

Argentina: Santa Fe Province promotes sustainable urban planning in its Intermediary Cities

In Argentina, like in many countries in Latin America, medium-sized cities have suffered sustained demographic growth accompanied by disorganized processes of urbanization. The Government of the Province of Santa Fe took this as a challenge. As part of its Provincial Strategic Plan, and following joint work carried out with the UNESCO Chair from the University of Lleida on "Intermediary Cities: Urbanization and development", promoted by UCLG, they launched the programme "Basic Plans in Intermediary Cities", consisting in the construction of tools for the planning and management of the territory, together with the local governments and citizens.

The [Government of Santa Fe](#), with the guidance of UCLG, began the design of the Basic Plans programme in September of 2013. It aimed to address sustainable urban planning and land-use planning as public policies, implemented through collaboration from various levels of Government, both provincial and municipal, using citizen participation as a key element for legitimation. Thus, during the months of May and June 2014, five intermediary cities submitted their Basic Plans for development and urban growth, with a projection for the future. Thirteen more localities are currently working to submit their Basic Plans before the end of the year.

Horacio Ghirardi, Secretary of Regions, Municipalities and Communes of the Province of Santa Fe, argues that urban planning and land-use planning are fundamental aspects of a provincial public policy that intends to assist municipalities and communes in the development of their local initiatives.

In Santa Fe, as in the majority of the Argentinian provinces, major inequalities occur in terms of regional development. The urban and rural intersect provides a unique dynamic to the territory and the lifestyles of its people. Each region has opportunities and challenges that cannot be addressed in a general way; they require a specific and close look for each case.

"In this context, life in our cities has become more complex. Recurrent economic crises, coupled with unplanned urban growth, have generated exclusion processes in many cities over time, making it harder for important sectors of the population to achieve a quality of life with dignity", said Ghirardi.

The Government of the Province of Santa Fe is committed to guaranteeing rights and improving the quality of life of citizens. Through the programme of Basic Plans in Intermediary Cities, it is accompanying the municipalities and communes in their future development, providing innovative solutions based on the local-provincial articulation, equity and citizen participation.



Basic plan: Guide for municipalities and communes

A Basic Plan is a specific methodology that orients municipalities and communes in the way of more balanced and sustainable urban planning, incorporating significant improvements in their policies and medium- and long-term actions.

In practice, this translates into a document that reflects the interaction of the components that make up the territory: i.e., road systems and transportation; water and risk areas; free and public spaces; basic services and infrastructure; accessibility to public facilities; and environment and the delimitation, extension and reservation of consolidated urban areas.

This type of plan defines strategic priority projects, identifies recent interventions in the territory and surveys planning regulations and specific plans. This document also contains a description of the urban morphology.

It is, in short, a guide to urban planning that allows local leaders to strategically address the growth of their territories and the development of their potential. It also enables later stages of planning, including regulatory and normative aspects, environmental and civic participation.

The task in the field is driven by a technical team, composed of staff from the ministries of Government and Public Works, who train and coordinate municipal technicians that, in future, should replicate and widen the results.

Results and new challenges

During the first stage of this programme, which began in September 2013, work was carried in five cities out over seven months; one for each of the regions that composes the Province of Santa Fe. Las Toscas, Sunchales, São Tome, Casilda and Villa Cañas have already presented the main points of their Basic Plans to local stakeholders. In addition, through participatory activities that were included in each plan, the projects were evaluated, validated and prioritized in collaboration with neighbours and institutions from every locality.



This initiative expects that by December 2014, thirteen other localities will submit their Basic Plans, demonstrating the positive outcome of a joint effort between the province and municipalities; which at the same time enables the consolidation of a network of cities in the Province of Santa Fe.

The development of Basic Plans, together with the municipalities and communes, is one of the lines of action that emerges from the advancement of our Provincial Strategic Plan; and one more step in the development from planning to strategic management. The process provided the possibility to articulate the problems and aspirations of each locality within an overview of the Provincial affairs and our horizon of future progress.

3rd Congress of Santa Fe, network of cities

The Government of the Province of Santa Fe, through the Secretariat of Regions, Municipalities and Communes, is organizing the third edition of the **Congress of Santa Fe, network of cities**. During this occasion, the Basic Plans and the status of their implementation will be presented. The Congress will be held on 25 and 26 September in the city of Rosario.

