



Integrated Support for Decentralization Project
WORKING FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Funded by EU and implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Albanian Government



DIBËR

Regional Development Strategy 2012-2016

“Sustainable development by raising capacities”

June, 2012

Important Disclaimer

Integrated Support for Decentralization Project is an EU-UNDP-funded project. The direct beneficiary of the project is the Ministry of European Integration, Albania. The project is being implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office in Albania with Technical Assistance from ECORYS, OPM and Co-PLAN consortium. Views and comments in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of the above mentioned institutions.

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Preface

The Regional Development Strategy is one of the most successful achievements of Dibra Region, a document of a particular importance, and fruit of a hard work of nearly two years.

A special technical and financial assistance has been given by UNDP, through the project "Integrated Support for Decentralization". The main goal of this process was to draft a regional strategy for development for Dibra Region and capacity building of institutions and administrations, in full compliance with national priorities and respecting local needs.

Various and difficult challenges that our region faces in its development efforts, require that we plan "**direction of development for the region**" in the best manner possible. All this requires seriousness, dedication and cooperation with all actors.

As the chairman of the Dibra Regional Council, I want to thank and express my special gratitude to all those who have been very active during the compilation and preparation of this valuable document, **representatives of local governments, the administration of Diber Regional Council, other institutions in our region and interest groups**, all who were ready with their contributions and expertise while simultaneously transmitting the message that different actors can work together for a common goal, the one of improving the future of our region.

Given that the needs are greater than resources, the Strategic Document serves as guide to the local government structures of Diber Region to determine priority areas to develop key sectors of economy, industry, agriculture, tourism, protect the environment, and to increase social integration.

I hope and believe that in the coming years we will see Diber Region stronger economically, with greater opportunities for living, employment and integration for all its residents and sustainability of the valued environment.

Again a big Thank You to all participants for their contributions!

Naim GAZIDEDE

Chairman of the Diber Regional Council

1. Current situation

1.1. Introduction to the region

Geographical Position of Dibra Region:

Dibra Region has a population of 190 356 inhabitants and an average density of 68 inhabitants per km², which is lower than the country average. According to the administrative division of 2000, the population of the region is spread over three districts, which include four municipalities, 31 communes and 279 villages. Dibra Region is located in the northeastern part of Albania, in the central mountainous area, on both sides of the Black Drin River and Mat Valley. It is bordered in the east by Macedonia, in the north by Kukës region, in the northwest with Lezhë region, in the west with the regions of Durrës and Tirana, and in the south with the region of Elbasan. Dibra is located at these geographic coordinates: latitude north, 41° 54'28", and south latitude 41° 20' 50"; east longitude 20° 34'50" and west longitude 19° 48' 36".

Natural conditions:

The northeastern sub-region is characterized by a diverse geological construction. In this sub-region different tectonic zones are found, such as the Korab, the Mirdita, the Krasta - Cukali and Kruja. The northeastern sub-region is dominated by different effusive and intrusive magmatic rocks, especially those ultrabasic. Besides these of considerable spread are sedimentary rocks, of carbonate and terrigenous type.

Relief:

The relief of the sub-region is very diverse. This feature is related to different lithological composition, neotectonic movements, abundant rainfall, thermal contrasts, considerable hill slopes, the spread of terrigenous and the presence of a dense network of rivers. The relief is composed of mountain lines, blocks and ridges, highlands and separated mountains, hills and river valleys, transverse and longitudinal and holes. Relief starts from 100-150 meters height in some valleys in the west to 2751 meters in Korab. At heights above 1600 meters there is a well developed glacial landscape in the form of cirques, as Nezhda of Lura, Malesia e Martaneshit and in Korabi mountain line.

Hydrography:

Dibra Region is characterized by large water richnesses. It is crossed by two major rivers: the Black Drin and Mat. Numerous underground springs emerge especially on the left side of the valley of the Black Drin. In Nezhda of Lura and in Martanesh there are found some glacial lakes.

Climate:

The climate is hilly Mediterranean pre-mountainous and mountainous Mediterranean. Rainfall is about 1500-2000 mm per year. The average annual temperature reaches 10-12 °C. In coldest months the minimum temperature reaches -25 °C, while in the hottest months up to 35 °C.

Lands:

The main types of land in the territory which lies Diber county are mostly mountains pastures lands, which are widespread in the heights of the mountains (in the mountine range of Korab and Lura). Brown forest lands meet in Lure, Golloborda, Skenderbeu Mountain Runja Lures, mountain range of Skenderbeu. Mountain brown soils are prevalent in the area of Klos.

Vegetation:

Regional flora is very rich, of the European and middle Mediterranean types. The northeastern sub-region is characterized by its large areas of grass and forest. It is distinguished by beech, pine and fir forests that have economic value, which are found in Korab, Lura, Martanesh etc. The forests of this sub-region are damaged due to illegal logging for construction material and for firewood, as in the period before '90-ies as well as during the last 20 years.

The animals:

Regional fauna is extremely rich and is represented by carnivorous animals (bear, wolf, fox, wild cat), herbivorous animals (wild boar, deer, wild goat, rabbit, wild cat), birds (ouzel, the mountain grouse, wild forest cock, etc.).

Natural resources and the economy:

Northeastern sub-region is characterized by huge mineral wealth. Underground is rich in minerals like copper and chromium metal, but also with the construction and ornamental stones, marbles, inerts of river beds, caolinic clay, etc.. The most important mines that continue to operate are the chrome mines in Bulqiza and in the area around.

Water Resources:

Underground sources, rivers and glacial lakes are of great economic and touristic potential. Northeastern sub-region with abundant water resources has enabled the hydro energetic stocks of HPPs in the Shkopeti and Ulëza.

Tourism:

The region offers numerous opportunities for developing different types of tourism and winter sports. Adequate facilities for tourism development are: Lura, Radomir, Shkopeti and Ulez, the valley of the Black Drin and Mat, etc..

Agricultural Economics:

The presence of river terraces, flat bottoms in highs allow cultivation of a number of agricultural products. Most common products are potatoes, beans, apples, pears, plums, cherries, and nuts, etc., which constitute an important economic resource for the livelihood of the residents.

Main geographical features:

Lura National Park is the only protected area in Dibra Region.

Main rivers: Black Drin River, the Mat River, Molle River, Seta River, Murrës River, Veleshica River, Zalli Okshtunit, Zalli i Bulqizës, Lusa River, Kurvajës River, Uraka River, Fountain head of Shutrenjës, Zalli i Shtamës.

Main streams: The stream of Maqellare, the Stream of Thermal Bath, the stream of Grama, the stream of Gjalagjoshtit, the stream of Veleshices, the stream of Melan, the stream of Luses, stream of Radoveshit, the stream of Vasha, the stream of Germanit, the stream of Baze.

Main lakes: Flower Lake, Lake of cows, slate Lake, Little Lake, Grand Lake, Black Lake, Lake of Hoti, Lake of Kallatë, Lake of Bruci, Lake of Bllacës, Lake of Lower Shtrunga, Lakes of Kacnisë, Lake of Grama, Lake of Hynoska, Lake of Tërnova, Lake of Sopot, White Lake, Lake of Skender, Ulza Lake, Shkopeti Lake, Lake of Balgjajt, Lake of Mbasdejes.

Highest peaks: Korab is the highest mountain of Albania with a 2751 m altitude. Korab is located on the eastern border, in Dibra Region, east of the Black Drin River, between two branches of it right, Grama stream in south and that of Veleshica in north. It is part of the eastern chain or Korab chain of Mountain Central Province. In Korab are found three highest peaks of Albania over 2700 m: Korab peak with 2751 m, Korab Gate Peak with 2725 m and Shullani Peak of Radomira with 2716 m.

Other important mountains of the region of Diber are: Highest peak on Mount Lura is Lura Crown at 2121 m altitude. Grama mountain with an altitude of 2345 m, located in chain of Korab- Deshat mountains. White cape with an altitude 2595 m. Small Korab with an altitude 2683 m, located in Mount Korab. Shullani of Radomirës with a height of 2716 m, located in Mount Korab.

Geological/mineral deposits

Dibra Region is rich in underground where the most important are:

Chromium: localized in Martanesh of Bulqiza, in Bulqiza, in Ternove, in Shupenzë, in Selishta and Lura. For this mineral the chrome enrichment factory in Bulqiza is functional.

Gypsum: They are located in mountain chain of Korab-Deshat relatively in large volumes.

There are some mineralisations in Dibra region as well, such as:

Poly metals: The iron-free nickel, which remain unused because of difficult conditions of their location and the difficulties of enrichment.

Clays: These are of medium and high quality found in areas: Kastriot-Tomin

Lime of Cidhna: These are very convenient and can serve as raw material for production of cement.

Marbles and marbled limestones: they are found in the areas of Arras, Zall Rec, Lura, Shupenzë, etc.

Main distances to borders, airport

Peshkopi – Bllatë 18 km

Bulqizë – Bllatë 34 km

Burrel – Bllatë 69 km

Klos – Bllatë 52 km

Peshkopi – Aeroporti Nënë Tereza 161 km

Bulqizë – Aeroporti Nënë Tereza 114 km

Klos – Aeroporti Nënë Tereza 96 km

Burrel – Aeroporti Nënë tereza 79 km

Peshkopi – Tiranë 173 km

Bulqizë – Tiranë 127 km

Klos – Tiranë 109 km

Burrel – Tiranë 92 km

Main roads and rail lines

Peshkopi – Tiranë Road

Peshkopi – Kukës Road

Zall Rec – Peshkopi (it connects some communes)

Lurë – Arras Road

Krastë (Martanesh) – Bulqizë Road

Xibër – Urë e Fshatit Road

Komsi – Burrel Road

There are no rail lines.

Summary Table of Population Data for Diber Region January 1st 2012

| No | Residence Center | Population | No of families |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Dibër District | 82,668 | 20,229 |
| 2 | Bulqizë District | 43,289 | 10,948 |
| 3 | Mat District | 64,399 | 16,992 |
| Total Region | | 190,356 | 48,169 |

Source: Civil Registry office in Dibra Region

Number and list of municipalities and communes:

Dibër District:

Municipality of Peshkopi,

Communes: Melan, Tomin, Kastriot, Lurë, Maqellarë, Muhur, Luzni, Selishtë, Sllövë, Kala e Dodës, Zall Dardhë, Zall Reç, Fushe Çidhën dhe Arras. (15 LGUs)

Bulqizë District:

Municipality of Bulqizë,

Communes Martanesh, Fushë Bulqizë, Zerqan, Shupenzë, Gjoricë, Ostren; Trebisht (8 LGUs)

Mat District:

Municipality of Burrel and Klos.

Communes: Baz, Xibër, Derjan, Rukaj, Macukull, Komsi, Suç, Lis, Ulëz dhe Gurrë (12 LGUs)

Region of Diber in total has 35 Local Government Units.

Main economic activities:

1. The largest employers in the region of Dibra are registered in the district of Mat and Bulqiza with 32 and 33 respectively (employers with more than 9 employees) and Dibra with 18 employers.
2. Agriculture sector: is the sector which has the largest number of employees, this is because in this sector all of the working age are called the self-employed, we have about 15,546 employees in the agricultural sector or 61% of total employees in all sectors including the Statal.
3. Production sector: Enterprises in the production sector occupy 6% of total active non-agricultural enterprises of Dibra Region. Number of employees in these enterprises is significant because it constitutes about 24% of total employees in non-agriculture private sector.
4. Service Sector: With regard to this sector we can say that there are a large number of enterprises operating in this sector (excluding the state). In this sector operate about 927 enterprises, the sector with most of enterprises but can not say the same thing for the

- employees in this sector because they rank after the trade and production which are the sectors with most employees.
5. Trade: It is a sector that has large number of enterprises and also large number of employees in this sector. Trade registers about 872 active non-agricultural enterprises and about 987 employee. This sector has the largest number of employees of all other sectors.
 6. Exports: If we could make a reflection of exports in economic activity we can say that they occupy a considerable part of our economy by about 45.6% of total economic activity. The largest part in export industry is by production (extraction and processing of chrome, and other underground assets) by about 44.3% and then come the trade and services 33.3% and 14.13% respectively. The smallest share in exports have those of construction and transport.

Cultural, social aspects:

Dibra district:

Oda Dibrane, Harvest Fair, Gostia Dibrane, the Feast of the cherry, Feast e Bjeshkës (Sllatinë), Birthday of Skanderbeg (May 6), the Feast of Drin,

Bulqiza District:

Festa e Gjoricës (dt 26/07), the feast of apple

Mat District:

Mat Lyrical Song, Laurantëve Meeting, October 8 - the birthday of Ahmet Zog King of Albanians, the Feast of Saint-George, Folk Fest July 31

Main tourist attractions

Tourism Types in Dibra Region:

Balnear, cultural, ethnographic, historical, Mountainous, Sports, River, adventurer, religious, recreational.

Dibër:

Natural touristic Potential

Pocest waterfall, Herbel Rock, Kërçini Rock, Gradishta e Gradecit, Top of Hynoska, Pasture of Rabdisht, Pasture of Cerjan, Pasture of Zimur, Black Drin Valley, Korabi Mountain, Pasture of Ladies, Cold Water (Vleshë), Grama Lake, Pasture of Grama, Grama Forests, Gorge of Seta (Arras-Çidhën), Gorge of Gjalicave (Çidhën), Pasture of Pllaju, Pasture of Xhaxhisht, Mountain of Qaf Kala of Scanderbeg, Runja Mountains, Murra with the red stone cave and gorge of Murra, Black drinking fountain, Big pond, Plateau of Runja, Cave of Bulaç, Top of Arape, Meadows of Lepusha, Lama e Hunit, Fields of Hasa, Rravzat, Deluj (Water source).

Cultural – Touristic Potential

Burim Mosque, Kërçisht Church, Grezhdan Castle, Kërçin Castle, Herbel Churches, Buraviku i Begjunecit, Gradeci Castle ruins (Zdojan), Kullaku Castle (Brezhdan), Churches in Dohoshisht, Kepi i Qytetit, Scanderbeg Museum (Sinë), Dine Hoxha Tower, Klan Dera Tower, Elez Murra Towers, Teqja e Sefere (Arap i poshtëm), Teqja e Mere (Lishan i Epërm), Lisi në varrezat të Like, Christians Cemetery, Sefer Canit Tower.

Burrel:

Natural touristic Potential

Balgjajt glacial lakes, cave of pigeons, Tall Stone, The Mat River Bed, Gurrat e Kaculit, the square where gunpowder was produced, Mountain with holes, Gurrat e gurit bardhë e Dishej Kete, great light Qaf-Murrisë, River of village Xibër Hane- Kete, The old Arber road, Sukzëz Mountain,

Qaf Panja, Llapusha Mountain, Erza Mountain, Shemri Mountain, Mat River, Qafshtama Park, Selica, Midhe Lake, Baz Mountain, Stanet e Neleve, Klivac Crown, Ulza Lake, Shkopeti Lake, Trollma Mountain, Derjani Lakes, Përroi i Kurvajës, Flim canyons, Tall Stone (Urxallë), Deja Mountain, Limosi Village, Bruc Village fountain, canyons of Seka (Prellë).

Cultural – Touristic Potential

Bridge of maiden, Castle of Skanderbeg, Petralbe, Rexhep Lleshi House museum, the Tower of Dedoll, Mali me gropa, Founts of White Stone, Great Light Qaf-Murrizë, The old Arber road, Pergja Lusa Cave, Place of gunpowder production Sherapop, Church of St. Nicholas, Sarjat e Zogut (Burgajet), Town of Varosh + castle, Grave of the Turk, the castle ruins of Komsj, Kalirec Church, Church of Fushë Bazë, Stream of Thana, the statue of Mother Theresa, Ulez Church, Stojan Church, Bushkash Church, ruins of churches Dukagjin (Shën Mëri, Ishtotri), Memorial of Dukagjin assembly (1602), Ruins of St. Trinity church, towers of Macukull, Neziv Cave, Cave of Këputes.

Bulqizë:

Natural touristic Potential

Black Drin Valley, Prati Highland, Homeshi Mountain, Ponds of Bllacës, Delgjurra, Black Lake, White Lake, Great Zabel, Zalli i Bulqizës, Peladhi Plain, Blak Drin, Zalli i Okshtunit, Ramnagore Mountain.

Cultural – Touristic Potential

Teqja e Bllacës , Teqja e babë Shehut (Boçevë), Kovashica Church, Marke Tower, Kurte Tower (Shupenzë), Vleshë Mosque, Krajka Town, Plain of the Castle, Kaziak Church, Cemetery Peak (Sofraçan), Palin of Gurra, Lapidar of the partisan battalion creation, Lapidar of national martir Mane Kazani, Lapidar of Tercilio Kardinali.

Main Roads for the future:

Arbër Road

Lis-Selishtë – Muhur Road

Kastriot – Arras – Lurë Road

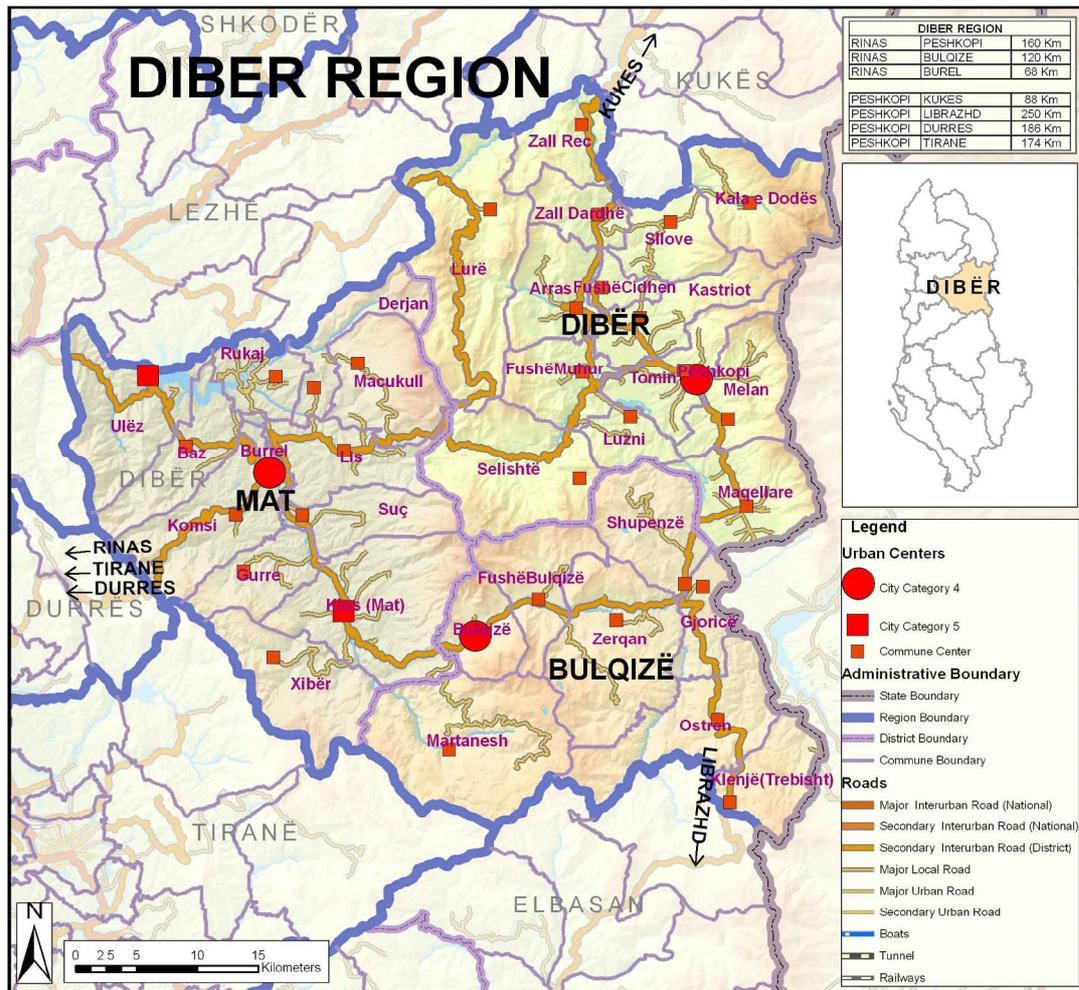
Ura e Cerenecit – Librazhd Road

Bridge of Mat – Perlat (Mirditë) Road

Zerqan – Tre tips Road

Ura e Cerenecit-Trebisht

Figure 1 : Map of the region



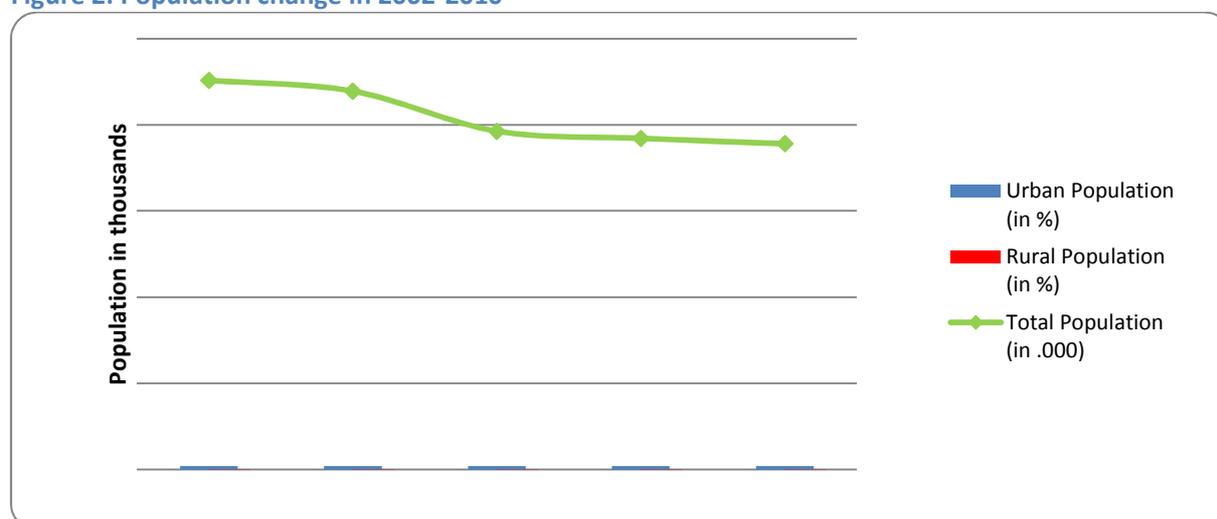
Source: Administrative and physical map, own elaboration

1.2 Demography and Spatial Development

Population

The population of Dibra Qark constitutes about 4% of the total population of the country with approximately 190,000 inhabitants¹ distributed among 35 LGUs - 4 municipalities, 31 communes and 276 villages. As per latest population census of 2011, this figure is much lower: only 137,000 inhabitants. During the last decade the demographic situation in Dibra Qark has followed the same trend as other north and north-east areas of the country, characterized by an overall depopulation and rural-urban migration within the qark. Between 2002 and 2010, the population has decreased by 16%-25%, depending on measurement method. The highest emigration, up to 11% occurred during 2004-2006. Since 2006, the changes are smaller, respectively 2.1% and 1.6% for the periods 2006-2008 and 2008-2010. The trend has been present in almost all LGUs, more evident in communes where depopulation was approximately 19% (highest in Zall Dardhe 59%, Rec 58%, Martanesh 55%). Population loss is experienced also in municipalities (9%) with the highest levels in municipalities of Bulqize (20%) and Klos (14%). Currently the urban population constitutes 32% of the total compared to 30% in 2002. Peshkopi municipality represents 10% of the total urban population of the qark. The average regional population density is 68 inh/km², a figure much lower than the national level of 148².

Figure 2: Population change in 2002-2010



Source: Dibra Qark Civil registry, own calculations

There is a series of factors that have determined this situation: closure of former public enterprises resulting in high level of unemployment and emigration, very low accessibility (internal and to the centre), low access to services, extremely low urbanization combined with large forests and mountainous areas and high fragmentation of settlements at high altitudes with varying slopes.

The data for 2010, indicate that the region has a age structure composed by 24% of the population in the age group 0-14, 50% in the age of 15-64, and 26% above the age of 65. The young/old ratio of 0,9 has worsen significantly compared to the relatively high ratio of 4.1 in 2008. The age dependency ratio is quite high 0.76, meaning there is 1.3 person of non-working age per each 2 persons of working age. In municipalities the ratio is higher 0.93. Worst values are in the following LGUs: communes of Martanesh

¹As per qark civil registry. Note: there are large discrepancies between civil registry and INSTAT data.

²The population density at the national level has been calculated as per national civil registry data from Ministry of Interior

(2.2), Shupenze, Ostren, Zerqan, Fushe Bulqize, Trebisht, Gjorice (1.9) and Municipality of Bulqize (1.9). Commune of Tomin has the highest ratio in the region (11.5).³

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. In terms of population, Dibra is ranked the second smallest qark in country, after Kukes, and constitutes up to 4% of the total population of the country. In the last 10 years the region has experienced extreme depopulation trends. ii. Dibra has very low population density, less than half of the country's average. iii. Low density, small and dispersed settlements (the largest city, Peshkopi, less than 20,000 inhabitants) and low urbanization define the regional demography. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The depopulation trend (2002-2010) has affected almost all LGUs, with the exception of three communes (Maqellare, Fushe Bulqize dhe Xiber) which benefited from growing employment in agriculture or mines. ii. The least affected by depopulation are the municipalities of Peshkopi and Burrel where emigration from the qark is at least partially compensated by the internal migration from rural areas. iii. Population losses are extremely high in the following mountainous area: Zall Dardhe 59%, Rec 58%, and Martanesh 55%, mainly due to difficult living conditions. iv. Similarly to other northern regions, there is a relatively young population with the age group 0-14 years representing 24% of the total. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The legalization process of informal settlements in more attractive regions and internally has encouraged migration. ii. Lack of clear development policies coupled with the absence of investments, has resulted in high emigration although this trend is diminishing: The improved infrastructure conditions and promotion of rural development with a focus on agriculture and tourism have contributed to stabilization of population numbers during 2006-2010. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Restructuring of the administrative and territorial division of the LGUs. ii. Promotion of sustainable economic development of the region through involvement of major stakeholders (Government of Albania, Qark, LGUs and Donors). iii. Promotion of employment through the support provided to potential sectors such as agriculture, agroprocessing industry, forestry and tourism. iv. Road infrastructure improvements (Arbri highway). |

Spatial Development

Dibra Qark is located in the northeastern part of Albania in an altitude that varies from 55m in Valley of Mat (Skuraj Bridge) and 2,751m (Korabi Mountain). The qark has an area of 2,767 km², comprising rather low shares of agriculture land (15%) and forests/pastures (25%) and high shares of other land, mostly mountains (up to 60%). The highest shares of agriculture land are present in the communes of Fushe Cidhen (47%), Tomin (40%), Kastriot (38%) and Gjorice (35%). Rural areas of Ulez (68%), Arrez (66%), Rec (64%) and Melan (63%) enjoy the highest shares of forests and pastures. Currently, the agriculture land use in Diber is 0.22 ha per capita compared to the national level of 0.67 ha p.c.. Significant fluctuations are seen in agriculture land use per capita in the years 2002-2010, with the overall increase of 19% and are directly related to depopulation. The economic and social activities are concentrated mainly in the municipality of Peshkopi and Burrel, less in Klos and Bulqize .

| |
|---|
| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Dibra has a low share of agriculture land and of forests (15 and 25%) when compared to the national figures (24 and 51%). ii. The agriculture land per capita is very low at 33% of the average country level, indicating low level of productivity per agricultural holding which may cause further emigration from rural areas. iii. The construction of Skavica hydropower plant(s) can reduce agriculture land area further.⁴ |
|---|

³ Reservations: the above analysis is based on data available, qark feels that in reality this is not the situation.

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| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The highest shares of agriculture land are present in eastern part of the qark. ii. Communes of Zall Dardhe (145%), Rec (135%) and Martanesh (121%) show extremely high increase of agriculture land per capita, primarily due to depopulation. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Geographic positioning and land features. ii. The support provided by the Government of Albania to the agriculture sector in the form of subsidies has positively affected the use of arable land, e.g. support to orchards. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The construction of Arbri Road and other investments to assist spatial development and use of the area. ii. Better territorial management to ensure a balanced development between urban and rural areas. |

Conclusions

The Dibra Qark is characterized by the following prevailing demographic and spatial features:

- The Qark has a relatively young population. However, this qark continues to experience severe depopulation following the same long-term pattern of other qarks in regard to migration from less opportune mountainous parts of the region towards the western coast, especially to the central locations in Tirana and Durres. This will have important consequences for regional and local development as it will be hard to sustain depopulating areas.
- The geographical characteristics impact the accessibility of different areas and result in high fragmentation of settlements, posing important socio-economic and administrative challenges. According to the economic development Dibra is among the qarks that are in the worst situation with high population decline, low density, very low urbanization, and high LGU fragmentation.

1.3 Growth, Competitiveness, and Economic Cohesion

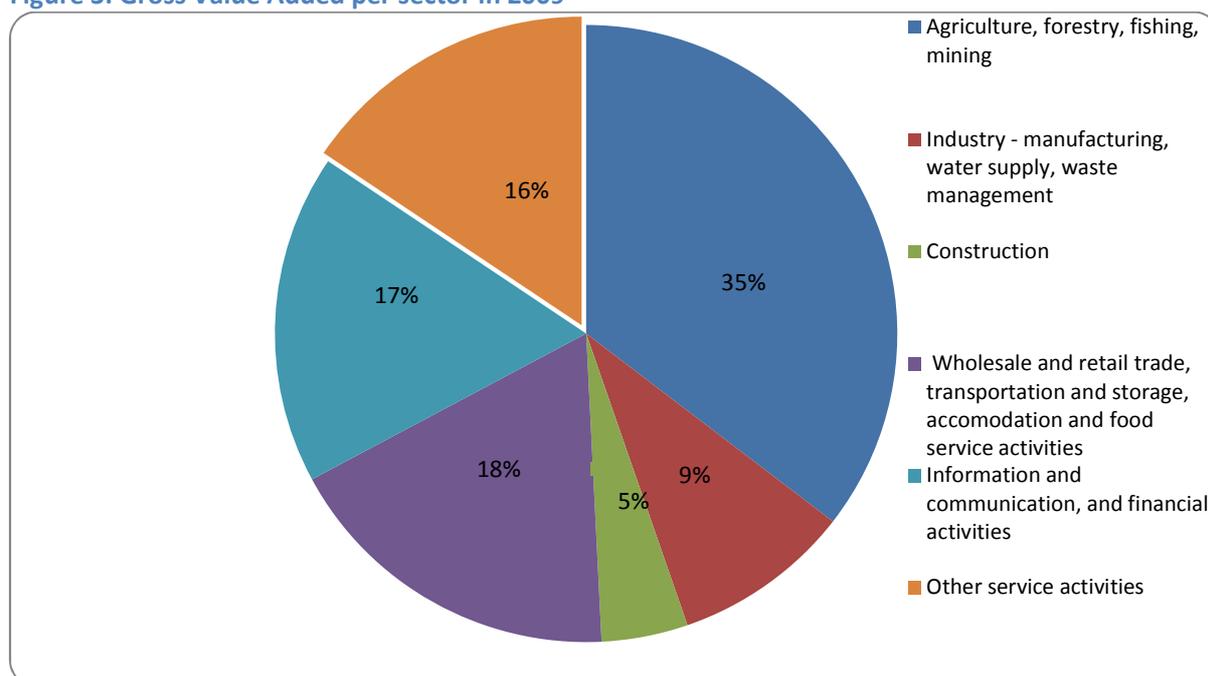
Economic activity

In terms of economic development, Dibra region is positioned last (approx. 60%) when compared to average national GDP (indexed at 100).⁵ Agriculture, mining, fishing and forestry constitute the highest share (35%) of Gross Value Added.

⁴ Building of Skavica Hydropower is still under discussion at the government level. Till now the bid for concession offers was opened 3 times. Currently, two are the most discussed variants options a) building of one single dam, which will cause the flooding of more than 18 villages, and of the most productive/agriculture land in the region; b) building of 3 dams respectively in Skavica, Arras and Luzni. The most plausible solution will be the second one. Land flooding will be minimal and the inhabitants of only 3 villages will be relocated.

⁵Regional Disparities in Albania (2010), table 11 – GDP per capita estimates (2007) p. 47

Figure 3: Gross Value Added per sector in 2009



Source: INSTAT "Regional Accounts in Albania 2009", p.38

Enterprises

Over 2002-2010, the number of non-agricultural active enterprises showed a high increase.

Figure 4: Non-agricultural active enterprises (2002-2010)

| Non-agricultural active enterprises | 2002 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of enterprises | 25 | 44 | 70 | 106 | 135 |

Source: Regional Tax Directorate

The number of active enterprises relative to population in Dibra region in 2010 is 435% higher than in 2002. The highest number of non-agricultural active enterprises relative to population is found in urban areas of Peshkopi (380), Burrel (396) and Bulqize (326). In rural areas the highest number is in Martanesh commune (285) mainly due to the high population loss and the highest number of active non-agriculture businesses (73), which are related mainly to chrome mining activities. From the data of Directorate of Taxes the number of newly created and recreated enterprises in 2002 was 36 while in 2010 the number was 235. However, the number of foreign enterprises decreased 5.5 times from 2002 to 2010.

Figure 5: Newly created non-agricultural active enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants (2002-2010)

| Year | 2002 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of enterprises | 1.6 | 7.7 | 11.3 | 16.3 | 12.4 |

Source: Regional Tax Directorate

In Dibra Region there are currently 83 enterprises with more than 9 employees. They are divided in districts as follows:

- Bulqize: 32 businesses with total of 651 employees. What is impressive in this district is that the major field of activity is the mining industry. Other activities are those of construction, commerce and public services.
- Mat: 33 businesses with total of 858 employees. The main activities of this district, beside mining, are those of construction, import-export of raw materials (mining included), services and trade.
- Diber: 18 businesses with total of 423 employees. The dominant businesses are trade/commerce and construction.

The number of non-agricultural active enterprise that operates in the region is 2,554. In terms of activity type the majority of non-active enterprises operate in the service sector (36%), then trade (34%), and transport (19%). They are mostly located in municipalities (2,136 businesses). Over 90% of these enterprises have employed only one person.

Figure 6: Active non-agricultural enterprises per districts and type of activity (2010)

| District | Trade | Construction | Production | Services | Transport | Total |
|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Bulqize | 208 | 23 | 49 | 200 | 121 | 601 |
| Mat | 294 | 56 | 51 | 326 | 147 | 874 |
| Diber | 370 | 25 | 57 | 401 | 219 | 1072 |
| Region | 872 | 104 | 157 | 972 | 487 | 2547 |

Source: Regional Tax Directorate

Figure 7: Non-agriculture employment per economic sector (2010)

| | TRADE | CONSTRUCTION | PRODUCTION | SERVICES | TRANSPORT | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|-------|--------------|------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| STATE SECTOR | | | | | | 5865 |
| BUDGET BASED | 40 | 0 | 8 | 5700 | 0 | 5748 |
| NON BUDGET BASED | 0 | 0 | 114 | 0 | 3 | 117 |
| PRIVATE SECTOR | | | | | | 3872 |
| BIG ENTERPRISES | 333 | 805 | 819 | 228 | 21 | 2206 |
| SMALL ENTERPRISES | 654 | 30 | 121 | 524 | 337 | 1666 |

Source: Regional Tax Directorate

The main employer for Dibra region is the state sector with a total of 5,865 employees, which is almost double of that of private sector which a total of 3,872 (agriculture excluded). The number of employees in agricultural businesses is much higher – 15,546 employees. The main branches of the industry in the region are: the mining industry (concentrated mainly in the area of Bulqize), and food-processing.

There are also hydropower plants operating in Dibra Region with the total production capacity of 56MW. The power generated is sufficient to supply about 33,000 families.

The main industrial export for Dibra is the mining industry. According to the Regional Directorate of Taxes the export value for 2010 is 2,627 million ALL.

Agriculture

The main sector of the regional economy is agriculture, constituting 62% of total employment in the region. Since 2007 the government runs the policy of supporting farmers (1,249 farmers supported). Orchards and fruit trees planting were especially encouraged due to the fact that Dibra has a very suitable climate for the cultivation of fruits. In general the production of agriculture and livestock products and sub-products, are for domestic consumption, however there are some products that are destined to market. These are primarily beans, meat and honey.

Figure 8: Current Structure of production and market (2010)

| PRODUCTION | REGION | | |
|------------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| | TOTAL TONS | TO MARKET | % TO MARKET |
| 1. FRUITS | 18000 | 3127 | 17,37 |
| 2. CROPS/CEREALS | 34047 | 1047 | 3,08 |
| 3. VEGETABLES | 35535 | 10000 | 28,14 |
| 4. PATATOES | 22693 | 9000 | 39,66 |
| 5. BEANS | 2150 | 1200 | 55,81 |
| 6. MILK | 63810 | 18359 | 28,77 |
| 7. MEAT | 9200 | 5500 | 59,78 |
| 8. EGGS | 33417(PCS) | 8417(PCS) | 25,19 |
| 9. HONEY | 120 | 90 | 75,00 |

Source: Regional Development Department

In 2006-2010 there has been an increase of 1,089 ha of cultivated land, which demonstrated the interest and also the importance of the agriculture sector in the economy of the region.

Figure 9: Production structure in 2010 as compared to 2006

| DISTRICT | CROPS/CEREALS | FORAGE | ORCHARD | VINEYARD | VEGETABLES | BEANS | PATATOES | TOTAL |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| DIBER (2010) | 3643 | 5128 | 1000 | 47 | 360 | 160 | 412 | 10750 |
| BULQIZE (2010) | 1507 | 2375 | 250 | 12 | 191 | 101 | 240 | 4676 |
| MAT (2010) | 1540 | 5250 | 100 | 105 | 702 | 143 | 178 | 8018 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| REGION 2010 | 6690 | 12753 | 1350 | 164 | 1253 | 404 | 830 | 23444 |
| REGION 2006 | 6567 | 12408 | 835 | 116 | 1006 | 438 | 894 | 22355 |

Source: Regional Development Department

Tourism

The development of tourism in Diber Region is related mainly to the mountain tourism because of relief. The area is most commonly visited in the summer, since in other seasons the access roads become impossible to go through. The most famous place to visit is Lura which is also a national park with two hotels or inns with a total capacity of 60 beds -the number of tourists per year, or the season is approximately 1500 visitors. It is equipped with 2 people. Nearby villages can accommodate 100 visitors per day. The Thermal Waters (Llixhat) are another location of interest. Even though this is a curative establishment, there are some revenues generated. The total number of visitors is about 7,000 visitors per year. The total hosting capacity is about 1500 visitors per day. Other cultural activities with interest for tourists are Oda Dibrane, Kënga lirike e Matit and faires organized each year.

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. GDP per capita of Dibra qark is approximately 60% of the country average and the lowest of all qarks. ii. Dibra is a predominantly agricultural region (35% of GVA), with significant minerals extraction activities. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The non-agricultural active enterprises are mostly located in the four municipalities of the qark (352 per 10.000 inhabitants) and there most new businesses are also established. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. The highest number of new businesses for 2010 was in communes of Martanesh (13), Gure and Shupenze (5), Tomin (4), Fushe Buqize and Kastriot (3). iii. There is a significant market agricultural production in the lower mountains areas. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Few opportunities and poor connectivity to national markets makes the region less competitive. ii. Government policies on natural resources have not favored at the Dibra district for economic development (existing significant natural resources, small population, etc.) iii. Despite the financial support of the agriculture sector through government subsidies and foreign foundations, the region still needs more investments in this sector. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Completion of modern roads to other counties and Arbri road. ii. Completion of urban plans to allow economic development. iii. Continuation of incentive policies for the agriculture sector. iv. Drafting of a plan for the identification and promotion of all tourist sites and cultural heritage. v. Increasing investments by foreign investors and the government. |

Employment

The working age population at the regional level is at 53% of the total. There is still a high unemployment and inactivity aspect of the regional economy. Employment structure shows that private agriculture sector is the main employer. A significant increase has been gradually noted in private agriculture sector (by 56%) and private non-agriculture sector (by 45%), whereas employment in public sector has declined (by 24%) in 2002-2010.

Figure 10: Employment per sector in % (2002-2010)

| Employment | 2002 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Public sector | 38.9 | 37.6 | 28.3 | 27.3 | 23.9 |
| Private non-agriculture | 14.8 | 14.6 | 11.6 | 18.1 | 17.4 |
| Private agriculture | 46.3 | 47.8 | 60.1 | 54.7 | 58.6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Regional Tax Directorate, Regional Social Insurance Directorate

The region's economically active population (labour force) has increased by 50% in the period 2002-2010, however it constitutes only 54% of the overall working age population, showing a high inactivity rate. Gender structure of the labor force in 2010, is only 13% female and 87% male. In 2002-2010 female labour force participation rate has declined by 70%, while male labour force participation rate has increased by 37%. This can be linked to significant drop of employment in the public sector. The registered unemployment rate for Dibra region is considerably high (16%), a decline by 43% compared to 2002 (by 28%).

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Dibra region represents a limited pool of labour force (less than 4% of the national total). ii. The unemployment rate is below the national average, however large portion of unemployment can well be hidden in agriculture. iii. A very low female participation rate is characteristic for the region. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The share of employment in agriculture continues to be very high and has increased by 27% in the period 2002-2010. ii. There is a decreasing tendency in regional registered unemployment (by 43%). |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Limited number of new job opportunities as a result of public sector restructuring and the overall slow development pace of the region. ii. The salary levels in public and private sectors do not motivate the educated young to return and work in the region. |

- iii. Unqualified working age population share is growing due to continued migration to other areas of the country.
- iv. No proper efforts to (re)qualify the working age population.
- v. Unattractiveness of the regional markets contributes to small numbers of new businesses established and jobs created.

Possible ways for improvement

- i. Proper orientation of the region economic development in order to create more jobs.
- ii. Requalification programmes according to the market needs.
- iii. Provision of vocational education and trainings to the needs of unemployed/long-term unemployed to increase their participation in labour market.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of economic activity and employment, Dibra Qark is characterized by the following prevailing features:

- Very low productivity of the regional economy (at 60% of national GDP per capita figure) with a very high share of agriculture in value added (over 1/3rd) reflect the difficult geographic position and conditions. Other sectors have some potential (mining, tourism) but require careful exploitation, not to create negative impacts between them and other branches of economy.
- Growth in numbers of enterprises, although quite impressive does not compensate for losses in public jobs over the years. While further support to agricultural production brings positive changes in the rural areas, conditions for jobs creation need to be prepared in other productive sectors.
- High economic inactivity of population is evident, and especially severe for females. Decline in registered unemployment figures may well obscure the difficult employment situation. (Re)qualification efforts need to be greatly increased.

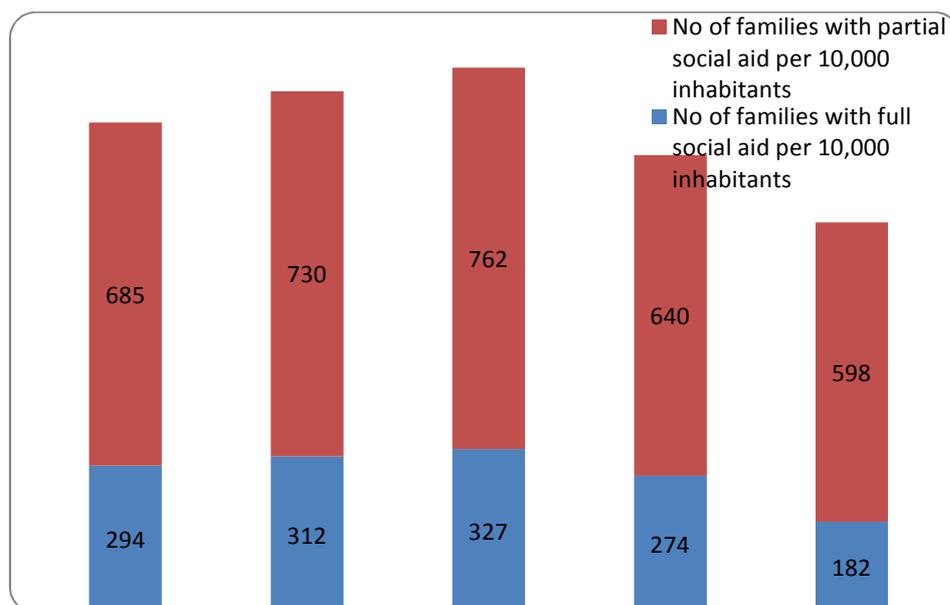
1.4 Social Cohesion, Health and Education

Social Cohesion

Currently, the overall number of families under social assistance in Diber qark is 12,491, from which 1,192 benefit from full and 11,299 from partial aid. In 2002-2010 the number of families treated under full social assistance has decreased by 50% and under partial assistance by 26%. Per each 10,000 inhabitants the number of families with full social aid is 63, a decrease by 42%. Compared to the national figures, Dibra stands at 21% of the national average.⁶

⁶ Reservation – the analysis is partial since the number of families under full and social economic aid is not available for all LGUs.

Figure 11: Families under social assistance (2002-2010)



Source: Regional Directorate of Labour

The data available for year 2010 show that the 98% of the number of families treated with full economic aid at the regional level are found in urban areas. The number of families under full economic aid per 10,000 inhabitants at the municipality level is 192 or 305% of the regional average figure (in Peshkopi municipality this number grew by 72% since 2002). Different NGO are working in tis region for improvement of the situation. There is quite a need and activity of charity work. The World Vision is working in 44 remote villages in the communes of Maqellare, Tomin and Kastriot (which have the lowest levels of total income per capita). Some 181 very poor families and 66 big families (patriarchal) benefit from their support.

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The number of families taking full and partial social assistance per 10,000 inhabitants is much lower when compared to the national figures. ii. The number of families benefiting full social assistance has been significantly decreasing. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Almost all families under full economic aid are in urban areas, especially in minicipality of Peshkopi. ii. Partial assistance, according to regulations goes to rural areas almost exclusively. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Limited opportunities for employment, especially in towns, which receive rural population but are inatractive for business investors/employers. ii. Employment in agriculture and livestock sector had a positive effect , decreassign the overall number of families receiving assistance. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Creating conditions for employment both in agriculture and outside and equipping people with skills needed in the economy. ii. Creating better connectivity to external markets. |

Health

The infant mortality per 1,000 live births has significantly decreased from 2002 (28) in 2010 (6). The same holds true also per children mortality under 5 years old (from 1,5 to 0 in the same period). The number of health centers per 10,000 inhabitants has remained more or less stable (2) during 2002-2010. The number of health centers per 10,000 inhabitants is 1.8 in municipalities and slightly higher (2.1) in communes. In 2010, there were no health centers available in communes of Muhur, Slllove, Rec, Gjorisht and Trebisht. The number of ambulances in the region is 10.8 per 10,000 inhabitants. The number is lower in municipalities (5.6) than in communes (13.2). At the regional level the number of ambulances has increased significantly (191) during 2002-2010, the increase has been substantial in communes (to 170 from 56 in 2002) and more moderate in municipalities (to 34 from 14 in 2002). In 2010, the number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants was 30, an increase of 70% when compared to 2002 (the number of beds in the municipality of Burrel increased more than by 200%, whereas in Bulqize by 85%). The figures per capita have also improved due to massive depopulation. In 2002-2010, the number of visits per 10,000 inhabitants has increased by 23% and was higher than the regional average in municipalities of Burrel (183% of average), Klos (155%), Peshkopi (149%) and seven communes – the highest in communes of Komsi (182%) and Derjan (159%). The lowest values are in the municipality of Bulqize (at 78% of the regional average) and in commune of Xiber (39%).

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants is at the country average figure.ii. The infant mortality rate has decreased over the years and in 2010 is now 5.7/1,000 live births, below the country's average of 10.5. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The number of ambulances per 10,000 inhabitants is higher in communes – 23 communes with the highest in communes of Derjan (281% of regional figure), Zall Dardhe (275%) and Ostren (208%).ii. Similarly, the number of health centers per 10,000 inhabitant is higher in communes – 20 communes with the highest in communes of Zall Dardhe (369% of the regional average), Lure (324%) and Derjan (302%) .iii. The number of doctor visits in municipalities is at 144% of the regional average while in communes at 79%. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Generally improving hygiene and healthcare conditions.ii. Massive emigration causing average and per capita indicators to improve, especially in rural areas. This however does not necessarily reflect improved quality of service. <p>Limited opportunities to access the health facilities in mountainous areas. Lack of specialist doctors at regional hospital</p> |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Focusing on the health care of mothers and children especially in the rural areas where the quality of services is insufficient and access very difficult.ii. Promotion of healthy lifestyles, hygiene, regular health checks and doctor visits. |

Education

The total number of primary and secondary education facilities is 121, of which 97 are dedicated to primary education (9-year old system) and 24 to secondary education.

Figure 12: Education facilities (2010)

| School Type | Diber | | | Mat | | | Bulqize | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------|-------|--------------|---------|-------|--------------|---------|-------|
| | Municipality | Commune | Total | Municipality | Commune | Total | Municipality | Commune | Total |
| 9-year | 4 | 36 | 40 | 6 | 32 | 38 | 2 | 17 | 19 |
| Secondary | 2 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 5 |

Source: Regional Education Directorate

In 2002-2010, enrolment in primary education declined by 20% and enrolment in secondary education increased by 41%, more in municipalities (by 49%) than in communes (by 29%). Out of students enrolled in the beginning of 2009, only 87% succeeded to complete their studies. The number of students who did not complete studies decreased in communes (-20%) whereas in municipalities it remained more or less stable (a 2% increase). Students finishing primary schools are willing to enroll in the secondary education. Their enrollment has gone up by 50% in 2010, compared to 2002. The situation seems better in rural areas. The increase in communes has been considerable (61%) with the highest values in communes of Kastriot (151%), Muhur (124%) and Lis (98%). However, willingness to enroll in secondary education does not mean study completion. Number of students enrolled in secondary schools who completed their studies is extremely low (33%) in Arres and (30%) in Kastriot.

Figure 13: Education completion (2002-2010)

| Year | 2002 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| % of primary graduates in secondary education | 52% | 67% | 72% | 85% | 78% |
| % secondary education competition | 91% | 90% | 80% | 83% | 87% |

Source: Regional Education Directorate and Education Offices in Bulqiza and Mat

The average class size is 20 students in primary education and 33 in secondary schools. In 2002-2010, this number decreased in primary schools (14%) and increased in the secondary schools (15%). In terms of availability of teachers, there is one teacher per 16 students in the primary schools and one teacher per 21 students in secondary schools.

Starting from 2008, the University of Durrës has opened its branch in Diber. There are three faculties and 20 available majors. The number of students enrolled in the tertiary level of education is 999 students in the full-time system and 307 part-time.

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. There is a reduction of number of students in primary and an increase in secondary education, due to depopulating localities and overall age-structure changes. ii. Continuation from primary to secondary education is low and completion of secondary education compared of enrolment is also low. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The number of pupils per one teacher in the primary education in municipalities is at 126% of the regional average, whereas in communes is at 91% of the regional average – the highest values in municipalities of Bulqize (at 143%), Peshkopi (134%), and Burrel (130%). ii. The number of student per teacher in secondary schools in half of the LGUs, where these facilities are found, is less than 81% of the regional average – lowest in Zall Dardhe commune. iii. Around 65% of the LGUs have classes, both in primary and secondary education, with a smaller size than the figure of the qark (20 for the primary, 33 for the secondary). |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The physical infrastructure of schools, especially in rural, remote areas, is not in good conditions, both in terms of buildings and teaching tools/computers. ii. Higher education offer is growing but employment opportunities will not allow many graduates to find appropriate work offers in the region. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> |

- i. Increase access to all levels of education.
- ii. Improve the quality of the educational system infrastructure.
- iii. Preparation and execution of an action plan for vocational education and training
- iv. Providing didactic material base for the main disciplines
- v. Offering other levels of vocational qualifications with 1-2 years duration, in addition to standard qualifications 3 and 5 years.
- vi. Increasing financial autonomy and relying on legislation.

Conclusions

In terms of social issues, health and education the following summary observations are valid:

- There is a gradual improvement in the self-sustainability of families in the region, especially related to subsidies paid in the farming sector. However, some localities are still faced with poverty.
- Basic healthcare indicators are also improving, but due to unstable population numbers services and facilities should be periodically reviewed and adjusted.
- Education facilities show some excess in relation to numbers of some student categories due to population shifts and age-structure changes, but in general a great improvement is needed in physical infrastructure. Low levels continuation into secondary education and low level of completion of secondary schools are worrying. In addition there are limited possibilities for vocational education and training that would respond to labour market needs.

1.5 Environment, Access to Infrastructure and Services

Environment

Diber qark is located on Mati and Drini i Zi river basins. Even though data are not available the water of these rivers is considered of very good quality and the pollution level (pollutants' discharge and construction along side) is low. Drini i Zi river stems from Ohrid Lake and flows through a mountainous terrains that increases its water flow and make them suitable for hydropower use. Mati river stems from Kaptine gorge and flows to the artificial lake of Ulez.

Figure 14: River water quality indicators (2010)

| River | Dissolved Oxygen (DO per mg/l) | Nitrate (NO3 mg/l) | Water flow (m ³ /sec) |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Drini i Zi | 8.5 – 9.91 mg/l | 0.26 – 0.3 mg/l | 103 m ³ /sec |
| Mati | 9.23 – 10.3 mg/l | 0.37 – 2.26 mg/l | - |

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Dibra Region

Rich water resources position Dibra qark in a favorable position in terms of production of renewable energy. Currently seven hydropower stations are at work with an installed capacity of 55 MW. Seven new small hydropowers, with a total capacity of 40 MW are expected to be functional soon. Another big investment on the Black Drini river is still under discussion. Dibra qark is well known for the natural lakes of glacial origin (seven) of Lure and the Martanesh. Also, in the qark there are many artificial lakes, created to better use rivers' hydropower potential. They constitute a good source for irrigation and fishing. There are also many mineral resources, among them chrome minerals in Bulqize, marble in Muhur commune, gypsum in Korab Mountain. Air pollution in Dibra region is considered low, since construction activities are rather limited and there is no heavy production. The main air pollution source remains the increasing number of cars. Urban waste at the regional level is calculated 0,09 ton/inh lower by 32% than in 2004. This at least partially is explained by deopupulaiton phenomenon. Data for

majority of communes is unavailable as waste management services are not established in many smaller localities.

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Surface water pollution in Drini i Zi and Mat Rivers is very low compared to other Albanian rivers. ii. Air pollution is minimal as no heavy industry is present. iii. Urban waste generation at regional level is at 42% of the national average. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Urban waste in municipalities is 0.23 ton/inh at 256% of the regional average. ii. Many settlements are void of waste and waste water management systems. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The natural conditions, not allowing for large urbanization, and with quick air/water exchange, create a dynamic environmental system. ii. Pressures on the environment are small and relate mainly to communal wastes. iii. Waste and waste water systems are underdeveloped both in term of infrastructure and management. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sustainable use rich natural resources should be made a priority. ii. Investments and service organization improvements are necessary, especially in the area of waste management. iii. Greater promotion and awareness on environmental responsibility is needed. |

Access to Infrastructure and Services

Roads transport - The length of regional roads is 403 km. In the period 2002-2010 there has been a decrease in the overall length of regional roads (by 20%), mainly due to changes in roads classification. However access to the region and within remains problematic. The length of national roads is 230 km. Most distances of settlements (other than those situated along the main roads) from the national roads are more than 25 km. Peshkopi is the only qark center that has no direct access to national corridors. Only the southwestern part of Diber qark has a travel time between 1 and 2 hours to the Rinas airport. Personal cars are considered a representative indicator for all road vehicles, as they show levels of welfare and access to personal transport. In 2002-2010 the number of cars per 1,000 inhabitants increased by 60%. The highest increase (over 200%) in car usage/inh was in municipalities of Zall Dardhe (308%) and Rec (268%), both communes with high population losses. Lowest increase (less than 50%) was in communes of Maqellare (15%), Fushe Bulqize (24%), Suc (42%), Tomin and Muhur (48%). On the other hand, deaths from car accidents are still at a low level. In 2010 there were 1.6 car accidents/10,000 inh. Public transport is organized in three levels: local (in the city or municipality if needed); inter-regional (between local government units within the qark) and intercity (between large urban centers within the country). Administrative and licencing complexities result in high cost to the providers, fragmented and low quality of service.

Access to drinking water and waste water treatment 74% of the whole qark population has access to drinking water systems, which means an improvement by 47% in 2002-2010. Changes have been more substantial in communes (82% increases) compared to municipalities (9%). In 9 communes current connections to drinking water networks are at the level of 90 to 100% of the population. The situation is worse in waste water treatment. Overall, only 35% of Diber qark population has access to such service, and it is mainly urban population (84%). Settlements in communes use septic tanks, only in 8 communes there is partial access to waste water treatment (less than 50% of inhabitants).

Electronic communication - Communications improved significantly in 2002-2010. There has been considerable progress in the three indicators of communication - fixed telephony, mobile telephony and Internet services. Fixed telephony is available only in urban areas, and has been more or less stable. There was a significant increase (by 43%) of the number of households with at least one mobile telephone. In 2010, 91% of families in Diber qark owned at least one mobile. Highest increase has been in communes (95%), due to the limited fixed lines coverage. Internet services remain limited.

Figure 15: Communication coverage in municipalities (2010)

| Municipality | Families with at least one mobile | Families with fixed telephony | Families with ADSL connections |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Peshkopi | 96% | 68% | 22% |
| Burrel | 85% | 35% | 9% |
| Bulqize | 96% | 28% | 9% |

Source: Diber Qark Directorate of Services, Albtelecom office in Diber

In 2008-2010, the ADSL service increased by 11% in terms of number of household contracts in urban areas. The number of persons having an internet address has increased substantially in 2002-2010 (by 68%).

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| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Peshkopi is the only qark center that has no direct/good access to national road corridors. ii. Travel distance from the qark center due to road conditions to the Rinas airport is still more than 4 hours. iii. Access to drinking water systems is unsatisfactory (74%) and is even less in terms of waste water systems. |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A very fragmented and of low quality public transportation service is present within the region. Coupled with poor roads connections, this negatively impacts internal assessability. ii. Access to water and waste water systems is much worse in rural areas. iii. Mobile telephony is commonplace (91% of all families at the regional level have access to at least one mobile). iv. ADSL service is present only in municipalities, and at low cost, unlike in communes. |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mountainous terrain makes communication difficult. Insufficient investments in road infrastructure add to the problem. ii. Dispersed and fragmented settlements, often with diminishing population numbers make investments in utility networks inefficient. iii. Modern ICT solutions overcome some of the naturally caused barriers to communication. |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continued investments in basic infrastrucutres (roads, water, waste water networks). ii. Setting and working towards minimum standards of public services in all LGUs. |

Conclusions

Key issues related to the environment, accessto infrastructure and services are as follows:

- Transport infrastructure at the regional level remains problematic, as reflected by the difficult access to Dibra qark, relatively long travel time to Tirana or other important centers of the country, and poor internal connectivity.
- Access to drinking water systems and waste water treatment is still low and this requires large invesments. They remain some of the challenges to be tackled at regional level; waste management requires a restructuring of this sector to make it more efficient in responding to new realities associated with population shifts and urbanization.
- Use of natural resources of the area can attract private investments and lead to improving infrastructure. Adjustments and forward planning can assist in efficient use of financial resources.

1.6 Local finances and development projects experiences

Overall income per capita in Diber is 5,687 ALL/inh, and is at 93% of national average (2010). Within the region, these values vary from 52% to 242% of the regional average: for municipalities 132% and communes 85%.

Figure 16: LGUs total incomes per capita (2010)

| LGUs at the range of 0 < 75% of the regional average | | LGUs at the range of 75 - 125 % of the regional average | | LGUs at the range of > 125% of the regional average | |
|--|-----|---|------|---|------|
| Kastriot Commune | 52% | Gure commune | 75% | Trebisht commune | 128% |
| Tomin Commune | 54% | Suc commune | 80% | Derjan commune | 132% |
| Maqellare commune | 57% | Slove commune | 89% | Rec commune | 152% |
| Fushe Cidhen | 60% | Baz commune | 99% | Peshkopi municipality | 164% |
| Rukaj commune | 60% | Ulez commune | 100% | Luzni commune | 167% |
| Gjorice commune | 64% | Macukull commune | 104% | Lure commune | 170% |
| Xiber commune | 65% | Muhur commune | 105% | Martanesh commune | 184% |
| Lis commune | 66% | Klos municipality | 106% | Selishte commune | 242% |
| Komsi commune | 66% | Zerqan commune | 110% | | |
| Kala e Dodes commune | 67% | Bulqize municipality | 122% | | |
| Shupenze commune | 71% | Burrel municipality | 124% | | |
| Fushe Bulqize commune | 72% | Melan commune | 125% | | |
| | | Zall Dardhe commune | 125% | | |

Source: Ministry of Finance, own calculations

In terms of own LGUs incomes per capita, the regional average is 1,998 ALL/inh, below the country average (at 57%). Compared to 2002, there seems to be an increase in the level of tax collection, which used to be only at 24% of the national average. Within the region, municipalities have higher own incomes (170% of regional average) compared to communes (67%). The highest levels of incomes from tariffs and taxes are in communes of Selishte (385% of regional average), Luzni (296%) and Peshkopi municipality (228%). The lowest levels of LGUs' own incomes are found in communes of Kala e Dodes (4% of regional average), Xiber (7%) and Rukaj (9%). In 2010, LGUs own income per capita constituted only 35% of the region total income. The unconditional transfer from the central government to the all qark LGUs is 2,610 ALL/inh, at 141% of the regional average. As per expenses, in 2010 investments were more significant for communes (2,347 ALL/inh) as in municipalities (1,739 ALL/inh). At the regional level investments per capita are at 86% of the national average, accounting for 36% of the overall public expenses in the region. Borrowing is a practice not widely present in LGUs. In Diber, only the Municipality of Peshkopi has borrowed money from World Bank) to finance its housing programme.

Outside perspective

- i. Diber LGUs overall income/inh is at 93% of national average, own income only at 53% and unconditional transfers at 141% of the national average.
- ii. Diber LGUs investments/inh is at 85% of national average, constituting 36% of qark's total expenditures, (97% of the national average).

Inside perspective

- i. As per own income/inh, significantly above the regional level are placed the communes of Selishte

| |
|--|
| <p>(242%), Martanesh (184%) and Lure (170%) and municipality of Peshkopi (164%).</p> <p>ii. Peshkopi municipality is the only LGU that has borrowed money from an IFI to finance a housing programme.</p> |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <p>i. Prevailing agriculture and low economic activity, coupled with massive emigration, are causes for low self-financing of LGUs in the region, creating a constant need for support from the outside (dependency development).</p> <p>ii. Public investments are kept at national average level, which is necessary but may be insufficient to prevent further population losses.</p> |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <p>i. Speed up roads program to 'connect' Diber to the national and international markets.</p> <p>ii. Encourage private investments and business establishment, and employment in the region.</p> <p>iii. Improve tax collection.</p> |

Development projects experiences

Diber qark was supported by the "Strengthening the local government in Diber Qark" project financed by the Netherlands Embassy in Albania from 2007 – 2010. The project had a "trusted fund" which was managed by the qark according to LGU needs. Public investments of 114,278,000 ALL were supported. Overall the fund supported 48 projects in 23 LGUs. Two of them have a regional character – reconstruction of thermal baths and reconstruction of the museum in Peshkopi. The EU-UNDP Integrated Support to Decentralization Project dealing with Regional Development issues (2008-2012) helped build capacities in strategic planning and project management as well (this Strategy and related Projects Pipeline was developed with EU-UNDP ISD assistance).

| |
|---|
| <p><i>Outside perspective</i></p> <p>i. Diber has had a very good and sound support by donors not only in projects, but also in capacity building</p> <p>ii. The projects implemented in Diber Region has given good development opportunities and know-how for the policy makers</p> |
| <p><i>Inside perspective</i></p> <p>i. It is quite difficult to reach in the center of the region and the richness of natural resources has attracted donors</p> <p>ii. The capacities and willingness of regional administration has been real incentive for the donors to implement projects in the region</p> <p>iii. Presence of large forests has been the area of interest for donors</p> |
| <p><i>Factors contributing to current situation</i></p> <p>i. All the LGUs of the Region have development strategies of some sort.</p> |
| <p><i>Possible ways for improvement</i></p> <p>i. Bring further forward the projects development under this strategy to the level of being ready for support, and also enriching the list with other projects according to the methodology</p> <p>ii. Shop for donors with the projects already developed</p> |

Conclusions

The region is characterised by the following public local income features and project management experience:

- There is a very low level of LGUs own incomes, reflecting weak regional economy and wealth, and leading to development dependency from central government funds and donors assistance. In the long term this situation has to be changed by creating conditions for jobs, business and investments in the productive sectors.
- Dibra qark has a relatively rich experience in projects and funds management, gained mainly from Dutch support in 2007-2010 and EU-UNDP support (2010-2012).

2 SWOT analysis

The SWOT table provides a good overview of all key issues taken into account when linking the current situation assessment with regional development directions.⁷

Strengths and weaknesses

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|--|
| <i>Demography and Spatial Development</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last years despite the significant depopulation of territory in the region, currently the trend appears to stabilize (+) • Relatively young population with large age group of under 14 years olds (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massive emigration from the region due to unfavourable conditions negatively affects many socio-economic development aspects and almost all LGUs (---) • Outside the major centres (even those are small), settlements and population are highly scattered/dispersed and urbanization low (---) • High mountains areas most affected by depopulation and facing stagnation (--) • Difficult geographic positioning and landscape (---) • Very low shares of agricultural land and land per capita (small holdings dominant) (--) |
| <i>Growth, Competitiveness, and Economic Cohesion</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region is rich of natural resources, especially potential mineral resources and water resources exploitable. (++) • The conditions favorably climate make possible the cultivation of a variety of crops This has led to establishment of various farms and investments, following government subsidies (++) • Developing agriculture able to produce for market use in and outside of the region – still not on a massive scale (++) • The number of small businesses and non-agricultural enterprises newly created went toward increasing. (+++) • Existence of tourist attractions (e.g. thermal waters) in the region and potential for mountain/nature tourism (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very low economic productivity (GDP per capita approx. at 60% of national average) is the source of dependency on the outside supports (---) • A closed non-productive economy – agriculture, the main sector, isolated and peripheral due to poor connectivity, which makes products less competitive (---) • Heavy reliance on public sector employment, high proportion of economically inactive and unemployed population, especially females (---) • No region-wide foreign investments of any kind (--) • The production (agricultural and livestock) is mostly for the local consumption and not yet on the national market (---) • The agricultural land is additionally highly |

⁷ The level of importance to regional development is indicated by the number of pluses or minuses given in brackets (one – considerable, two – high, three- very high).

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| | <p>fragmented (--)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production (both livestock and crops) is still mainly for local not even national consumption (--) • The age of farmers is 50-60 years. Rural depopulation - no young potential young farmers working on agriculture is a real risk (-) • Possible irrigation problems (-) • There is no potential for mass tourism and lacking standards (--) • No clear brand for region and its tourism potential, no regional website (--) • Very limited regional promotion (-) • Efforts inefficient on tourism promotion and little organized cooperation between tourism operators and public sector. (--) • There is a lack of synergy between tourism potentials, crafts and gastronomy, etc . (e.g hotels for example must have traditional cuisine ore some kind of entertainment) (--) • Indiscrimination use of forests: illegal exploitation, lack of proper management (--) • Underdeveloped sectors despite relatively high potential: tourism, renewable energy, mining (---) |
| <i>Social Cohesion, Health and Education</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of families that are receiving economic aid (full or partial) is decreasing, which is an indicator of more people being employed either in agriculture or elsewhere (++) • Basic health indicators are improving (++) • The ratio teachers to pupils is low, which impacts the teaching quality (+) • The quality of teaching has been improved due to increased qualifications of the teachers (++) • University located in the region adds qualified labour force (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still a good number of families not self-sufficient (--) • Lack of specialties in the region make the health sector offer very limited. People travel Tirana for basic surgical interventions, or emergencies. (--) • Problem represents the high number of pupils per classrooms in the urban areas and underutilized capacity in rural areas (--) • School infrastructure is often of poor quality and further rationalisation is required as a condition of further investment (---) • Degree of “combination” of classes in certain schools is excessive and likely to impact negatively on educational performance (--) • Professional/vocational education appears unattractive and of poor quality (---) |

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|--|
| <i>Environment, Access to Infrastructure and Services</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general environment is not heavily polluted because this is not impacted by heavy industry, large parts of it are of outstanding beauty (+++) • Natural resources in water, forests and pastures are abundantly present (+++) • The presence of local and regional initiatives on the protection of environment, biodiversity and others has helped to have a quite good environmental status in the region (++) • Transport has been improving due to the investments in regional roads (ADF) (++) • Good coverage by mobile telephony services (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though there have been initiatives in environmental protection, there are still damages in some forests and as a result damage and destruction of wild fauna of the region (--) • Environmental damage is caused by general lack of inappropriate and waste water management and facilities (---) • A considerable part of the citizens are not aware about environmental damage. (---) • • Poor access in relation to the main corridors of the country as well as internal ones as a result of the poor quality of these axes. (---) • Many other roads of poor quality even the important ones (---) • Lack of water supply (diminishing) – major issue in many rural areas and of potential tourism attraction (--) • Weak coverage by quality Internet access (--) |
| <i>Local finances, development projects experience</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive project and development funds management experiences with donors (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGUs have low income and this brings of their financial dependence from the Central Government and other donors to favorable conditions for development. (---) |

Opportunities and threats

| Opportunities | Threats |
|---|--|
| <i>Demography and Spatial Development</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved connectivity to the region and within can attract settlements and investors (+++) • Largely unspoiled natural assets, if properly managed, can be utilised for income generation (++) • Young population, if becoming economically active, can support regional economy (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further urbanization tendencies without influx of new people, can harm the rural communities (dying off villages) (--) • Continued depopulation and urbanization can lead to major public infrastructure inefficiencies (---) |
| <i>Growth, Competitiveness, and Economic Cohesion</i> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The position of the region with a border to Kosovo and Macedonia is a good opportunity to develop trade relationships with the bordering countries (++) • There is recently a high interest of entrepreneurs in the sector of agro-processing due to the fact of investments in fruit trees planting (+++) • Continued programs at national level to support production modernization in agriculture (++) • Investments in important roads (Arbri) can open access to new markets (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customs policy for the excise goods is not favourable, thus making the trade of such goods not favourable with the bordering countries (--) • Government policies on natural resources (hydropower, minerals extraction) do not favour regional development (---) • There are three versions of building the Skavica hydropower, whichever version is put into practice, there will be some agricultural land that will be flooded and some other degraded (-) • Kukes' better access to national roads makes their economy more competitive than Diber (---) |
| <i>Social Cohesion, Health and Education</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employment opportunities in some sectors based on regional strengths: agriculture, energy, mining, tourism (++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non- adjustment of health and education provision to the observed rural to urban and out of region migration patterns (---) • Education continuously detached from labour market needs (---) |
| <i>Environment, Access to Infrastructure and Services</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of biodiversity as an important agent for settlement and tourism in the future (++) • Continued government and donors support programs for improving and developing infrastructure (+++) • Foreign programs, IPA etc. focused on environment (+++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismanagement of water, air and land – in a non-sustainable way (---) • Delays in the completion of major roads connecting the region (---) • Inactivity in environmental protection measures (waste, waste water management) (---) |
| <i>Local finances, development projects experience</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in decentralization in general and fiscal decentralization in particular.(++) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loosing lessons learned from previous and current programs supported by donors if government policies do not promote regional development (--) |

Conclusions:

The SWOT of Diber region builds mainly on opportunities and strengths. Main findings are summarized below:

- The region is conditioned by its peripheral geographical position, difficult terrain, and located away from major international and national routes. As a result, the region is very scarcely

populated and in addition losing population over time. This process is either stopped or development aspirations will suffer.

- There are some obvious development opportunities arising from the construction of important national roads that will improve access to larger markets. Some influx of people, companies and investments can be expected.
- An important advantage of the region is its biodiversity and unspoiled nature of many places. This can be exploited not only to widen the agricultural production but also tourism, specifically mountain/nature tourism. Some potential also exists for curative/regeneration toursims (hot waters). The region has many natural and cultural assets: beautiful landscapes, artificial and natural lakes, rivers monuments, mineral wealth etc. Good planning, increased capacities and networking are the conditions to benefit from these advantages.
- In terms of agriculture, the region is can still increase quantities and quality both due to natural conditions and to government incentives. However, storage, trading and food-processing capacities need to be greatly improved and land fragmentation reduced. Cooperative initiatives are also required, among farmers and other operators.
- The industry and energy (especially the heavy one) are less important sectors of the regional economy but increased numbers of small and medium enterprises are promising. The region should invest more to promote new business initiatives, especially those that can increase employment.
- Regarding education, there are several inefficiencies needing attention (better planning and adjustment of facilities distribution to respond to population changes). Special efforts are needed to make more connections to labour market needs and promote vocational education and training.
- Environmental issues are of significant importance, although there are no severe environmental damages they should have the attention of all regional actors to defend and to not damaged. The region, just like other parts of Albania must introduce resonable solutions to solid waste management and wastewater treatment.
- The region and its constituent LGUs are equipped with increasing strategic planning and project management capacities. These are not supported by increased own incomes of LGUs and will be lost if not supported in the long-run by donors.

3 Policy context

There are many possible models and approaches to Regional Development. In Albania the legal and institutional framework for Regional Development remains fluid. Regional actors therefore need to orient themselves in an evolving situation. The region needs to know what it can do best, what can best be done by others, where it needs to concert with national authorities, where and to what degree it needs to concert among regional actors. Below, the Regional Partners set out the “map” of development realities – problems, challenges and interventions – where it is considered that, acting together, they can already contribute to the development of the Region. Essentially there are two realities to this:

- areas where some planning and preparatory input from regional actors is essential and sufficient (to inform and direct mainly national policies and strategies)
- areas where implementation is best done at regional level – higher than the purely local, lower than the national. In many cases the trem “regional” implies some aggregate or coalition of diverse local interests.

The ideas set out here derive from analytical exercises and exchange of experiences undertaken by representatives of regional institutions in the course of Regional Strategic Actors Program. This is not a

legal analysis of who should do what but rather an analysis of the reality of who actually does what, who is de facto expected to do what and who is best placed to do what. The key conclusions of the exercises undertaken are the following:

- The attribution of different responsibilities in terms of development actions (taken broadly) in Albania is still incomplete. While there are certain overlaps, there are many more gaps – gaps where no one is active. Further, practical interfaces between different levels of governance (especially national and regional/local) and within regions, between various public and other actors, are insufficient that really, really needs for intervention and improvement. This undermines any real proactive development and has to be changed.
- There are many areas where no public agency is active, reflecting a lack of financial resources, imagination, institutional and organizational capacity. Over-concentration on major infrastructure and insufficient concentration on productive investments (outside of certain agricultural subsidy schemes), labour market supports, promotion of tourism, is common.
- Development areas are not homogenous blocks, all of which can be exclusively attributed to this or that level of public authority. In each area (support to productive investment, transport infrastructure, environment infrastructure, tourism development, etc.) a series of policy, strategic, investment, practical processes and resources are required to bring about desired changes. Processes have depth and breadth and different actors intervene. In many development areas, in Albania as elsewhere, many public actors are and should be at work together.
- Regional development does not belong to any single layer of public governance. It is not only about the qark as an institution: it is about the development of the regional territory and as such involves many different levels of public and non public governance. In the Albanian situation practical regional development requires a practical partnership approach.
- It is to be recognized that national/central actions even when fully conceived, planned, prepared and implemented directly by central government, also contribute to the development of regions. In many other cases, so-called “national/central” actions also require some degree of regional contribution to ensure appropriate implementation (e.g. the entire area of environment including waste, waste water management). In this sense in many areas it is clear that regional actors working together can assist in the delivery of many national policies (environment, infrastructure, SME development and business promotion, agriculture, labour market, and human resource development, etc.).⁸
- By analysing the main areas where public monies can and usually intervene to support various development processes, we have been able to identify areas where some form of development action by regional partners: a) necessary, b) appropriate, c) not being undertaken by anyone else, d) could be implemented very easily without any substantial legal or other institutional changes. This is where regional development can take place now. We can also identify actions which though falling into the same paradigm (necessary, appropriate, not being undertaken by others) would require some minimal level of clarity from National Government in the form of some enabling for their realization (usually policy, regulatory or strategic) framework. This is obviously the case with regard to an area such as waste management.
- Regional development is about: a) addressing the needs and possibilities of the entire regional territory (at the “mezzo” level). The same applies when we look at development from the local perspective. Theoretically certain development actions could be done at local level e.g. tourism

⁸For example, can the National Strategy for Waste Management be implemented in its entirety by either the Ministry of Public Works and Transport or the Ministry of Environment? Is there not a practical necessity to mobilise the efforts of a regional coalition (quark and municipalities for example) to ensure implementation and operation of waste management facilities? In short even for many so-called national/central actions there is de facto a necessary regional dimension.

marketing, waste management, SME support. But in many cases – and this is the experience of much of the world and especially of the rest of Europe – local solutions would not be efficient, effective or sustainable. Many actions need to be planned, prepared and indeed often implemented for a larger reference area, i.e. at a higher territorial level and scale. In Albania, in the current situation that higher level or scale is the territory of the qark (region). The question of who finances actions is an entirely different issue: in principle resources may come from the central government and external donors to regional and local authorities through various transfer mechanisms, and/or may be raised from local sources.

- It is evident however that in Albania as in many countries the needs of the territory of the qark cannot be met from the limited competencies of the qark administration alone. It is a political and administrative decision as to whether to re-organize the qark (or indeed any other public) functions to take account of this. But it is not absolutely necessary. In many countries the need for regional scale has been met not by wholesale administrative change, but rather by enabling flexible modes of working between and across public institutions, in short through partnership between local public authorities, between different levels of local and regional public authorities. This is a more functional, somewhat flexible approach. It is the partnership behind this Strategy proposes.

Below we set out our view of which level of governance practically plays which role. From this we identify especially a narrow and wider core for clear intervention from regional actors acting together. We also identify other areas where we have a contribution to make. And we identify areas where we accept, indeed request, that central/national government will assume its responsibilities and do, at its level, what only it can do by virtue of the resources and competencies it has. As a Regional Partnership we are committed to co-operation with all levels and types of governance and with the donor community in order to develop our Region:

1. Development areas best suitable for the actions of the central government alone (policy, strategy, regulation, financing, implementation):

- Transport: international road routes and motorways, all mainline rail and rail assets, all major inland waterways and rivers, national system-based reforms – new certifications systems, new standards
- Energy: major energy networks deriving from or linking to other countries, most energy production/generation facilities
- Telecommunications/IT: all investments in backbone infrastructure (main network) (this is also likely to be a mainly private investment), national system-based reforms – new certifications systems, new standards
- Human Resource and Labour Market Development: national system-based reforms – new certifications systems, new standards, new curricular standards, certain major programmes applying across the entire labour- market system (though regional or local customization may be possible)
- Agriculture: national subsidy regimes, subsidies to investment, national system-based reforms – new certifications systems, new standards, price-subsidy schemes of any kind.

2. Development areas requiring regional (and local) input at various parts of policy implementation:

| Development Area | Role for Regional Actors: bottom-up needs identification, planning, preparation (even if national policy/strategy exists) | Role for Regional Actors: joint implementation at regional (largely regional) scale | Remarks |
|------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| Transport | Regional/Local Road Network | Generally no | Large LGUs can implement, |

| Development Area | Role for Regional Actors: bottom-up needs identification, planning, preparation (even if national policy/strategy exists) | Role for Regional Actors: joint implementation at regional (largely regional) scale | Remarks |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | | currently Albanian Investment Fund implements, qarks supports implementation for smaller communes |
| Environment | Infrastructural investment to ensure treatment and/or recycling, re-use of domestic or industrial waste | Yes | Within National Strategy and Regulatory Framework, requires national-regional coordination, but delivery is mainly regional and local |
| | Infrastructural investment to ensure treatment of waste water | Infrastructural investment to ensure treatment of waste water | Requires some supra-local planning; implementation may be local |
| | Water Collection/ Supply | Water Collection – Yes Water Supply regional and local | Within National Strategy and Regulatory Framework |
| | Investments to enhance the sustainability of natural environment esp. with regard to areas of outstanding beauty or sensitivity (rare biodiversity, etc.) | Yes (usually requiring several communes/qark, etc.) | As immediately above |
| Health | Organization and provision of primary care and non-hospital infrastructure and service | Yes | Within National Strategic Framework |
| | General hospitals, regional hospitals (public) | No | As immediately above |
| | (Exceptionally) public health care programmes (otherwise inherently national) | Yes | As immediately above |
| Education and training | Primary & Secondary | No (municipalities and communes) | As immediately above |
| | Infrastructure/Equipment | Some yes | As immediately above |
| | VET Infrastructure/Equipment/ Regional Labour Market Needs | Yes (regional/local labour offices, regional education boards) | As immediately above |
| | Services for persons outside formal education and VET system | Yes, Services for persons outside formal education and VET system | As immediately above |
| | Particular regional or locally focused programmes/projects, especially with innovative components (even if within some form of nationally conceived, standards-based paradigm) | Yes (by Labour Office and other regional bodies) | As immediately above |
| Social inclusion | Social assistance | Largely no | Implementation may be national or local – much less regional |
| Tourism | Almost all aspects of tourism except regulatory aspects and international marketing can best be planned at this level (destination management, product development, branding, | Marketing, branding, sales, large amount of product development require regional (possibly also local) | Within National Strategic Framework |

| Development Area | Role for Regional Actors: bottom-up needs identification, planning, preparation (even if national policy/strategy exists) | Role for Regional Actors: joint implementation at regional (largely regional) scale | Remarks |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | marketing, even sales), key facilities | implementation Development of tourism sites will usually be implemented locally (with regional planning) | |
| Agriculture and rural development | Producers Groups, Regional branding, | Yes | Within national strategic & regulatory frameworks and programmes, e and increasingly convergent with EU policies in this area |
| | Rural development initiatives (agri-tourism, etc.) | Yes | As immediately above |
| Productive sectors | Infrastructural investment (subject to market analysis) to establish centres for business location, incubation, incl. workspace, business parks/zones esp. those with a function to encourage inter-enterprise co-operation, shared services, innovation. | Yes – (some can be implemented locally, e.g. by large municipalities, but will usually still require regional planning/preparation | More complex interventions are best implemented by specialist (State) agencies |
| | Regional business promotion initiatives (web-site, etc) | Yes | Direct financial aid to companies generally best delivered by State agencies |
| | Shared advisory/consultancy services (including start-up ideas, business plans, investment plans, studies, marketing or other practical support to sales) | Yes | Within national strategic & regulatory frameworks |

From the above, we consider that there is currently absolutely nothing – except provision of financial means and development of appropriate capacities - to prevent immediate implementation of regional projects in key areas given below. In other words there is no dependence or limiting conditionality on National Policies or Programmes. The areas where regional initiatives can already be implemented:

- All tourism development and investment activities except mainstream international marketing
- Development of Environmental management plans for protected areas, areas of outstanding beauty or sensitivity
- Development of rural development strategies and structures, Area-based investment to regenerate, redesign, renovate, clean up, upgrade, develop, and enhance attractiveness for commerce, visitors, investment of villages and rural areas, Construction/reconstruction of local roads with high proven demand (esp. for transportation of production
- Business Promotion – regional marketing and promotion – “Why Invest in Our Region?”, “What our Region has to Offer Investors”.

For other areas there planning of investments will benefit from clarification of the national investment framework by relevant State bodies. Planning and investments may be made best done through regional projects – but it is incumbent on the Central Government firstly to clarify and the framework in which these can be done (e.g. address regulatory, legal or market issues) in some cases particular investments may best be implemented by a single, large LGU):

-
- Infrastructural investment to ensure treatment and/or recycling, re-use of domestic or industrial waste
 - Infrastructural investment to ensure treatment of waste water
 - Investments to enhance the sustainability of natural environment esp. with regard to areas of outstanding beauty or sensitivity (rare biodiversity etc);
 - Infrastructural investment (subject to market analysis) to establish centres for business location, incubation, incl. workspace, business parks/zones esp. those with a function to encourage inter-enterprise co-operation, shared services
 - Infrastructural investment (subject to market analysis) to establish centres for business location, incubation, incl. workspace, business parks/zones esp. those with a function to encourage inter-enterprise co-operation, shared services, innovation.

It would be of immense assistance if roles and responsibilities in some of these areas were better defined: however in many areas it is clear that the burden of effort in terms of detailed planning, preparation and often implementation, falls on local public bodies acting together rather than on the State, whose role is largely one of “enabling”. As the public investment and development programme widens over time, the need for more regional efforts will become obvious in terms of both planning and development implementation.

3. Vision

The Strategy is medium term, meaning up to 5 years (2012-2016) as there is too much uncertainties to comfortably plan further into the future at this point. The actions are in general up to 3 years, especially detailed for years 2012 & 2013. Certain projects that will require several years of preparation prior to implementation are included because preparatory actions will be required in short to medium term. The Strategy covers all relevant areas irrespective of which level of governance is mainly responsible for them. The Strategy is guided by a common development or change vision:

In 5 years Dibra region will become a region where individuals and businesses will be able succeed and take advantages of the development powers of their economy and natural resources to achieve better life quality for themselves and their families, without exclusion, and are not excluded in this process.

This vision implies:

- A rupture with many existing trends, including institutional and individual attitudes, behaviours and performances,
- A commitment to forge a new form of co-operation across systems and levels of governance,
- A commitment to work for a much greater degree of economic and especially productive performance,
- A commitment to review and change where required, regulatory and other administrative practices that are contrary to the vision of this Strategy,
- A collaboration with the Central Government, responsible for various fields within this Strategy to align their policies and practices on this Strategy and to accept to cooperate to engage with the regional partnership to this effect,
- A call on donor organisations to study this vision and strategy, to seek to identify specific actions which they can support.

The vision will be realised through the following strategic objectives and through developmental actions and investments falling under several priority areas.

4. Objectives

| Strategic Objectives |
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| SO1 – To further strengthen the capacities of regional actors to take the lead of regional development process and to ensure effective implementation of Regional Development Strategy. |
| SO2 - To widen the productive part of regional economy, esp. in areas capable of generating overall regional income (agro-processing, tourism, hydropower, etc.), including adequate provision of essential services to businesses that guarantee good business climate. |
| SO3 – To ensure an appropriate level of accessibility and connectivity of and within the Region, essential for economic and social purposes. |
| SO4 – To value and improve the natural environment and cultural heritage, as key aspects of the Region’s identity and attractiveness, especially avoiding all negative effects on the environment from human activities. |
| SO5 – To develop the capacity of people and to provide appropriate conditions of fairness, inclusion and opportunity to all so that citizens may optimally participate in the economy and society. |

An initial action plan for the period 2012-2014 for this Strategy identifies a small number of actions - mainly viable project concepts that have been identified and prepared to a preliminary stage, some projects and key processes – that will be pursued as a matter of urgency. This is the immediate ***agenda for change***.

5. Priorities, actions and preparations

Within the time-frame 2012-2016 the following priorities will be pursued. The Regional Partnership invites:

- State Ministries and Agencies to study these priorities with a view to seeing how these can support national policies and strategies and be supported financially by them, especially in the context of the review of the Regional Development Fund and its operations and the future NSDI.
- Donors, including the EU, to likewise study these and especially the Project Concepts, Projects and Development Processes to see how they can support the directions determined by the Regional Partnership.

Priorities are results-oriented but indicative of actions to be undertaken. They set directions which clearly go well beyond available financial resources. In many cases as the Regional Partnership deepens and gains experience, projects, project ideas will focus only on certain aspects of the somewhat broadly defined priority areas. In this sense this Strategy is a process, not just a final document.

The Strategy includes mainly actions that address regional needs. Regional is defined as “referring to, engaging or impacting on a significant part of the region”. In theory this could be an action involving mainly one municipality but only of recognised by others as regional. In general it will exclude stand-alone, single LGU actions, especially those of smaller LGUS where the actions are clearly local. Definition of “regional” may include inter-municipal co-operation projects. Actions will be spread across priorities and will be both hard and soft.

Alongside, and hopefully in complementarity to the regional actions, the Government will pursue its development programs on the one hand, just like municipalities and communes on the other. The Regional Partnership has paid attention to the national development agenda and EU integration demands in crafting the Strategy and the set of initial projects. This document represents a coalition of local needs and aspirations that will be achieved by two parallel and non-exclusive processes: regional development as described here, and local development as expressed in local development plans and related projects. The Strategy is not intended to substitute for development efforts at the local level but rather to effect changes which can be better initiated at the higher, ‘mezzo’ level.

The strategic priorities are described in detail below:

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| Priority | 1. Strengthening the capacities to develop the region |
| Relevant Strategic Objective | SO1 – To further strengthen the capacities of regional actors to take the lead of regional development process and to ensure effective implementation of Regional Development Strategy. |
| Rationale | In order to access future EU money in the framework of a regional development policy, the regional actors should possess the so called “development capacity”, which is nothing else than the abilities of the local and regional actors to identify, coordinate and plan development needs, priorities and actions, attract funding and implement projects. Qark is the key actor of the development community at the regional level and its main role is to ensure a more enabling environment for successful implementation of development activities. It should be the initiator, facilitator and coordinator of the activities of the other local and regional actors. It should be the spirit behind the partnership principle which if properly applied, should bring together key partners to identify, propose and implement programmes and projects that provide for a broader economic or social return and benefit. One of the main problems pointed out by an Institutional Assessment Study on the Capacities |

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| | <p>of the regional actors⁹ in this process, are the limited management capacities of Qarks in regional development despite designation of structures and availability of personnel. The study identifies also that ideas of wider participation, partnerships and coordination are mostly unexploited, which coupled with weak NGO sector, constitute an important missed opportunity. In Diber Qark are 46 NGO operating. The main areas in which they operate are: environmental protection, sport activities, religion, humanitarian work, women and children rights.</p> <p>Due to a very positive experience with the Dutch project on “Strengthening the local government in Diber Qark” (2007-2010), Diber qark administration has a clear perspective of first level local government needs and has been extensively engaged in supporting them in the preparation of Local Development Strategies. However there is still a need for Diber qark administration to take a proactive role in strategic planning and establishment of sustainable and efficient mechanisms for consultations and cooperation in development priorities in order to achieve better synergy and greater impact of local and regional initiatives.</p> |
| Scope | <p>There is a need for further orientation of key regional actors to better cope with the challenges that regional development will bring along with it in a longer perspective. These interventions may also call for adjusting of institutional framework and several working procedures in Dibra Regional Council. In the context of Dutch Embassy supporting the accepted results are:</p> <p>Result 1 - Strengthened institution and raised capacities of Diber County</p> <p>Result 2 - System for strategy assessment and monitoring is set up at first tier of local units to revive strategic documents and guide</p> <p>Possible measures to be undertaken under this priority area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of mechanism for improving the reinforcement of Regional Development Strategy through an open and accountable administration – meaning improvement and formalization of horizontal and vertical cooperation and communication among actors involved in this process so that there is a timeframe for respective actions and synergy among interventions that shall complement one another; • Creation of simple and flexible mechanisms and minimal structures to support the implementation of Regional Development Strategy, mainly in terms of Partnerships to support the implementation of actions in the main identified areas – agriculture, mining industry and tourism, employment, SMEs, citizen participation initiatives. • Development and strengthening of Qark administration’s human resources main skills – leadership, communication, negotiation, project development, and monitoring – to better organize their work towards the needs of their users (business community, municipalities and communes, citizens, NGOs, etc.) |
| Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 55 people trained to play a pro-active role in regional development • At least 12 forms of Partnership initiatives/mechanisms set up |
| Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 people with developed capacities able and successfully play the coordinator role in the implementation of Dibra regional development strategy. • At least 5 Partnerships in key areas fully operational and sustained by all actors |
| Lead Organisation(s) in Implementation | <p>A <i>bottom-up</i> approach is needed throughout the whole process of elaboration and implementation, where relevant local and regional stakeholders will be involved at every stage of decision making, through developing of different forms of voluntary partnerships. The Qark will play a central role in developing most of these partnerships, but it is necessary clear understanding of their role to be developed, not as an institution with possessing the whole “know-how”, but more as facilitator and moderator, who is optimizing the competencies and capacities of other partner institutions in the region (“know-who”). In addition to Qark administration, the municipalities and communes are expected to be main actors in implementation of RDS, together with the representatives of the business community and civil society organizations.</p> |
| Key Preparatory | <p>A kick-off workshop to be organized aiming at presenting the RDS, introducing the concept of</p> |

⁹Regional Development capacities on the ground. An institutional assessment, UNDP, 2011.

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| Actions and Decisions Required | <p>capacity building and division of roles and responsibilities between the local/regional institutions and within the Qark administration (mid-year 2012).</p> <p>Working groups to be established, as a core for partnership initiatives and responsible person for each working group to be assigned, not necessary within the Qark administration.</p> <p>The working groups/ partnership initiatives should develop an action plan for next 12 months.</p> <p>Some form of coordination developed to minimize costs and maximize benefits of territorial planning tasks.</p> |
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| Priority | 2. Expanding Dibra's region growth potential |
| Relevant Strategic Objective | SO2 - To widen the productive part of regional economy, esp. in areas capable of generating overall regional income (agro-processing, tourism, hydropower, etc.), including adequate provision of essential services to businesses that guarantee good business climate. |
| Rationale | <p>In terms of economic performance Dibra region has a very weak one – it is ranked last with it is GDP per capita at 60% of the national average. The thorough analysis of current situation shows that the regional economy is strongly affected by the overall characteristics that the region has – low density of inhabitants, low urbanization levels, small and fragmented settlements, low shares of agriculture land and difficult mountainous terrain. Despite these characteristics the main productive economic sectors are agriculture, mining industry and to certain extend tourism.</p> <p>The regional economy is mainly agriculture dependent and the main employment generation sector (it is estimated that 60% of people are dependent on it). Agricultural productions meet the internal market needs and hardly do access national or international market. The region is well known for a variety of fruits which fail to be exported outside the region due to difficulties in their preservation and low storage capacities. According to the analysis, in 2010 only 56% of all orchard production was sold to internal domestic market – of this only 12% went into food processing, the remaining of 38% covered family needs. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection through its “Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development” has provided support to farmers especially in planting new orchards. Only in 2009-2010 some 130,557,000 new orchards’ roots have been planted in the region, increasing by 12% the overall number of these trees. The most supported orchards were apples (56%), cherries (20%), plums (4%) and pears (9%) and 11% others.</p> <p>During these years a number of private businesses have been supported by donors (i.e. Japan Government and Mountainous Area Development Agency) in their efforts to establish food processing facilities; however they fail to have internationally recognized standards such as ISO for the processed products. No products certified as bio-products are exported to international markets. The same holds true for products’ branding and marketing which positions cultivators, farmers and producers in Dibra region at the low end of the value chain. This is mainly linked to rather limited capacities of people involved in these types of activities: product packaging, collection and distribution/commercialization. In Peshkopi municipality exists a product packing, collection and distribution point for the fruit products, but the management process and technology are not in compliance with EU Standards.</p> <p>Business environment is characterized by small scale businesses and lack of competition. Even though the number of active non-agriculture enterprises has increased substantively in 2002-2010 (435%), the region shows the lowest levels of entrepreneurial activity when compared to national levels. Dibra region is positioned at the lowest level, doing slightly better than Kukës, with only 2%¹⁰ of the total number of non-active enterprises doing business in this region. The productive sector is very weak, making the regional economy mostly consumer driven – service providing companies account for 36% of all non-agricultural enterprises. In 2010, the</p> |

¹⁰ Statistical Bulletin, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy (June 2011), p. 24

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| | <p>number of active businesses working at the mining industry is 104 (13% of the outstanding permits reported by the end of 2009)¹¹. In 2010, the mineral exports accounted for 32% of total regional exports. With respect to employment distribution among sectors of economic activity, figures for 2010 show that those employed in the mining industry are 586. The working conditions of the people employed in this industry are very difficult with low safety standards at work.</p> <p>In terms of tourism, Dibra region is known for its thermal waters and its national park Lura. The first destination is mainly for healing/curative reasons and has a total number of 7,000 visitors per year only for thermal tourism and about 1500 per year visitors in Lura. Tourism activity in Lura is still in its basic endeavours, dependent on individual initiatives and mainly seasonal.</p> <p>Based on the above challenges there is an increasing need for better cooperation and communication among market players (private, local government units, de-concentrated bodies, and different organisations) especially in business advisory services and partnership initiatives building, development and diversification of their offers, improving business awareness - so that regional products/offers do access and successfully compete in the national and international market.</p> |
| <p>Scope</p> | <p>Agriculture</p> <p>One prioritised task for increasing the capacity of regional actors and especially businesses involved in agriculture is creating the right circumstances to boost their capacities to develop new and attractive products with greater added value which they can bring not only to regional market, but also to national or international ones.</p> <p>Examples of possible actions that may be pursued under this priority area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the supporting of farmers for extending the planting process and creating the favourable conditions for increasing of their products as well as increasing the level of cooperation between them. • Development of initiatives to develop the needed skills in order to support the agriculture production or delivery according to the market needs, especially in terms of key local products quality, branding and marketing. • Development of initiatives to support agriculture businesses in food processing especially in further mechanization, up-skilling of their employees, up-grading/set-up/diversification of rural enterprises in different directions, i.e. fruit storage, fruit processing, fruit compote production etc. • Advisory services/training initiatives in business planning, product certification and marketing, negotiating and technical skills to assist people employed in agriculture/and similar activities to better explore market opportunities; • Supportive initiatives to set up/strengthen Dibra Farmers and Producers Organisations / Networks/ Associations and similar Partnerships among different actors (business, university, etc.) to facilitate know-how, good practice transfer and business to business meetings; <p>The abovementioned initiatives should be carefully planned in join partnership with the Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection and Qark Regional Council in order to efficiently and effectively use the “Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development” which is preceding IPA V – Rural Development.</p> <p>Mining industry</p> <p>Mining industry is concentrated in the extraction and operation of existing mines mainly concentrated in Bulqiza area. Even though most of the interventions under this heading are belong to national level there is still an identified in for certain interventions which fall mainly under the following directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in building a stable partnership with extractive companies, local government units and civil society organisations in order to strengthen the transparency of the region’s resource revenues from this sector in order to better implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); |

¹¹<http://albeiti.org>

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of awareness/advisory services/training initiatives on behalf of people employed or to the employed in the mining industry on needed skills and relevant knowledge on “safety and health conditions in the mining sector”; <p>Entrepreneurship</p> <p>Examples of possible actions that may be pursued in this priority area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the capacity of Qark’s Department for RD for supporting entrepreneurship in the region • Establish business start-up support infrastructure – enterprise support agencies, centers for entrepreneurship • Enhance entrepreneurial spirit through education, trainings on business and management skills, business planning, etc. • Introducing specific instruments for promotion of entrepreneurship, with special focus on women and young (business plan competitions, entrepreneurship award, mentorship program, etc.) <p>Tourism</p> <p>The salient features of tourism development in Diber region to date have been a lack of strategic planning, improvisation of limited actors and no coordination at any level of local governance. Thus, examples of priority actions that may be pursued under this priority area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Tourism Regional Partnership of Actors involved in tourism (tourist operators, local government authorities, and businesses) that cooperate to identify and formulate solutions and actions to be pursuit in this area; • Development of a Regional Tourism Plan building on existing local strategies, which seeks to develop a “regional brand” to promote tourism; • Diversification and enrichment of tourism offers and products to make people aware of the potentials of the region apart the curative aspect and form new demands; • Development of adventure tourism product based on natural resources and potential outdoor activities that the region offers (Lura lakes, the ridges from Deshati to Korabi mountains, etc.) • Development of cultural tourism products based on cultural heritage • Development of initiatives to support Tourism Regional Partnership actors to promote, advertise, brand and marketing the tourism offer of the region (brochures, leaflets, regional tourism website etc.) • Initiatives to further develop tourism infrastructure according to certain established and agreed regional tourism standards (hospitality standards – hygiene, gastronomy, language knowledge; tourism facilities operating; etc.) |
| Outputs | <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 voluntary joint initiatives of farmers stimulated through state subsidies and other supporting policies in order to enhance the agricultural and livestock development. • At least 10 agricultural and livestock farms/farmers groups supported on export-oriented activities through participation in trade fairs or various business meetings. • At least 10 initiatives to develop skills in support of agriculture production and food processing: products quality, branding, etc. • At least 3 initiatives to establish/strengthen Farmers and Producers Associations to facilitate knowledge and good practice transfers. <p>Mining industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one Partnership active in the mining sector to promote Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); • At least 5 training/awareness initiatives carried out on safety in mining industry <p>Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three concrete joint initiatives among the qark, chamber of commerce, association of businesses and local actors of the region in identifying the business |

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| | <p>potentials, tackle the actual issues and business needs, set priorities of development and plan together the future actions in the business area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 training measures on “Introducing and applying instruments for entrepreneurship support“ implemented for the representatives of the Qark’s RD Department • At least 4 training courses organized for potential entrepreneurs (at least 50) covering business planning and/or business and management skills • At least 1 new instrument for entrepreneurship promotion implemented (business plan competitions, entrepreneurship award, mentorship program, etc.) <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a chain/networking between business in tourism service provision (sort of cluster development through marking and fostering categories of facilities that contribute to enlargement of areas, services and targets) • At least two working groups/networks/partnerships for implementing joint initiatives in specific tourism sectors have been formed (thermal waters, mountain tourism, active tourism, cultural tourism, etc.) • At least one new product has been developed jointly by involving regional tourism potentials (thermal waters, hiking, cultural tourism, etc.) • At least 30 house owners participate in the training programs for providing tourism services for visitors (accommodation, food, recreation) • At least one promotional material developed for promoting regional tourism potentials (eg. create a regional portal for tourism info in cooperation with groups of LGUs, brochures, etc.) • Development of tourism product based on cultural heritage (churches, monasteries, traditions) • Stimulation of production of original traditional souvenirs • At least two joint regional projects have been implemented e.g. (marking mountain bike or hiking trails, etc.) • At least two training measures implemented for regional actors who are involved in tourism project covering topics, such as: customer services, cost calculation, behaviour, etc. |
| <p>Results</p> | <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved networking and cooperation between the established groups (associations) in order to incite them toward a higher cooperation level • Established links between the agricultural and livestock sector, agribusiness and academic institutions and R&D departments. • Increased capacities of organizations that support agribusiness, for better quality services at all levels. • Improved access to the potential financial resources for the agro-processing industry and the refrigerating and storage of agricultural and livestock products • Investments realized in the area of food processing and storage • Increase the competitiveness of agricultural and livestock products (in particular the most traditional ones) by improving the managerial skills and the introduction of quality standards • Increased value of agricultural production <p>Mining industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease of number of accidents and casualties in the mining sector <p>Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reanimated network of government and business actors able to lead in a sustainable and smart manner the business development of the region • Department for RD of the Qark is capable of providing quality assistance for new businesses in the region • At least 30 participants at start-up training courses have prepared their business plan and at least 15 have established their own business |

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| | <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in overnight stays by 100% (2016 versus 2011) • Increase in number of visitors outside of the region by 100% • 50% increase of accommodation capacity • 20% rise in estimated number of persons working in the tourism sector |
| Lead Organisation(s) in Implementation | The Regional Council is expected to take the leadership to bring relevant actors together and establish functioning partnerships where appropriate. Organizations representing the interest groups and supporting economic development are to take roles according to their scope/statutes. Both public and private bodies need to participate. |
| Key Preparatory Actions and Decisions Required | The Qark administration is required to initiate subject/sector meetings in order to establish sustainable coordination and collaboration mechanisms and action plans as appropriate. |

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| Priority | 3. Ensuring accessibility and connectivity |
| Relevant Strategic Objective | SO3 – To ensure an appropriate level of accessibility and connectivity of and within the Region, essential for economic and social purposes. |
| Rationale | <p>Diber qark has a road network of 1268 km (230 km of national roads, 404 km of rural roads and 634 km of local roads). Diber is one of the qark suffering most from lack of external connectivity to national hubs. Peshkopi is the only qark centre that has no direct access to national corridors and which takes extremely long journey time (approximately 5 hours from Tirana). However, construction of the Arbri road and its connection to the Tirana-Shkoder-Kukes network of highways is a government priority. The construction works at this stage are focused on the two main segments of 16 km including a tunnel of 808 m within this segment, to be finalized during this year. The investment on the last segment of 26 km, part of Arbri road is to be finalized in 2013. Also inter-regional road connections to neighbouring qarks are under completion i.e. Diber-Kukes and Diber-Librazhd.</p> <p>Under the current plans, Arbri national road will act as the backbone to connect most of the inhabited areas. This implies that there is a need for ensuring easy and safety connections of the region's main urban centres, main production centres and the main tourist destinations to the Arbri road. Upgrading the existing infrastructure to ensure better connectivity to Arbri and improving the level of safety standards of entering and leaving the national road and of the users should be carefully followed and asked for from the regional actors.</p> <p>In terms of internal routes and intra-regional accessibility the situation is also difficult. Due to the mountainous terrain, most settlements are situated more than 25 km from the national road. This shows an increasing need for complementary interventions at these secondary links mainly to areas of economic activities and main touristic destinations, such as Maqellare – Peshkopi, Peshkopi – Kastriot- Arras - Lure, Selishte Muhurr, Ura e Cerencit – Stebleve-Librazhd, Klos- Ura e Matit – Rukaj, etc.</p> |
| Scope | <p>Possible measures to be undertaken under this priority area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building of national road linking Tirana with Peshkopi • Ensuring safety connectivity of main urban/economic centres, etc. to the Arbri road • Rehabilitating regional and local roads of importance for business and tourism • Creation and promotion of an integrated high quality service of public transportation. |
| Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbri national axis completed • At least 100 km of other roads upgraded over key regional and local axes of importance for business and tourism • At least 3 access routes from urban areas and to Arbri road completed • A mechanism for promoting public transportation set up |
| Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average journey time from Tirana to Peshkopi reduced by 60% (down to approx. 120 |

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| | <p>minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average journey time within the region destinations reduced with at least by 20% • Public transportation operational (high quality service in terms of travel times reduced by 30% on average) |
| Lead Organisation(s) in Implementation | Public organizations relevant to different types of roads need to closely collaborate and communicate their plans. It is expected that the Regional Council will take steps to agree on priority lists of investments in road infrastructure. |
| Key Preparatory Actions and Decisions Required | Regional Council should develop a joint mechanism on which it will propose prioritization of roads construction/reconstruction both at the regional and local levels. |

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| Priority | 4. Managing the environment and cultural heritage in a sustainable way |
| Relevant Strategic Objective | SO4 – To value and improve the natural environment and cultural heritage, as key aspects of the Region’s identity and attractiveness, especially avoiding all negative effects on the environment from human activities. |
| Rationale | <p>Better management and sustainable usage of natural resources is a challenge faced by all communities. Local authorities, although aware of such challenges are often powerless to change the situation. What these initiatives often require is a high degree of inter-municipal cooperation and joint actions to tackle mutual problems. Situated in a mountainous terrain the region offers very rich natural landscapes with high aesthetic value. Diber region is well known for the protected area of Lure, of very high ecological interest due to number of species living there. However, the area is in degradation and need to be preserved and promoted. Its preservation has mainly to do with protecting the endangered species, and biodiversity. It is well known for the seven natural lakes of Lure and those of Martanesh. In recent years a lot of damage has been done to forests both by humans and nature, thus an emergent need for protection of the soil system from deforestation and erosion has been identified.</p> <p>In terms of water resources qark is very rich, positioned on Drini i Zi and Mati river basins. The quality of waters of these rivers is estimated to be of very good quality but interventions should be foreseen to protect them and surrounding valleys from waste and waste water discharge. Some decent connections of portable water and sewage waters are found in the urban areas. However, waste water treatment plants are missing in the qark. As per the analysis, Diber qark is placed last in terms of urban waste generation – but often disposed waste is not collected due to the non-existence of proper waste management services in most communes.</p> <p>Taking into account the richness of hydropower resources and favourable climatic conditions, energy efficient solutions should be considered, promoted and implemented, both as a means to protect the environment and as a way to generate economic value.</p> <p>The region has some unique cultural and historic sights/monuments and traditions which deserve preservation and promotion, also from the perspective of attracting tourists. These should be properly categorized and investments made accordingly.</p> |
| Scope | <p>Possible measures to be undertaken under this priority area are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of necessary mechanism and structures to improve the Lura protected area by protecting biodiversity, improving the conditions of habitats and endangered species living there – by creation of civil society participative procedures in the management of protected areas • Implement waste management plans combined with the regions’ environmental restoration –especially in terms of placement of proper waste baskets to collect waste, providing of proper services; • Development of measures to treat waste water disposal especially in urban and |

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| | <p>touristic potential areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of a single waste management facility in compliance with the national strategic priorities; • Securing sufficient 24 hrs quantities of good-quality potable water to urban and tourism important areas; • Development of measures to preserve the good status of river waters and improve the status of Lura Lakes waters – promotional activities, awareness raising • Activating the civil society on issues of environmental protection - raising awareness among citizens, establishing democratic and participative forms of public consultation to increase citizens’ and businesses’ awareness and strengthen culture in favour of environmental protection. • Developing skills for all regional actors/ groups involved in the environmental protection and management, as well as promoting environmental education. • Energy efficiency initiatives by businesses, public administrations and citizens Activating the civil society and businesses on the benefits of cultural heritage preservation and promotion |
| Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single regional waste management facility in compliance with EU standards planned, prepared and started to be implemented; • Establishment of a single structure at the regional level to own and operate the regional landfill facility; • 3 waste water treatment facilities established • At least 30 km of connection networks between households and waste water treatment facility undertaken • 2 good-quality potable water supply projects for at least 20,000 inhabitants implemented • 200 ha of deforested areas rehabilitated • 10 inter-municipal/communal/businesses and schools anti-litter initiatives and campaigns per year organised; • 15 environment education activities in schools organised where at least 300 students involved • At least 10 different initiatives implemented in the area of green energy and energy efficiency • At least one new activity/initiative (e.g. regional days, thematic days, etc.) undertaken and sustained to promote regional cultural heritage |
| Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of number of illegal dumps by 50% • Number of localities awarded “The cleanest locality of the year” Title by donors/or LGUs/Qark – 4; • 50% decrease of untreated waste water disposal • Regional forests increase by 15% • 12 LGUs furnished 24 hours with good-quality portable water • 80 persons actively involved in voluntary capacity in various environmental enhancement, anti-litter campaigns • 30 certified students on environment issues implement a number of environment protection follow up initiatives • 5 new energy efficient systems/sources developed in the region • 30 persons involved in a new regional initiative to promote cultural heritage |
| Lead Organisation(s) in Implementation | The Regional Council should take the lead in developing/consulting the regional waste management plan and operational issues related to environmental management. A union of municipalities/communes should be considered as a vehicle to implement strategic decisions in the area of waste management. |
| Key Preparatory Actions and Decisions Required | Continued contact and talks are required both with the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Public works. Involvement of LGUs and environmental groups at the regional level should be secured by the Qark through a mechanism of periodical meetings and info-sharing. A working group should be activated for that purpose immediately. |

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| Priority | 5. Development of human capacities. |
| Relevant Strategic Objective | SO5 – To develop the capacity of people and to provide appropriate conditions of fairness, inclusion and opportunity to all so that citizens may optimally participate in the economy and society. |
| Rationale | <p>Diber region is characterized by relatively high unemployment rates (16%). Long-term unemployed and female unemployment have the highest shares. The population in this region shows a high rate of inactivity – economically active population counts for only 54% of the overall working age population. The main source of employment is agriculture (59%), followed by employment in public sector (24%) and employment in the private sector is placed last (17%). It is thought that informal economy and employment provides work opportunities to a considerable number of people. Mainly young people in both rural and urban areas remain more exposed to it. This situation of lack of/scarcity of economic opportunities translates into other socio-economic problems (poverty, substance abuse, etc.) and prohibits integration of vulnerable groups into the economy and society.</p> <p>The above picture is mainly due to the limited work opportunities that the regional economy offers to its people. Unattractiveness of regional markets and failure to access national ones contributes to the small number of businesses established or being operational. Often these businesses are characterized by low skills demanding jobs. Employers appear discouraged from increasing the quality and skills of their employees due to the low standards of products and services they currently produce, which can be realized by a workforce with traditional qualifications or very minimal skills. The same understanding characterizes trade unions, which are very weak.</p> <p>This vicious cycle seems to be deteriorated also by the mismatch between demand for skills in labour market and outputs of the education system. The region shows a stable trend of enrolment ratios in primary and secondary education, as well as higher education – in rural areas the analysis indicates that these figures are in decline but still high percentage of young people complete the primary (78%) and of those secondary education (87%). The region has only one professional secondary school where study 541 student mainly in subjects such as English (156), economics (115), combined technical education (mechanics, electrician and wood carving – 122), ICT (73), office administration (36) and taxation (39).</p> <p>In terms of tertiary education the public branch of Durrës University is operational since 2008. Still this education provides rather skilled labour that will strive to find jobs in the existing market. A pilot model has been tested at the University of Durrës, with the establishment of the Faculty of Integrated Studies with Practice, which applies the concept of lifelong learning with hands-on practice, although not in its Diber branch. Several other public universities, including the Agriculture University of Tirana have committed to launching post-secondary programs that are very much VET-oriented. Similar practices can be a very good start to meet the offer-request needs. There seems to be no other initiatives or active employment programmes in the region to integrate these young people, female or long-term unemployed in the labour market apart the VET system, which often fails to respond to the labour market demands and needs. Thus, crucial to reducing unemployment and increasing participation in education – including vocational education and training will need to develop partnerships between the worlds of education/training and work, in particular by further increasing levels of engagement with social partners in the planning of education and training provision to contribute to development of the labour market.</p> <p>Alongside education and employment initiatives, other social inclusion and charitable initiatives should be continued and developed: assistance to families with many kids, people in poverty, etc.</p> |
| Scope | <p>Possible measures to be undertaken under this priority area, and that would help create more and better jobs that will be accessible to all, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Partnership with all the actors involved in education and employment sector – in order to redefine the training system for the unemployed, |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>highlighting certification and quality assurance, improving its performance and appeal and shifting attention towards establishing links to employment and the real needs of the unemployed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Regional Strategy for Education and Employment and assessment of the current market • Expand the VET package of offers by offering short-term and mid-term courses and workshops in areas that are tailored to the location or a particular geographically-defined labour market – i.e. English courses, local gastronomy, hospitality for touristic areas; • Tackling undeclared work and unumregistered unemployment by raising awareness among employers and employees at the local and regional scale • Development of a Partnership on social inclusion and working out a regional system for identification of persons in need and coordinated response by various governance levels, and civil society organizations. |
| Outputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction between universities and the private sector, and social partners strengthened; • A list of occupations and needed standards at the regional level elaborated • An integrated network that will provide employment services by means of certified structures of the public and private sector developed • Regional Strategy for Education and Employment and relevant action plan elaborated • Interaction between social inclusion actors, coordination of their actions through an agreed Regional Social Inclusion Action Plan |
| Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rate among youths increased by 30% • Participation of women in the labour market increased by 20% • Employment of certified people from VET structures increased by 50% • Number of families remaining under social assistance reduced by 10% |
| Lead Organisation(s) in Implementation | Employment services and VET services organizations, business representatives, as well as social assistance institutions must be involved. The Qark can take the initiator's role in order to establish a workable inter-institutional dialogue and collaboration. |
| Key Preparatory Actions and Decisions Required | The Qark administration is required to initiate subject/sector meetings in order to establish sustainable coordination and collaboration mechanisms and action plans as appropriate. |

6. Required resources

The vision, priorities and particular projects (in annex to this Strategy) cannot be implemented unless specific resources are identified and made available. Many of these are facilitative. Some however are also institutional. First priority identifies the institutional and capacity building actions that will be required and are already being developed within the Region. However there is a need for certain institutional support at a higher level which will also facilitate the development process in this and other Regions. We identify and describe these below. In those areas where significant regional or regionally concerted efforts are required, there is need for a vertical coordinating and communications mechanism between the regional partnerships and specific agencies and actors at national level. In the absence of these, those areas requiring regional-national co-operation will be subject to dysfunction in planning and implementation. The following are the main areas where this appears to be required – urgently:

- Regional roads
- Solid Waste Management
- Treatment of Waste Water
- Environmental protection
- Vocational education and training (esp professional)
- Tourism – international marketing (to be linked to regional marketing efforts), accommodation

While there may be other areas, the above appear to require some form of regular communication/coordination/ co-operation mechanism. For the moment, there is a large deficit in terms of effective vertical development co-operation. We call on the Government to address this issue urgently.

The Strategy, at its starting point, is not fully financed. In fact it is only minimally financed by the declared contributions from the Qark and its constituent municipalities and communes. Some of development efforts can be tackled without large financial outlays as they pertain to institutional change. Still, there are obviously substantial financial needs to support:

- Institutional and capacity building for development (Priority 1)
- On-going preparation of specific initiatives and projects (Priorities 2-5) – specifically the projects currently considered to be “viable project concepts” (annexed to the Strategy) on which we have worked urgently require financial resources (for studies, consultancy, etc.) to be brought to a full state of readiness
- Implementation of development projects and investments as indicated in the list of projects annexed to the Strategy.

The Regional Council looks to the following instruments and organizations to assist on these issues:

- The Regional Development Fund – focused at least in part on so-called “regional projects” as defined in terms of impact, engagement and partnership working
- International donors – especially those committed to regional and local governance and development
- The EU – even its so-called “national” focus on major projects cannot be implemented (at least in the area of environment and business development) in the absence of support to the regional level (capacity-building, project development, project investment).

7. Management

Overall responsible to ensure implementation of the Strategy and Projects is the Regional Council. On a bi-annual basis it will receive a report on the implementation of each of the priorities and the overall strategy, including any delay, problems and bottlenecks. It will seek also be able to request any information pro-actively on the same, make recommendations and take relevant decisions related to the Strategy. The Regional Council will consult the established Regional Partnership on all strategic development decisions.

The strategy management functions will be organized in the following manner:

- **Operational Monitoring** – the Development Department of the Qark will ensure appropriate systems to monitor and report progress on the implementation of the Strategy. This will include a report on each priority on a quarterly basis according to target indicators. It will collect information, liaise with stakeholders and hence provide regular and ad hoc half-yearly reports on the implementation of each of the Priorities.
- **Project Pipeline** – the Development Department of the Qark will manage the project pipeline that has been established. It will report ensure by its efforts, including provision of practical support and assistance through appropriate Regional Project Development Programmes, that at all times, the Region is progressing a portfolio of regional projects towards funding and implementation. It will be pro-active in liaising with any local or national actor to ensure this.
- **Information and Communication** – the Development Department of the Qark will maintain a web-page dedicated to “Regional Development”. This will provide on-going information to all development actors in the Region, include the Strategy, most recent reports to the Qark Council, and any other information considered helpful in the pursuit of regional development. It will also manage a special section related to “business promotion” in which the region and its assets will be profiled for investors internal or external.
- **Support to Regional Council in pursuit of Regional Development:** the Development Department of the Qark will also provide all required secretarial and administrative support to the Regional Council with regard to the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy.
- **Donor Coordination:** the Development Department of the Qark will ensure that the Regional Council is kept informed on the activities and intentions of donors in Albania, including any possible emerging opportunities.

Annex 1 – Priority projects

The Priority Projects are real actions targeted to contribute to the achievement of regional strategic objectives. The list of Projects directly supporting the Strategy will be updated by the decision of the Regional Council as required, so that a pipeline of projects is constantly developed.

| Project 1: Handicraft - Promoter of Tourism and Real Support to Diber Region Economy | | |
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| Objectives: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sustainable tourism by bolstering handicraft traditions • Establish a handicraft association • Enrich the market with handicraft products | | |
| Project justification: | | |
| <p>Diber has a good tradition of craftsmanship, which, regrettably is being neglected to oblivion. The qark of Diber has a potential of 3,000 women for handicraft products. These women are growing old and essentially there is no heritage of this handicraft, thus leading to the need for intervention in this sector in order to utilize the craftsmanship resources and boost the region's economy. Artisans of the region are not organized and people working in this sector are poorly qualified. While the demand for handicraft products is limited, the promotion of craftsmanship is almost inadequate.</p> | | |
| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better recognition of the region's products • Information on handicraft products is easily accessible to all • Handicraft people are stimulated to maintain and revive the tradition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented information on tradition of craft and type of artisan products in the region • Qualification of a group of young people on producing artisan artwork • Organization of fairs in three main towns of Diber qark • Establishment of a handicraft association • Web portal, promotional materials, creation of an information center • Establishment of a facilitation structure for marketing the products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study on current status of products and producers • Design brochures and posters • Dissemination of informational materials • Training courses of 100 youth in three towns • Meeting with old and young artisans • Establishment of a web portal • Cooperation with dealers interested in marketing handicraft products |
| Partners and contact: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Council of Diber: Nevila Manga; Tel:+355 218 22170; E-mail: kabanevila@yahoo.com • LAG: Fellenxa Shehu; shehufellenxa@yahoo.it;Tel: 0692796311 | | |
| Total project value - 120.000 Euro | | |
| External financing needed - 110.000 Euro | | |
| Cost (time) to complete project preparation –4.000Euro (6 muaj) | | |

| Project 2: Development of Agriculture in Diber Region by Establishing a Management Structure | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support the increase of production and human capacities Ensure institutional and basic physical infrastructure for sustainable and long-term development of agriculture Reduce poverty, increase farmers' revenues, and empower the region economically | | |
| <p>Project justification:</p> <p>Government of Albania subsidy and Diber farmers' investments have helped in the cultivation of 1,105 fruit trees with a yield rate of 20,000 metric tons. Cooperation between farmers and their groups is poor. Some 30% of the production does not meet the established standards due to the lack of market, storage and processing.</p> | | |
| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More opportunities for employment Revenues increase by 20% in the first year Production is increased by up to 30% Production value increases by processing products of second and third quality Production cost drops by 20% Living standards for regional farmers' families increased Farmers are more aware of their qualification Cooperation among farmers increased | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established management structure to engage with the entire administration of work A cooperative that will incorporate all existing or new farmers' groups A refrigerator with a storage capacity of 1,000 tons An agri-processing line with a processing capacity of 1,000 tons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of management structure Feasibility study, market analysis Meetings and workshops to organize farmers as a single group Recruiting of professional staff on improvement of product quality and identification of markets Training of farmers Research on installation of physical infrastructure (refrigerator, processing lines) |
| <p>Partners and contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Council of Diber ; Pajtim Pernezha; Tel:+355 2 2324; E-mail: pajtim71@yahoo.com DRB AKU; Maksim Hajrullaj; +355674019667; dr.maxdiber@yahoo.com | | |
| <p>Total project value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phase I -120.000 Euro - Phase II -700.000 Euro <p>External financing needed - 779.000 Euro</p> <p>Cost (time) to complete project preparation –5000 Euro (12 muaj)</p> | | |

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| Project 3: Drafting Action Plan on Management of Pollution and Protection of Environment | | |
| Objectives: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess pollution in environment in Diber region • Analyze the environmental, economic, and social impact of pollution • Draft a plan of measure on management of pollution | | |
| Project justification: | | |
| <p>This project is a priority area in the third objective of the strategy, which essentially seeks to assess and improve the region's natural environment, as a key aspect of its identity and attractiveness, drafting a regional strategy on waste management and the required facilities. Out of 35 local government units in Diber qark, only 8 of them provide cleaning services, and there are 7 dumping sites. This region generates about 23,260 tons of waste per year, but it does not have a system to manage waste by nature and type. In those LGUs, where this service is not provided, waste is annihilated in other forms, such as dumping into the rivers/streams or incineration. It is necessary to draft an action plan to manage pollution and protect environment. All key actors will have to be involved in the implementation of this plan.</p> | | |
| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 LGUs and 2,547 businesses in Diber region area aware and involved in regional efforts on management of pollution in the qark • A quality and quantity assessment of pollution and its impact in Diber qark • A regional integrated plan on management of pollution for Diber qark • LGUs and regional businesses have a regional integrated plan on management of pollution as part of their development plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU between LGUs and other local and regional actors on joint and integrated contribution to the implementation of the project • Report on assessment of pollution and its economic, environmental, and social impact • Plan with proposed measures to reduce and manage pollution at local and regional level • MOU between LGUs, regional businesses and Diber qark on coordination of actions to implement the plan of measured specified in the framework of the project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with relevant institutions on issues of environment, presentation of project, signing of MOUs (LGUs, NGOs, MEFWA) • Establishment of expert group for the assessment of pollution and its environmental, economic, and social impact • Drafting a plan of measures intended to reduce and manage pollution • Presentation of integrated pollution management plan to LGUs and regional businesses |
| Partners and contact: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Council of Diber; Ejona Mazari; +355674032819; ejonamazari@hotmail.com • Agritra Vizion, NGO; Majlinda Hoxha; +355 68 2828450; majlinda.hoxha@yahoo.com | | |
| Total project value - 140.760 Euro | | |
| External financing needed – 130.760 Euro | | |
| Cost (time) to complete project preparation –5.000 Euro (12 muaj) | | |
| Project 4: Establishment and Operation of a Training Center for Communal Forest and Pasture Users in Diber Region and Broader | | |

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| <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure healthy forests and pastures during all year round by means of their sustainable management • Ensure greater opportunities to generate more proceeds to communal forest and pasture users |
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Project justification:
 Since year 2008, over 70% of forest and pasture land has been transferred to the ownership of local government units, which are lacking staff and required know-how to sustainably manage them in order to provide for own and local needs. LGUs will have to hire people qualified in forestry and farmers should seek their advice and assistance in activities they undertake in communal forests and pastureland.

| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 LGUs are informed and aware of sustainable management of communal forests and pastureland in their ownership • Representatives of LGUs have the required capacities for sustainable management of communal forests and pastureland in their ownership • About 3,000 communal forest and pasture users are informed and trained • 4 LGUs have prepared paper for the registration of forests and pasture land with the Real Estate Registration Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two specialists from each LGU is trained on all activities and interventions to be undertaken for a sustainable management of forests and pasture land in LGU's ownership/use • An awareness program undertaken with all LGUs of the qark and associations of communal forest and pastureland users in these units • The staff covering communal forests and pastureland in LGU are assisted in drafting projects to raise funds for a sustainable management of forests and pastureland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of foundation act and statute • Registration of the center with the court and tax office • Creation of facilities of the training center • Establishment of database on the group of experts • Application for license/renewal • Inventory of donors • Writing project proposals and application for funding • Promotion of the training center and website • Review of current curricula • Development of new curricula • Conducting training • Technical assistance/service |

Partners and contact:

- Regional Council of Diber ; Behar Dema; +35568 36 08 370; behardema71@yahoo.com
- Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures, Diber Region; Durim Kaba; :+355 69 40 50 288; durimit@yahoo.it

Total project value - 325.000 Euro
External financing needed - 300.000 Euro
Cost (time) to complete project preparation – 6.000 Euro (12 muaj)

Project 5: Creation of Modern Infrastructure in Kastriot-Lura-Kurbnesh Road Axis

Objectives:

- Improve the economic and social conditions of the community in the communes involved in the project
- Connection of two corridors: Northeast Corridor and Nation's Corridor

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access of these areas to urban zones in Diber | | |
| <p>Project justification: The Kastriot-Lura-Kurbnesh road is an important axis for the development of the areas which this road permeates. The road is currently unpaved posing high hazard for accidents and the travel time is long (about two hours). Businesses in the area are few because of the high costs of running business activities. The area has many natural, cultural, and historic resources that have not been utilized to date.</p> | | |
| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42 km of road improved • Travel time reduced to one hour • Safer travel • Level of economic and cultural exchange between Diber region and other parts of the country increased • Number of tourists in the areas of cultural and historic wealth (birthplace of Scanderbeg) and tourist values (Canyon of Seta and Lura National Park) increased • Health, education, fire brigade services improved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical project prepared • Road constructed • Plan on road maintenance and management prepared | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing of contract on preparing the project with outside experts • Organization of bidding (signing the contract of implementation) • Implementation of works • Supervision of works • Handing over the road to LGU • Drafting a road management and maintenance plan |
| <p>Partners and contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Council of Dibër Elisava Methasani; +355 067 40 32 797; elisava.kuka@gmail.com Bajram Kalia; 069 67 00 803; bajramkalia@yahoo.com | | |
| <p>Total project value - 15.120.000 Euro External financing needed - 15.120.000 Euro Cost (time) to complete project preparation –378.000 Euro (12 muaj)</p> | | |

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| <p>Project 6: Promotion of Economic Growth through Guided Development of Tourism in Diber Region</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting a tourism action plan • Piloting trekking (adventure) tourism to three various destinations until end of year 2015 <p>Project justification: The main problems of tourism development in Diber region to date include lack of strategic planning, low level and limited number of stakeholders, and lack of coordination among levels of local governance. The project identifies the need for sustainable economic development focused in issues of tourism and the opportunity of empowering tourism-oriented businesses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of partnership of regional tourism • Development of a regional tourism plan • Development of adventure tourism in natural resources |
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| • Development of addition initiatives to support actors of tourist partnership of the region | | |
|--|---|---|
| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders in tourism development have a clear orientation • Number of tourism-oriented businesses increased • Tourists travel on their own • Accommodation is improved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOU on the process • Database on tourism potentials • Tourism action plan • Reconstructed houses • Easily accessible trekking paths with signage installed • Promotional materials, including web portal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of working group with the participation of LGU representatives, tourism experts, historians, and interest groups for drafting the local tourism plan • Process of collection of data on tourism potentials • Analysis of current status and SWOT analysis • Meetings with interest groups focused in participatory planning process on finalization of document • Creation of a web portal on tourism • Training to key people on provision of tourist services • Rehabilitation of guest houses for tourists (characteristic houses of the area, as an opportunity) • Creation of trekking paths associated with relevant information |
| <p>Partners and contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Council of Diber; Zenulla Mehmeti; +355 218 22170; mehmeti68@yahoo.com • Korabi Treking & Tours: Hamit Salkurti; 3550692053492; korabitt@yahoo.com | | |
| <p>Total project value - 132.600 Euro External financing needed - 100.000 Euro Cost (time) to complete project preparation –7.000 Euro (6 muaj)</p> | | |

| Project 7: Integrated Urban Waste Management (Municipality of Bulqize and Communes of Fushe-Bulqize and Zerqan) |
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| <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and attractive area • Coverage of entire territory of the municipality and communes with the cleaning service • Construction of a shared dumping site that meets environmental standards |
| <p>Project justification: The area covered by this project is facing serious environmental problems that need to be addressed urgently. Some of the main problems relate to the lack of a dumping site for urban waste, lack of</p> |

designated collection points and containers for disposing of the waste in villages, low level of civic awareness on collection of waste, damaging of waste bins and containers, incineration of waste, and discharging waste on river banks and roadsides.

| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased LGUs' capacities on environment • Increased clean area size in LGUs and environment is more attractive • Community is informed on environmental risk • Illegal dumping is reduced or eliminated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified staff • Every LGU has a concrete plan on urban waste management • Installation of 100 containers in units with no containers • Reduction of quantity of generated urban waste • Signed MOU among LGUs • Technical project approved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of training for LGUs with environmental problems • Drafting cross-local plans on urban waste management • Identification and cleaing of areas polluted from illegal dumping • Designation of waste collection points and installation of containers • Preparation of awareness campaign (polls, flyers, TV spots) • Drafting of MOU between LGUs and Diber Qark and its approval in the respective councils • Drafting of technical project on dumping site |

Partners and contact:

Agim Perhati; +355682353778; agimperhati@yahoo.com

Gezim Boba; +355682050211; gezim_boba2007@hotmail.com

Total project value - 146.750

External financing needed - 124.737 Euro

Cost (time) to complete project preparation –7.000 Euro (12 muaj)

Project 8: Waste Management in Peshkopia Town and Four Communes (Melan, Maqellare, Tomin and Kastriot)

Objectives:

- Have a cleaner town/village and healthier community by enhancing and improving the current system of waste management
- Increase of access to the waste collection service in neighborhoods of Peshkopi town and in the villages of four communes (Maqellare, Melan, Kastriot, and Tomin) within the first year of project implementation
- Establish the waste collection system in over 80% of villages of the communes with no service within the first year of project implementation
- Increase community awareness on disposal of waste to the designated locations through an awareness campaign during the first 6 months of the project start

Project justification:

The environmental situation in the LGUs where the project seeks to intervene is more or less similar to that of other locations in Albania. The main problem relates to the limited level of waste collection

service provision in these areas. Since the Municipality of Peshkopi has a dumping site and relevant authorities are willing to share with the neighboring LGUs, it is necessary to establish cross-local cooperation with regard to this service. The project aims to regulate the waste collection system where it is in place and establish the system anew where it is lacking. It will also work on civic awareness on waste management.

| Results: | Products: | Activities: |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean areas in town/villages increased • Communes may use the dumping site of the Municipality of Peshkopi • Residents of 4 communes use designated collection points to dispose of their waste • Number of residents in town using bins increased • Number of residents in villages using designated collection points increased | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste management plan • Feasibility study • Awareness materials for the community (brochures, flyers, polls) • Efficient system for the collection of cleaning fee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting LGUs' plan on waste management • Feasibility study/risk analysis on dumping site of the Municipality of Peshkopi • Awareness campaign in each phase • Creation of a system for the collection of the waste service fee • Installation / replacement of bins in related units and education of citizens on their use • Construction and designation of collection points for villages and education of residents on their use |
| <p>Partners and contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Council of Diber; Jetmir Tahiri; +355674025324; jeto_006@hotmail.com • Peshkopi Municipality; Arjola Balliu; +355682010322; arjola_shimaj84@yahoo.it | | |
| <p>Total project value - 72.810 Euro External financing needed - 65.000 Euro Cost (time) to complete project preparation –4.000 Euro (6 muaj)</p> | | |

Annex 2 - Authors and contributors

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|-----|-------------------|---|--|
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| 32. | HAXHI ABAZI | REGIONAL AGRICULTURE DIRECTORY | CHIEF OF ADVISORY SERVICES |
| 33. | JETON KALOSHI | DIBER REGION | TOURISM SPECIALIST |
| 34. | FAIK NELAJ | BURREL MUNICIPALITY | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICE |
| 35. | MALVINA SHEHI | FEDERATA KOMBETARE E PYJEVE DHE KULLOTAVE | COORDINATOR |
| 36. | AGIM PERHATI | BULQIZE MUNICIPALITY | DEPUTY MAYOR |
| 37. | FELLENXA SHEHU | AGRITRA VISION | FINANCE OFFICER |
| 38. | GEZIM BOBA | BULQIZE MUNICIPALITY | CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT |
| 39. | ALBERT COLLAKU | KLOS MUNICIPALITY | CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT |
| 40. | SAMI KURTI | PRIVATE SECTOR | KLOSI 2009 OWNER |
| 41. | ASLLAN DAXHA | FUSHE-BULQIZE COMMUNE | FINANCE CHIEF |
| 42. | SABRI LACI | PESHKOPI MUNICIPALITY | DEPUTY MAYOR |
| 43. | YLLKA QOKU | PESHKOPI MUNICIPALITY | REPRESENTATIVE OF EDUCATION COMMUNICATION CENTRE |
| 44. | BILBIL LAZRI | MAQELLARE COMMUNE | TAX DIRECTOR |

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| 45. | FEHMI TANJI | DIBER COUNTY COUNCIL | COUNCIL SECRETARY |
| 46. | SPARTAK KOLTRAKA | STATE SOCIAL SERVICE | CHIEF OF FINANCE |
| 47. | ELSON RECI | BURREL MUNICIPALITY | DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT |

Annex 3 – Strategy consultations

| Date: 05/06/2012 | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Consultation activity: Workshop on Presenting Draft Strategy to Regional Stakeholders – public consultations | | | |
| No. | Name | Institution | Position |
| 1 | NAIM GAZIDEDE | DIBER REGION COUNCIL | CHAIRMAN |
| 2 | ALBA DAKOLI (WILSON) | FLAG | DIRECTOR |
| 3 | FEMI HOXHA | DIBER REGION COUNCIL | VICE CHAIRMAN |
| 4 | AGIM SELITA | LIS COMMUNE | MAYOR |
| 5 | ROLAND KETA | BULQIZE MUNICIPALITY | MAYOR |
| 6 | ILIR KROSI | PESHKOPI MUNICIPALITY | MAYOR |
| 7 | HAJRI BEGU | DIBER PREFECTURE | GENERAL SECRETARY |
| 8 | MANUSHAQE CORJA | DIBER PREFECTURE | SPECIALIST |
| 9 | DEFRIM FIKU | ZERQAN COMMUNE | MAYOR |
| 10 | BILBIL DACI | REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS | DIRECTOR |
| 11 | GAFUR GAZIDEDE | DIRECTORATE OF FORESTRY SERVICE | DIRECTOR |
| 12 | JONUZ HOXHA | REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE | DIRECTOR |
| 13 | HAXHI ABAZI | REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE | DIRECTOR OF EXTENSION |
| 14 | LUAN HAKA | REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF ROADS | DIRECTOR |
| 15 | ADRIAN SHEHU | PESHKOPI MUNICIPALITY | DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR |
| 16 | HAREDIN XHAFERI | DIBER UNIVERSITY | DEAN |
| 17 | ARTAN RROJI | FLAG | DEPUTY DIRECTOR |
| 18 | DALLENDYSHE KALLAVERJA | INSTAT | DIRECTOR |
| 19 | LULZIME PILAFI | REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY | DIRECTOR |
| 20 | ALBERT COLLAKU | KLOS MUNICIPALITY | URBAN PLANNING DIRECTOR |
| 21 | SALI TERSHALLA | ARRAS COMMUNE | MAYOR |
| 22 | ELSON RECI | BURREL MUNICIPALITY | INSPECTOR AT DEVELOPMENT SECTOR |
| 23 | VELI VRANICI | CULTURE CENTRE PESHKOPI | DIRECTOR |
| 24 | MAKSIM HAJRULLAJ | NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF FOOD | DIRECTOR |
| 25 | GENC SHARKU | PREFECTURE OF DIBER | PREFECT |
| 26 | DALI HORESHKA | SNV/PRO MALI | COORDINATOR |
| 27 | NEKI MEHMETI | MELAN COMMUNE | MAYOR |
| 28 | AGIM PERHATI | BULQIZE MUNICIPALITY | DEPUTY MAYOR |
| 29 | GENTIANA BELILAJ | WORLD VISION | DIRECTOR |
| 30 | ELTON PEPA | WORLD VISION | STAF CS COORDINATOR |
| 31 | FATOS MANDRI | SLOVE COMMUNE | MAYOR |
| 32 | ARJOLA BALLIU | PESHKOPI MUNICIPALITY | DEPUTY MAYOR |
| 33 | JOE BONK | PEACE CORPS | VOLUNTEER |
| 34 | PAJTIM ALLAMANI | PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE | DIRECTOR |
| 35 | GAZMIR ZENELHASANI | REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF RURAL ROADS | DIRECTOR |
| 36 | SHUKRI SHEHU | STATE SOCIAL SERVICE | DIRECTOR |
| 37 | SHKELZEN QOKA | SOCIETE GENERAL ALBANIA BANK | DIRECTOR |

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| 38 | HAMZA LESHI | KASTRIOT COMMUNE | MAYOR |
| 39 | ZENULLA MEHMETI | DIBER REGION | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT |
| 40 | PAJTIM PERNEZHA | DIBER REGION | DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES |
| 41 | BEHAR DEMA | DIBER REGION | DIRECTOR OF URBAN PLANNING |
| 42 | EJONA MAZARI | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |
| 43 | ALTIN PIRA | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |
| 44 | JETON KALOSHI | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |
| 45 | ELISAVA METHASANI | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |
| 46 | JETMIR TAHIRI | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |
| 47 | ERIOLA KICA | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |
| 48 | NEVILA MANGA | DIBER REGION | SPECIALIST |

Annex 4 – Integration of comments from public consultations

Public consultations took place on 5 June 2012, followed up by a period of 10 days for further comments. The table below lists the comments received and their treatment in the final document.

| Comments received | Treatment of comments |
|---|--|
| In the objectives families in economic difficulties should be included. | Comment integrated already in the draft. The objective related to social inclusion is presented (SO5), and with it the Priority 5: Development of human capacities. |
| The activities of regional authorities should be positioned to facilitation of the work of LGUs. | Comment integrated already in the draft. SO1 and Priority 1 cover this aspect. |
| It is necessary to sensitize and raise awareness of the population on improvement and protection of the natural environment. | Comment integrated already in the draft. SO4 and Priority 4 cover this aspect. |
| Priority 1 and 5 need to be reformulated. | Comment integrated after consultations. Priorities reformulated to cover administrative/management capacities (Priority 1) and broader capacities for inclusion of all in the economy and society (Priority 5). |
| SOs need to be fully expresses by priorities. | Comment integrated already in the draft. Priorities reflect areas of intervention contributing to reaching specific objectives. |
| Cultural and heritage identity should be reflected in the strategy. SO on cultural, historical identity is proposed. Cultural tourism and heritage development to be included. More attention to culture and its promotion should be given. | Comment partially integrated after consultations. Creating more objectives will dilute the strategy. Culture and heritage is already considered, among others in Priority 4: Managing the environment and cultural heritage in a sustainable way, and under tourism development. |
| Referring to SO5, it might have more specific focus on social aspect. Besides employment, aspects of domestic violence, abuse, alcoholism etc. should be included. | Comment integrated after consultations. SO5 is reformulated to cover social inclusion aspects. |
| Merging of SO4 & SO6 and reformulation is proposed. | Comment integrated after consultations. SO4 and SO6 merged into SO4. |
| The vision in Albanian version should not use the word "fighting". | Comment integrated after consultations. Vision reformulated to avoid confusion. |
| A priority for water resources (hydropower) is proposed. | Comment not integrated. It is impossible to include priorities at this level of detail. Priorities related to economic development cover the use of hydropower in the region. |
| Priority 5 is reformulated this way: Promotion of development of human capacities. | Comment partially integrated after consultations. The reformulated Priority 5 is: Development of human capacities. |

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| Mountain and family tourism should be included in the strategy. | Comment integrated already in the draft. Tourism is included in Priority 2: Expanding Dibra's region growth potential. Types of tourism can be further decided in operational terms. |
| We think that other areas of development/support might be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional markets of livestock and agriculture products 2. Regional agricultural development strategy 3. Regional strategy for medicinal herbs cultivation 4. Agro-tourism development 5. "Bio" Products – Regional certification of origin 6. Professional Agriculture Education Development 7. Support to development of infrastructure for irrigation 8. Regional center for local capacities development (communes and municipalities) | Comment partially integrated already in the draft. Some of the proposed ideas are already included in the strategic priorities. Some others can become projects in support of the Strategy. |
| Reformatting of Local Government is needed and decrease of LGUs numbers according to population. | Comment not integrated. Administrative reforms are not part of the Strategy. These subjects should be pursued separately based on a consensus among LGUs. |
| It is proposed to include better public finances management, including economic aid. | Comment partially integrated already in the draft. Better administrative and development capacities included in Priority 1: Strengthening capacities to develop the region. |
| The environmental assessment is very good, but there is a need for development of projects on Integrated Waste Management also for other communes of Diber and Mat. | Comment integrated already in the draft. The priority projects list is open and new projects on waste management can be added in time. |
| In SWOT analysis: emigration as positive factor as well; difficult geographic position is not true but territorial mismanagement; regional university not as an opportunity but also a strength. | Comment partially integrated after consultations. Regional university considered as strength. Other comments not substantiated by evidence. |
| Involvement of all municipalities and communes should be ensured (not only Dibra and surrounding communes). | Comment integrated already in the draft. The Strategy serves all LGUs of the region and is not exclusive in any way. |
| Focus should be put on: livestock, green energy, energy efficiency | Comment integrated after consultations. Strategic objectives and priorities cover these aspects of development under SO4 and Priority 4. |