

## **The Second Phase of the Vila Real Modelling Project: Planning a Local Agenda 21 for Vila Real**

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The Vila Real Modelling (VRM) project aims to enhance development planning in the municipality of Vila Real, Portugal, so much in terms of methodology as in content. The joint venture between the Town Hall of Vila Real and the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro is taking place between 2002 and 2004. The project features three phases, structured along the classic “intelligence-design-choice” model of decision-making. This work presents the second phase of the VRMP, and transmits experience on the most creative work of the project.

The VRM project is carried out alongside the drafting of a Local Agenda 21 for the municipality, which is to remain latent until the conclusion of the project. This draft gathers the most important elements of a Local Agenda 21, namely the community vision, an analysis of the main issues by the community (including the local government), and action plan proposals. The remaining steps to fully develop the LA21 draft of Vila Real are saved for beyond the conclusion of the VRM project, involving the communication among the stakeholder groups (including the decision-makers), implementation of the best of the action plan proposals, and evaluation and feedback.

The first phase of the VRM project, code-named “intelligence”, involved a conceptual model of the municipality and satisfied its objective to comprehend and describe the development situation in the municipality of Vila Real. The conclusions from the intelligence phase demonstrated what is ailing in Vila Real, and identified some

opportunities for further development in the municipality. In particular, the main feedback loops identified five issues of major concern and, simultaneously, opportunity for development: community equipment and public space, related to urbanization, as well as air pollution, noise, and road stress, related to transportation. These issues affect the human population, which, in return, is responsible for their cause and correction.

The second phase of the VRM project, called “design” and presented in this work, assumes the responsibility to: (a) identify the shared vision for the future of Vila Real, (b) identify objective sets for the development of the municipality, taking into account the shared vision and the physical situation in Vila Real identified in Phase I, and (c) create development scenarios (or strategies) for the municipality. Along with this, and as a preparation for the third phase, a quantitative version of the system model is elaborated.

In order to satisfy the three Phase II objectives laid above, both the local government and the wide community of Vila Real, featuring distinct stakeholder groups, are being approached by questionnaires designed to capture the vision and the values of the two driving forces in the municipality. The questionnaire is expected to come to a conclusion by late spring of 2003. Quantitative data for the model of Phase II have already been collected and assessed, and are presently being used for model building.

The elaboration of a quantitative model of the municipality is based on the output of the first phase of the project, namely a qualitative model of the municipality, complemented with information gathered from primary and secondary sources. The historical time horizon of the system model, for which data are sought, is set to 10 years. The forecasting time horizon is set to the next ten years, as well. Both versions of the system model – i.e. from the first and second phases – shall be available on the Internet, jointly with the other material of the project.

The third phase of the VRM project comes as future work. Namely, it is the typical “decision-making” phase, including all the scenario simulations, scheduled to take place by the end of 2003. The VRM project is expected to conclude in the first

quarter of 2004, having produced a Local Agenda 21 draft and a comprehensive system model applicable to a multitude of tasks in the local development planning process of Vila Real.

### **Key Words and Phrases**

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Local Agenda 21, municipality, planning, Vila Real, Portugal