



Downtown One Tirana

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## ALBANIA IS USING BOLD DESIGN TO BOOST COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND TOURISM

 TRAVEL & TOURISM

### Construction has begun on Albania's tallest building, featuring a pixelated map of the country on its facade

**Spotted:** Dutch design studio, [MVRDV](#), is using cutting-edge design to create Albania's tallest skyscraper, a so-called "vertical village", and piece of art. Called Downtown One, the 140 metre (459 ft) tall building will be located in the capital city of Tirana. Featured on its facade is a pixelated map of Albania. The topographical map-like effect is produced by staggering sections of the uniform windows at different heights and lengths. The created space allows for terraces, designed to encourage conversations between neighbours. The result is a vertical, 37-storey village, according to the project's architects.

The mix-purpose building will include business space and residential apartments. Every house or office will represent an actual village or town in the country. Residents will be able to identify their apartment or business with a spot on the map, MVRDV says.

The plans include an onsite playground and underground garage. The building will open in 2024.

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## Takeaway:

Architecture and design are increasingly seen as instruments to attract tourists and investment. Urban planners are hoping for the "**Bilbao Effect**", the phenomenon by which a city is revitalised by investment in iconic architecture, as happened after the building of the Guggenheim Museum in a run-down port city in northern Spain. Dubai spent \$1.5 billion to build the highest skyscraper in the world, **Burj Khalifa**. It has become a world-class tourist attraction, welcoming **3.53 million visitors in 2012 and 2013**. Albania is hoping for a similar bump. The country has already invested in a state-of-the-art **upgrade of a Communist-era landmark** in the capital. The Downtown One project is the latest effort.