Territorial Intelligence as an Approach of Cooperation in the Territory: Case study in Hassan 1st University

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Abstract—This article is based on research conducted at the University Hassan 1st of Settat in Morocco, which aims to implement a territorial intelligence approach in the city of Settat. The design of a Web portal is an important step in our approach. The territorial information system would at first be a web portal, for supporting the network of local stakeholders around a common understanding on territorial issues and to establishing the elements of a territory project for a city marked by the non-use of ICT in the context of collective management.

Index Term—Portal, Territorial intelligence, University, territorial stakeholders, Innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the advanced regionalization in Morocco, the understanding of the territories, Territorial development, and the participatory approach constitute the three pillars of the new territorial governance. In that regard, Territorial intelligence is providing a policy response for a growing demand for more democracy. At the same time, however, it fosters a better understanding of the complexity of social, economic and environmental realities by the local actors and their interactions within territories.

It is intended to give effect to the creation of synergies between the different actors in the development process (local communities, associations, companies, development agencies, universities ...). The development of the territory now steps up from to the actions directed problems toward actions oriented actors.

This paradigm shift can both enhance the involvement of local actors and their ability to understand and to act efficiently. The approach envisaged reaffirms the importance of the intangible capital and builds its strategy on the mobilization capacity of this capital in both social and environmental dimensions, as the main resource the transformation of the territory.

Therefore, cooperation with university is a must if we are to reap the benefits of research and knowledge generation.

The main topic of this work is to define possible avenues to create favorable conditions for the emergence and consolidation of this territorial intelligence. In particular, we propose an examination of the conception phase of the territorial web portal and to see how it can present an opportunity to develop the potential for innovation and learning considering the common stakes identified by local stakeholders.

In this paper, we extend the concept of territorial intelligence that has followed the economic intelligence and used by the Moroccan Government to foster the development of the industrial clusters. We think that the territorial intelligence does not limit the territorial development. It is about more than just developing cooperation to economic growth and to business competitiveness. It complains other dimensions as regards to the perception of the territory and its dynamics.

The intelligence allocated to the territory cannot be reduced to the establishment of a system with an economic purpose. The intelligence must consider in all its dimensions as a living space for everyone, for social links and for the management of collective affairs and economic activities. We are also interested in value for the territory as storage medium and a dynamic for stimulating further opportunities to build a more secure future. It is possible to raise the concept of territorial intelligence and find the right dosage and the appropriate links which guarantee its manifestation to their various dimensions.

First, we present the group theory which guides our approach for the implementation of a territorial intelligence approach. We also present the role that the university can play for sustainable development processes of the territories, combining its societal assignment with education and science. In the second part, the case of the University of Hassan 1st helps to show how an action-research, which is still under development, can lead to a collective and dynamic learning by the territory's stakeholders together around its needs and its opportunities.

This action-research aims to, inter alia, the establishment of a web portal, and whose design/construction stage presents an excellent opportunity for bringing different stakeholders together and true moments of mutual discovery.
II. THE UNIVERSITY: AN ACTOR OF TERRITORIAL INTELLIGENCE AND NETWORKING OF STAKEHOLDERS

A. A detour through of the group theory  

We use an approach that it is based on the principle of the development of environment by the environment itself. Thus, it's a question of changing conduct to acquire that the various territorial actors appropriate their role in the system that will be instituted. Our reflexion led us to make a detour through of the group theory, following a detailed analysis of Marc Maesschalck (2009). One of the most important aims of this proposal is to mobilize actors, to incorporate the learning of these actors, to develop new adaptive behaviours, to build devices and to strengthen the capacity to do of the stakeholders.

The group theory underlines the importance of:  

- Adopting a model of governance in which care of the current state of relations between all stakeholder groups. In particular, faced with the management of common property resources problem, promote a negotiating behavior between the territorial stakeholders in which they have been evaluated each others in finding an agreement; it will no doubt be sub-optimal to achieve, but it is surely provisional and reviewable and for which the reconstruction processes would have allowed stakeholders to have expertise in terms of process revisability.

- Use a number of pragmatic programmes (Co-design, Benchmarking, Error-detection ...), that will provide a frame for the territorial actors around their territorial issues.

- Enhance within each group of actors (local community, companies, universities....) a self-transformation, by taking into account the new roles in their relations with each others to overcome any possible existing blockages in territorial governance as a collective action. Each group of actors should also evolve through the development of new capabilities, through the transposition of its capabilities to be used with non-routine domains by the representation of another social role. This is known as social reframing ».

This social reframing does not take place automatically by the local group of actors. We believe that the University as a meeting point of debate, the creation and transfer of knowledge. It is well placed to stimulate and to facilitate the necessary transformations among groups. Therefore, it is supposed to be at the heart of the dynamics of change in the territory and allows local actors to qualifying common learning actions, clarify, adapt and evaluate the mechanisms put in place to bolster its own transformation.

B. The University: An actor of territorial intelligence  

The role of the University within the territory is all the more important as it is now considered in the context of the knowledge society and the knowledge-based economy. University autonomy and its position outside economic and political rivalries at the local level allow it to initiate and assist actors in an action of strategic scope which aims to support the sustainable development of the territory.

All of this places the university at the core of sustainable development strategies of territories. Many experiences from all over the world have shown how it has successfully experimented in particular through the notions of Italian industrial district, networking within Japanese companies, Brazilian local group of production, Competitiveness Cluster and learning region.

The models available are many, while they are generally in support of the importance of proximity in exchanging knowledge and sharing skills.

In addition, universities and research centers give territories domestic absorptive capacities of innovation knowledge, produced around the world, thus encouraging more competitiveness of the territory.

The innovative environment is defined as the territorialised package in which interactions between economic agents that develop self throughout learning.

In fact, the daily interaction between the different actors is a source of the learning processes. It also permits to create new systems of thinking, organization and actions to new culture of learning about the territory.

Moreover, the Moroccan university since the 00-01 Act has integrated a third component to its general mission of research and training: Promotion of services to the territory and projects tackling the environmental and social issues.

The university has been since invited to give the basic concepts, the methods and tools used to understand real issues raised by citizens. It must promise an original and innovative contribution to clarify methodological and theoretical criteria to design and build up development projects.

University must take part of the action and become more open to its territorial environment. It should be at the heart of cultural and economic development to a knowledge society, through its opening towards the territorial environment and its learning and training role in the development and promotion of human resources.

University plays a fundamental role in the sustainable development within its territory, supported in this by its social responsibility, in support of the progress of education, science across their different entities: Laboratatories and researches centres...
III. TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COLLABORATIVE TERRITORIAL PORTAL FOR THE CITY OF SETTAT CITY

A. Methodology

This paper presents the Action research leeded within the city of Settat since 2009 and concerns the conception and the implementation of an approach of territorial intelligence. This action was mainly realized through seminars on the NICTs and Competitiveness of territories organized by the Hassan 1st University of Settat professors, trainers, elected representatives, local managers, experts, companies, institutions, associations and other local actors implied in the territory projects.

According to the conclusions of those seminars, we try to demonstrate that the territorial intelligence can constitute an appropriate solution to problems induced by the phenomena of globalisation which destabilize politically and economically the countries and territories. We want to make reflections on the modes and the processes of implementation of this approach and to define tracks to be followed. Several experiments has taken place in Morocco and in the world, but the originality of our approach is that it is performed by professors and by the civil society actors in an ascending approach with the objective to promote the university, as a full actor, at the heart of the territorial dynamics.

This experience is certainly enabled by Moroccan political moment characterized with an aim to found an advanced regionalization .Nevertheless; we must join a process of cultural and practical changes. Those changes are slow and irreversible, and contribute to the emergence of a new structuring of the system of territorial governance.

These seminars provided an opportunity for public debate and thematic workshops.

It has enabled them to reach agreement on the possible organization of territorial intelligence device in the form of an association of territorial intelligence in the two cities.

On the one hand, to make different actors of the territory participate in the process of elaboration of the concept and the implementation of the territorial intelligence approach and, on the other hand, because it guaranteed a big flexibility in its organization and its management, finally to put all the local actors on an equal footing.

Thus, the co-design portal is under way to obtain the first component of a territorial information system. The SIT will in particular support the interactions between local actors and reduce uncertainty in the territory.

B. The territorial information system: represent the territory, support interactions of the local actors

The information system is envisaged as a technological and human mediating device, designed by and for the actors with a conscious and effective will to correspond it to the representation which they make of their territory, that is, the interactions which they maintain or intend to maintain between them, and also to help structure and to support these interactions.

The information system would reduce the uncertainties and allow for the development of strategic information scanning. By using ICTs to develop decision-support tools, we would have at the same time an on-board intelligence very useful for the actors. The information system extends the human networks and facilitates the exchanges and the learning through consultation and "promote the collective intelligence which can be implemented on a wider scale" [14].

To accommodate complexity of the context, we chose the flexibility and the agility. We consider the information as "soft", even liquid, and this fluidity must not be sacrificed for a technological or organizational rigidity. The information system, while maintaining a minimal normative strength, must evolve based on a representation of a territory and the interactions which have, also to evolve. The retrospectives and the rebates in question have been positively received because the whole system is set up as vector of change. All this now, needs an agile, incremental and evolutionary management driven by demands and uses of the actors which stayed close to the developers or form part of them. The consistency of system is ensured by the coherence of interactions and relationship that it intends to support and by the shared vision of the territorial actors.

We chose that this information system was developed by the research laboratories of the university with the ability of "a subcontracting introduced in calculated well doses" (Laurent Bloch, 2005). However, the university is not considered as a simple stock of skills, but as a central actor of the territory. The project management is ensured by the territorial intelligence association.

C. Analysing preconditions for implementing a territorial web portal of the Settat city
TABLE I

Preconditions for implementing a territorial web portal of the SETTAT city

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<tr>
<th>Preconditions</th>
<th>Initiatives undertaken</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify the right stakeholders with common interest in the project and develop translation capacity of local actors</td>
<td>The first editions of seminars and meetings have enabled all participants better to express themselves freely about their territory. During this phase, the use of animators like Mr Thierry Moniquet, Consultant in Strategic Intelligence, was important to help local stakeholders to clarify their perception on the territory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set up a Bottom-up approach for the project to develop a common understanding of the context</td>
<td>The project initiated by the University Hassan 1st with a bottom-up approach, to have an understanding of the context in which the changes will be made. The beginning is to clarify and structure the local stakeholders’ perception.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote the capacity of local stakeholders to appropriate the project</td>
<td>The final decision will be taken by the local stockholders. Also, our approach is guided by the basic principle: Involvement in the early stages of design, local people are likely to develop ownership of a project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local expertise to develop relationship between actors and designers</td>
<td>The portal will be developed by the laboratories of the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan the project in the long-term to assure its sustainability</td>
<td>A long-term vision for the project is completely guaranteed by its nature. First, The associative structure was chosen to foster long-term commitment of stakeholders by giving different actors the opportunity to participate in the process of implementation of a territorial intelligence approach. It guaranteed a big flexibility in its organization and its management. It is hoped that an association of territorial intelligence shall be established in the city.</td>
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IV. CONCLUSIONS

Territorial intelligence consists of a network for territorial stakeholders to take part in its development by the pooling and sharing of information and measures. As well as achievement of its objectives and results depends on the communication and information flow that will have to be established. Accessibility of new information technology strengthens local development partnership.

This contribution was primarily made in order to establish the role which can be played by ICT for local development, also the role of the university within its territory as a main actor of this dynamic related to the fact that it represents the place where concentrate factors and activities of the production of knowledge.

We brought up some difficulties which obstruct the reintegration of the university in its territory. But we consider that its important potential of learning, knowledge and innovative dynamism, once freed from the incomprehension of local actors, the university goes on a mission to contribute in the territorial development of its territory.

REFERENCES


