
ASSESSMENT OF THE IPRS OFFICES IN ALBANIA

by

HELEN SCHUTTEN

Registry Operations Specialist
Terra Institute, Ltd.
10900 Stanfield Road
Blue Mounds, Wisconsin 53517, USA

Terra Institute, Ltd., has provided technical assistance in Albania since 1994. Under both the Land Legislation and Policy Project (LLPP) and the Land Markets in Albania Project (LMAP), the Institute has archived almost 50 reports, papers, draft legislation, and commentaries on land legislation, land registration, land tenure, and other land market-related activities in Albania.

The report presented in this document, "Assessment of the IPRS Offices," by Helen Schutten, was submitted to Terra Institute, Ltd., as commissioned for the Land Markets in Albania Project (LMAP), in November 1999.

All views, interpretations, recommendations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the supporting or cooperating institutions.

Copyright © 2001 by Helen Schutten. All rights reserved.

Readers may make verbatim copies of this document for noncommercial purposes by any means, provided that this copyright notice appears in all such copies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	DATA COLLECTED BASED UPON INTERVIEWS	1
2.1	Tirane One Registration Office	1
2.2	Tirane Two Registration Office	7
2.3	Lushnje Registration Office	8
2.4	Kavaje Registration Office	9
2.5	Kruja Registration Office	10

ASSESSMENT OF THE IPRS OFFICES IN ALBANIA

by

Helen Schutten*

1. INTRODUCTION

The tremendous accomplishments of Albania's Immovable Property Registration System (IPRS) during the difficult times of the past three years are obvious. Indeed, much has been done. The overall implementation of this property management system in Albania as well as the total number of cadastral zones that have completed first registration are remarkable. Implementation of the system, moreover, has proceeded in an accurate manner due to the close scrutiny used for updating extant regulations based on the problems that each registration office has experienced.

This report provides a point-in-time assessment of select IPRS registration offices. Its findings and recommendations are based on a sampling of data collected from visits to Tiranë One, Tiranë Two, Lushnjë, Kavajë, and Kruja registration offices in November 1999. Tiranë One is covered in some detail.

2. DATA COLLECTED BASED UPON INTERVIEWS

2.1 TIRANE ONE REGISTRATION OFFICE

There are 62 rural cadastral zones in Tirana One; the 25 urban cadastral zones in the city of Tiranë are divided between Tiranë One, with 13, and Tiranë Two, with 12. In practice, however, Tiranë One handles all 25 urban cadastral zones. Of Tiranë One cadastral zones, 56 rural and 1 urban have completed first registration.

2.1.1 Select staff

The Tiranë One Registration Office has a staff of 15 persons who process approximately 15 rural and 45 urban documents per day. Staff members include the following.

Registrar. The registrar is responsible for the overall organization of the office, including workflow, procedures, and management of personnel. At time of study, the registrar at Tiranë One was Vladimir Pelumbi, a geodetic engineer who also worked with maps when problems arose.

Vice Registrar. The vice registrar has the same authority as the registrar in the latter's absence. S/he is responsible as well for all correspondence with state institutions and for registration problems. S/he manages and reviews the work and handles staff discipline.

At time of study, Jordan Bulku, a lawyer, was vice registrar at the Tiranë One Registration Office. As a lawyer, he was also responsible for the *kartela*. He covered all legal issues and gave necessary instructions to the public; he did this for both urban and rural zones. His legal work was especially important for the

* Regional Planning Consultant, Terra Institute, Ltd. Schutten submitted this assessment in November 1999.

urban section of the office because those employees were not familiar with the IPRS and had difficulty adjusting to the new system (until 2 months ago, the urban section was still using the Hipoteka stamp). Bulku also handled problems that arise at the registration desk so ongoing reception of applicants can continue.

Financial Secretary. The financial secretary position has 3 parts: 2 positions are paid by IPRS, and 1 is paid from .05 percent of taxes collected (although the vice registrar hires this person, the position remains under the jurisdiction of the taxation division). The 2 IPRS financial secretaries are a Chief Financial Secretary (requiring a university degree in finance) and a cashier (needing a high school education).

For October 1999, the financial payments collected at Tiranë One totaled 650,000 lek, out of which 350,000 lek were for taxes or taxation and the remaining 300,000 lek were from fees or fines. The financial secretary and cashier are responsible for collecting all fees for both urban and rural zones. No separation was made between Tiranë One and Tiranë Two for fees or taxes collected.

Chief Financial Secretary. The Chief Financial Secretary is responsible for collecting all income from fees, stamp taxes, transfer tax, and fines.* S/he must check all the financial aspects of the registration office, balancing receipts with the amount of cash collected, and deposit money in the bank on a daily basis. Monthly tables balance the total cash collected. A detailed report is prepared for the Central Office and the Chief Registrar.

The Chief Financial Secretary is responsible for purchasing supplies; small items are purchased with cash, and large items, through bid. Before writing a check, the financial secretary must go to the treasury for a stamp indicating that there are adequate funds in the bank account.

The Chief Financial Secretary is also responsible for the payroll. Payroll is done twice a month. At the end of each month the salaries are computed, with a solidarity fee tax and insurance payment subtracted from each person's pay. The total of tax and insurance is deposited in the bank.

At the end of each month the Chief Financial Secretary checks on the balance for expenses and income recorded at the Treasury, gets a copy of the data, and again checks the registration office data for agreement.

Although the Chief Financial Secretary is supposed to deposit the money in the bank each day, Alma Musha, Tiranë One chief secretary at time of study, had no car so made the office deposits on Friday of each week, keeping 5,000 lek for the cashier to open the office each day and make change.

All income in Tiranë One is manually posted in the accounting books, with each collection listed separately. Since the ledger is completed manually and the computer is slow in using the spreadsheet program, bookwork is often incomplete at the time of bank deposit, and subsequent corrections are made to balance the account.

At time of study, Rezarta Mecani helped with manual bookkeeping and computer entries. Using the computer in the finance department, however, delayed the entry of required data in the 60-column Excel spreadsheet. A faster computer would allow the financial officers to complete this work on time. (The Tiranë office also needs a place to store supplies.)

The Tiranë One office collects one-third of the total amount of money collected in Albania. In one day, on average, it processes 150 receipts, and in one month, 2,600 receipts; approximately 5,000 applications are processed monthly (July 1999 was an exceptionally busy month, with 240 receipts processed per day). When an application receives a fine, however, the total is not computed (instead the fine outstanding is

* For the registration office fee, 60% goes to the Central Office budget, and 40% to the state budget. For fines, 100% goes to the state budget. For the stamp tax, 5% goes to the Central Office budget (the Central Office distributes its budget among registration offices throughout Albania). For the transaction tax, 100% goes to the state budget according to Law 8438 of December 1998 (prior to this law the Central Office received only 2% of transaction taxes collected).

calculated, or the number of days multiplied by the amount due); the lack of a total in this case causes delays at the finance window and with the public.

Hipoteka. The 6 employees, 4 lawyers and 2 engineers, of the Tiranë One Hipoteka Office were struggling to learn the IPRS system. The transition to the new system has been difficult because the IPRS regulations are quite different and the legal requirements are much greater than those of the former Hipoteka Office. At time of study, the receptionist would complete an application and allocate the documents into cadastral zones to be distributed to the employees of the urban zone. The urban zone applications contain much more information than the rural applications. When the documents do not look right they are referred to the lawyer, who in the Tiranë One office was usually the vice registrar. In Tiranë One, the Hipoteka registered 520 documents during the month of October 1999.

Receptionist. The urban and rural sectors each have their own reception book. The numbering system in the reception book is consecutive, starting with 1 for the calendar year. The book records the application number, date, name and address of applicant, type of document, signature of applicant, number of folder, notes, and number of the cadastral zone. When an employee of the Hipoteka section takes an application for processing, s/he signs the reception book; as the documents are returned, within 10 days, a mark is placed in the book to indicate that the originals have been returned.

When the receptionist serves an applicant, s/he checks the papers and fills out the reception book, checking the passport and certificate of ownership, and then entering the fee that needs to be paid on the application. Both customer and receptionist sign the application. The receptionist keeps the papers and gives the completed application form to the customer, who must then take the application to the finance window for payment.

The customer waits in line at the finance window, makes the proper payment, and takes the application back to the reception line to wait for completing the processing. In time, the receptionist stamps the application and gives the pink half-sheet to the customer as a receipt. S/he then combines the finished application with the documents received and places them on a table for review.

At the end of the day, the receptionist assigns the proper cadastral zone to each application. The applications are then ready to be verified. (It was noted that on each application the receptionist wrote in the space provided that the document was received by the Hipoteka, instead of the IPRS, because the urban cadastral zones had not had first registration.)

At Tiranë One, customers must wait a long time in line and often have to return to the registration office two or three times. One person returned five times in all to get the documents recorded. The reception area in the Tiranë One office is utterly out of order. People are crowded in the waiting area, shoving and pushing to be serviced next. The people get upset and anxious, and it was suggested that they should have policemen to contain the crowd.

Urban sector. Each person in the Hipoteka or urban section has been assigned 6 cadastral zones. The chief of the Hipoteka section, Bejnik Bazraktari, is a lawyer and checks all the documents for legality (he also spends much time with court decisions). Each cadastral zone has a separate numbering system. To obtain the last number listed for a particular cadastral zone, the archive is checked and the stamp is fixed with the next number.

All records found in the Hipoteka books are listed on the contract. The contract prepared by the notary is attached to the application. If there is no contract, there is no transaction. The contract lists the Hipoteka number and the date. From this information the book is located and the information is verified and handwritten on the contract, which is signed and dated. When the information contained in the books has been listed, the documents go to the Coordinator's Department of the Project Management Unit (PMU). When a property has completed the first registration process, the Hipoteka record in the book is closed by stamping the IPRS archive number in the "comments" column.

By law, the new archive number for properties in the IPRS should be stamped by the archivist; however, at time of study there was no archivist at Tiranë One so staff in the rural section stamped the new number.

To close the Hipoteka records, the cadastral zone number, the volume and page, and the date the *kartela* is opened are written in the comments column of the previous transaction in the Hipoteka book. When first registration for apartments is complete, the Hipoteka book will be placed in the archive.

The chief of the Hipoteka section said that in the old system everything was written, so even a change of name had to be entered with a written description. Also there were no maps of the property in the old system, so determining boundaries and location was a problem. Now the records need to change only the names in the *kartela*, and it is much easier to sell a part of a property. There is great advantage to the new IPRS.

Tiranë is divided into 4 regions. The urban cadastral zones assigned to one individual are located in the same governmental region. In this way the individual always deals with the same persons in the local government office.

One person who is usually with the rural section also works with the urban section and serves as the link between the urban section and the IPRS coordinator. S/he has taken one urban zone that has completed first registration and one very busy urban zone for the Hipoteka.

Hipoteka personnel make out the provisional certificates for properties in the urban zone that have gone through first registration. This is why it is important to close the Hipoteka record.

Each Hipoteka employee in the urban zone completes between 7 and 10 documents each day. Some of the older properties take more time for tracing the history. A dispute in the courts or a lack of privatization documents also requires more time. Documents are returned to the customer within 10 days.

The chief of the Hipoteka section said that they needed more staff.

Rural sector. There are 4 specialists in the rural sector, which will be called the IPRS: the chief (a geodetic engineer), one cartographer, 1 archivist (this position does not yet exist but is covered by someone else), and one receptionist (who is currently attending law school). This section is making good progress. The specialists have strong connections and a good understanding of the new IPRS. The receptionist helps people move back and forth between the reception area and the financial section.

The rural sector registered 200 documents during the month of October 1999. Each document received is given a number, which is the order of work. In this way the documents are handled in the order of receipt.

When a *kartela* is closed, the same number is stamped on the new *kartela*. This number is placed on all documents pertaining to the transaction. Each transaction is filed in a separate folder. Each cadastral zone has a unique set of numbers starting with number 1 and continuing consecutively. Each volume in a cadastral zone has 250 pages, at which point a new volume is begun.

The maps are divided into very small parcels. Due to the amount of subdividing, it is difficult for the cartographers to fit the unique parcel number on the maps, which were very torn and dirty at time of study. It is also difficult to see the new parcel borders and parcel numbers. If these maps are somehow mislaid or destroyed, a lot of updated information will be lost.

The maps will be digitized from the film, which is not updated. At this time larger-scale maps could be made. Although digitizing is done by a private company, the IPRS regulations state that updating has to be done at the Registration Office. An updating manual has not yet been drafted.

Much time is spent by the specialists in manually locating ownership records requested by the embassy for persons going abroad, lists of information for persons who have asked for social welfare from the municipalities, and information for the courts. For every one request in the rural area, there are 200 requests in the urban sector. Computerization would help the specialists locate the information. Computerization would also be good backup for the *kartela*, which is the official document.

Some of the problems the registration office faces include no computability with the *tapi* and the RIM. In this case a survey must be ordered. Approval is required from the municipality.

On a positive note, once the *kartela* is complete, the next transaction goes very quickly.

Findings

- ◆ People waited for a long time in an unorganized manner before being assisted.
- ◆ Customers had to return two or three times to complete their transactions.
- ◆ Customers had to wait in three lines to finish their transactions.
- ◆ There was only one computer in the Finance Department.
- ◆ Money was deposited once a week rather than on a daily basis.
- ◆ The receipts for July and August 1999 were not posted.
- ◆ There was no designated storage place for supplies.
- ◆ There was no archivist on the staff.
- ◆ The rural sector was efficient.
- ◆ Some *kartela* were not signed and stamped by the registrar.
- ◆ Some applications were not signed in the spaces provided.
- ◆ Total fines on the application were not computed by the receptionist.
- ◆ It was impossible to give good service with the system in operation at the reception/finance area.
- ◆ Hipoteka personnel were unsure of the IPRS procedures.
- ◆ Requests from embassies and local governments for property ownership information required manual searches, which took up a great deal of staff time.

2.1.2 Coordinator's Office

In the Coordinator's Office at Tiranë One, 15 employees and 2 lawyers are responsible for verification of documents of urban transactions. They search the chain of title from 1994 to the present and pull all old Hipoteka documents. Five additional employees have been approved, but the office lacks space to hire them.

It is estimated that there are 76,000 apartments and 40,000–41,000 private properties. Some properties have not been privatized, including 30,000 with no inventory. The suburban area has not been inventoried; it contains a great deal of illegal building.

Five persons are involved with the opening of *kartela* for apartments from National Housing Agency documents. The two surveyors work more with the Hipoteka documents and make the changes on the maps.

Nine persons work with the Hipoteka transactions from the urban sector. They open the A-4 *kartela*, listing the volume, page number, and unique property number. They then trace each property back to the point of privatization and find the document from the National Housing Agency and the family status certificate. They update the *kartela* with this information and place the documents in a separate plastic folder, that is, they pull them out of the Hipoteka records. After the daily transactions are complete, these employees work methodically on finishing the cadastral zones.

For apartments, the Coordinator's Office fills out the A-4 *kartela* as a worksheet only. When daily transactions come in, only the *kartela* that have missing transactions have to be searched. Information on the A-4 *kartela* is used to fill out the legal *kartela*.

Five cadastral zones will be displayed by the end of 1999. Two are located in Tiranë One, and one in Tiranë Two. The other two are yet to be determined, but several are close to completion. The maps have been updated as of 1998. Once this work is done, the focus will change to apartments constructed after 1998. Research will be done, property numbers assigned, and *kartela* filled out. The maps will be updated, showing all the buildings constructed in 1998 and 1999. A separate *kartela* will be completed for each apartment and for the building; a 20-unit apartment building will have 21 *kartela*.

Findings

- ◆ The Coordinator's Office needs more office space.
- ◆ The hiring of an additional 5 employees has been approved but not carried out.

2.1.3 Central Office

The chief of the Central Office is responsible for all mapping in Albania. He visits all 34 registration offices not only for mapping but also for legal aspects of registration. He is a member of the control team, which is responsible for accurate implementation of the regulations and laws of the IPRS. The chief prepares a report after each visit and submits one copy to the Chief Registrar, one to the PMU, and one to the district. Bejnik Como, the Central Office chief at time of study, has 7 years' experience as the chief of mapping in Puka; he is a topographic engineer and in 1993 became a charter surveyor.

As the maps pass from first registration to the IPRS, they are no longer under the supervision of the PMU. The Central Office prepares a report and an agreement to accompany this transfer from the PMU to the Registration Office. This complies with the July 1994 Law for Registration.

Each month the Chief Registrar sends a work schedule to the Central Office. This schedule usually contains problems that had been sent to the Chief Registrar from the district registration offices. The problems are thus assigned to Bejnik Como and Merita Qato, the lawyer for the Central Office.

The Central Office chief prepares the first draft on problems concerning registration and suggests any required legal changes. These papers are completed with the help of the lawyer, and drafts are submitted to the ministries. The lawyer also spends two days a week traveling to different districts to help with problems.

Como and Qato usually visit the district registration offices 4–6 times each month. Often they pick a meeting place and have 4 or 5 registrars come to that location for discussion and training.

The major responsibility for the chief of the Central Office is to research and prepare a new archive system* for the film maps. This task is in progress and Como is searching and gathering information for the best process. A procedure will be determined for the removal, if allowed, copying, return, humidity, temperature, and type of location for the archives. The chief is also searching for a good system for the archive inventory. There are 3.5 million properties in Albania and 1.6 million have been registered. The fees collected for September totaled 1.6 billion lek and approximately half of that, 739,731,000 lek, was collected in Tiranë.

Six months ago the Central Office conducted training for all offices. This training was scheduled after a test was given to everyone at the registration offices. Training was based on the regulations. Questions were asked that indicated how much of the law the employees knew; special questions were prepared for each district, and 70 separate test papers were drafted.

Training employees and teaching the new system is a step-by-step process, for the staff is new and has a hard time keeping up with changes in the law. Training is based upon the type of occupation. One field will be chosen each month for specific training in that area of expertise. Usually this training is done on the basis of 2 or 3 office visits. It consists of discussing the regulations, laws, and procedures for conducting first registration in the urban zones. Trainees also present their own ideas on first registration and problems they have experienced. There is general training, and special training has been prepared for the financial staff. Since different offices are at different stages in the process of the IPRS, training consists of theory and practice at the same time.

The control team consists of the Central Office lawyer, the Central Office chief, and a PMU representative. The team prepares a report of its findings and presents it to the district, the Chief Registrar, and the PMU.

* Suggestions for the archive are based on the Wisconsin experience.

Lawyer Qato is responsible for all legal aspects confronting the Central Office. In practice, people from the Tiranë One Registration Office often go to Qato during the day as problems arise. The other districts send their legal problems to the Chief Registrar in writing; the problems are then referred to Qato and Como. Qato also writes laws and presents them to the ministries. She has prepared a series of bulletins providing information for the registration districts.

Findings

- ◆ There is an overload of responsibilities for one person. The training/monitoring function should be a separate full-time position.
- ◆ The amount and complexity of legal problems confronting the Central Office and the work required in other legal areas cannot be adequately addressed by a single lawyer.
- ◆ The lawyer now spends up to two days a week traveling to the district offices for training and monitoring, addresses legal problems and legislation issues, and answers questions from the registrars and the public.

2.2 TIRANË TWO REGISTRATION OFFICE

The main boulevard in the City of Tiranë serves as the natural boundary dividing cadastral zones between the Tiranë One and Tiranë Two registration systems. There are 12 urban cadastral zones and 99 rural cadastral zones assigned to the Tiranë Two Registration Office. Of these cadastral zones, 53 have been through the process of first registration; all these transactions were then transferred to the Tiranë Two office.

Prior to first registration, the new documents for urban properties allocated to the Tiranë Two Registration Office are processed at the Tiranë One office. This is necessary because the all Hipoteka records have been transferred to the Tiranë One office. As an application is filled out, a search for existing documents is made in the Hipoteka records back to 1991.

Thus when a person presents documents for property located within the yellow line of villages in a Tiranë Two cadastral zone, the registrar must either go to the Tiranë One Registration Office to get the documents from the Hipoteka records or send the owner to bring them back in a stamped envelop. At this point the Hipoteka file is stamped closed and the property goes directly into the IPRS. Tiranë Two then updates the *kartela*.

In the rural cadastral zones, the owners of property in villages that have not entered the IPRS must come to the Tiranë Two office to get a negative statement. Negative statements, issued for properties that have not been entered in the new registration system, are used for loans, for buildings that had been recorded, or for public purposes such as court processes, social welfare, and local government offices. For example, the decision of the Council of Ministers split the village of Shkoza into two cadastral zones, 3,976 rural, and 8,180 urban. Half of the village is therefore considered rural and half is urban (because of ongoing construction). The people in the rural cadastral zone must first obtain negative statements and then record their documents in the Hipoteka at the Tiranë One Registration Office.

The Tiranë Two Registration Office is run by 5 people: the registrar, the chief financial officer, 2 cartographers (one with an engineer's background and the other with a surveyor's degree), and a receptionist (who is a lawyer).

When the office opened there were 29 rural cadastral zones; this has been expanded to 53 cadastral zones.

In October 1999, the office collected 200,000 lek (approximately US\$1,500), each day processing approximately 4 transactions, 1 subdivision, and 1 or 2 certificates. The money collected comes from a stamp tax, a transaction tax, and registration office fees; it is turned over to the state for deposit in a bank account.

Four documents are required for sale of property within the yellow line of a village: the certificate copy of the index map and *kartela*, the family status of the seller, the contract from the notary, and a local government certificate. The buyer and seller obtain the certificate, the family status of the seller, and the local government certificate. They then get a copy of the *kartela* containing that day's date from the Tiranë Two Registration Office. These documents are taken to the notary for a notarized contract. The certified copy of the *kartela* and the notarized contract must have the same date. The documents must be recorded within 30 days of that date or a fine is imposed (10% of the fee per day that the registration is late).

Documents that are missing from the Hipoteka records greatly concern the registrar because in this case the people must try to provide the missing documents. They also experience lack of cooperation from the notaries.

2.2.1 Findings

- ◆ A check of office procedures demonstrates that applications are signed in the proper place, index maps are updated, and the numbering system complies with the IPRS law and regulations. The *kartela* are stamped and signed by the registrar.
- ◆ No *tapi* have been issued for 21 cadastral zones. Although a request has been submitted to the head of the District Council and to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, it is necessary to obtain financial support for this missing information.
- ◆ The ex-owners took back their land in 12 cadastral zones behind the Dajti, so new *tapi* must to be made to reflect the factual situation. This should not be a problem because there is no conflict. A decision is needed from the Land Distribution Office. The maps for these rural areas will be updated by March 2000.
- ◆ The archive has limited space; it was quite damp on the day of inspection.

2.3 LUSHNJE REGISTRATION OFFICE

2.3.1 Staff

Registrar. The registrar is responsible for the organization and functions of the Lushnjë Registration Office. At time of study, there was no lawyer on the staff so the registrar had to cover the legal aspects. The registrar, Hosbi Hoxha, has been the vice chairman of the Land Distribution Commission dealing mostly with the laws. In 1991, he was the chief agronomist in Lushnjë District; he then worked in the Cadastral Office; in June 1996, he was appointed as registrar.

There was a staff of 7 persons at time of study.

Lawyer #1. This position was vacant at time of study. No one had applied for the position because the payment was so low. The lawyer who had worked at the office was hired by a bank and doubled his salary. The Lushnjë Office finds it hard to keep good people.

Chief of Finance Sector. This person covers all financial activities and relations with the Central Office as well as with all third parties (i.e., auditors, etc.). Responsibilities include collection of fees, stamp tax, and taxation. Out of 21 fees collected in the office, 16 need a tax stamp, which is placed on any application and is kept in the finance section.

Lawyer #2. This person is responsible for all transactions and documents covering urban zones that have not gone through first registration. S/he works with the Hipoteka section.

Mapping. There are 2 persons in this department. The present chief holds a university degree in topography. The second person has a 2-year technical degree as well as practical experience; he updates the maps after first registration.

Chief of Reception Office. This person fills in the applications and prepares the tables by hand. The present chief has a university degree and is studying computerization at the PMU.

Registration. The main duties of this position are filling in the *kartela* and the certificates. The present employee has a technical high school degree and excellent penmanship. With the attribute of good penmanship, the records are clearly written.

PMU. This post is occupied by a coordinator who works with a private team of surveyors. This team consists of 10 persons who do the mapping and cover and prepare the public estate. Once they get the third printing, *kartela*, and maps from the PMU, they can start IPRS activities.

At time of study, the staff had to stay later every day to update the *kartela* and to change the maps, for their work could begin only at 12:00 noon.

The inventory of the Hipoteka records is complete. To prepare for first registration, the Lushnjë Office will first pull the documents completing the apartments. In one cadastral zone both the documents and the *kartela* have been computerized, and the buildings are all privatized. For the others, the PMU is preparing for the public display. All the Hipoteka documents recorded from 1991 to 1998 will be reflected and written down on the *kartela*. This will be completed by a special team financed by the project. In June 1999, the team began to work with the A-4 *kartela*, which will serve as the basis for filling out the legal *kartela*.

The Hipoteka documents contained no maps, so it was difficult to pull documents from Hipoteka records and incorporate them with the IPRS. Also, the Hipoteka recorded only the contract, which lists the head of the family and the receipt for the apartments. Those family members who were 18 years of age and older needed to be found; this process was difficult because the family status records in the National Housing Agency had been burned. The Hipoteka did not contain a survey. For each apartment, therefore, the team would need: family status, contract, survey for the whole apartment, and survey for the entrance and joint areas.

The Lushnjë Registration Office recorded 20 transactions each week or approximately 4 per day. This included both rural and urban zones. In October 1999, they recorded 96 contracts. Lushnjë is considered the “Bread Basket” of Albania. There are 52,000 hectares with 35,000 under cultivation. Land in the rural areas does not change ownership, so there are fewer documents in the rural cadastral zones.

2.4 KAVAJE REGISTRATION OFFICE

In the Kavajë Registration Office, the registrar supervises 3 main divisions: mapping, reception, and finance. The mapping section employs 3 persons (its chief at time of study was a geodetic engineer); the reception section employs 2 persons (its chief was a lawyer, and the receptionist, an agronomist); the finance section employs 1 person (who was an economist with a degree in finance). The Hipoteka person was a lawyer, and the other employee was attending law school. The Kavajë registrar at time of study was Seit Cikallesi, an economist.

There are 68 cadastral zones in Kavajë—3 urban and 65 rural. Of these zones, 45 rural have gone through first registration and 2 urban will enter first registration by 2000. It was hoped that the apartments would complete first registration in the first 3 months of the year. Technical and legal help was contributed by the PMU. The apartments constituted 30 percent of the urban zone, with 25–30 percent coming from work of the Restitution Commission on National Privatization. Forty percent of individual properties had no privatization documents.

The Kavajë office planned first to finish with the apartments and then to solve problems for the other properties. A solution was needed for Article 24B, which presented special difficulties. The Kavajë procedure was to transfer from the Hipoteka, so it needed the Hipoteka number, date, and page. It could then transfer to a new number with the A-4 *kartela*, without needing to work with the A-3 *kartela*.

Kavajë had one urban cadastral zone that had gone through public display for a period of 90 days preparatory to registration. The inventory of the Hipoteka had been completed by private workers employed by the PMU. These individuals had pulled the old Hipoteka documents at the Kavaje Registration Office.

The Adriatic seaside was the most difficult zone; at the time of study, there was a good deal of illegal building and land division.

The Kavajë Registration Office returned documents within 2 to 5 days, with a maximum of 7 days. Its weakest point in the process of registration of property was computerization. The office updated maps with red ink and made new copies after there had been a lot of transactions. Kavajë had 3 cadastral zones that had many transactions, especially along the coastline.

2.4.1 Concerns

The Land Distribution Office has indicated that it might take another look at all levels of land distribution with the idea of making changes, but without realizing the status of property. Article 26 7843 of the Registration Law states that upon completion of the public display the registrar has the right to issue a certificate without the third printing provided there is no problem with the *kartela*. However, as much as 60 to 80 percent of the work on property distribution had been completed, and all this would be destroyed if there were a different distribution. The Kavajë office was not sure if this prospective change was nationwide or only on undistributed land and land in conflict.

2.5 KRUJA REGISTRATION OFFICE

The Kruja Registration Office has 3 urban cadastral zones; 2 are in the city of Kruja, and 1 is in Fush Kruja. Of the rural cadastral zones, 26 have completed first registration.

At time of study, the Kruja registrar was Haki Cela, a geodetic engineer. The mapper-and-receptionist was also a geodetic engineer; she was responsible for the connection between the Hipoteka and the IPRS and, if necessary, consulted the lawyer. The chief of the Hipoteka section was a lawyer, and the chief of the financial section, an economist. The archivist also did the job of cashier.

The Kruja Registration Office processed more records during the summer. The villages were not in the first registration. Although 26 rural cadastral zones had completed first registration, it would have been better had the apartments gone first through the first registration process. The *tapi* had not been issued. Based on the documents from the National Housing Commission, the Kruja office had started first registration for the apartments. (In Fush Kruja, the previous notary had taken all of the National Housing Agency documents to her office and would not release them.) The inventory of the Hipoteka for the City of Kruja had been completed.

When the Kruja office finishes with the National Housing Commission, it plans to pull the Hipoteka documents. This work will be done by private workers contracted by the PMU.

No entries have been made on the computer. Although the maps have been updated, there were not been enough changes to warrant new maps.