

Saida Urban Sustainable Development Strategy

Local Expert Team

Strategic Framework Report

Executive Summary

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INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Framework is largely based on the Strategic Diagnosis of the six transversal issues generated by Descriptive Memory of the city of Saida. The diagnosis of each transversal issue generated a number of specific strategic objectives. The strategic objectives that resulted from the six tracks of investigation were grouped into clusters under the heading of more general objectives.

The clusters respect the cross cutting approach of the diagnosis, encompassing different transversal issues as well as different sectors, as presented in the Executive Summary of the Strategic Diagnosis.

During the Strategic Framework phase, the team of experts elaborated the results of the Diagnosis into a set of strategies, which will guide the elaboration of the Action Plan. The cross-cutting approach of the Diagnosis allows for considering each strategy within one comprehensive framework, and pursuing value-adding complementarities and synergies among different objectives related to different sectors. It allows as such envisioning coalitions and coordination among stakeholders active in different sectors, while providing each of them with guidelines specific to their own priorities.

The objectives drawn from the diagnosis phase were further tested and redefined through a program of meetings during the Strategic Framework phase that included the working group, the Association of Traders, the NGO network in Saida, and the School network in Saida. These meetings resulted in the adjustments of some objectives and the addition of a new strategic objective: Security and Stability. This was a result of the general political instability in Lebanon and a more direct result of the armed confrontation between the Lebanese Army and the militant group of Al-Asir that took place in Saida during the Strategic Framework phase.

These meetings were also the catalyst for articulating both the vision and the mission for the city of Saida.

1. VISION FOR SAIDA

“Saida and dynamic surroundings offer the successive generations of its residents a healthy diversified economy and a green environment to live and prosper capitalizing on its locational advantages, rich history and cultural diversity.”

صيدا ومحيطها الحيوي توفر للأجيال المتتابة من سكانها اقتصاد متنوع وبيئة سليمة لكي يعيشوا ويزدهروا مستفيدين من موقعها وتاريخها الغني وثقافتها المتنوعة.

The USDS vision for Saida, elaborated along with the USD process of consultation with local stakeholders, carries forward five key assets which represent main drivers for the sustainable development of the city, and, consequently, constitute the core structuring links connecting the strategies outlined in the framework presented below. These strategies shall as such be understood as aimed to enable the city to valorize these assets towards increasing prosperity and wellbeing of the residents.

These drivers of development are represented in the framework by the color coded double arrows, representing each one a key asset:

- ✓ A Diversified Economy 
- ✓ A Green Environment 
- ✓ Locational advantages 
- ✓ Rich history 
- ✓ Cultural diversity 

2. MISSION FOR SAIDA

The objectives and strategies proposed below are meant to provide a framework to meet the vision by guiding the identification of future projects on urban form and infrastructure towards an equitable growth of the local economy. A time frame of ten years was used as benchmark at this stage, to assess the feasibility of the proposed strategies and their ability to make significant breakthroughs, albeit not entirely reversed entrenched conditions. In some cases targets were reasonably feasible within that time frame; in others the structural gaps and initial conditions underpin the full realization of the process within a ten years frame. However, at this stage, the strategic framework is concerned with plausibility more than with actual feasibility. The general objectives related to urban infrastructure, economic development, governance, heritage protection, and environment are:

- A. Improving socio-economic conditions of residents
- B. Sustaining environmental health
- C. Connecting the city with its surroundings
- D. Coordination, cooperation and networking
- E. Lobbying with the national institutions for implementing, amending and/or developing legal frameworks
- F. Security and Stability

3. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

General Objective	Strategic Objective	Strategies
<p>A</p> <p>Improving</p> <p>Socio</p> <p>Economic</p> <p>Conditions</p> <p>Of</p> <p>Residents</p>	<p>A1  </p> <p>To ensure the continuous diversification of the economic base of the city and the viability of all sectors through technical support and training to ailing sectors to adapt to new economic realities and conditions</p>	<p>A1.1 <i>Setting realistic targets for growth in the near future</i></p> <p>A1.2 <i>Developing incentive packages to support emerging sectors of the economy</i></p> <p>A1.3 <i>Setting up financing mechanisms to cover the cost of infrastructural developments</i></p> <p>A1.4 <i>Providing for alternative and diversified land uses in the master plan</i></p>
	<p>A2 </p> <p>To develop full cycles of development to attract and retain qualitative investments particularly in the tourism sector and to link these networks to efforts to preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of the city</p>	<p>A2.1 <i>Increasing communication to valorize Saida's cultural heritage</i></p> <p>A2.2 <i>Promoting income-generation activities to support tourism and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage</i></p>
	<p>A3  </p> <p>To integrate marginalized groups into the city services and economic development such as poor Lebanese families, and Palestinian refugees</p>	<p>A3.1 <i>More equitable distribution of urban infrastructure</i></p> <p>A3.2 <i>Comprehensive development programs for the refugee camps</i></p>
	<p>A4  </p> <p>To empower local communities particularly the less advantaged ones</p>	<p>A4.1 <i>Introducing special programs to integrate the marginalized groups into the local economy</i></p> <p>A4.2 <i>Opportunities for Small Medium Enterprises</i></p> <p>A4.3 <i>Partnership and support to development oriented NGO's</i></p>

A Improving	A5 ↔ To promote innovative economic enterprises	A5.1 <i>Incubating new enterprises</i>
		A5.2 <i>Establishing networks with nearby municipalities</i>
Socio	A6 ↔ ↔ To address traditional livelihoods (fishing, agriculture and related cottage industries) by institutional capacity building of organizations representing workers and businesses involved in traditional crafts	A6.1 <i>Building the capacity of organizations representing workers and businesses involved in traditional livelihoods</i>
		A6.2 <i>Supporting collective actions of organizations representing workers and businesses involved in traditional livelihoods</i>
Economic Conditions	A7 ↔ ↔ To restore the historical housing stock engaging the residents through subsidies and training according to consistent and affordable restoration guidelines and techniques	A7.1 <i>Promoting qualitative investments in various economic sectors engaging different actors in networking aimed to valorizing heritage as a local top ranking asset</i>
		A7.2 <i>Supporting small businesses and improve working conditions in the sectors employing the residents of the Old City</i>
		A7.3 <i>Attracting and channeling investments on restoration of the housing stock into subsidies and training for the residents according to coherent and affordable restoration guidelines</i>
Of Residents	A8 ↔ To seek employment opportunities for owners and residents of the old city	A8.1 <i>Employment opportunities in activities supporting the development of tourism for owners and residents of the Old City</i>
		A8.2 <i>Providing vocational training and enhance entrepreneurial skills of owners and residents of the Old City</i>

B	Sustaining	B1 	To ensure ecological integrity of water courses, marine and groundwater and safeguard against seasonal flooding	B1.1 <i>Safeguarding riparian ecologies</i>
		B1.2 <i>Protecting coastal marine resources</i>		
		B1.3 <i>Recycling storm water</i>		
		B1.4 <i>Developing an administrative framework to manage water resources</i>		
	Environmental	B2 	To plan for a Blue-Green Network that serves amenity and promotes sustainable use of environmental resources	B2.1 <i>Developing the river corridors as amenity landscapes and greenways</i>
		B2.2 <i>Protecting the Qanaya</i>		
		B2.3 <i>Developing the waterfront into a dynamic multifunctional landscape</i>		
		B2.4 <i>Upgrading the abandoned Railway tracks into a Green Corridor</i>		
		B2.5 <i>Integrating the traffic related green areas towards visual continuity</i>		
	Health	B3  	To enhance the system of managing infrastructure	B3.1 <i>Establishing an effective coordination among the municipalities in the Federation of Saida and Al-Zahrani</i>
		B3.2 <i>Establishing a technical coordination bureau in the Municipality</i>		
		B3.3 <i>Cost recovery for investments in infrastructure</i>		
B4 		To develop a proper monitoring and evaluation process for infrastructure	B4.1 <i>Establishing an urban observatory</i>	
B4.2 <i>Formalizing stakeholder participation in the decision making process</i>				

C Connecting The City With Its Surroundings	C1   To link the old city culturally, spatially and economically with the greater city and beyond	C1.1 <i>Promoting cultural activities and events in the Old City</i>
		C1.2 <i>Promoting commercial fairs to revitalize the souq</i>
		C1.3 <i>Implementing restoration projects of key structures and open spaces along the Old City perimeter</i>
		C1.4 <i>Envisioning tourist trails connecting the Old City to the other heritage sites and green spaces around the city</i>
	C2  To increase quantity and improve quality of green areas	C2.1 <i>Increasing the per capita allocation of green areas</i>
		C2.2 <i>Improving the quality of green areas</i>
		C2.3 <i>Ensuring sustainable management of green areas</i>
	C3   To preserve the city historical link with the sea, with the coastal orchards and the with the hills	C3.1 <i>Valorizing the river corridors as landmarks defining the distinctive character of Saida's urban texture</i>
		C3.2 <i>Re-conceptualizing agriculture within a multifunctional framework</i>
	C4  To develop a collective spatial strategy for the greater Saida area and to link the development of future infrastructure projects to a comprehensive vision for the city	C4.1 <i>Developing a strategic spatial vision for Greater Saida</i>
		C4.2 <i>Create real linkages between the various parts of Greater Saida</i>
		C4.3 <i>Capitalizing on the assets of the regional hinterland of Saida</i>

D	D1 ↔ To develop a comprehensive plan for the old city to ensure and guide coordination among the various actors and projects for restoration	D1.1 <i>Promote exchange and debate among the patrons of past restoration projects</i>
		D1.2 <i>Develop and apply restoration guidelines</i>
		D1.3 <i>Complement physical interventions on the urban fabric with social programs to engage the residents in the preservation efforts</i>
Coordination	D2 ↔ ↔ To develop a framework for true cooperation among the municipalities in the greater Saida area in a manner to ensure that duties and rights of every party are clearly defined and adhered to by the various municipalities	D2.1 <i>Organizing the tax base and tax collection within Greater Saida</i>
		D2.2 <i>Coordinating services provision and integration of the Palestinian refugees in the overall development of the city</i>
		D2.3 <i>Rethinking the administrative boundaries of the Municipalities of Greater Saida or their administrative framework to increase social cohesion and integration</i>
Cooperation	D3 ↔ To coordinate with the Union of Municipalities of Saida Al-Zahrani to identify regional development projects and to organize and structure the tax base and tax collection within the Union	D3.1 <i>Launching a political dialogue between the political parties and stakeholders influencing the Saida and Al-Zahrani Union of Municipalities, both at the national and municipal level</i>
And		D3.2 <i>Organizing the tax base and tax collection within the Union</i>
Networking		D3.3 <i>Coordinate regional development with the Union of Municipalities of Jezzine 'Ain Al-Majdaleen</i>

D Coordination	D4   To assure coordination among the various mega projects and develop cross sectoral synergies and mutual benefits	D4.1 <i>Formalizing the USUDS process</i>
		D4.2 <i>Developing feasibility studies for the major projects</i>
		D4.3 <i>Developing innovative solutions to problems</i>
Cooperation	D5  To create formal and informal networks for branding the city and marketing its potential assets	D5.1 <i>Creating public-private partnerships to promote the city</i>
		D5.2 <i>Developing a branding strategy</i>
		D5.3 <i>Creating protected domains</i>
And Networking	D6  To create mechanisms of technology transfer among concerned parties in order to increase quality and quantity of production to meet market demand	D6.1 <i>Increasing cooperation between Saida Institute for Technology and local industries</i>
		D6.2 <i>Increasing quality of hospitality services in the old city</i>

E Lobbying With National Institutions For Legal Frameworks	E1 	To adopt and implement the decentralization law as well as numerous other laws pertaining to the finances and responsibilities of municipalities	E1.1 <i>Creating a municipal legal committee</i>
			E1.2 <i>Developing a national lobbying strategy with other municipalities</i>
	E2  	To elaborate a new zoning for the old city including micro schemes based on improved data and wider survey	E2.1 <i>Complete extensive social and spatial survey of the Old City</i>
			E2.2 <i>Map different options for applying different building schemes in different areas of the Old City</i>
			E2.3 <i>Present and discuss options for building schemes with legal experts and national planning authorities</i>
	E3   	To protect Saida's landscape distinctiveness enforcing and enhancing existing legal framework for the protection of water resources and green areas	E3.1 <i>Enforcing Existing Legal Frameworks on Riparian and Marine Resources</i>
			E3.2 <i>New Legal Frameworks for Urban Agriculture</i>
			E3.3 <i>Hybrid Legal Framework for the Railway Corridor</i>
	F Security and Stability	F1 	To prove Saida's centrality and leadership in opening local dialogues about these issues
			F1.2 <i>Encouraging small initiatives of local NGO's and businesses creating local platforms for reconciliation and peace-building</i>

4. IN CONCLUSION

In parallel with the Strategic Framework phase, the team of experts and the Municipal team, initiated a number of small projects under the umbrella of the USUDS. The projects were intended to inform the public, to build partnerships and to engage the community. A number of meetings were held towards that end with the Trader's Association, the Schools Network and the NGO network in Saida. These meetings were also intended to facilitate for a process of healing and reengaging key actors after the Abra events that the city suffered from. Three projects have already been launched:

Bher El Eid – "مهرجان بحر العيد" Project

"Baher El Eid" is part of Saida's heritage. It is the space where the Adha Eid celebrations have traditionally taken place every year. The partnership that was established between the Municipality and the Trader's Association and a number of NGOs (Blue Mission, DPNA, Abnaa Saida Association, ChaCha & SOso Colony) granted the children of Saida, especially underprivileged children, this year a special event over the Adha Eid with a better more secure space and a more enhanced entertainment program (such as clowns and folklore dances). The objective was to highlight the cultural identity of the old city by preserving one of its well-known venue and cultural celebration in "Eid".

"Let's Imagine Saida" Workshops with the Schools Network in Saida and Neighboring Villages

A meeting of the School Network of Saida in the presence of its president, Mrs. Bahia El Hariri launched the activity "Let's Imagine Saida – **تعو نتصور صيدا**". Thirty four schools participated in the project and involved their eighth graders. Students take photos of places they like and others they dislike. The photos are intended to establish a dialogue among the students about their perception of the city of Saida through visual means. The workshops are expected to end in November, and a grand entertaining exhibition of their photos will follow as an outcome of all the workshops.

The Green Railway Tracks

A third project was a greening of the old railway tracks to be a recreational space in the city, and an environmental campaign that will be launched in the near future. This project is a product of the ideas shared by the Saida USUDS Strategic Diagnosis report and by the "Shajar wa-Bashar" NGO in Saida. This project is currently unfolding and will soon be implemented.

Such projects are small steps but are certain to pave the way for the Action Plans, in the next phase of the USUDS project, and are also certain to pave the way for long term civic engagement and partnership building in the city of Saida.