

MASTER European Innovations for a Sustainable Management of Albanian Territories, Rural Areas and Agriculture: Instruments, policies, strategies

Curriculum template

MODULE 6 *Territorial Administration, Planning and Governance*

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1. *Description of the module - objectives, and procedures*

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

This module aims to highlight:

1. The role of administrative reforms in consolidating good territorial governance; and the role of local and regional authorities as new organizational and spatial- geographical units.
2. The need to combine and articulate various sectoral policies at territorial level.
3. Structural, socio-economic and environmental changes in rural space in the light of sustainability.
4. Changes in planning and implementation processes of spatial and development policies in the context of decentralization as well as the transformation of public action from state-led into territorial action (bottom-up processes).
5. Understand the spatial planning instruments at local, regional and local levels.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE

In this module the students will find information on the following issues (a short explanation for each topic that is going to be discussed):

I. Introduction: Theory and Concepts.

Topic 1 – Introduction to Geography and Space

Topic 2 - Rural restructuring and new challenges for sustainable rural development and planning

II. The European context of territorial governance and spatial planning

Topic 3 - Territorial Administration and Spatial Planning

Topic 4 - Sustainable planning and governance in rural areas

Topic 5 - The institutional framework of European territorial policies

Topic 6 - Territorial reforms in Europe

III. Administrative and territorial reform in Albania: institutions, local actors and practice

- Understanding the Albanian context

Topic 7 - Administrative and territorial reform in Albania

Topic 8 - The current local government context in Albania

Topic 9 - Territorial planning situation of Albania

-How to prepare general plans at national and local levels

Topic 10 – Guidelines on Preparation and Implementation of General National Spatial Plan

Topic 11 - Guidelines on Preparation and Implementation of General Local Plans

Topic 12 - Analysis of Implementation of a specific General Local Plan (representative case from north of Albania)

Topic 13 - Analysis of Implementation of a specific General Local Plan (representative case from central of Albania)

Topic 14 - Analysis of Implementation of a specific General Local Plan (representative case from south of Albania)

2. *Content of the module*

Topic 1 - Geography and Space

This topic introduces some main key concepts of Geography, Spatial and Regional studies such as space, place, territory, and sustainable territorial development in order to understand social organization of space in different parts of the Earth ranging from the local to the global at a given time; i.e. how people use and alter their environment and in which way environment, including space and places impacts on people and their everyday life. In doing this, the topic will allow students to become familiar with theoretical and methodological approaches regarding new principles and criteria for the sustainable planning of human communities (geographical mobility, territorial integration, promotion of place identity) and a democratic territorial governance within territorial administration policies.

This topic includes definitions of key concepts and terms in Geography:

- Space
- Place
- The Five Themes of Geography (location, place, human/environment interaction, movement, regions)
- Territory/territoriality

Topic 2 - Rural restructuring and new challenges for sustainable rural development and planning

This topic introduces to rural restructuring processes and the changing countryside (social, cultural, demographic, and environmental change) after World War II and in particular during the recent decades of post-productivist transition. How much “agricultural” remains the countryside nowadays in terms of employment and incomes? How do environment and climate change impact on habitats, farming and rural activities? In the wake of social and economic restructuring, what types of conflicts arise regarding the control and exploitation of territorial resources (land-use conflicts, economic, environmental, social, and cultural). Which is the role of counter-urbanites and emerging non-agricultural stakeholders in local political leadership and governance patterns? The topic will provide an introduction to major conceptual approaches in rural change in terms of both processes and practices that trigger change as well as of relevant multiple responses (economic, political, socio-cultural) under the lens of sustainable rural development and planning.

The main chapters include:

- Key concepts of rural restructuring processes in the post-productivist transition; Emerging conflicts and challenges
- Responses to rural change and new strategies for rural development and planning; Shifting from state to ‘bottom-up’ procedures

Topic 3 - Territorial Administration and Spatial Planning

The aim of this topic is to familiarize students with the terms of spatial planning and its relation to territorial administration and governance. What are the links between space, administrative-spatial structure, planning and territorial governance in view of the contemporary challenges of decentralization and centralization, what is the role of government and the shift to governance, and what is the role of participation in a bottom-up approach and the process of democratization.

The aim is to look at the links between the process of local government reform and the administrative-territorial structures and understand the process of transferring powers and resources to local authorities in relation to Urban and regional planning at multiple scales (i.e. the neighborhood, city, regional, inter-regional, and national levels).

The main chapters of this topic include:

- Spatial planning and Territorial administration
 - Introducing the concept of spatial planning
 - Types of Spatial Planning Instruments and linkages Spatial Planning instruments and state organization
 - Decentralisation reforms and territorial administration and governance
- A territorial approach of bottom-up planning
 - Advocacy Planning vs Rational planning model: towards a participatory approach of planning
 - Decentralization and local territorial development
 - Territorial typologies and statistical areas
 - The role of local government and local self-government

Keywords: territorial administration, spatial planning, local self-governement, advocacy planning, participatory planning

Topic 4 - Sustainable planning and governance in rural areas

This topic describes the changing rural areas and the evolution towards an integrated planning approach. It explains the power of the relationship among rural actors and the sustainability aspects in urban-rural partnership. It is trying to link land-use planning with rural development by explaining how to plan and draw rural space development based on integrated planning approach for sustainable management of land resources and on an interactive partnership between governments and people (bottom-up procedures).

The main chapters include:

- Changing rural areas
 - Rural-urban typologies
 - Rural, islands and mountainous and remote areas
 - Sustainable rural-urban partnerships
 - Bottom-up or endogenous process of local development in rural areas
- Cultural and natural diversity of rural areas
 - Rural space as cultural heritage

- Rural space as natural heritage
- Planning and Management of Land Resources in the Rural Development Context

Keywords: rural-urban partnerships, bottom-up endogenous development, rural heritage, natural protected areas

Topic 5 – The institutional framework of European territorial policies

Introducing environmental and spatial planning policies in Europe and their evolution. Analyzing the European framework for the balanced and sustainable spatial development. Combination and articulation of various sectoral policies at territorial level.

This topic contains information about:

- Brief history of Spatial planning in Europe
- The European Spatial Development Perspectives” ESDP
 - 3-policy goals
 - 13-policy aims/objectives
 - 60-policy options

Topic 6 - Territorial reforms in Europe

This topic studies the evolution of institutional framework and territorial/administrative reforms in Europe. Its main aim is to understand reforms of the first tier of government (municipal/communal level) as a feature of public administration. Case studies / examples from European countries and lessons learned. Greece will be used as an example of a neighbor country of the South Balkans that is experiencing territorial amalgamation reforms among several countries of Europe in order to see comparable aspects with the Albanian case and lessons learned.

- Territorial reforms in Europe
 - Reorganization of 1st tier local authorities in Europe (Change of the number of municipalities, size comparisons and other statistics concerning sub-national governments before and after reforms)
- The case of Greece
 - Main geographical features and spatial structure of the country
 - Administrative System and Territorial Governance
 - Lesson learned

Topic 7 - Administrative and territorial reform in Albania

Administrative and territorial reform in Albania: Brief history, strategy, objectives and implementation processes. This topic aims to understand the current territorial organisation of Albania, its subnational levels of governments and analyze the changes in the number of local government units (from 373 to 61), the effects on population size of local governments and the impact on responsibilities and their economic and administrative performance. This lesson will try to understand the population trends in

rural and urban areas and the depopulation of some peripheral regions (emigration to other countries and internal migrations from distant rural regions to big cities) and link this processes with the functional approach of decentralization in Albania.

- History of the Administrative-territorial Organization in Albania (1912-now)
- Mapping size and population trends/local governance mapping in Albania
- The approach of 'Functional areas' in Albania
- Main considerations

Topic 8 - The current local government context in Albania

Identification of the new spatial-geographical units and the explanation of the management of territories in Albania. Other decentralization and local/rural development programs in Albania.

This topic explains the main decentralization strategy of the Republic of Albania for the period 2015-2020 (Minister of state and local issues) in terms of the structures of local governance, their functions and responsibilities, intergovernmental relations and institutional capacities.

Topic 9 - Territorial planning situation of Albania

The articulation between the different levels in policy formulation (European, national, regional and local) combined with the role of institutions and rural/ local actors in shaping and implementing these policies.

The topic explains how the new legal planning reform, is being supported by the Territorial-Administrative Reform of 2015, where government supports technically and financially local municipalities to draft General Local Plans, their main tool for territorial development. We will explain the use of new integrated planning instruments is developed through a cross-sectoral process involving many actors, at all levels of governance e.g. First National Spatial Plan for Albania 2030 (adopted by the government in 2016).

Through the presentation and understanding of the new specific laws for planning and development of the territory, students will familiarize with basic principles, responsibilities and rules for territorial planning in Albania, which are the institutions with planning responsibilities, what are the planning instruments and at which levels.

Topic 10 – Guidelines on Preparation and Implementation of General National Spatial Plan

Representatives from ministry in charge and AKPT will be invited to explain spatial planification process at national level in regard to preparation and implementation of General National Plan through specific case studies. The idea is to get familiar and explain through different maps (urban system, infrastructure system, areas of national importance etc.) of the General National Spatial Plan. Possible guest lectures and workshops with representatives from AKPT will be used to facilitate comprehension of the new planning instruments.

Topic 11 - Guidelines on Preparation and Implementation of General Local Plans

Representatives from AKPT and local administration will be invited to explain spatial planification process at regional and local level in regard to preparation and implementation of General Local Plans through specific case studies.

This part will be enriched by the fieldwork that will be done by Master and pairing PhD students.

Topic 12 - Analysis of Implementation of a specific General Local Plan (representative case from north of Albania)

Students will work as a team (at least 3 persons per team) by choosing a representative case from north of Albania to analyze, criticize what is included, implemented and applied on the specific GLP. They will also analyze if the GLP include specifications in accordance or not with the EU policies and concepts.

Topic 13 - Analysis of Implementation of a specific General Local Plan (representative case from central of Albania)

Students will work as a team (at least 3 persons per team) by choosing a representative case from central of Albania to analyze, criticize what is included, implemented and applied on the specific GLP. They will also analyze if the GLP include specifications in accordance or not with the EU policies and concepts

Topic 14 - Analysis of Implementation of a specific General Local Plan (representative case from south of Albania)

Students will work as a team (at least 3 persons per team) by choosing a representative case from south of Albania to analyze, criticize what is included, implemented and applied on the specific GLP. They will also analyze if the GLP include specifications in accordance or not with the EU policies and concepts.

3. Planning of the practical teaching classes

4. Individual research project