PROMOTING PLACE-BASED DEVELOPMENT IN DECLINING AREAS

THE STRUCTURED DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE PROCESS AS A TOOL OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

CASE STUDY/ THE LIMASSOL WINE VILLAGES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECT: THE CONTRIBUTION OF HERITAGE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Republic of Cyprus
Department of Town Planning and Housing
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Vineyards visto in the Pachna area

INTRODUCTION

- Statement:

  Bottom-up participatory processes with consensus building are the foundation of a place-based strategy in the field of spatial planning.

- Purpose of the paper:

i. To **demonstrate an effective way of public participation** (Structured Democratic Dialogue Process – SDDP) that allows the expression of citizens' knowledge and preferences and articulates their vision along with the steps to be taken to achieve it (wider/ European scope);

ii. To **assess the planning procedures and participatory practices in Cyprus** (national objective);

iii. To show in general the positive impact of these participatory processes on heritage.

- The opportunity to do so:

  The '**Limassol Wine Villages Local Development Pilot Project**: **the contribution of heritage to local and regional development**', which falls into the Council of Europe's Local Development Pilot Projects Programme (LDPP).

COHESION

Territorial Cohesion

Place-based strategy

Community-led
local development

Public participation

General Regulation of the European Union Structural and Rural Development Funds proposals make community-led local development a key feature of the next programs (2014-2020)

- **Place-based strategy** in its general level of application:

  - Long term development perspective

  - Capitalises on location advantages

  - Involves a broad collaborative partnership (local elites)

  - Supported by multilevel governance and integrated approach.

- **The component of heritage (cultural and natural)** acquires greater significance with:

  - the introduction of the territorial dimension of the Cohesion Policy

  - the spread of the international economic crisis
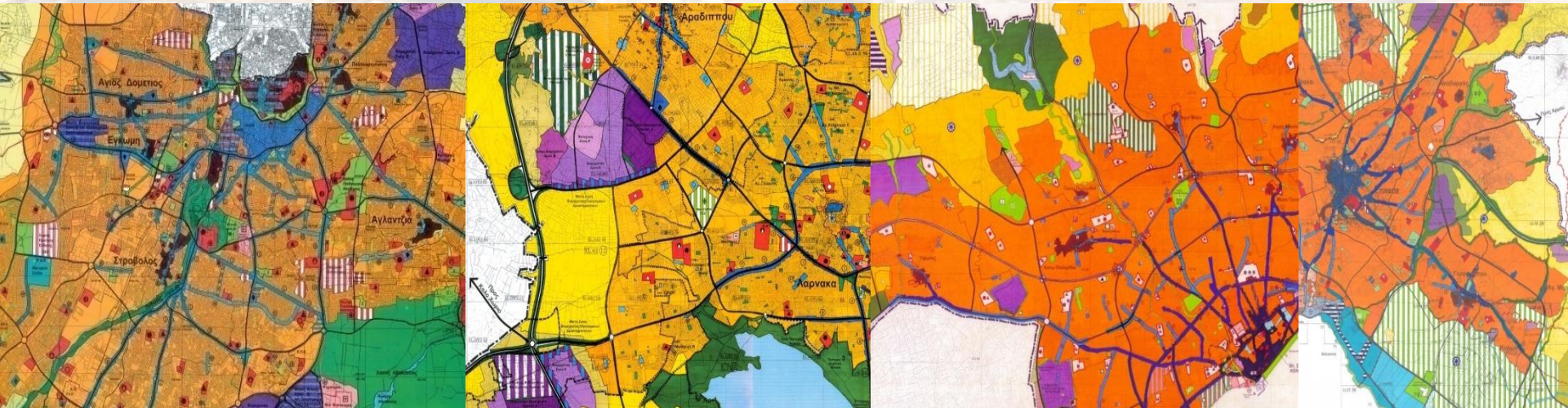
  - increasing global competition.

Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

All the above show that:

- **The European Union has an increasing focus on development actions with integrated delivery on the ground, based on the active involvement of people.**

- **Heritage is a motive power especially in declining rural areas which require new development models and opportunities arising internally, collectively and from the grassroots.**
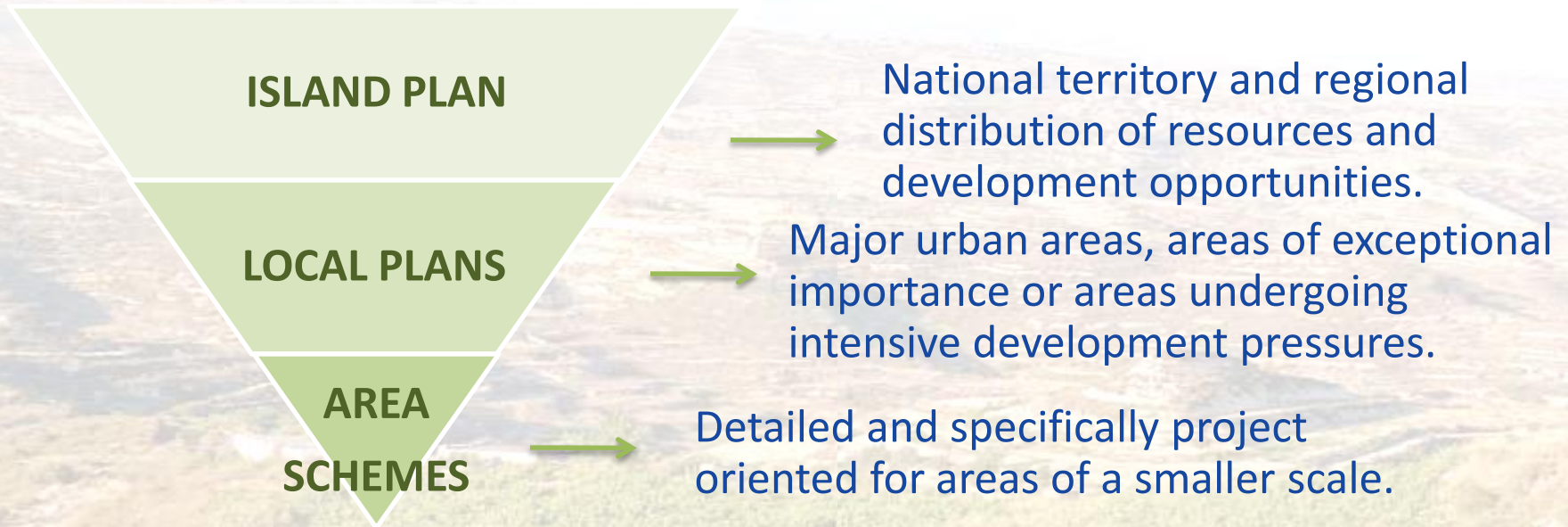
Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

Cyprus Planning System and Public Participation

Three-tier hierarchy of Development Plans:

ISLAND PLAN → National territory and regional distribution of resources and development opportunities.

LOCAL PLANS → Major urban areas, areas of exceptional importance or areas undergoing intensive development pressures.

AREA SCHEMES → Detailed and specifically project oriented for areas of a smaller scale.

Policy Statement for the Countryside:

- Introduced due to the absence of a legally bound Island Plan;

- Its general provisions are applicable in rural areas where neither a Local Plan nor an Area Scheme is in force.
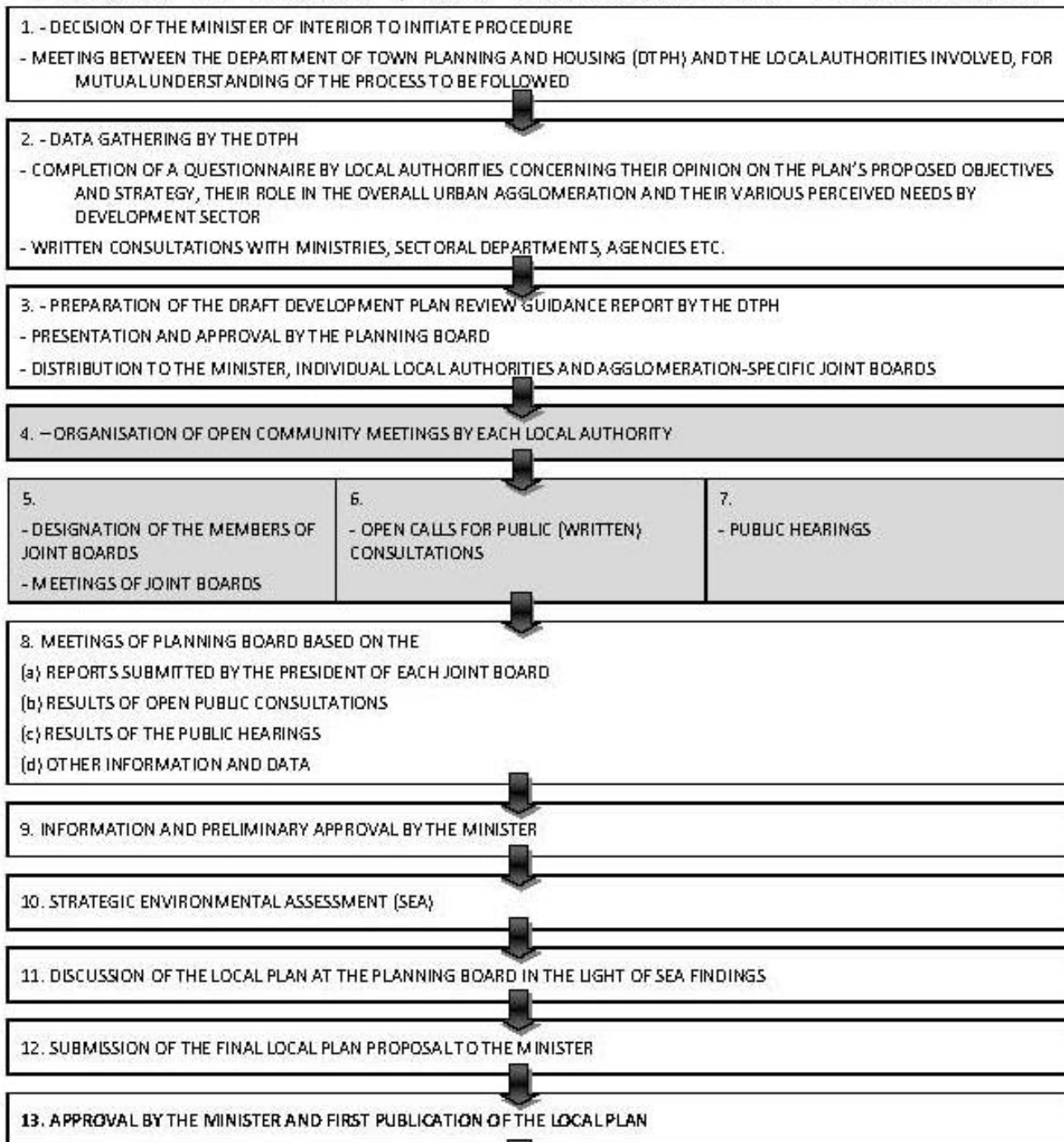
Development Plans and public participation

Public involvement is introduced through:

- **Open community meetings**, aimed at gathering the views and opinions of the public.

- **Written consultations** by the public at large (individuals, bodies or authorities). A number of them are put forward at **public hearings**.

- **Joint Boards**, which advise the Minister of Interior regarding the preparation or revision of Local Plans/ Area Schemes; its members are elected from the local authorities and also include individuals with specialist knowledge or a valid opinion in respect of the Plan.

- **Objections** submitted by the public (Local authorities, NGOs, and any interested body or individual) against any of the Plan's provisions.

FIGURE 1: LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION PROCEDURE

1. - DECISION OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR TO INITIATE PROCEDURE

- MEETING BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING (DTPH) AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVED, FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED

2. - DATA GATHERING BY THE DTPH

- COMPLETION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNING THEIR OPINION ON THE PLAN'S PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY, THEIR ROLE IN THE OVERALL URBAN AGGLOMERATION AND THEIR VARIOUS PERCEIVED NEEDS BY DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

- WRITTEN CONSULTATIONS WITH MINISTRIES, SECTORAL DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES ETC.

3. - PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW GUIDANCE REPORT BY THE DTPH

- PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL BY THE PLANNING BOARD

- DISTRIBUTION TO THE MINISTER, INDIVIDUAL LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND AGGLOMERATION-SPECIFIC JOINT BOARDS

4. - ORGANISATION OF OPEN COMMUNITY MEETINGS BY EACH LOCAL AUTHORITY

5.	6.	7.
- DESIGNATION OF THE MEMBERS OF JOINT BOARDS	- OPEN CALLS FOR PUBLIC (WRITTEN) CONSULTATIONS	- PUBLIC HEARINGS
- MEETINGS OF JOINT BOARDS		

8. MEETINGS OF PLANNING BOARD BASED ON THE

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF EACH JOINT BOARD

(b) RESULTS OF OPEN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

(c) RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGS

(d) OTHER INFORMATION AND DATA

9. INFORMATION AND PRELIMINARY APPROVAL BY THE MINISTER

10. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

11. DISCUSSION OF THE LOCAL PLAN AT THE PLANNING BOARD IN THE LIGHT OF SEA FINDINGS

12. SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL LOCAL PLAN PROPOSAL TO THE MINISTER

13. APPROVAL BY THE MINISTER AND FIRST PUBLICATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN

Local Plan Preparation - Objections

B. Objection Evaluation and Final Publication

B1. FILING OF OBJECTIONS BY ANY AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL (within 4 months of first publication)

Steps B2 to B6 to be carried out within 10 months

B2. ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIONS BY SPECIAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

B3. EVALUATION COMMITTEE SENDS REPORT WITH SUGGESTIONS TO THE MINISTER, ON THE BASIS OF ITS ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIONS FILED

B4. THE MINISTER ADJUSTS PLAN ON THE BASIS OF INPUT RECEIVED AND SUBMITS IT TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

B5. DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

B6. DEFINITIVE PUBLICATION OF THE APPROVED PLAN

Evaluation of public participation

- **Institutional limitations** do not really promote public participation and new effective levels of governance (delay in the process of decentralisation and restructuring of local authorities).

- **Weaknesses of Joint Boards**, which restrain a bottom-up approach based on citizen participation (participants are few, their involvement is temporary and their role is consultative).

- **Inability of local authorities** to draw up a real development programme beyond the usual re-zoning requests.

- **Problems of citizen behaviour, awareness and know-how** make difficult the dialogue on matters of strategy and public interest.

The Limassol LDPP could supplement existing planning procedures by:

• **improving existing participatory practices and mechanisms,**

• **widening the scope of planning in socio-economic issues and implementation methods,**

• **formulating a more appropriate and shared project vision and strategy.**

Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

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A new opportunity for participatory planning: the Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) for the Wine Villages in Limassol

The Limassol Local Development Pilot Project (LDPP) as an instrument for territorial cohesion

The **LDPP programme**:

• Provides an opportunity for **innovative/ fruitful discussion of issues**, with possible implementation of the outcomes in the existing institutional framework.

• Helps **protect, conserve and enhance the territory's heritage** as a **factor of socio-economic development, identity and cohesion**.

• Promotes a model of **holistic, multi-sectoral** and **sustainable development**, underpinned by the **active involvement of citizens**.

• Aims to **improve the standard of living**, minimise the differences between urban and rural life and create opportunities for employment and economic development.

• Promotes **transparency, democracy and dialogue**.

✓**The Limassol LDPP, like other similar projects, will be developed in 3 phases:**

| DIAGNOSIS | STRATEGY | IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME |

The Wine Villages in the Region of Limassol

• **A mountainous and semi-mountainous area with 15 traditional settlements** (total population 3369 - 2011 Census)

• A **functional region** based on physical, historical, environmental and socio-economic similarities.
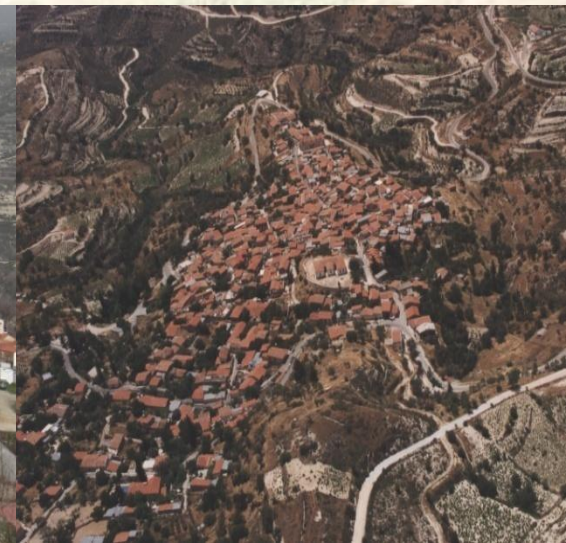
The Wine Villages in the Region of Limassol

•The area is known for its:

   i. **wine producing tradition**, which has its footprints on the landscape dominated by a system of dry-laid stone terraces (cultivated or abandoned);

   ii. **rich fauna and flora**, which led to the inclusion of some significant parts of the area in the Natura 2000 network;

iii. **religious buildings** and **vernacular architecture** strongly influenced by the wine production economy.

The Wine Villages in the Region of Limassol

• Some of the **issues faced in the area** are:

i. the process of **dereliction**, **abandonment** and **depopulation** of the most remote and mountainous settlements;

ii. the a**bandonment**, **neglect** and **deterioration** of many dry-laid **stonewall terraced vineyards** because of the decay of agriculture and its mechanisation;

iii. the **change of the authentic** cultural landscape;

iv. the gradual **transformation of the traditional character** of settlements.

The LDPP programme experiments a real place-based approach and a community-led local development method, under the wider agenda of Territorial Cohesion.

The characteristics and problems of the region of the Wine Villages make of the area a unity of space, which asks for a territorially sensitive approach. This will also help in the preservation of the villages' rich cultural and natural heritage.

The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process (SDDP)
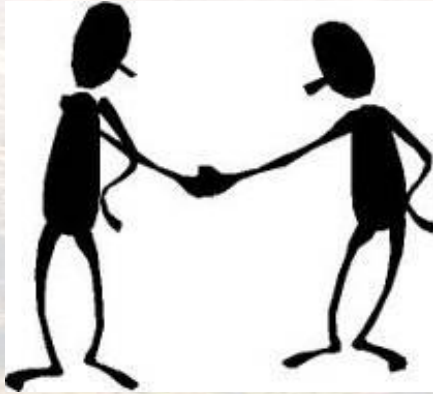
The SDDP instrument

- The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process – **SDDP** (developed by Dr. Alexander Christakis and John Warfield) is a deeply **reasoned, scientific methodology for large-scale, collaborative design**, which is effective in:

  - **resolving multiple conflicts** and problems that are more and more complex in a reasonably limited amount of time;

  - **gathering the collective wisdom** ('Demosophia') of a wide range of different stakeholders who experience the problem;

  - **assisting heterogeneous groups** in collectively developing a common framework of thinking based on consensus building and thus achieving results.

The SDDP instrument

- The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process (SDDP) was used as the main instrument in the 1st phase of the Limassol LDPP ('Diagnosis') completed up to now.

- Specifically, it was used to:

  - describe and analyze the current situation in the Wine Villages area and extrapolate it to the future on the basis of the existing situation (**base scenario**);

  - identify the possible obstacles for reaching a specific topic/ the desired situation ('**Wall of Obstacles'**) ;

  - develop a shared vision for the sustainable development of the territory ('**Vision Tree of Descriptors'**).

- It then converges on a collaboratively developed 'Action Agenda' that will tear down the 'Wall of Obstacles' and nourish the 'Vision Tree'. It focuses on the distinctions among the '**can be**' (problems), '**ought to be**' (vision) and '**will be**' (strategy).

Retroductive Design & Development Frame

Wall of Obstacles
Co-laboratory I: "Can"

Vision Descriptors
Co-laboratory II: What "ought to be"

Co-lab III: "Will be done"

Cluster

Tree

GAP
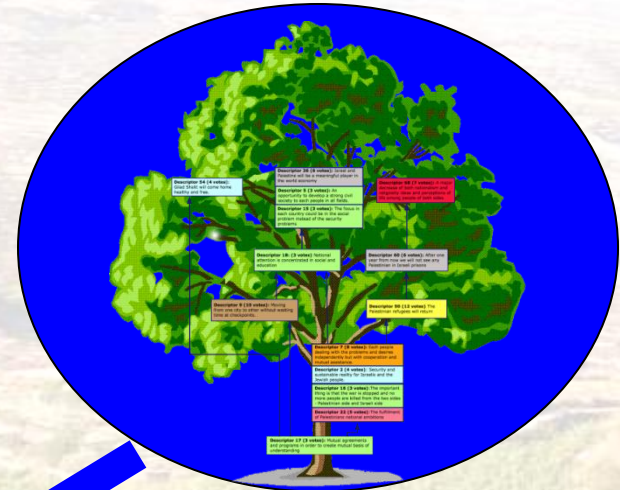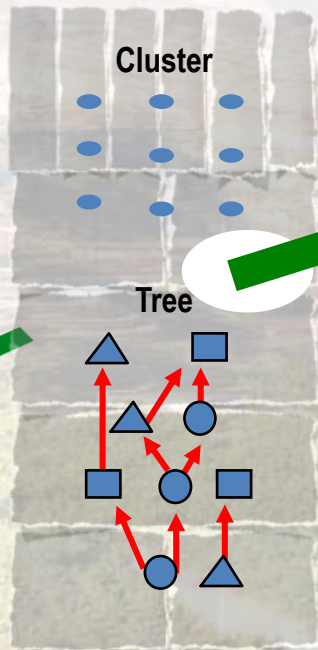
CURRENT SITUATION

EXTRAPOLATED FUTURE

(Diagramme by Dr A. Christakis)

Structure and process of the SDDP

A core group of people, the 'Knowledge Management Team' (KMT) composed by the owners of the problem, representatives of the main government agencies and the SDDP experts, plays a crucial role in coordinating the process (identification of stakeholders, drafting the triggering questions, preparation of the reports, invitation of participants, etc).

The identification of stakeholders is of paramount importance. They have to accurately represent elements of the subject and cover all of its facets (local stakeholders, relevant public and semi-public organisation, NGOs etc).

Structure and process of the SDDP

1. The participants are invited to answer the Triggering Question, formulated by the KMT, at a round-table session.

Structure and process of the SDDP

2. All responses to the triggering question (one idea in one sentence) are recorded in Cogniscope™ software, printed and posted on the wall.

Structure and process of the SDDP

3. The authors of the proposals clarify and describe their ideas for better understanding and to avoid overlapping.

Structure and process of the SDDP

4. The ideas are clustered into categories based on similar attributes.

Structure and process of the SDDP

5. All participants get five votes and are asked to choose their five favourite (most important to them) ideas. Only the ideas that received votes go to the next and most important phase.

Structure and process of the SDDP

6. Participants are asked to explore influences of one idea on another. If the answer is 'yes' (great majority) an influence is recorded in the special software, which minimises the number of queries by using mathematical algorithms.

Structure and process of the SDDP

7. The relations recorded result in the production of an 'influence tree' ('Wall of Obstacles' or 'Vision Descriptors') by the software. The 'influence tree' is presented to the participants, subject to discussion.
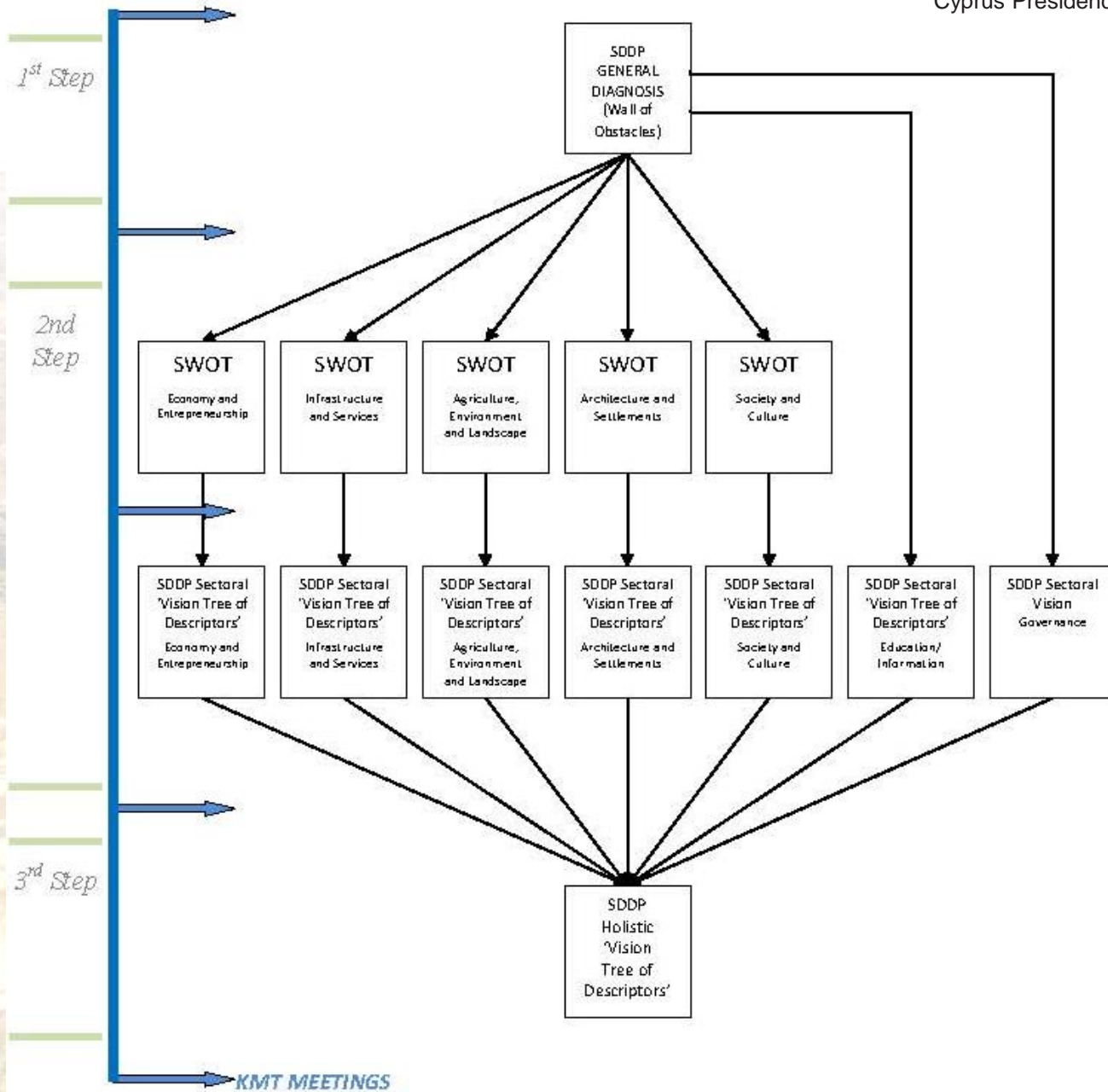
The Limassol LDPP: experience of participation

• **Road Map** of the Diagnosis Phase of the LDPP: made out of consecutive and participatory approaches that allow the overall and focused analysis of the area.

• This process, based on the SDDP 'Wall of Obstacles', is summarised in the following diagramme, where:

1st step: The **'Wall of Obstacles'** (root cause map) was designated by Co-laboratory I.

2nd step: Seven thematic working groups elaborated a **SWOT** analysis and/ or a **sectoral common vision** for each theme, representing a group of obstacles.

3rd step: The **'Vision Tree of Descriptors'** of the area was drawn out of a synthesis of the previous thematic work, by Co-laboratory II.

• The KMT meetings take place at several instances to coordinate the process.
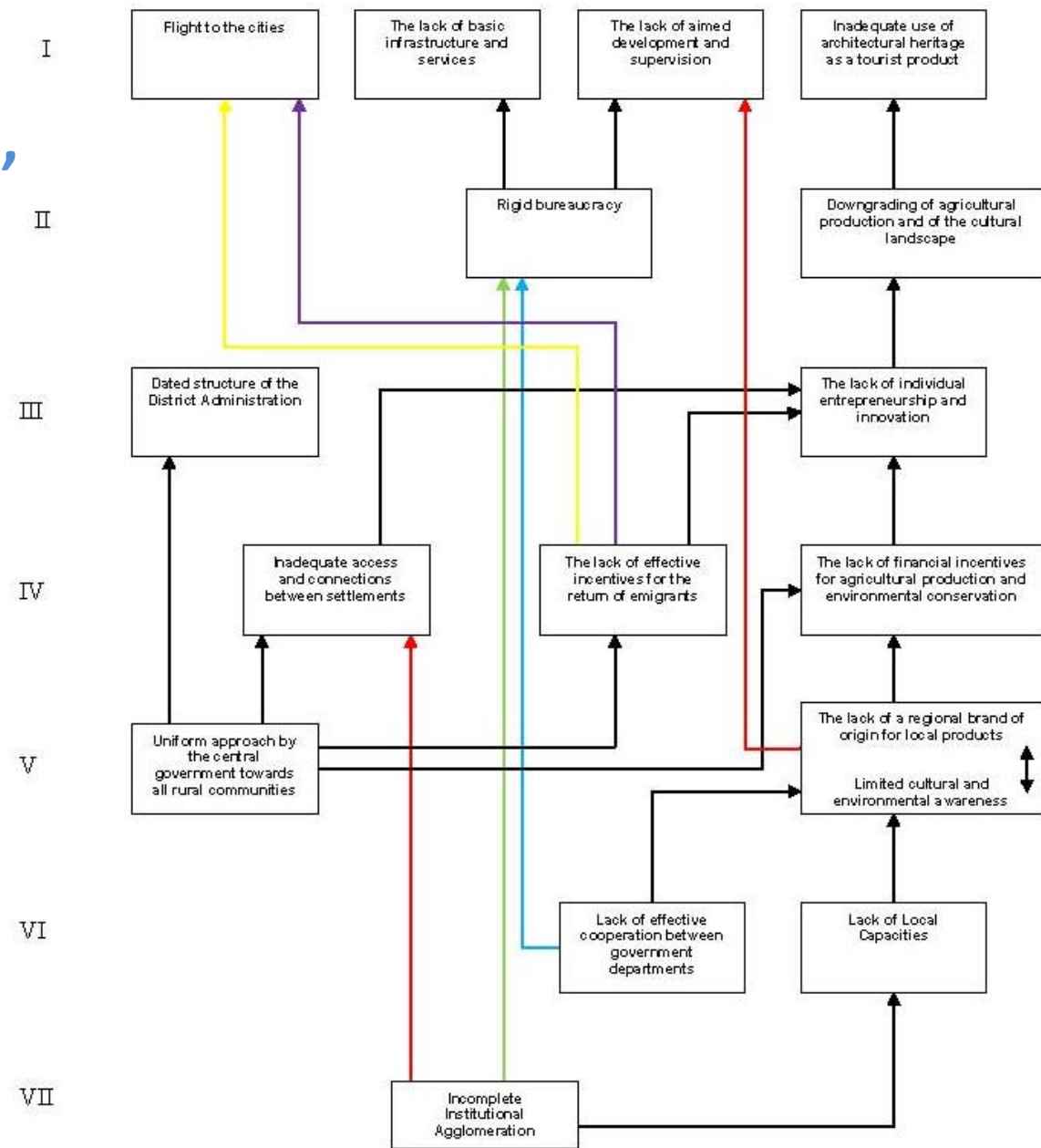
The Limassol LDPP: experience of participation

1st step: **'Wall of Obstacles' – Co-laboratory I**

• The KMT selected as a Triggering Question: *'Which are the obstacles for the development of the Wine-villages of Limassol?'*

• The 27 participants, representing 26 stakeholders, gave 71 answers.

• The answers were then clustered into 7 categories.

• Participants voted 5 barriers they considered as the relatively most important (16 barriers were collectively considered as the most important).

• Participants explored possible interactions and independencies between the 16 most important barriers by answering the question: *'If we manage to deal with barrier A, would this significantly assist us in dealing with barrier B?'*

• The 'Wall of Obstacles' depicted that the fundamental (root-cause) barriers were the incomplete process of institutional agglomeration of the local authorities, their low level of management capacities and the lack of effective cooperation between government departments.

Influence tree
Or
'Wall of Obstacles'

Root causes

The Limassol LDPP: experience of participation

2nd step: **Theme Working Groups**

• Following the Co-laboratory I, 7 Themes of sectoral or strategic nature were identified for further investigation:

1. Society and Culture

2. Architecture and Settlements

3. Economy and Entrepreneurship   **Sectoral**

4. Infrastructure and Services

5. Agriculture, Environment and Landscape

6. Education and Information

7. Governance and Administration   **Strategic**

• For the development of each Theme, a Working Group with members and leader was designated by the KMT. This enabled the stakeholders' base to drastically enlarge.

The Limassol LDPP: experience of participation

2nd step: **Theme Working Groups**

• The Working Groups proceeded with a SWOT analysis for the 5 sectoral themes, in order to obtain a better understanding of the area's real limitations and potentials at local and macro regional level.

• A sectoral common vision through the Structured Democratic Dialogue Process (SDDP) was established for each of the 7 Theme Groups. The TQ was: '*What are the descriptors of the desired situation for the sustainable development of the wine villages in the field of … (relevant thematic)?*'

• The Theme Working Groups identified an average of 60 descriptors for each Thematic, selected and average of 15 more influential descriptors and produced 7 separate sectoral 'Vision Trees of Descriptors'.

Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

The Limassol LDPP: experience of participation

3rd step: **Holistic 'Vision Tree of Descriptors'**

• The KMT, with the collaboration of the Working Groups' leaders, analysed the sectoral 'Vision Trees of Descriptors' and identified the most influential factors.

• An inter-sectoral co-laboratory with representatives of each thematic working group was organized with the aim of establishing a common, integrated, holistic vision for the area.

• The 44 most influential descriptors of the different Thematic clusters were discussed, and 18 were selected as the most important. Their interrelationships were then explored.

• The 'Vision Tree of Descriptors' depicted that the most fundamental action towards the sustainable development of the area is again the institutional agglomeration of the local authorities, which will facilitate a number of local initiatives (one-stop shop for facilitating development and investments and a local agency for the promotion and preservation of architectural heritage).

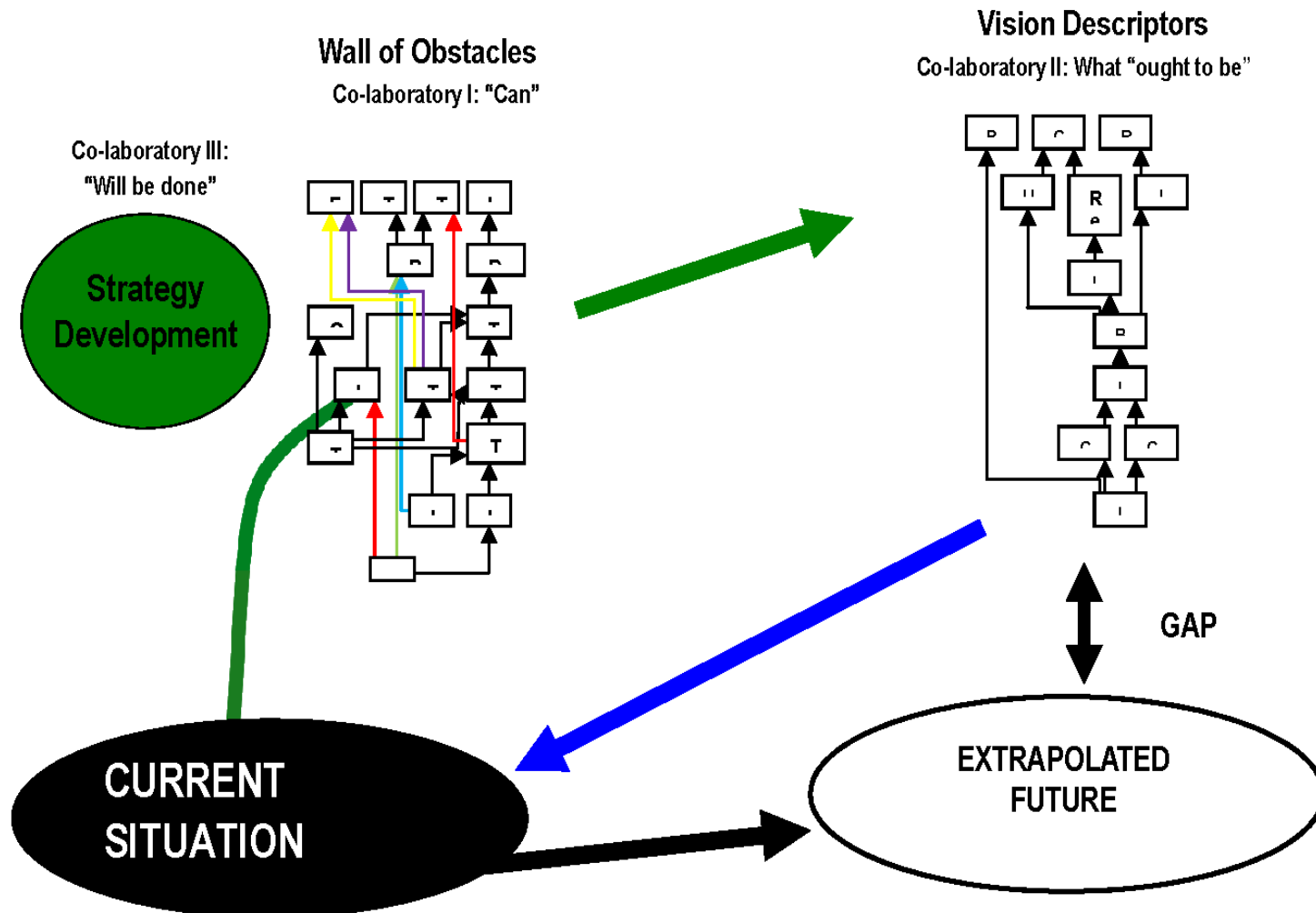Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

'Vision Tree of Descriptors'
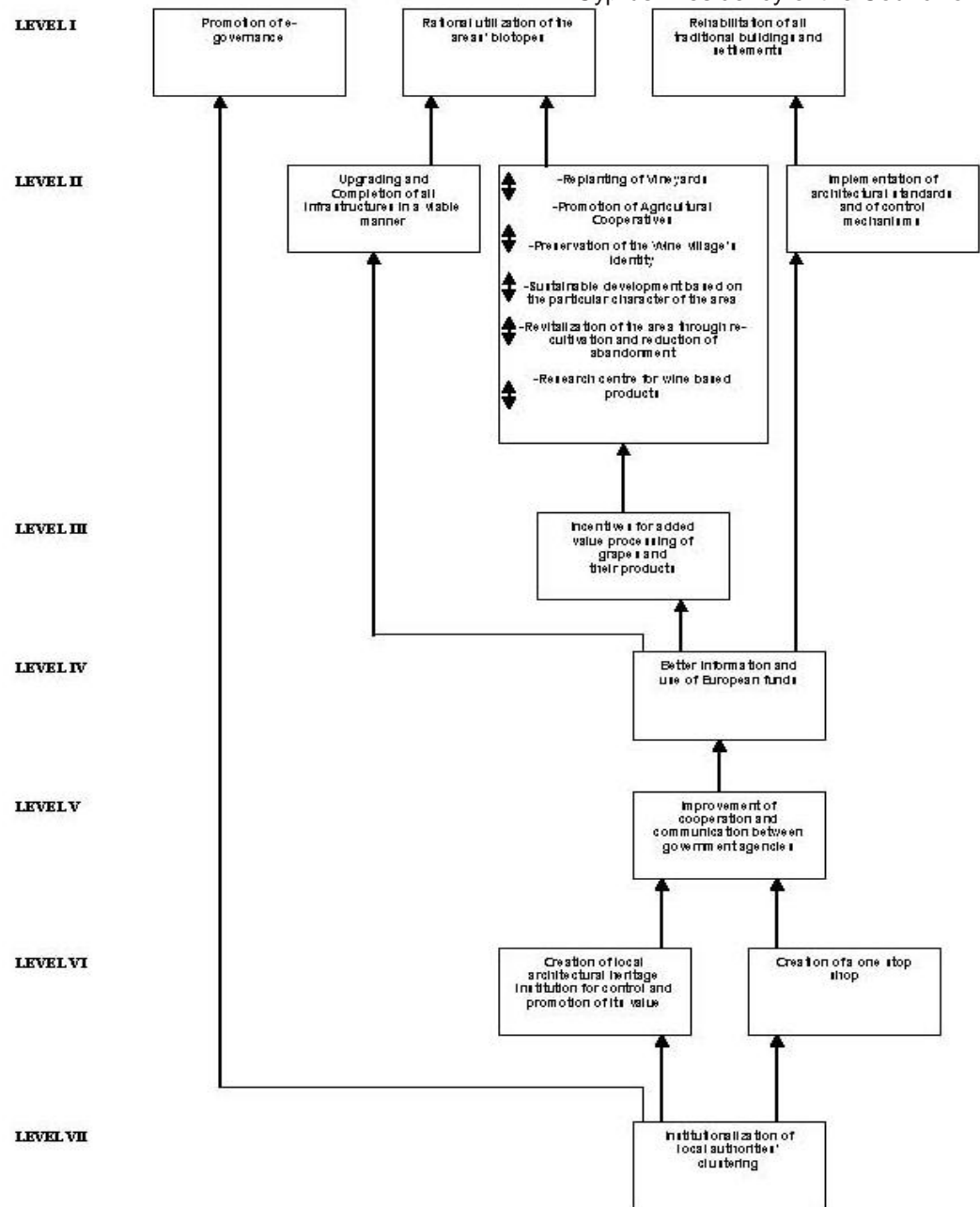
Fundamental actions

Retroductive Design & Development Frame

The added value of SDDP

- Strategic character of the dialogue;
- Promotion of decentralisation and inter-communal cooperation;
- Promotion of a place-based and bottom-up approach;
- Consideration of not only territorial, but also social and economic aspects, in an integrated development approach;
- Fostering identity and heritage;
- Long-term outcomes rather than immediate and temporary outputs;
- Networking and capacity building, especially among neighbouring communities;

The added value of SDDP

- Legitimacy of the actors and their work;
- Stakeholders engagement and the sense of collective ownership;
- Empowerment of community members;
- Creation of a core team (KMT) to sustain the continuity of the process;
- Development of mutual trust between participants;
- Redefinition of the role of the civil servants;
- Participation on equal basis and respecting the autonomy of all participants;
- Facilitation of mutual understanding and consensus building.

Limitations of the SDDP

- **Time consuming process**, since there is a need of systematization or standardization;

- **Training requirement of facilitators**, since the tools employed and the software used have to be learned;

- **Need for involvement of a substantial number of participants**, for the wider possible representation and interaction among institutions;

- **Need to achieve a state of mutual trust** which is a prerequisite of collective action;

- **Need for coordination between various government agencies** which are relevant to the project;

- **Need for long-term commitment of institutions and local people**, due to the long meetings of working groups.

The Structured Democratic Dialogue Process (SDDP):

- Effective instrument of community-led local development, since it actively involves stakeholders in a consensus building process.

-Comprehensive mechanism of dialogue amongst stakeholders from the outset, based on a real bottom-up approach.

- Designed in such a way as to encounter complex issues and to harness the collective wisdom of participants, regardless of their educational and cultural background.

The priority now is to customise this instrument in spatial planning, aiming to improve existing participatory practices.

Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

Conclusion

- The **Limassol LDPP** has proved to be a unique opportunity to experience a place-based approach**:**

  - approach with long-term outcomes and perspective;

  - invests on heritage and other locational advantages;

  - vision, strategy and policies really adapted to the context and needs;

  - involvement of numerous stakeholders in a collaborative way;

  - vertical and horizontal integration achieved by the choice of participants and the cross-sectoral dialogue.

- It drove deep into the question of methodology and participation and its findings could be disseminated.

- It could be an aspiration for future models of development, especially during this period of economic crisis (more clear understanding of the place, recall of quality values, return to the roots of heritage).

- This exercise could thus become an opportunity to reassess EU's development paradigm and a source for clarifying and enriching the notion of territorial cohesion.

Vineyards vista in the Pacina area

Thank you for your attention!

Republic of Cyprus
Department of Town Planning and Housing
Nicosia, 03/09/2012