



# #Tirana100: Rebound

Repairing and preparing  
Tirana for a resilient future

Synthesis of the  
International Urban  
Planning Workshop  
in Tirana  
Albania, 2021

**les Ateliers**  
maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

# les Ateliers

maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

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Les Ateliers is a non-governmental organization that brings together an international network of professionals, scholars and decision-makers in the field of urban development. Focused on the practice of urban management, the association organizes workshops imagined as sources of design and creativity aimed at providing local decision-makers with an international perspective and innovative proposals for their development challenges. Created in 1982, Les Ateliers was originally aimed at students and young professionals. Following the request of local communities, governments and other partners, it has added workshops open to experienced professionals and volunteers since 2005. In France and abroad, these workshops provide local authorities with illustrated and innovative proposals for their strategic territorial and urban development projects. Through the confrontation of different professions and cultures, these workshops also serve to challenge traditional notions of learning models and high-level exchanges.

Les Ateliers organized an international urban planning workshop in Albania in 2021, initiated by the Bashkia Tiranë (Tirana municipality) and the French Development Agency (AFD). From over 50 applications received, 14 participants of varying nationalities and specializations were selected. Divided into three teams, they volunteered their expertise and time for the entire duration of the workshop from 23 January to 02 February 2021. The workshop closed with an international jury, during which the three teams presented their work to a gathering of stakeholders from Tirana and Albania, international partners and experts. This Synthesis compiles the conclusions developed during this workshop — #Tirana100: Rebound.

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# #Tirana100: Rebound

Repairing and  
preparing Tirana for a  
resilient future

## Foreword

Resilience is defined as the capacity to withstand adversity and recover from difficulties. Given the circumstances, Resilience is a word that could define both the city of Tirana and the international urban planning workshop that was held there.

The capital city of Albania has known several important shocks recomposing its territory and its dynamics. As Tirana was completing its third decade of transition towards democracy and market economy, it faced two major setbacks: the 2019 earthquake that caused extensive damage in and around the capital city, followed by the global Covid-19 crisis and its socio-cultural and economic implications.

Coincidentally, the desire for a workshop in Tirana was born in the continuity of the working seminar on metropolises organized by AVITEM in Tirana in 2019. Although the workshop process had begun, the earthquake delayed the first field mission and influenced the approach. Subsequently, the pandemic introduced new delays and major travel restrictions. Les Ateliers organized a programme of video-conferencing meetings and working groups to prepare the international workshop and the on-site workshop was held as soon as the conditions became more favorable. The international urban planning workshop in Tirana finally took place from Saturday 23 January, 2021 until Tuesday 02 February, 2021.

The workshop model was based on the methodology of Les Ateliers de Cergy. For 10 intense days, 14 international and local professionals from different countries and fields of expertise came together to explore the capital city of Albania, meet the locals and work in teams. The workshop was a platform for non-commercial exchanges, inviting all the local and international stakeholders to participate in the collective construction of a vision for the future of the city of Tirana.

The workshop explored actionable ideas and approaches on repairing the current cracks in the urban fabric, while preparing to sustainably manage the rapid demographic and economic growth that is expected to continue. This synthesis document includes a summary of the workshop's topic and introduces an analysis of the teams' proposals.

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## **Tirana, a city in transformation**



# A City In Transformation

## Challenges

Despite these positive changes and aspirations, it is said that the mayor of Tirana is the mayor of every Albanian's plan B. Plan A is to emigrate abroad. There is some truth to this feeling as evidenced by the high rate population turnover - people coming into the city from the regions and emigrating abroad. The reasons behind it are complex. Despite, or because of its phenomenal growth in the postcommunist years, recent progress in urban planning, and many eye-catching projects that could easily fit in a Western capital, Tirana still faces many pressing issues.

For over two decades there was a proliferation of informal buildings, mainly in the periphery, which are now in the process of legalisation but lack formal urban services and infrastructure. Providing these services is not only a financial challenge, it is also hindered by a lack of unbuilt space and reticence from inhabitants. The rapid economic and demographic growth and the following construction boom has led to a shortage of affordable housing, lack of quality public spaces, heavily damaged water and green networks, and a generally neglected ecology. An inefficient transport system, coupled with an Albanian car culture that views the car as a status symbol, has resulted in severe traffic gridlock which has economic, ecological and health-related consequences.

Although Tirana's economic conditions are better than in the provinces, there is still a relatively high rate of unemployment and especially high under-employment as young people from all over Albania flood into the city to study and then search for hard-to-find work. This young and dynamic workforce is also one of Tirana's key advantages, highlighted by its status as European Youth Capital in 2022.

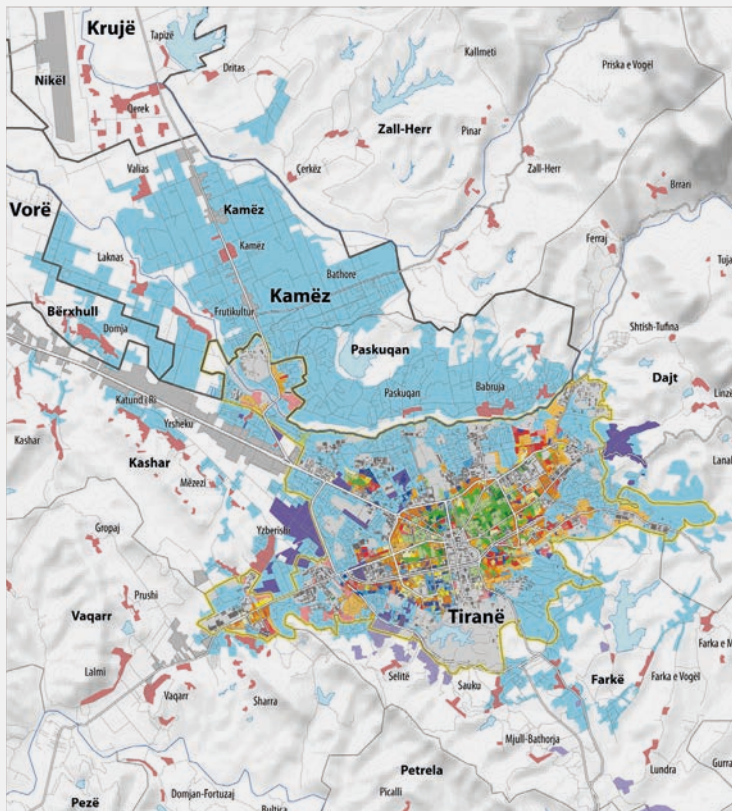
Urban resilience researchers call these types of challenges Chronic Stresses – slow moving disasters which have a direct impact on the wellbeing of the city's inhabitants. These stresses become glaringly exposed when the city is hit by unpredictable shocks.

## Between an earthquake and a pandemic

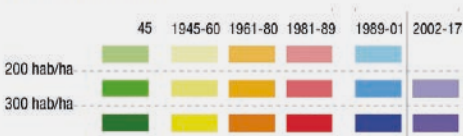
In the past year Tirana has suffered two such shocks. The earthquake of November 2019, whose epicentre was not far from the city, caused significant damage and left about 2000 families homeless. The municipality responded quickly to move the victims into temporary housing. It was still in the process of examining the full extent of the damage and exploring reconstruction plans when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Albania. The national government responded by imposing a very strict quarantine, shutting down businesses and the teeming cafes and public spaces. This is particularly traumatic for a city and culture where most business and social activity happens in public spaces, cafes, and bars. Its long term effects are still uncertain.

Skanderberg square, in the heart of the city





Population density



- Municipality border
- Communes (before 2014)
- Municipality border before 2014

- Informal building
- Village
- Empty industrial areas
- Recent industrial area

Growth of Tirana through time: various legacies



Informal addition to existing building

### Rural and urban intertwining in Farkë





The workshop's approach. Live sketching by Véronique Olivier Martin

## The Workshop's Approach

### A resilient future

The preparation for this workshop began 2 months after the earthquake and continued during the pandemic, as the urban planning priorities of the municipality shifted repeatedly and dramatically in response to these extreme events.

In defining the topic of the workshop, the acute shocks, which must be addressed urgently, are considered as an opportunity to also help alleviate the underlying chronic stresses in the city - a crisis as an opportunity.

It is an opportunity to imagine a resilient future for Tirana where individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within the city have built the capacity to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. A socially, environmentally and economically resilient Tirana. This requires repairing the past and preparing for the future.

### Repair and Prepare - A two-prong approach

- › **Repairing** the urban fabric and providing municipal services after years of informal building, internal migration, and recent natural disasters, while maintaining core qualities and identities.
- › **Preparing** so as to anticipate the provision of services for the expected growth in population, density, built areas, and economic activity.

Both "repair" and "prepare" have immediate/short term as well as long term dimensions. Actions must be taken now with a long term resilience strategy in mind. For these interventions to have a meaningful impact, they would have to operate at different scales: from block and neighbourhood level to city and territorial development.

Repairing and preparing are interlinked - the immediate repair work contributes to preparing Tirana for the future. For #Tirana150 or #Tirana200.

**In this workshop that future is seen through the lens of Urban Resilience. It is both a theoretical framework, as described by the Global Resilient Cities network, and a goal. The end goal remains turning Tirana from a stepping stone into a desirable destination.**



## Tirana's plans and ambitions

One of the first notable regeneration projects was in the early 2000s when the then mayor of Tirana mandated that communist-era apartment buildings, which had become dilapidated, be painted in bright colours and patterns to enliven the city and create civic spirit. Since then, Tirana has seen a series of acclaimed urban and architecture projects designed by renowned international architects. Of particular note is the reimagining in 2017 of Skanderbeg square, an iconic space in Albanian consciousness, as a pedestrian public space.

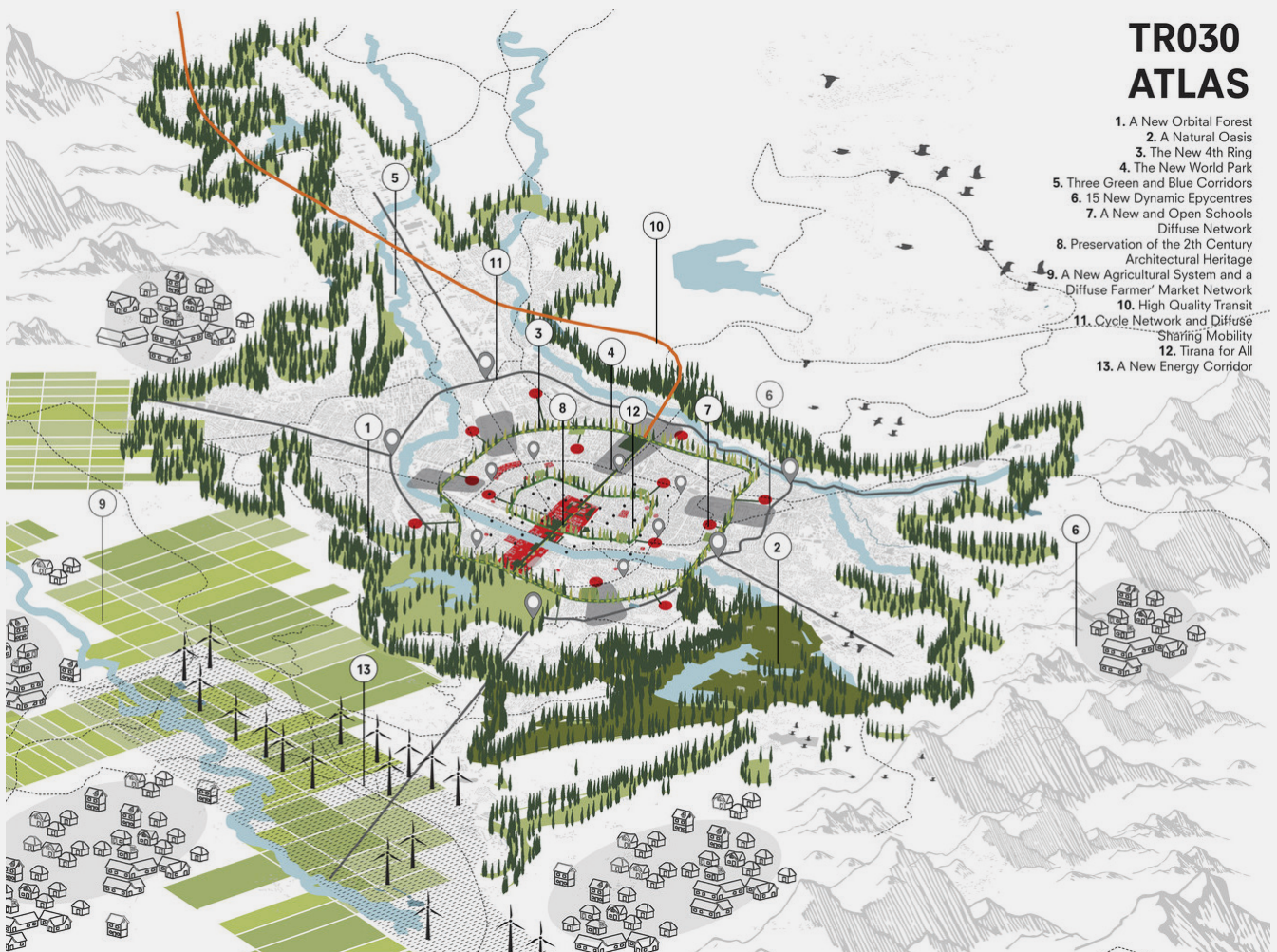
In 2018 Tirana adopted its first urban vision and masterplan since the administrative reforms: Tirana030, designed by Stefano Boeri. It covers not only the city centre but also what used to be independent towns and villages at the outskirts of the city,

including rural mountainous areas in the periphery. It aims to transform Tirana into a green and inclusive city through the creation of a continuous orbital forest system around the city that would redefine its limits and act as a barrier to urban sprawl.

In addition, the Sustainability Urban Mobility Plan for the city of Tirana (SUMP, 2019) is a strategic plan designed to help Tirana transition from a car centric to people centric mobility.

Last but not the least, several post earthquake reconstruction projects are currently underway. The idea is to go beyond mere reconstruction and renovation and create new neighbourhoods in strategically earmarked sites. Once complete, these mixed-use cross-financed neighbourhoods would operate as vibrant urban centres that would encapsulate Tirana's vision of a polycentric and kaleidoscopic city.

Stefano Boeri's TR030 urban vision projects Tirana as a green metropolis



## KINOSTUDIO'S FUTURE ROLE IN A POLYCENTRIC CITY

The Kinostudio area has an iconic place in the imaginarium of Albanian culture. As the center of Albanian cinematographic production since the 1950s it has produced the images that have built, reflected and recorded the identity of the nation. It currently houses the Ministry of culture, The Marubi film school, the Albanian National film archive, and several TV studios and radio stations. The area also is also home to the now dilapidated Porcelani factory which produced porcelain and ceramics for the whole country.

In the 1950s this was the eastern edge of the city. But in the 90s and 2000s informal housing was built in the available land around the area. Currently Kinostudio is strategically placed with the potential to connect the urban core of Tirana to the protected natural areas of Dajti National Park and further afield.

### The workshop objectives

Because of its storied past and current program, the area is seen as an important node with cultural dimensions in the polycentric Tirana vision of the TR030 plan. Although an international competition for a masterplan of the area is envisioned to take place some time in the near future, the vision is yet to be defined. For this reason, the Tirana municipality has suggested to focus on Kinostudio as a pole of a polycentric Tirana, where the workshop can provide a strategic vision that can be used as a premise for more specific urban design competitions.

With Kinostudio as a starting point, the scope of the workshop goes beyond it, incorporating broader strategies for the eastern slice of the city from the urban core, through Kinostudio, all the way to the Dajti National Park. The workshop explores actionable ideas and approaches on repairing the current cracks in the territory, while preparing to sustainably manage the rapid demographic and economic growth in Tirana.

The Ministry of Culture located in Kinostudio



Porcelani park and surrounding housing blocks



## PROCESS OF THE WORKSHOP

### Preparatory events:

#### Exploratory mission

January 2020

Les Ateliers team met the Municipality of Tirana to discuss the development of the Albanian capital and the topic of the workshop.

#### Online round tables

1st Round Table - September 2020

Enabling Tirana's transition towards alternative and sustainable modes of mobility

2nd Round Table - October 2020

Matching municipal services to housing development in a rapid growth context

3rd Round Table - December 2020

Balancing urban - rural development for territorial resilience

International Meet Up - December 2020

Tirana as an attractive Mediterranean capital for Youth

#### Partners Committee

15 January 2021

An online forum for dialogue and consultation between local stakeholders, institutions, researchers, private stakeholders and representatives of civil society around the topic of the workshop

### Elements of the workshop's programme:

**Site visits** - 23, 24 and 25 January 2021

Heritage, rehabilitation and integration of informality  
Southeast: New places for polycentrism in a growing city  
Kinostudio : the emergence of an open cultural campus

**Opening session** - 26 January 2021

**Exchange Forum** - 28 January 2021: Local partners, stakeholders, professors and guests joined by videoconference or onsite to follow the teams' progress and comment on their proposals

**Final presentations and jury** - 02 February 2021



## Proposals for a resilient future



# The Teams' Proposals

## 1. Less is more

### Multi-functional open spaces for resilient neighbourhoods

The first team draws on the vision of the general local plan TR030 to propose complementary actions starting from public spaces at the neighbourhood level, organically growing onto the city level, and eventually integrating with the metropolitan network.

The strategy is to increase the public space available for active mobility and community activities by closing some streets, offering safe routes for pedestrians and bikers to get from one place to another, and eventually covering large areas.

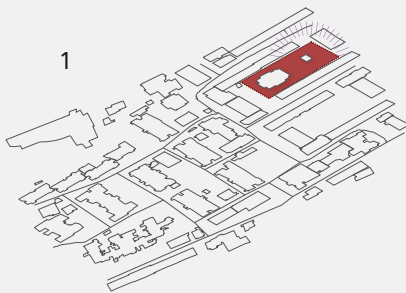
The strategy is deeply participatory: after identifying open spaces and old industrial buildings, the municipality encourages citizens to propose projects based on their own needs, such as urban agriculture,

green spaces, cultural activities... This co-production is made possible by a methodology which associates the inhabitants at all stages, bringing them together and encouraging transparency.

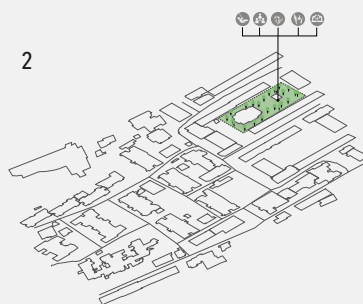
The former Porcelani factory in the vicinity of Kinostudio is taken as an example of the city's reinvestment in these abandoned places: there are multiple functions such as handicrafts, urban agriculture and cultural spaces.

Infusing these spaces with intense social and cultural programs encourages the collective use of public spaces. Active modes of transport are prioritized for accessibility, safety and inclusion, and an alternative car free network starts to emerge. By completing the already growing network proposed in TR030, it becomes possible to cross the entire city and reach as far as Durrës and the other surrounding towns.

#### An incremental approach to developing a network of interconnected public spaces



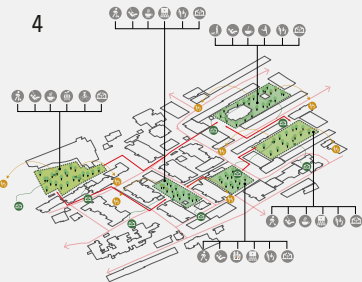
1. Pilot Microspace: Claiming an empty pocket space.



2. Transforming the empty space into an active space with the introduction of recreational, cultural and/or sports activities.



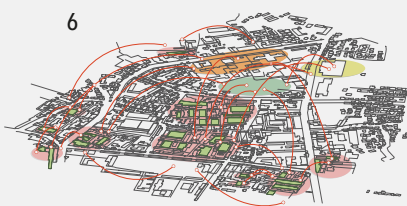
3. Bringing people together for recreation, art, production and community involvement. Local food producers sell their goods directly to consumers at farmers markets and community gardens.



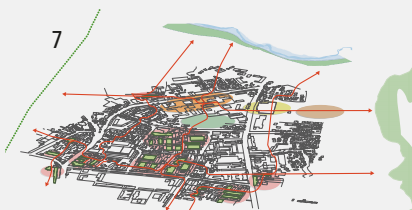
4. Developing multiple micro-spaces for public use, connecting them through pedestrian and bicycle lanes, thereby progressively creating an integrated network of accessible public spaces for more and more households.



5. Encouraging the residents' bottom-up approach to develop micro-spaces with funds generated from the products cultivated, with the support of public and private entities.



6. Creating and linking larger pocket poles with each other as well as with the nearby bigger park, the multifunctional pole of Porcelani and the Kinostudio's Cultural one. Some activities may now happen in the public micro spaces.



7. Connecting the new integrated network of micro and macro public spaces with the larger structures of Tirana, the Tirana river, the 4th new green ring, Dajti Mountain and the Metrobosco, also large recreational parks of public production.

## 2. Positive Energy City

### A nature positive approach

Tirana has developed rapidly and uncontrollably around the urban center, while neglecting the surrounding rural areas. The second team proposes a positive vision of the city in 2050, based on the threats linked to climate change and on the necessary resilience in the face of certain events such as the 2020 pandemic.

The transformation towards a carbon-neutral future is made possible through the proactive attitude of Tirana's institutions, actively engaging with the public and incentivizing social participation.

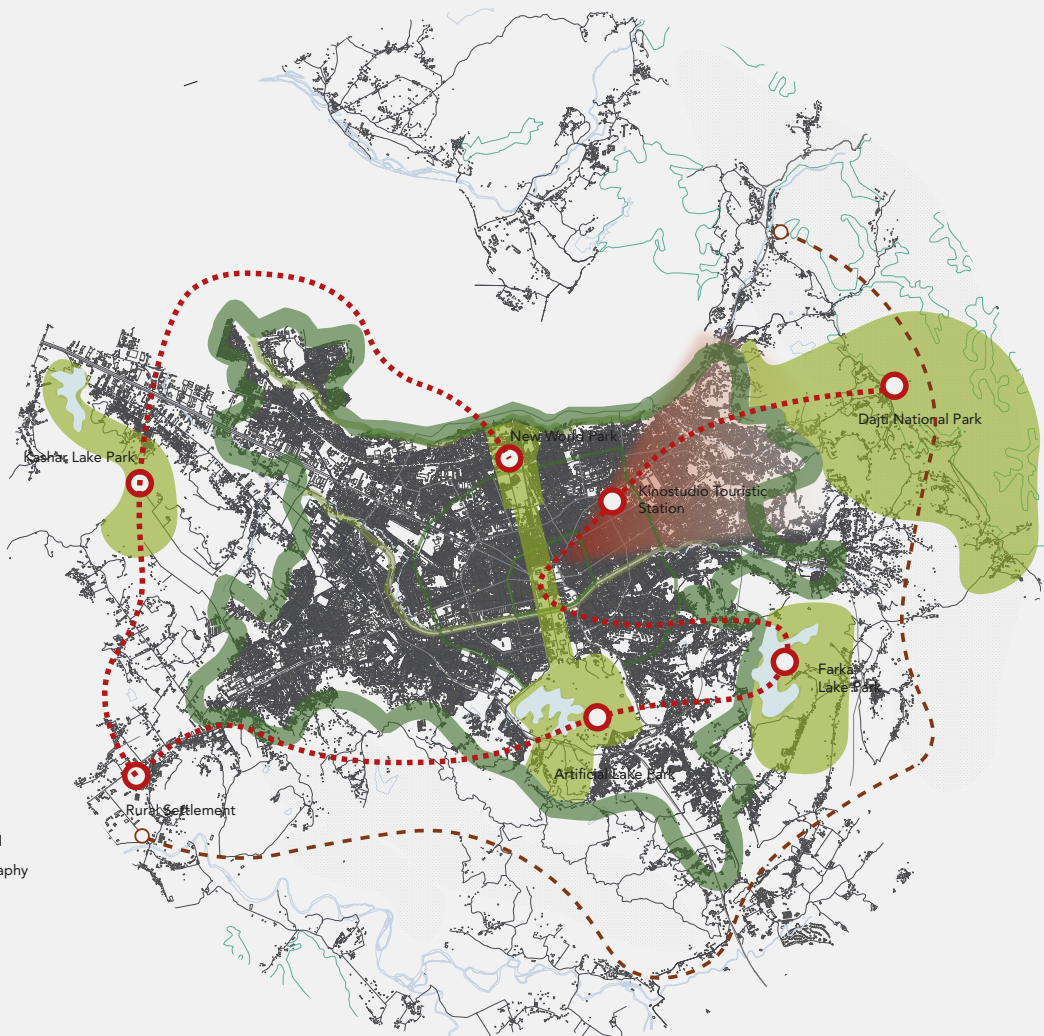
Skëndi, an Albanian in his forties, is our guide in the projected smart city of 2050. Skëndi was a

student in the 2020s, when the Pyramid, a vestige of communism, became a training center for information and communication technologies. A young man interested in art and culture, he was involved in the process of revitalizing some old factories. Now he works and lives in Tirana.

He shares his daily life with us as well as the policies that have transformed the city:

- › soft mobility has spread to the city, based on existing plans but also with the installation of a tram along the main axis
- › participation is encouraged for creative activities in the old factories
- › remote working and improved mobility have made rural areas more attractive. Organic agriculture is the norm.
- › Kinostudio is now the cultural and creative center of the city, and the starting point for sightseeing and nature excursions in Dajti.

The team offers a vision of a Nature Positive approach grounded in the TR030 vision



# 3. Go EAST!

## Cloud city

The Cloud City is an innovative approach that seeks to reverse the historic patterns of urban movement in Albania, using both new forms of social organization and existing cultural capital to empower citizens in the selected area, improve economic opportunities and transform the communities of the 21st century for a resilient future.

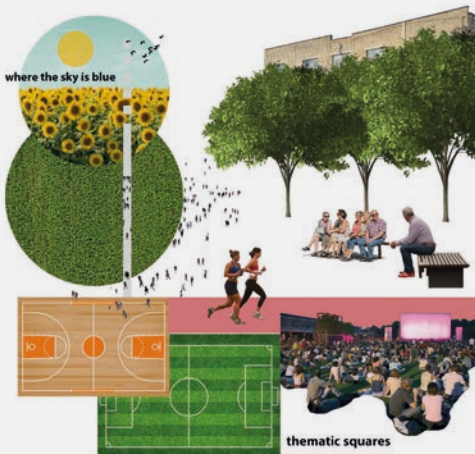
The third team offers to build on the neighbourhood's assets:

- › Neighbouring Mount Dajti, an ideal destination for nature and sports tourism
- › Vast agricultural lands located east of the city
- › Rich historical, architectural and cultural legacy of Kinostudio Shqiperia e Re and the Marubi Film Academy;
- › Highly educated young Albanians
- › Abandoned buildings and industrial wasteland east of the city

The end goal is to create a more flexible district, rooted in its territory and modern in its economic and social dynamics. It identifies different types of "intermediate spaces", to be repaired and furnished to improve the quality of life, welcoming solutions for mobility, housing, agriculture, social encounters, knowledge, employment and entrepreneurship.

One of the central concepts is connectivity (both digital and physical). This term generally describes the ability to exchange information, goods, services but also human capital, stories and social cohesion. Resilience is thus conceived in terms of connectivity, which will contribute to meet and support the needs of a more "permeable" society, using the tools of temporary and permanent urban planning.

Kinostudio is transformed through the neighbourhood's new identity





# A shared vision by the three teams

## An ACTIVE city

### Repairing the public realm, enhancing walkability

Preparing for climate resilience through green infrastructure and soft mobility.

In the first roundtable, we spoke of the relationship between Tirana's car-centric mobility and its lost, reduced and neglected public spaces – partly as an extreme counter-reaction to decades of denial of private property and individual car ownership during the Communist era.

The participants discussed the challenge of making the switch from driving to more environment friendly modes of transport and established that solving mobility is really not about public transportation, nor is it about technology. In the context of Tirana, the real challenge is one of mentality - to dethrone the car as a status symbol and to make walking and cycling attractive to the people of Tirana, and to ensure that the innovation in urban mobility triggered during the pandemic results in lasting change.

### 15-min city VS 1 hour metropolis

While the teams embraced the benefits of the polycentric city with its self-sufficient 'covid-resilient' neighbourhoods, equal emphasis was placed on planning for a complete and well connected city at the metropolitan scale. The city's nodes, or hubs, each known for their unique and diverse role within the city, are accessed via an integrated multimodal transport system that includes a variety of mobility solutions. The teams unanimously highlighted that the key to ensuring behavioral change lay not in any one solution but rather in ensuring that the combined mobility options allow Tirana's citizens to access the

various services provided in each node. In the case of Kinostudio, one such potential hub, this could entail, among other things, night buses to accommodate evening film screenings and events.

### Green Infrastructure

Tirana's parks, although large, remain isolated and disconnected. They cannot compensate for the absence of small pocket parks, crucial for recreational needs and quality of life, especially in high density urban neighbourhoods. Once again, the key factor is the importance of a network of interconnected green spaces achieved through cumulative and consistent urban acupuncture actions, such as converting unused areas, abandoned spaces and parking lots into mini parks. The resulting green corridors, in combination with the aforementioned bike paths and pedestrian spaces, would bring multiple benefits to the city: a healthy urban environment, reduced impact of urban heat islands, a stronger social fabric, enhanced biodiversity as well as increased flood resilience.

### Microtransformations

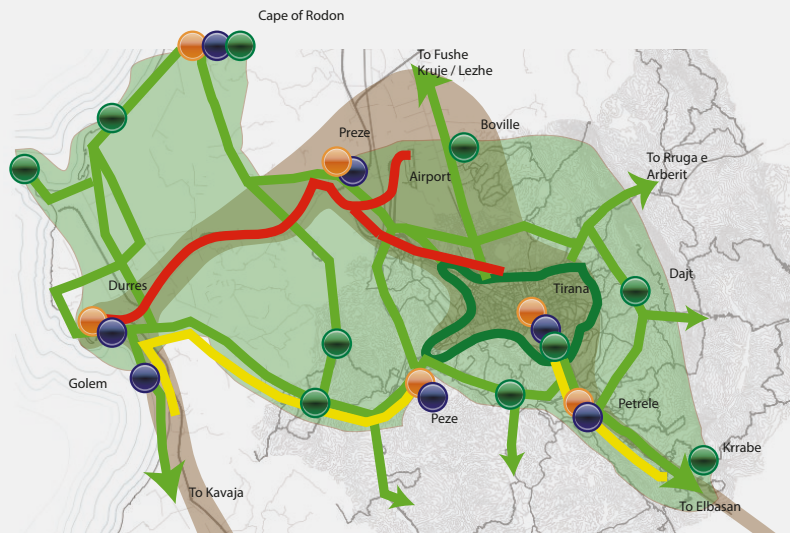
An active pedestrian and bike friendly environment can be accomplished through:

- › revitalizing untapped public space in between buildings; - this is particularly relevant in communist era neighborhoods of "prefabricated" apartment blocks.
- › encouraging active uses in the ground floor such as shops and services; Tirana has a rich culinary tradition and great weather to support a culture around outdoor dining.
- › increasing the public space available for slow modes of transport and community activities by limiting car access in certain secondary streets and transforming them into social spaces and event venues, through close collaboration with the residents.



Informal areas in 2021 and in 2050: improving public space with environmental value to increase soft modes of mobility





The mobility system expands and takes into account the capital region.



A strategically planned network of green infrastructure connects the 15 minute neighbourhoods

Over time, even small actions at the neighborhood scale would give rise to a metropolitan-level network of people-friendly, car-free spaces covering much longer distances. Although a bottom-up approach, this organic development could potentially have a significant impact at the city and up to the metropolitan scale if it is both encouraged and supported by the municipality.

### Tirana's sixth ring

Tirana's ongoing Orbital Forest Project, a green belt beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> ring road, aims to limit urban sprawl and increase the city's available green space. One of the teams took the concept one step further and proposed a "sixth ring road" within the orbital forest. The idea is to have a series of bike/walking paths that go along the orbital forest and also connect radially with the soft mobility infrastructure that lead towards the city center as well as infrastructure that radiates outwards connecting to suburban and periurban areas.

This strategy would have the dual benefit of making the orbital forest more accessible and valued by the citizens, and it would encourage biking and walking by providing a more pleasant and safe environment to carry them out. This strategy is in synergy with the previously mentioned green infrastructure and micro-transformations within the city proper. When looking outwards, towards the rural edges of the municipal boundaries of Tirana, the soft mobility ring at the orbital forest connects with a network of ecotourism "trails", adding value to the existing natural areas, cultural sites and historical monuments. These eco-tourism trails connect Tirana with its suburbs, rural towns and villages, and can be gradually expanded to intercity and regional connections stretching to Durrës on the coast, or Elbasan and Dibra across the mountains.

In other words, the "sixth ring" and its eco-trails is where bottom up and top down as well as urban and rural development strategies meet.

# A CLOUD city

## Repairing the urban-rural fracture

Preparing a resilient economy through connectivity

In the round table on rural-urban interdependence, we examined the symbiotic relationship between the rural and the urban. We looked into why people leave their villages and discussed strategies that would give them reason to go back. Municipal departments as well as academic experts acknowledged the challenges of working on the development of a region made up of fragmented entities that until recently had never been governed centrally nor with a territorial vision. We agreed that for a truly sustainable approach and a holistic development of the metropolitan region, a better and deeper collaboration between urban planning expertise and rural development expertise is essential.

## The hybrid work revolution

Tirana's 2019 Earthquake followed by the Covid-19 global pandemic have significantly changed the way people value city and rural dwelling and working. The teams proposed an innovative approach that seeks to reverse the historic patterns of urban movement in Albania, using both new forms of social organization and existing rural and cultural capital to empower the citizens.

They projected a post-pandemic future where traditional economies (agriculture, tourism, production) could co-exist in harmony with new "covid-resilient" economies (remote working), creating a hybrid economy driven by an interdependent network of remote knowledge workers and location specific workers.

This approach takes a pragmatic view that prioritizes economic development, using it as a lever for socially and environmentally sustainable development. For the area of Kinostudio, this means creating a new cluster focusing on creative and service economies, and improving linkages both outside and within the neighborhood to the agricultural and natural tourism potentials of the Tirana Metropolitan Area.

## Eat local, work global

The Cloud City unveils new modes of work and opens up opportunities for increased mobilization and productivity of existing employment. By empowering and connecting the creative cluster, professionals will be able to offer their services and products to a wider variety of clients and markets.

1. Knowledge professionals will be engaged both within the community, collaborating to facilitate improved products and marketing for goods, as well as outside, through remote work and collaboration based upon an improved reputation and knowledge base.
2. Large businesses will benefit from the cultivation of a skilled workforce and contribute to building the economic, social and urban potential of the community, which provide dividends to their own success.
3. Meanwhile, the resulting improvement in product quality will help the agricultural producers, artisans and craftsmen to enter new markets, increase sales and reach more clients. Alongside the development of human capital, the Cloud City will be marketed as a talent and innovation hub, attracting foreign investment and new talent, creating a virtuous cycle of growth and further contributing to resilience.

The Cloud City brings new activities and intensifies the use of public space in the city

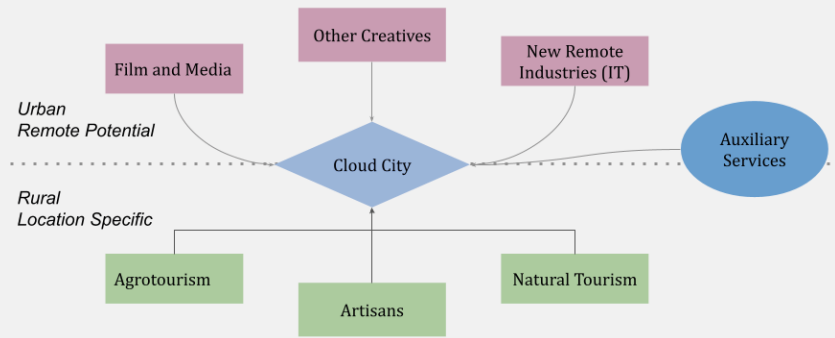


## Economic sustainability

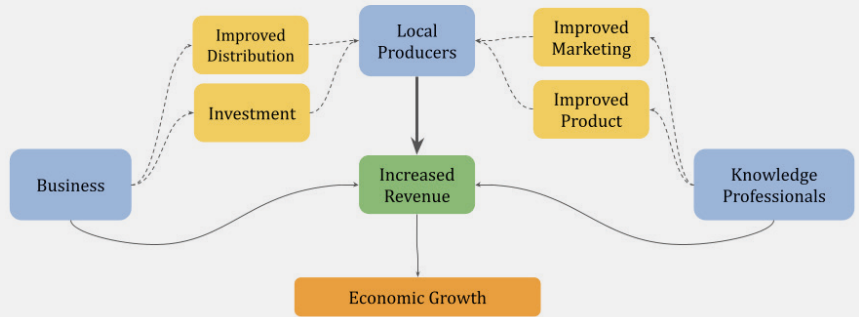
In order for this approach to be considered indispensable and function beyond the lifespan of a few urban interventions, it must provide for the community's basic needs. This can only be achieved by improving livelihoods through sustainable income opportunities. Providing these opportunities to all sections of society would ensure a more widespread adoption of this approach and an engaged community ready to embrace a new way of life. In order to achieve this, the project seeks to improve the integration between traditional, place-specific economies and the new, increasingly digital creative classes, through partnerships, knowledge transfer and increased physical and informational connectivity.

The infrastructure must be built first to be then supported by increased connectivity (both digital and physical). The term connectivity here generally describes the ability to exchange information, goods, services but also human capital, narratives and social cohesion. In the "Cloud city", Resilience is thus conceived as a function of connectivity, which will help to both meet and sustain the needs of a more "permeable" society.

Cloud City Professional Sectors



Possible Collaboration Framework in Kinostudio



The Cloud city also brings development in rural areas



## A DIY\* CITY

### Repairing distrust and creating sustainable dialogue

Preparing a resilient society through scaled engagement

\*DIY: Do It Yourself

One of the outcomes of a roundtable discussion on the challenges of providing services and infrastructure to expanding populations, was that the deciding factor in the successful installation of these services was a healthy and continuous dialogue based on transparency. When financial resources are limited, what matters most is how these resources are spent and for whose benefit.

### Top-down with bottom-up

All three proposals emphasized the need for inclusive and participatory urban planning – engaging the residents in the decision-making processes – in order to repair Tirana’s neighbourhoods and make them resilient to economic and environmental uncertainties. This would require an integrated top-down and bottom-up strategy.

- › Top-down: A top-down approach would help develop the main planning policies and framework, while taking care to build trust in the planning process through better participatory tools, better interaction and inclusion.
- › Bottom-up : A bottom-up participation action would encourage citizen participation, take into account the needs and vision of urban users, and adapt the function and design of public spaces accordingly.

The clear risk to avoid for both the government as well as the citizens is for such participation to be hijacked by politics and lobbying.

### Public spaces as economic drivers

Neglected public spaces could be made more attractive not just for cultural or aesthetic reasons but to enable economic activities such as urban farming harvests or small neighborhood markets where individuals can sell homemade products and remain motivated to proactively maintain these spaces.

### Participatory activism

A community is empowered when it can collectively identify its needs despite limited resources and without relying on the authorities. Films and social media help express and promote these needs as well as multiply the democratic process in other communities.

### Awareness & transparency

Strategies such as organizing group activities, broadcasting informative videos on municipal policy as well as providing assistance with various administrative procedures, could help improve relations between the municipality and the residents.

### Community-led urban regeneration

Democratic decision-making processes like participatory budgeting, in which citizens directly decide on how to allocate a part of the public budget, can greatly restore people’s trust in the authorities.

One way to facilitate the process would be for the municipality to identify unused urban spaces and list them on a platform. People could then make their proposals, have them approved by the municipality and apply for funding from private investors. This type of bottom-up urban regeneration could also help resolve some of the financial challenges of funding such operations.

### Lasting change through temporary interventions

Successful urban regeneration, like economic growth, takes time and careful planning. One way to achieve it is through temporary interventions or pop-up urbanism: quick, low-cost and high engagement activities to revitalize the existing urban spaces through active community participation, ultimately vital to attracting private investment. Success stories at a micro level eventually clear the path for more and more permanent interventions and overall improvement of the urban fabric. The first phase of “temporary” interventions can begin immediately but the second phase of permanent intervention will take longer. This approach would maximize the probability of long-term success while controlling costs.

### Urban transformation and resilient communities

Abandoned and unused sites on the fringes of the city have a high potential for renovation and repurposing by integrating them into the community. The Communist housing blocks exhibit both decline and resilience. Decline is felt in their physical forms and urban spaces as a result of time and exploitative development, while resilience manifests in their ability to still provide a place for community and engagement.

The teams proposed developing a new cluster around the area of Kinostudio-Kombinat, focusing on creative and service economies, and improving linkages both within the neighbourhood and with the Tirana Metropolitan Area in order to strengthen

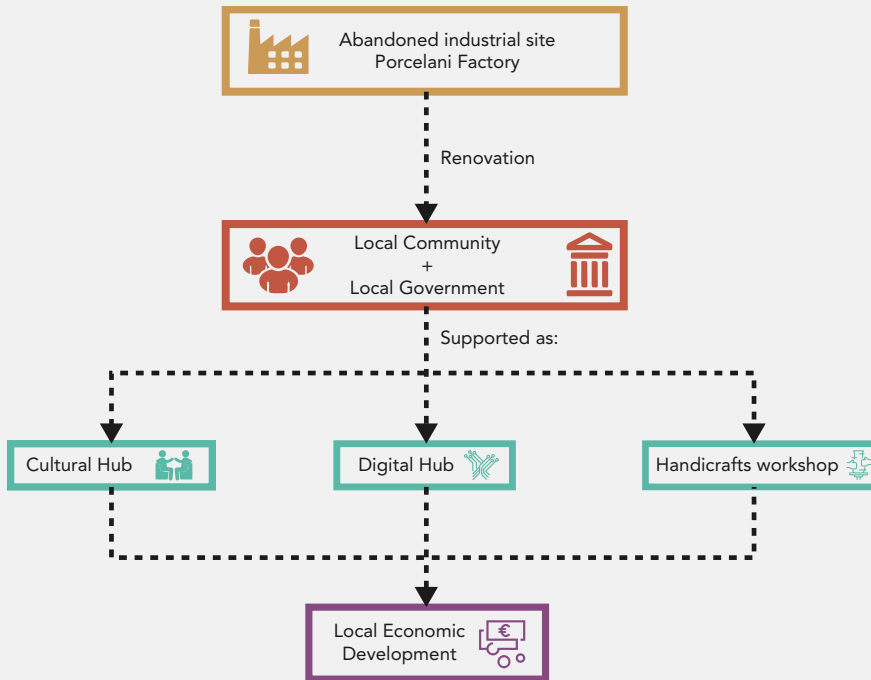
its agricultural and nature-based tourism development potential. The aim: regenerated neighborhoods where citizens are culturally and financially empowered. The process: A multistep renovation process involving resident participation, experimental workshops, local businesses and proactive municipal support.

The key to successful urban regeneration lies in distinguishing the specific character of a particular neighborhood, creating multifunctional hubs and appropriate linkages: connecting the city with nature,

the youth with the elderly, institutions with people, the past and the future, as well as small businesses and social activities.

The Porcelani building could host a handicrafts and food market, urban agriculture facilities, social activities and a cultural venue. Multifunctional urban spaces could greatly aid in the sustainable development of Tirana as they would meet the social, economic, environmental and cultural needs of its communities.

Regeneration of the Porcelani Factory through community participation



TIMELINE	TEMPORARY URBANISM	PERMANENT URBANISM
3 mo-1y	Identify Best Pop-Up Practices (e.g. guerilla gardening, events, opening up streets, installations, performances etc)	Urban Regeneration Studies (Social, Economic, Environmental and Urban Dimension) to understand the status quo, define stakeholders, agendas and existing development trajectories
6 mo-1y	Execute (using Public and Private funds and engaging local expertise)	
	Use Low-Cost Marketing and Grassroots engagement ( users become creators)	
6mo-1y	Monitoring and Feedback	Define Guidelines and Business Model for Different Typologies (Developers, Private, etc.)
1-2y	Maintenance and Repeat Implementation as Needed (ongoing)	Facilitate Pilot Projects
6mo-1y		Feedback and Calibration
Ongoing		Wider Implementation

Temporary actions can be launched quickly and then be turned in permanent urban actions

Methodology enabling citizens to participate in the transformation of public space



Urban gardening within the local squares as an example of community participation

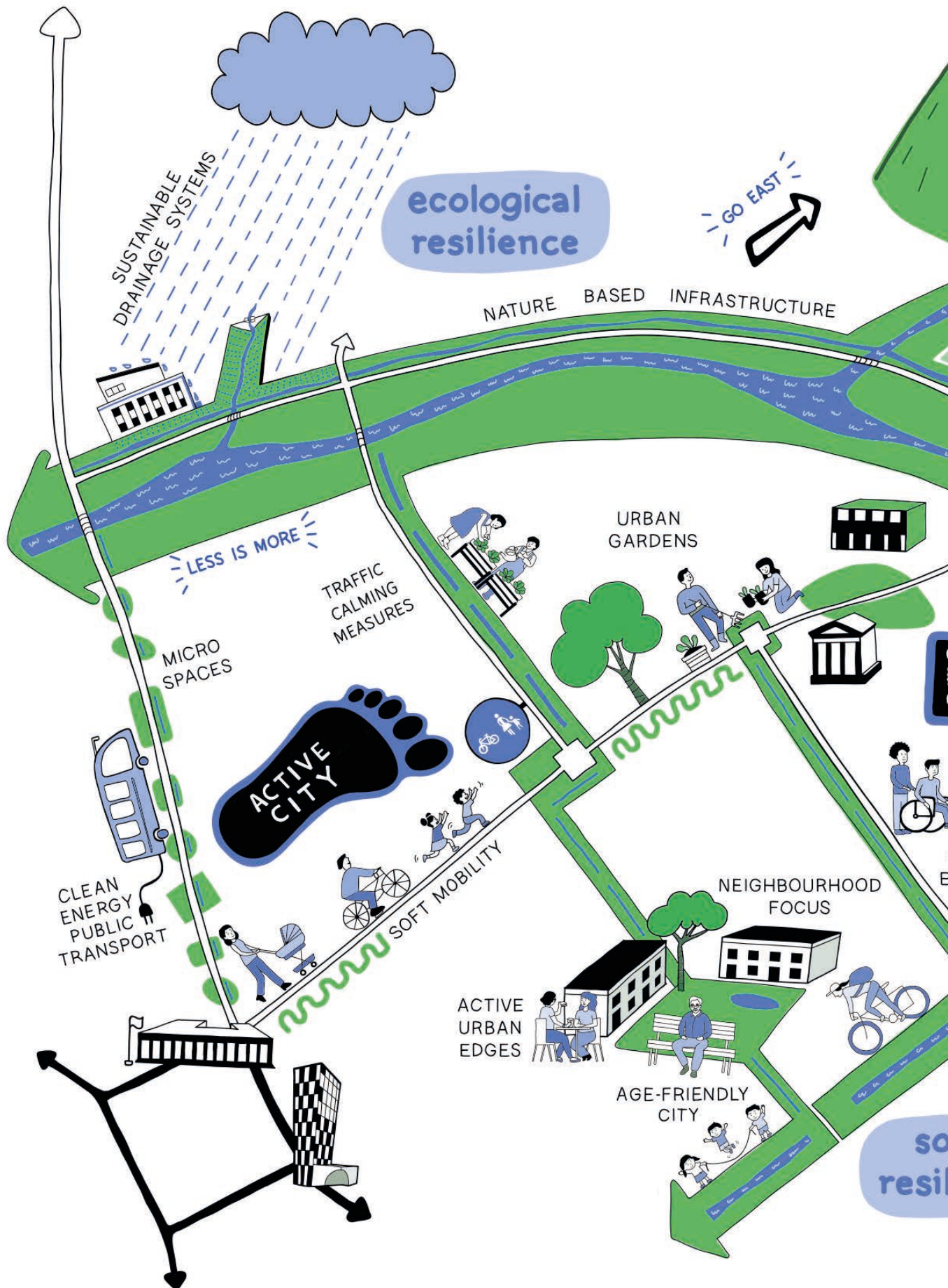
The Porcelani factory becomes an attractive center for activities in Kinostudio





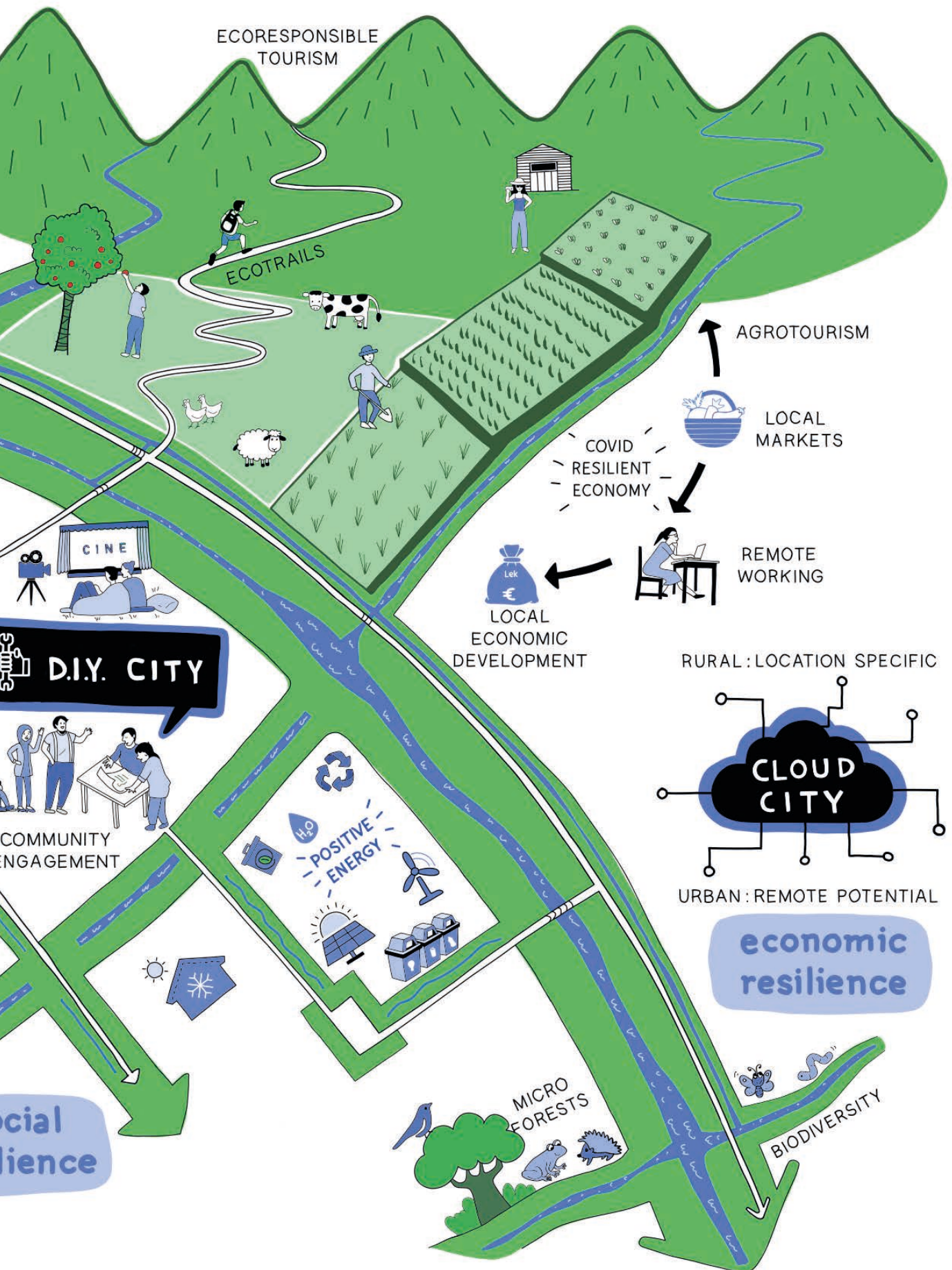
## Vision for Kinostudio and Tirana





The common vision of the future Tirana of Tirana#100: Rebound (diagram by Reena Mahajan and Ermal Kapedani)





ECORESPONSIBLE  
TOURISM

ECOTRAILS

AGROTOURISM

LOCAL  
MARKETS

COVID  
RESILIENT  
ECONOMY

REMOTE  
WORKING

LOCAL  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

RURAL : LOCATION SPECIFIC

CLOUD  
CITY

URBAN : REMOTE POTENTIAL

economic  
resilience

MICRO  
FORESTS

BIODIVERSITY

D.I.Y. CITY

COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

social  
resilience

## Roadmap

# Vision for Kinostudio and Tirana

### **1. At a strategic scale, a combination of top down planning and bottom up engagement.**

- › Spaces between (existing) buildings - designed with involvement of residents.
- › These are connected with the city-wide network and corridors - devised through centralized long-term planning.

### **2. Scalable (soft) mobility - from space between two buildings it can reach down to Durres.**

- › A soft mobility corridor in the orbital forest and radial access through neighbourhoods.
- › The car is not banned or ignored - instead, other mobility possibilities are provided concurrently.
- › There is a focus on individual mobility and a necklace of small public spaces that are connected to each other and to the transport.

### **3. Kinostudio - a place of integration. Its role in the future of Tirana stems from its geographical positioning, its cultural heritage and architectural assets.**

- › Urban/suburban/rural
- › Tech/Traditional economy (art-crafts/rural production)
- › Eat local - work global
- › Nature-based infrastructure
- › City as a place to make a living, and then more

### **The vision REPAIRS:**

- › Local public micro-spaces
- › Economic relationship between rural and urban
- › Transit and access to cultural activities and spaces
- › Green infrastructure
- › The existing character of the neighborhood (architectural, social, cultural)

### **The vision PREPARES Tirana by:**

- › Providing a scalable soft mobility network that connects the core to the periphery and further
- › Improving social participation and trust, starting from their front doors
- › Economic development opportunities in the rural areas through tourism and production
- › Intersecting a globally minded young workforce and new technology with traditional and local economic activities.
- › Creating and valorising (thus protecting) environmental (green and blue) areas at the periphery of the city and stretching into the rural/mountains
- › Placing housing (densification) and economic development as a key process that enables the rest.
- › Densification, when well-guided, facilitates the provision of municipal services - physical infrastructure (water, sewage and waste water removal, electricity) and social services (schools/day cares, public spaces etc.).

## The international Jury

The jury of the workshop was composed of international partner representatives, experts and researchers, as well as local authorities and actors, local institution representatives, specialists ...

In view of the pandemic's health and safety protocols, Les Ateliers and its partners organized a hybrid workshop, prioritizing the health and safety of the participants while also bringing together international experts from all over the world. I.e. France, USA, Greece, and Canada

"Thanks a lot for these amazing presentations of Tirana's future. I particularly enjoyed the fact that all three teams had a people approach, involving the citizens in the development of the city."

The residents invited to create and maintain the micro public spaces, that can rely on a civic heritage within the small neighborhood. It is not the core mission of the municipality but it is a very strong challenge to make city policies successful. It is really something to work with and to work on."

GENCI KOJDELI, HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT, MUNICIPALITY OF TIRANA

## Verbatim

"The different teams have strongly underlined the need to bring nature back in the city. What is the next great park system for Tirana? I was impressed by how the teams embraced the concept of the orbital forest and built on it to elaborate a metropolitan ecological framework."

The orbital forest and the water bodies form a large park that goes through the city, touching many neighborhoods. The teams have worked to emphasize the role of local and micro parks and how they should be linked to the river and forest systems. It is very relevant to guide decision-making from this idea towards an ecological framework."

PHILIP ENQUIST, PARTNER IN THE CHICAGO  
OFFICE OF SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL IN  
CHARGE OF URBAN DESIGN & PLANNING

"Tirana is four times a capital. It is the capital of Albania, it is a capital in the Balkans, it is a capital of the Mediterranean Region, and it is a European Capital."

The work of the teams offer approaches that may inspire the local stakeholders on several important themes for Tirana:

- › waste management and its numerous dimensions, notably the circular economy as well as individual and collective behaviors;
- › the environment, addressed through nature based solutions;
- › public space management, and maintenance;
- › active mobility replacing automobile dominance;
- › community involvement driving innovation and progress;
- › and finally, culture: Tirana has a rich past and should be proud of its heritage.

As a last remark, I think Tirana will be a city for its people, for the country, but it will also shine as a welcoming city for foreigners. Tirana will become a touristic destination, not only in the Balkans but in the whole Europe, thanks to your culture, your tradition, your history, but also thanks to the welcoming heart of the people of Tirana."

BERNARD VALERO, FRENCH AMBASSADOR

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Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Tirana, Albania

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