

## Research by design / exploring resilience

### Berat competition call<sup>1</sup>

*from the Manifesto "Call for expression of interest", Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, AKPT – National Territorial Planning Agency and Atelier Albania.*

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#### Manifesto

The competition area is both a target and a test site at the same time. It is a small island in a relatively small historic city in Albania, the city center of which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. There is a lot to tell about the city, its particular history and its architecture, but since it is not the scope of the brief to fall into those details, these explanations will be part of a separate document. The island itself, which is the site of this international competition, is a leftover asset neglected by the city but which nevertheless changes shape time after time because of the changes in river water flows. The strong presence of this asset in the city landscape means that the island can be transformed in a real focal point for the city and particularly for the neighbourhoods at its vicinity. This island deserves design thoughts that will shape its potential. On the other hand, throughout history the island and the river water have continuously been in a struggle for defining their territories. Recently Albania experienced flooding and a lot of issues that come along with that. Even though flooding is not a new phenomenon it again caught residents of the flooded areas unprepared, and as a result there was a considerable inventory of consequences. This international contest is announced with the purpose of connecting the Osum Island to the city of Berat network. This international call is looking for ways where urban can cohabitate with nature and be resilient towards any natural phenomenon. Through this open call, Atelier Albania, aims to attract teams of architects and designers. The goal is to

obtain the most original and visionary concepts of an architectural and urban character intervention for the test site Osum Island in Berat and come up with innovative solutions to develop the landscape, or be 'urban by nature' and be resilient at the same time. Concepts should be based on principles that are informed by and in return respond to the peculiarities of the context, requirements of the assignment but are also informed by the experiences of other countries.

#### Competition area

The area of competition is determined by the footprint of the Osum Island in Berat, which is changeable according to the water flows. The island is positioned in between the banks of the river and is faced by the two oldest and most beautiful neighbourhoods of Berat, which is a UNESCO heritage settlement. This island has a strong presence in the river landscape, but has always been neglected. During the early 40's of last century, the Italian architect and planner Gherardo Bosio, proposed in its plan for the city of Berat to connect both banks of the river through the island that emerges in the area where the river is much wider compared to other sections. This plan was not executed, at least for this part of the city. The connection of two riverbanks was realized south of the island, where the river narrows down, leaving the Osum island neglected, even though its presence has a very strong impact on its urban and natural landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> Call complete text available at <http://competitions.planifikimi.gov.al/beratisland/> [last access 10.07.17]



*Fig1 / competition area  
source / Call for expression of interest" Ministry of Urban Development, AKPT and Atelier Albania.*