

Comparative approaches in drafting of the Municipal Development Plans

“In house” approach of Junik Municipality, and MDP Outsourcing of Rahovec Municipality

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ABSTRACT

Spatial Planning of Kosovo, law no. 04/L174 requires from the municipalities drafting of their strategic documents, such as:

- Municipal Development Plan/MDP
- Zoning Map and
- Detailed Regulatory Plans (not- mandatory).

This paper aims to present two different approaches of MDP¹ examples preparations:

1. “In-house” approach, example of Junik Municipality, and
2. Outsourcing approach, example of Rahovec Municipality

Junik Municipality (June 2009) started its preparations for drafting of the MDP with "In-house" approach, being in this way the first municipality of Kosovo to use this methodology, whereas other municipalities of Kosovo used their external outsourcing, among them also the Rahovec Municipality.

As a result of a two (2) year work and as the first document drafted "In - house ", having also the Environmental Impact Assessment-EIA included within, this document was completed and approved by the Municipal Assembly of Junik and by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) on October 2011. In contrast, Rahovec Municipality including other Kosovo municipalities, in drafting of their own MDP-s, used external companies/consultants through outsourcing methodology (through tendering).

While "In-house" approach of this strategic municipality document explains the process, the required activities with their results of compilation, creating in this way a sense of ownership by "learning by doing" methodology, the example of Rahovec Municipality with its outsourcing approach, implicates high cost expenses of municipal budget, decrease the sense of ownership, and it has its own difficulties in further implementation of the plan as well.

¹ Municipal Development Plane (MDP)

KEYWORDS: Strategic documents, Municipal development plan (MDP), “In-house”, Outsourcing, "learning by doing".

1 INTRODUCTION

Law on Spatial Planning No. 04/L174 provides for two levels of spatial planning in Kosovo:

1. Central level planning for the entire territory of Kosovo, including:
 - 1.1. Kosovo Spatial Plan;
 - 1.2. Kosovo Zone Map; and
 - 1.3. Spatial Plans for Specific Zones.

2. Local level planning for the entire territory of municipalities, including:
 - 2.1 Municipal Development Plan;
 - 2.2. Municipal Zone Map; and
 - 2.3. Detailed Regulatory Plans.

“Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is a strategic, multi-sector document that defines the long-term limits of economic, social and spatial development. Municipal Development Plan shall include the plan for development of urban and rural zones for a period of at least eight (8) years.”²

In the Kosovo of pre 1990s, but also persisting to this day, since the drafting and development of new legislation in the area of spatial planning, it was a practice of municipalities to outsource the development of strategic spatial and urban plans to external design offices through tenders.

Such a practice has also been adopted by the municipality of Rahovec, which in 2010, tendered for drafting of MDP, unlike the municipality of Junik, which during 2009/2011 developed the MDP “In-house”, with the assistance of experts supported by external agencies and donors.

2 “IN-HOUSE” APPROACH OF JUNIK MDP

Municipality of Junik is a fairly new municipality, established originally as a Pilot Municipality on September 26th, 2005, subsequently certified as fully-fledged municipality on August 13th, 2008. There are 9600 inhabitants residing (according to LLGF)³ with an area of 77.77 km². As a young municipality, it was supported by external donors in various areas, including spatial and urban planning.

² Spatial Planning Law-Article 16,1., page 17

³ Law on Local Government Finance N.03/L-049, Annex I: Data used for allocating the General Grant, under 10, page 21

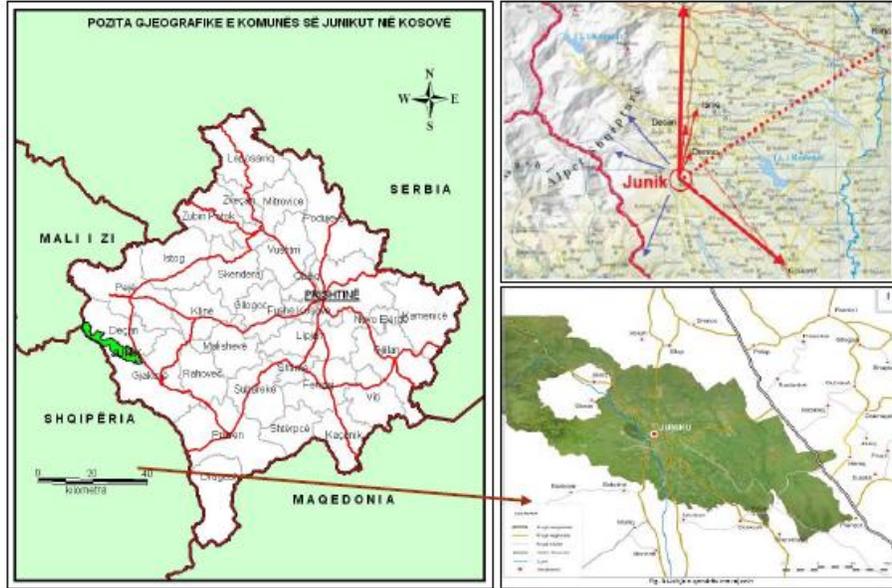


Figure 1: Geographical position of Junik Municipality

On March 27th, 2009, Municipal Assembly of Junik reached a decision to develop the MDP of Junik.⁴ In order to comply with the procedures required for drafting the said document, a municipal working group had been established, composed of experts of various fields of all departments, under the coordination of the Department of Urbanism, namely the Planning and Urban Office of the department. The group had been simultaneously supported by two international organizations (UN-Habitat and CHwB⁵), which assigned a local expert (Teuta Jaha-Hoxha) as well as international experts to provide professional support for drafting this strategic municipal document.

The working group initially developed an activity plan, whereby a responsible person for every activity was assigned. The existing situation in the municipality was analysed, while documents and information were collected. These data were subsequently sorted by the working group coordinators, followed by various meetings and workshops, with the involvement of participants of key areas, ranging from public at large to experts, organizations and responsible institutions, irrespective of gender and age.



⁴ Municipal Development Plan of Junik (Alb version), page 11

⁵ Culture heritage without border (CHwB)



Figure 2: Photo of meetings and workshops

Department of Urbanism in Junik employs an architect, civil engineer and two surveyors, a number which is insufficient to handle the organization and management of the entire process of MDP development. These staff members were also carrying out their daily duties prescribed by employment contract. However, with the support of two external organizations, these staff members in the course of two years (2009-2011) managed to develop the “MDP of Junik 2011-2023”, a document already approved by the MESP⁶ as the first “in-house” model developed, along with environment impact assessment.



Figure 3: From left: Poster of public participation, First page of MDP and Article in newspaper

We cannot explicitly state that this approach may be the most favourable to all municipalities in Kosovo, however, in the case of small municipalities or even larger municipalities with an established planning office, staff by professionals in sufficient numbers, may always be more viable alternative to tender.

2.1 Advantages of “in-house” approach / Junik

During the development of MDP through “in-house” approach in Junik, several advantages in important areas have been identified, in terms of **human resources, organization, management, legislation, institutional framework and interaction.**

Planning under “*learning by doing*” methodology provides an opportunity for engagement and for contributing to the quality of the product and the process itself. Through this approach, the *ownership*

⁶ Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP)

over the document is established, which comes with the recognition that the municipal staff developed the document. The municipality also takes on the *leadership and management* role over the entire process, which results in an understanding of the *approach to spatial planning process* by actually practising it. Equally important is the process of *participatory planning* through the involvement of key actors at meetings, workshops and various consultations, where many activities were conducted, such as: SWOT analysis, development of vision, identification of goals, objectives and development of scenarios. All of the activities allowed the municipal staff involved in the process to build their *organizational skills* and *project management skills*.

“In-house” approach generated some impact on municipal staff also from *organizational* perspective. Not only were the executive bodies involved in the process through the municipal working group, but also the department directors and the mayor himself were involved at crucial stages.

In spite of low salaries and inability to financially incentivize the group, a small recompense however, was identified by means of training and study visits both inside Kosovo and abroad.

“In-house” approach allowed enhancing knowledge on *planning legislation*. At the same time, *communication and cooperation* was established and enhanced with the central level, especially the relevant ministry (MESP), which monitored the entire planning process through active participation at meetings and workshops.

Looked from *financial perspective* the entire process may be said to have cost 3-4 times less relative to a tender procedure, making thereby considerable financial savings for municipality.

2.2 Shortcomings of “in-house” approach / Junik

Some shortcomings identified during the implementation of this methodology are as follows:

- *Time factor*
- *Limited professional human capacities in municipality*
- *Lack of financial incentives*
- *Lack of municipal planning office*

A prior assessment of human resource capacity of municipality found that their staff was inexperienced in the planning area, but also in insufficient numbers. This, in turn, affected *the time* required for developing the plan, compared to development of MDP under outsourcing arrangements.

The *limited professional human resources in municipality*, due to inability to hire professional staff and increase the number of staff are not entirely dependent on the municipality but also on the central government. The responsible ministry specifies the staff limits and allocated budget to municipalities. In the case of Junik, this made it impossible to hire more professional staff of the area. At the same time, *low salaries* present little interest for experts of various fields to join the municipality.

Last but not the least, lack of *planning office* in the municipality caused the municipal working group made of officials of various departments to operate at sub-optimal level, in view of the daily activities they have to carry out as part of their employment contracts.

3 OUTSOURCING APPROACH OF RAHOVEC MDP

Municipality of Rahovec has a surface area of 275.5 km², comprising 36 settlements and a single urban centre of Rahovec. There are 71522 inhabitants in the municipality⁷ (according to LLGF are 63,000 inhabitants)⁸. On 17.03.2010, municipality of Rahovec reached a decision to develop the Municipal

⁷ Municipal Development Plan, I.4.1. Population figures, pg. 18. No data on population at Kosovo level. In 2011, a population census had been carried out; however, census data have not yet been published.

⁸ Law on Local Government Finance N.03/L-049, Annex I: Data used for allocating the General Grant, under 25, page 21

Development Plan. Although, the municipality of Rahovec has a considerable number of experts assigned to department of urbanism and other departments, the municipality called for a tender stipulating development of MDP by an external professional company. Thus, in July 2010, a contract between municipality of Rahovec and N.SH.P., Data-GIS-Consulting was signed regarding the development of MDP of Rahovec.

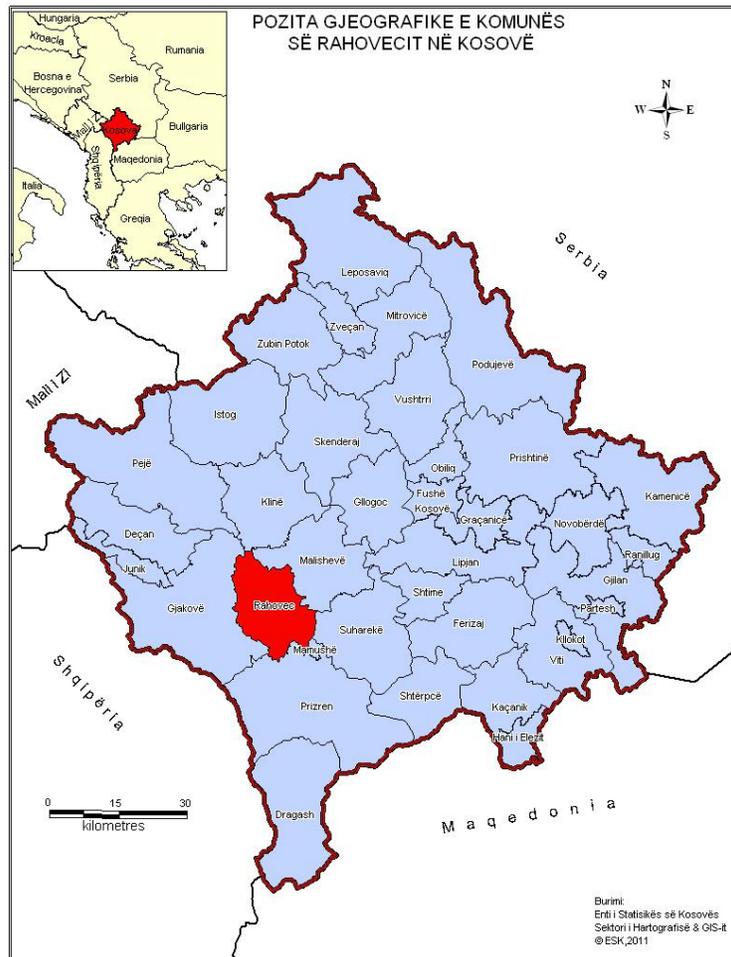


Figure 4: Geographical position of Rahovec Municipality

At the time of development, the Department of Urbanism in Rahovec counted a director, civil engineer himself, two other civil engineer, an architect, an environment expert as well as two other civil engineers assigned to Department of Public Services. Compared to Junik, Rahovec had more professionals who could have worked to develop the MDP on their own.

3.1 Advantages of “outsourcing” approach / Rahovec

Advantages identified during the development process are as follows:

- *Experience* in the area of spatial planning and development of such documents
- Sufficient *human resources*, namely experts of the area.

- Shorter *timeframe* of development⁹
- *Maximum commitment* of company's experts in the project in view of payments involved
- *Timely completion* as required under the contract (subject to smooth implementation)

3.2 Shortcomings of “outsourcing” approach

During the “outsourcing” approach, during the process of MDP development for municipality of Rahovec, the following shortcomings were identified:

- *The high cost* that municipalities pay for the plan
- Failure to *actively* involve the municipal staff in the planning process
- Absence of *any learning process or capacity building* on the process by the municipal staff
- Absence of a sense of *ownership* over the document by the municipal staff
- Absence of *knowledge* about the content of the document by the municipal staff
- Limited readership of the document by the municipal staff due to *excessive volume*
- *Non-compliance* with the document although it is a strategic document – law for municipality, especially for department of urbanism
- Partial *public participation* in the planning process.

4 CONCLUSION

Practical experience in these two municipalities that followed different approaches to MDP development led to the following conclusions:

- In the “in-house” approach in the case of Junik, the advantages outweigh the shortcomings in general, because: a sense of ownership of the document was established, the contents of the document are familiar for the municipal staff as well as for all external stakeholders involved in the process, such as local and international NGOs, neighbouring municipalities, citizens of the municipality, farmers, businesses, students, teachers, etc.
- Implementation of the document and control of MDP is better in the case of Junik compared to the case of Rahovec
- If the municipalities wish to produce a strategic document developed by its own municipal resources should exhibit strong leadership, a professional staff employed and identify motivation methods for the staff in order to induce their maximum commitment.
- A planning sector or office needs to exist as part of department of urbanism staffed with experts of all areas that will work in developing the municipal plans required by the law.
- The staff of the municipality seeks to conduct planning is much more thoroughly aware of needs, shortcomings and development priorities compared to external staff.
- In-house approach is not universally appropriate for all municipalities; this depends on circumstances of the relevant municipality.

The experiences drawn from the MDP development process for the above mentioned municipalities indicate that, in the case of Junik, the in-house approach, notwithstanding minor shortcomings, resulted as more successful compared to Rahovec, which was developed by the external company.

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⁹ It should have been however, not in this case; although the drafting began in 2010, the final version of MDP was delivered in 2013 due to the break that had occurred in the meantime as a consequence of outstanding technical issues between the contractors.

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