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# From intersectorial plans to territorial cohesion policies in rural development and protection in Albania

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## Abstract

*This paper derives as a result of the workshop held at POLIS University in Tirana and the University of Ferrara involving PhD Candidates of the 30 and 31 cycles, during the period of January and February. The special feature of this workshop was the involvement of various profiles within a single argument - that of the "Seman River" area (located in central Albania). The emergence of this various scientific fields has been taken into consideration in this paper, including here biological sciences, rural landscape, and coastal development, in order to give the territory an interdisciplinary analysis - especially to the rural one.*

*Due to the lack of public policies on the above mentioned areas also as a result of 25 years of communist regime, has left the area without any kind of governance tools (such as tax collection and public investment), aggravating its development by not utilizing the true potentials of the area, such as the natural resources (gas), water supply, and agricultural fertility.*

*Moreover, due to the new Territorial and Administrative Reform on the third administrative level (with new born Municipalities) have not envisioned any approaches to rural development, public capabilities, where regulatory and financing tools remain up to the First Administrative Level.*

*According to Co-Plan (2014), which studied various scenarios in shaping future Second Administrative Level in Albania (the Regions), policies at this administrative level clearly need to deal with at least two features; Rural Development and Environmental Protection.*

*The challenge of this paper is to open possible new direction of these features through the first administrative level - where at the moment everything seems concentrated at this decisional context - and urge the need for a Second Administrative Level, in order to give new insights for future governance capable of lead Rural Development. From the point of view of the originality to study and read the hindering factors of rural development, this paper will try to find alternative solutions of the rural territory government through the study of decision-making context - in order to find at least one element in this context that we can change in order to direct this development. For this reasons, as we will see below, three directions have been proposed to understand the decisional context; Land property issues / Monitoring and Certification Programs / Financing tools.*

*Finally, this paper will explore the proposed directions addressed from the First Administrative Level through a policy evaluation process, highlighting the possibility of programs dealing with the stated problems.*

*The last chapter considers financial feature as an alternative solution in seeing rural development issues and problems in a holistic way - considering the development as cohesive process. Also highlighted in Fig. 1, the Seman River pollution from oil gas activities has a close relation with the agricultural land and its hindering factors. This creates the need to explore the rural development as a holistic and cohesive action starting from a necessity to address the environmental protection.*

## Introduction to the area

When we talk about Albanian rivers there's nothing more sorrowful and hopeless than when we see their natural condition and the effect that the human impact has on it. For many years the water basin has been subject of illegal earnings from various groups (single inhabitants, companies) linked to the building sector or other. The extraction of raw materials has changed over times the river basin, leaving space to flooding and soil erosion, setting up a negative overall image for all Albanian rivers from the north to the south. The case study that we explored during this workshop shows us a unique situation, where the issues mentioned above are intersected with many administrative levels and in different territorial contexts. The area that the workshop focused on was the Seman River area, covering different territorial contexts, combining a series of multifaceted problems of the human health and on the environmental impact.

From the complexity of the two dynamics mentioned before; administrative level and territorial context this paper considers separately the rural issues from the urban ones. The human factor stands as the main indicator in regards of river pollution in the city of Fier (3 km away).

The other two indicators stand as productive factors and are related to oil drill activities, three oil drill camps (Fushe - Marinze, Kucove, Ballsh, crossing Osumi river and Gjanica river), and the informal productive chain of agricultural goods in Myzeqeja field - which covers around 5% of the national area. A schematic separation between human factors and productive factors is also illustrated in fig.1. If we consider this separation by context it would be urban and rural, or by territorial governance - local and central level. This last separation is crucial in understanding the importance of the central government in shaping the future development of new born municipalities (Law 115/2014 'Territorial Reform'). Although the Law no. 10119 "On Territorial Planning" removed the 'yellow line' as an urban borderline concept, and opened it to a broader concept of territorial development, many rural issues remain obsolete from central government policies, and strongly decisive on local impact.

## Studying The Decisional Context: The Importance Of A Holistic Problem Solving

Among few attempts in analyzing and classifying the context, M. Jänicke's work

(2005) on development of environmental policies in a comparative perspective, suggested an analytical framework in which he refers to the structural context of policy making - that is divided into three different categories: cognitive context, economic context and institutional context.

According to Dente (2010) the decisional context or environment is the set of structural or contingent factors and conditions that influence decisional processes and contribute to the determination of their outcomes, but cannot be modified by actors, nor in particular, by those interested in the policy decision.

Each decisional process, in fact, is carried out in a given space and in a given moment in time so it is reasonable to expect that everything that is possible or impossible here and now, will not be in another place at another moment. Dente (2010)

Keeping this separation, from rural - urban, as a public administrative issue many contingent factors on territorial development for the new born municipalities rises.

With the new law on territorial decentralization of the third administrative level (Law 115/2014 'Territorial Reform') one of the main challenges of the municipalities is to connect the city with the hinterland, by including productive sectors such as agriculture and other sectors related to environmental issues, which are hanging on from the first administrative level policies, such as; Land property issues, Monitoring and Certification programs and Financing tools.

**a) Land property issues** in the agricultural sector: Between Uncertainties and Conflicts

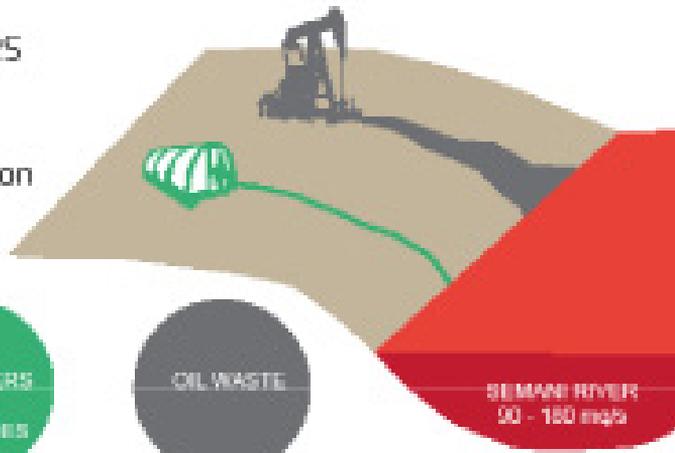
According to Law nr. 7501, dated 19.7.1991, the agricultural land has previously been given for use to families in the rural areas; specific number of hectares per person, without the possibility to sell or buy new land. On the other hand, the overlapping layer of the old owners before the communist regime, which claim their ownership, requires an immediate institutional response on the decisional context. Even where the law does not provide sale agreements, acts of purchase and sale has been made between informal arrangements - generating conflicts; overlapping ownership, changing also the cognitive context.

**b) Monitoring system**, and certification programs of productive sectors - to oil drill

## PRODUCTIVE FACTORS on river pollution

many policies to take on  
central authorities

regional scale



activities and to the agricultural sector. Fieri Municipality and the surrounding area have been known for a long time for its fertile and extensive land of agricultural production. Muzeqeja field, as it's named, at the beginning of the '90 covered almost 25% of national forage production and other varieties.

Nowadays it would be difficult to estimate the national importance of this regional area, which surely remains one of the most important resources for the local communities and villages.

Moreover, the informal market and the low cognitive context use of pesticides, based in an uncontrolled and uncertified market, has caused serious effects on the environmental impact and also on the irrigation canals. On the other hand, the inability of the public administration's in stimulating policies in order to assess and monitor the impact of the productive factors on rural areas with an intersectoral policy, involving various ministries, rises a crucial and sectorial question on "who should lead future policies in such a complex institutional and cognitive context?"

According to the Intersectorial Coastal Plan of the Ministry of Urban Development a particular attention should be given to local communities living in the coastal areas and along the sea side, hence no program of this ministry has included these communities in this plan (Intersectorial Plan Coasts, draft plan).

From the other side, the three oil camps; Fushe Marinez, Kucove and Patos show the most relevant national resource according to the Ministry of Energy and

Industry and it's incomes.

From this point of view, the two ministerial sectorial plans show a fragmented vision in leading this intersected and conflictual national priority.

According to the Intersectorial Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Forest Management, "Strategjia Ndersektorial e Mjedisit", 2013-2020, there's no guideline document regarding industrial incidents from toxic pollution, or on management of incident; toxicology; methods of decontamination; or equipments that could be used during the occurrence of a chemical emergency. Another thing to bear in this final claim is that of the institutional ability to monitor the environmental impact of the oil sector which is infrequent and has low results.

Hence, it is crucial to specify that is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environmental and Ministry of Energy to monitor the industrial impact, in order to design policies on environmental and human health. Various studies (Guri, Aliu, Lubonja 2013) on oil drill activities and their impact in the ecosystem, have revealed conclusions of severe impacts of the health of the community living around Fier.

**c) Financing tools** / Actually there are two financing sources from the Central Government regarding the rural development; the Albanian Development Fund (Fondi per Zhvillimin e Rajoneve) and various Ministries.

The first has actually invested only on 2015, 1/70 of it's budgeted for environmental issues and only 1/12 for

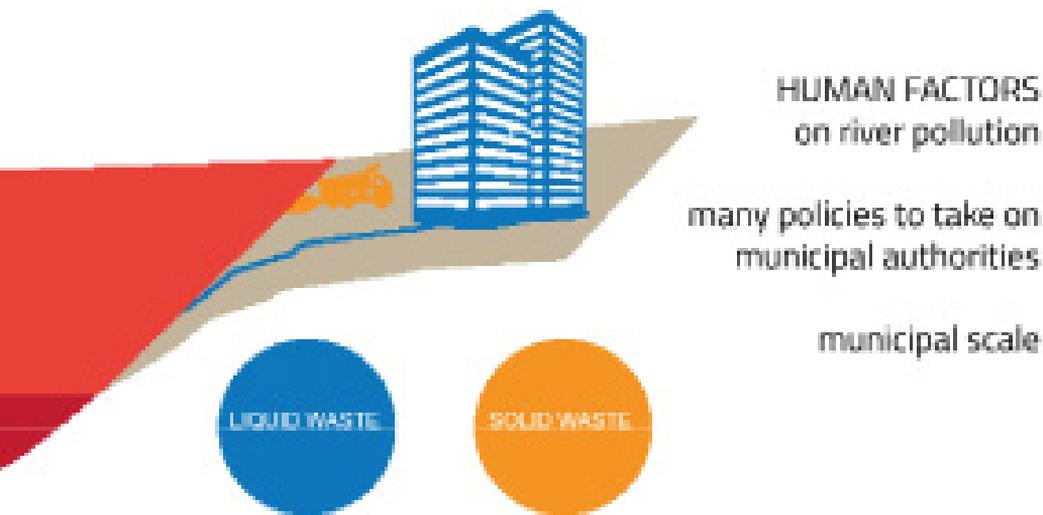


Fig1 / "Rural - Urban", Seman River as a transmitter of potentialities and threats - from Oil drill camps to agricultural land / source drawing by the author

rural water supply. (Annual Report of the Regional Development Fund, 2015). Thus most of the budget was allocated for street reconstruction 52,525,679 € (Projects 1); for rural water supplies 5,058,760 € (Projects 2); environmental projects 824.218 €; educational projects 331.168€; requalification of urban squares 1,017,946€; and the Museum of Photography Marubi (Marubi Fototeka) 760.971€. (FSHZH, annual activities report, 2015)

Regarding the Ministry of Agriculture the financial tools relate to single farmers with a high capital invested already, or with a reimbursement till 10.000 Euro of input capital. The character of these policies are aimed for farmers which have already made their investment in the sector – and not those who for underlying reasons can't get into the productive sector, even if they were already part of it.

Beyond the limited financial tools, the same report from the ministry where the sector of agriculture is facing many problems, in one way or another makes the environment context non-fertile for future investments, such as: i. losses in manufacturing, ii. small surface of the farm (medium 1ha per farm), iii. lack of manpower (due to international and internal migration) and iv. low level of technology, v. high prices of agricultural inputs, vi. lack of unity among producers (cooperation), etc. If further investigated on the actual situation, this ministry currently has 3 ongoing projects, where the first one aims the financial support (Sared Project); the second a 'vacant' public work assumption (with particular

skills and abilities) and the third one the rehabilitation of water canals and irrigation projects.

Directly or indirectly, the financial investment in agriculture comes out as a redistributive policy from the Ministry of Energy, an amount of capital which the extracting company operating in Fushë Marinzë and Kuçovë should make on environment and human health. It's a Public Private Partnership at a high level of agreements, between the state and big corporate, such as Bankers Petroleum, which operates in the area of Fier.

One of the questions that rises consist on the fact that this agreements have local repercussions and if affirmative what character and on which sector? Referring to Bankers Petroleum in 2014 this company has invested 70 million USD on health, environment and safety, approximately 60% to abandoned oil wells, and 30% to direct environment.

If the reactivation of the old industry (the oil wells) has been considered as an environmental issue to invest on (60% of the total amount), which is the next aim after the oil wells will be reactivated?

### Consideration on decisional context

According to M. Jänicke's the analytical context mentioned before, cognitive, economic and institutional context, some findings can be as such;

Cognitive context (Environment): The uncertain ownership and the overlapping layers of laws have harmed seriously the cognitive market of purchasing land, where the agricultural sector is part of it. From the other side, this uncertainty in the

agricultural sector 'enjoys' an unbalanced tool-market, which is hardly controlled by the national institutions, such as seeds and pesticides.

Institutional context (Environment): regarding the institutional environment it can be said that some policies have moved, particularly in the Myzeqe area - where acknowledgment of the agricultural property process from the public has had success. One of these factors that pushed this process is also the need to expropriate private agricultural lots due to the Trans-Adriatic-Pipeline project (TAP). In addition to the commitment of the Ministry of Urban Planning for the National General Plan there's no map at national level regarding the recognition phase of agricultural property with various layers of ownership, although some processes have taken place but in an sporadic way. According to some studies only 80% of land should be given to farmers by law 7501 is registered by the cadastral offices in Albania - but no map is available at public or academic audiences or use.

The first week of April, 2016, heralded the beginning of a new governmental campaign on the recognition based on law 7501 on the agricultural land as private property, starting in Novosela area (Fier-Lushnje city), in a similar process as the building sector, (ALUIZNI - the national agency for the legalization of informal settlements), the remaining 20% still has not obtained the certification of property. Economic context: according to agricultural basic needs, the starting capital is strongly related to oil consume and water system for the irrigation. Actually Albania has the highest price for litre of gas and no policies for agricultural purposes aim in obtaining a lower cost of it. As far as the water system many policies have aimed in directing investments on irrigation canal. Another remaining factor for a difficult process of cultivation, but not last, is the high cost of fertilizers on the Albanian market.

### **Choosing between Land property issues, Monitoring and Certification Programs and Financing tools; the importance of a holistic problem solving.**

- Land property issues:

If land fragmentation stand as a hindering factor to the agricultural sector, distributive and redistributive public policies (financing tools from the Government, as in the picture below) will not solve the problem of the agricultural sector due to a low level of monitoring the oil drill activities and river pollution.

- Monitoring and Certification Programs:

If public policies of the Ministry of Energy

and Industry will help in solving the problem of pollution in rivers from oil drill activities and later to the agricultural field (including pesticides etc.) - the low financing of local farmers by a meritocratic system, such as subventions, will not solve the undeveloped agricultural of Albanian system due to the problems listed by the Ministry of Agriculture mentioned before (low level of technology, losses on manufacturing etc).

- Financing Tools:

If public policies of FSHZH (Albanian Development Fund) will cover finances on irrigation canals and on watersheds the problems listed above will prevail on solutions.

On this condition it's clear that the geographic and administrative triangulation requires a horizontal cooperation or umbrella process to see the problem solution in a holistic way among actors and public policies.

Intersectorial plans from the Ministry of Urban Development, seems to be the only one which tries to put regulative public policies in a broader vision considering problems and defining planning priorities.

### **Suggestions And Future Strategies**

After an analysis on the decision context and the problems that each actor faces in such complex and conflictual environment, it is possible to create a first conceptual network. Fig.3 introduces a typical form that gives an idea of the morphological variety of decisional network. The dots represent actors and arrows are their connections which in the analysis model are the resources they exchange with the regarding policy. In these conditions, what remains to do is to open up to various possibilities of strategic choices designed and formulated by a group of authors.

The "art and craft of policy analysis" written by Wildawsky in 1979 and later by R. K. Saprú in 2010, consists in the ability to "read" the decisional processes in order to choose the correct strategy to achieve the transformation desired. In this case, from the analysis, it's clear that a different cooperation and network among actors can totally change the decisional context. To get to different scenarios we must flank again to the theory of complex strategies. Density and Centrality are two indicators that measure the network properties; The higher the level of centrality, the greater will also be the role of the dominant actor (new connections), whereas the higher will be the density, the stronger will be the relation and cooperation among actors (new interactions). If we should

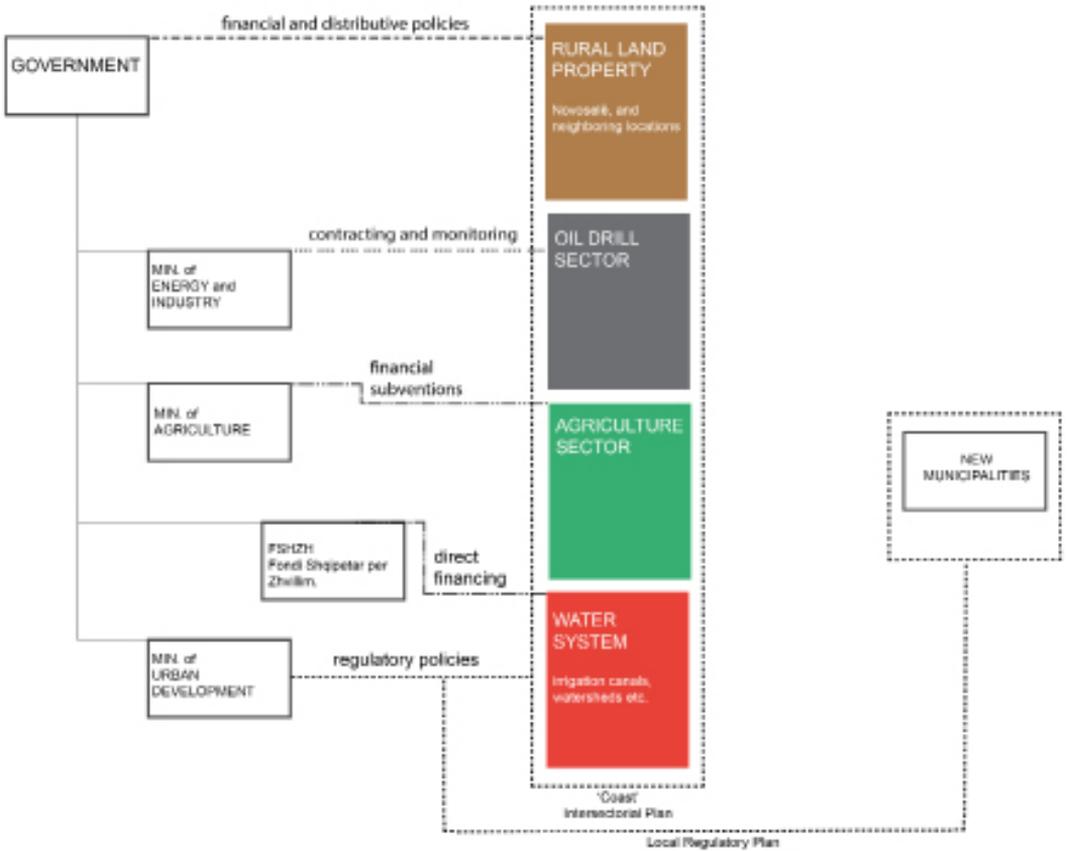


Fig2 / Actors, Public Policies, and Actors Network: sources / 2 initiatives of Ministry of Urban Development (Local Plans, Intersectoral Plan - 'Coasts'; 3 ongoing projects of Ministry of Agriculture (PROMAS, SARED, Water resources and irrigation projects), Governmental initiatives (Ditari i Keshillit te Ministrave - 1 Prill)

ask about the dominant actor, it is clear that the Ministry of Urban Development regulates more connections with other actors, although it's regulatory policies holds the network - the Intersectoral Plan 'Coast'.

In social science regarding network manipulation theories and possible scenarios that can be generated exists a multiscalar and interdisciplinary way in treating actors and their resources. What we are going to do is by imaging a different level of centrality and density for the territorial projects / policies. Indeed for (Coleman, 1956), the existence of multiple centers of power and avenues of status attainment is central ingredient in maintaining the freedom-order balance among actors.

**Strategy no.1** Increase / decrease the density

- Objective 1: Increase the density (increase interaction)

When we expect mutual learning (repeated games), and a creation of trust between different actors.

- Territorial scenario no.1: By increasing the interaction among local actors, such as local land owners, local farmers, oil drill company, regional agencies, with the

corresponding ministries. Certainly, not all actors have the same resources, but what keeps them together are the financial policies from the central ministries. One solution it would be by seeing how funds are distributed, in order to create a system of continuous game with reciprocal beneficiaries - and this can take place at local grassroots, by empowerment and capacity building approach.

- Objective 2: Decrease the density (decrease interaction)

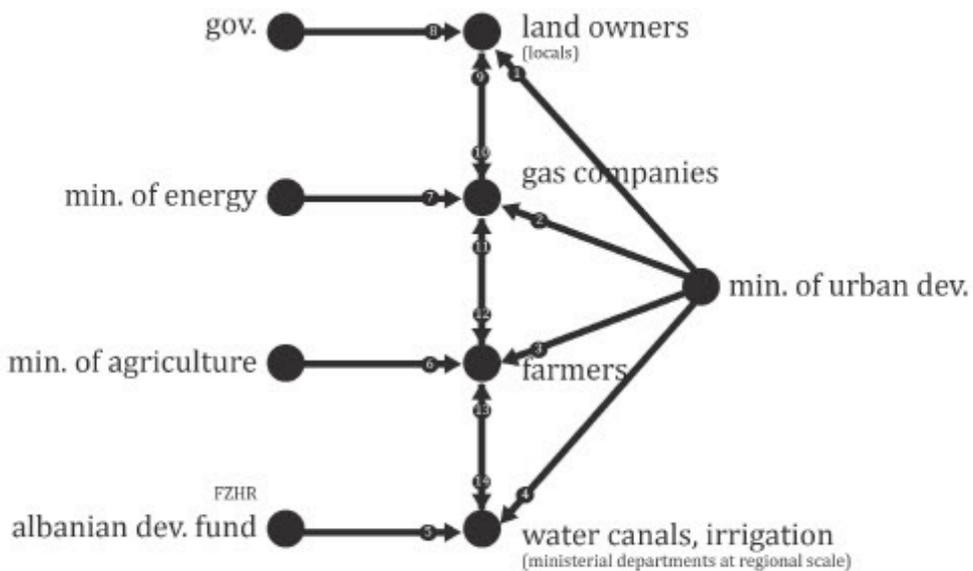
This example is considered as an expectation when different actors could have different statements or conflictual relations.

- Territorial scenario no.2: One of the possible scenarios can be to address international diplomacy and informal mediations. Certainly, the low density in Fig.3 shows its peculiarities on decisional context on three issues; land property, monitoring and certifications and financing policies - but a similar and continued condition should be put in a serious constriction of the future development of the regional area.

**Strategy no.2** Change the centrality

- Objective: Increase the centrality (add interaction)

This is to ensure the stability and



density = 0,19 (for a variable from 0 to 1)  
 centrality = 0,28 (for a variable from 0 to 1)  
 9 actors

Fig3 / Actors, Public Policies, and Actors Network: Measuring Centrality and Density.  
 (a. Distributive Public Policies - Financing, b. Regulative Public Policies - Intersectorial Plans)  
 source / scheme by the author

Proportion of all the connections in the network that refers to one specific actor.  
 Its formula is:  $C = k_i / \sum k_i$   
 where:  $C$  = centrality coefficient that varies between 0 and 1  
 $k_i$  = number of connections of each actor

Amount of relations among actors of a decisional process. Its formula is:  
 $D = \sum k_i / (n^2 - n)$  where:  
 $D$  = density coefficient that varies between 0 and 1  
 $n$  = number of actors  
 $k_i$  = number of connections of each actor

effectiveness of the main actors (not necessarily efficiency).

- Territorial scenario no.3: The ministry of Urban Development is the only actor which has the highest interaction with the other actors, and the regulatory policies (Intersectorial Plans) are the resources that this actor has. By adding new interactions with other actors, such as other various ministries, we can integrate the financial resources with those regulative - which would lead to new territorial Plans. At this point we must add that the final result may be also collegial groups among the actors.

**Final remark:** the study of the network and the possibility of manipulating the interactions between the actors does not bring great reveals in the aspect of the decision making, but rather it offers a clear

analytical field of present territorial policies and those that possibly could be taken in consideration for future strategies. On this frame, new strategies can be added.

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e vendit pritës ndërmjet Republikës së Shqipërisë, duke vepruar nëpërmjet Këshillit të Ministrave, dhe Trans Adriatik Pipeline Ag, lidhur me projektin e gazsjellësit Trans Adriatik (projekti TAP), si dhe të marrëveshjes ndërmjet Republikës së Shqipërisë, përfaqësuar nga Këshilli i Ministrave, dhe Trans Adriatik Pipeline Ag, në lidhje me projektin e gazsjellësit Trans Adriatik (projekti TAP)". Tiranë.

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