

**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS IN THE AREA OF SALONTA,  
BIHOR COUNTY, ROMANIA**

**NAN ANCA IOANA<sup>1</sup>, VENIG ADELINA<sup>2</sup>, VASS HUNOR<sup>1</sup>, JURJESCU ANDREEA  
LIDIA<sup>1</sup>, MATEOC TEODOR<sup>1</sup>, MATEOC-SÎRB NICOLETA<sup>1</sup>**

**<sup>1</sup>Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I  
of Romania" from Timisoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism**

**<sup>2</sup>Oradea University, Oradea, Romania**

\*Corresponding author's e-mail: nicoletamateocsirb@usab-tm.ro

**Abstract:** *During this period, Salonta and its neighbouring localities need a development plan targeting all areas and the interests of all the members of the community; a plan is required to channel resources to integrated actions aimed at social progress, protecting the environment, and efficient use of human and natural resources in order to achieve a high and safe level of growth and employment. The Salonta Development Strategy is built on the conclusions of socio-economic analyses and of SWOT analysis, including the benefits of neighbouring localities. The strategy, through structure and content, aims at economic and balanced development, while developing its capacity to adapt and respond to key economic changes.*

**Keywords:** *strategy, development directions, area, Salonta Municipality*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The strategy is aimed at a wide range of community economic, social and environmental issues, which are relevant to defining the objectives needed to achieve sustainable development and increased economic and social cohesion in Salonta Municipality [4,5,7].

The strategy is a planning framework that defines the vision, the ways leading to its achievement and on which the public and private sector can act effectively with regard to the use of local resources and the generation of community benefits [15]. It guides such interventions and activities necessary to create a dynamic and prosperous region to focus on key areas of development [3,8,10].

At the same time, this is the basis for the development of the local public administration action plans and, implicitly, its localities, as well as for partner organizations for project presentation in national and European funding programs supporting local development and, implicitly, zonal one [9,1,11].

The strategy provides a balanced and integrated approach to the development of Salonta Municipality and neighbouring localities with emphasis on:

- Facilitating economic growth;
- Improving basic infrastructure;
- Protecting and improving environmental conditions;
- Improving services (medical, social, cultural) and access to them;
- Allowing unrestricted access for population and industrial consumers to this infrastructure (water, electricity, sewage, transport routes);
- Increasing the standard of living, reducing poverty [12,14,16].

The strategy focuses on the characteristic and existing challenges and opportunities at local level and, implicitly, at zonal level, aiming at the elimination of barriers to economic and social progress [2,6,13].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Development Strategy of the Salonta Municipality is built on the conclusions of socio-economic analyses, based on the SWOT analysis, including the benefits of neighbouring localities. SWOT analysis is an efficient method used in the case of strategic planning to identify potentials and priorities and to create a common vision of development strategy. SWOT analysis must respond to the question “Where are we?”, involving the analysis of the internal environment of the area and the general and specific external environment.

The strategy, through structure and content, aims at economic and balanced development, while developing its capacity to adapt and respond to key economic changes. The constituent elements of the strategy aim to achieve a balanced development of Salonta Municipality and neighbouring localities, as well as offering equal opportunities for their inhabitants.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The development strategy of Salonta Municipality and of its neighbouring localities aims at the sustainable capitalization of human, economic, institutional, and financial resources meant to affirm distinctive qualities, strengthening and developing roles in regional and national territory of the extension and diversification of partnerships in sustainable projects according to community potential and aspirations.

***The general strategic objective of sustainable development of the Salonta Municipality area is the transformation of the area and increasing its economic capacity so that it becomes a reference centre in economic and environmentally friendly investment, as well as a cultural, educational and tourist centre.***

Therefore, the concept of development aims to strengthen the basic characteristics mentioned above and the imposition of Salonta area as a competitive multifunctional centre of Romania, polarizing the South-West Region, integrated into the national and European economy, capable of ensuring a friendly environment and economic activities. Achieving this goal is only possible in a global – economic, social, cultural – sustainable development framework in all aspects – temporal, qualitative and environmentally friendly.

The synthetic formulation of the overall objective at the same time presents the main goals of the expected development of the area, as well as the paths by which they can be achieved. In order to fulfil these desiderata, it is also aimed at ensuring stable economic growth by creating and/or developing those branches and sub-branches of the area economy, which maximally exploits the existing local potential. The development of the area is mainly based on private entrepreneurs’ actions.

To this end, it is expected to increase the attractiveness of the business environment, improving physical (technical) infrastructure and institutional infrastructure dependent on local power bodies, adopting coherent and stable local regulations aimed at attracting domestic investors and, in particular, foreign ones.

Observing the trends in the development of the world economy, it is particularly intended to facilitate competitive industrial activities in the area – using advanced technologies and producing high value-added value of products – and high-quality service activities. To this end, the concept of development focuses on the applicative research activity of the institutions/firms in the area, aimed at the implementation of high technologies in the area as well as on the training/recalculation of the labour force in accordance with the requirements of the modern economy expected to be specific to the area.

Obviously, all processes for transforming economic activity impact the labour market. Re-technologizing and developing peak industries will generate the numerical reduction of enterprise staff, which can accentuate unemployment.

For the absorption of the labour force resulting from this possible “technological unemployment”, it is necessary to encourage the creation of small and more dynamic businesses, as well as the development of the service branch. In this respect, new technologies need to become a tool for creating new jobs. But this sustainable, competitive development can only be achieved in a stable, cohesive and participatory social climate.

The concept is considering ensuring the participation of the inhabitants to an active cultural life, supporting the activity of all cults in the area, in the spirit of oecumenism, ensuring the necessary conditions for the inhabitants belonging to all ethnicities to feel “at home”, cohabitating in harmony in the area. The concept of development grants due importance to ensuring high quality levels of health services and social assistance for disadvantaged people and groups such as the unemployed, the disabled, institutionalized children, temporarily remaining homeless, etc.

The economic development of the area cannot be an end in itself. It will be achieved to improve the living standards of the inhabitants to provide them with a richer and more beautiful life. The major goal of the strategic development concept of the Salonta area is to ensure the prosperity and quality of life of the inhabitants, the universal objective envisaged by any local community in its development.

The strategy wishes to provide the space for development and local decision-making, to propose changes where feasible, to describe the general development lines and the involvement of decisions in these processes.

It is desirable, by reinventing and reconnecting processes of a new, vibrant area, that the community benefit from a new way of living in this area as a result of the measures taken to cover the needs of the population and the quality of the environment. The future of the community is dependent on social, economic and environmental factors as well as on the activities that will be undertaken by local authorities, organizations, institutions and partnerships developed at zonal and, implicitly, local level, which, through a conjugate effort and aimed at supporting the vision, can contribute to reaching it. The slogan is “Together for a new better life!”: a safe, clean area in which people are working and learning, a healthy area.

As regards the current situation of the Salonta area and its neighbouring localities, the following aspects are considered major strategic development points:

**1) Economic strategy:**

a) Incentives to businesses by providing financial facilities during investment periods; promoting local, regional, national and international cooperation;

b) Supporting entrepreneurial initiatives by providing investors’ facilities and incentives; developing utility networks in industrial areas; expanding utility networks in predictable future target areas for investors; developing and diversifying economic activities; promoting and presenting on the City Hall of Small Enterprise web site;

c) Attracting Romanian and foreign investments by developing and implementing a marketing campaign to promote the area of Salonta, Bihor County, Romania; lobbying at national level for inclusion of the area in development and investment programs; promoting on a permanent basis zonal and local resources and values; promoting facilities offered by public administration; developing and implementing development strategies; identifying possible partnerships; cooperation with local decision-makers in order to attract investors;

d) Implementing modern management systems by promoting the implementation of clean technologies or technologies that reduce the impact of economic activity on the

environment for the production of quality goods and services; promoting partnerships in order to better use local and zonal resources; Introducing and complying with U.E. standards; establishing incentives and penalties for the introduction of quality management systems in the areas where they exist;

e) Increasing the importance of support and advice services by stimulating the development of consultancy services in various managerial and investment areas.

**2) Human resource strategy:**

a) Promoting active policies to stimulate employment by promoting the social importance in the community; supporting economic agents investing in increasing the quality of human resources; promoting professional training or reconversion programs tailored to labour market requirements;

b) Increasing managerial efficiency through the implementation of managerial and entrepreneurial training programs; promoting exchanges of experience in order to form new partnerships; developing entrepreneurial spirit; ensuring access to information and continuous information; organizing exchanges of experience between various decision-makers.

**3) Infrastructure and environment strategy:**

a) Increasing the comfort and urban and rural aspect by supporting private and public housing programs; updating PUG; clarifying the legal situation of land or real estate that currently do not have a well-defined owner; coordinating land allocation for future commercial activities, public services, transport, housing, education, health, and environmental protection so that a specific activity does not harm another activity in terms of location, volume and distance; encouraging investments by improving the land management system, ensuring information on the offer of lands needed to carry out activities; introducing an urban and rural waste collection system; constructing the surface water drainage network separated by the old sewerage according to the rules laid down in E.U. directives, with impact on water quality; extending the sewage and water supply systems; expanding and modernising the pluvial chain; rehabilitating the sewerage system; making utilities for the industrial park in order to attract economic societies; informing citizens about the benefits of applying new technologies and materials in personal dwellings (thermal insulating materials, insulating windows, waterproofing membranes), benefits materialized by reducing electricity and thermal energy consumption; arranging modern, concrete-made, closed collection platforms that do not allow the spread of collected garbage; purchasing machines for waste selection; expanding the gas distribution network; rehabilitating the Salonta Romanian Railway building; informing and guiding the population in keeping the locality in which they live by different means: posters, reprimands, and fines whose degree of application and amount will be established by a decision of the local councils; supporting economic agents investing in individual sewerage networks; rehabilitating, modernising and reorganising the railway station; supporting projects aimed at reducing the negative impact of human activity on the environment; improving the quality of life by developing infrastructure and, implicitly, the increase in access to it; increasing the quality of public services.

b) Developing and modernising the transport infrastructure through the development and modernization of local transport infrastructure by redeveloping bus stops and reconstituting the public transport supply; rehabilitation of paved roads; asphaltting of cobbling earth roads; modernization of roads for access to county roads; construction of parking lots; rehabilitation of urban transport by creating integrated transport networks and popularizing alternative transport methods.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The impact of the implementation of the Salonta, Bihor County, Sustainable Development Strategy:

- Economic and social development of the local community;
- Increase of the attractiveness for domestic and foreign investment;
- Development of trade links;
- Superior capitalization of the potential of the area;
- Development and increase of the competitiveness of the business environment;
- Increase of productivity;
- Creation of new jobs;
- Increase of the establishment and survival rate of enterprises;
- Increase of investment volume;
- Increase of economic efficiency;
- Solution of the housing crisis;
- Increase of the degree of comfort and reduction of the risk of population illness;
- Improvement of the quality of environmental factors;
- Promotion of recovery, recycling and re-use;
- Prevention and diminution of the negative effects of natural phenomena;
- Reduction and prevention of the negative effects of pollution;
- Reduction of the effect of economic activities on the environment;
- Increase of social stability;
- Facilitation of access to public services;
- Increase of the transparency of the decision-making act;
- Increase of public participation in the local governance process;
- Development of community identity;
- Increase of the access to information and of the level of information of the population;
- Awareness of environmental protection issues;
- Increase of the socio-economic satisfaction of the population;
- Increase of the quality of social services;
- Increase of the degree of social insertion.

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