

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF BAIJA MARE CITY

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Abstract: *The paper presents a series of subsequent tools that provide the support for the complex tools regarding the important aspects of local and territorial development, such as strategic planning, sustainable development strategies, integrated development plans. The reference point of this research is represented by the management process in the public administration in the city of Baia Mare for which there are, in the general economy of the paper, the most complex resources for an empirical research. The Baia Mare Urban System presented in this paper has all the characteristics of a model structure of polycentric development that has elaborated/formulated a development overview on long and medium-term with all the strategic, tactical and operational elements that support the development within a well defined territory. The approach on both components (institutional, territorial) has a complex character but at the same time, a unitary one. The promotion of polycentric and balanced territorial development as an essential element for the territorial cohesion realization represents one of the priorities of Europe Strategy 2020. In this context, the formation and consolidation of the development poles as basic elements for the creation of polycentric networks must be supported by integrated politics at local and regional level. The study cases outlined in the paper represent models for the use of different public management tools in concrete situations that cover most of the fields approached in local administration.*

Keywords: *sustainable development, Europe Strategy, urban system*

JEL classification: *J11, R11, R23.*

1. Introduction

The approach of the European Union has evolved from the social dimension to the competitive one (Lisbon Agenda, Leipzig Carta, European Territorial Agenda) thinking at a larger scale (metropolitan scale, growth poles). Following this, the present article wishes to provide a practical framework which can be used to better understand the need of an efficient urban system and, also, to create an urban system based on competitiveness and innovation.

Allocated to each strategic objective, according to the locally established strategic planning, policies of sustaining the promotion of public programs have been defined, concerning development in urban, over or suburban context in Baia Mare city.

The territorial adjustments in the field of economy and housing, the conservation and the promotion of natural values, the development of the basic public infrastructure are some of the major fields of interest.

A number of issues defining the urban system management Baia Mare emerged from the diagnosis analysis carried out. This set of problems will lead us, as a next step, to formulate strategic objectives and policies, programs and development projects, respectively:

- the peripheral position in relation to the major transportation corridors;
- the effect of economic restructuring;
- the existence of regional disparities;
- the existence of environmental issues;
- the damaged built heritage;
- the complexity of public management.

Considering the elements that are part of the vision of development, the strategic objectives for which the Baia Mare Urban System Association has been created are: improving the quality of life and removing the existing disparities between localities, creating a pole of economic concentration and support for attracting investment and for further development of jobs in this area. 18 policies have been established in order to implement the development strategy of the Baia Mare Urban System, accompanied by a series of measures and concrete projects which are necessary for its implementation.

2. The implementation of a Strategy for Local Sustainable Development

Starting from the assumption that there exist administrative-territorial entities, respectively the commune/ the town/ the municipality, a first instrument of strategic management was identified through the drawing and the implementation of a Strategy for Local Sustainable Development. The case study taken into account is the local Agenda 21 and all the data and the specific measurement instruments used in this case study were collected through the systematic analysis and evaluation of the economic development in the Baia Mare urban and suburban area.

The sustainable development of the Baia Mare municipality through Agenda 21, which contains the elements of both a development strategy and of a transformation strategy, is characteristic of a pro-active community development. One crucial element which led to its elaboration is represented by the existence of a well-developed community, with a positive potential of human resources, within the context of a radical change in the fields of activity in the local economic sector.

The necessary equilibrium for implementing such a strategy is sustained through the achievement of an efficient communication with the local community in order to directly involve it in the process of decision making and the promoting of measures necessary for implementation, as well as through the over-development of the tactical level, able to sustain the reaching of medium and long-term goals within strong social and economic transformations.

The way of integrating the local strategic objectives at a county and regional level has been realized through the promoting of an ascendant strategic construction ("bottom up"), the elements of the local strategy being the basis for the construction of strategies at county and regional levels.

Steadily promoting the objectives and measures established by Agenda 21, both at a formal and an informal level, Baia Mare has succeeded to make known and to

render assimilated at county and regional levels through the specific strategic documents all the elements of the local sustainable development strategy, thus influencing the county and regional concepts of development.

Implementing the strategy represents the practical stage of planning and monitoring the process of putting into practice the decisions expressed in development programmes and projects. This must ensure the reaching of the strategic goals that have been stipulated, through the implementation of projects at the community level (Applen, 2002; Benson *et al.*, 2004).

The Sustainable development strategy represents a strong political pledge on the vision about the future of the community and at the same time a platform for the coordination of integrated actions from the urban agenda assumed by the collectivity. The strategy answers the challenges with which communities are faced on a global scale: financial crisis, competitiveness and globalization, a decrease in population and the demographic aging, migrations, climatic changes and the management of energy resources, to which are added, at an internal level, the process of decentralization in the education and health systems (Choo & Bontis, 2002).

Through the experiences encountered by the municipality of Baia Mare during this implementing period, the perspective of a supra-urban level depending on the global agglomeration that had created it was identified, the necessity of development being in this respect approached from a territorial point of view. The modification in the ratio of resources between the dense urban zone and the adjacent rural zones is analysed according to the common values and objectives they sustain.

To this purpose the concept of poly-centric regional development has been analysed and developed, the great urban centers having a polarizing role for the adjacent influence zone. The Metropolitan Development Strategies represent the third instrument of strategic public management dealt with within this paper. The case study and the functional links between the urban pole and the influence zone have been developed and analysed in the case of the Baia Mare Urban System.

This poly-functional territory has been analysed both from the perspective of defining the administrative limits and from the point of view of the social, economic and environmental development potential. The defining of a metropolitan-type strategy, as well as of some afferent measure plans needs an institutional and financial construction in order to efficiently complete the territorial dimension.

The approach of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Baia Mare city has as its foundation the global and European experience in the domain of strategic territorial planning, within the context of promoting

The territorial development knows a new approach within which the social, economic and territorial dimensions are treated in an integrated manner in the context of the sustainable development. The decisions regarding measures for development are made under multiple pressures, and the phenomena that manifest themselves locally have an ever-growing territorial dynamics.

Romania's development is based on a powerful system of major development poles connected to the complemented system of support specialized poles by a good partnership relation between the different levels in view to ensure the socio-economic and territorial cohesion, the sustainable development.

In this context it is necessary to consolidate a coherent network of development centres which is to act as development engines, and also as an equilibrium structure at the regional level in Romania.

The Urban System Baia Mare is a functional example of territorial structure which has drawn a development strategy where there have been underlined the key-aspects of management, the strategic objectives, the policies and the development measures.

The instruments used have mainly been those promoted by the local public administration, these having the role of offering consistency to the private and public policies at the level of local or regional communities. The decisive role of public management in the near future is to build the “frame” for the social and economic development of a well defined space.

This space must tackle with both the values of local identity (cultural, economic, social or natural environment), and the major challenges linked to globalization-related phenomena, the ever-changing world economy and the degrading of the environment.

The instruments of public management facilitate the access of the community, in its whole, to public resources and the development vision of a community, the public administration playing the major role of managing these resources for a rise in life-quality levels within the community it represents.

The use of the Baia Mare model as a good practice example and the improvement of public management tools in the context of innovative approaches through the involvement of the local community and of the strategic partners forming a genuine partnership for the development of policies and actions.

Dissemination of the local experiences outlined in this paper regarding the integrated development gathered through the activities performed by associative structures (urban agglomerations, metropolitan areas, local action groups, community development associations) and consolidation of all local initiatives with respect to sustainable development and applying for and use of resources from European funds.

Connection to the European network (URBACT) dealing with the strategic management for land use, which is considered to be the most important tool for the approach and provision of competitiveness, attractiveness and sustainability of European cities/regions. This implies an approach at the strategic level (planning instruments, observation instruments), as well as at tactic and operational level (action plans, study cases) and it can generate a series of practical models and methods for similar communities interested in local development.

Drawing up new grounds that would settle the objectives and criteria based on which new partnerships will be built between regional or local governments and all the economic, social stakeholders, with structures that represent the civil society, with non-governmental organizations or other bodies interested in the sustainable development of communities.

Enforce the indispensability according to which the strategic and urban plans for large cities are elaborated and approved in accordance with those of the adjacent administrative divisions.

In order to approach the proposed objectives, we will present hereafter several proposals that would allow a professional approach of the issues related to integrated local development (Anghel, 2013):

- Creation of a participative framework, involving all the categories of local stakeholders in the decision-making process with respect to the sustainable development of the communities they are part of. Besides local authorities, representatives of the public sector, including decentralized institutions,

private entrepreneurs, professional associations, education or research institutions, unions, non-governmental organizations or other representative of the civil society should be involved.

- Development of local networks and partnerships for the use of the participative mechanism correlated with an efficient information and communication system, which will further allow the concentration of resources and the optimal exploitation of the local potential.
- Elaboration of three types of main tools meant to orient and promote a realistic and responsible vision upon the local development perspectives: a local development strategy that sets the medium and long-term objectives; an action plan that outlines the priorities and steps to be taken on medium and long-term for reaching the objectives set in the strategy, that will include cost assessment, identification of financial resources and how to apply for them; a portfolio of projects considered by the entire community as priorities for the sustainable development of the city or region.
- Completing the legal background for the integration of the strategic vision regarding spatial planning and city planning in the local and regional development programmes. Institutional and administrative capacity-building in local governments in order to elaborate the strategic development documents for each locality (Local Agenda 21, sustainable development strategy, integrated plans, portfolio of projects).
- Setting up a clear calendar for the preparation, elaboration and correlation of the strategic documents, of the mechanisms and related tools, necessary to apply for European funds foreseen for 2014- 2020, in order to be able to reach the objectives set by the European Strategy 2020 and by the national programmes (National Reference Programme, National Development Plan, Operational Programmes).

The case studies presented in the paper may represent models of good practice for any city hall in Romania as regards the increase of institutional and administrative capacity at the level of local authorities and civil societies, the management of polycentric territorial-administrative development

For the implementation of politics related to the integrated polycentric development network, instruments specific to the territorial spatial planning (investment programs, territorial plans, monitoring of territorial development), non-spatial (budget, finances, administrative capacity) and strategic planning (strategies of regional development, coordination mechanisms, politics substantive, strategic planning) are used.

The promotion of polycentric and balanced territorial development as an essential element for the territorial cohesion realization represents one of the priorities of Europe Strategy 2020. In this context, the formation and consolidation of the development poles as basic elements for the creation of polycentric networks must be supported by integrated politics at local and regional level.

This public institutional construction precedes and becomes an a priori condition regarding the success of an administratively-territorial durable development process (at the level of neighbourhoods, belonging localities) as well as at territorial level of a superior rank: microregional, county and regional.

The tactic direction of the public management modernization process. In all planning documents of the development at national level, the collocation "The triangle of knowledge" is used especially within the field of "Growth of Economic Competitiveness". The collocation symbolically presents the importance of the

relationship between: (1) Universities (assimilated with fundamental research centres, (2) Development Innovation Centres (CDI – assimilated with platforms of applicative research, initiators of “pilot” projects, consultancy providers or facilitators of technology transfer) and (3) Enterprises, in order to ensure the competitive advantages on long -term period of some products or services.

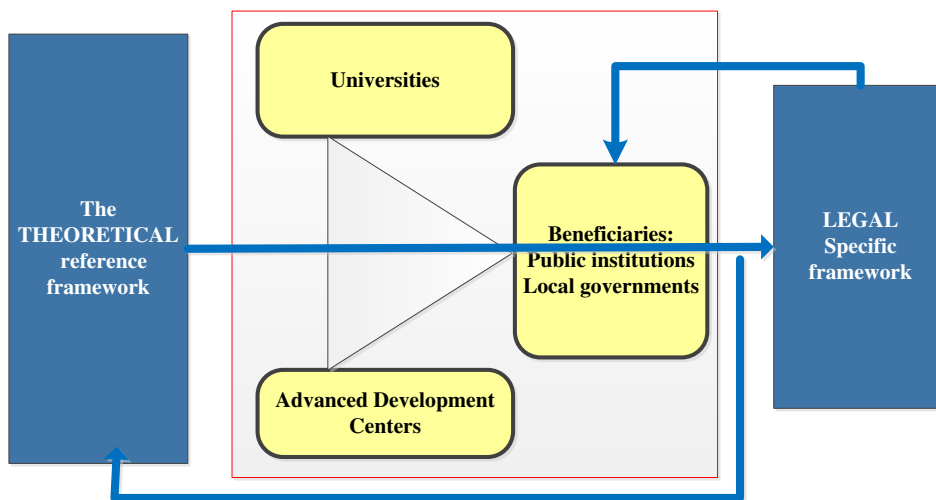


Figure 1: The development process of public management
Source: Anghel, 2013

The development process of public management based on the application of “The triangle of knowledge” presents the following advantages (Anghel, 2013; Anghel, 2006):

- It uses the advanced research (on long- term) and the theoretical foundation of the modernization instruments construction of the public administration ensured by the “university” partner.
- It ensures the optimizing process and efficiency of the construction and practical application (adaptation to the beneficiary’s specific) of the public management instruments, ensured by CDI specialised in different fields: Technology of Information and Communication, Human Resources, Public Relations, Public Politics, Financial Management);
- It represents an answer given by de practical application of the public management instrument that shall lead to the evolution of the theoretical frame of public management, ensuring its continuous development and adaptation to the modifications of public institutional environment from Romania;
- It contributes to the creation of a legislative frame adapted to real needs, tested by the national public system and not based on prognoses or opinions of an expert type;
- It allows the facilitation of a legislative frame whose norms were pre-tested by pilot projects and agreed on by beneficiaries.

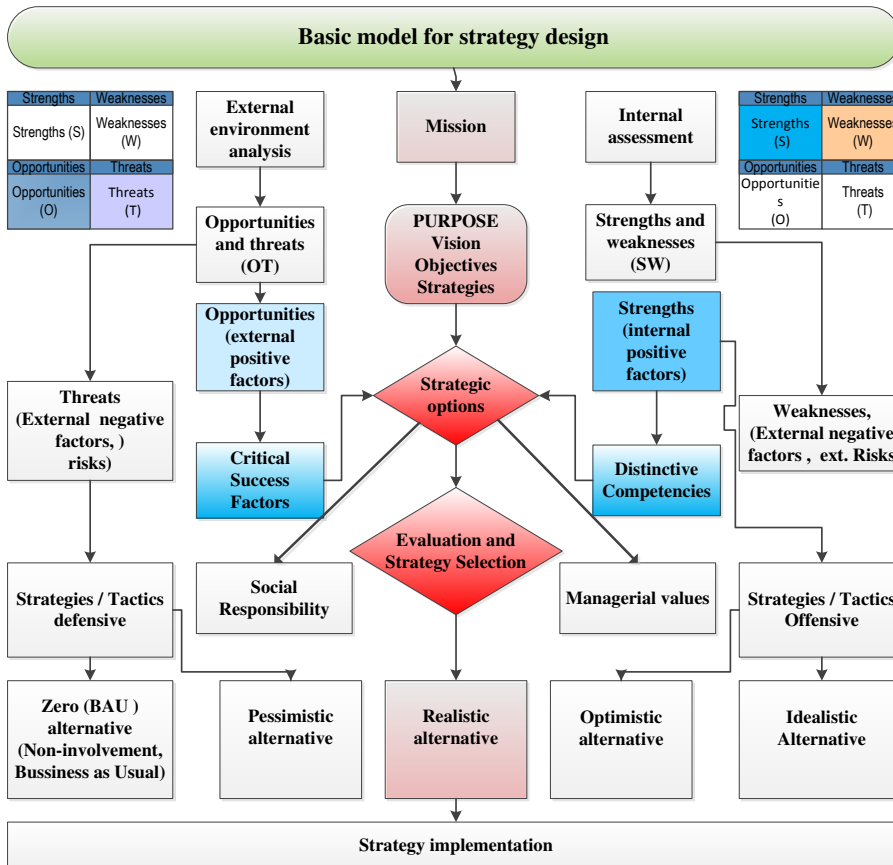


Figure 2: Model for strategy elaboration

Source: Anghel, 2013

The base model used for the formulation of the strategy was used in all phases of the measurements, starting from a simplified model with approaches on two directions represented by the SWOT analysis part (analytical approach), respectively the visionary measurements (overview, mission, strategic targets). The two approaches have finally generated five types of strategic alternatives (zero alternative, pessimistic alternative, optimistic alternative, realistic and visionary alternative)

The model emphasizes the two great types of approaches (defensive and offensive) important especially in tactical phases that aim at medium-term targets.

Another advantage of the model is the emphasis and picture of the distinctive competitiveness and competent elements as critical factors of success, respectively the social responsibility and managerial values as important elements within the complete

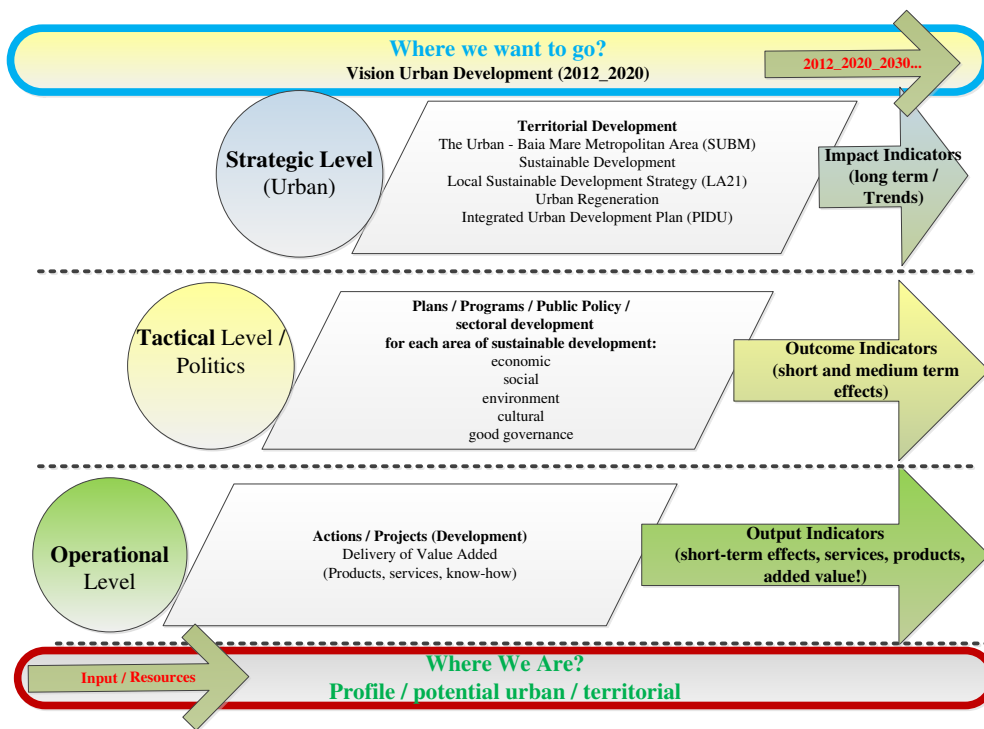


Figure 3: Concept of Local – Territorial Integrated Development
Source: Anghel, 2013

A series of public management instruments are interconnected in order to realise a unitary construction that covers the entire problematical aspects of a community at a county capital city level.

The Scheme of the Local-Territorial Development Concept synthetically presents:

(a) The content of the stages of local-territorial development planning:

- Definition of urban – territorial profile based on the quantitative indicators (statistics) and the qualitative indicators of the local resource types (natural, physical, human, social and financial);
- Evaluation of the development potential (based on the strategic analyses SWOT/PEST of the local – territorial profile);
- Establishment of strategic planning elements;
- Definition of the development overview, an ideal image of a desirable future, shared within the community;
- Establishment of development targets and measures (strategies and programmes)

From the territorial perspective of the administrative unit (subunits – neighbourhoods, or supra-units– territorial cooperation areas; microregional, counties, regional);

- From the sectorial field perspective of the local development integrated within the concept of durable development (economic, social, environment, culture, governing)

(b) The process of local-territorial planning, definitive for the local capacity evaluation of public management. It is defined through the involvement degree (civic participation) of all concerned parties in all planning stages (by information, consulting, participation), ensuring the participative character of the elaboration, public assumption and application of local-territorial development politics.

(c) The levels and types of indicators of the monitoring and evaluation system of the implementation progress of development elements:

- Impact indicators (long- term effects on big groups of beneficiaries, the entire community), definitive for the degree of achievement of strategic objectives;
- Result indicators (short- term effects on some specific target groups) that define the degree of the achievement of the programmes, applied plans, respectively of the specific objectives and planned measures;
- Exit indicators/“output” (services and products realised as a result of projects’ application, services provided within the Local - Territorial Action Plan)

3. Conclusion

The sustainable development strategy of the Baia Mare city defines the general frame in what the decision-making process in urban planning is concerned. It is a comprehensive document which defines the Urban Agenda for Baia Mare, putting together visions, projects and opportunities with a particular stress on sustainable options. It offers solutions for development creating a sound basis for the future of the city as well as a frame for a better use of structural funds.

In the process of drawing the sustainable development strategy of the Baia Mare municipality there has been used for the first time in Romania the poster-plan type of cartography, which presents the main strategic choices until 2020. It is a synoptic document which projects the future of the community, a perspective document which puts into the limelight both the conceptual axes of the city’s development and the zones envisaged for intervention within the following years. (zones of urban development, zones of urban regeneration).

My recommendation refers to the extrapolation of this collocation at the level of public management by the promotion and support of a development process of public management at national and local level based on the collocation named “The Triangle of knowledge”, that emphasizes the partnership relationships that must be built at the level of a community, with extended possibilities at territorial level.

Thus, a useful co-operation between the fundamental actors of the community that must participate in formulating the development overview and the elaboration and implementation of all fundamental documents that contribute to the increase of local capacity of development is achieved.

The development of the management capacity of local public administration institutions requires the use of some modern management instruments that shall lead to an increase of the administrative capacity at local level.

The case studies presented in the paper may represent models of good practice for any city hall in Romania as regards the increase of institutional and administrative capacity at the level of local authorities and civil societies.

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The Baia Mare Urban System presented in this paper has all the characteristics of a model structure of polycentric development that has elaborated/formulated a development overview on long and medium- term with all the strategic, tactical and operational elements that support the development within a well defined territory.

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