



WP 3.5 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

WP3. SIDIG-MED PROJECT

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INDEX

WP

3.5	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES	3
3.5.0.	INTRODUCTION.....	3
3.5.1.	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN BMA	3
3.5.2.	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN ROMA	5
3.5.3.	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN AL-BALQA.....	10
3.5.4.	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN MAHDIA	13

3.5 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

3.5.0. INTRODUCTION

The Sidigmed project has vigorously helped to highlight the importance of Urban Agriculture for its social, economic and urban landscape aspects.

Supported by the enthusiasm of the local associations and citizenship, the project has brought this message in numerous scientific and institutional settings environmentally and socially active; the topic was treated as part of targeted meetings, networking tools specifically established and numerous necessary meetings between technicians to implement the "pilot projects" established in the program.

By "local development strategy" we mean the actions undertaken under the SIDIGMED Project that aim at long-term consequences in the extension of the urban and periurban agriculture once the SIDIGMED is finished. That means, actions that can give tools, promote or facilitate the appearance of new agricultural projects or the extensions and the improvement of the existent projects.

3.5.1. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN BMA

During the development of the Pilot Project there has been a close collaboration with the Local Authorities to define the different aspects of the Project. Thanks to the SIDIGMED, we have also had contact with several stakeholders related to urban agriculture. In terms of project development and governance, it has been especially relevant the interviews done with the "Garden commission" of the "Xarxa de Ciutats i Pobles per la Sostenibilitat" (Network for Cities and Villages towards Sustainability). In the "Garden commission" take part several technicians of the local public administrations that work in urban garden projects.

Both experiences have led us to the conclusion that in many cases, local Authorities have limited tools to make decisions in the field of urban agriculture, especially in small towns. The aspects with major difficulties were:

- Feasibility studies and selection of the site
- Management models to make the project viable.
- How to integrate environmental and social approaches (this question is related with the area of the public administration that is leading the project: Social services or Environment)

For this reason, the SIDIGMED local development strategy focuses in developing some tools for the decision-makers in Public Administration. The first tool is an in-depth study about the landscape and morphologic characteristics of the periurban area of Sant Boi de Llobregat to see how a further development of UPA Projects is possible. The second tool is a simple software tool that is able to calculate an estimation of the investment cost for a UPA Project taking into account a few variables.

These tools complement each other and will help to extend methodologies and lessons learned in the Pilot Site.

- ***Flexible agriculture as a tool to recover abandoned periurban land. Case study in SantBoi de Llobregat.***

In the last decades, urban pressure has led to the abandonment of land. The urban expectation has caused the appearance of many residual areas. These areas have been either occupied by illegal gardens or converted into open spaces. Among the open spaces, some have developed into forestry ecosystems, and some have very poor vegetation. The new forest land near the city has increased the risk of forest fire and has risen the maintenance cost, which is borne by the Municipal Administration.

Agriculture can be the answer to the fragmentation and abandonment of the urban borders, to the maintenance costs. Agriculture can also be a strategy to strengthen the productivity of the valley, and to enable the connexion between the natural systems (forest, river) and the urban systems. It can also be the answer to the increasing demand for quality food.

From the point of view of the landscape architecture, the BMA has developed a project to implement this approach in SantBoi de Llobregat, the municipality where the Pilot Project has been developed. The project has been done with the collaboration of a PhD student of the UPC (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya). The project aims to redefine the urban boundary of SantBoi de Llobregat and to reinforce the agro-forestry mosaic between the municipalities of SantBoi de Llobregat and Santa Coloma de Cervelló.

The proposal plans the recuperation of the abandoned agricultural land and contact areas between forest and urban areas by means of restabilising diverse agricultural activities. These activities are different and adaptable depending on the scale, the topographic characteristics, the main functions pursued (economic, social, ecological, etc.). Moreover, the project suggest different management model with different grades of participation of the citizens.

This study will be very useful tool for the urban planners and decision makers of SantBoi de Llobregat in order to have a consistent basis to articulate new politics regarding governance and agriculture.

- ***Forest fire protection strips management alternatives in periurban areas. Cost estimation.***

Forest fire protection strips (fuel breaks) is a protection zone of 25 meters in width, starting from the outer perimeter of a housing state. In these areas –after a forest clearing with a maximum density of adult trees less than 150 units per hectare- the tree layer and shrub has been significantly reduced to break the horizontal and vertical continuity of vegetation layers, so that in case of fire, this treatment allow to decrease the fire intensity and speed, making easy the fire-fighters action in the extinction task. The ground should remain clean of any dry vegetation and died during the period of maximum risk of fire.

Vegetable garden could be an alternative way in order to manage fuel breaks, but could be possible to apply other management systems. In order to help people in charge of decision making process, we have prepared a very simple spreadsheet that allows you to get an estimation of the **costs** of the following alternatives:

1. Vegetable garden
2. Cherry trees plantation
3. Goats targeted extensive grazing
4. Forest garden

“Diputació de Barcelona” is a public administration that has been working for years giving support to the implementation and management of urban gardens in the Barcelona province. On the occasion of the SIDIGMED Project, the AMB has been in touch with the coordinator of the garden commission of this institution and has established a collaboration between public administrations. This collaboration will take advantage of the fact that the “Diputació de Barcelona” sometimes contracts the design of urban gardens. These experiences will be useful to test and adjust the Cost estimation spreadsheet before disseminate it for a public and free use.

3.5.2. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN ROMA

The course of the project has led to the support of the birth phase of the first Regulations of Urban Gardens of Rome, which involved the passage from the acquisition of spontaneous initiatives to the encoding of operational practices that are coherent with existing legislation, also developing other initiatives with the procedures already in place for other plans related to urban green areas.

Thanks to the "Pilot Projects" component of the program the project has advanced a procedure and tested it on the territory, identifying the different phases and highlighting, at the same time, the bureaucratic difficulties; the procedure will also be useful to accompany the implementation of the Regulations.

The implementation practices of the City on urban gardens has a slight deviation with respect to the one of Sidig-Med project as the call for tender has been announced at a time chronologically previous to the constitution and the formalization of the Rome Regulations. Sidig-Med is subject to special procedures (to make a call for the allocation of the pilot activities) where in reality the associations will be in charge to carry out the work without call for tender. Nevertheless, all the experience that the project has been able to achieve on the study and the methods of carrying out the call for proposals is to be considered a gain that would not have been acquired otherwise.

One of the main results obtained was, in fact, the proposed procedure and the coding of the implementation modality to draw a first model in Rome. This way we reach completion on the one hand, and on the other its "assimilation" by all those who will have to play a role in it.

PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR PILOT PROJECTS

The path followed to determine projects, seeing them approved by the relevant entities and launch the implementation call for tender is giving a contribution to a possible procedure model which could be part of the "implementation rules" necessary to the regulations.

Following is the detailed analysis of the phases:

A- Choice of areas for the pilot project: many areas dedicated to agriculture were considered and among them only those with no design constraints were selected; municipally owned areas, free from administrative disputes and, where possible, allowing for the involvement of project partners (Caritas).

B- Progressive identification of reference standards for theselected areas (openings and passages, access to water, etc.) expressed by Entities (eg. Park Authority, SIMU), to the extent that the project was only given the task of ensuring the essential infrastructure of the areas in order to raise the potential for improvements.

C- Development, based on the first tool, of a first level design sheet: the "feasibility" sheet used to define the design guidelines for each area.

D- Verification, on the territory, of the various design aspects and preparation of feasibility sheets for each selected area.

E- Consultation with the authorities and the competent administrative offices on the basis of written sheets and encoding of a possible shared consultation practices, aimed at defining a model for both the implementation and the procedure.The Sidig-Med project has, therefore, verifiedthat the choice of the areas, the assessment of their suitability and design definition of "parks or gardens for urban gardens" in public areas, given the complexity of the legislation, should necessarily emerge from a progressive confrontation with the relevant bodies.This was achieved thanks to the availability of the City officials, through targeted preliminary meetings and "Services Conferences." This procedure has enabled designers to gradually correct the errors in progress, incorporating the suggestions received.

F- Consultations with the Districts and with the social organizations present in the territory, on the basis of the sheets drawn, aimed both to the design of the areas and to the definition of a shared model of implementation and of procedure as well as the creation, through SidigMed, of committees / municipal groups, where the pilots are to be implemented. The creation of a consultation committee?? was also strongly encouraged in order to make institutions perceive the needs of the district.

G- Report, based on all the information received, of preliminary plans and specifications.

H- Launch of the tender for the realization of the Contract Integrated for executive design of interventions, final approval and implementation.

It thus appears as the Sidig-Med project has helped to codify the practice of evaluation and planning for areas that fall into the following zoning types:

- Area for agricultural use in protected natural area, with no management plan approved;
- Area for public green areas and local services;
- Area in Historic Villa with Monumental constraint.

PLANNING

After taking into consideration the high amount of constraints and permissions expressed by institutions and entities, considering the information gathered through the Services Conferences, and keeping in mind the indications of the Master Plan of the City of Rome, the first of phases of the project development have begun on the basis of a preliminary feasibility sheet.

The sheet highlights:

- The economic and legal characteristics of the area

- Toponym
- Location (address, borders)
- Surface in square meters

- The environmental analysis

- Lying, land morphology
- Water resources (water table depth, the presence of water surface objects, risk of water pollution)
- Soil (characteristics, quality, analysis)

- Legal framework

- Analysis of any constraints (park area, landscape protection)
- Compatibility with the destination from urban Master Plan
- The socio-economic analysis

The procedural elements acquired thanks to the pilots of Sidig-Med project can be the basis to build a process and management model, thus defining the "Implementation rules" of the Regulations.

It is important to emphasize the fact that the project was born as an experience in itself, with the aim to develop or improve a model of governance in the delicate Urban Environment sector through the instrument of collective, educational and therapeutic gardens. It is an experience born and developed within the administrative offices and in close collaboration with the associations that enabled to calibrate the operation. Therefore, the project has informed many operators in the social field, dedicated to the improvement of the city, on

which were the ways to be in compliance with the rules and procedures, to the day never shown so clearly by the City in the field of urban gardens.

A goal, in our opinion, of incredible importance in a city such as Rome with an enormous agricultural and green areas potential, which are unfortunately often degraded or inaccessible.

DESIRABLE FUTURE ACTIONS:

The Project Sidigmed has set the foundations for creation and management of parks and urban gardens to become a normal action, promoted by stakeholders and assessed by the competent Administrations according to reliable and codified procedures.

This result can be fully achieved through the following additional actions:

A) Implementation of new pilot projects:

The creation of new parks and urban gardens is crucial to confirm and possibly improve the procedures, thus reaching a model shared and known to all parties.

B) Comparison with the model developed by Sidig-Med:

The model outlined in these pages will allow spontaneous urban gardens to compare and process changes in terms of compliance with regulations and technical aspects examined.

This allows the design of interventions to bring these urban gardens in line with the identified parameters, which are essential for the regularization of contractual conditions with the entity owning the land as a necessary condition to obtain authorization from the Administration.

C) Inventory and suitability analysis of new areas:

The process also points out the need for a preliminary selection phase of suitable areas for urban gardens.

This activity is, to a large extent, still to be initiated and the Sidig-Med project has highlighted how essential this activity is in order to concentrate work and investments on compatible and suited areas.

D) Development of the assessment of urban horticulture benefits:

The reality of the existing urban gardens allows in-depth study of the possible environmental and social benefits of this activity. It will also allow the assessment of possible social and environmental impacts.

E) Establishment of a consultation committee for urban horticulture

An important goal which Sidig-Med has largely outlined through the local forum is the creation of consultation committee of citizens and associations. The committee is a legal form already legislated within the municipal regulations but rarely used due to lack of coordination between the groups. Another merit of Sidig-Med has been to create numerous bridges between the committees and associations which, at this point, will have a much better chance to assert their concerns within the complex bureaucratic and administrative process, requiring simplification of procedures and transparency in administrative actions.

THE LEGACY OF SIDIG-MED (IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY)

Sidigmed has encountered some difficulties in the implementation of pilot projects, especially in facing the administrative procedures to obtain the necessary permissions for the creation of urban gardens. Through analysis and evaluation of the Regulations, approved by the City of Rome, promoted with the active participation of associations and local groups, certain aspects have emerged which deserve improvements in order to make more "friendly" the relationship with the local administration and other entities responsible for the issuing of authorizations (ACEA City Departments, Superintendence at Roma Natura).

The activity carried out by groups and associations formed the basis of the formation of committees in the districts of the pilot projects, which have supported and monitored the implementation and will enliven the use of the pilots. The project leaves, therefore, a worthy cohesive working group which has liaised with associations and institutions and has led citizens adhering to participatory processes along a path of information, education and dissemination of key issues related to urban gardens.

This process of evolution, which had a strong impact on institutional governance, has not stopped by the approaching of end of the project but, on the contrary, is precisely now harvesting the rewards. Proof of this are the willingness on the part of the various citizen groups to give themselves two important objectives: the first is the desire to establish themselves as "Consultation Committee of Urban Gardens of Rome", the second is to join in chorus to a great "Forum of the Urban Gardens of Rome ". The first is an entity established by the Regulations of the City of Rome, which promotes participation and initiative of citizens, set up by the City Council or the District councils. Through the Consultation Committee, the City dialogues with the representatives of associations working in a particular sector or representing particular groups of citizens. The Mayor, having heard the representatives of the local realities, shall approve the regulations and elect a Committee coordinator.

The Forum, however, is determined independently as a large group of associations and movements, which may decide to set up juridically as a consortium of companies or ATI (Temporary Business Association). This may allow the group, which becomes almost a "movement", to also participate in international calls for tender, propose initiatives or indicate national legislative changes well above the City itself.

Reaching this point is a very important milestone for the city of Rome which, at least for the spirit that pushes citizens towards change and improvement, may be representative of a good model for European urban communities.

3.5.3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN AL-BALQA

Activity 3.5:

Definition of four Local Development Strategies and Structures involving UPA to promote social and intercultural dialogue, and fight urban exclusion and poverty through improved governance: Al-Balqa, Jordan Strategy:

Al-Balqa, Jordan Strategy

RBG & FD

Introduction:

UPA activities is being implemented by local community, NOG's and associations in Al-Balqa governorate. These activities have high potential as source for income generation and to improve food security of local communities at risk of social exclusion. The government of Jordan through the Ministry of Agriculture is promoting UPA initiatives by individuals, local community groups and community based organizations in all Jordan. Al-Balqa governorate is famous with variation in climate, ranging from Mediterranean climate at the high lands to subtropical zones at the Jordan Valley. This enable small farmers and families to produce various crops at different date through the year. In Al-Balqa, many NGO's are working with the community as well as on agricultural activities. They are targeting urban and peri urban local communities including rural families and poor small farmers to promote UPA income generating activities with the aim of helping these communities to increase food supply for the poor and achieve household food security.

The RBG, is a nongovernmental organization work to protect the environment and biodiversity conservation in Jordan. RBG is working also to help local community through permaculture and sustainable living practices. The FD is the main directorate responsible for the conservation of forest ecosystems and the sustainable management of these ecosystems in Jordan. Using good governance and participatory approaches, FD seeks the involvement of local communities in conserving natural ecosystems and to improve their income by utilizing services provided by these ecosystems sustainably. RBG and FD share their vision to improve the livelihoods of local community by using innovative and sustainable approaches for the welfare of these communities, while conserving national precious ecosystems.

Social exclusion might vary from one country to another, and can be manifested in various forms. For that four different local development strategies should be formulated to express the variety of conditions and partners views on this issue that might differ from one country to the other across the Mediterranean.

As partners in the SIDIG-MED project, a project financed by the European Union to facilitate social and cultural dialogue, RBG and FD propose a local development strategy for Al-Balqa, which should be used in the future as a basis for achieving the project targets. This strategy is in line with the project objective and will serve to ensure the achievement of the project objectives and goals.

SIDIG-MED project aims to achieve the following objective:

SIDIG-MED goals and objectives (for all local developmental strategies) are summarized as follows:

SIDIG-MED General Objective

Promote social and intercultural dialogue through cross-border cooperation in the realm of local Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture (UPA) related to governance issues

Specific Objectives

1. Improve capabilities of project partner cities and public administrations towards implementing governance policies and strategies on local UPA
2. Promote social and intercultural dialogue
Fight social exclusion and poverty in and near cities

The goal and objectives of the local development strategy (For Jordan, Al-Balqa):

In line with the forementioned objectives and goals for the SIDIG-MED project, and taking into consideration that poverty has been chosen as the most significant cause for social exclusion in Jordan leading to inequity among various social sectors and affecting large sector of Jordanian population. For that, RBG and FD agreed to jointly develop the current strategy to be used as guiding document toward future local development using good governance, participatory approaches and innovative techniques as basis for implementing this strategy.

Strategy Introduction: link the strategy to the project and national objectives

Vision:

Promotion of social and intercultural dialogue by improving the livelihoods of community sectors at the risk of social exclusion

Goal (Al-Balqa, Jordan Strategy):

Promotion of UPA activities in Al-Balqa governorate to fight urban exclusion and poverty of local community through improved governance and promotion of permaculture practices

Objectives of the proposed strategy:

1. Fighting social exclusion and poverty for community groups at risk of social exclusion at Al-Balqa Governorate by development of UPA training programs aim to improve local community skills.
2. Helping local community to fight social exclusion and poverty by promoting UPA success programs or initiatives implemented by the other cities in the Mediterranean.
3. Promote Al-Balqa best UPA governance model for community based organization and governmental organizations within Al-Balqa to achieve interactive social and Intercultural dialogue with relevant organizations.
4. Promote UPA best practices models for local community to achieve maximum agricultural production and increase community income.

Matrix of National Targets, KPI'S and Strategic actions

1. Fighting social exclusion and poverty for community groups at risk of social exclusion at Al-Balqa Governorate by promotion of UPA and development of UPA training programs aim to improve the skills of community members.

KPI's:

1. Capacity building needs assessed and prioritized.
Conduct local capacity building needs assessment for local authorities, NGO's and local community members.
2. Identify potential income generating projects of UPA, especially for women, including economic feasibility.
3. Raise awareness of local community, NGO's and local authorities on UPA importance and impact to local families.
4. Prepare local regulations to promote and develop UPA projects and implementation by local community in al-Balqa governorate
5. Develop marketing tools and action to enable the community for proper marketing and return of local products.

Strategies and actions to achieve objectives

The four cities participating in SIDIG-MED project implemented actions to fight social exclusion through promoting UPA activities, implementing pilot site and doing training for target groups. Partners achieved good progress in working with the target groups. This strategy aim to help other organizations and communities in the **Mediterranean** to fight social exclusion in the community and help the community groups at risk to involve in UPA activities and to get income for sustainable living.

RBG in cooperation with the FD is looking to develop more comprehensive and detailed UPA strategy aim to promote UPA activities within Al-Balqa and the country. The FD is working with all agricultural directorate in the country and they have the access to promote UPA for more diverse communities. The strategy will be implemented in cooperation with the relevant target groups and local stakeholders and adopting UPA promotion tools to reach the target groups. In specific, the following levels will be adopted:

- Policy & Decisionmakers level.
- Local public authorities level
- organizations/associations level
- Community level (Final beneficiary)

These levels correspond to three major sectors to ensure good governance. These sectors are: Policy / legislation, Institutional and social aspects.

Actions to be taken:

- Legal actions, by the FD whom can launch new regulations to promote UPA by improved access and utilization to forest ecosystems and their resources.
- Technical, by knowledge transfer and exchange new experiences with local community of Al-Balqa from Rome and Barcelona practical experiences on UPA.
- Financial, by fund raising and financial resources mobilization to provide more funding to local communities to implement UPA best practices.

3.5.4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN MAHDIA

Introduction:

The city of Mahdia wishes by setting up pilot site to create synergy between civil societies on the one hand and public administration on the other. It is through a relationship of reciprocity and bilateral cooperation we see a relationship is created for the good of the city in the first place and citizenship in general. This relationship will allow associations to take ownership of a testing ground which will be a base or associations coming to settle on the pilot site to perform daily tasks related to UPA. This relationship will reinvigorate a relationship by equipping success of strengths to help improve the sense of citizenship among associations and allow participating actively in the process of sustainable development. The municipality will have the task of financial and administrative management of the site and will allow the transfer of activities for associations. The training schedules spots and skills enhancement will be implemented in close collaboration with civil society.

The strategy of the Municipality of Mahdia

The Municipality of Mahdia wants to build a trusting relationship with the civil society. This relationship will help to change the image of public administration in the memories of the civil society. The administration remained to be under development by factor of disallowed practices and erroneous decisions that have marked the history of the Tunisian administration. The Municipality of Mahdia wants to build a new relationship of trust and sharing of expertise. The pilot site executed by the SIDIG MED project will be a testing ground for associations related to the UPA and combat social exclusion. That said the Municipality of Mahdia uses the pilot site to revive the relationship with local, regional and national associations in order to create new synergies.

1. Objectives of the strategy of the city of Mahdia

- a. **Changing the relationship between public administrations and associations:** this approach will create new relationships between the associations of civil society and public administration. This relationship will be the heart of activities of the pilot site since these associations will come to the site to perform the UPA-related practices. This will improve that relationship and a climate of trust between the two partners having a common object to be achieved by various methods.
- b. **Develop a sense of citizenship among civil society:** The pilot site will enable associations to plan concrete actions that will affect the lives of citizens through the maintenance of public green spaces and improving living conditions citizens. This is done by a doctrine based on the principles of collective work and good citizenship. Actions such as these will enhance the sense of citizenship and help to install a nationalist culture in the global sense. These actions will also help to develop the volunteer principles in the citizen who is directly involved in these actions.
- c. **Optimizing the use of the pilot site:** the strategy mapped out by the city of Mahdia will use the pilot site in the most suitable way since this site will house the activities of associations and citizens through a series of agreement between the municipality and associations in order to define a work program to be adopted and approved by the municipality and implemented in collaboration with associations. These agreements will help to establish an operating schedule of this platform in order to optimize the available space and improve the management of space within the site. This will help the municipality to maintain the site in a respectful state that will carry out the activities plotted in coordination with civil society and public administration.
- d. **Creating indirect employment positions:** the pilot site will allow participants (civil society and citizens) to acquire the skills that will help them improve their skills in the field of the UPA. These players will head to the employment market by acquiring the skills and knowledge required in the field of the UPA. This qualified workforce that missing it on the local market will find work easily going towards a neglected sector.

2. The components of the strategy of the city of Mahdia

The Municipality of Mahdia has planned a series of programs that will track the local strategy to develop urban agriculture and to achieve the above objectives:

- a. **Setting Work Programme:** the city of Mahdia trace a site operating program that will consider the needs of civil society, the citizens in the field of the UPA. This program will be by cycle or workshop to cover areas highlighted by the target groups, and will achieve the goals set in advance.
- b. **Establishment of partnership agreements:** the municipality of Mahdia enter into partnership with civil society, experts, citizens in order to receive certain experiences and know-how to disseminate to the public thereafter. A series of agreements will emerge and that the common interest of all.
- c. **Animation of training sessions:** it is through these activities that the target groups will benefit from the expertise of specialized municipal staff in agriculture, horticulture and gardening. Training sessions will be held in collaboration with relevant public administration to improve the skills of the participants. As field work will be conducted to meet the needs of participants.
- d. **Implementation of evaluation program:** This program will allow the municipality to adjust the general planning in order to achieve the objectives while changing the program and methods. This assessment will be on two levels: a short, and after a

while. This step will allow assessing the level reaches the participants and addressing the anomalies and shortcomings encountered.