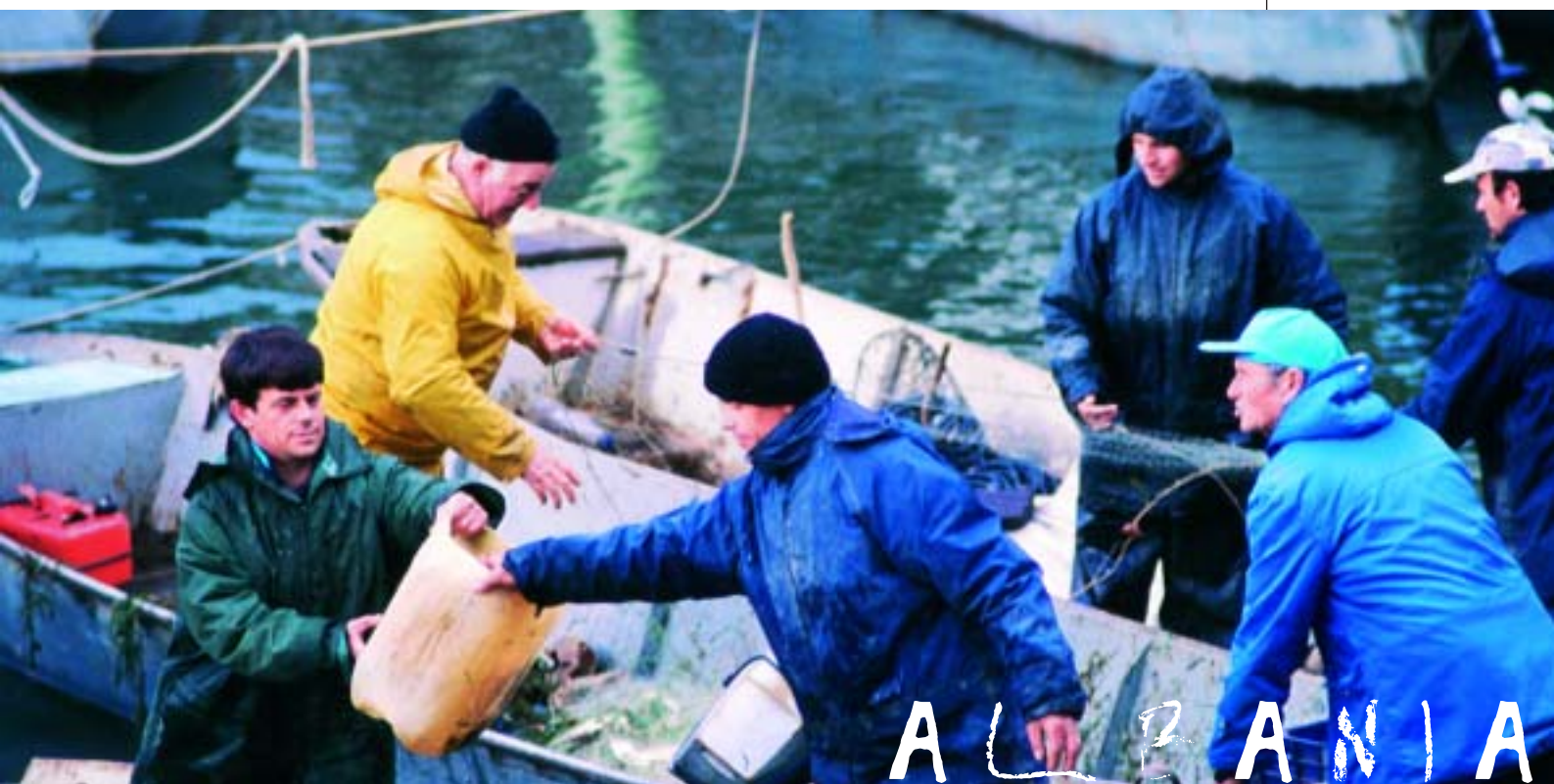


PASARP
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME

IFAD/UNOPS



IN ALBANIA

ALBANIA

PRESENTATION

Duration of activities

The Programme began in July 1999 and was ongoing as of December 2003.

National coordination

The Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation is the Albanian institution responsible for the Programme of Assistance to Support Albanian Regions and Prefectures (PASARP).

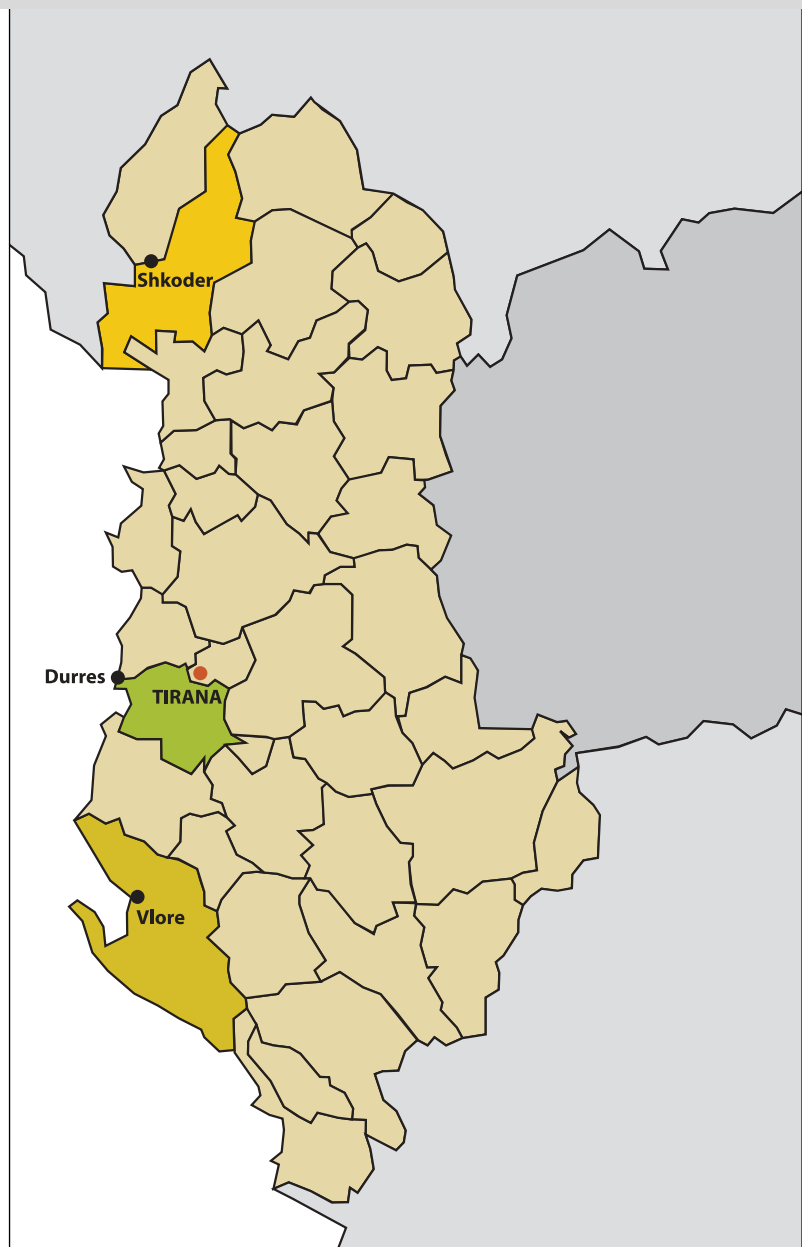
Since 1999, the National Working Group, created by the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, has monitored all PASARP initiatives at the international, national and regional levels. Since 1999, the Vice-Minister for the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation has presided over the work of the National Working Group, which includes: a representative of the Ministry of Economics, the director of the Department of Economic Cooperation, the prefects of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder, and the director of the Local Technical Unit of Cooperazione Italiana. Starting in 2004, the presidents of the Regional Councils will also become full members in order to bring the working group in line with new Albanian decentralisation policies

Governments involved in cooperation

Italy.

Territorial actors

The Working Group of the Region of Shkoder, called the Local Action Group since 2003, has coordinated PASARP activities since 1999 and defines their local plans of operations. A technical unit responsible for processing programmes of a regional scope has also been operating since 2003. Ten representatives of the public administrations and three local associations participate in the Local Action Group, with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) representing the international community. TEULEDA, the local economic development agency (LEDA) of the Region of Shkoder, has been working for the economic development of the region since 2001. It has 21 members, 9 public and 12 private.



The Working Group of the Region of Vlore, which has coordinated PASARP activities since 1999, is composed of 8 representatives of the institutions, 3 local associations, the Italian Consulate in Vlore, and the OSCE.

AULEDA, the LEDA of the Region of Vlore, has been working for the economic development of the region since 2003. It has 13 members, 9 public and 4 private.

The Working Group of the Region of Durres, which has coordinated PASARP activities since 1999, is composed of 15 representatives of local institutions, and 3 local institutions. A cultural study group was set up in Durres, which involves more than 200 representatives of regional associations and institutions.

TAULEDA, the LEDA of the Region of Durres, has been working for the economic development of the region since 2003. It has 23 members, 8 public and 15 private.

Territorial partners

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group of the Region of Shkoder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toscana Region Committee; Emilia-Romagna Region Committee; Provinces of Pisa, Grosseto and Forlì-Cesena; Municipalities of Modena and Venezia; Trento Committee. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gruppo di Lavoro della Regione di Valona | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marche Region Committee. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group of the Region of Durres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marche Region Committee; Lazio Region Committee. |

Funding

The Italian Government disbursed a total of USD 13,659,501 to the International Fund for Agricultural Development / United Nations Office for Project Services (IFAD/UNOPS) for PASARP between 1999 and 2004.

The overall contribution of the decentralised cooperation committees was USD 1,330,000. In 2003, the Italian regions raised more than USD 1,900,000 in

cofunding from the Italian Government (Law 84/01, Law 212) and the European Union (EU). The decentralised cooperation committees contributed substantial qualified technical assistance. A further USD 100,000 came from the universities of Bologna and Parma, the Caritas Ambrosiana charity, the Italian Institute of Culture in Tirana, and the Swiss Embassy.

Key features

At the end of 2003, a national guarantee fund was set up for the credit activities of the three LEDAs in order to create and sustain small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The CREDINS Bank board of directors established an additional fund of USD 1,400,000 to supplement the PASARP fund of USD 1,100,000. The CREDINS Bank also decided to open its own branch in Shkoder, one of the poorest regions in Albania. This result demonstrates TEULEDA's credibility in creating a favourable environment for entrepreneurship and development.

Decentralised cooperation contributed around USD 900,000, a significant amount, in 2003 to the regions of Shkoder, Vlore and Durres. Furthermore, partnerships between Italian and Albanian regions won seven bids for access to new funds for the same number of projects for a total of USD 1,900,000. Taking into consideration the other above-mentioned contributions, the result is that for every dollar invested by PASARP to implement projects (about USD 4,000,000) in the Regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder, another dollar came from other sources in 2003.

In December 2003, having learned about projects undertaken in Vlore, Durres and Shkoder, above all in preserving historical-artistic heritage and promoting culture, the mayor of Gjirokaster applied to the Ministry of Local Government to participate in PASARP and receive technical assistance. The mayor stated that with PASARP support the Municipality of Gjirokaster would improve its chances of being named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

PASARP collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) in drafting the strategic document for national psychiatric care reform, adopted by the Ministry of Health and approved by the Council of Ministries in May 2003. In 2004, the Ministry of Health envisages planning the conversion of resources and activation of new services, as recommended in the strategic document, in consideration of PASARP activities in the Regions of Vlore and Shkoder.

OVERVIEW

PASARP officially started in Albania on 4 January 2000 (its operational structure had already been launched in August 1999).

The Programme was set up by IFAD and UNOPS on the basis of a memorandum of understanding between the Italian and Albanian governments, signed on 10 June 1999. The Italian Government earmarked a total fund of LIT 36 billion for PASARP. In 1999, the first two instalments were disbursed for a total of LIT 6 billion from emergency funds to support the launch phase.

The Albanian Government targeted the Prefectures of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore for interventions, due to the high number of Kosovar refugees in these areas. In 2000 and 2001, participatory methods were implemented in the three prefectures through the Prefecture and municipal working groups. In addition, at the national level, a decree from the Prime Minister created the National Working Group for the national coordination of PASARP.

During the launch phase, the management and operational structure of PASARP was set up and the initial impact projects were identified in the prefectures. The working groups and the National Committee also jointly planned the activities of the first plan of operations for 2000–01, which was financed by the Italian Government with an additional contribution of LIT 4 billion. Impact projects were completed in the Prefectures of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore, and successful projects were carried out, such as the launching of the process of national mental healthcare reform and the implementation of the first LEDA in the Prefecture of Shkoder. In all these activities, a fundamental contribution came from decentralised cooperation actors. The activities of the first plan of operations ended in March 2002.

In early 2002, the second plan of operations was programmed for the period from April 2002 to March 2003. On 20 March 2002, the tripartite meeting between the Albanian Government, the Italian Government, IFAD and UNOPS was held in Tirana. The Albanian Government was represented by the secretary-general of the Presidency of the Republic, President Mejdani's spokesperson, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Economic Cooperation, the Minister for Public Order and the Vice-Minister for Agriculture. The director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs territorial office for the Balkans represented the Italian Government. The

Geneva UNOPS Division for Rehabilitation and Social Sustainability (UNOPS/RESS) Office was represented by the portfolio manager.

At the meeting, the prefects of Vlore, Shkoder and Durres presented the results achieved by PASARP in 2000 and 2001, and the most significant aspects of the new plan of operations. Minister Ruka, coordinator of the National Working Group, presented recommendations for the second phase of PASARP, inter alia, changing its name to "Programme of Activities in Support of Albanian Regions and Prefectures" while retaining the acronym PASARP, and the involving the newly created Albanian regions in the processes of territorial planning. Minister Meksi underlined the innovative aspects of the Programme, such as the economic development agencies, the mental health projects, international links created through decentralised cooperation, the study groups of the prefectures, and the intention of the Albanian Government to "export" these projects to other Albanian regions. The media gave ample coverage to the event, starting from the week preceding the meeting.

In July 2002, the Albanian Government appointed Fatos Nano as Prime Minister, Ben Blushi as Minister for Local Government and Decentralisation, and Arben Malaj as Minister for the Economy and International Cooperation. The new ministers confirmed the intention of the Albanian Government to enhance the role of PASARP in supporting decentralisation processes and local economic development under way in the country. In December 2002, the Italian Government approved funding amounting to USD 6,999,023 for the second plan of operations.

PASARP carried out the strategic changes requested by the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, bearing in mind the ongoing reform processes in Albania in 2003. The prefecture working groups were opened up to the presidents of the regions (Qark), who assisted the prefects with coordination. The mayors, who also belong to the regional councils, and some technical experts specialised in development planning joined the groups. The presidents of the regional councils are elected to the assembly by the mayors of the region and are responsible for development processes in their areas. The Regional Technical Units are being constituted and will be responsible for processing projects of a regional scope. In the Region of Shkoder, where conditions were most favourable, a veritable laboratory of new structures for the regions was set up. With their knowledge of methods and instruments of local democratic

governance, local Italian bodies involved in decentralised cooperation provided a valuable contribution to addressing these new challenges.

OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The Albanian Government has entrusted the Ministry of Local Government with coordinating PASARP. The prefects come under the direct control of the Ministry of Local Government as do the municipalities and communes in administrative issues. The Albanian authority responsible for PASARP is the Vice-Minister for Local Government, in charge of the project for the institutional reform of administrative decentralisation.

The National Working Group represents the PASARP strategic planning and supervisory body. It was created by a decree of the Prime Minister, and envisages the participation of the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Trade, the three prefects, UNOPS and the Italian Embassy. When necessary, it is extended to include the Prime Minister's Cabinet and sectoral ministries interested in PASARP activities. As a consequence of the growing importance of the regions, the presidents of the regional councils have been invited to participate fully in National Working Group meetings.

The prefecture working groups have been re-defined as regional working groups in the three regions. Participating in them are: the prefects, the presidents of regional councils and some members of the cabinets of the prefecture and the region, district officials, mayors, chambers of commerce, representatives of Albanian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), representatives of the local business world, a representative of Italian NGOs and one of the international NGOs, a local office director from the OSCE representing international organisations, representatives of decentralised cooperation, and the PASARP area manager. The local media participate regularly in the meetings and broadcast them, sometimes live, in order to guarantee maximum transparency in decision-making processes.

The agreement reached concerning the make-up of the regional working groups is a significant result, as the prefecture authorities are appointed by the central government while the presidents of the regions, mayors and district officials are elected. Thus, the meetings provide an opportunity for joint planning among the different political entities. The national authorities have

expressed great interest in these instruments of local governance, and the intention of institutionalising them in the framework of national decentralisation reform.

While continuing to be the local authorities responsible for PASARP, the prefects have been assisted by the presidents of the regional councils in coordination activities. In 2003, the principal territorial reference points for PASARP were the regional working groups and the regions. Routine management was delegated to the official in charge of the planning and development department, which was transferred from the prefecture to the regional administration. In 2000, operating through the working groups, the prefectures selected the target municipalities, where ad hoc working groups were set up to plan and monitor projects, under the management of the mayors or communal officials.

PASARP has a national coordination office in Tirana, where the PASARP international coordinator works, under contract to UNOPS. An international administrator, a programme assistant, a financial assistant, a secretary and a driver operate there. As of February 2003, an information and press office has been opened at the Tirana headquarters, managed by an Albanian expert. An international expert also provides technical assistance for the LEDAs of Shkoder (TEULEDA), Vlore (AULEDA) and Durres (TAULEDA), and other bodies in charge of managing the national guarantee fund, in collaboration with Albanian economists.

PASARP has an office in each of the Regions of Shkoder, Vlore and Durres. In each office, coordination is ensured by an area manager, under contract to UNOPS. There is also a financial assistant, an engineer, a programme assistant, a secretary and a driver. In April 2002, the PASARP office in Durres was transferred to the prefecture headquarters in order to save on operating costs. The area manager functions of Durres are carried out by an expert hired locally. The four offices have six vehicles, computers, telephone lines, fax machines, Internet, e-mail, electricity generators, telephones and radio links.

RESULTS OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Numerous activities were carried out at the international level in support of development processes in the Regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder.

Decentralised cooperation

In 2003, all activities agreed upon with the decentralised cooperation committees were financed and undertaken through numerous missions in Albania and Italy to exchange information and evaluate ongoing projects. Through decentralised cooperation, substantial European funds and additional financing were obtained to carry out projects identified by the regional working groups.

It was possible to involve so many important actors from Italy through permanent coordination between PASARP and the UNDP/UNOPS programme on education and training, information and documentation, and decentralised cooperation, known as EDINFODEC. All decentralised cooperation projects follow strategies defined by the regional working groups and are an organic part of local development plans. In the Regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder, the focal points of the decentralised cooperation committees are an integral part of the working group, guaranteeing the solidity of interventions and continuity of relationships.

Promotion of decentralised cooperation began through the PASARP framework in July 1999 with the presentation of programmes to interested regions and local bodies in Italy. In December 2000, 5 regions, 5 provinces, 12 municipalities and more than 70 public structures, NGOs and associations participated. In 2002, the decentralised cooperation committees operating in the three prefectures implemented projects for a total of USD 430,200. FORMEZ contributed about USD 100,000 for the Alba project. Donations from Italy were a further added value with regard to funds pledged by each committee. In 2002, intense joint planning began of projects to present to different funding sources.

In 2003, the decentralised cooperation committees operating in the PASARP framework were:

- The Emilia-Romagna Committee (composed of the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Province of Forlì-Cesena, the Municipalities of Modena, Forlì and Cesena, GVC, Nexus, Iscos, CEFA, UISP, Educaid, ARCI, AVSI, CESTAS Bologna, the Emilia-Romagna Theatre, the University of Parma, Lower Romagna Civil Protection, Pluriverso, the Orlando and On the Road Associations, Etimos-overseas, the University of Bologna, and the University of Parma) in the Regions of Shkoder and Durres.
- The Toscana Committee (composed of the Toscana Region, the Provinces of Firenze and Grosseto, the

Municipality of Cortona, Meyer Hospital, the local health offices of Pisa and Arezzo, COSPE, and the Madonnina del Grappa charity) in the Region of Shkoder; and the Pisa Committee (the Province of Pisa, the North-South Centre, the Polis consortium, which brings together the Municipalities of Santa Croce sull'Arno and Ponsacco, the Industrial-technical Institute Leonardo Da Vinci of Pisa, the Montale Pedagogical Secondary School of Pontedera, the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Pisa, the Il Simbolo and Amici della Strada associations of Pisa) in the Region of Shkoder.

- The Marche Committee (composed of the Marche Region, the Regional Union of Chambers of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona, the Italian-Albanian Chamber of Commerce, Anconambiente, the Ancona Theatre Group, and the University of Ancona) in the Regions of Durres and Vlore; the Venezia Committee (composed of the Municipality of Venezia and ACTV – public transport) in the Region of Shkoder; the Lazio Committee (the Lazio Region and VIS) in the Regions of Shkoder and Durres; the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Committee (the Archaeological Museum of Udine) in the Region of Durres; and the Lecce Committee (the Province of Lecce and the Chamber of Commerce) in the Region of Vlore.

The decentralised cooperation committees allotted USD 900,000 for the period 2002–03 to carry out projects in the three regions. In 2003, the committees also mobilised additional financing of about Euro 2,300,000 (about USD 2,900,000) for interventions in the Regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder. This amount broke down as follows:

- Euro 534,500 was raised through Law 84/01: the Marche Region contributed Euro 314,500 (Euro 140,000 for environmental protection, Euro 140,000 for tourism, and Euro 34,500 for culture); the Toscana Region contributed Euro 220,000 to support governance.
- Euro 720,000 was raised through the EU: the Marche Region contributed Euro 270,000 for environmental protection; the Abruzzo Region and International Liaison Services for Local Economic Development Agencies (ILS/LEDA) contributed about Euro 100,000 to support small agricultural businesses; the Po Delta Regional Park contributed about Euro 350,000 for the environmental protection of wetlands in Shkoder. A CADSES project is being evaluated with the Municipality of Venezia for a total of USD 500,000, for governance in Shkoder and other Balkan regions.

- Euro 260,000 was raised through Law 212 (of the Italian Government) with the Port Authorities of Ravenna, the University of Bologna and a pool of logistical support enterprises of the Port of Ravenna for economic development in Durres.

The role of the Marche Region

The Marche Region made a significant contribution to the social and economic development of the Region of Vlore, in collaboration with PASARP.

Small-scale fishing. The first course for technicians and workers on repairing fishing nets was organised with the Marche Region in 2001. With the assistance of the LEDA, this project led to the creation of an association of repairers, who now plan to set up a business. PASARP renovated and renovated the association's workshop in the new fishing port of Qender, where nets will be repaired and produced. In September 2003, at the request of the local authorities, the intervention of the Marche Region was extended to the Region of Durres in order to create a fishing-net production business and provide training in waste management in coordination with the agencies of Durres and Vlore.

Tourist guides for the Regions of Vlore and Durres. In collaboration with the universities of Ancona and Vlore, the Marche Region produced a tourist guide for the Region of Vlore. This has proved to be an extraordinary tool for promoting the territory. Some 3,000 copies of the guide were printed in Albanian, English and Italian, and it was officially presented in Vlore in June 2003, with the president of the Marche Region presiding. It has been distributed in Albania and Italy to tour operators, hotels, bookstores and some public and private institutions. In early 2003, a training course on bed-and-breakfast (B&B) enterprises took place in Vlore for renters in the town of Himara. In November 2003, in collaboration with AULEDA, a training course was held for hotel receptionists in Vlore. The second edition of the guide to Vlore is being printed, while the guide to Durres is being drafted. The working groups that produced the guides are no less an achievement in themselves, as they are in charge of managing the regional tourism development plans. The guide provides information on history, culture and wine and food for the tourist interested in what the Region of Vlore has to offer. The universities of Ancona and Vlore are promoting the DOP (Italian denomination of quality regional products) label for some typical regional products.

Development plan for tourism in the Region of Durres. In collaboration with the Prefecture, the Regional Government and TAULEDA, a task force for tourism was set up to define short- and medium-term

proposals, improve opportunities for tourism, and define a framework for tourist activities in the Region of Durres. This plan, part of the framework of national laws and plans, will contribute to developing tourism nationwide. Information activities are planned for Albanian tourists as well as agencies and tourists from Kosovo and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The plan aims to boost the limited numbers of Italian and European tourists who visit Albania in the summer months and to provide a focal point for foreign residents in the country. Activities are under way to identify Italian investors, above all from Marche, as well as activities to boost tourism by creating an information and promotional centre for Albania, and campaigns to promote tourist destinations in the Regions of Vlore and Durres.

Tourism development agency in the Region of Vlore. A tourist agency is being built in Vlore in order to provide consulting services for operators and promote B&B facilities so as to involve small and medium-scale investors.

Assistance to renters and high-quality production. The intervention took place in Himara, a town with a high potential for seaside tourism in the Region of Vlore, and Kruja, the heart of Albanian cultural and historical traditions in the Region of Durres. It greatly stimulated the development of small-scale entrepreneurship, especially among women.

Training. Courses were held, and others are planned in Albania, with training sessions at institutions in Marche, on hotel management, management of tourist enterprises, and planning territorial reception and services.

Mental health and the campaign against social exclusion

In September 2002, PASARP formally joined the project International Debate Open Services, of the WHO Mediterranean Centre for the Reduction of Vulnerability (WMC) in Tunis. The project in Albania focused on disseminating and supporting the national psychiatric care reform.

In 2000, in collaboration with the International Exclusion.net network, WHO, UNICEF, and the Ministries of Health, Labour and Social Affairs, a national census was carried out of those confined in institutions and those able to overcome social exclusion. Training visits were organised for Albanian operators at the mental health service in Trieste and 25 people were trained during a two-week period, in collaboration with WHO. The network contributed to

the technical supervision of the national psychiatric care reform policy. Together with the network, PASARP participated in the International Workshop on Psychiatric Care Reform in Albania, organised in Tirana by WHO and the Ministry of Health (December 2001), and presented ongoing activities in Vlore and Shkoder. In 2002, projects were planned for Albania in the framework of the International Debate Open Services.

In June and July 2003, a complex cultural awareness, training and dissemination project was undertaken to support the Albanian Government in the national mental health reform process. The premiere of the photographic exhibition "Objective: a people's world: 24 photographers in action" organised by the WMC in Tunis was organised. In collaboration with the WHO Tirana office, PASARP supported the organisation of the event and the production in Albanian and Italian of the catalogue of the exhibition.

During the principal lecture at the University of Tirana by Benedetto Saraceno, director of the Geneva WHO Mental Health Centre, a joint project with the WHO headquarters was defined in order to support the Ministry of Health in applying the strategic document, previously approved by the Council of Ministers. PASARP agreed with WHO in Geneva to provide financial support to the planned interventions and to train health workers. The institutional agreements with WHO (headquarters in Geneva, office in Tirana and the WMC in Tunis) gave PASARP high visibility for its ongoing contribution to the psychiatric reform process. This recognition has also encouraged local officials, who are working on building up new territorial service networks as an alternative to institutionalisation.

In September 2003, in collaboration with Exclusion.net, an internship was organised in Italy at Trieste Health Office 1 for four psychiatrists, directors of healthcare facilities in Shkoder and Vlore. The internship was crucial for the later start-up of territorial admission services in their respective areas. Also worthy of note are the contacts made, thanks to Exclusion.net, with the world of social cooperation to set up social enterprises for the integration into the labour force of people with psychiatric, psychological and physical problems.

Through missions and distance technical assistance, the director of the International Debate Open Services of the WHO Centre in Tunis guaranteed support for the mental health services reform project. The director provided monitoring and coordination of the national and international technical personnel involved and

also participated directly in the national study group, which produced the strategic document for the reform, approved by the Albanian Council of Ministers. A psychiatrist from the Sorrento Health Office produced a grid to evaluate the level of independence of patients proposed for social and employment integration, and the impact of activities in Shkoder and Vlore. Carmen Roll, a registered nurse from the Trieste Health Office, supervised on-the-spot pilot projects and the activities of Caritas Ambrosiana. The latter organisation is a PASARP-implementing partner in mental health. The three experts provided technical assistance to Albanian technical experts in drawing up mental health pilot plans in Shkoder and Vlore.

Local economic development

In 2000, a ten-day study-trip to the agencies of Parma, Bologna and Travnik (Bosnia and Herzegovina) was organised for 13 representatives of public and private institutions of the Prefecture of Vlore in order to facilitate the start-up of the LEDA there. To facilitate the setting up of the Shkoder LEDA (TEULEDA), study-trips were organised to the agencies of Parma and Bologna (2000), Warsaw and Lublin (2001) and Travnik (Bosnia and Herzegovina) with the participation of 18 representatives of public and private institutions in Shkoder.

In 2003, international activities were directed towards building a network between the LEDAs of the Regions of Shkoder, Vlore and Durres and territorial economic actors of the industrialised countries, to activate effective and sustainable international partnerships. With these objectives in mind, the agencies of Shkoder, Vlore and Durres joined ILS/LEDA.

From 17 to 19 February, two directors of the Albanian Ministry of Sport and Culture participated in the International Sport and Development Conference in Magglingen (Switzerland). They presented ongoing initiatives in Albania to promote sport as an instrument for social and economic development. After the conference, PASARP, the Municipality of Durres, the Albanian Olympic Committee and the Albanian Government cofunded a project in Durres, near completion, for a business run by young people to renovate sports facilities.

On 7 March in Florence, PASARP participated in a meeting organised by the cooperation office of the Toscana Region to open an art school in the Region of Shkoder focusing on developing the crafts sector. Participating were: the director of the international

service activities of the Toscana Region, a consultant of the president of the region, a representative of the Etimos consortium, the director of the Casa Toscana consortium, a representative of the University of Florence, a representative of the Polis consortium and a representative of Dafinor, a private company in Shkoder (specialising in small-scale production of traditional-style furniture). As a joint effort among the different actors, a school for young Albanians interested in woodworking will be opened at Dafinor. Dafinor has already started up the first courses to launch the new productive process.

ILS/LEDA, PASARP and TEULEDA, participated as guests of the Botteghe della Solidarietà (BDS) consortium (fair-trade retail shops) in the national fair-trade fair. From 12 to 14 July in Modena, BDS hosted a selection of handicrafts from Shkoder at its stand, while TEULEDA and some entrepreneurs established important contacts with Italian Fair Trade. This first intervention encouraged TEULEDA to define a project to enhance the production of Albanian handicrafts (rugs, filigree, wrought iron, ceramics and textiles), creating an identifying label, an electronic catalogue and a permanent display of products in the main public offices of the city of Shkoder.

With the support of ILS/LEDA, the three LEDAs participated in an Adriatic transfrontier partnership with 12 Italian provinces to finance projects in the framework of the EU INTERREG 3°. PASARP participated in the meeting organised by the Province of Teramo and held in Mosciano S. Angelo (Teramo) on 3–4 July, where the participation of the Albanian LEDAs in Oasis (fishing and fish farming) and Interrural (development of agriculture and rural tourism) was agreed. The projects will be presented by the 12 provinces in partnership with the Albanian, Serbian and Croatian agencies. On 23–24 October, the Province of Ancona organised another meeting to define projects with the participation of the Albanian LEDAs, which presented their targets in fishing, fish farming and rural development. The Abruzzo Region disbursed Euro 100,000 to cofinance Law 84, which contributed Euro 215,000 to the seven Balkan LEDAs. While waiting for the Interrural financing, the Albanian LEDAs will obtain a financing of about Euro 100,000 for productive projects in agriculture. PASARP participated in a meeting organised by ILS/LEDA in Rome, with Claudio Caruso, councillor for the Department of Regional Policies of the European Commission in Brussels. The European Commission (EC) presented the new opportunities that will be made available for the developing countries of the Mediterranean basin with the proximity programmes,

significant instruments for promoting new territorial partnerships.

From 15 to 21 November, PASARP was visited by the National Service Consortium (CNS) director for the Balkans. CNS is a consortium of 200 Italian social enterprises and cooperatives. During the visit, the subject was raised of starting up, in collaboration with the Albanian LEDA network, the development of a network of enterprises which, based on the CNS model, can offer services to the public administrations. Meetings were held with institutional and business actors in the Regions of Shkoder, Vlore and Durres in order to verify the feasibility of the project. These meetings raised interesting prospects for partnership activities with the LEDAs in waste and public health management and waste recycling, the management of combined cycles of energy cogeneration (incinerators) in Durres and Vlore. The meetings also focused on efforts to enhance the artistic heritage and museums of Shkoder. At the end of the mission, a partnership was set up between PASARP and CNS to provide assistance, through the LEDA, in setting up a laundry, canteen and catering services for the hospitals of Vlore interested in outsourcing services. Business plans for the projects are being drawn up.

Ideass

In collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of Albania, a project within the framework of the initiative Innovations for Development and South–South Cooperation (IDEASS) was initiated to promote innovations and South–South cooperation. In particular, the Colombian kangaroo mother method to help premature and underweight infants was promoted in Albania. The positive results achieved are described in the chapter on IDEASS.

RESULTS OF NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In 2003, PASARP continued to guarantee support to the process of decentralisation under way in Albania. All national activities were carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Local Government, involving: the Ministry of Economics, to launch the LEDAs; the Ministry of Health, for psychiatric care reform and the nationwide adoption of the kangaroo mother method; the Ministry of Culture for the archaeological risk map of Durres and cultural events to promote the artistic, cultural and historical heritage of the regions.

A significant partnership was formed in 2003 with the director of scientific and university cooperation of the Italian Embassy in Tirana, Professor Adriano Ciani, who put PASARP in contact with the universities of Bologna, Florence and Parma. These universities were crucial for implementing quality projects in economic development, archaeology and governance.

On 18 July 2003, the tourism guide to the Region of Vlore was presented during a ceremony in Tirana, which was broadcast by numerous television channels and reported by the major Albanian newspapers. The Italian Ambassador and the Albanian Ministers of Tourism and Economy participated. Participating from the Marche Region were: the president of the Region, the environmental councillor, the director of the Community Policy Service and Development Cooperation, the director of the Department of Economic Activities, the director of the Environmental Service, the director of the Cooperation Office for Development, the managing director and the technical director of the Anconambiente Service Office, the director of the Regional Union of Chambers of Commerce and the president of the Italian-Albanian Chamber of Commerce. The guide was produced by Albanian and Italian experts, supervised by Professor Renato Novelli of the Polytechnic University of Marche.

The national decentralisation strategy

Since 2000, PASARP has participated in meetings of the task force to implement the national decentralisation strategy. At the "Friends of Albania" meetings, PASARP was cited as an innovative programme to support decentralisation processes. Collaboration was established with the national association of mayors.

In collaboration with the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank and the Ministry of Local Government, national training and updating plans for officials and elected officers in the new local bodies were finalised. PASARP participates, in collaboration with FORMEZ, in the national task force responsible for training. This task force is composed of representatives of national and international organisations, Albanian municipalities, communes and regions. PASARP also participated in drawing up the final strategic document, which the Albanian Government presented to international partners in September 2003. Once approved by the Council of Ministers, the strategy will provide a national platform for donor countries intending to

contribute to the decentralisation process. Minister Blushi has already obtained funds from the 2004 state budget to implement the strategy. The expert from the Council of Europe in charge of defining the training strategy praised the methodologies applied by PASARP in the regions. The expert also supported the request to include the communes in training activities and the proposal to formally involve Albanian universities in the strategy.

In 2003, the Albanian Government strengthened the regions, which are gradually taking over the local planning carried out previously by the prefectures, with the exception of civil protection. The municipalities are supported in improving their skills in managing social and health services, education, environmental protection, cultural promotion and support for the economy. The strategic medium-term objective of the Albanian Government envisages the re-grouping of the 12 microregions into three large regions of a size more in line with European parameters. The new law has abolished the districts. The regions are divided into municipalities (Bashkie) with urban areas of reference and communes (Komuna), consisting of groups of small rural villages.

The Vice-Minister for Local Government, Natasha Paço, sent a memorandum to the regional authorities of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore, recommending that the coordination functions of the prefects and presidents of regional councils be combined in the working groups, and that resources be allocated for plans produced with participatory methodologies. In Vlore and Durres, the groups were temporarily re-defined as regional working groups. In Shkoder, the Regional Council adopted the Ministry's recommendations in full. In 2003, PASARP carried out an experimental study in the Region of Shkoder in order to fine-tune the new regional structures provided for by the law, in view of their eventual implementation in the Regions of Durres and Vlore.

On 18–19 September, PASARP, the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Local Government organised a national conference on the best local economic development practices, with a view to extending them on a national level to support the decentralisation process. PASARP presented the experiences of the economic development agencies operating in the Regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder. The conference was carried out in the framework of the Beacon Project of the Ministry of Local Government and the Council of Europe. PASARP participates in the management committee of the project and provides technical assistance for the association of Albanian communes.

Campaign on mental health and social enterprises against social exclusion

In 2002, the study carried out by PASARP on the costs and functioning of psychiatric services in the Regions of Shkoder and Vlore was used by the WHO office in Tirana to draw up a national strategy for optimising resource use. PASARP collaborated with WHO on drawing up the strategic document on national reform, adopted by the Ministry of Health and approved by the Council of Ministers in May 2003. The Ministry of Health later started up the formulation of a plan to apply reform principles.

In this framework, PASARP carried out two intervention studies in the Regions of Vlore and Shkoder to help it plan the re-conversion of resources and the activation of new services in spring 2004, as recommended in the strategic document. The intervention studies envisage the use of a previously installed data-collection system, a detailed analysis of costs, and experimental activities to build up the new system of territorial services offering an alternative to psychiatric hospitals. The action plans of intervention studies were authorised by the Ministry of Health and have the support of WHO. Experiments in the Regions of Shkoder and Vlore are recognised as part of the national reform process. This recognition has had the important effect of encouraging the local social and health teams that since 1999, with PASARP support, have undertaken initiatives to convert the mental institution system and build territorial services that are sustainable and compatible with European criteria. Mental health operators in the Regions of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore participated regularly in the WHO-promoted national days on mental health and basic healthcare. In collaboration with the WMC, the research material produced will appear in a publication in 2004.

On 19 November 2003, PASARP participated in the national workshop organised by the Ministry of Health, with the support of WHO, in the framework of the Stability Pact, to bring Albanian legislation in line with European mental health regulations. The suggestions made by the actors from Shkoder and Vlore regarding the sustainability of halfway houses, the right to care at territorial facilities, the recognition of work done outside hospitals by psychiatric workers, and access of patients to programmes to integrate them into the working world were included in the workshop's final recommendations. The document will be presented to the legislative commission of the Albanian Parliament in order to complete the legal framework on mental health.

Local economic development

PASARP contributed to reducing poverty and unemployment by creating and supporting the LEDAs of the Regions of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore, offering integrated assistance to SMEs, focusing on the most disadvantaged parts of the population. The LEDAs contribute to creating economic and political stability in the regions. In 2003, PASARP provided funds and technical assistance to set up LEDAs in the Regions of Durres and Vlore, and strengthen the managerial skills of TEULEDA in Shkoder. Starting in February, various national meetings were held to present the LEDA model. The positive reception of the presentations led to the rapid creation of the agencies. The process of creating AULEDA (the Vlore LEDA) ended on 20 May 2003, and that of TAULEDA (the Durres LEDA) on 30 April 2003. PASARP participated in selecting the personnel of the three agencies.

A study of the Albanian financial system was carried out in order to identify a partner for the creation of a national guarantee fund, which will allow the LEDAs to help the territorial enterprises effectively. Under the rules established by the Albanian Central Bank, this guarantee fund extends credit to entrepreneurs who have valid project proposals but no access to credit owing to a lack of assets. The fund provides the guarantees that the entrepreneurs are lacking. After a detailed analysis of the proposals, CREDINS Bank and American Bank were shortlisted. With Geneva UNOPS technical assistance, CREDINS Bank was selected in October 2003. It is one of the few credit institutes with only Albanian capital. In December 2003, agreements were signed to set up the guarantee fund at CREDINS Bank to activate credit for SMEs in the Regions of Durres, Vlore and Shkoder. PASARP contributed USD 1.1 million to the fund and the CREDINS Bank provided another USD 1.4 million, for a total fund value of USD 2.5 million. After signing the agreement to manage the guarantee fund, and thanks to work done by TEULEDA, the board of directors of CREDINS Bank also approved the opening of a branch in Shkoder.

Starting in January 2004, the three LEDAs will be able to offer financial aid services to local businesses, new or already operating in tourism, agriculture and agribusiness, fishing and fish farming and arts and crafts. In order to activate credit disbursements, the LEDA personnel have undergone training in how to present projects and prepare the necessary documentation.

Coordination with other cooperation initiatives

One of the successful cultural initiatives of PASARP was "Jazz Summer". This jazz festival involved the staging of eight concerts over three weekends in five Albanian cities, from 17 July to 4 August 2003. It was organised in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture, which contributed USD 10,000. PASARP coordinated the event, which attracted 1,000 spectators to each concert. The Albanian municipalities supplied logistical and organisational support, while the Albanian state television network provided stage assistance and the technical staff for the concerts, which were taped and later broadcast. Two groups from Campania and two groups from Emilia participated in the first edition of the jazz festival: the Antonio Onorato Band, the Hells Cobra Blues Band, Siluet and the Carlo Maver Quartet.

In September 2003, in collaboration with WHO, the International Debate Open Services project of the WHO Centre of Tunis and the Swiss Embassy in Tirana, which contributed USD 3,200, PASARP organised a competition for young Albanian photographers called: "Open eyes: 18 young artists portray Albania". In collaboration with the Independent Forum of Albanian Women, International Debate Open Services in Tirana was organised, and a feasibility project was drawn up for a local radio station with the Shkoder NGO Mandarina Project.

PASARP collaborated on the "Lifelong learning week", organised by UNESCO and the PARSH Foundation. PASARP presented the professional re-qualification activities carried out: training with internships in Italy for operators in cultural enterprises; professional refresher courses for mental health operators; courses for women managers of B&Bs; professional training for members of a fishing-net production and repair company in Vlore; internship for local administration officials at Italian regional and municipal offices; training for eye doctors from the Region of Shkoder at the Meyer Hospital in Florence.

Agreements with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are being prepared relating to initiatives to assist the re-entry of Albanian emigrants from EU countries. The project is financed by the EU and envisages using the three LEDAs to offer services in the territory to assist the re-entry of emigrants, putting to use their business skills gained abroad. The resources made available by the IOM project and the services provided by the LEDAs will lead to the creation of an extremely innovative model of

intervention in Albania. The project will be activated in early 2004. The LEDAs will be in charge of supplying support business services in the Regions of Shkoder, Durres and Vlore, and the IOM offices will offer logistical and organisational support for re-entry.

As part of its participation in the UN National Group, PASARP contributed to drawing up the general framework for development assistance in Albania and to the course on managing disasters, where a document was produced defining the roles of each agency in responding to emergencies. PASARP is part of the coordination group for information and documentation and participated in the exhibition organised for United Nations Day. PASARP assisted the UN National Group in drafting the national report on Millennium Objectives, especially regarding: anti-poverty strategies, by presenting the LEDA experiences; strategies to reduce infant mortality and promote breast feeding, with the kangaroo mother experiences and screening for women carried out in the Region of Durres; defining strategies to safeguard the environment, with projects carried out in Durres and Vlore in partnership with the Marche Region.

PASARP started collaborating with the Italian Delegation of Experts (DIE) of Tirana, the Italian State Railway and the Albanian Army on a project to restore stretches of the Durres-Skopje railway. Considered a priority, the initiative has great symbolic value as the last stretch of railway in Albanian territory at the border of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was destroyed in order to isolate the country. The Italian Embassy in Tirana contributes to the project by donating some materials from Italian railways and by participating in planning and managing the work through Italian Army engineers. PASARP was put in charge of procuring materials.

Information and documentation

PASARP belongs to the UN Press Club and paid particular attention in 2003 to publicising its activities by publishing a newsletter and managing a Web site. The large number of articles and services in the main newspapers and most important Albanian television channels demonstrate the national impact of the Programme:

- Newspapers and magazines: Gazeta Shqiptare – 20 articles; Shekulli – 9 articles; Panorama – 16 articles; Korrieri – 13 articles; ATSH (Albanian news agency) – 18 articles; Sot – 6 articles; Dita – 5 articles; Republika – 7 articles; Koha Jone – 6 articles; Albanian Daily News – 9 articles.

- Radio–television broadcasters: Top Channel – 17 pieces; Top Albania Radio – 11 pieces; News 24 – 12 pieces; Vision Plus – 10 pieces; Telenorba – 9 pieces; Telearberia – 11 pieces; TV Klan – 11 pieces; Voice of America – 2 pieces; TV Amantia – 12 pieces; TV 6+1 – 11 pieces; TV Shkodra – 6 pieces; TV Rozafa – 5 pieces; TV Teuta – 14 pieces.
- Features: Corrieri – 1 August – three pages on positive changes in the three regions; Vision Plus TV – 2 June – eight-minute piece on the photographic exhibition “Objective: a people’s world” and an interview (30 minutes) with the PASARP coordinator, in the morning programme “Rrezja and Drites”; Vision Plus TV – 10 June – 18-minute piece on the halfway house “Mimosa House” in Shkoder and an interview with the Albanian doctor, coordinator of the project for the Ministry of Health; BBC – November – piece on mental health pilot project in Vlore; Korrieri – 5 December – three pages on the “Digitalisation of the Marubi Photographic Archive” project in Shkoder; TV Teuta – since 1 August – four 20-minute interviews have been broadcast on the Durres archaeological project, with the participation of eminent Albanian and Italian scholars and local administrators from Durres. Apart from specific news items, journalists have always supplied ample information on PASARP and its ongoing and completed activities in the regions.
- NEWSLETTER. In 2003, three newsletters were prepared and issued. Each issue contained information on ongoing projects and their impact on the population. There were also interviews and special features on the projects. The newsletter is eight pages long, in English, and is available electronically, via e-mail or on the PASARP Web site.
- WEB SITE. Since the end of 2003, PASARP has been operating an Internet site: www.unops.org.al. The site provides full information on completed, ongoing and planned projects as well as details of publications, the newsletter, partners, photographs and contacts in order to know all about local development promoted by PASARP in Albania. Information on PASARP is also available on the UN Web page for Albania: www.un.org.al, while information on initiatives to support educational and social and health services is available at www.exclusion.net.
- PASARP has produced the following publications: the tourist guide to the Region of Vlore, with the Marche Region; the catalogue of the international photographic exhibition: “Objective: a people’s world”, with WHO and the Tunis International Debate Open Services project; the catalogue of the exhibition of young Albanian photographers: “Open eyes: 18 young artists portray Albania”, with WHO, the

Tunis International Debate Open Services project and the Swiss Embassy; a book “Project Durres: studies in Albanian cultural heritage from antiquity to the Middle Ages”, with the University of Parma and Civic Museums of Udine; the guide to the exhibition “Durres – 3,000 years of civilisation. Pride and responsibility”, part of the Durres archaeological project; the UNOPS/PASARP brochure “A bridge between emergency and development”; the brochure “Archaeological risk map of the Municipality of Durres”, complete with a poster and compact disc produced in collaboration with the University of Parma and Civic Museums of Udine; the newspaper of the UN system in Albania “Let’s work together”, edited by IOM and PASARP. The first two issues have been printed. OIM e PASARP.

RESULTS IN THE REGION OF SHKODER

The Region of Shkoder has an area of 3,562 km² and is located in the northern part of Albania, bordering Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro). The territory is mainly mountainous, with narrow, winding valleys and a fertile plain delimited by a complex river drainage system and a short stretch of sea coast at the mouth of the Buna River.

It has a population of 318,850, mainly ethnic Albanians. The migratory flow towards the major urban centres is increasing constantly, along with a seasonal migratory flow from the districts of Puke and Malesi Madhe towards Greece. The Italian coastline is still the principal destination for illegal migrants in the entire region, although the phenomenon decreased in 2003.

As a result of the national political-administrative reform process, the Region of Shkoder has retained five municipalities (Bashkie), while the number of communes (Komuna) has fallen from 33 to 32 owing to the merging of two territories into the commune of Bushat-Barbullush.

In April, the prefecture working group involved the Region (Qark) of Shkoder. The president of the Regional Council was given a position of pre-eminence in the group and the Region assumed a more important role in planning activities. It was agreed to call it the Local Action Group.

The Local Action Group brings together ten representatives of local public administrations: the president of the Regional Council, the prefect, the mayors of Shkoder, Puke, Koplik, Vau-Dejes, Fushe

Arrez, Velipoja, Bushat and Barbullush; three associations: the Chamber of Commerce, the Albanian NGO Hapa te Lehte, and TEULEDA. Participating in the Local Action Group are also the OSCE, representing the international community, the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Toscana Region and PASARP. The University of Bologna, the Theatres of Emilia-Romagna, the University of Florence, the North/South Centre, Etimos, the Polis consortium, Coldiretti Florence and Caritas Ambrosiana collaborate with the Local Action Group on specific initiatives.

The Local Action Group reformulated the PASARP plan of operations to make it strategically compatible with the new institutional situation, re-directing funds earmarked for small-scope activities towards initiatives considered of greater priority: governance, economic development, social and health services, with priority given to mental healthcare reform. Cultural activities, albeit with a small budget, were also maintained as a priority. The Local Action Group reserved 45 percent of its overall budget for economic development, as an engine of intervention on which to base the other activities of the plan. In this process, the various municipal administrations showed a considerable, innovative sense of regional identity by foregoing funds for infrastructures limited to their territories in favour of projects covering more than one municipal area.

The decentralised cooperation committees in the Shkoder area also re-programmed their regular interventions in view of the Local Action Group's new regional strategies, in a process ending in April 2003. The Toscana and Emilia-Romagna Regions reinforced their interventions. The Economics and Business Faculty of the University of Bologna made a significant contribution. The Lazio Region carried out a professional training project. The Emilia-Romagna Region guaranteed its ongoing presence, with an office in Tirana and a focal point in the Region of Shkoder. The Pluriverso consortium, the University of Florence, COSPE and an intern from the SIOI also guaranteed their presence in Shkoder.

In March 2002, the Italian institute FORMEZ, which specialises in training public administration officials, started up the pilot project Alba to train local administrators in collaboration with PASARP. The courses were set up keeping in mind the training needs that emerged from a survey of officials of the local Shkoder administrations. The courses on civil protection were undertaken with a technical expert of the Emilia-Romagna Region. At the end of the

courses, a technical expert arranged with the local authorities for a donation worth Euro 200,000, consisting of off-road vehicles, radio-communication apparatus and apparatus for meteorological surveys. The project ended in June 2003

In 2003, the Region of Shkoder was visited by numerous decentralised cooperation official and technical delegations. There were 27 missions, involving 37 institutional and technical actors, to Shkoder to plan new interventions, monitor ongoing projects and start up activities.

Albanian delegations also went on missions abroad. Ridvan Troshani and Elvin Hoxha of TEULEDA and Ervin Gjini, a social worker, visited Local Health Office 1 in Trieste in order to learn about social enterprises; Elvin Hoxha of TEULEDA, Merita Kazazi, Shkoder Regional Development Office, represented the Region in Belgrade, at the "Europe is meeting" conference; Elvin Hoxha of TEULEDA and Merita Kazazi, Shkoder Regional Development Office, participated in a course in Reggio Calabria on human rights organised by the Pentadattilo association and Pluriverso, during which they also visited the Calabrian Arbereshe communities of San Giorgio Albanese and Vacarizio Albanese; the vice-mayor of Shkoder visited Modena and Venice to define the CADSES programme's participation in Shkoder; the regional health director participated in a training internship at the Meyer Hospital of Florence; the vice-mayor of Shkoder, the director of the city Museums, the head of the municipal development office in Shkoder and a representative of the company ERA visited Venice in connection with the "Marubi" Museum activities.

Results of governance projects

As mentioned above, the prefecture working group changed its name to Local Action Group and decided it needed a technical instrument in order to implement the decisions made by the strategic and political management. In June 2003, a technical unit for decentralisation and planning was activated, in accordance with the new national laws on decentralisation. The Technical Unit meets on a weekly basis to define short- and medium-term development policies and the initiatives to be undertaken with the resources available. The presidency of the unit is guaranteed by the director of the Regional Development Office. The unit is composed of:

- regional and prefecture development offices;
- offices linked to the region and the prefecture;

- a technical representative for each municipality in the territory;
- ad hoc specialists (TEULEDA, the Territorial Agency for Cultural Activities and the Legal Documentation Centre are recognised as permanent specialists).

The unit began operating by identifying the implementation process for functional structures of the region: training, technical and legal support, local planning and strengthening of regional instruments. In order not to waste resources and instead meet concrete goals within reasonable timeframes, the unit concentrated on aspects it considered strategic:

- Training: formulating a training plan; participatory identification of training needs and technical support; mapping of training services in the country and resources from abroad (decentralised cooperation); providing first training modules; activation of distance technical support modules (e-governance);
- Local Planning: study to rationalise the collection of regional local economic development data; identification of development indicators compatible with local characteristics; setting up a database for unified data collection to aid in economic development planning.

The unit operates with a newly created service, which has regional financial resources and the technical assistance of PASARP and the decentralised cooperation committees. The University of Bologna supports local economic development through a researcher who has been collaborating on creating the regional database and identifying indicators since October 2003. Projects have been agreed with the Toscana Region for 2004. The FORMEZ Alba Project led to unified data collection, which constitutes the database of the future regional geographical information system (GIS).

The Technical Unit, with the collaboration of PASARP, carried out the necessary activities to implement priority regional structures, achieving the following results:

- Legal Documentation Centre. The University of Florence, with an EU TEMPUS project, and the University of Shkoder helped to create a centre which, linked to the unit, offered legal support to the decentralisation process, supplying legal material, research services and consulting for local administrations. An expert from the centre worked with the unit to produce a regional database. In September 2003, the legal framework was defined

for setting up a public-private sanitation service in Velipoja. To strengthen regional territorial planning capabilities, the Province of Pisa formulated a support project for the Technical Unit, for Euro 300,000, which was presented to the Italian Government (Law 84/01). The project, promoted by the Toscana Region, will be carried out by the North/South Centre of the Province of Pisa and the Medina association. In two years' time, it will lead to the creation of information and analytical instruments concerning the territory, including the drafting and updating of basic maps.

- Regional Training Centre. Linked to the Technical Unit, it is a point of reference for the information network. A search was initiated for publicly-owned premises to be used for permanent training activities. The meeting room of the Regional Council, which suits the purpose, needs to be modified and the unit has disbursed the funds for its physical renovation and technical overhaul. The room will be transformed into a functional training centre, with a sound system, video system, simultaneous translation and recording instruments, printing facilities and a production room. The head of the centre is a regional official appointed by the unit, who coordinates the training modules and their planning. The first training modules were provided by the Ministry of Local Government.
- Regional Communication Network. Social communication, a crucial aspect of a functioning region, is not very efficient in Shkoder in that broadcasts do not reach the major town, let alone small mountain villages. Official announcements are sent from the region by mobile telephone to the mayors, when possible, and work-related documents are usually hand-delivered from communal offices. In November, the unit, through a team of experts, created a regional map of the communication systems: main and rural telephone lines, radio, antenna, satellite and mobile telephone repeaters, and army systems. The study identified the most extensive and locally sustainable mixed public/private system to put the municipalities online and use a regional server, which is also being set up. These are the foundations on which the first nucleus of the Regional Communication Network will be set up.
- Regional Information Service. The Technical Unit planned to provide the municipalities and communes with computers and train local officials, to facilitate information collection, management and dissemination. In 2003, the communes of Shkoder,

Koplik, Puke, Velipoja, Fushe-Arrez, Vau-Dejes and Bushat-Barbullush were targeted, while five more will receive service in 2004. The service has provided computer courses and will start up a collection of data in the municipal territories. The Regional Communication Network and the Regional Information Service are an integral part of the Regional Training Centre and will receive operational assistance from the head of the technical service. The unit will oversee strategic policy directly.

- Emergency unit. The Emilia-Romagna Region and FORMEZ made a significant contribution towards starting up the unit, in collaboration with PASARP and the Prefecture of Shkoder. The emergency unit has a renovated office and sufficient technical equipment to alert the proper authorities in an emergency (police, fire brigade, ambulance and army). The rapid communication capabilities of the unit cover about 80 percent of the region.
- Territorial Activation Agency. The agency is an initiative of the Municipality of Modena, through the Pluriverso consortium, and works towards activating social programmes to support local study-groups. PASARP established an agreement with the Territorial Activation Agency to draw up a map of risks and social service opportunities. The map produced was given to the Technical Unit and is a model for future data collection and service planning. With the support of the Polis consortium of the Province of Pisa and the local employment office, the map will be used to design a strategy to integrate disabled people into the working world. The agency, with support from PASARP, identified social development indicators for regional planning and organised an international workshop on sustainable development. The agency is a permanent member of the Technical Unit, where it coordinates, supports and promotes social policies.

From 31 June to 1 July 2003, a workshop on local sustainable development in the Shkoder area was held in Shkoder in order to review local development initiatives under way in the Balkans. Many actors operating in local development in Albania participated in the workshop, from local, national and international public and private sectors. Participating were: a representative from the Balkan Observatory, the president of the Aspromonte National Park, the social service councillor of the Municipality of Modena, a mental health specialist from the Local Health Office 1 in Trieste, and Albanian university professors from the Shkoder Economics Faculty. Social assistance was

studied in depth, which the community of Shkoder will use to reorganise its services, with support from Modena and the Territorial Activation Agency. Local actors formulated many proposals, such as the implementation of information services for the public, reinforcing city neighbourhoods and their structures.

Since its creation in 2001, the women's centre "Light Steps" has promoted gender policies, carrying out courses in sewing, literacy and information technology in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Shkoder. In 2003, in collaboration with the Toscana and Emilia-Romagna Regions, the Municipality of Forlì and the Italian NGO COSPE, a business promotion centre received support. The centre will be enlarged to contain an Internet point, an Internet café, a computer training centre for women and an area for women's activities. Professional training courses and support actions to family-run businesses were also planned with a view to promoting employment among women. The new structures will become operational in 2004 and will be supported by the interested international partners.

Territorial and cultural services

In 2000 and 2001, impact projects were carried out in the Prefecture of Shkoder. A dormitory for university students was renovated. Part of the dormitory, which will host 500 young men and women from mountain villages, was restructured and inaugurated on 5 December 2000. The value of the project, including the state contribution, is USD 400,000. The second part of the building was renovated with public administration funds.

The environmental reclamation project in Puke, completed in 2000, produced the following results: restoration of the sewer system in the outlying areas of the city and connection to the main sewer; opening of public toilets in the city centre; improvements to access roads to the centre and containment of the nearby hills (containment walls, access stairs, drainage, and tree planting); improvements to the waste collection system; and training of municipal workers in managing public and social services. The project benefited 1,000 families. In 2001, social services were implemented in seven communes (Kelmend, Boge, Madhe, Kaftalle, Gjegjjan, Vau Dejes and Shelquet). The schools of Kaftalle, Boge and Shelquet, which cater to 400 children, were renovated. The health offices of Selce, Lepushe-Gropa and Broje of the Municipality of Kelmend were renovated and provided with equipment and furnishings. All the health personnel in the valley were trained in collaboration with the NGO

COOPI. The maternity service of Vau Dejes received healthcare equipment, and a prefabricated facility donated by the Meyer Hospital of Florence was installed for outpatient services. In August 2001, the footbridge of Dom-Gjegjian was opened, allowing students from some villages to shorten their route to school by 5 km. The total value of the PASARP contribution was LIT 410 million.

In 2003, the following results were achieved:

- *Migjeni Theatre of Shkoder.* On 14 April 2003, "Le Ultime Lune" by Furio Bordon was performed at the city's theatre. The play was directed by Nanni Garella and performed by Albanian actors in their language. It was so well received by both the public and critics that the play had a repeat performance at the National Theatre of the Academy of the Arts in Tirana on 13 June. The performance was supervised by the Emilia-Romagna Theatre Foundation, operating in Shkoder through PASARP since March 2001, and the Emilia-Romagna Region. PASARP re-opened the orchestra pit of the theatre. With the patronage of the Italian Embassy, the Italian Institute of Culture and Pro Helvetia, on 8 November 2003, with Silvia Casarin Rizzolo conducting, the notes of "The Silken Ladder" by Rossini and "The Telephone" by G.C. Menotti were heard once again in the Migjeni. The event had a great impact. Renovation of the theatre began in December 2000, in collaboration with the Prefecture of Shkoder, the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Theatre Board of Emilia-Romagna, 30 musicians and technical personnel, and 20 cultural associations of Shkoder. The renovation work began in July 2001 and was completed in February 2002. The Emilia-Romagna Theatre Board (ERT) staged cultural events and performances in numerous other places in the city (schools, universities, cultural centres, and private homes). During the renovation, ERT staged Pirandello's "Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore," with the actors of a local theatre company, directed by Nanni Garella, who also guaranteed crucial exchanges of a technical nature with the theatre personnel. In November 2002, the "Dinner Party" by Pier Vittorio Tondelli was staged. During the two performances, young actors played alongside the most famous names in Albanian theatre. The two performances, planned in a very short time, were highly successful and had a nationwide impact.
- *Radio project:* The regional cultural study group expressed the need to hold a cultural event that stressed participation. A local radio station was thus planned, in collaboration with the Municipality of

Modena, and PASARP requested local NGO Mandarina Project to produce the business plan through a participatory research project. The broadcaster envisages offering socially-committed information services and access to all information provided by regional study groups. The decentralised cooperation committees were contacted with a view to finding actors and financing.

- *Marubi Photo Archive.* In collaboration with the Municipalities of Venezia and Modena, and the University of Florence, in May 2003 a working plan was defined to preserve the photographic collection of the archive, which contains 500,000 images collected by the Marubi family (originally from Piacenza) in Shkoder and in the southern Balkans over a period of 150 years. The first activities, begun in September, consisted of digitising the photographs and negatives in the archive in order to preserve the entire collection. The archive received the necessary computer equipment to carry out the work and the team of technical experts was enlarged. In 2004, digitalisation will be completed and the museum will be re-launched through marketing initiatives. Given the exceptional importance of the archive, the Albanian Ministry of Culture expressed the intention to increase its funding, and create a foundation, on an international level, to protect and promote the cultural assets of the facility. A travelling exhibition is planned for 2004 in Venice and Modena. The project was inaugurated at a renovated local cinema on 25 November 2003 with numerous personalities present. The photographs were projected and exhibited in what was a highly successful event, covered by the national mass media.
- *Renovation of the Italian Department.* The project involved the universities of Shkoder and Florence and envisaged renovating facilities and the enhancement of different services. Two buildings were renovated, with innovative technical designs for the territory, thanks to the contribution of the Florentine School of Architecture. The following areas were created: renovated faculty rooms; public use areas; a student lounge; a training centre; an Internet centre for students; a centre for seminars and exhibitions; and areas for new services. The department was opened on 22 July 2003. The work was done as inexpensively as possible and funds left over were earmarked for other initiatives. The University of Florence will use the structures to implement TEMPUS, approved by the EU at the end of 2003. PASARP was in favour of

locating the Legal Documentation Centre in the new premises, in agreement with the Technical Unit of the Region of Shkoder. The project cost Euro 130,000.

- *Environmental usage and social enterprises in the Municipality of Velipoja.* In partnership with the Municipality of Modena, the Pluriverso consortium and the Emilia-Romagna Region, a public/private company was planned for public sanitation in the Municipality of Velipoja, a well-known seaside resort visited by thousands of tourists. The agreement between the partners was signed in July 2003, with work scheduled to begin in early 2004. The company is the first of its kind in Albania and has had a nationwide impact. A social public/private enterprise, Lule Dielli (Sunflower), has already been created. It is an enterprise consisting of 10 women in charge of keeping the beaches clean during the summer season and running the bathing establishment. With the participation of territorial associations, the city of Modena and Lule Dielli, musical, folklore and sporting events were organised. A controlled dumpsite was also built, in collaboration with the Municipal Council of Velipoja, which guarantees its utilisation for three years. Work to enlarge the dump, extending its utilisation to six years, will be financed with proceeds from the mixed public/private enterprise. The study on enhancing tourist and environmental facilities in order to develop fully the potential of the territory and officially insert the Lule Dielli enterprise into municipal management mechanisms continued with the Municipalities of Velipoja and Modena. Production began on a masterplan for ecological and sustainable tourism with the national and local tourism committees. Two rural roads as well as showers and public toilets on the beach were reopened and work began on renovating a primary school and a public telephone area. The initiative received wide media coverage and the most famous Albanian rock band recorded, free, a promotional clip on the beaches of Velipoja, with the assistance of a Milanese director. A feasibility study was drawn up for the urban plan of the area with COSPE and the Emilia Committee. The overall commitment of all the parties to the project is about Euro 120,000.

Mental health and socially useful enterprises

In 2003, activities related to mental health reform continued. In April, in line with the policy document approved by the Ministry of Health and the recommendations of international experts, the Local

Action Group invested a considerable part of its funds in strengthening the intervention for mental health and social enterprise promotion in Shkoder. The plan provides for the creation of a model of territorial mental healthcare services, which are integrated and respect the dignity of the patients. Work began on setting up a new reception and rehabilitation service for the hospital (a pilot admission service – PAS), to reduce the number of hospital beds in the psychiatric ward, launch territorial therapeutic/rehabilitation services and carry out activities for the insertion of vulnerable people into society and the labour force. The plan was carried out in collaboration with the Municipality of Modena, WHO, Caritas Ambrosiana, Trieste Health Office 1, Exclusion.net, the Pluriverso consortium, the Toscana Region, the Polis consortium, the Province of Pisa and the Province of Grosseto.

The admissions service of the hospital in Shkoder was launched through an intervention study that aimed at applying, in the Region of Shkoder, the recommendations of the policy document on mental health reform, approved by the Albanian Government. It is a service for reception, diagnosis and therapeutic-rehabilitation care and serves as a filter for all requests coming into the psychiatric hospital. The service will provide homecare for a pilot territory of 120,000 inhabitants. The service project was officially approved by the Ministry of Health.

In brief, the objectives of the intervention study are: reduction in the number of hospitalisations and days spent in the psychiatric hospital in Shkoder; reduction in hospital beds and conversion of those services into territorial care; implementation of a hospital/territory network system in a pilot district of 120,000 inhabitants for hospital discharge and acceptance into territorial care service; therapeutic/rehabilitation services for a community and territorial mental health system; optimising utilisation of professional resources in the hospital admissions and observation services; data collection and provision of detailed information for long-term planning, in accordance with the Policy Document of the Albanian Government; insertion of the service into the future Action Plan for Implementation of the Mental Health Policy Document in Albania; inclusion in the admissions team of new professional figures (social assistants and psychologists) under contract to the national health system.

The plan covers an eight-month period (July 2003 – February 2004) and its implementation is to be overseen by Caritas Ambrosiana, which will guarantee

a continuous presence in the territory. Caritas Ambrosiana has also handled the renovation and adaptation of hospital facilities. The following territorial services have been activated in collaboration with all local, national and international actors involved.

- *Rehabilitation unit.* PASARP renovated the men's ward of the psychiatric hospital, creating an area for the rehabilitation unit, which has six beds and personnel available from the ward, assisted in their daily work by experts from Caritas Ambrosiana. The unit adopted new acceptance methodology for entry into future external apartment groups.
- *Territorial services.* Thanks to the purchase of an off-road vehicle and the reorganisation of personnel work shifts, it was possible to set up intervention teams to handle patient discharges and routine and emergency house calls. Once consolidated, this service will be a key point of the mental health centre's activities as provided for in the policy document.
- *Mimosa House.* The first of its kind in Albania, Mimosa House is a halfway house, which hosts an apartment group, saving on hospitalisation time and beds in the psychiatric hospital and introducing rehabilitation treatment compatible with WHO recommendations. The facility, launched in 2001 by PASARP, has aided 15 women discharged from the hospital. The construction project for a new facility for the service has found interested parties in the Local Action Group and the Municipality of Modena, which contributed funds to complete the furnishings. The land was provided by Albanian authorities. The first stone was laid on 8 December 2003 in the presence of Councillor Alberto Caldana of Modena, the Italian Consul, the president of Caritas Ambrosiana, a representative of the Albanian Minister for Health, WHO, many local personalities and the national media. Work is scheduled to end in March 2004. The sustainability and transfer of Mimosa House to the public health system is part of the project. Identification of public areas and facilities to create accommodation units for vulnerable people were initiated with the Municipality of Shkoder. The units, which are inexpensive and highly sustainable, will allow the territorial service network to be completed. The first map of the sites has been completed and the intervention will continue in 2004.
- *Training.* In 2003, health personnel participated in the training modules provided for in the agreement

with the Minister for Health, and also carried out two study-trips to the health facilities in Trieste, organised by Exclusion.net. In 2004, other courses on insertion and social enterprises will involve all operators in the sector, with the support of decentralised cooperation and TEULEDA experts.

- *Shop project.* The Toscana Region, through the Shop Project of the Polis consortium, supports the creation of a socially-useful carpentry business to insert vulnerable people into the labour force. In collaboration with the employment office of Shkoder, local entrepreneurs, the Chamber of Commerce and TEULEDA, handicapped people will receive pilot work grants.
- *Summer holidays in Vlore.* Ten women from Mimosa House participated in a summer holiday in Vlore, in collaboration with local institutions and the local PASARP office. In August, a group of Italian and German volunteer professionals accompanied the guests, who were able to have a holiday and visit another Albanian city for the first time in their lives. The activity had a positive impact on the population and professionals of Vlore, who observed the positive results of territorial care on people with psychiatric problems.
- *Summer holiday infrastructures in Velipoja.* The Province of Grosseto and the bank Monte dei Paschi di Siena are providing financial support to "Project Hope", a project that aids young people with neuro/psychiatric problems from all over the region through a network of "family homes." The Toscana Region supported the summer camp, the only one in Albania, located in an important seaside resort for northern Albania. The camp hosts hundreds of guests on the beach of Velipoja during the summer. PASARP carried out work on the facilities, enlarged and equipped the common areas, and installed safety systems.

Local economic development

TEULEDA, the economic development agency of the Region of Shkoder, was created in March 2001 with PASARP support. A legally recognised foundation, its initial activities consisted of drawing up a map of risks and resources for different economic sectors and building up international partnerships with FORMEZ, Wetlands/INTERREG II, the University of Bologna, Cosmopolite, the Pluriverso consortium and the Balkan Observatory.

TEULEDA has 21 members, 9 public and 12 private: the Prefecture of Shkoder; the Region of Shkoder; the Chambers of Commerce of Shkoder and of Malësia and Madhe; the Agriculture and Food Office of the Municipalities of Shkoder and Puke; the Municipalities of Shkoder, Puke, Malësia and Madhe, Koplik and Fushe-Arrez; the Regional Employment Office of Shkoder; the Regional Development Agency of Shkoder; universities; the Business Incubator of Shkoder; the Union Confederation of Shkoder; the Albanian Foundation for Training and Development (AFTD); the Women's Association of Shkoder; the NGOs "Refleksione" of Shkoder, "ARFA" and "ALB-DRURI" of Fushe-Arrez; CARITAS Albania; the Eco-Forest Association of Puke; and the Economic Support Agency (ERA).

In early 2003, TEULEDA became fully operational. It is sufficiently equipped for its activities and it has extended its territorial presence through numerous interventions. The technical structure of the agency provides for a high-level, young and motivated operating team. TEULEDA consolidated collaboration with local and international stakeholders in the territory. It identified a portfolio of potential users for access to credit and other services related to crafts, fishing, tourism and agriculture. For example, TEULEDA made it possible for many artisans from Shkoder to participate in fairs in Italy and Albania, this opened up new channels for distributing high-quality goods produced in the region. With the setting up of the guarantee fund, in collaboration with CREDINS Bank, the Region of Shkoder has USD 1,000,000 at its disposal for credit activities in the territory.

In collaboration with the decentralised cooperation committees, TEULEDA carried out the following projects:

- Alba Project. Survey of training needs. FORMEZ signed a contract with TEULEDA as a local partner to identify the training needs of local administration officials. The survey results were presented on 9 October in a national study group with the Council of Europe. The results of the study were taken into consideration when drawing up the national training policy. Furthermore, in the framework of the Alba Project, TEULEDA supported the urban planning and mapping office of the Municipalities of Puke, Fushe-Arrez and Vau-Dejes and the Region of Shkoder in managing information on local development. TEULEDA introduced GIS technology to the Municipality of Shkoder; set up the emergency civil protection unit of Shkoder; and gave logistical support to FORMEZ experts for activities in the region.
- B.R.I.D.G.E. – "Cosmopolite" of Faenza. The project aims to create a vocational and self-employment training centre. TEULEDA is in charge of vocational training in crafts, through a twinning with vocational schools in Shkoder and Faenza.
- WETLANDS II. TEULEDA is a partner in Wetlands II, a project financed by the EU in the framework of INTERREG IIA. The project increases the integrated management capabilities of wetlands in partners' territories, standardising systems and experimenting models of sustainable development. TEULEDA participated in two international meetings in Italy and Germany, where the best practices in wetlands management were presented.
- Social enterprises. In a partnership with Exclusion.net, a study tour was organised for the TEULEDA staff to Trieste ASL 1 Health Centre in order to: learn about the process of de-institutionalisation and models of organising services for the mentally disabled in Trieste; study methods and difficulties linked to starting up social enterprises; and identifying services that healthcare structures can outsource to enterprises recognised as socially useful.
- Rural microcredit. The Toscana Region collaborated with TEULEDA through Etimos and Coldiretti Florence in rural microcredit activities, coordinated with TEULEDA projects to benefit parties without access to the guarantee fund. This instrument will enhance the thoroughness and overall incisiveness of TEULEDA activities in the territory. From 2001 to 2003, both directly and in collaboration with TEULEDA, PASARP financed 98 microenterprises. The Toscana Region also supports TEULEDA in a project for "strengthening productive capacity" in the dairy-cheese sector in rural areas of the Region of Shkoder. The project was presented to the Italian Government (Law 84), and approved for a value of Euro 300,000.
- The "Don Bosco" vocational school in Shkoder. With funding from the Lazio Region and PASARP, TEULEDA was able to improve the institute, which trains young plumbers, masons and electricians. Fifty plumbing kits were provided, which will be utilised to start up individual businesses. A year-long supplementary course was launched for small-scale artisans/technicians.
- Social enterprises. In collaboration with the admissions service of the hospital in Shkoder, TEULEDA promoted social enterprises, with the

technical and methodological support of the Economics Faculty of the University of Bologna. In collaboration with social and employment services, an experimental fund was set up for “grants for socially useful work”. The university, through an intern, assisted TEULEDA and the Regional Technical Unit, involved in pinpointing the development indicators which will make up the regional database (assistance is guaranteed from November 2003 to March 2004). TEULEDA created the Simulimpresa network, a service that follows the planning phases and business plans of an enterprise at a distance through a pool of experts.

In collaboration with local institutions, TEULEDA carried out the following projects:

- The Corn and Rice Institute: The institute, the only one of its kind in Albania, protects and promotes the value of high-yield varieties of indigenous corn and rice. TEULEDA supports the administration of the institute in defining a detailed development plan and investments to be made. The intervention was timely, given that in late 2003 a media report publicised the large-scale marketing of genetically modified organisms in Albania. Local hybrids, selected by the institute over a period of 50 years, can boast complete environmental compatibility, high and lasting yields and the entirely natural characteristics of the product. Thus, TEULEDA has further strengthened the marketing of the institute’s products, stressing their advantageous aspects. The University of Bologna has boosted the institute’s business plan through its support of Simulimpresa.
- Activities to support and promote handicraft production: TEULEDA carried out the following activities: individual technical assistance for producers; a meeting with 35 producers to promote different types of products; participation in the fair-trade fair in Modena; participation of 10 craft workers from Shkoder in the “Vjeshtë 2003” fair in Tirana; production of an agency Web site and a digital catalogue to put on the Web in order to promote and market products directly; preparation of the first permanent craft exhibition involving the institutions; the study and creation of a label identifying local products and promotional materials; identification of national and international channels for marketing the products; visit to the Arbereshe communities in Calabria in order to promote and exchange products.
- Technical assistance: TEULEDA set up a training course in business start-ups for public administration

personnel in some rural areas in collaboration with AFTD. It supplied technical assistance to draw up business plans for SMEs participating in the “Competitive Grants Programme” (CGP), a technological transfer project of the “Agricultural Services Project” (ASP), financed by the World Bank. In June, in collaboration with the Pluriverso consortium and the Municipalities of Shkoder and Modena, TEULEDA organised a workshop on stability and local development, in which most economic stakeholders in the region participated.

RESULTS IN THE REGION OF VLORE

The Region of Vlore is located in the southern tip of Albania, on the border with Greece. Its capital is 120 km from Tirana. The land is mostly mountainous, with a small plain in the north. The total population is 321,000. The major urban centres are Vlore (80,000), Saranda (25,000) and Delvine (15,000). Emigration of people of working-age from the Region of Vlore to Greece and Italy has been high. Ethnic Albanians make up 98 percent of the population, but there are also Greek and Roma minorities. Seventy percent of the population is Muslim, 20 percent Orthodox and 10 percent Catholic. The Region of Vlore is divided into 7 municipalities and 19 communes.

In 1999, the Working Group of the Region of Vlore identified interventions for territorial infrastructures and cultural services as priorities. In 2003, the working group devised a policy to boost the economic development of the region. In order to apply the new national decentralisation policies, the prefecture working group became a regional working group in 2003, presided over jointly by the president of the Regional Council and the prefect.

The regional working group of Vlore brings together eight representatives of local institutions and three representatives of associations: the president of the Regional Council, the prefect, the mayors of Vlore, Delvine, Novosele, Saranda and Lukova; the director of the Regional Development Office; the Italian Consulate in Vlore; the OSCE; and PASARP. The public health department, the psychiatric hospital and the University of Vlore collaborate with the regional working group.

In 2003, political and technical decentralised cooperation delegations undertook many missions in the Region of Vlore in order to plan new initiatives and monitor ongoing projects. Eight missions to Vlore took

place, with the participation of 29 institutional and technical actors. In 2003, monthly missions were carried out by Professor Renato Novelli of the University of Ancona, a focal point of the Marche Region in Albania, in order to monitor and implement projects. Furthermore, in October, the EU approved a project entitled "LIFE – Third-party Countries", which involves the Marche Region, PASARP, Albanian environmental institutions, the Region of Vlore and the Municipalities of Durres and Shijak.

Culture

In 2000 and 2001, the following activities took place: four folk music concerts in Vlore, Delvine, Saranda and Kote; exhibitions by young artists; presentations of books written by local authors; and video shows in schools and the theatre in Vlore. The video *Ka Drita* was produced and distributed by the youth centre of Vlore. The video portrayed the situation in the city and was broadcast by RAI News International. Cultural activities were well attended, some by the President of Albania. In 2002, the Youth Company of the Permanent Theatre of Marche presented the play "Arlecchino servitore di due padroni" at the theatre in Vlore; attending were the mayor of Vlore, the president of the Region, the Italian Consul in Vlore and hundreds of spectators. The Youth Company was accompanied by the La Macina folk group from Marche, which performed a concert in the University Square in Vlore for hundreds of people. In October, the Petro Marko theatre troupe of Vlore performed Pirandello's "Morsa e Cece" at the Theatre of Ancona. About 200 spectators and Albanian immigrants as well as local authorities from Marche attended the performance. The two initiatives also led to information exchanges among directors, actors and technical experts of the two theatres.

In 2003, a project was launched to illuminate the castle of Kanina, located a few kilometres from the city of Vlore, and one of the most interesting historical sites in southern Albania. In very poor condition, it has been used as a munitions depot and military barracks. It is in an extremely scenic spot, on a plateau overlooking the Gulf of Vlore, and is a strategic resource for developing tourism. A pool of architects from Vlore produced a project to restore the castle, which was approved by the Albanian Institute for Cultural Monuments. PASARP is in charge of installing external illumination, now under way.

In 2003, Red Mosque Square was also restored. The Italian Consulate overlooks this square, which was in a

state of decay and much used by the inhabitants of Vlore. The feasibility study was finished in April, work began in June and was completed in October 2003. The pedestrian area was paved; a parking area provided; street illumination was restored; green areas were provided and benches installed.

Territorial, environmental and tourism services

In 2000 and 2001, impact projects were carried out to improve local infrastructures and promote tourism. The drinking-water supply system was restored to the villages of Trevilazer, Skrofotine and Cerkovine (Municipality of Novosele), benefiting 4,000 people. In 2002, the intervention was extended to the whole municipality, with Euro 600,000 from the ECHO Programme of the EU, obtained by the NGOs COOPI and MOLISV. Work ended in March 2002. The Turkish Government also financed repairs of other parts of the Novosele pipe grid. An environmental protection project for the coastal recreation area of Saranda was carried out, with a beach cleaning initiative which many people participated in. A market was set up for agricultural products in Delvine. In June 2001, work was completed on the new market and a section of the aqueduct, benefiting the entire population of Delvine. In 2001, the main beach of the city was reclaimed, with the removal of heavy objects. The project ended in May 2001 and was a significant benefit for the tourist season in Saranda. The City Hall later reclaimed another beach, further enhancing the area's potential for tourism.

In 2002, the main city park of Vlore, "Luna Park", was rebuilt. An outer wall was built and a drainage system installed; an electrical system was also installed, the fountain restored and green areas created. Recreational equipment was supplied by a private company in Tirana, which also oversaw its management and maintenance. The park opened to the public in October 2002. In 2002, a wholesale market for agricultural products was set up in Vranisht, the traders were organised and a retail market was built near the state road. Work proceeded from July to October 2002. In the Municipality of Lukova, the electricity system of Shen Vasil was restored and the road leading to the beach of Lukova was rebuilt. The improved road led to the opening of bathing establishments, bars and restaurants on the beach, run by private enterprises. The beach was used by local tourists in the summer of 2002.

In 2003, the following projects were launched and completed.

- *Construction of food and industrial product market in Saranda.* The feasibility study and identification of management and maintenance mechanisms by the municipality and traders were planned in 2002. The market, which affects the farmers and traders of Saranda, can host more than 100 traders. It was inaugurated in June 2003.
- *Urban renewal in Akerni (Novosele).* The project restored the main access road to the town, built pavements and restored street illumination. The work was completed in June and inaugurated with the Italian Consul from Vlore, local authorities and a representative of the Ministry of Economics in attendance.
- *Renovating the drinking-water supply in Villhat (Delvine).* The project consisted of building a pumping station, substituting pumps, repairing and substituting the end pipes of the town. Work ended in September, providing drinking-water for the 500 inhabitants of Villhat, located just outside Delvine.
- *Restoration of the sewer system of Qazim Pali (Lukova).* The project, begun in July and completed in December, led to the restoration of the sewer system of Qazim Pali (Municipality of Lukova), benefiting 1,000 inhabitants, who can now rely on an adequate system for channelling reflux water.
- *Renovation of the Sports Centre of Saranda.* The project began in November 2003 and is near completion. It is a small complex for team sports and cultural activities in the centre of the town. It is an important meeting place for young people. Work will end in February 2004 and consists of enlarging the sports centre, renovating the changing rooms and drainage system, and building a new fence.
- *Reconstruction of a country road in Qender (Panaja).* Built as part of the project, the new stretch of road of about 450 m links the state road to the village of Panaja, providing improved access from the village to the most important areas in the region.
- *Environmental protection in the Region of Vlore.* Carried out in collaboration with the Marche Region, the project began in 2001 by supplying the Municipality of Vlore with 4 crusher trucks and 500 waste bins. The public sanitation company AnconaAmbiente trained eight technical personnel

of the municipality and the sanitation service of Vlore, and provided technical assistance for the organisation of a model collection system in the central part of the city, serving 22,000 families. In March 2002, municipal technical staff and entrepreneurs in charge of waste collection in Vlore went on a five-day study-trip to Ancona. In 2003, the Region of Vlore, the Marche Region, the Municipalities of Orikum, Himara, Lukova and Saranda, and PASARP presented a proposal for EU funding, under the initiative LIFE – Third-party Countries, to create a regional authority in charge of managing waste in accordance with European standards. The project was approved with funding for Euro 300,000. The project was presented at a national meeting in Tirana by the Region of Vlore, the Marche Region and PASARP in December 2003. The delegation from the Marche Region, which included representatives of AnconaAmbiente, fine-tuned managing and operational methods of the project with Albanian local and national authorities. The project is scheduled to begin in early 2004. AnconaAmbiente will provide technical assistance and be in charge of general supervision, while PASARP will be responsible for coordination and supplying logistical support to the project.

Mental health and social enterprise

The project began in 2000 and envisages the gradual conversion of the psychiatric care system in collaboration with the health district, the administration and the personnel of the psychiatric hospital and the Italian NGOs CESV and CDS. Rehabilitation was carried out for individual patients from women's ward no. 4 of the hospital, with activities inside and outside the hospital in collaboration with the Marche Region, ARCI and UISP. Personnel attended refresher courses with the support of Italian and Albanian NGOs, OSCE and UNICEF. The women's association of Tirana (TWIG) donated home appliances and sewing machines to the hospital. About 60 patients are involved. Another 350 people receive assistance in the outpatient clinic and home care from the health office, supported by CESV and PASARP. An association of 44 relatives of patients was created. In 2002, individual rehabilitation continued for 65 patients of the psychiatric hospital. The home care activities catered to more than 70 people, with 329 services provided. The association of relatives of psychiatric patients collaborated with the territorial team in setting up self-help groups.

In 2003, in applying the policy document of the Ministry of Health, PASARP intensified mental health initiatives in the territory. Psychosocial rehabilitation activities (PRAs) were carried out, as well as an intervention study to create a PAS and an emergency psychiatric care service, which provides assistance to local patients in their own homes.

In collaboration with local and international partners, a first network of stakeholders was created in order to guarantee integration into society and the labour force of vulnerable people and the promotion of a new attitude towards mental healthcare. The actors involved in the project are: WHO, which provided technical assistance also through the International Debate Open Services (WMC); Caritas Ambrosiana, which guaranteed implementation of the interventions; Trieste Health Office 1; Exclusion.net, which coordinated internships and assisted in disseminating information; the University of Turin and the "Franz Fanon" Centre of Turin; the association Initiative zur Soziale Rehabilitation Psychisch Kranker (NGO) of Bremen, the University of Bremen and the association Ambulante psychiatrischen Dienste (NGO) of Hamburg, which in August and September participated in psychosocial rehabilitation at the psychiatric hospital in Vlore.

Pilot PRAs began in July 2003 and lasted two months. A group of international volunteer professionals, involving all local operators, organised activities during a summer holiday for 78 patients of the psychiatric hospital in Vlore. With the collaboration of a consultant of the Marche Region for tourism development, PASARP rented part of the tourism/hotel complex belonging to the Albanian Union Confederation in order to host the summer holiday. Social and professional integration initiatives were carried out regarding the human and civil rights of long-stay patients in the hospital of Vlore. In late 2003, a psychosocial rehabilitation project was launched at the hospital with the aim of discharging and re-inserting patients into society. Collaboration established with the Albanian Union Confederation contributed to the creation of numerous initiatives for the development of the Region of Vlore. With the technical assistance of international experts, the medical staff created three rehabilitation units to promote personalised care projects for patients. Contacts were re-established with families, home visits carried out, discharges took place and territorial care took over. The social problems of the patients were identified: needs linked to lack of work, housing and family support. In order to find concrete solutions to these problems, collaboration was set up with civil

society associations and local institutions: municipalities, prefectures and LEDAs. In March 2004, achievements and a medium-term action plan proposal will be presented to the Ministry of Health, as requested by the Albanian Government, to apply the national mental healthcare reform.

The PAS takes care of admissions, diagnosis and entrusting patients to territorial care, and acts as a filter for all requests coming into the psychiatric hospital. The PAS, located on hospital premises which have been renovated and equipped by PASARP, has eight beds (four for women and four for men), a kitchen, living room and reception room. The team in charge of it is managed by a psychiatrist of the hospital and made up of hospital staff nurses and healthcare workers.

The intervention-study project has been approved the Ministry of Health, which approved the plan of operations. The project envisages: reducing the number of hospitalised patients and days spent in the psychiatric hospital of Vlore; reducing the number of beds, converting them into territorial services; creating a hospital/territory network to discharge and entrust patients to territorial care in a pilot district of 120,000 inhabitants; offer territorial mental health therapeutic-rehabilitation services; optimise the utilisation of professional resources operating in hospital admission and observation services; collect necessary data for long-term planning, in accordance with the policy document and incorporating the Vlore action plan into the action plan for implementation as stated in the Mental Health Policy Document; and enlarge the Vlore team with new professional figures, under contract to the national public administration.

The service received a motorised vehicle and the work shifts were modified to facilitate discharging patients and performing routine and emergency house calls. Once its new operations are established, the service will be part of the future mental health centre. In 2003, operators were trained through the modules in accordance with the Ministry of Health and visited the facilities in the local health office in Trieste, with the technical assistance of Exclusion.net. In 2004, operators will be trained through further modules on integration and social enterprises, in collaboration with experts of the decentralised cooperation committees and the Vlore LEDA.

The project lasted eight months (July 2003 – February 2004). It was implemented by Caritas Ambrosiana, which guarantees a continuous presence in the

Region of Vlore and has already collaborated with PASARP in renovating hospital premises. The inauguration ceremony of the admissions service took place on 9 December 2003 with local health authorities, the president of Caritas Ambrosiana, Don Virginio Colmegna, and representatives of the association of relatives of psychiatric patients attending.

Local economic development

In 2001, the Marche Region planned, with the Working Group of Vlore, economic development initiatives linked to the potential for tourism in the coastal areas. A course for eight people was organised to repair and assemble fishing nets in Vlore. The course, which lasted from July 2001 to April 2002, led to the recovery of traditional skills in repairing fishing nets. Diplomas were presented to the participants in a ceremony held on 9 June 2002 in Vlore, attended by the director of the Fishery Department of the Ministry of Agriculture of Tirana. The participants are planning an enterprise to produce and repair fishing nets. The Marche Region also launched a study, with the working group, of the tourism potential of the coastal areas of the Region of Vlore. The study was carried out by five Albanian experts and professors from the University of Ancona, coordinated by Professor Renato Novelli. The Region of Vlore provided the office and PASARP supplied the necessary equipment.

The presentation of the masterplan for tourism took place on 8–9 June 2002, organised by the Chamber of Commerce of Vlore, in collaboration with PASARP, at the start of the tourist season. Produced through a partnership of the Marche Region, the Region of Vlore and the UN, the masterplan demonstrates the great potential of decentralised cooperation in promoting local development. The masterplan is not a traditional plan for tourism, but rather a factual and analytical review of the environmental, cultural, architectural and social resources of the territory. Drafting the plan involved intensive data collection and manageable initiatives were identified by territorial actors. Economic development conditions of the territory, environmental aspects, national plans, and social aspects of the country and the region were all taken into consideration when producing the masterplan.

Results of AULEDA

In 2000, a network of 26 actors had already been established for economic development in Vlore, and four study-groups were set up to create the agency.

Training courses were carried out in Albania and study-trips undertaken in Italy and Bosnia and Herzegovina at other agencies. However, the process of constituting the agency was slowed down in 2001 at the request of the prefect of Vlore, who presided over the working group.

The LEDA for the Region of Vlore, AULEDA, was created on 20 May 2003. AULEDA has 13 members, 9 public and 4 private: the Prefecture and Region of Vlore, the Municipalities of Vlore, Saranda, Lukove and Novosele; the University of Vlore; the Regional Employment Office of Vlore; the Regional Development Agency of Vlore; the Chamber of Commerce of Vlore; the Agriculture and Food Office of Vlore; the Association of Rural Tourism and as an honorary member, the Vlore branch of the Bank of Tirana.

PASARP provided AULEDA with a credit of USD 350,000. Credit activities privilege the unemployed, low-income families and socially vulnerable groups. Through a national guarantee fund, and the contribution of CREDINS Bank, the credit fund available for AULEDA exceeds USD 750,000. The AULEDA board is made up of seven members, appointed by the assembly. The technical structure consists of a staff of four highly-qualified people.

Through an intervention-study process in the territory, AULEDA identified the following target sectors: agriculture and biological agrobusiness, tourism and connected services, milk and milk products, fishing and fish farming. AULEDA worked towards developing a base for rural and cultural tourism; promoting local agricultural products and certifying their quality; promoting and sustaining initiatives in the fishing sector, activating resources and qualified skills in the Marche and Puglia Regions; and supplying technical and financial assistance for new business projects and SMEs. In 2003, AULEDA became fully operational and worked on the following initiatives:

- Promotional initiatives. Participation of Vlore products at the “Slow Food” fair in Pesaro, displaying a large variety of agrofood products from Vlore; training course for hotel receptionists in Vlore, in collaboration with the universities of Ancona and Vlore; participation in Expo Vlore 2003, the Vlore fair held in September 2003, where AULEDA contacted more than 600 potential buyers; participation in October in the conference on “Production of biological milk products in the area of Karaburuni”, organised by the Association of Biological Agriculture.

- **Training for tourism.** On 17 October, AULEDA organised a meeting with local tourist operators, to identify needs and opportunities for future partnerships. AULEDA subsequently planned training modules for managers and personnel in the tourist sector in order to improve their performance and customer service. In December, it held two training days for hotel personnel dealing with the public in order to enhance service management and customer relations. In collaboration with the Association of Albanian Hoteliers, AULEDA promoted the creation of a regional section of the association.
- **Marketing of rural tourism.** AULEDA conducted marketing research in Vlore and the communes of Palasa and Dhermi in order to develop the B&B model in the areas currently least affected by tourism flows. The research also identified the instruments to create a B&B system, such as training, cooperation among operators and access to credit. In order to develop international tourism, a task force was set up, entrusted with providing “fly and drive” tourism packages. The project intends to provide travel agencies with a product that can focus on different targets. The Albanian LEDAs will coordinate the development of this tourism proposal, in collaboration with the Marche Region and the principal international networks of the tourist industry. The task force also identified a further product for Albanian citizens, a weekend formula to stagger the tourist flow and promote areas and untapped local potential in the Regions of Vlore, Durres and Shkoder.
- **Agriculture and agrobusiness.** On 30 October 2003, in collaboration with the Regional Agriculture and Food Office, a meeting was held with 40 representatives of farmers’ associations to launch collaboration and identify instruments and opportunities to develop enterprises in the sector, promote local products, identify new and more modern distribution channels, and promote biological and natural products.
- **“The Ecological Valley” project.** The Albanian agriculture system is still fragile as a great deal of land is uncultivated and its full potential unexploited owing to the lack of industrialisation in agriculture. Therefore, in late 2003, AULEDA promoted a project to enhance the Vlore River valley as an area of high ecological potential. The project intends to direct territorial partners towards urban, social, economic and productive

choices that safeguard and reclaim the existing residential areas; recognise the significance of its natural and cultural features, the values and knowledge of the territory. The target area, the Vlore River valley, is well suited for agriculture and livestock, and includes 6 communes and 53 villages, with 43,000 inhabitants. In early 2004, an agreement protocol was signed to create the territorial pact, the first of its kind in Albania.

RESULTS IN THE REGION OF DURRES

The Region of Durres is in central Albania and its capital, of the same name, is located on the Adriatic coast. The territory has 20 km of coastline, fertile plains and hills, and some mountains. The Prefecture is composed of two districts, Durres (four municipalities and six communes) and Kruja (two municipalities and four communes). It has a population of 240,000. The city of Durres has 120,000 inhabitants. Kruja, Shijak and Fushe Kruja are the other major urban centres.

In 1999, the Prefecture Working Group of Durres gave priority status to interventions for enhancing basic health, educational and cultural services. The situation in the region has changed considerably in the last two years, and in 2003 the prefecture working group drew up a plan to promote economic development. In applying the new national decentralisation policies since July 2003, the Prefecture Working Group of Durres also became a regional working group, presided over jointly by the president of the Regional Council and the prefect.

In 2003, the decentralised cooperation committees carried out numerous missions in Durres in order to launch new initiatives and monitor ongoing projects. Nine missions were undertaken, involving 19 political figures, experts and academics of the committees. In 2003, Professor Renato Novelli of the University of Ancona, a focal point of the Marche Region in Albania, undertook monthly missions in Durres in order to monitor the implementation of projects. In October, the EU approved an important project, LIFE – Third-party Countries, which involves PASARP, the Marche Region, the Albanian environmental institutions, the Region of Vlore and the Municipalities of Durres and Shijak, in the Region of Durres.

In 2003, Albanian delegations undertook missions to Italy. In March, restorers of the Archaeological Museum of Durres and the Institute of Cultural Monuments participated in a training workshop in Parma and

Bologna. Ten students from a training course on cultural enterprises participated in a ten-day internship in Italy. The universities of Bologna and Parma involved public and private bodies of the Emilia-Romagna Region to carry out and cofinance these training activities. In March, in Parma and Udine, the second scientific meeting of the "Durres Archaeological Project" took place, with the Albanian professors Neritan Ceka of the Academia of Sciences, Afrim Hoti, director of the Department of Archaeology of Durres, Gazmend Muka, director of the Institute of Cultural Monuments, and Iris Pojani, of the Packard Humanities Foundation, participating.

G o v e r n a n c e

The Regional Working Group of Durres brings together 15 representatives of institutions and 3 local associations: the president of the Regional Council, the prefect, the mayors of Durres, Kruja, Fushe Kruje and Shijak, a representative of the Regional Planning Office and one for development, the representatives of the Regional Health, Education, Environmental and Urban Planning Offices, the director of the Tourism Development Office, the directors of the Employment Offices of Durres and Kruja, a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, and two representative of NGOs. In Durres, a study group on culture was set up, with more than 200 representatives of regional associations and institutions.

One of the first activities carried out by PASARP in 1999 was the renovation of offices to be used by the working group in the prefecture building. In 2003, it was planned to house the Regional Technical Unit in these offices, whose first duty will be to create a task force to support tourism policies, with the assistance of PASARP, the Marche Region and the Polytechnic University of Marche.

In 2003, a project of "Support to employment policies and social dialogue in the Region of Durres" was carried out by the NGO ISCOS of the Italian Trade Union CISL, in collaboration with TAULEDA, the Marche Region and ISCOS of Marche, Piemonte and Liguria. The project will lead to setting up an integrated information system (SILD), in collaboration with the two main Albanian trade unions and the employment offices of Durres and Kruja. The project began in October and is scheduled to last eight months.

In the framework of the Durres Archaeological Project, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports requested technical assistance from PASARP in order to utilise

and protect the cultural and archaeological heritage, creating a special office for Durres on the basis of laws recently passed by the Albanian Parliament. The University of Parma provided its own scientific and organisational services. A detailed proposal of activities to carry out was supplied by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, which is evaluating the financial and legal feasibility of the initiative.

With PASARP support, the Regional Council organised a first workshop on local strategies for regional development in July 2003. In November, an important meeting was held on civil protection in the Region of Durres. This led to contacts with the Municipality of Napoli, the Province of Salerno and the international institute "Stop Disaster", which is involved in sustaining the institutions of Durres in preventing disasters and organising regional civil protection services.

H e a l t h a n d e n v i r o n m e n t

In 2000, a working group had already been trained in social and health services, and a project launched to reduce health risks and strengthen mother and infant services in the most remote and least-equipped areas of the territory. The rural centre of Bushnesh was inaugurated in October 2001. Community health personnel and teaching staff received training in preventive health.

In 2003, the regional study group decided to unify activity planning in order to improve health and the environment. The regional office of the National Environment Agency was equipped, the regional office was provided with computer services, and a regional database for the environment was created. PASARP reserved a fund to cofinance the project LIFE – Third-party Countries "Environmental protection in Vlore and Durres", in collaboration with the Marche Region and the EU. PASARP financing will be oriented towards collecting and recycling waste in the town of Shijak.

A project to reduce health risks and improve oncological-gynaecological services in the Region of Durres was launched. The project began in June 2003, producing a feasibility study as well as drafting the technical documentation and preparing the institutional framework. The Albanian Society of Colposcopy coordinates the technical-scientific part of the project, while the Durres branch of the NGO Independent Forum of Albanian Women handles the distribution and information aspects at the local and national levels. The project has been carried out with the support of WHO and the World Society of

Colposcopy. The project provides for initial screening for the prevention of cervical cancer for 5,000 women aged 35–45. It covers a large territory, two urban areas (Durrës and Kruja) and three rural areas (Bushnesh, Manze and Ishem), the most disadvantaged in the region. A pool of gynaecologists is responsible for collecting the PAP tests in the mother–infant health centres, while a modern cytological laboratory has been equipped in the centre in Durrës for cytological analyses. On the basis of regional experiences, national protocols for the prevention of tumours in women will be proposed to the Albanian Ministry of Health.

Another project, directed towards strengthening services to protect mothers and children is scheduled to commence in early 2004. It envisages undertaking support activities for: family planning; prevention of infectious diseases in infants; and reduction of the infant mortality rate, through the kangaroo mother method for premature and underweight newborns.

Culture and education

In 2000 and 2001, cultural activities involved a high number of cultural and artistic organisations and the local media. In 2000, two days of concerts and cultural activities were organised, with the participation of more than 10,000 people. In 2001, the joint planning board produced a cultural development plan for the territory. An inventory was undertaken of artists, artistic infrastructures, archaeological and cultural sites, active cultural organisations and traditions. Collaboration began with the Museum of Udine and the University of Parma. With the contribution of the city of Cortona, the Kruja study group produced the first guide and historical/tourist map of the town in October 2002.

In 2002, the study group on culture, with the participation of all local actors, produced the cultural development plan. This plan covers the enhancement of infrastructures, appreciation of local artistic resources, the organisation of the culture sector and the promotion of international scholarships. The Permanent Theatre of Ancona staged a theatrical performance and held workshops for technical updating in theatre in Durrës and Kruja. The play “Arlecchino servitore con due padroni” was performed at the theatre in Vlorë. In January 2002, in collaboration with the Municipality of Milano, renovation of the stage-lighting system of the Moisiu Theatre in Durrës was completed.

In 2003, numerous cultural initiatives were carried out, such as the jazz festival in Durrës, with the participation of internationally known musical groups. Giancarlo Menotti’s “The Telephone” and Gioacchino Rossini’s “The Silken Ladder” were performed, bringing opera back to the Moisiu Theatre in Durrës. The following results were achieved in 2003:

- *Durrës Archaeological Project.* The project was launched in 2002, in collaboration with the University of Parma and the Civic Museums of Udine, in order to protect and promote and develop the value of the archaeological heritage. The first conference was “Study of Albanian cultural heritage – comparison of research techniques” (Parma and Udine, 19–21 April 2002), whose acts were presented on 5 November 2003 in Tirana by the Chancellor of the University of Parma. The second conference, entitled “Instruments for protecting Albanian cultural heritage: the archaeological risk map and computerised cataloguing. Italian examples and their feasibility in Albania”, was held in Parma and Udine in March 2003 and provided the basis for the drafting of the archaeological risks map, an essential instrument for city planning. The rapid population growth of Durrës has led to a construction boom, which threatens the very survival of the extensive archaeological heritage. In April 2003, the Albanian Government passed a law on cultural monuments. This law regulates cultural and archaeological heritage in a more effective way, establishing rules for urban development that ensure respect for the archaeological foundations of the city. Produced using the latest GIS system, the risk map provides information about the position, depth and nature of archaeological findings, and pinpoints areas most at risk from development. The map is the information base for planning urban development while complying with the new law for the conservation of cultural heritage in an urban area. The photographic exhibition, “Durrës. 3000 years of civilisation. Pride and responsibility” was an important contribution towards increasing knowledge of, and promoting and developing, the archaeological heritage of the city of Durrës. Inaugurated on 2 August by the Minister for Culture, Youth and Sports, the exhibition was held in the evocative setting of the galleries of the Roman amphitheatre in Durrës, open for the first time to the public for a cultural event. The exhibition closed on 7 October 2003. The exhibition illustrated the long and extraordinary history of Durrës, an Adriatic city that developed to be an eternal gateway between East and West. The panels illustrated the artefacts conserved in the

Archaeological Museum of Durres and ancient monuments scattered around the area. The brand-new cultural enterprise Epidamnos-Dyrrachium-Durres (EDD) supported the organisation of the event. In three months, 5,060 people visited the exhibition, more than the total number of visitors to the amphitheatre in the last ten years. These facts have convinced the authorities of Durres that cultural resources can be utilised for the local and national development of tourism and the economy. Albanian institutions have requested the assistance of PASARP in order to identify further interventions, such as the creation of an urban archaeological park and the conversion and restoration of the amphitheatre of Durres and the surrounding areas.

- *Training course in cultural enterprises.* In cooperation with the universities of Bologna and Parma and the Civic Museums of Udine, a training course in cultural enterprises was held for 30 young unemployed people and personnel of local institutions, followed by an internship in Italy. Planned in the framework of the "Durres Archaeological Project", the course was held by the universities of Bologna and Parma and the most qualified Albanian instructors and experts in the sector. It ended in March 2003, with the first cultural week of the project. Called "The reawakening of the city", this event had a great impact and was received enthusiastically by the public. With the support of TAULEDA, the young people trained during the course created the cultural enterprise EDD, which is a significant result of the initiative. EDD was entrusted with carrying out the most important event of the Durres Archaeological Project: setting up the photographic exhibition "Durres. 3000 years of civilisation. Pride and Responsibility". EDD also participated in preparing and drafting the archaeological risk map of the city of Durres.
- *Completion of the cultural and sports centre in Kruja.* The cultural and sports centre in Kruja is an open complex, with an amphitheatre capable of holding 5,000 spectators, a field and some other structures. Renovation began in November 2000 and ended in April 2001, and saw the active participation of the prefecture cultural study group, schools, associations, institutions, artists and writers. The clubhouse of the cultural centre was inaugurated on 12 August 2003, in the presence of the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation and the mayor of Kruja. On that occasion, PASARP and the mayor of Kruja signed an agreement committing the municipality to awarding management of the work to an enterprise of young people, promoted by the

cultural group of Kruja. The enterprise has the duty of supporting the municipality in planning and carrying out cultural activities. Kruja is a destination for many national and international tourists. However, owing to its limited accommodation facilities and lack of cultural events, tourists tend not to stay overnight. The agreement signed with the Municipality of Kruja envisages promoting longer stays for tourists through a network of B&Bs and a stimulating variety of cultural events.

- *Renovation of the stadium of Shijak.* Sports in the town of Shijak have been boosted by the town's football team winning promotion to the Albanian first division championship for the first time. In the framework of the regional study group, the municipal authorities proposed rebuilding the town's stadium and provided funds to cofinance the work. The improvement of the stadium, bringing it up to Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) standards, satisfied citizens' and athletes' needs. Restructuring work and the construction of new stands began in May 2003 and are an example of an effective technical and financial cooperation with Albanian institutions. The Albanian Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, involved in the project by the Municipality of Shijak, the Shijak Football Club and the Albanian Football Federation contributed USD 40,000 to the project.
- *Restructuring of the "Rinia Recreational Park" in Durres.* The lack of sports and recreational facilities for young people in the city of Durres induced the regional study group to plan the renovation of the "Rinia Recreational Park", a long-abandoned and decaying public facility. The project envisages reinforcing sports and educational initiatives, involving local actors; promoting cooperation among all actors in the sports sector; and increasing opportunities for economic development by creating socio-sport businesses run by young people. The project envisages training young people in sports management, supporting them in creating enterprises, and providing renovated high standard facilities. Sports operators, local institutions and sports trainers have given considerable support to the project. Renovation will be completed in February 2004. The Municipality of Durres has contributed USD 30,000. Many actors responded positively to the proposal of the study group: the Marche Region, the Rotary Club of Marche, UISP Marche, the Italian Volleyball Federation, UN Volunteers and the Albanian Olympic Committee. They were given the task of

organising activities in the park, while TAULEDA was entrusted with creating, training and supporting the youth-managed socio-sport enterprise of “Rinia Park” of Durres.

Local economic development

In previous phases, the prefecture working group had identified a strategic project for the city of Durres: the reconstruction of the city market, which was inaugurated in September 2002. The work, carried out by a local enterprise, took nine months under the supervision of experts of the Municipality of Durres and PASARP. The market has a surface area of 2,600 m² and 340 stalls for the retail sale of fresh foods, such as fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and milk products. The first Albanian association of local retail traders was created, called “Shoqata tregu i perditshem Durres”, which the municipal authorities put in charge of managing the market. The day after the inauguration, the market opened its doors to the public, and the impact on the city was immediate. The neighbourhood, whose streets used to be invaded by makeshift, unsanitary stalls, now looks clean and orderly. The market is very lively and used by many people.

In 2003, with the experience carried out by the Shkoder LEDA as a reference, the regional working group decided to create TAULEDA, a regional agency, with a budget of USD 450,000 to cover operating costs for the first two years of activity, for technical assistance and for providing financing, through credits subject to reimbursement, to SMEs. This new allocation of PASARP funds led to the reduction of funds earmarked for other initiatives, with the consensus of all participants in the working group.

In March 2003, an initial meeting was organised with the institutions and civil society of Durres to promote the constitution of an agency. At the end of the meeting, it was decided to set up a working group to define the statute and necessary procedures to create the agency.

Results of TAULEDA

TAULEDA, from Taulantia, the ancient name of Durres, was created on 20 April 2003. It has the legal form of an association. It has 23 members, 8 public and 15 private: the Region of Durres; the Municipality of Durres; the Municipalities of Durres, Kruja and Shijak; the Regional Employment Office; the Agriculture and Food Office of Durres; the Port Authority of Durres; the Chamber of Commerce of Durres; Egnatia Group

Association; Centre for the Development of Civil Society; Women with Social Problems; Albanian Women’s Forum; Daily Market; Pesticide Management; Centre for the Promotion of Business and the Economy; Albanopolis; Gruaja and Kohes & Ekonomia; Youth Association Council; Young Intellectuals; Women, Time and Economics; Women and the Family; Council of Associations for Social Services; and Era of Change.

TAULEDA commenced work on 4 August 2003, with a staff consisting of a director, two experts and an administrative assistant. The offices became fully operational in September. PASARP provided TAULEDA with USD 70,000 for management expenses and activities in the territory. In five months, TAULEDA, while having undertaken countless initiatives, spent only USD 18,000, paying particular attention to saving on management expenses.

The TAULEDA staff participated: in a course organised by PASARP on local development; in the course organised by PASARP and CREDINS Bank on managing the guarantee fund; in the course on distance training Simulimpresa, organised by the University of Bologna; in the workshop “The stock exchange and new alternatives for financing business activities” organised by the Tirana Stock Exchange; in the training course for trainers, organised by Chemonic; in the workshop “Women in the Workforce” organised by the National Labour Service and the Council of Europe; and in the training course organised by SEED Albania, entitled “YES creating and managing a new enterprise”.

TAULEDA identified the target intervention sectors, establishing short and medium-term objectives in the tourism, crafts, cultural enterprise, agricultural and agrobusiness sectors. The agency assisted in defining development policies for the Region of Durres. In close collaboration with the Prefecture and the Region, it offered technical assistance to process the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for tourism. The results were presented at a meeting called by the prefect with the highest local authorities. At the meeting, the constitution of a permanent policy commission was established to support tourism, made up of the main local authorities and supported by a pool of experts, TAULEDA among them.

The SWOT analysis was performed for the first time in the Region of Durres with the direct participation of local operators. TAULEDA organised various brainstorming sessions with operators in the sector to discuss, analyse and propose solutions to problems

that arose. One of the outcomes most appreciated by the operators was the possibility to meet and discuss their respective and common problems.

TAULEDA helped prepare the tourist guide to the Region of Durres, edited by Professor Renato Novelli of the University of Ancona. It programmed package tours to promote the region, aimed at foreign tourists, and fine-tuned a “fly and drive” package formula.

In September, TAULEDA launched an intense action to stimulate growth in the territory, by identifying and supporting the most promising business ideas. In the Municipalities of Sukth, Manza, Kruja and Fushe-Kruje, Hamalle, Perlat, Rrushkull, Manza, Armath, Shkafane, Rrotll, Shenpjeter, Gramze, Dukagjin, Nikel and Thumane, meetings were organised with farmers and local producers. At the meetings, needs were identified and a technical assistance path for access to credit launched through the guarantee fund. Furthermore, TAULEDA contributed to the partnership with ALCRED Ltd. (a cold-line, agricultural-produce processing company), an important market opportunity for the agriculture sector of the region. One of the main reasons for the low level of production is more a shortage of markets rather than lack of financial resources.

Through these meetings, TAULEDA established direct contacts with more than 600 farmers. An agreement is under way with the Albanian association that promotes and assists biological farming. One of the strategies of the agency consists of helping the farmers with BIO certified agricultural products, making them available on national and international markets, with appropriate labelling to increase their

value and sale price. Further interesting investment opportunities emerged at the meetings:

- Arqile Gerxo – Perlat, Sukth: wine and grappa production;
- Ahmet Qyra – Hamalle, Sukth: vegetable production for the export market;
- Gezim Derrasa – Hamalle: poultry and egg production;
- Xhemal Rruci – Fush-Kruje: creation of a wine-cellar to produce quality wines.

In Kruja, a project is being defined to improve the production of lime, which will have a considerable impact on employment and the environment. Lime is currently produced using traditional methods. These methods destroy the forests, mountains and the surrounding environment, as wood and old tyres are used to cook the limestone and there is no control of quarry management.

TAULEDA provides technical assistance to these and other business projects, and organises other training activities for groups of potential entrepreneurs. In Hamalle, on 21 November, it held the first course to set up and manage a cattle farm, while in Kruja it organised a course to manage B&Bs, which many local women took part in. TAULEDA undertook initiatives to extend activities in the territory. It obtained financing from the Soros Foundation for USD 8,368 to produce a practical guide, in printed form and online, for enterprise creation and development. The guide is a useful instrument for entrepreneurs, above all for those who are starting out, as it provides complete details on the obligations and opportunities of the Albanian enterprise system.