

## Local and Global Sustainability: the Case-Study of Beja Municipality Local Agenda 21 Operationalization Challenges

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**Abstract :** Frequently, the Sustainable Development paradigm is considered the contemporary societies flag and is has been assuming different nuances on local and global dialogues. This reveals the ambivalent character associated to its implementation due, namely, to the kind of synergies that political institutions, social organizations and citizenry can actually create. The Sustainable Development concept needs further discussion so that it can be useful in decision-making processes. In fact, the polysemic nature of this concept has consistently undermined its credibility leading, among other factors, to the talk and action gap, as well as to misappropriations of this notion. The present study focuses on the importance in questioning the sustainable development operationalization, "To walk the talk", and intends, in a broad sense, identify prospects and the elements of sustainability that are included in strategic plans (global, national and local) and, in the strict sense, confront discourse and practice in the context of local public policies for sustainable development, in particular with regard to the implementation of Local Agenda 21 in the municipality of Beja (Portugal) in order to analyze at what extent the strategies adopted and implemented are aligned with the paradigm of sustainable development. The method is based on critical analysis of literature and official documentation, using three complementary approaches: a) exploratory review of literature in order to identify publications on sustainability and sustainable development; b) this second approach complements the first, focused on the official documentation for the adoption and implementation of sustainable development, which is produced in the global plan, regional, national and local levels; c) and the approach which is focused on official documentation that expresses the policy options, the strategic lines and actions for sustainable development implementation Beja's Municipality. The main results of this study highlight the type of alignment of the Beja's Municipality sustainable policies, concerning the officially stipulated for the promotion of sustainable development on the international agenda, stressing the potentialities, constraints and challenges of Agenda 21 Local implementation.

**Keywords :** sustainable development, Local Agenda 21, sustainable local public policies, Beja

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