Sustainable Urban Development Strategy

The MedCities approach

October 2011

Contents

The aim of this document is summarise the model of the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy which will be implemented through the project Mediterranean Network for the Promotion of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies.

MedCities has been promoting these strategies for some years as an effective instrument which integrates social, economic and environmental factors to define the policies and priority projects of a city and its metropolitan region.

The objective of a Sustainable Urban Development Strategy is to incorporate public-private cooperation in the definition of the key elements of the socio-economic and urban development of the city, without overlapping the responsibility of final decision-takers on these series of issues.

The Mediterranean Network regards strategic planning as being more of a continuous management method rather than a one-off planning method for the city. Therefore, social and economic agents (such as neighbours, unions, entrepreneurs, administrations, associations, etc.) become active players in the urban transformation. Their role is not merely of consultative or deliberative nature. They are actively involved in decision taking processes and are directly or jointly responsible for the financing and/or execution of specific projects which are strategic to the whole city.

From this viewpoint, the Sustainable Urban Development Strategies require two crucial elements for ensuring effectiveness:

- **Strategies require Projects.** *Without viable projects of high economic, social or territorial impact, all strategies become a set of "good intentions" with no real effects.*
- **Strategy must territorialize.** *The problems express themselves of different forms and with varying intensity in different areas or neighbourhoods in the city. This will require different solutions for each area.*

The Products expected from a USUDS

The products contemplated on ending the process are:

- **Descriptive Memory** of the city, offering the most objective vision of the different variables that make up the urban reality: demography, productive sectors, social welfare, urban quality ... The report also includes a list and brief description of major projects already underway in the city. This Memory permits identifying the Critical Issues for development which will subsequently be analysed in depth.

- **Strategic Diagnosis** of the Critical Issues identified in the Memory. Each case will be studied in depth following a transversal approach in order to allow understanding the different interrelations of urban variables. In addition, the Diagnosis will include an analysis of trends and an analysis of the environment to facilitate the proper positioning of each problematic with respect to other comparable realities with the city.

- **Strategic Framework** of development. As the result of the work carried out in the Diagnosis of the critical issues, a proposal for the Strategic Axes of Development and for the General Objective will ensue (the latter is to be understood as the shared vision for the future of the city).

- **Action plan.** As mentioned previously, Strategies require Projects. Therefore, an Action Plan including a calendar, people in charge and estimations for all the projects will not be only drawn up but also those Structuring Projects that may act as drivers for the city in order to achieve the results considered in the Strategic Framework will be identified. With regard to these Structuring Projects, a further specialised and in depth work will be carried out, as it is understood that the success or failure of the UDS greatly relies upon them.

- Indicator System to allow the city to efficiently monitor those urban variables affected by the Action Plan. One must bear in mind that the ultimate goal of the UDS is the non-compliance of the Action Plan. The aim is for the city to evolve in the direction set by the administration and citizenship, so further interest will be placed into assessing the evolution of the city than implementing the proposed measures.

1 1. Structure proposed for the deployment of a SDUD

The Mediterranean Network for the Promotion of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies suggests that cities wishing to develop UDS should have the minimum structure to allow them meet the foreseen requirements:

- **Clear leadership** of the municipal institution, identified in the figure of the Mayor.

- Constitution of an **Executive Committee** that will integrate the key economic and social agents, as well as other public administrations and companies already operating in the city. This will be the main decision-making body during the process.

- Identification of the **Municipal Service** responsible for the executive management of the works. A possible part-time dedication to the project would be equivalent to 25% dedication (with respect to the total) of 3 people with a technical profile and of 15% of 2 people with an administrative profile.

- A **technical team** dedicated full time to the project, made up of 5 people with a qualified technical background. Their task will be executing the necessary works in order to develop the products of the Plan as well as dynamising the working teams and the actions of participation and broadcasting that are decided upon.

Each participating city will have the support of the central structure of the Network, and especially that of the Knowledge Transference Centre of on New Plans and Dissemination, which will be responsible for the specialised training of the people involved in the municipal service and the technical team.

The Network will likewise provide direct support to the Mayor in managing the process. Moreover, there will be an amount available for the hiring of international consultants, to facilitate the works, and for the communication actions and publications.

2   Proposed Work Plan

To develop a UDS process by putting into practice the methodology proposed by the Mediterranean Network for the Promotion of Sustainable Urban Development Strategies, a Work Plan with duration of about 17 months is required. The activities to be carried out are:

2.1   Organisation and start up (3 months)

The objectives in this first phase involve:

- Identifying the members of the Executive Committee, as a decision-taking body

- Defining the Municipal Service that will be in charge of leading the executive production of materials

- Selecting and hiring the members of the Technical Team

- Training the people responsible for the executive management and the technical team

- Selecting possible external technical assistances

- Holding a public information meeting to present the process and its management and decision-taking bodies

2.2   Drawing up of the Descriptive Memory (2 months)

The prediagnosis or "Descriptive Memory" is an initial work realized by the technical local team through a participative process by means of working groups. His aim is to gather and to synthesize the available information about the city. There is gathered information of statistical sources and of secondary sources. The aim is to have a description of the city (état des lieux) and to identify "key issues":

- Gathering of existing data and studies

- Examining, by means of the sectorial reports elaborated by the local experts, the different urban variables (demography, economic activities, social welfare, poverty and risk situations, institutional framework…)

- Identifying the Key Issues for the development of the city that will be used as a base of reference to direct subsequent work

In addition, with the support of politicians and technicians of the local government, the principal projects already in process will be identified, some of which will be able to form a part of the Action Plan.

2.2.1 Methodology to identification of key (or transversal) issues

Transversal topics should be identified jointly by members of the Technical Team working together, once the conclusions of the Prediagnosis have been agreed.

- Each expert should record the main conclusions of their prediagnosis on a worksheet for each conclusion.

- The experts should in turn put forward these worksheets, grouped into similar topics.

- Worksheets must be grouped together dynamically during discussion, modifying both the packages and their composition as often as required until a grouping acceptable to all is agreed.

- The resulting groupings will form the transversal topics. A title must be agreed for each topic. The title will facilitate understanding of the content and main subject under analysis.

To facilitate subsequent work of public discussion with the agents, it is recommended that not more than 5 – 6 topics be developed, since a working group must be created (and administered) for each topic.

2.2.2 Participation and agreement of pre-diagnosis phase

In this phase, work must be done with representatives of the social and economic agents with knowledge and expertise on the city (e.g.: university professors or members of the research departments of other institutions)

1ST MEETING.

- Presentation of the project and working context of the Diagnosis Groups in the USUDS

- Explanation and distribution of sector pre-diagnosis documents (Inception Reports)

Work by Technical Team members between meetings: Gather comments from Group members and updating of document in a Descriptive Memory plus a proposal set of Key Issues for the city development.

2ND MEETING.

- Presentation of the modified document for validation and the start-up of a reflection on the key topics (normally transversal)

NOTE: According to the available time to carry out the work, it's best to advance the pre-diagnosis without the celebration of the workshops described here. The presentation and validation of the Descriptive Memory and Key Issues can be done in the Diagnostic phase.

2.3 Drawing up of the Strategic Diagnosis (3 months)

The Strategic Diagnosis will have a transversal vision on the critical issues and will involve:

- Elaborating new specific approaches on the main aspects of the issues treated. These works may be carried out by the Technical Team and, should the specialisation and complexity suggest, there would be

the possibility of consulting the local University or the institutions involved such as the Chamber of Commerce, etc.

- Managing working groups integrated by representatives of the main institutions and cities organizations that may give their specific point of view and knowledge about the issues to be discussed.

- Preparing a synthesis of each critical issue including prior knowledge, the new knowledge generated and the contributions of the working groups. These syntheses should include, at least, the current situation in the city and its territorialised reflection in the different areas or districts, an analysis of trends, an comparative analysis of other territories of the environment and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses along with the opportunities and threats of the city with regard to each critical issue analysed.

- Holding a public information meeting to inform about the conclusions and the steps to taken.

2.3.1 Methodology of strategic diagnosis: key (or transversal) topics

Each transversal topic will form one section of the Diagnosis and will be drawn up by all members of the Technical Team who have contributed conclusions. One member will be named as head of the section (normally, the expert most closely involved in the main issues of the topic).

This expert will be required to ensure the literary unity of the section and consistency of the data and estimations by other participating experts.

Each one of these named "head of section (or key issue)" will also be responsible for drawing up a SWOT analysis for their topic.

The final result will be the "draft Diagnosis" to be discussed by the working groups.

2.3.2 Participation and agreement

Work of members of the Technical Team between meetings: Collection of comments on the key topics and drawing up of a draft of the Diagnosis.

The working groups will be supervised by the heads of each topic.

It is strongly recommended that the opportunity is taken to identify the social agents (including elected officials) who can collaborate with Technical Team heads, even if only on a formal basis, in administering the groups.

These agents, the most active and involved in the project, will be very useful at later stages of the work.

The results of the work done by the groups must be validation by the citizenry of the work of Technical Team members, but also identification of the major strategic objectives for development expressed by participants.

The general trend is to talk about the projects, but at this stage it is very difficult to know whether a project is strategic or not, since neither the General Objective nor the strategic lines have yet been defined. A project will be strategic if it furthers the line of the strategic objects.

Debate should therefore be oriented towards diagnosis of the city to encourage the formulation of strategic objectives. There will be time to talk about the projects at the next phase.

The General Objectives will be those which form part of the "strategic framework" and include the alternative scenarios (see point 3.4.)

Analysis of the transversal topics and alternative scenarios form part of the content of the final Diagnosis.

3ʳᴰ Mᴇᴇᴛɪɴɢ (informative, non participatory, plenary session with all Group participants)

- Explanation and distribution of the draft document of the Diagnosis

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- Discussion on the draft in groups of 10 members each (random organisation, these are not the Working Groups) with a leader / facilitator for each group

- Presentation of a summary of the work of each group at a plenary session.

5ᵀᴴ Mᴇᴇᴛɪɴɢ

This is a public meeting, open to citizens, led by the Local Government and in the presence of the social and economic agents.

- Presentation of the city's Strategic Diagnosis and work to be done.

2.4   Strategic Framework (2 months)

The preparation of the Strategic Framework, based on the analysis made for the Diagnosis, allows directing in a more concise way the work of elaboration of the Action Plan.

The strategic framework consists of the General Objective (or "City Vision") and the Strategic Lines (or "City Mission")

The General Objective is the "city's vision", the purpose of its strategies. This is an easily understandable description of the future forecast which defines the unique nature of the city.

The Strategic Lines (or Strategic Objectives) are the "city's mission", its main lines of development. The strategic lines organise the actions and projects of the Plan into coherent groups.

The programmes, policies, plans, projects and actions arising from agreements should allow the city's vision and mission to be attained.

- Internal work of reflection developed by the Technical Team and the external consultancy, under the direction of the Municipal Service responsible for the UDS.

- Validating the conclusions, expressed as a General Objective and Strategic Lines made by the Municipality and the Executive Committee.

2.4.1 Methodology for defining the Strategic Framework

There are up to three methods to choose from for defining the Strategic Framework. The atmosphere of working groups at the prediagnosis and diagnosis phases will determine the final choice made

2.4.1.1 The "simple" method

Under the first method, it will be Technical Team members themselves who after discussion determine the strategic framework on the basis of their previous knowledge, knowledge acquired during earlier phases and suggestions and contributions made by social and economic agents in the Working Groups.

After determining the strategic framework, a Working Group can be created for each Strategic Line to identify and develop the worksheets of each project.

2.4.1.2 The three-scenario method

This method consists of the Technical Team defining three basic scenarios for discussion at a workshop between the social and economic agents. The structure of each scenario will always contain a General Objective and strategic lines.

The three scenarios are as follows:

- **Trend scenario:** what would happen if nothing was done and the current trends were allowed to follow their course?

- **Maximum scenario:** what is the ideal horizon, irrespective of the real capacity of institutions and social actors?

- **Intermediate scenario:** what is the likely scenario, depending on the capacities attributed to the city (its institutions and social and economic agents)?
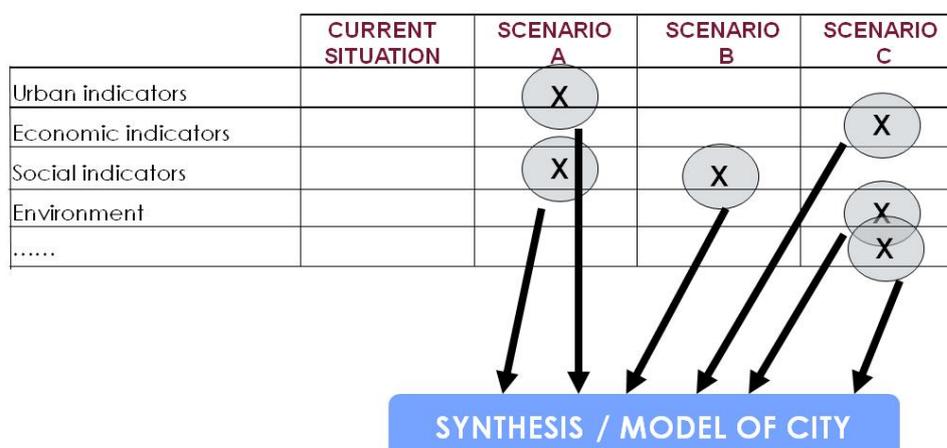
Once members of the Technical Team have defined the scenarios, a working session with the agents would be required to decide which to choose, and after choosing a scenario, working groups would be created for each strategic line.

2.4.1.3 The alternative scenarios method

This method is the most complex and therefore requires the greatest rapport between the Technical Team and Working Group participants.

Team members design some alternative scenarios (e.g.: industrial city, tourism city, tertiary city, etc.) and describe how each of the variables (parameters) which they comprise would be included in the future. The same variables would be described for each scenario, facilitating comparison between them.

The agents do not reach a decision on a strict definition of each scenario as a whole, but on their component variables. Finally, the choice of variables allows the experts to describe the strategic framework as the synthesis of the agents' opinions on the parameters.

	CURRENT SITUATION	SCENARIO A	SCENARIO B	SCENARIO C
Urban indicators		X		
Economic indicators				X
Social indicators		X	X	
Environment				X
......				X

SYNTHESIS / MODEL OF CITY

As always, the structure of the strategic framework is based on the General Objective and the strategic lines which facilitate the organisation of the working groups.

Furthermore, because the choice is made based on the variables quantified or on the description of the trend desired, the table of the variables chosen permits the definition of a great many of the city's indicator system.

2.4.2 Participation and agreement

In this phase, and the follow ones, the work should be made with the city's decision makers (better than with connoisseurs), on the basis that a consensus is being sought on the General Objectives and actions to be taken.

6TH MEETING.

- Presentation in plenary session of the context of work, the scenarios defined by the Technical Team and the work to be done.

- Discussion in groups of 10 people maximum (randomly organised) on the parameters that define the scenarios.

- Résumé in plenary session of the discussions by groups and reminder of the work to be done.

2.5 Action Plan (4 months)

The Action Plan has to include a wide range of projects that allow achieving the objectives set in the Strategic Framework.

- Interviewing the main social, economic and institutional agents to acquaint their projects in progress or planned and select those considered positive for the evolution of the city.

- Managing working groups made up by representatives of the main institutions and cities organizations that make easier the identification of necessary projects which were not considered at the beginning as well as the design of Structuring Projects that act as drivers of the strategy.

- Drawing up of an Action Plan including a clear identification of the people in charge of each Project, an analysis of cost and feasibility, the expected results from the point of view of the achievement of the strategies and a system to prioritise projects.

- Elaborating specific monographs for the preliminary development of the Structuring Projects in order to facilitate implementation and the search of donors for its financing.

2.5.1 Methodology for drawing up an Action Plan

The Technical Team should use the collection of data from the prediagnosis stage, the results of the Diagnosis stage as well as discussions with the social and economic agents to identify the projects and actions under way or planned by public and private organisations.

This list of projects will be used to draw up a preliminary draft of the Action Plan, with the projects organised by the strategic line resulting from work on the Strategic Framework.

But these strategic lines are only a description of the intention of the actors taking part in the workshops.

When the definitive project and actions worksheets appear after the agents' work, members of the Technical Team must draw up "project clusters" from all the projects.

Project clusters will be organised by identifying the objectives of the definitive strategic lines. Following this process, the strategic lines will represent not only expressions of intent of participants, but will also reflect the city's potential for developing and executing projects that can transform its circumstances.

Criteria for prioritising projects and actions include:

- Their capacity to transform the urban circumstances in the direction defined in the strategic objectives (the "strategic framework")

- Their capacity to mobilise both actors involved and external resources

- Their capacity to create new urban dynamics and trends (social, economic, territorial) which may help objectives to be attained

Three categories of project can be defined:

- Structuring or strategic projects. These are projects which in themselves are capable of transforming the city's circumstances by their impacts on its territory, society and economy

- Complementary projects, which while not strategic can create "project clusters" of a strategic nature

- Projects required for the execution of strategic projects. These are projects which, while not strategic have an "instrumental" effect on the success of the projects and the USUDS

2.5.2 Participation and agreement

For each Strategic Project there will be a Working Group to determine:

- The project objectives and impacts forecast

- The criteria to be borne in mind by those responsible for their execution

- The source of funding

- Mobilisation of actors and leadership

- Schedule

- (…)

7 TH MEETING.

- Presentation of the working context of the Project Groups in the USUDS. Results expected.

- Explanation and distribution of project packages by strategic lines.

- Identification of definitive Strategic Lines.

- Distribution of responsibilities as regards the identification of new needed projects and adaptation of existing ones (if needed and possible) and drawing up project worksheets, particularly for Strategic Projects.

Before the 8th Meeting, the experts must collaborate with the Stakeholders on drawing up worksheets and preparing project clusters (See the point on "Methodology for drawing up the Action Plan" in this Report) During this process work may be done for the Working Groups separately.

The Working Team will prepare the draft of the Action Plan and send the document to Group members.

8 TH MEETING.

- Presentation in plenary session of the draft Action Plan.

- Work on prioritising projects and actions.

Members of the Technical Team must work together to draw up the definitive wording of the Plan.

As project leader, the Municipality must make the key contacts with the hard core of the social and economic agents (the Executive Committee) for preliminary validation of the document.

2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation System (3 months)

The Monitoring and Evaluation System will include the elaboration of a proposal of the bodies responsible for managing the Plan and an indicator system for the evaluation, taking into account that the structure of the Plan is responsible for the promotion of the project but not of its execution:

- Revise the composition of the decision-taking (Executive Committee) and Management (Municipal Service) bodies according to the Action Plan to be promoted. This should involve performing the appropriate changes and the creation of new bodies if necessary.

- Elaborating an Indicator System to allow knowing if the evolution of the city follows the trends planned in the strategic objectives.

- Development of an Indicator System to allow monitoring the progress of execution of the project integrated in the Action Plan, especially of the Structuring Projects.

- Holding a public information meeting about the Action Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation System.

2.6.1 Indicators System

This includes "Execution Indicators", to indicate the state of execution of projects in the Action Plan. Most of these indicators should be signposted in the project worksheets.

It also includes "City Evolution Indicators". The objective of the USUDS is not to approve the Plan, but to transform the city's current circumstances in the direction defined in the work, particularly the strategic framework or future scenario.

- **"All Purpose Indicators":** these are the basic indicators for permanent monitoring of **the circumstances of** the city. These indicators must also allow **to be compared** the city with other cities or metropolis.

- **"City Performance Indicators":** these are indicators for evaluating the city's **evolution** in the direction of the objectives forecast in the strategy and are a very useful instrument for permanent review of the strategic framework.

- **"Policy and Programme Indicators":** these indicators evaluate project **impacts**.

To define city indicators and establish their expected or desired evolution the parameters and criteria used in the scenarios methodology will be employed. This will guarantee that the Indicators system conforms to the strategies agreed with the social and economic agents.

2.6.2 Structure for monitoring and execution

From existing experiences, a basic model of the organisational framework can be prepared for the phase of monitoring, development and execution of the projects.
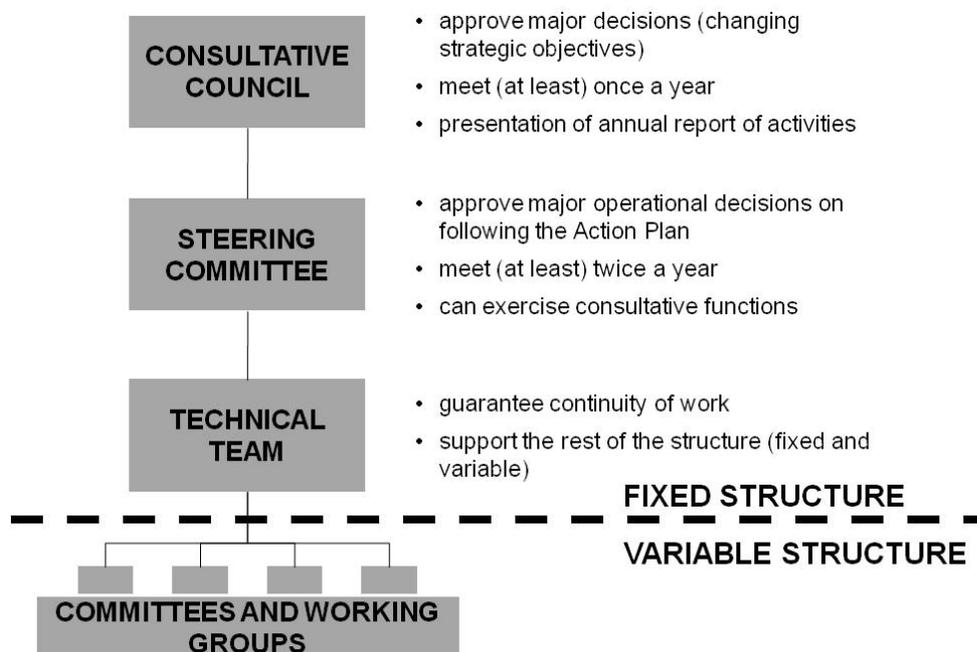
CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Thought should be given to the wisdom of modifying or extending its composition to adapt it to objectives and institutional changes after its constitution.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Must include representatives of the institutions on the General Council which are best equipped to solve any problems which may arise in the monitoring, development and execution of the Plan.

TECHNICAL TEAM

Thought should be given to setting up an "intervention group" within the structure of the local administration to support the entire monitoring structure, and to guarantee continuity of the work.

2.6.3   Participation and agreement

9TH MEETING.

This is a public meeting, open to citizens, led by the Municipality and with the attendance of the social and economic agents. It will also serve as a meeting for disseminating the issue in the Mediterranean region.

• General presentation of the work for drawing up the USUDS.

• Presentation of the conclusions of the Diagnosis, Strategic Development Scenario (Strategic Framework) and Action Plan.

• Presentation of the Implementation System.

USUDS NETWORK

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