

**The analysis FCP:
Facts, Challenges and Projects
in the territorial strategic
planning**

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"Do not pretend things to change

if we continue to do the same "

(Albert Einstein)

Facts, Challenges and Projects

There is a range of different methods and techniques in strategic land use planning, depending on the features of the town, city or area, on the capacity of the technical staff involved and political leadership and above all, on the objectives or purposes for which the process is got under way. More specifically, different procedural approaches are implemented depending on whether what is being sought after is only to identify the most important projects to be promoted or whether the intention is also to strengthen the organising capacity and shared response of the city to the challenges brought up.

It needs to be grasped that each town or city has a complex singularity, that is, that **cities are distinguished by the way they arrange the different factors constituting the structure of their territory, economy and society in processes**. There is nevertheless a set of instruments whose flexibility and ability to reflect the complex singularity of each city mean that these can be more generally applicable; this is the case of FCP (HDP/FDP¹).

FCP (Facts, Challenges, Projects) analysis was systematised as a methodology for drawing up urban strategies and was initially used successfully in Barcelona (Strategic Framework for Social Action), Seville (II Strategic Plan), Cordoba (Strategic Analysis of the Province), Granollers (II Strategic Plan) and Santander (Strategic Plan). The MedCities network applied this for the first time in cities on the southern shore of the Mediterranean in an innovative way, starting in Tetouan in Morocco and in Sousse in Tunisia.

FCP, as the initials indicate, involves the following aspects:

- The **facts** identified: the events that are taking place in the city and its surroundings, and which have the greatest impact on the city and its future. The facts refer to objective factors affecting economic, spatial and social development and the sustainability of the town or city. These are the facts with the greatest influence or/and forecast to have most influence, on both the economy and on society or the territory of the city in its future. The main facts and key challenges are not the same in all cities, but do indeed tend to be transversal to the main scopes of action if these are properly considered. Experience shows that from 5 to 10 facts considered of great strategic importance are generally identified.

¹HDP in Spanish, FDP in Catalan, French and Portuguese. FSP in Italian.

- **Challenges:** aspects that have to be faced up to from a strategic standpoint, and which stem from the impact of the facts on the production, social and spatial structure of the city. Challenges are not objective, that is, situations to be attained, although they are directly related to these: *it could be a problem, a situation, an opportunity or highly objectified danger, etc.* Challenges thus act as indicators enabling the fulfilment of objectives to be assessed.
- **Projects or programmes:** instruments which are planned or being executed in the town or city at the time when the analysis is made and which are intended to provide a solution for challenges. That is, challenges are tackled with programmes and projects. This section is highly important since it indicates at the time of the analysis the challenges that are already being tackled or are planned to be tackled through projects. The project has to be specific and able to be budgeted and financed for execution in a specific time.

There is a very widespread flaw found among planners, in the analysis or diagnosis stage, consisting in not taking the projects already existing or under way into account. FCP has three major advantages:

- 1) From the first stage in the analysis work is done with projects and proposals that will gradually be prioritised and specified in the process for drawing up the Plan.
- 2) This is a synthetic document, easy to understand and very useful as an aid in processes of citizens' participation and discussion, since it not only allows prioritisation, but above all enables channelling the main demands, expectations and needs of the main sectors of the city and its citizens.
- 3) It is easy to be corrected and reprogrammed, which makes it a dynamic instrument for preparing a shared strategy which not only has widespread agreement of the main agents and sectors of citizens, but also involves their commitment to action.

The forms of using FCP: its adaptation to the stages in the Methodological Guide put forward by MedCities and the USUDS project

FCP has been used as a document for strategic synthesis of the diagnosis or even pre-diagnosis stage, with greater value for urban strategy than the well-known SWOT, which is recommended, as has already been pointed out, as a complement and particularly in subject areas in which the city or town is in a highly competitive situation with other territories for attracting investments, headquarters of institutions and companies or major events.

The FCP was nevertheless used in the city of Tetouan for the first time, at the start of the process in the stage known as pre-diagnosis or identification of the critical factors conditioning the city's situation and its future. The critical subject areas are clearly facts (F) and the main challenges brought up by these, which in the case of Tetouan were identified by the technical team, after completing their in-depth interviews of the main agents. The technical team drew up a first FDP document, which was validated by the pilot committee after being completed, and the diagnosis or analysis stage started, which consisted in going more deeply into the first FCP document and opening work groups with experts and actors from the city, to be able to reflect on these and start to construct the system of complicities as regards the challenges to be tackled by the city.

In the case of Sousse, in view of the non-existence of analyses of the city, the technical team drew up a first report based on quantitative and qualitative methodologies on the basic dimensions of the city: Economy, Infrastructures and Territory, Social Cohesion, Sustainability and Governance. These reports were used for drawing up a first FCP, which was discussed and prioritised in the work groups.

FCP analysis procedure is not only highly compatible with the different stages proposed by the methodological guide for strategic planning used by Med Cities, but furthermore constitutes a method for efficiently deploying this guide, since FCP is a conceptually clear method, easy to understand, highly operative, and which enables working with key projects from the start of the process, and cuts down the time needed for preparing the strategic contents of the Plan.

The stages in the USUDS Guide for preparing a strategic plan and the way these are solved by FCP can in fact be seen in the following table:

Stages in the methodological guide.	Development of the FCP
<u>Pre-Diagnosis</u> : Identification of critical themes.	First formulation of structuring <u>Facts, Challenges and Projects</u> under way or planned.
<u>Diagnosis</u> : Analysis of critical subject areas.	Deliberation, extension and <u>deeper analysis of the first FCP</u>
<u>Strategic Framework</u> : General objective or view, strategic lines and line objectives	From the FCP to the proposal for <u>Strategic Framework</u> : Vision and model of the city (strategic purposes), strategic lines or vectors, projects (under way, envisaged and new).
<u>Action Programme</u> : Project Datasheets	<u>Action Programme</u> . Complete project datasheets: purposes and objectives which these respond to, specific objectives, agents involved, envisaged/desirable calendar, approximate budget, sources of financing.

FCP is thus a methodological instrument for analysis of the town or city to organise a set of information and knowledge about the city in its different dimensions consistent with the purposes of an urban strategy which structures, facilitates and gives coherency to the methodological deployment of an urban strategy.

From the FCP to the strategic proposal

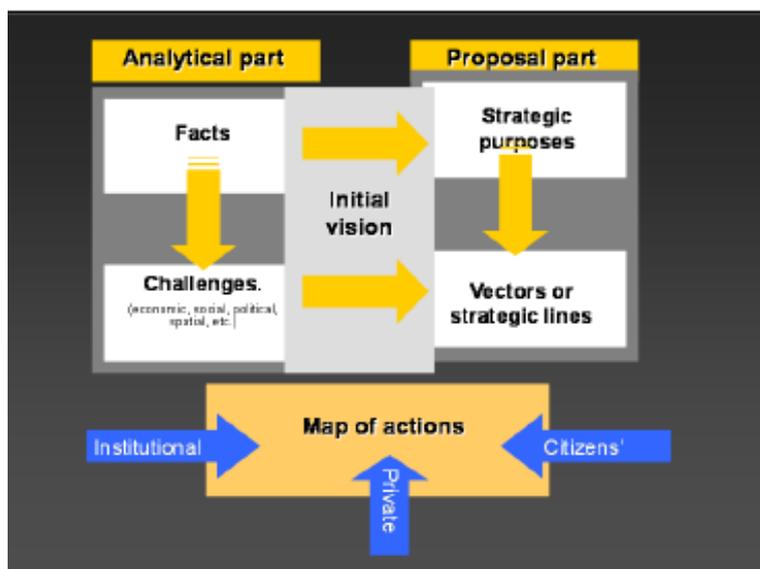
Perhaps the main comparative advantage of the FCP as compared with other strategic analysis methodologies is that this enormously and consistently facilitates the transition to the proposal or strategic proposal stage, since by taking into account the facts of greatest influence on the city possible *future scenarios* can be deduced from this, depending on whether the main challenges that these bring up are being, or could be, tackled successfully. The most desirable scenario of the possible ones strictly constituting the definition of the vision of the city is chosen

from these, thus enabling identification of the main strategic purposes that have to be attained. From the deliberation on the facts the major strategic purposes forming part of the vision or future model of the city will be identified.

In quite a lot of land use strategies, the vision or model of the city arises from the deliberation process (this a not a mechanical process under any circumstances) to transform the key facts which most condition the present and foreseeable future of the city, in intentions or major strategic objectives which will be the line or sub-line objectives of land use strategy. In many cities the vision or future model of the city is not only a desirable one of the possible scenarios, but a permanent and rational aspiration, which arises at a given time and in spite of necessarily being reprogrammable, is prepared with the intention to be permanent, constituting an act of “historical affirmation” for the city, in which the shared ethical will of wishing to reach this is displayed. *Scenarios in this case constitute the medium or setting of which the city forms part* and in accordance with the development of this setting, not controlled by the city, its evolution will be different. Hence the level of progress/regression with regard to the model or vision of the city will be different depending on which scenario actually arises. The city, its capacity for organisation and action and its strategic lines will understandably have to consider the different scenarios and have to be reprogrammed in line with these, but the vision or model is not necessarily relinquished, instead reprogramming the strategy or bearing.

Challenges are the basis for drawing up a first identification of objectives and criteria for action which will be structured in axes or strategic lines, which are organised by means of the strategic lines or vectors for transforming the city. Projects under way, planned or the new ones brought up in interviews, participative workshops and thematic committees are compiled and arranged by their impact on the deployment of the objectives.

This can be expressed in a conceptual diagram:



This methodology is a new instrument for drawing up shared urban strategies arising from the need to respond to certain demands in the preparation of a specific strategy, but whose application can be very extensive by fostering the city's ability to singularise the analysis of its strategic situation.