

GENERAL INFORMATION

PETUS description of tool in use						
<b>Name of the case</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan, Velingrad Municipality</b>					
<b>Name of the tool</b>	<b>Set of Local Sustainability Indicators (LSI)</b>					
<b>Country</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>					
<b>City / region</b>	<b>Velingrad Municipality</b>					
Total area	803.1 sq. km					
Population	42665 inhabitants (2002)					
Density	53.12 inhabitants/sq. km					
<b>Tool user's profile</b>	<p><b>a. Velingrad Municipality</b> <b>Capacity 21 Program</b></p> <p><b>b. Capacity 21 Program</b> - management on national, regional and local level through involving all groups of the public in the development and the implementations of strategies, programs and projects for sustainable development.</p> <p><b>c. Velingrad Municipality</b> 4600 Velingrad 35 Chan Asparuh str. tel: +359 359 5 21 15; +359 359 5 21 17 Fax: +359 359 5 43 41 <a href="http://www.velingrad.bg/">http://www.velingrad.bg/</a> only in Bulgarian</p> <p><b>Capacity 21 Program</b> 1000 Sofia 16-20 Alabin str., floor 3, room 311 tel./fax +359 2 980 07 09 E-mail:<a href="mailto:capacity21@mbox.cit.bg">capacity21@mbox.cit.bg</a></p>					
<b>Reviewer, date</b>	Ina Kovacheva, last updated April 2005					
<b>Short description of the case</b>						
<p>Bulgarian government initiated the <i>Capacity 21 Programme</i> jointly with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Programme in 1997 to answer the need for integrating the sustainable development principles in national and municipal policy and planning. The <i>Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and Action Plan of Velingrad Municipality</i> was elaborated as a pilot project of the <i>Capacity 21 Programme</i> and was financed by UNDP in Bulgaria.</p> <p>SDS comprises five parts - Future Development Vision, Current Situation Analysis and Evaluation, Local Agenda 21, Action Plan and Indicators. The set of indicators was supposed to evaluate the Action Plan results. Some of the indicators have been traditionally implemented even before the SDS elaboration and was considered useful for including in LSI as a means to support decision making.</p> <p>The case presents the relations between the municipal strategy, the action plan elaborated for the implementation of the strategy and a set of local indicators intended to evaluate the success of the actions undertaken. The holistic approach applied traces the connections between different urban aspects and can be a basis for defining the missing elements and relations.</p> <p>Although many of the actions included in the Action Plan have been partially or fully realised, it seems that the Municipality found it difficult to evaluate the results through the indicator set.</p>						
To which PETUS key-problem is this case study related?						
Sustainable balance between economic growth and a social and environmental sound development						
<b>Sector</b>	Waste	Energy	Water	Transport	Green/blue	Buildings and land use
						<b>X</b>
<b>Scale of project</b>	Component	Building	Neighbourhood	City	Region	

				X	X
<b>Status of project</b>	Starting up	Ongoing	Finished	Start date	End date (exp.)
		X		2000	2006
<b>Key words</b> Local Agenda 21, indicators, holistic, cross-sector, stakeholder involvement; sustainable development, multidisciplinary					
<b>Project</b>					
a. Object (building, city park, wind farm, etc.)	a. Municipality				
b. Type of activity (regeneration, renovation, new development, etc.)	b. Development				
c. Type of product (plan, scheme, design project, etc.)	c. Strategy				
<b>Tool</b>					
a. Character (according to WP3final0704.doc)	a. Indicators				
b. Benchmarks (qualitative or quantitative)	b. Quantitative				
c. Availability (paid/ free)	c. Free				
<b>Decision-making process</b>					
a. Stage of the tool implementation (preliminary, midterm, etc.)	a. Monitoring				
b. Level (political, technical, etc.)	b. Political, technical				
c. Public participation	c. Yes				
<b>Other</b> (optional, if needed)					

#### DETAILED INFORMATION

<b>A. Detailed description of project and tool</b>	
<b>1. Description of context</b> (existing strategies, laws, policy, action plans, etc.): EU, national, regional, municipal	<p>Bulgarian <b>Capacity 21 National Programme</b></p> <p>Bulgarian government jointly with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) initiated the <i>Capacity 21</i> Programme in 1997 to answer the need for integrating the sustainable development principles in national policy and planning.</p> <p><i>Goals and Objectives</i></p> <p>Following the <i>Agenda 21</i> principles, the goals and objectives of Bulgarian <i>Capacity 21</i> Programme are targeted towards encouraging and supporting actions to achieve better management on national, regional and local level through involving all social groups in the development and the implementations of strategies, programs and projects for sustainable development. The project objective is to lay down the basis for the development of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (Bulgarian Agenda 21).</p> <p><i>First phase (1997-1999)</i></p> <p>The first project phase consisted of four structural elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishing a National Commission for sustainable development;</li> <li>▪ Developing an Educational strategy for sustainable development;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attracting the media and the public for the sustainable development idea;</li> <li>▪ Creating Models for the development of sustainable municipalities.</li> </ul> <p><i>Second phase (1999-2001)</i></p> <p>The second phase is a joint effort of Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and UNDP, funded by the <i>Global Capacity 21</i> Initiative, as recognition of the good output of the first phase of the project. It was implemented in compliance with the approved National Plan for Economic Development (2000-2006), and the National Plan for Regional Development. Its main objective is the building of institutional and human capacity for sustainable development at national, regional and local levels as a move towards development of Bulgarian <i>Agenda 21</i>.</p>
<p><b>2. Description of project</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Background (What caused the initiation of the project?; What was the problem? Who initiated the project?);</p> <p><b>b.</b> Objectives/aims (sustainability statement – what issues of sustainability were attacked);</p> <p><b>c.</b> Time interval and stages of project realisation;</p> <p><b>d.</b> Financing – amount, sources, institutions involved, partnerships, levels.</p>	<p><b>a.</b> The <i>Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and Action Plan, Velingrad Municipality</i> was elaborated as a pilot project of the <i>Capacity 21</i> Programme and was financed by UNDP in Bulgaria.</p> <p>SDS comprises five parts - Future Development Vision, Current Situation Analysis and Evaluation, Local Agenda 21, Action Plan and Indicators.</p> <p><b>b.</b> In the <i>Future Development Vision</i> were formulated main development goals of the Municipality with <b>the aim to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ outline the changes needed in the social and economic life of the municipality</li> <li>▪ formulate the priority sustainability tasks for the municipality</li> <li>▪ plan necessary actions for the priority tasks implementation taking into account the effective use of the municipal resources and the imperative for environment protection;</li> <li>▪ direct and integrate the responsibilities and the actions of particular institutions and organisations;</li> <li>▪ stimulate awareness for sustainability and create a new approach to the decision-making process.</li> </ul> <p>The local community outlined four strategic development priorities for the municipality – (1) tourism development based on local healing mineral waters, handicrafts and traditions, and environmental landmarks; (2) agricultural development; (3) wood industry development; (4) development and preservation of forests and high-mountain woodland.</p> <p>The aims and priorities were defined based on the <b>Current Situation Analysis and Evaluation</b> where an assessment of the economic, social and environmental status, public infrastructure and services, territorial structure and local authority capacity, and the degree of democratisation were undertaken.</p> <p>The analysis was based on generally quantitative indicators consistent with sector investigation and existing statistic and register database created in the long-term (in the course of 50 years). Most of the indicators implemented for the evaluation of the current state had been traditionally used and for that reason included in the LSI.</p> <p><b>c.</b> The SDS was accomplished in 1999 and had a 7-year horizon (till 2006). In 2001 it was reviewed and updated.</p> <p><b>d. In the Action Plan</b> (based on <b>Local Agenda 21</b>) a set of structured recommendations were defined on how to achieve the formulated development goals. Appropriate actions, expected results, responsibilities and possible financial sources were outlined (partnerships between private and municipal companies were provided as well as international and local cooperation).</p>

e. Other sectors involved in the particular project/problem (conflicts and/or links)

e. The SDS had a holistic character and comprised all urban systems and infrastructures and thus provoked changes in the existing Town Center Scheme (see fig.1).



**Fig 1:** Scheme of the Velingrad centre

**Actors involved in the project**

Municipality, public organisations, NGOs and the expert team of *Capacity 21* National Programme.

**3. Description of tool**

a. Character (according to WP3final0704.doc) - calculation tools, process tools, assessment methods, generic tools, simulation tools, guidelines, framework tools, schemes, indicators and monitoring, checklists, case-specific tools;

The evaluation tool referred to as Set of **Local Sustainability Indicators (LSI)** has been developed as an integral part of the SDS of Velingrad Municipality by an expert team (a non-profit organisation) in close cooperation with the local authority, local community and based on UNDP guidelines. The overall process included brainstorming, interviews, and the establishment of working groups.

Sustainable Development **Indicators** – a list of 48 indicators for monitoring and assessment of the SDS implementation were developed. The indicators were classified in seven categories divided into relevant subgroups:

- Ecology (air, waters, soils, waste, preservation of the biodiversity);
- Economy (financial and human resources and mechanisms);
- Social environment (struggle against poverty, demographic dynamics, education, social phenomena and public health);
- Urban management and residential policy (urban and administrative structure and residential policy);
- Urban infrastructure (state of pavement, percent of the inhabitants using the sewage system in the municipality).
- Land use (Degree of agriculture mechanisation in the mountainous areas, change in land use)
- Local governance (Decisions made by the Municipal Council leading towards sustainable development, public access to information).

The indicators, needed for evaluating respective actions and the aimed state of the urban system, were outlined in each subgroup; alternative indicators were proposed where lack of relevant information was expected.

b. Availability of the tool (web-based / paper, paid / free, etc.)

a. Indicators and monitoring;

b. The manual for the Strategy and LSI development is paper-based and freely downloadable in Internet:

<http://www.capacity21-bg.com/Documents/Methodics.pdf> (in Bulgarian);

c. Based on existing tool or newly elaborated;


c. Based on existing tool;

<p>d. Adaptation of the tool to the local context (are there local experts involved in tool's development?)</p> <p>e. Other tools implemented to support the project development</p>	<p>The LSI are adapted to the peculiar context by local experts with the participation of the citizens and NGOs;</p> <p>e. No information available;</p>
<b>B. Tool implementation</b>	
<p><b>1. Argumentation for choosing the tool</b></p> <p>a. What were the reasons for the implementation of the tool? (voluntary or requested by what local, national, etc regulation)</p> <p>b. Who took the initiative for choosing /elaboration the tool?</p> <p>c. What were the criteria for choosing the tool?</p> <p>d. Was there knowledge of other tools and were they considered?</p>	<p>a. The reason for choosing LSI to evaluate the effectiveness of SDS implementation was the attempt to adapt existing international knowledge and good practice in the field of sustainability to Bulgarian local level where no preliminary experience in this field existed. The SDS was expected to clearly formulate the sustainable development priorities of the municipality and to assist the decision making process by providing a tool (LSI) for monitoring and assessment of urban sustainability. The will for a new holistic view on the development of the municipality under changing social and economic conditions in the country was a driving force for the elaboration of the SDS.</p> <p>b. The elaboration of the SDS was a joint initiative of the Municipality and the expert team from <i>Capacity 21</i> National Programme. The indicators were agreed upon by all the actors involved in the elaboration of the SDS.</p> <p>c. The criteria for choosing the LSI were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reliability – to reflect fundamental and already proven aspects which are important in the local context;</li> <li>▪ Acceptance by the public – to be appreciated by the local community as a visible sign of moving towards or away from sustainability;</li> <li>▪ Attractiveness to the local media – to get the attention of local newspapers, TV and radio, to be readily published and used for analysis of societal tendencies, thus raising awareness;</li> <li>▪ Empirical value –to provide comparability of information with former time periods and available statistical data;</li> </ul> <p>To be logical and scientifically valid.</p> <p>d. The Municipality had no knowledge of other evaluation tools; therefore the expert team based its proposals on the framework of the European Urban Charter developed in accordance with <i>Agenda 21</i>. The set of indicators was based on “<i>Indicators of Sustainable Development Framework and Methodologies</i>” (UN model) and on creatively implemented previous NGO experience in the cities of Varna (Bulgaria) and Seattle.</p> <p>The planning tools previously used at the municipal and regional level did not explicitly consider the issues of sustainable spatial development and were not tailored to the peculiar local conditions in the municipality.</p>
<p><b>2. Barriers for the tool implementation</b></p> <p>What were the main problems in the tool implementation? (Regulation, information available, public awareness, lack of clear SD definitions and benchmarks, communication etc.)</p>	<p>The LSI implementation started in 1999. It seemed difficult and not very effective. Public awareness of the role and importance of the indicators needs further development. A detailed monitoring of the process is needed to outline and classify particular obstacles.</p> <p><b>Financial difficulties</b>– some of the planned actions were delayed as they relied on private investment that was not realised and thus the indicators tracing their impact on the development of the municipality became irrelevant;</p> <p><b>Considerable dynamics of changes in real estate management</b> during privatisation and restoration of ownership on urban land - numerous contradictions claiming ownership over sites (lack of adequate record) created barriers to the implementation of already developed urban management indicators;</p> <p><b>Lack of practical experience</b> in using indicators by all the local actors involved;</p> <p><b>Policy discontinuity</b> - Due to a number of local political changes within a short period of time the Municipality has not been persistent in developing and updating the LSI.</p>
<b>C. Influence of the tool on the decision-making process</b>	

<p><b>1. Description of the decision-making process/ procedures</b></p> <p><b>a. Stages</b></p> <p><b>b. Levels (political, technical, etc.)</b></p> <p><b>c. Sources of information used during the dmp;</b></p> <p><b>d. Who are the decision-makers?</b></p> <p><b>e. Who made the final decision for the project implementation? Was it political or technical decision?</b></p>	<p><b>Actors involved in the decision-making process</b></p> <p>The Municipality, public organisations and NGOs, private business</p> <p><b>a. stages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Through the <i>Capacity 21</i> Programme the community stakeholders (divided in community working groups) identified their community's sustainable development priorities and discussed a total of 32 possible projects (later included as a basis for the Action plan within the SDS - from fitting public buses with catalytic converters to reduce air pollution to heating local schools with water from the hot springs to save energy;</li> <li>▪ Elaboration of the Municipal SDS by the expert team based on the decisions made by the community discussions;</li> <li>▪ Public discussion of the final SDS;</li> <li>▪ Official approval of Municipal SDS by the Municipal Council.</li> </ul> <p><b>b. the first three decision making stages (see the listed items above)are connected to the expert level, while the last one relates to the political level</b></p> <p><b>c. During the elaboration of SDS different sources of information were used from:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Statistical Institute - concerning demographic characteristics of the population, labour force, employment in Bulgaria and the target municipality for the 1985-1999 period;</li> <li>▪ Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry - regarding cultivation and average yields, registered farmers, crops specialisation, etc.;</li> <li>▪ National Employment Service – information about unemployment in Bulgaria and in Velingrad municipality</li> <li>▪ Public discussions were organised before the elaboration of SDS;</li> </ul> <p>Survey of vulnerable groups, stakeholders, companies and agricultural producers in the municipality.</p> <p><b>d. Velingrad Municipality and the Municipal Council</b></p> <p><b>e. The Municipal Council made the final political decision for the SDS implementation and for Local Agenda 21 approval.</b></p>
<p><b>2. Tool in decision-making process</b></p> <p><b>a. At what stage was the tool implemented? By whom? (experts, politicians, etc.)</b></p> <p><b>b. How did the tool output influence the process (added or skipped levels/stages in the existing decision-making process, etc.)?</b></p> <p><b>c. Quantitative goals or benchmarks defined? (If YES, which – and what were they compared to?)</b></p> <p><b>d. Was the tool used to support argumentations?</b></p>	<p><b>a. The set of indicators is supposed to evaluate the Action Plan results. Although many of the actions planned have been partially or fully realised, the Municipality found it difficult to evaluate the results by the indicator set. Some of the indicators (predominantly sector-specific ones: percentage of green areas, water consumption per household, number of unemployed people, etc.) have been traditionally implemented even before the creation of the SDS and were considered useful for including in LSI. However it was obviously difficult to introduce a more holistic approach of tracing the complexity of links between different outcomes as it required time and resource consuming procedures of data collecting (not affordable under the current economic situation).</b></p> <p><b>b. A Municipal Environmental Department was created as a result of the project. A Local Commission for Sustainable Development was also created at the Municipal Council to serve as an expert body. It is up to date responsible for monitoring the ongoing implementation of the Local Agenda 21 and for updating Action Plans to ensure the agenda's implementation. Some of the members of this local commission are from the local government administration.</b></p> <p><b>c. No qualitative indicators are included by now in the indicator set. All 48 indicators are quantitative and explanations are set for the implementation of the exact parameters in each of them. Most indicators had been already used in practice or were set in Bulgarian National Standard as relevant parameters in the evaluation of specific processes. Where no measurement had been made up to the starting moment of the Action Plan implementation, the initial measured value of the indicator was taken as a basic reference point.</b></p> <p><b>d. No information available</b></p>

<p><b>3. Transparency of decision-making process</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> How was the information of the dmp disseminated? - directly (decision makers – public) or indirectly (decision makers - NGO, PR company, etc. - public); sources of dissemination used (mass media, internet, brochure, etc.)</p> <p><b>b.</b> How was the public involved?</p> <p><b>c.</b> Was there a public discussion over the project and at what stage of the project development?</p>	<p><b>a.</b> The information dissemination about the decisions made was accomplished by the Municipality and the NGOs participating in the process. The preferable sources were seminars, local mass media and recently Internet. Nowadays the Business and Information Centre in Velingrad is a place where citizens are informed about all the activities undertaken and decisions made by the Municipality.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Several working meetings were held, local round tables, seminars and public discussions were organised to present the goals and tasks of the "Capacity 21" Program and to build trust and partnership with the representatives of the Municipality. The policy implementation of the sustainability idea at the community level was considered successful.</p> <p><b>c.</b> The public discussions in the initial stage of the SDS elaboration provoked a public forum for sustainable development. A local task force was created including representatives of all interested groups (municipal administration, NGOs, private business, media, young people, etc.).</p>
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**D. Expert assessment/analysis/comment of the tool effectiveness**

<p><b>1. Assessment by tool users</b></p> <p><b>a.</b> Were there measurable improvements as a result of the tool implementation? If YES, what? If no: why not?</p>	<p><b>a.</b> Due to the comprehensive environmental indicators applied, considerable increase in the amount of green spaces is reported by the Municipality and special attention was paid to the preservation and maintenance of public open and green spaces in the town and its surroundings.(Picture1)</p>  <p><b>Picture 1:</b> Well maintained greenery in the main pedestrian street to the town centre</p>
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<p><b>b.</b> Were there any spin-off's or unintended consequences?</p> <p><b>c.</b> General view on the tool? Lessons learned?</p> <p><b>d.</b> Potentials for further use of the tool?</p> <p><b>e.</b> Will the actors recommend it or use it in other cases - why / why not?</p>	<p><b>b.</b> The discussions resulted in general rising public awareness and activity; further attention focused on the need for improving municipal policy in the fields of employment, education human resources. Meanwhile a Business and Information Center was created. The JOBS (<i>Job Opportunities through Business Support Programme</i>) office in Velingrad, which is estimated as one of the most successful in the country, stands to benefit from the previously gained experiences.</p> <p>Another impact of the SDS development in Velingrad was that the experience reached other Bulgarian Municipalities. Velingrad shared its approaches with other Bulgarian neighboring Municipalities through nationwide awareness-raising campaigns, training seminars and workshops for effective networking. Velingrad Municipality established co-operation arrangements, supporting other communities to draw upon their experiences and develop their own Local Agendas 21.</p> <p><b>c.</b> The SDS contributes for increasing local people's commitment; it supports public participation which is the basis for action transparency; it favourably influences local authorities' capability of listening to people's ideas and proposals before taking decisions. The feedback resulting from LSI implementation makes local authorities more confident in their efforts to implement sustainability considerations and shows them where to focus and reinforce the actions in progress.</p> <p>Additional efforts to provide transparency have been realised through continuous dialogue between partners, to achieve a shared vision for the future. Furthermore the ability to identify problems was an important step for overcoming them. Defining challenges in participatory, multidisciplinary forums helps to ensure that they were accurately defined and become generally accepted.</p> <p><b>d.</b> LSI could be useful in evaluating the processes during sustainable municipal development. However some recommendations are to be outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for 'chains of indicators' to trace the links of social, economic and environmental consequences of actions;</li> </ul> <p>Addition of relevant indicators concerning tourism development and energy efficiency;</p> <p><b>e.</b> The local authorities and municipal experts consider it a generally successful initial step in building public awareness, yet difficult to implement in some practical aspects because of being too general.</p> <p>Actors involved (experts from the municipality, local NGOs) consider that additional development of the LSI is necessary in order to use it more effectively in future.</p> <p><i>"I think that the main success in all these activities (e.g. elaboration of the SDS) is that we have changed the minds of many people at the national and local levels. Not only people from institutions, but also the common people understood what sustainable development is and that there is no contradiction between the words sustainability and development."</i> Belin Mollov, expert from Capacity 21 program involved in the elaboration of the SDS.</p>
<p><b>2. Reviewer's assessment</b> of the tool (usefulness, sustainability relevance, who are the actors excluded? etc.) Suggestions and needs for further development of the tool</p>	<p>The set of indicators is a dynamic system and has to be continually updated and revised to answer the changes in the Municipality. The SDS and LSI are generally useful as a first step towards the evaluation of urban sustainability and provide a holistic view on the development processes in the municipality.</p> <p>Some general shortcomings of the LSI could be pointed out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of indicators directly concerning pressures caused by tourism although it is pointed out to be a priority in the action plan;</li> <li>▪ No indicators concerning energy efficiency;</li> <li>▪ Lack of indicators on transport efficiency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>E. Additional information on the case study available</b></p>	
<p>Websites</p>	<p><b>Velingrad Municipality</b> <a href="http://www.velingrad.bg/">http://www.velingrad.bg/</a></p> <p><b>Capacity 21</b> <a href="http://www.capacity21-bg.com/indexGB.htm">http://www.capacity21-bg.com/indexGB.htm</a></p> <p><b>Business and Information Centre</b> <b>Agency for Regional Development</b> <a href="http://www.cbivel.org/">http://www.cbivel.org/</a></p>



References <i>concerning the case but also the key words or problem</i> (papers, articles, reports, laws, etc.)	Sustainable Development Strategy of Velingrad Municipality Approaches to sustainability – Capacity 21
Other sources (Interviews, conferences, discussions, etc.)	Interviews: <b>Ms. Snezhana Veleva</b> , Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Velingrad, 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2004 <b>Mr. Todor Enev</b> , Architect in Chief, Municipality of Velingrad, 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2004 <b>Ms. Svetlana Papukchieva</b> , Team Leader, JOBS (Job Opportunities through Business Support), 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2004
Contact details for further information	