

Strategic development planning for agricultural development and the integration of other domains important for the territory

Abstract

In strategic development plans for agriculture, it is important to recognize that in a given territory it may also be necessary based on the preoccupations of the multiple actors involved, including citizens, to integrate other strategic orientations in order to achieve the vision constructed for the territory. Thus, this could include the domain of water quality conservation, the conservation of flora and fauna including the conservation of 'humanized landscapes, the conservation of heritage landscapes with its implications for the development of rural tourism, and climate change and variability. Several of these domains represent the recognition that agricultural land and farming activities can also be multi-functional and are able to support other functions (if of course, the actors decide that these other functions are important for their territory).

Keywords: multi functionality of agricultural land, strategic development planning, land use planning, strategic orientations, geographic, sectoral, transversal, multiple actors and their legitimate interests

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Introduction

This short article represents a further development of the article published in IJAWB earlier in the summer of 2017 Bousbaine et al.¹ In Section 1, we develop the characteristics of Strategic Development Planning (for and by the citizens and collective actors) for a territory. In Section 2, we discuss some specific characteristics of Strategic Development Planning for Agricultural Development and how it can be integrated into other major preoccupations for the territory. In Section 3, we provide an example of how an Agricultural Development Strategic Orientation might be linked to other Strategic Orientations, either Sectoral or Transversal Orientations. Finally, we draw some conclusions.

Strategic development planning

Strategic development planning represents a form of planning that does not simply take account of land uses (land use planning) but also deals with very important issues and challenges that are not directly treated, if at all, by land use planning. These other issues and challenges include effective communication with the citizens as actors and collective actors, specific types of agricultural development including the use of fertilizers and pesticides of particular types, and dealing with poverty Bryant & Preston.²

Strategic Development Planning for a territory (e.g. a municipality, a county, or other forms of government) implies 5 stages Bryant.^{3,4} Increasingly common in the Canadian context is the form of strategic development planning in which all citizens in a territory as well as collective actors participate not simply in terms of being consulted but by actually taking on responsibilities such as identifying pertinent actions, managing them and even contributing to mobilizing the resources necessary to achieve them both financial; as well as other resources. This form of Strategic development planning depends very much upon the dominant culture in a territory, notably one that recognizes the very significant roles that citizens and collective actors

can take on. An excellent example of where this has taken place began in Haliburton County in Eastern Ontario, Canada Haliburton⁵ and the process has carried on to the present time. Local and regional cultures where local and regional governments do not recognize the fact that citizens and collective actors are often entirely capable of participating in a real development planning process have real difficulties in benefiting from this form of strategic development planning. Various dimensions of this process have been identified in British Columbia Markey et al.⁶

The 5 stages involve

- Creating a VISION for the territory (territory, municipality, region, etc) as well as for any specific component of the territory.
- Analyzing the Strengths and Weaknesses (and therefore for economic activities this also requires understanding competition from other territories and countries).
- Identifying the Strategic Orientations that must be pursued in order to achieve the VISION that has been proposed for the territory.
- For each Strategic Orientation, identifying and selecting the appropriate actions that need to be taken to ensure that the objectives determined for the Orientation can contribute substantially to the overall VISION of the territory.
- Monitoring and Evaluation of all the processes put in place, specifically monitoring and reviewing how well the first 4 stages are being achieved.

Strategic development planning is in effect a continuous process

- Of the results of the decisions taken (Vision, pertinent choices of the Strategic Orientations, Actions),

- b. The integration of new information into the planning and action processes, which may require revision of stages 1, 2, 3 and 4.

This new information can include the identification of new trends in anything that could influence actions, new forms and sources of competition when the strategic development plan is partly focused on economic development such as agricultural development, and also the changing values of the population both locally and in relation to people outside the territory who can have an influence on what happens in the territory, e.g. changing values of rural tourists in relation to how they value different components of rural and agricultural landscapes, and the changing values of consumers (local and elsewhere) concerning the quality of the foodstuff that is preferred by consumers (e.g. 'healthy' foodstuff, locally produced foodstuff).

Any of these new domains of information can lead to the revision of the Vision, the choice and specific characteristics of any Strategic Orientation, and modifying and/or developing new Actions. Strategic Orientations can be of three types

- a. Sectoral orientations such as agriculture,
- b. Geographic orientations, e.g. agricultural reserves, valley bottoms,
- c. Transversal orientations which cut across several other Strategic Orientations (e.g. conservation of the environment, conservation of flora and fauna, water quality improvement) (Figure 1).

On Figure 1, the horizontal axis represents all of the different actors (including citizens) who might have an interest in one or more Strategic Orientations. At the top of each Strategic Orientation we find the actors who are quite obviously directly interested in the actions taken in the particular Strategic Orientation, e.g. for Agricultural Development, we would expect to find farmers and their families primarily involved and then the companies and counselors who provide inputs and information to the farmers. Further down, we would find other actors interested more in such issues as water quality, landscape conservation and the conservation of flora and fauna. Strategic Development Planning can be implemented at different levels, although it is easier to involve a wider range of citizens and collective actors when the planning process is being undertaken for local (e.g. communities) and regional e.g. (counties) jurisdictions. Different elements of strategic development planning can be seen in communities and regions in Northern British Columbia, Canada, and also in Peel Region in Ontario, Canada Peel Region⁷ and as well at a country level, e.g. for tourism development in Italy Angeloni⁸ (Figure 1).

Agricultural development: a sectoral strategic orientation

When associated with particular agricultural reserves an Agricultural Orientation can also have a Geographic Orientation, In a sectoral strategic orientation such as Agricultural Development, the effective involvement of actors with legitimate interests in how agricultural development may affect these other interests (or in other words, some of the multiple functions other than agriculture) should also be taken into account so that these actors should also be involved in the discussions. However, if these interests represent a major preoccupation for the territory, these interests may also be translated into a transversal Strategic Orientation, e.g. Environmental Conservation or Climate Change and Variability. Evidently, another

sectoral Strategic Orientation could be selected that would also have linkages to the Agricultural Development Strategic Orientation, such as Rural Tourism (Figure 1).

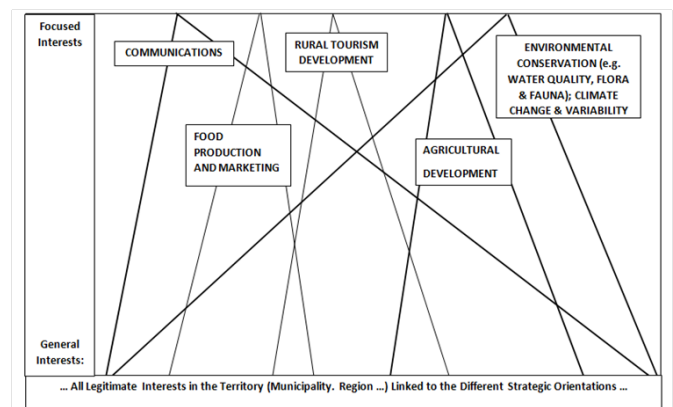


Figure 1 The different types of strategic orientation in strategic development planning (Based upon Bryant).⁴

An example of strategic development planning for agriculture

A perfect example of Strategic development planning for Agriculture is found in the Province of Quebec, Canada. Legislation was enacted in 1978 in Québec to protect agricultural land from different forms of urban development and subsequently in 1996 was modified to also protect farming activities in the agricultural reserves created under the 1978 legislation. The protection of agricultural land and farming activities was enacted through the creation of agricultural reserves. Although this was a very important first step, it was not enough to keep governments, including the provincial government, to refrain from withdrawing farmland from agricultural reserves in some territories. This situation eventually (2008) led to the provincial government advocating that the different Regional Municipal Counties should be encouraged with other actors, including farmers, to put in place a development plan for agriculture. This was achieved and represented a major step forward, especially since the provincial government also encouraged those involved in this regional process to take account of the multi-functionality of farmland and farming activities. These development plans were in effect strategic development plans for agriculture in the agricultural reserves (thus, a combination of sectoral and geographic strategic orientations). This has given rise to an important range of articles on this experience.^{1,9-11} As one example of another function related to agricultural land and farming activities in several regions, we can refer to the Québec legislation regarding humanized landscapes Domon¹² and the planning of the integration of this function into the development planning of different territories Trépanier & Bryant¹³. In the case of Québec, since summer 2016, a process has been put in place to start the integration of a particularly important transversal strategic orientation into the agricultural development plans, namely Climate Change and Variability, with an emphasis on the development of tools for farmers to integrate into their farms to adapt to Climate Change and Variability. This will reach its final stage early in the winter of 2018.¹⁴

Conclusion

In a number of jurisdictions since the 1970s, substantial progress has been made in relation to development planning for agricultural

land and farming activities. This has been achieved largely through constructing Strategic Development Plans for Agricultural Development, and more recently by integrating Climate Change and Variability into agricultural development Bousbaine et al.² While these various initiatives take time to become accepted and integrated, there is no question that there has been progress and strategic development planning has made very useful contributions to agricultural (and rural) development in many jurisdictions.¹⁵

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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