

Albania's path to climate resilience

The National Adaptation Plan

The NAP aims to reduce climate risks across Albania by strengthening infrastructure and institutional and technical capacities for the long-term integration of Climate Change Adaptation into national planning. Covering the period 2026–2036, it focuses on five priority sectors highly vulnerable to climate change — agriculture and forestry, tourism, energy, transport, and urban development.

PRIORITY SECTORS HIGHLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Albania NAP prioritizes a total of 66 adaptation measures, with an estimated implementation cost of USD 9.8 billion for the whole period (≈ EUR 8.4 billion). The cost of inaction, however, would be far greater: without adaptation, Albania could face climate-related losses exceeding USD 17 billion.

These include:

SOFT MEASURES	Soft measures, such as capacity building, planning tools, and financial incentives, which strengthen governance and adaptive capacity
GREEN MEASURES	Green measures, which use ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions to reduce risks
GREY MEASURES	Grey measures, referring to engineered or technological solutions that protect critical infrastructure.

These interventions will enhance resilience, support sustainable growth, and align national priorities with global adaptation goals.

Urban Development in Albania

Opportunities and challenges

Albania is a **highly urbanized country**, with nearly two-thirds of its 2.9 million people now living in cities. The Tirana–Durrës area dominates, while mountainous and central regions lag behind in economic and social development. According to the Socioeconomic Scenarios Report (2023), in 2020 it was estimated that about **one-third of the population (36%)** lived in the coastal areas, which include Tirana, Vlorë, Elbasan, and Shkodër. Since 2013, local governance has been streamlined into 61 municipalities, guided by the General National Spatial Plan (Shqipëria 2030) and local plans that define land use, territorial development, and regulations. Many buildings are formally constructed, but a significant share originates from informal settlements, often in risk-prone areas. Cities show a wide mix of building types, mostly privately owned, and face an urgent need for improved infrastructure. Urban development is also shaped by Albania's four distinct climatic zones, from coastal plains to mountainous areas, adding complexity to planning and resilience efforts.

How does climate change affect the Albanian Urban Development sector?

Risks and vulnerabilities

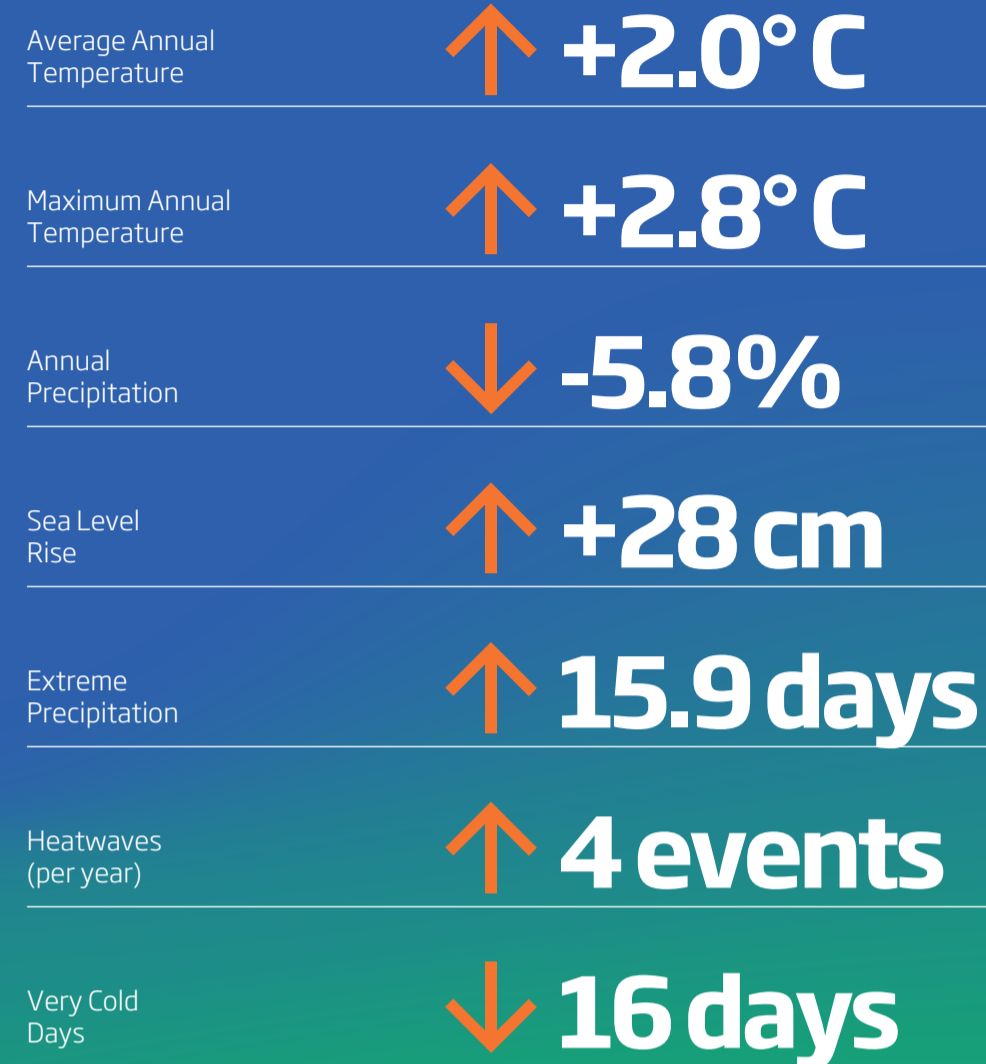
Urban development in Albania is closely linked to climatic conditions, which are categorized into four climatic zones: the Mediterranean Field Zone (MFZ), **Mediterranean Hilly Zone (MHZ)**, **Mediterranean Pre-Mountainous Zone (MPMZ)**, and **Mediterranean Mountainous Zone (MMZ)**. The risk and vulnerability assessment shows that, although the urban sector currently faces relatively low levels of climate risk, these are projected to increase significantly in the future — reaching high levels under optimistic and very high under pessimistic scenarios. The analysis also considers four urban subsectors:

- **Residential:** built-up area consisting predominantly of residences.
- **Social:** social and community facilities and services that support the well-being and quality of life of individuals in urban areas.
- **Productive:** essential facilities that enhance economic growth in cities, crucial for fostering development.
- **Supply network:** it refers to facilities and equipment for transportation, energy, water supply, solid waste disposal, etc.

Across all subsectors, risk levels follow the same trend — low today, but rising to high or very high by mid- and long-term projections.

National climate projections

Climate projections for Albania by 2050 reveal a clear pattern of rising temperatures, declining precipitation, and increasing frequency of extreme events across all emission scenarios.



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Learn More

Urban Development in Albania's National Adaptation Plan

Building a sustainable and climate resilient sector in Albania



Urban Development

Urban Development sector

Adaptation Measures & budget overview

In the urban development sector, **9 adaptation measures aim to strengthen urban resilience** and integrate climate considerations into territorial and spatial planning.

Each measure under the NAP is supported by a comprehensive implementation framework that includes:

- A defined **budget and funding sources**
- **Institutional roles and responsibilities**
- **Detailed sub-activities** for implementation
- **Monitoring indicators** to track progress and impact

Within this framework, the transport sector's priority actions consist of:

Climate-integrated spatial planning

Update city master plans to incorporate sea-level rise and flood risks, guiding territorial development and preventing construction in high-risk zones.

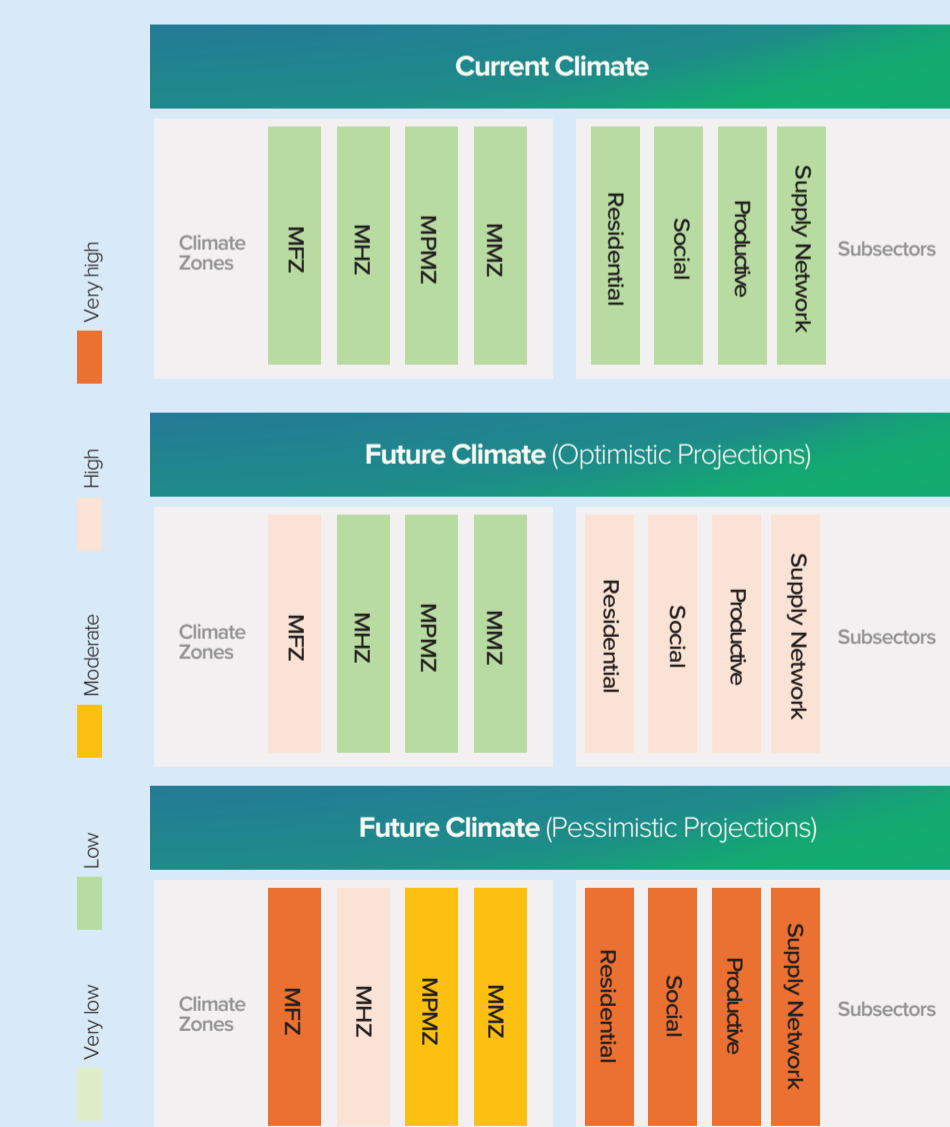
Resilient infrastructure and buildings

Conduct city-level climate risk and vulnerability assessments to inform urban investments, improve building standards, and enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure.

Flood risk management

Develop municipal flood emergency response plans and promote sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to reduce runoff and urban flooding.

Green infrastructure and urban greening: Implement reforestation and green corridor initiatives to mitigate heat island effects, enhance biodiversity, and improve air quality. Together, these interventions represent a strategic effort to ensure that Albania's urban development sector remains inclusive, sustainable, and resilient in the face of evolving climate challenges, with a total estimated cost of USD 2.72 billion (≈ 28% of the NAP's total budget).



Key threats include:

- **Flooding** of infrastructure from heavy rainfall
- **Heat waves** leading to excess mortality and illness
- **Sea level rise** threatening coastal cities

The most vulnerable are Albania's largest and most urbanized areas — Tirana, Durrës, Vlorë, Fier, Shkodër, and Elbasan — especially along the coastal belt.

Albania's urban future is therefore highly exposed, calling for urgent adaptation and resilience measures.

SOFT MEASURES

- 1 Maritime and Territorial Planning for Climate Resilience: Preparing for Rising Seas and Changing Environments
- 2 Strategic Spatial Planning for Risk Reduction: Redirecting Developments and Managing Surface Water Flood Risks
- 3 Incentive schemes to increase extreme temperature resilience of the building stock
- 4 Integrating Green Spaces into Public Infrastructure Development through Green Field Urbanism
- 5 Climate Risk Assessment for Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, and Beyond: Developing a Comprehensive Vulnerability Map
- 6 Flood event emergency plans
- 7 Sustainable Urban Design: Construction and Fast Installation of Permeable and Infiltration Areas

ESSENTIAL GREEN MEASURES

- 8 Restoring Green Corridors: Reforestation and Urban Greening Initiatives
- 9 Enhancing Urban Resilience: Assessing Greenspaces and Sustainable Drainage Solutions



Urban Development