3 Strategic management of cities

Most of us fear change. Even when our minds say change is normal, our stomachs quiver at the prospect. But for strategists and managers today, there is no choice but to change. (Robert Waterman Jr.)

Recommended additional reading:

- Kresl, P.K. (2007). *Planning cities for the future: urban economic strategies in Europe.* Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC). (2005). *Cities of the Future: global competition, local leadership.* Retrieved from PricewaterhouseCoopers-Website: http://www.pwc.com/en_GX/gx/government-public-sector-research/pdf/cities-final.pdf

3.1 Chapter Overview

As pointed out in previous chapters, globalization and the economic consequences involved, dramatically changed the environment for cities. This was also true for urban planning strategies that aimed to enhance the economy of a city. Although cities' authorities did much planning prior to the beginnings of globalization and the increased competition between urban areas as well, such planning efforts must be regarded as being rather ordinary and inefficient since they tended to target objects, such as social housing projects or land use projects, which had only marginal impacts on the enhancement of a city's competitiveness (van den Berg et al., 2005, p. 12). In other words, such planning strategies were not components of long-term strategic visions, and therefore did not address a city's specific economic development needs in an effective way.

However, as the world has become more and more global, many city leaders started to realize that it is time to take over new responsibilities, including a long-term oriented, pro-active urban policy development thinking approach. Due to the rapidly changing global environment, the leaders of cities recognized that it is crucial for a city to be prepared for the future. As a consequence, today modern city management approaches comprise a thorough analysis and understanding of the present situation of the city in order to enhance current strengths and eliminate current weaknesses, the identification of future trends which might have an impact on the city and the development of a vision and a promising, long-term strategy in order to exploit future opportunities and tackle potential threats to the city.

In view of the competitive environment cities have to face today, managing a city becomes comparable to managing a large organization. Cities, which want to influence their future development actively, have to be aware of their strategic assets and resources, have to have a vision and have to develop a strategy to reach their long-term goals. City networks, co-operations and partnerships are among many others part of a city's strategic assets and resources and can be therefore used to accomplish a city's vision and to support its strategy (PwC, 2005, pp. 14–16). This discipline of managing a city according to economic concepts is called strategic city management and is introduced to the reader throughout this chapter. First of all, the basic idea of strategic city management is explained. This is followed by a more detailed description of a city's strategic assets and the most common visions and strategic goals, which cities set for themselves.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter successful students will be able to:

1. Understand managing different types of capital in a city
2. Understand and describe main principles when managing people, property and processes in a city
3. Understand the practical concept of urban management.

3.2 Introduction

Globalisation and decentralisation have forced regions and cities to face numerous problems and challenges. Some have managed to solve the problems and became the 'cities of the future', others have failed to do so and are called the 'cities of the past'. To improve the position of the latter, good use of city capital must be ensured to achieve competitive advantages. These competitive advantages today are based on knowledge and information technology.

"Internationalization, change into a society where information and creativity are of importance, and rising weight of network position alter the risk pattern and thereby create new demands for active urban policy of marketing and strategic planning…Only localities that actively fight for their future will have one" (Anderson, Wichmann and Matthiessen, 1995).

According to PwC (2005), managing a city is comparable to managing a large organization. In order to be prepared for the future, cities and companies need to know where they are today (their present situation) and what is necessary to achieve their future goals (vision and strategy). Besides, they have to be aware of the external environment and trends, which might affect their decisions and which might also be drivers for change. Future trends such as globalization, urbanization, migration, changing demographics and others can be both, a threat and an opportunity for cities. However, if the city administration is able to develop its city's strengths and eliminate its weaknesses, the city is on the best way to reach its goals (PwC, 2005, pp. 14–16).

3.3 Different types of capital and assets in a city

There are six different types of capital (PWC 2005) that need to be managed strategically:

- Intellectual and social capital – people and knowledge;
- Democratic capital – participation and consultation;
- Cultural capital – values, behaviours and public expressions;
- Environmental capital – natural resources;
- Technical capital – man-made capital and infrastructure;
- Financial capital – money and assets.

Capital	**Examples**
Intellectual and Social Capital	People and resources of knowledge
Democratic Capital	Transparency, partnerships and participation
Cultural and Leisure Capital	Values, public expressions and behaviors
Environmental Capital	Natural resources
Technical Capital	Infrastructure, man-made capital
Financial Capital	Assets and money

Table 1: Examples for different types of capital

As mentioned above, many different urban assets or foundations, which are more or less intertwined with each other, together form a city's power source, which enables a city to enhance its level of competitiveness. To the most important basic foundations belong according to the modern literature, the following categories:

a) knowledge base,
b) urban diversity,
c) innovativeness and accessibility,
d) agglomeration and urban scale,
e) social cohesion, and
f) economic heritage.

Knowledge Base

The first category, the so-called knowledge base, according to Lever (2002) involves available sources of tacit and codified knowledge, the overall knowledge infrastructure of a city and the general educational level and creativity potential of the people living in the city. Many studies suggest a positive relationship between a city's knowledge base and its economic development. For example, Matthiessen et al. (2002) conclude that a city's knowledge assets have a considerable impact on the overall economy of the city since such assets are of increasing importance with respect to economic change and growth. According to van den Berg et al. (2007), however, cities often neglect to exploit their knowledge assets in a full way since they are unable to optimize the interaction between universities and business entities. In addition, it is recommended to address the problem of knowledge fragmentation within research institutions as well. In fact, larger cities are typically hindered to perform in an efficient way due to the fact that their various sources of knowledge, e.g. their universities, are acting independently from each other, and therefore often generate knowledge duplications.

As a consequence, city governments would do well to align the different sectors of research, education and business in a better way. Additionally, several studies (e.g. Gleaser, Sheinkman & Sheifer, 1995) have identified the positive correlation between relative high amounts of university graduates working in a city and an overall improved economic performance of the city. Regarding the creativity potential of people, Florida (2005) highlights the economic importance of creative people, the so-called creative class, who hold the information needed to produce all kinds of knowledge-intensive *art*, like software programs, songs, poems or designs. Black and Henderson (1997) and Simon and Nardinelli (1996) approve of the accumulation of well-educated people and the consequential spillovers of tacit knowledge which promote the long-term growth of cities.

In order to enhance its competitiveness level a city must, therefore, apply every effort to attract such well-educated knowledge workers (Gleaser et al., 1995 as well as Kimbrough & Murphy, 2005). According to Kresl (2007, p. 14) a city in the twentyfirst century must attract skilled workers, who are scarce, rather than unskilled workers, who are abundant throughout the world. As mentioned before, Florida (2000, p. 6) believes that instead of simply choosing the job with the highest salary potential, talented people are normally more concerned with place-based characteristics. In addition, van den Berg et al. (2005) argue that knowledge workers are allured by places, where they can enjoy life. Besides, creativity tends to attract other creative knowledge workers, which means that there is a cumulative effect involved (Florida, 2000, p. 15).

Moreover, Glaeser (2000) believes that companies are searching for locations, where they have access to a well-educated labor force rather than access to customers or suppliers, and that they are even willing to follow movements of well-educated knowledge workers to other, more enjoyable cities.

To sum up, the latest research on regional development highlights the importance of shifting the policy focus on people rather than on firms. As a matter of fact, the assets of cities are regarded as unique sources for attracting highly skilled and talented people, who in turn can leverage the competitiveness levels by strengthening the knowledge intensive economy (Lee, Florida, & Acs, 2004 as well as Turok, 2005, p. 41).

Urban Diversity

Urban diversity is a city's openness or tolerance towards outsiders. According to Florida (2002, p. 249ff) and Begg et al. (2004, p. 103) diversity among people living in a city fosters interactions between residents, and, therefore, leads to newly generated knowledge and innovations. In addition, creative knowledge workers are more likely attracted to cities that are associated with a high level of diversity since the social hurdles to enter such a city are relatively low. Again, many internationally recognized studies found the positive correlation between urban diversity and economic growth to be true (e.g. Glaeser et al., 1995).

Urban diversity can be best measured in terms of the number of people, who are born with different national roots. Another indicator is presented by Florida (2002, p. 333), who measures this foundation on the basis of the relative share of homosexual couples living in an urban area. It has to be highlighted, however, that cultural diversity might bring along some social drawbacks as well. According to van den Berg et al. (2007) there are many districts within European cities where badly integrated immigrants live, who cannot contribute to the overall economic development of these cities since they do not possess well-developed, knowledge-intensive skills.

Innovativeness and Accessibility

As van den Berg et al. (2007) observe, the competitiveness of a city is becoming increasingly reliant on innovation and entrepreneurship. However, it is proven by empirical evidence that regions across the globe unevenly benefit from innovative activities. As a matter of fact, high concentrations of innovation and entrepreneurship can be usually found in agglomerated, urban areas only. For example, Cooke and Simmie (2005, p. 98) state that 67% of all patent exports in Italy are undertaken around Milan and Turin. Furthermore, they argue that 60% of Japanese R&D laboratories in the US are located just around four urban areas, namely Boston, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles/San Francisco. Besides, innovation does not have to be necessarily about breakthroughs in new technologies. (Hospers, 2003) Indeed, five different kinds of innovation can be identified: a) process innovation, b) product innovation c) input or raw material innovation, d) new markets, and e) new organizational forms (Schumpeter, 1942, pp. 132f.).

Due to the fact that knowledge is the main factor that fosters the development of an innovative environment, one can come to the conclusion that in order to enhance the overall innovativeness, cities have to ensure that firms are fed with the best sources of knowledge (Cooke & Simmie, 2005, p. 110). Additionally, according to Simmie (2002) face-to-face contacts at infrastructural hubs foster knowledge spillovers that lead to innovation. Consequently, a high level of national and international accessibility facilitated by international airports, high-speed train connections and a well-functioning, local transportation network might be crucial for a city to sustain social and economic development (Parkinson et al., 2004, pp. 58f.). Furthermore, local innovation is promoted variously in different states. For example, while innovation is primarily driven by the private market with only little outside coordination in the UK, in Germany multi-level networks are implemented in order to stimulate innovative thinking between private and public organizations (Parkinson et al., 2004, p. 60).

Agglomeration and Urban Scale

A noticeable determinant of urban competitiveness is the geographic concentration of economic activities or, in other words, the tendency for companies to cluster around urban areas, which implies that firms benefit from being located near cities (Turok, 2005, p. 35). According to Gordon and McCann (2000), geographical proximity enhances companies' economic opportunities, such as benefiting from economies of scale and scope, and softens the risks to which they are potentially exposed. More than a hundred years ago, Marshall (1890) was already highlighting the mutual gains of different companies, which were geographically clustered. What is more, literature assesses the size of a city as an important determinant for its success. The bigger a city is in size, the more attractive it tends to be for both knowledge workers and companies.

In times of the knowledge economy three major economic benefits regarding geographic concentration of companies and the size of cities can be identified (Collins, 2007). Firstly, companies benefit from clustering around larger cities due to the possibility to recruit from a larger pool of specialized human resources and a better access to supplying and supporting components, such as marketing services, communication facilities or venture capital. Moreover, knowledge workers are more likely to move to larger cities since metropolitan areas offer a greater variety of jobs (Turok, 2005, p. 35). Equally, suppliers and distributors gain from being located close to a larger city due to the increasing chance to get in contact with potential buyers (European Cities Monitor, 2009). Secondly, all parties involved gain from greater knowledge spillovers and information flows. As indicated before, the frequent exchange of tacit knowledge stands in direct relationship with economic success. Due to the compact clusters of companies, face-to-face exchange of technological information and knowledge that leads to innovation is more likely to happen (Malmberg et al., 1996). Thirdly, larger sized urban areas usually harbor a broader set of amenities that are, as explained before, so crucial to attract knowledge workers and firms. A large urban size provides, among others, international schools and universities, various cultural institutions, an enlarged transportation network and numerous, entertaining alternatives (van den Berg, 2007).

Social Cohesion

Another fundamental foundation for cities' assets deals with the levels of social equality and poverty in an urban area. As shown before, nations, regions and cities strike different paths in order to sustain further economic growth. For instance, Finland bases its development plan on social equality while the US banks on its *American dream* philosophy, where differences in social classes function as primary motivator (Le Galès, 2007). Generally speaking, however, low levels of poverty and social inequality are favourable both from a societal perspective and from an economic one. As a matter of fact, high levels of societal exclusion and poverty may cause tensions between the upper and lower social classes. Such tensions may result in higher criminal activities or even civil wars, lower safety perceptions of inhabitants and tourists and generally a significantly decreasing quality of life (Hall & Pfeiffer, 2000, p. 21). What is more, low levels of social cohesion may imply that valuable human capital is excluded from economic life, and therefore wasted (van den Berg et al., 2007).

Economic Heritage

The economic history of a city must also be seen as a factor that influences its competitiveness in times of the knowledge economy. As indicated before, many cities in more developed economies went through a rapid expansion in the 19th century as an economic consequence of the industrial revolution. Such cities grew tremendously because of the development of particular industries, e.g. the steel industry or the coal industry, and their economic advantage of having access or being relatively close to important, industrial raw materials (Begg et al., 2004, p. 101). However, over time the economic environment has changed, and what used to be an advantage in the past turned out to be a disadvantage in the modern economy. Indeed, changes in advanced economies have devaluated cities' geographical advantages of the past (van den Berg et al., 2005, p. 10). Traditional smoke-stack industries near cities were replaced by smaller, customized factories (Gleaser, 1998). Knowledge intensive activities displaced the production of tangible goods.

In general, literature assumes that cities which were dominated by traditional manufacturing industries and port activities tend to suffer from a less well-educated labour force, inappropriate levels of air pollution, a tarnished city image and lower standards of living (van den Berg et al., 2005, p. 10). As a consequence, these days such cities struggle to overcome their manufacturing legacies and their outdated social, economic and institutional structures, which hinder them to leverage their competitiveness levels, while others profit from the enhancement of more modern service industries and find themselves on a steady, economic rise (Begg et al., 2004, p. 101ff). A study of the largest US cities revealed that while about one quarter managed to transform a population decline into a growth between the 1980s and 1990s, and another quarter experienced constant growth, about a half of the screened cities faced severely damaging losses (Beauregard, 2004).

3.4 Economic outputs

As mentioned before, modern literature claims that some researchers are misled to equate productivity levels or per capita income figures with the relative competitiveness of cities (Bailey et al., 2004, p. 136). Nevertheless, economic performance output plays an essential role. According to Turok (2005, p. 26), approaches, which are intended to gain insights into the competitiveness level of a city, need to consider, among other things, the city's ability to sell products and services in competitive, external markets and its efficiency to produce products and services.

Variables that are often used for assessing the economic output of a city are, among others, its GDP per capita, change in GDP per capita, GDP per employed resident, the rate of unemployment and the number of newly formed companies (Bailey et al., 2004, p. 136ff). GDP per capita, which is frequently utilized by the DTI to evaluate regions' competitiveness levels (e.g. DTI, 2000), measures the capacity of a city's resident to generate economic wealth. In general, the major advantage of indicators determining GDP figures is that they are related to residents' income levels and consequently their living standards in a positive way.

Major drawbacks of GDP per capita are, however, that this indicator reacts very slow to change and highlights historic data only (Bailey et al., 2004, p. 137). Besides, a city's economic productivity might be best evaluated by utilizing its figures for GDP per employed resident. In addition, from the level of unemployment one can infer a city's labor utilization and how equal income is distributed among residents. Indeed, the higher the unemployment rate, the smaller the numbers of residents that benefit directly from newly generated income (Bailey et al., 2004, p. 137). Last but not least, the number of newly founded companies is frequently believed to be positive related to a city's competitiveness level since it ought to be obvious that newly set up firms bring along innovation and entrepreneurial spirit (Bailey et al., 2004, p. 147). However, the rate of newly established firms is only valuable when taking the number of companies' failures into consideration at the same time.

3.5 The 'Five Pillar' approach

This modern approach of managing a city can also be referred to as 'strategic economic planning' (SEP). As indicated above, SEP is different from ordinary strategic urban planning since it focuses on the efficient utilization of its assets in order to accomplish an objective which enjoys great support for the city's residents and which is supposed to leverage the city's competitiveness level. (Kresl, 2007, pp. 2ff.) According to Kresl (2007, pp. 29ff) an effective SEP effort consists of at least five components. These components are:

- an objective examination of the urban region's strengths and weaknesses in relation to other urban competitors,
- involvement of the public and of all major entities in the region in an exercise that will make clear the actual aspirations and concerns of the local residents and entities,
- a design of a strategic economic plan and vision that realizes the previously identified realistic aspirations and concerns,
- a mobilization of local human resources on the context of clear responsibilities and lines of authority and with an understanding of who or which agency is in charge of the process, and
- regular monitoring and evaluation efforts of progress and performance.

Additionally, it is important to emphasize an appropriate marketing and communication of these future-oriented strategic components and the goals involved, since in times of increased urban competition, a city will not be able to stand out from competition, and therefore not be able to leverage its attractiveness for new businesses and highly educated knowledge workers (PWC, 2005).

After identifying a city's strategic assets and resources, every city should develop a vision statement, its long-term strategic goals and a proper strategy. Although those strategic items are set up individually by every municipality, many cities focus on the same general issues. Having a look on the development goals of cities around the globe, it can be noticed that nearly every city today aims at being a place to live, work, educate, socialize and relax. Through a modern image and a warm atmosphere, people and companies shall be invited to come, to stay and to spend their money in the cities (PwC 2005, p. 8). PwC who analysed vision statements and strategic goals of cities around the globe, has come to the conclusion that for nearly every modern city in the 21st century, three different concepts, describing the ideal or competitive city of the future, seem to bear resemblance to the city's individual vision and strategy. All of those three concepts, which are called the *knowledge city*, the *creative city* and the *intelligent city*, combine the aforementioned aims.

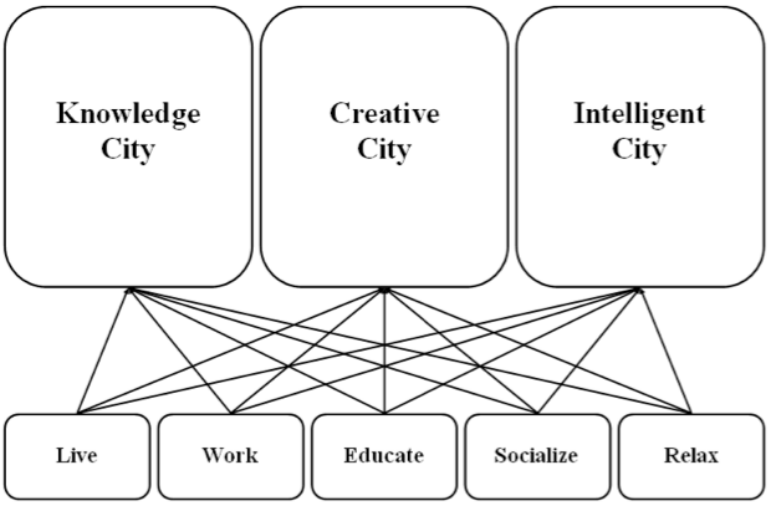

Figure 2: The Three Concepts for an Ideal City
Adapted from PwC, 2005, pp. 8; 20–22

Explaining those concepts shortly, the knowledge city is a city with high quality and density of educational and research facilities and highly knowledge-based economy. The creative city on the other side refers to a diverse and highly experienced group of citizens, who want to have action, experiences in various fields, a dynamic environment and a place for self-realization. Finally, an intelligent city is not only a combination of the aforementioned concepts, but a place for knowledge exchange and generation between citizens and/or people from other cities, and a city which is constantly developing and adapting to future needs (PwC, 2005, pp. 20–22).

By the way, those five cornerstones of a successful city, namely being a place to live, to work, to educate, to socialize and to relax, cannot only be used to develop the ideal city in theory on the one hand but also to compare cities with each other on the other hand. A good example for comparing cities according to those dimensions is the European Smart Cities ranking. This ranking is aimed at finding Europe's smartest medium-sized city according to the following dimensions:

- smart governance,
- smart economy,
- smart living,
- smart mobility,
- smart people and
- smart environment.

By using such city rankings, researchers, economists and politicians are able to draw conclusions whether one city can be seen to be better in one area than others (European Smart Cities Ranking, 2011).

Developing the Vision and Strategy (VIS) model for strategic management of a city

Strategic development plan is a basis for achieving optimal results through management process. It should be directed towards various goals, but above all towards economic growth and employment (by enhancement of entrepreneurship and innovative activities, use of ICT, modernisation of education) leading towards increased welfare while securing sustainable development.

Methodological approach should be based on definition and evaluation of key indicators of the national and regional development strategy, leading towards developing such a strategy with a focus on economic development, social, public health, cultural, environmental, and ecological policies. In this phase it is essential to achieve the highest possible consensus about the fundamental strategic development policy amongst all stakeholders in the city.

Based on statistical analysis, strategic goals and key indicators are aggregated in five clusters/areas (indicated in Figure 5). Simultaneously, five aggregated key indicators for monitoring purposes should be designed.

On the operational level, the following activities are needed (the entire approach is depicted in Figure 4):

- Analysis of the basic operational strategic programmes
- Establishment of the 'Monitoring Committee' which role will be to monitor and evaluate the development of the Strategic Operational Plan' as well as the Management of Changes Strategy.
- Design of semi-structured survey, organising interviews, focus group meetings reflect back workshops and telephone interviews with stakeholders.

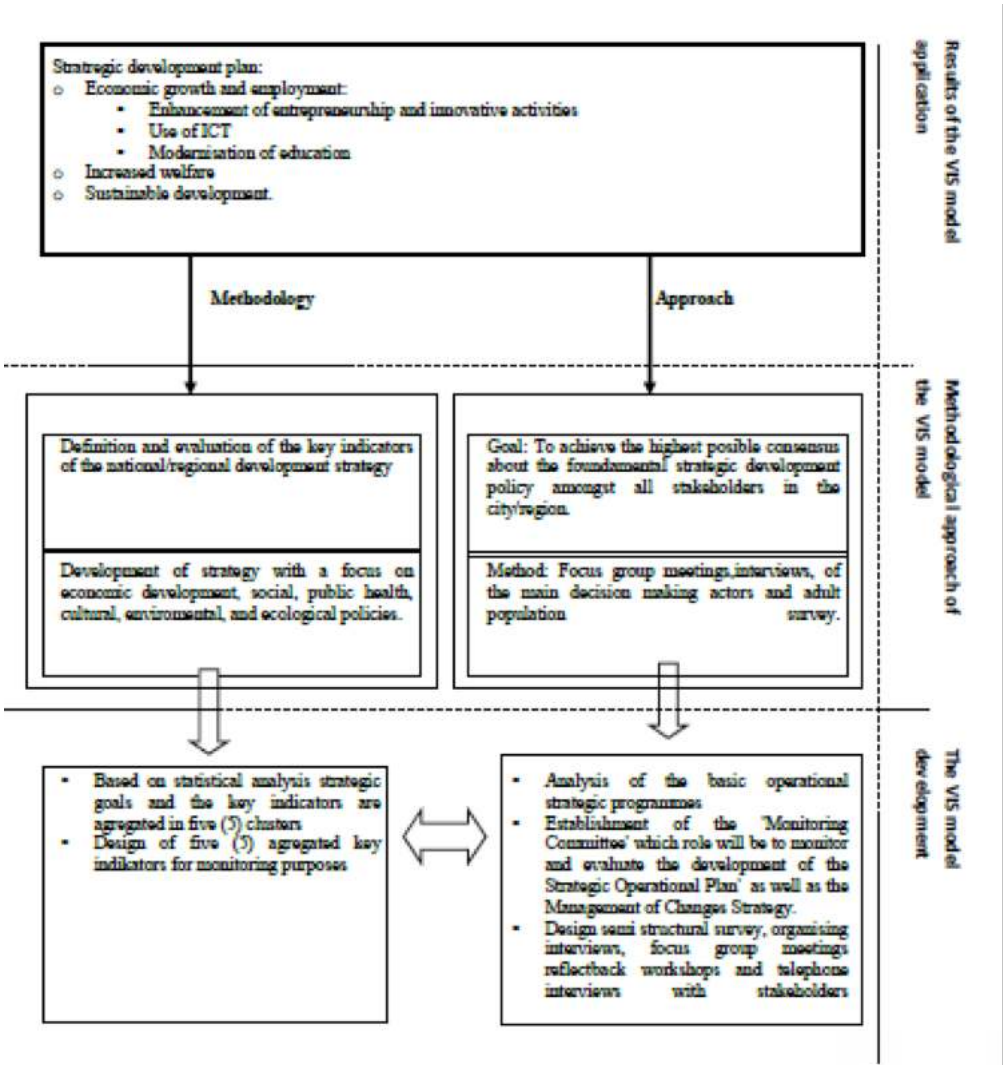

Figure 3: Process of developing the VIS model

With defining and assessing the five pillars/clusters/areas (economy, transportation and communication, education, environment, quality of life) in a 'Vision and strategy' (VIS) model, particular attention is paid to balanced approach as an example of what can be done in each of the five areas.

The VIS model for city management is developed through analysis of strategic development documents, design of framework for vision and strategy model, defining five pillar model for strategic planning, defining consistent system of economic indicators and semi-structured in-depth interviews with city representatives and experts on urban competitiveness. The framework of VIS model is shown in Figure 5 below.

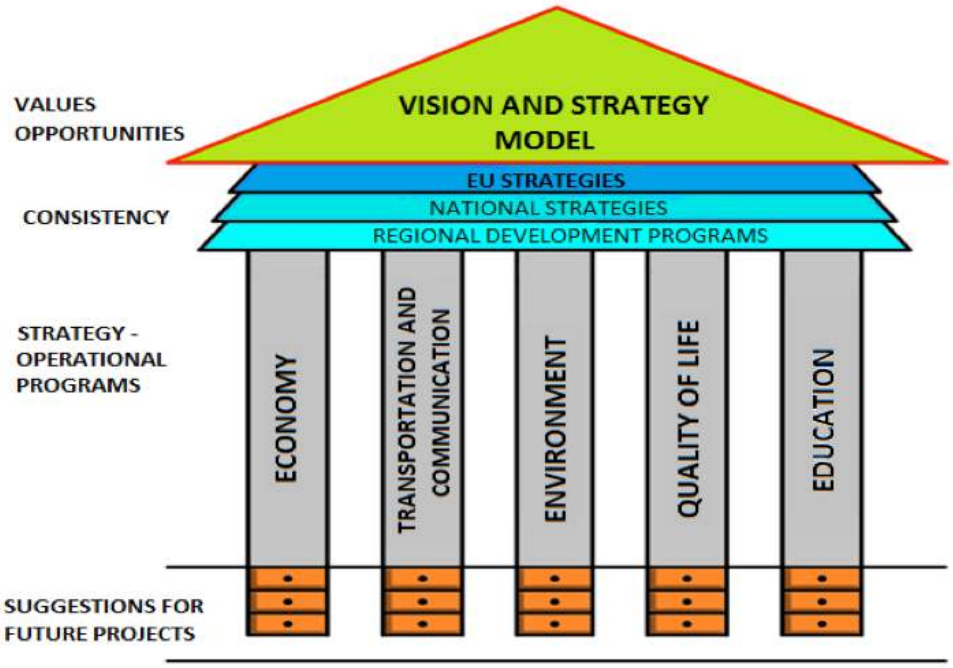

Figure 4: The Vision and Strategy Model (VIS)

The model enables cities to improve their position with respect to higher productivity, educated labour force, high economic growth, added value per capita and ultimately, to increase quality of welfare.

3.6 References

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