The Consortium

The consortium has a core group of 4 universities (Florence, Shkoder, Graz and Athens), with a tradition of cooperation, in Tempus projects and other forms since 1998. Florence and Shkoder act also as coordinator of national partners.

In the case of Florence, the Faculty of Political Sciences (Prof. Di Nolfo), has coordinated several Tempus projects since 1995 and two projects with Albania since 1998 and is Contractor of this project.

The Project Coordinator is Prof. Stefania Fuscagni, of the Faculty of Humanities and also Rector’s Delegate for Albania. Her role in the creation of the Dept of Italian language in Shkoder and her interest in the development of the local economy has put her in contact with Shkoder administrators and of course with the Rector’s Office.

Prof. Fuscagni has also been active in bringing into the consortium FORMEZ, a public school of administration and management in Rome, that also provides expertise to Italian Regions and Municipalities.

They have a non-academic approach to training public administration staff that is the basis of the model of the Training Centre established in Shkoder and also provides a necessary balance to the creation of an academic curriculum within the Shkoder Law Faculty.

Among the partner the Region of Shkoder (Qarku) and the Municipality (Bashkia), for support in the initiative and as main parties interested in the Training Centre.
The Background

In the last ten years Shkoder and the whole northern Albania faced several challenges both due to conflicts with and to neglect by the central government, making it one of the country’s less developed areas. In addition to the stagnation of the economy, the city of Shkoder is heavily penalized by the unreliable electric supply and by the low budget of the Municipality. A good chance to improve the present situation is being given by the Law on Decentralization No 8652 of July 31st 2000, re-defining the competences of the local governments, with the basic idea of strengthening elective local governments by giving more administrative autonomy to the Municipalities (Bashkia) and by appointing 12 new Regions (Qarku) in the same territories of the Prefectures (Prefektura). In such a transition, becomes evident the need of an institution building in the form of training for the local governments' staff, to enable them to face the new challenges and functions when the decentralization process is completed and therefore to take advantage of the opportunities offered in this framework. In addition to this, it is clear that it is necessary to provide a specific form of higher education for future local administrative staff, and this means having a university curriculum to produce young graduates in the economic-juridical branches.

The idea of this project took form over a rather long period, two years, when several factors came together. The various links of the University of Florence in Shkodra, either as previous Tempus projects on EU institutions or as cooperation for the establishment of a Dept. of Italian language, led to a series of contacts that often touched on needs beyond those addressed by these forms of cooperation. Also, the various exchanges between the Faculty of Law in Shkodra and the Faculty of Law in Graz, within Tempus or with financial help from the Austrian government, led the teaching staff involved to express an interest in doing something focussed on the local administration in Albania - a topic often discussed also with Athens, that had a Dept. of Public Administration partner. The visits of EU staff in Shkodra often led to meetings with local administrators, who echoed, with a different emphasis, the same needs expressed by the Shkodra University teachers. At the same time, Prof. Fuscagni was discussing the question of administrative training in Albania/Shkodra with a leading school in Rome, FORMEZ, that has a specific experience in this field. Also, during her visits to Shkodra, she came into contact with local administrators who put forwards several ideas re the development of the local economy (agriculture, tourism, archaeological sites) and once again the need for a good standard of administration and management as the main requirement for this aim. So, two levels of activity were considered of primary interest: to create within the Shkodra Law Faculty a specific curriculum in Public Administration and to create a Training Centre intended mainly for PA staff. Input was constantly provided by the Municipal and Regional administration in Shkodra and by Formez, while Graz and Athens - as well as Florence in its teaching capacity - discussed how to address the needs in the most suitable and effective ways. All then agreed on the thematic areas and methodology.
Project Development - Action Implementation

The wider objective of the project is to create a self-sustaining structure for training/retraining of PA staff. The specific project objective, to be realized through the outcome of training courses for PA staff, is a new curriculum within the Law Faculty and the Training Centre, also envisaged in terms of impact and sustainability, that is to spread the idea and practice of the decentralization process and to provide trained/retrained administrative staff. The project was structured in 3 phases:

1. Teaching in Albania (by EU staff and by Shkoder staff)
   EU universities and FORMEZ held intensive courses/modules for Shkoder University. The teaching in Shkoder by EU staff had two objectives: to help create a new curriculum in PA at Shkoder Law and to help create a Training Centre, and were concentrated into three main thematic areas: Territory, environment and development; Civil protection and volunteer associations; Decentralization.

2. Training in EU
   Shkoder University teachers had training visits to the EU, to access department and library resources, with the main objective of preparing outlines of courses/modules/seminars, for use at the home institution, both at Faculty level and at Training Centre level. Selected PA Staff had training visits to EU in branches of EU local administration, mainly at Municipality level, of the appropriate Department/Branch, but also Region level, when suitable.

3. Creation of a Training Centre
   Actually a formal agreement has been signed by the project’s participants and it will provide stable links between the academic institutions and the local government. In the Training Centre some additional activities have been held:
   - ECDL: a first module of training and selection among the academic staff of the University has been carried out (6 days). Its aim was to select the teachers to be involved at the next stage which will involve PA staff, mainly, and students as targets of the courses;
   - GIS technology: two half-day seminars on the Geographic Information Systems (lectures and lab exercise format) was held by Formez experts and was directed both to the PA Staff and to the academic staff of the University. Its aim was to improve the knowledge over the practical application of GIS technology already introduced in the local administrations and in the University by a previous project financed by Formez International: ALBA (Action Learning to Build Albania).
Main Project Activities: Executive Phase

Training of Trainers
The analysis of the existing situation inside University of Shkoder highlighted the lack of specific courses inside the Law studies area.

Preliminary intensive course - Module zero
A preliminary course called “Module 0” on “Legal and Business English” was introduced at the suggestion of the University of Graz. “Module 0” was divided into three sub-modules: EC Law and specific terminology, use of EC legal and business terminology (treaties, fundamental freedoms, etc.), practicing and reading of legal acts and ECJ judgements.

Teaching in Albania
On the basis of the need analysis, all the partners of the consortium agreed on a training curriculum/teaching modules divided in 6 different areas:

Area of European Constitutional Law
Module 1: European Constitution
Module 1.1: European Convention on Rights
Module 2: Community Law (2nd pillar)
Module 3: Community Law (3rd pillar)

Area of Public Administration Law
Module 1: Participatory Planning and Civil Protection
Module 2: Local Government Law and Decentralization
Module 3: Administrative European Law; Comparative Administrative Law

Area of Information Technologies and the Law
Module 1: Introduction to the theory of Information Technologies and the Law
Module 2: The Use of Legal Databases; Copyright Law, On-line Trading Law
Module 3: The Use of Informatics in Administrative Procedures: E-government and Digital Signature

Area of Programming and Control of PP.AA.
Module 1: Planning Programming and Budgeting System
Module 2: Internal Control and Audit System in PA
Module 3: Public Governance and Public Utilities

Area of Law and Economics
Module 1: Economic Analysis of the Law and Competition Law
Module 2: Environmental and Sustainable Development Law
Module 3: European and International Financial Policy for Development

Area of economics and management of public utilities
Module 1: Public and Environmental Economics
Module 2: Local Public Utilities Management (gas, water, electricity, transports, wastes)
Module 3: Economics and Enterprises Management; Urban and Territorial Marketing
Main Project Activities: Executive Phase

Training of the Albanian Civil Servants

This activity was the core of the project, and was organized with two different approaches:
- Training of PA staff by Shkodër University Academic Staff
- Study visits in EU partners institutions of PA staff selected. In this case some Albanian Professors decided to participate as well, even though their involvement was not foreseen in the original Application Form

The main outcomes were:
- Retrain Shkodër PA staff
- and test the teaching modules and the general scheme/programme/curriculum to be adopted by the training centre itself

Each training-stage organized by FORMEZ for Shkodër PA staff was aimed at developing participants' individual resources in at least three sectors:
1. the VISION: the capability/motivation to face new challenges in programming and managing politics with a new approach. In this field new knowledge can be acquired only comparing the traditional local approach to the practices of the “other”. The individual can get a new and different vision observing other administrations, also in terms of cultural diversity;
2. the KNOWLEDGE and TECHNICAL SKILLS for programming, managing, monitoring, evaluating and controlling politics with special reference to: projecting and implementing organizational models and professional behaviours of PA staff; using new technologies for managing and deciding. The objective is a new comprehension of the know-how, through the comparison with the host administration and a deeper understanding of the reasons of diversity.
3. the value of RELATIONS to be established with the host administrations, useful in terms of possible inter-regional and international cooperation. This objective is particularly important, in the framework of socialization processes and exchanges in view of a widened practices community. Relations among professionals establish a network that can be considered as the basis of a cultural enrichment and professional development. The core of this process is a constant peer review, a transfer – also informal - of technical competencies, a general confrontation on common themes.

According to these aims, each visit to EU was regarded as an important learning moment for all participants and for home PA in general.
Training-stage experiences:

1. **Title:** Territorial Marketing for development  
   **Thematic area:** Territory, environment and local development;  
   **Host administration:** Emilia Romagna Region, Ravenna Province, Faenza Municipality  
   **Participants:** Shkoder University, Shkoder Municipality, Shkodra Region  
   **Period:** 4-8 October 2005

2. **Title:** Geographic Information System  
   **Thematic area:** Territory, environment and local development  
   **Host administration:** Province of Naples  
   **Participants:** Shkoder University, Shkoder Municipality, Shkodra Region  
   **Period:** 4-8 December 2005

3. **Title:** Territorial Strategic planning for social services  
   **Thematic area:** Decentralization and capacity building  
   **Host administration:** Area Nolana  
   **Participants:** Shkoder University, Shkoder Municipality, Shkodra Region  
   **Period:** 13-12 December 2005

4. **Title:** Local Finance and Development  
   **Thematic area:** Decentralization and capacity building  
   **Host administration:** Toscana Region  
   **Participants:** Municipalities, Shkodra Region  
   **Period:** 2006

**Seminar**

Formez held three seminars in June 2005 and July 2005 as a preliminary step to the stages. PA staff as well as professors from Shkoder University attended them. Seminars were dedicated to:  
**Geographic Information System (June 2005);**  
**Disaster Management: civil protection and civil defence (July 2005);**  
**Territorial Marketing (July 2005)**