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Using of strategic management tools in conditions of local self-government in Slovakia

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Abstract

Current trends in public administration lead to economic, efficient and effective use of finance, human and material sources in the area of local self-government. Also management of municipality property prefer methods and tools used in the private sector. One of these approaches is application of the principles and tools of strategic management. The aim of this paper is on a selected sample of municipalities to determine whether these municipalities have worked out their development strategy through the economic and social development program of community and what is the level of municipalities' development potential analyses and defined strategies and priorities published in it.

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1. Introduction

Local self-government carries out diverse activities relating to the development of its managed area and ensuring local inhabitants quality of life. With limited financial, material and human resources is therefore necessary to carry out their activities looked foresight into the future and their activities implemented thoughtfully and with the expectation of a positive outcomes. Predicting the future with the adoption of current decisions on the future

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development of the municipality is closely linked with sophisticated management and planning activities. After successful implementation of strategic management in the private sector, in developed countries this approach began to apply also in the management of local self-government.

Implementation of the strategic management in this field is not easy. Strategic management includes activities aimed at maintaining long-term consistency between the mission of local self-government, its stated long-term objectives, available resources and relationship between organization and environment (Ochrana, 2010).

2. Brief theoretical background

In strategic management, the attention (as opposed to the management of operational or tactical) is target particularly in the external environment of the organization. It would be a mistake to assume that strategic management neglects the internal environment completely, because factors inherent in this environment are also very important for sound management decisions (Keřkovský & Vykypěl, 2006).

The essence of strategic management consists in defining strategy, which has entered into management theory through planning functions. In the narrowest sense, the strategy is preparation for the future that is think about the future, know the future and imagine these ideas to fulfill (Papula & Papulová, 2012). Strategic management is understood as the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluates transversal decisions that allow organizations to achieve their objectives (Wright & Nemeč, 2003).

Strategic management consists of formulating the vision, mission and goals of the organization, analysis of external and internal environment of the organization, selection of an appropriate strategy at local, regional or national level, depending on the level of government entities, organizational design changes, administrative measures and control systems for implementing strategy (Tej, 2011).

The development of strategic management is not random, but it occurs as a result of previous development and adaptation of management entities of local self-governments to conditions for development of the country. One of the tools of strategic management, which is used by the local self-government, is strategy. Strategy addresses the most serious, critical and crucial issues relating to the quality of life of residents. Strategic decisions are usually general and have long-term nature. Successful organizations from unsuccessful do not differ by making sure they have a good strategy or worse one, but by that they can quickly and efficiently implement it.

Community development strategy is an economic and social development program of the municipality (ESDP). ESDP provide a comprehensive view of the development of the village in the medium term in most cases for a period of 5-6 years. ESDP is a basic medium-term programming document to support regional development at the local level (Law 539/2008 about regional development support). This document has been prepared in accordance with the objectives and priorities set out in the National strategy of regional development and ESDP of higher territorial unit, on whose territory the municipality is located. It corresponds to the obligatory part the municipality planning documentation and it is approved the by the municipal council.

This document is the basic document for community development and it is an important document for assistance from the European Union. If the municipality has not developed this document it can not to apply for grant assistance. Currently, nearly each municipality in Slovakia has processed ESDP. On the one hand, it is very positive phenomenon that it can move the municipality closer to the conceptual development, on the other hand there is a fear of misuse of planning process, which may lead to schematism, which is distant to inhabitants. Ignorance of the individual problems of towns and villages does not allow approach central government adequate to the resolution of socio - economic problems. By creating of ESDP the local self-governments have therefore possibility to coordinate activities that will contribute to the development of local self-governments and its surrounding areas and improve inhabitants' quality of life in town or village.

The aim of this paper is on a selected sample of municipalities to determine whether these municipalities have worked out their development strategy through the economic and social development program of and what is the level of municipalities' development potential analyses and defined strategies and priorities published in it.

Based on a comparison between selected cities, we propose recommendations for the creation ESDP in the future preparation and development of this strategic document.

3. Material and methods

As was mentioned above the economic and social development program of the municipality is a medium-term development document, which aims to formulating an idea of the municipality direction, which reflects the economic and social interests of its citizens and is in accordance with accepted concepts of law, higher territorial unit, the strategy of development of the microregion or departmental strategies, the interests of environmental protection, cultural heritage, etc. (Zamkovský & Lukáčová, 2004).

ESDP it integrates two systems of programming – programming of top-down and bottom-up. The programming system from top to bottom is used mainly by harmonizing and linking major the municipality project plans for key strategic documents at national level. ESDP of the municipality enters the system from the bottom up programming in developing strategic documents at the regional and subregional level, when developing their policy must consider the needs of municipalities within its given territory. Harmonization of requirements and needs of municipalities into regional development documents contributes to a balanced socio – economic development of the regions. The main objective of the program document ESDP is to create of logic program structure, which is becoming a tool of management development in order to improve the quality of life of citizens and their environment. Program structure of document ESDP creates a set of measurable indicators (Hamalová & Belajová, 2011).

ESDP as a the municipality development strategy can be adopted and implemented only after considering and incorporating the comments of the public and all major stakeholders (also taking into account the comments surrounding villages and towns, which are expected inter communal cooperation) to the present intention of developing the municipality. Otherwise, such development strategy should not be transparent and it would provoke constantly doubts, conflicts and question marks regarding the legitimacy of realized objectives, measures and activities. From these reasons we had an interest to know whether municipalities in Slovakia understand ESDP as an important tool for their development, from which particular parts it consists and if it is understood and acceptable for further implementation. We addresses prepared questionnaire to selected 10 towns of Slovakia, but until now we got back answered questionnaire only from 3 towns. From this reason the research sample was created by three towns of Slovakia (see more in Table 1). A lot of mayors considered ESDP as a measurement tool of their works' results, they are not willing to offers data. These three town are located in different part of Slovakia and because they ask for anonymity we marked them as T1 (town 1), T2 (town 2) and T3 (town 3). T1 is county seat, located in the northwestern part of Slovakia in the Lower Kysuce in Žilina region. T2 is the administrative center of the district in Trenčín region, located in the central and western Slovak, in the central part of the Upper Nitra Basin. T3 is located in the central part of Slovakia, in the south is surrounded Vepor Mountains and north of the Low Tatras. For better presentation of selected towns, in Table 1 we present some information amount these towns. Indicators like number of inhabitants, size of area and density population per km² we reached from Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. Information about total budget of towns we found out from Final Account of each town per year 2011, in which every municipality has to present its incomes and expenditures and total result of economy. Every municipality has to send Final Account of last economic year to Ministry of Finance of the Slovak republic up to 30th June every year.

Table 1. Brief characteristic of selected towns (to 31st December, 2011)

Indicator	Unit	T1	T2	T3
Number of inhabitants	total	15 652	48 866	21 827
Area	ha	2 641	43 069	12 196
Density of population	numb. of inh. per km ²	593	1 135	179
Total budget of town	Eur	10 169 203,00	24 725 565,00	10 583 822
Total municipality rev per 1 inhabitant	Eur	649,70	505,99	484,90

Source: authors' proceedings on www.e-obce.sk

In assessing the level of processing ESDP in selected towns we investigated whether the document includes:

- Analysis of economic and social development of the city, major developments, setting goals and priority needs,
- Community development strategy, guidelines, priorities and development goals,
- Analysis of the financial needs and funding options defined in ESDP,

- Analysis of the links to the strategic documents in the field of regional development,
- Topicality of ESDP.

4. Results

4.1. Analytical assessment of the document

Analytical part of ESDP describes the characteristics of the local area and determines the traits that can serve as a source of comparative advantage, which can be used for community development, or conversely as a source of threat, whose influence is necessary to eliminate as much as possible. The analytical part is based on two types of data – derived from statistical and literary sources (the so-called "hard data") and the views of local residents (so-called "soft data"). An important part of the analysis is a SWOT analysis and analysis of problem areas.

All ESDP of surveyed cities are in the starting of a defined geographical and administrative area location, geographical characteristics and processed within one described geomorphological conditions, climate, hydrology, vegetation and zoological conditions in the area. ESDP T1, T2 and T3 also have processed the historical and administrative developments (see Table 2).

Table 2. Processing analysis of geographic, cultural – historical and natural conditions

Indicator	Geographic characteristics and selected area	Historical development	Natural conditions
Town			
T1	✓		✓
T2	✓	✓	✓
T3	✓	✓	✓

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

As results presented in Table 3 compared ESDP have processed human potential from seven aspects, except ESDP T1, where the lack of data about natality, mortality and population movements, which are important for the assessment of the reasons for the declining population in cities.

Table 3. Processing analysis of demographic potential of cities

Indicator	Development of inhabitants' number	Natality	Mortality	Population movement	Age structure	Education structure	Religion structure	Nationality structure
T1	✓	–	–		✓	✓	✓	✓
T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

ESDP of T1 has public amenities processed from the perspective of all eight areas listed in Table 4. In ESDP of T2 and T3 are not specified state and government resident and operating in city. The two have also worked ESDP of different parts of amenities and their effects of local self-governments.

Table 4. Processing analysis of public facilities

Indicator	Housing	Education	Culture	Sport	Health service	Social services	Public administration	Tourism
T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓
T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	✓

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

In ESDP of T2 and T3 lack of data on telecommunications services and telephone network (Table 5). ESDP of these places describes the situation in the field of technical infrastructure in terms of the current state (i.e. the state in 2007) and the intentions that cities in the upcoming activities planned to take place. ESDP of T1 contains an inventory of technical infrastructure as such and recommendations that result from this condition. ESDP of all surveyed cities include an analysis of three basic modes of transport – road, rail and air, ESDP of T1 also analysis waterway.

Table 5. Processing of analysis of technical infrastructure and transport connections of cities

Indicator Town	Technical infrastructure					Transport				
	Water and sewerage	Heating	Gas	Electricity	Waste manage- ment	Telecommu- nications	Road	Railway	Plane	Water
T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

In ESDP of T1 lacks analysis of the noise, which is one of the most important indicators of environmental quality. ESDP of T2 and T3 do not have processed an analysis in terms of water quality and soil. In ESDP of T1 is an analysis of the possibilities of using alternative energy sources in an urban area.

Table 6. Processing of analysis of protection and creation of the environment

Indicator Town	Air	Waste	Land	Water	Noise	Nature protection	Alternative sources of energy
T1	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
T2	✓	✓			✓	✓	
T3	✓	✓			✓	✓	

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

From the perspective of analyzing economic potential in ESDP of T2 and T3 lacks analysis of the situation in agriculture and forestry. In ESDP of these cities is but an analysis of the economic potential in terms of absorption potential of individuals and households and of local self-governments influence on the economy of the city. ESDP of T1 also includes an analysis of the current situation and recommendations resulting from this condition.

Table 7. Processing of analysis of economic development potential

Indicator Town	Small and medium entrepreneurship	Industry	Agriculture and forestry
T1	✓	✓	✓
T2	✓	✓	
T3	✓	✓	

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

In terms of other indicators are data examined in ESDP of selected cities different. As table 8 shows ESDP of T1 is processed as the only the survey of the views and needs of the inhabitants, which focused at citizen satisfaction with the provided level of business activity in the city and with the services provided by the self-government. Furthermore, the survey focused on the most important investment activities in from the perspective of citizens, for priority areas for solving problems in the city, for main areas of environmental pollution in the city and for serious social problems in the city. Another important area that is processed only in this ESDP is continuity to other strategic documents. The absence of part in others ESDP we consider as a significant deficiency, because the obligation to include the following information in ESDP is required by law about regional development (§. 8 ods.4 point. c). ESDP T1 has processed also an overview of the use of funds from the EU for the period of 2004–2006.

ESDP of T2 and T3 has processed an analysis from the perspective of the broader relationship between town and backgrounds, and it describes the Leaving citizens and attendance at work and school, described microregions and microregional associations active within a town and cross-border cooperation and partner cities. ESDP of T3 in the

last section focused at e-government and informatization of public administration. It describes the concept of information systems development, conditions for the introduction of e-government, the legislative framework in the field of information and sources of funding informatization.

Table 8. Processing of analysis of uncategorized indicators

Indicator	Using of EU funds	Opinion poll	Commutation	City partnership	Cross-border cooperation and partnership	Continuity of ESDP to other strategic documents
Town						
T1	✓	✓				✓
T2			✓	✓	✓	
T3			✓	✓	✓	

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

SWOT analysis of selected cities is in all ESDP processed from the perspective of six basic areas. SWOT analysis of T1 is prepared for all areas in single table of SWOT analysis, where weaknesses outweigh the strengths, opportunities outweigh the potential threats. SWOT analysis of T2 is treated as the seven particular SWOT analyzes, each of which is focused on one of the six areas. Seventh SWOT analysis is oriented on relations between city and surroundings. SWOT analysis of T3 is processed as eight particular SWOT analyzes, each of which is focused on one of the six areas. Seventh SWOT analysis of T3 is focused on the area's wider relations city and surrounding, the eighth SWOT analysis of T3 focused on the area of e - government and informatization.

Table 9. SWOT analysis processing

Area	Human potential	Economic potential	Social potential	Civil infrastructure	Transport infrastructure	Technical and environmental infrastructure
Town						
T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

In the final part of the analysis of T1 ESDP are set key disparities and main development factors. This part completely absent in ESDP of T2 and T3.

4.2. Assessment of the program part of document

Programming part of ESDP is based on the analysis and evaluation of potential strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the future development. It follows the basic documents for the development and sets a global objective of ESDP and strategic objectives of ESDP that lead to achieving the global objective of ESDP.

The global objective of every self-government' ESDP is "Improving the quality of life of city residents." Global objective of ESDP T3 and T2 is complemented by "Improving the business environment in the city." As is noted in Table 10 f ESDP everyone except the global goal defined several strategic objectives that will lead to the fulfillment of the global objective.

T1 as the strategic targets of ESDP provides reconstruction and development of the civic infrastructure and facilities, development and reconstruction of transport infrastructure, improving environmental quality, economic competitiveness and growth potential of the city, upgrading technical infrastructure and regional development.

T2 in the ESDP defined as strategic objectives to achieve a more favorable business and investment environment, cost-effective government ensuring basic tasks of employment growth, high-quality social services, quality education and development of education, culture and information infrastructure, improving transport infrastructure, improving technical infrastructure, improve the quality other parts of the environment for residents, the development of international, inter-regional and inter-municipal cooperation and transparent government.

Table 10. Processing of ESDP strategic objectives and defining their areas

Indicator	Defined global objective	Number of defined strategic objectives	Civil infrastructure	Transport infrastructure	Environment	competitiveness and economic growth	Technical infrastructure	Spatial development	Employment	Informatization and digitization	Business environment	Economical and transparent government	Development of inter-municipal, inter-regional and international cooperation
T1	✓	6	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
T2	✓	10	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
T3	✓	8	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

T3 focused its strategic objectives on more favorable business and investment environment, cost-effective government in the initial tasks of employment growth, high-quality social services, quality education and development of civil infrastructure, improving transport infrastructure, improving technical infrastructure, improve the quality of the environment, international development, and interregional and intercommunal cooperation and effective and transparent functioning digital city.

In addition to setting a global goal and strategic objectives has of ESDP T2 and T3 in the introduction of strategic enumerated the basic principles to be applied towards meeting goals – personal freedom and personal responsibility, private property, unrestrained competition, voluntary solidarity, subsidiarity, efficiency and quality, transparency in decision-making.

In the field of civil, transport, technical and environmental infrastructure is particular priorities focused mainly on the reconstruction and development of the current situation. In the field of competitiveness and economic potential of city are priorities focused on completion of the infrastructure of the industrial park, at creation of conditions for the restructuring of the industry and creating new jobs.

Implementation of the main and strategic objectives of ESDP T1 is achieved through a set of priorities and actions at implement the strategic goals. Each priority includes a set of activities which are allocated in priority order. A particular method of implementing proposed activities and the extent decided by the City Council with regard to the current state and the current financing options.

Targets based on ESDP of T2 are almost all focused at non-investment projects, except only some objectives in the field of transport and education infrastructure. Great attention is paid to the employment and activities that will contribute to a reduction of the number of unemployed in the city. The strategic goal of is to create the conditions for business particularly small and medium enterprises, to further intention belongs the achievement of long-term and stable balance budget, cooperation with governments and the private sector in job creation, completion of infrastructure in the fields of education, information technology, transport and the environment. The aim of also center is more effective cooperation with foreign partners in the city as well as to its own citizens and to strengthen the position of the region.

Strategic intentions resulting from ESDP of T3 are based on the need to create an environment for business that will bring new jobs in the city. To further intention belongs improve the quality of local self-governments services and efficient of local self-governments expenditures, for employment the city plans to cooperate with state administration and the private sector, in the field of education activities are aimed at enhancing the skills of its citizens and on improvement of education by completing school infrastructure in the city. In the area of transport infrastructure, the city will try to complete the infrastructure related to the availability and development of tourism in the city. Another objective of city is to streamline form of cooperation between the city and the twin cities abroad

and to strengthen the position of city in the region. The digitization presents the intention to create an internal portal that will serve as a data repository of municipal office and organization established by the self-government in the city.

Table 11. Processing of ensuring the implementation of ESDP in cities

Indicator	Determination of measurable indicators	Financial plan for implementation	Institutional ensure the implementation	Organizational support for implementation	Monitoring and evaluation	Timetable for implementation
Town						
T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T2		✓				
T3		✓				

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

Table 11 presents ESDP of T1 has set measurable performance indicators for each priority and financial plan. The financing of the planned activities the city can use its own resources (budget and current revenue sources obtained by disposing assets) and external resources (loans from commercial banks, funds from the state budget and EU funds for the implementation of approved projects). Financing of activities given in ESDP is multi-source. The most of the major infrastructure projects would be financing from EU structural funds, smaller projects of subsidies and grants from the state budget (camera system – Government Council for Crime, reconstruction of the house of Culture – Ministry of Culture, the construction of rental housing – State Housing Development Fund) and public – private partnership (completion urban indoor swimming pool). Furthermore, in ESDP of T1 is given the institutional and organizational security of ESDP. The main managing authority for the implementation of the program is T1, technical realization is provided by municipal authorities. O other institutions involved in the implementation and realization are city council and as coordinators particular committees of the City Council. Monitoring of activities is carried out continuously city office with the coordinator. Coordinator will report annually about the status of the tasks of ESDP. The final evaluation will be carried out in 2014 on the evaluation of the implementation of indicators. In case that the implementation of the activities is co-financed by the EU, is subjected to monitoring and evaluation of project conditions established by the managing authority for the operational program. Timetable set deadlines for implementation of activities, if the city does not obtain resources to implement of these activities from the state budget or from EU structural funds, will try to implement to ensure a limited extent according to their financial possibilities.

ESDP of T2 and T3 contain only a financial plan for implementation of ESDP from the state budget and EU funds.

Table 12. Assessment of updated of ESDP (to 31st December, 2012)

Indicator	Compiler	Date of approval	Financing	Number of updates
Town				
T1	Castor&Pollux, a.s. Bratislava – years of experience in creating strategic documents	6. 11. 2007	95% EU funds 5% local self-government	1 (to 30 th November 2011)
T2	SEA – Agentúra pre vzdelávanie a vedu Bratislava	31.7. 2007	95% EU funds 5% local self-government	2 (to 10 th October 2008 and 8 th September 2010)
T3	Fond Consult Bratislava	27.5. 2008	95% EU funds 5% local self-government	0

Source: ESDP of towns and authors' proceedings

ESDP of surveyed municipalities have in terms of the time period, for which were developed different length – ESDP of T1 and T2 was developed for the period 2007–2013 and ESDP of T3 for the period 2008–2013 (more see Table 12). ESDP of T1 contains also vision to 2016. All ESDP of surveyed cities were developed by an external company and their development has been co-financed by the EU. ESDP of T1 and T2 have been already updated.

Conclusion

ESDP of city as a medium term strategic planning document of development of local self-government has drawn up generally for a seven years period, which is identical to the programming period in the spending of assistance from the structural funds of the EU. By us studied analyzed ESDP of three cities were developed for the period until the end of 2013. Nowadays all selected local self-governments are preparing to create new ESDP of municipality on programming period 2014–2020.

Based on detailed analysis and comparison of individual ESDP of surveyed cities, we came to the following conclusions and recommendations:

ESDP of T1 is in our view the most comprehensive by site content, its way of processing is clear and understandable also for ordinary citizen and meets all the requirements specified by law about regional development. A big positive of this document is realized opinion poll, whose results are processed directly in ESDP of. The analytical part is fairly detailed and transparent.

ESDP of T1 meets all requirements established by law about regional development, is a document that to local self-government provides a detailed overview of the current state not only on the basis of statistical data and literature, but also from the perspective of the citizen, is flexible and its update in 2011 responds flexibly to current events in the city. In the program sections are given measurable indicators important for subsequent evaluation and monitoring, institutional and organizational support for the implementation and implementation of ESDP, developed a timetable of individual activities, and the financing of the implementation not only from the European Union, but also in the form of grants and subsidies from the state budget and co-financing through public – private partnership.

ESDP of T2 and T3 are processed by two different external companies, but they are never content and layout completely identical. In our opinion, putting processors do not have much experience with processing strategy documents of this magnitude.

In programming part of ESDP of T2 and 3 missing set measurable indicators upon which would have allowed subsequent evaluation and monitoring of implementation of ESDP . From both documents is not specified exactly who is responsible for implementation and realization of ESDP by site of institutional and organizational assessment. It does not describe the way of the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of activities in both ESDP. The individual activities to achieve strategic goals of ESDP do not have a timetable for implementation. The last part in both ESDP is dedicated to the financing of individual activities. Funding is oriented unilaterally only to support from EU funds.

ESDP of T2 and T3 are in our opinion processed confusing and for the average citizen city are hard to understand. Serious weaknesses of these ESDP are in our view is absence of basic data that for creating ESDP arises from the Act about regional development – lacks opinion poll of citizens, information about following ESDP t other strategic documents, set measurable indicators for subsequent monitoring, organizational and institutional framework for realization and implementation ESDP, the timetable for implementation of individual activities.

The lack of these ESDP of T2 and T3 by us is also unilaterally proposed method of financing and activities only by the European Union. In context of next programming period, to both cities we recommend in developing of ESDP to connect with agency, which has more experience with creation of similar documents and that develop ESDP "tailor-made" for concrete city. Also we found out that a lot of mayors considered ESDP as a measurement tool of their work and than they are not willing to offers data. It is important to explain municipal authorities, especially mayors that ESPD is a development tool which is useful tool for everybody who stays in elected public function (e.g. mayor, city councilor) and not a tool which is possible to use for mayors' work evaluation. Policy implications as a result of our study we consider to make the publishing of fulfilling the strategy, development objectives, priorities and measurements declared in ESDF obligatory for municipalities. Municipalities should be obliged to publish and actualize this information up to 30th June every year as Final Account. Due to this the transparency of using the public resources in local self-government as well as public control in this field will increase.

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