CASTELLDEFELS INTERNATIONAL PROJECTION PLAN

Summary report
CASTELLDEFELS’ INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT

One of Castelldefels City Council’s priorities is to consolidate the international activities carried out by the municipality and raise its profile. For this reason Castelldefels has drafted its first 2014-2020 International Projection Plan, which will allow public policies and territorial development to be improved through the strategic reinforcement of its international activity, while contributing to achieving the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy for intelligent, sustainable, inclusive growth.

There are various reasons for this political commitment associated with the real situation in the municipality. These are:

- The increasingly global environment that characterises our societies, with a clear impact on the social, cultural and economic situation in Castelldefels.
- The need to open up the city to opportunities from outside the strictly local sphere.
- The wish to raise the profile of the specific social and cultural features of Castelldefels.
- Interest in learning from the experience of other cities that could be applied locally.
- Upholding the municipality’s interests before European institutions, as well as a wish to include the major debates with local repercussions taking place in the European and international spheres on the local agenda.
- The possibility of accessing sources of finance and European subsidies that could play a key role in implementing projects within the municipality.
- A wish to prepare the city for future challenges and help its population understand the true situation in other areas.

Castelldefels City Council has considerable experience in carrying out international activities, directly and with the support of initiatives stemming from the city’s network of associations. The International Projection Plan describes the municipality’s international track record, strengthening it with a cross-sector view of the area, to help position it better in order to benefit from and manage the opportunities and challenges arising in the international context. More than 70 people took part in preparing the Plan, including representatives of local agents and the general public, making it a forum for everyone to work on organising the plans for the city.

The International Projection Plan is intended to be a strategic planning and management tool bringing cohesion to international projection actions in accordance with the municipality’s general strategy. The Plan is based on three basic lines – knowledge, tourism and sport – which are the true strengths of Castelldefels. These follow different competitive paths that still have international potential to be developed.

The Castelldefels International Projection Plan was approved at the Full Council Meeting of 27 March 2014. The approval of this Plan makes Castelldefels a pioneering city in Catalonia in inclusive, concerted strategic planning of international activities throughout its area.
PRESENTATION OF THE CITY

The municipality of Castelldefels has 63,085 inhabitants and forms part of the metropolitan area of Barcelona. It has excellent communications with Barcelona and with the main communication and international trade infrastructures, such as the port and the airport. This proximity to Barcelona encourages the creation of synergies with the Catalan capital, which also allows it to add and contribute to the city’s international attraction capacity.

Main assets of the region

Castelldefels has assets associated with its geographical position and human capital, and with knowledge, culture, tourism and sports.

Attractive location.
Castelldefels enjoys an excellent setting on the Mediterranean coast. Its 5 km beach is skirted by a long promenade, most of which was recently opened. It lies in the beautiful area of the Garraf Natural Park and Llobregat Delta, which means it can offer an extremely high quality of life, close to Barcelona.

Human capital.
The municipality currently has residents from more than one hundred different countries. This diversity and emphasis on policies aimed at managing immigration and ensuring social cohesion promoted by the council have produced a welcoming, open city. Castelldefels also has extremely dynamic associations, offering international contacts and experience.

Culture.
The city has many items of public heritage, such as its castle and Romanesque church, both of which are emblematic buildings, and a defence tower network dating from the 16th century. It also has two important cultural buildings built much more recently: the Plaza Theatre and the Central Library.

Knowledge.
Castelldefels has an important knowledge and innovation cluster, the Mediterranean Technology Park (which includes the Baix Llobregat Campus of the Technical University of Catalonia), with institutions that bring enormous added value to the international projection of the municipality. These are educational and research centres with a solid track record and international presence. Their staff come from all over the world and are experts in the fields of telecommunications, aeronautics, photonics, mathematics, biotechnology, agricultural engineering and the environment.
- In the educational field, the municipality has the Barcelona School of Agricultural Engineering and the Castelldefels School of Telecommunications and Aerospace Engineering.
- In the research field, the municipality has the Institute of Photonic Sciences (ICFO), the International Centre for Numerical Methods in Engineering (CIMNE), the Telecommunications Technology Centre of Catalonia (CTTC), the I2Cat Foundation and the Research Centre for Agri-Food Economy and Development (CREDA).
Sports area.
Castelldefels has a large number of public and private sports facilities including the Olympic Canal of Catalonia, a leading water sports infrastructure, with calm waters for canoeing and cable water skiing. The municipality is also outstanding for its public and private sport management experience and its history in organising sports events with an international dimension.

Consolidated tourist sector.
Castelldefels has an attractive range of tourism including an excellent beach, a varied range of leisure and sports activities, cultural vitality, access to the Garraf Natural Park, diverse, competitive culinary options and hotel establishments catering for all tastes.

STRATEGIC VISION

Starting point

In recent years, Castelldefels City Council has implemented an active international policy. For example, it has taken part in European projects and in activities to raise awareness of the European integration process through activities such as promoting exchanges with institutes from all over Europe within the framework of the Comenius programme. Moreover, as a result of international cooperation activities, the city’s associations have developed valuable expertise in international relations. In particular, the municipality has taken part in the LocalMed Platform promoted by Barcelona Provincial Council for cooperation with municipalities in northern Morocco.

Castelldefels also has a solid track record in national and international promotion as a tourist resort, through the development of alliances with public and private agents and active participation in international tourism trade fairs. Castelldefels was also an Olympic sub-venue during the 1992 Games in Barcelona, which has allowed it to position itself internationally as a sports city.

In this respect, an active policy has been promoted to encourage sport among the public and host important sports events. For this reason, in 2013 the city was chosen as the European City of Sport and also as the City of Catalan Basketball. In addition, in 2017 it will be a sub-venue for the Mediterranean Games. Equally notable is the international dimension of its educational, research, development and innovation centres, which are integrated into the Mediterranean Technology Park and benefit from consolidated international projection.

However, alongside this, some elements must be readdressed to ensure the economic and social sustainability of the city in the medium and long term. In this respect, the impact of the economic crisis on the municipality should be mentioned, as well as a range of tourism excessively focused on the summer season and sometimes associated with aspects such as “sun and sea”. In addition, the Mediterranean Technology Park appears to be somewhat disconnected from the city, and there is evidence of a need to consolidate strategic coordination between international activities and sector-based programmes promoted by the city council and the international interests of local agents and citizens.

Objectives
Considering the preliminary diagnosis, the objectives of the Castelldefels Projection Plan are as follows.
- Associate the Castelldefels brand with tourism, and also with sports and knowledge.
- Eliminate the seasonal nature of tourism and increase annual tourist volumes.
• Turn the beach into a leading international venue for practising sport and enjoying an excellent lifestyle all the year round.
• Strengthen links and increase cooperation between the city, the Mediterranean Technology Park and the Technical University of Catalonia Campus.
• Facilitate access to European funds and projects and international links.
• Establish a link between cooperation for development and city projects.
• Promote synergies and cooperation between the city council, local agents and citizens in relation to international initiatives.
• Strengthen the receptiveness of the public, businesses and institutions to the international sphere, preparation for the future and ensuring social sustainability.

In this respect, Castelldefels’ international strategy is focused on jointly revitalising the city’s assets so they can achieve the desired potential and impact in the municipality’s international projection. Based on this consideration, Castelldefels needs to reinforce its external and international projection in relation to:
• Excellence in knowledge and innovation.
• Being a reference in water sports, particularly canoeing.
• The quality of its services for visitors and tourists.
• Its rich culture, heritage and gastronomy.

Line 1. Castelldefels, city of knowledge and innovation

Castelldefels has a knowledge and innovation cluster, with institutions bringing considerable added value to the municipality’s international projection. Taking the 2020 timeline as a reference, Castelldefels will strive to move from being a knowledge cluster to a city of knowledge. This objective lies within the European strategy for the next six years (Europe 2020), confirming the important of the knowledge society and promoting the intensification of cooperation between university, research and local agents.

The objectives in this area are:
• To associate the Castelldefels brand with knowledge, science and technology.
• To set up a network formed by knowledge sectors and international programmes already begun or about to be started.
• To integrate the Mediterranean Technology Park (MTP) into the city in order to associate the Castelldefels brand with the activities and institutions of the Park.

Line 2. Castelldefels, a city with a calling for sport

Castelldefels has a series of top-class assets for learning and practising amateur or professional sport. The international projection strategy promotes these assets in order to associate the Castelldefels brand with sport, sport tourism and elite athletes related to Castelldefels. In this respect, Castelldefels beach is especially important, because of its length, width, quality and location near Barcelona, providing a place to practice of various sports on the sand (tennis, volleyball, rugby, paddle tennis, badminton, football, ultimate frisbee, etc. in their different beach modes) and water sports (kitesurfing, windsur
fishing, sailing, jet skiing, angling and other water sports) and attracting visitors, tourists and athletes from all around the world.

The beach will be established as a place for practising sport at any time of year, helping eliminate the seasonal nature of sport tourism, increasing economic activity and raising the city’s profile.

The specific objectives in this area are:
- To become a leader in sport tourism in southern Europe, and, in particular, in international cable water skiing and calm-water canoeing.
- To develop expertise in research and practising high-performance sports.

**Line 3. Castelldefels, a tourist city**

Due to its coastal location and proximity to Barcelona, the municipality has trajectory strong track record in tourism, traditionally linked to its beach. This strategic line is aimed precisely at eliminating the seasonal nature of tourism and consolidating a year-round attraction by adding scientific tourism and congresses and conventions to beach tourism and promoting other assets in the region. Castelldefels will also implement activities that relate its brand to the Barcelona brand in order to attract visitors and tourists.

The specific objectives in this area are:
- To consolidate and promote tourism in order to develop a renewed strategy and image through new programmes.
- To enhance existing assets and resources in order to make them profitable and improve tourist packages.

**IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PLAN**

Implementing the internationalisation strategy means incorporating a joint cross-departmental vision into the activities carried out by Castelldefels City Council in this field. The synergies that may arise between the three priority lines on a local and an international scale will contribute to shaping the strategy of an integrated city with a potential impact on commerce, enterprise, youth, culture and social cohesion, among other aspects.

**Institutional and local government consolidation**

The preparation of the International Projection Plan has led to the creation of a cross-departmental working structure within the city council, as a work space shared by the services most directly concerned with the international projection of the city. This cross-departmental work space will be continued to ensure the activities defined within the framework of the Plan are carried out.

The Plan preparation process itself has led to the creation of a second structure, the Castelldefels International Projection Commission, as a joint body formed by the city council and local agents, represented by those related to the lines and objectives of the Plan. This commission is one of the fundamental elements for jointly managing the implementation of the activities envisaged in the Plan, with the active involvement of important representatives from civil society to generate greater joint responsibility in implementing this city project.
Instruments

Priority is given to specific instruments for facilitating the execution of the Plan and ensuring its sustainability.

- Strengthening cooperation with cities that have similar characteristics and interests to those of Castelldefels in other regions, within the framework of European and international projects and networks, in order to share and learn from strategies, public policies and initiatives of interest to the city.
- Monitoring European policies and the incorporation into the local agenda of the major European and international debates with a local impact.
- Fostering initiatives related to communication and marketing to publicise the objectives and progress of the Plan and position Castelldefels on the international map, in accordance with the assets to be strengthened. These activities will have a local and an international scope.
- Establishing alliances with the private sector to promote projects and events with international potential.
- Involving local agents and the general public in the city’s international activities through public information initiatives and the incorporation of an international aspect in activities already carried out on a joint basis, if it is considered relevant, as well as encouraging a network of citizens from Castelldefels who are interested in contributing to the international projection of the municipality.
- Consolidating the structure responsible for managing the International Projection Plan and for coordinating international activities in the city.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Castelldefels International Projection Plan is a roadmap for consolidating the city’s international projection. It consists of a programme of activities to be carried out during the period 2014-2020. This timeframe will allow the annual and mid-term review of the activities to ensure the objectives established in the Plan are being met. The Plan will be monitored and evaluated within the framework of its International Projection Commission, ensuring that local agents also become involved in this process and promoting shared learning. The public will be informed of the Plan evaluation results in the information sessions held while it is being implemented.
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Contact information
Àrea de Cooperació i Participació Ciutadana
/Public Participation and Cooperation Section/
Castelldefels City Council
Tel. +34 936 651 150 ext. 1273
E-mail: cooperacio@castelldefels.org
Website: www.castelldefels.org/cooperacio

supported by:

Diputació
Barcelona