

## THE STRATEGIC APPROACH OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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### **Abstract:**

*The paper presents the important aspects of local and territorial development, such as strategic planning, sustainable development strategies, and integrated development plans. The comparative analysis allows the reference to real situations at the managerial level in the Romanian and European public administration. Thus, an ideal optimal model can be built for similar structures where sustainable development programs. 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. An important role in sustainable development in Romania, will go to continuous education, for the acquisition of new communication skills, risk management, business management, for a more effective activity which is adapted to continuous changes in market conditions and for ensuring competitiveness in all fields. The 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 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.*

**Keywords:** *sustainable development, city, strategies, urban, system, polycentric.*

**JEL classification:** R11, R23, Q56

### **1. Introduction**

The sustainable development through its economic, social and environmental dimensions has become a key factor that generated major changes with respect to the management techniques in the public administration.

The positive evolution of the administrative decentralization will lead to the decentralization of the development process, this implying a high degree of specialization and diagnosis within the structures of the local public administration.

The development and strategy departments should become integrated and integrating elements of the management in the institutions of the local and regional public administration.

The strategic approach of sustainable development in the local communities leads to the accreditation of a social perception regarding the importance of public participation in all the approaches related to local development. Making the sustainable development an efficient process implies the alignment of the Romanian institutional system to the new European standards.

The Urban Development Integrated Plan of the city in Romanian, is aimed at the public intervention on a well-defined area needing regeneration because of social, economic, territorial, functional and environmental discrepancies, as compared to other urban areas of the municipality.

The success of the implementation of the European project on sustainable development in the cities of Romania, during 2015-2020 will depend to a great extent on the qualification of human resources and on the know-how, on the infrastructure improvements. Introduction of innovation in the production sector, the administrative processes, in everyday life, the promotion of local products and on the market development for a new generation of products and services.

The main strategic objectives of sustainable development in Romania during the implementation of the European projects are:

- the development of modern education and training systems in order to provide youth with the proper skills required by the labor market;
- the promotion of an attractive higher education system linked with the economic environment;
- measures to reduce unemployment rate and to support the employment of young graduates;
- stimulation of innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship spirit, at all levels of education and professional training, supporting young entrepreneurs in starting and developing a business.

The Development Strategy of the cities contains the vision and the strategic development objectives, the package of policies, programs and projects, as well as the implementation mechanisms in a continual process over a defined period(drafting, implementation, post-implementation analysis, reviewing).

The metropolitan development strategy sustains the polarizing role of the city in the concepts of regional public management, being defined as an instrument of long-term public management, in order to sustain the regional polycentric development, a current aspect of public management policies.

Outlining these aspects concerning the modern instruments of public management can conceptually and practically support the Romanian public administration in the process of administrative reform. The manner of the integration and the results of the assimilation can be shown as examples of good practice, established at the level of global doctrines and at the level of applicability in the Romanian society. The field of sustainable development is rather new in Romania. Resources management, local economic development with protection for the future young generations are quite a challenge for the communities with poor resources in the context of globalization and increased world competition for resources but also in the context of challenges concerning globalization, climate changes , social and economic crisis.

The strategic approach of local communities' sustainable development has to

create a social perception that institutions are serving the citizens and not the other way around. In order to be compatible with the European model, public management becomes an important model in the community's evolution in the context of decentralization.

In the new European context, stimulating the development of a managerial conception, characteristic for a modern public administration, is absolutely necessary.

Each public manager has to select, based on his or her own experience and perception, those elements able to define their own managerial "model". This paper does not claim to have an academic approach to the managerial phenomenon in public services nevertheless it represents a starting point in understanding this field of work going through adaptation processes, based on best practice experiences and examples accomplished in the Romanian public administration.

The study of public management in the circumstances generated by the current situation of the Romanian local administration presumes an investigation conducted on all the elements connected to documented foreseeing, the public authorities' ability to prepare plans, programs and projects, the competence to decide on drafting and implementing adequate strategies for ensuring a sustainable development of the local communities.

Specialized studies and research in the field have a rather recent history in Romania. The premise at the base of this paper is the objective need to conduct a theoretic-applicative research on the new approaches, simultaneously with the proposal of choices for perfecting the public management instruments.

Consideration has to be given to the fact that sustainable development, as a fundamental element in the evolution of communities, has to be analyzed with all that it involves at the institutional, legal and community level of resources management.

In addition, there are a series of current global challenges needing a fast adaptation through mechanisms enabling, in the context of long term measures, the application of public management capable to diminish or to adapt to these challenges.

Amongst the most important current challenges, needing the development of instruments sustainable at local, regional but also with global effects, the following are listed:

Globalization, expressed especially through population mobility, pressure on the life quality level, extended economy, interdependence of social, economic and environmental systems;

Climate changes, as an effect of the pressures on the environment's natural regeneration ability;

Society, as a means of organizing existence, designs the entire field of human action: social system, behavioral organism, individual personality, physical and organic environment, cultural system.

Made up from a regulation system of orders, statuses, rights and obligations belonging to members, human community, in order to survive and develop, has to maintain the integrity of a cultural orientation, understood and respected by its members, as a base for social identity.

Evolution in time of local community structures as well as the social and interdependence relations between individuals and groups, the increased complexity of phenomena and the development of communication instruments

have led to the appearance and development of the management concept.

A number of issues defining the urban system in Romania management 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 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 Urban System 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.

## **2. The implementation of a Strategy for Local Sustainable Development**

The sustainable development for the cities of the Romania, 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 to top"), the elements of the local strategy being the basis for the construction of strategies at county and regional levels.

Implementing the strategy represents the practical stage of planning and monitoring the process of putting into practice the decisions expressed in development programs and projects. This must ensure the reaching of the strategic goals that have been stipulated, through the implementation of projects at the community level.

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 de-centralization in the education and health systems.

Through the experiences encountered by the cities of the Romania 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 analyzed according to the common values and objectives they sustain.

This poly-functional territory has been analyzed 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.

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 centers which is to act as development engines, and also as an equilibrium structure at the regional level in Romania.

The Urban System for the cities of Romania 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.

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.

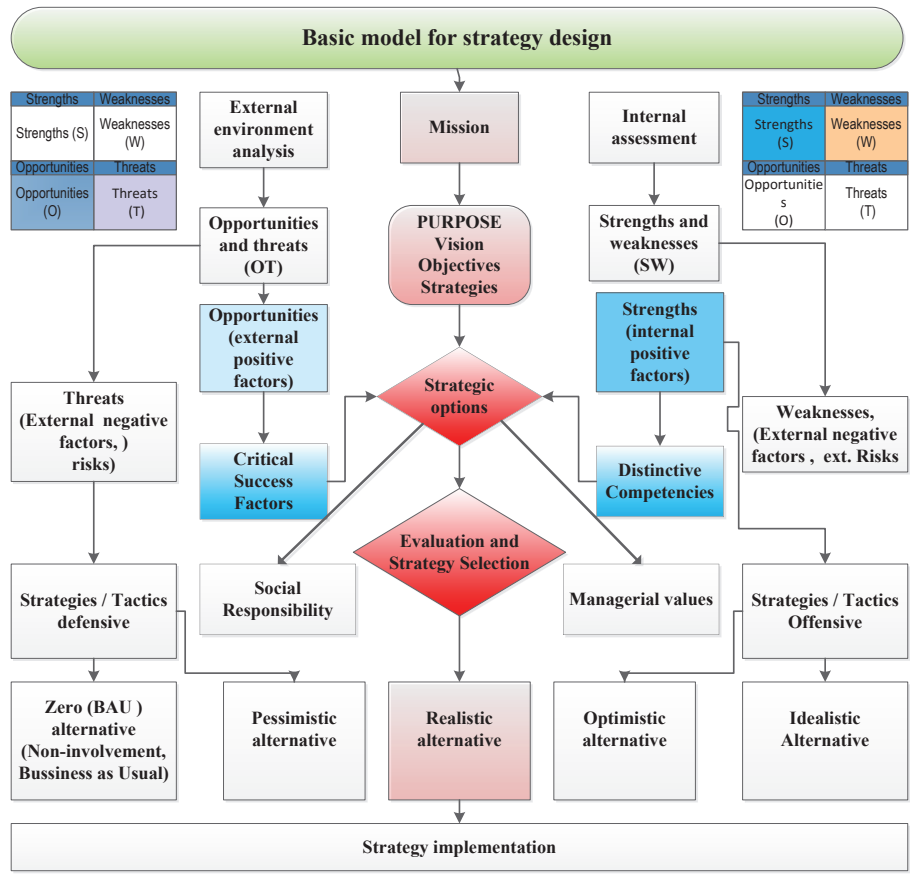
Development of local networks and partnerships for the use of the participative mechanism correlated with an efficient information and communication system,

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.

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 programs (National Reference Program, National Development Plan, Operational Programs). For the implementation of measures 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 substantivize, 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.

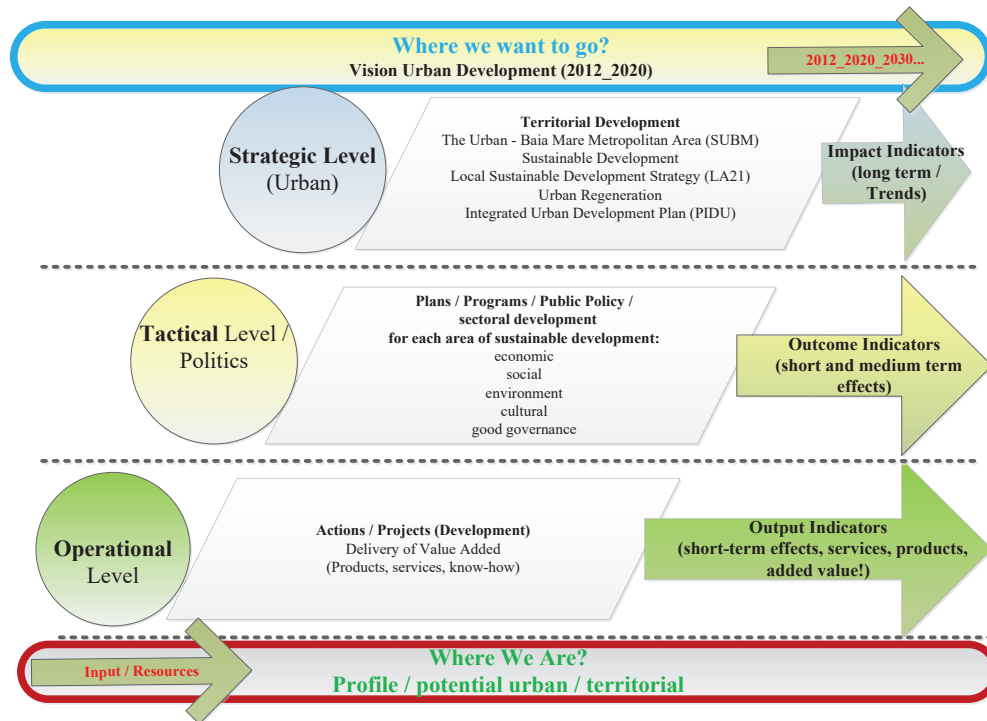


**Figure 1.** Model for strategy elaboration  
**Source:** Anghel, 2013

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 2.** Concept of Local – Territorial Integrated Development

**Source:** Anghel, 2013

A series of public management instruments are interconnected in order to realize 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 programs)

From the territorial perspective of the administrative unit (subunits – neighborhoods, or supra-units– territorial cooperation areas; micro regional, 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

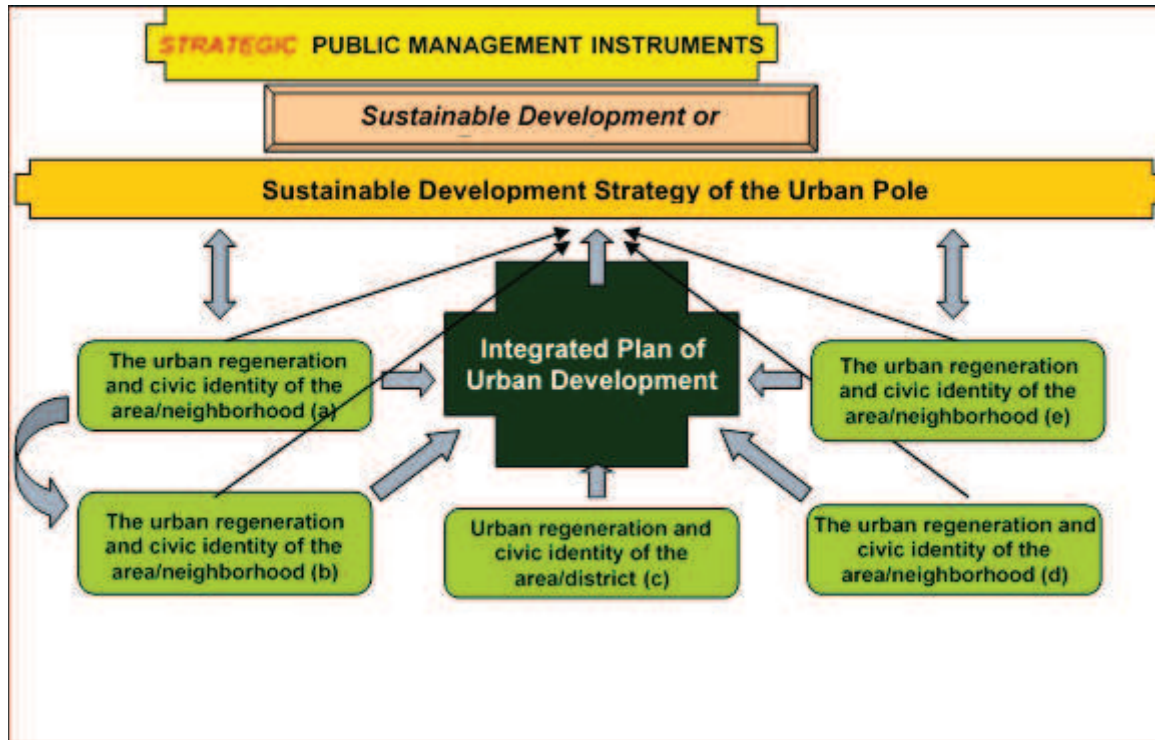


evaluation of public management. It is defined through the involvement degree (civic participation) of all concerned parties in all planning stages (by information, consulting, and participation), ensuring the participative character of the elaboration, public assumption and application of local-territorial 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 programs, applied plans, respectively of the specific objectives and planned measures;
- Exit indicators/"output" (services and products realized as a result of projects' application, services provided within the Local - Territorial Action Plan)

The disadvantages of such an approach is the concentration of public interventions in a well-defined urban area to the detriment of other urban areas that require interventions in an extended conceptual analysis; a representation of the application or urban regeneration at the level of the entire community is represented as follows:



**Figure 3.** The analysis of the sub-urban development in relation to the entire local  
**Source:** Anghel, 2013

In this context, the functional approach of a Masterplan of urban regeneration for this area offers a series of competitive advantages on a long and medium-term, the most important being the following:

- The integrated approach of some functional urban areas, in relation to the neighborhood creates the premises of a balanced, long-term sustainable development;
- The identification and the allotment of a social, cultural and administrative identity to an urban zone lead in perspective to social stability and an increase in the predictable competitiveness of any zone;
- The decentralization of administrative, economic and social functions at an urban level is the tendency of the third millennium, at all levels this optimal endeavor being correlated with the increase in the cooperation capacities and the social dialogue in a globalization world;
- The credibility of some long-term strategic projections not only renders more efficient the resources allotted for their completion, but also creates a favorable environment for an increase in the level of life quality due to the elimination of some development risks;
- The capacity to integrate distinct measures and actions having the same direct beneficiaries leads to the sustainability of long-term planning of certain objectives, the results and impact on a short- and medium term being synergic and comprehensive for these beneficiaries;

The instruments used were mainly those promoted by the public administration, these having the role to offer consistency to private and public policies. 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 address not only the local identity values (cultural, economic, social of natural and built frame), but also the major challenges linked to the phenomena of globalization or the degradation of the environment.

The sustainable development of cities which contains the elements of both a development strategy and of a transformation strategy, is characteristic of a proactive 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 to top”), the elements of the local strategy being the basis for the construction of strategies at county and regional levels.

One of the most important development options is the strengthening of the metropolitan zone through the pole-centered integration of development, starting from the attraction vectors of the city seen as a center of gravity and with the

following options:

- coherent development strategy
- functional specialization through innovation
- supporting sustainable economic development
- elimination of disparities

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 centers which is to act as development engines, and also as an equilibrium structure at the regional level in Romania.

## **2. Conclusion**

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 de-centralization in the education and health systems.

Through the experiences encountered by the cities of Romania 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 analyzed according to the common values and objectives they sustain.

To this purpose the concept of poly-centric regional development has been analyzed 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.

This poly-functional territory has been analyzed 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 sustainable development of cities.

In the process of drawing the sustainable development strategy of the cities of

Romania there has been used for the first time in Romania the poster-plan type of cartography, which presents the main strategic choices until 2020.

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.

For the implementation of politicize 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 substantivize, 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.

Sustainable development in during 2015-2020, will be the responsibility of the entire human community, from public institutions to the citizens. The existence of a performing county public administration will be crucial for the sustainable development.

The longer term impact on the level of the projects implemented on the development of the sustainable development of Romania will involve activities which generate socio-economic benefits, but with the sustainable conservation of resources to the benefit of future generations.

The successful implementation of the European will depend on the community's ability to form effective working teams which will successfully implement European projects, monitor and evaluate properly the results, which will generate an increase in the quality of life.

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