

Strategic Planning for a Sustainable Innovation Zone in Porto Alegre

Global Urban Development/Paralelo Vivo/Pulsar course description

Tuesdays, 19:00-22:00, October 27-December 15

Paralelo Vivo (PV), Pinheiro Machado 40, Independencia, Porto Alegre

Sustainable Innovation Zones are a key action step recommended by Global Urban Development (GUD) in the March 2015 World Bank-funded economic strategy for Rio Grande do Sul to become the most sustainable and innovative place in Latin America by 2030:

http://www.globalurban.org/2015_RS_LEAPFROG_ECONOMIC_STRATEGY.pdf.

Sustainable Innovation Zones combine six key elements: 1) Innovation and Technology; 2) Entrepreneurship and Startups; 3) Sustainability and Resource Efficiency; 4) Creativity and Collaboration; 5) Participatory Community Management; and 6) Business-Friendly Environment.

According to the Leapfrog Economic Strategy's Executive Summary (pages 4-5):

“The focus on Sustainable Innovation is vital for the success of the Leapfrog Economic Strategy. The future of the world will be about finding ways for billions of people to live and thrive in peace with each other and in peace with nature. And the good news is that in the 21st century, people, places, and organizations can literally ‘get richer by becoming greener’ – earning and saving more money by conserving and reusing resources much more efficiently.”

“Many of the major technological advances of the coming decades will involve enabling people to enjoy economic prosperity and quality of life in ways that conserve and reuse natural resources and protect and enhance global ecosystems. The places in the world that Leapfrog into such a future, as some places already are doing, will have a huge economic competitive advantage over the rest of the world. And the first places among emerging economies in developing countries that can accomplish such technological breakthroughs definitely will Leapfrog into the front ranks of global competitiveness. This will happen for two main reasons. First, because their expertise and experience, reflected in their products and services, will be of enormous value to the rest of the world, as it will be to their own people.”

“Second, because many global resources will flow to such places from elsewhere: talent, technologies, investors, entrepreneurs, students, scholars, traders, tourists, developers, donors, and much more. The world has a huge interest in supporting places committed to Sustainable Innovation, and this growing interest and the global resources that come with it will increase exponentially during the coming decade.”

“Rio Grande do Sul now has the opportunity, by committing in 2015 to become the most sustainable and innovative place in Latin America by 2030, to achieve exemplary, high-quality, and broad-based economic growth over the next 16 years. The following report outlines key strategies, and features many detailed examples and opportunities. One of the most important of these is Sustainable Innovation Zones.”

“Sustainable Innovation Zones are a centerpiece of the RS 2030 Leapfrog Economic Strategy. These many special areas in municipalities throughout the state will be among the leading centers for research and development of new technologies, entrepreneurial startups and business incubation and acceleration, state-of-the-art methods for improving sustainability and resource efficiency in business and daily life, reducing burdensome rules and regulations to create a more business-friendly environment, establishing public-private collaboration in strategic investments and participatory urban management, and much more.”

“Sustainable Innovation Zones in Rio Grande do Sul will be located in mixed-use communities near colleges and universities, technology parks, and technology business incubators, with commerce, housing, and other key amenities and services. They will be magnets for international talent and experiments in 21st century technology.”

The RS Leapfrog Economic Strategy suggests “the 4th District could become one of the first Sustainable Innovation Zones in Rio Grande do Sul” (page 140). This new course will initiate strategic planning and stakeholder outreach to enable Independencia and Floresta to organize a Sustainable Innovation Zone.

Through this course and related entrepreneurial activities, Paralelo Vivo (and its many member organizations, including Pulsar and GUD) can serve as an anchor and catalyst for the Sustainable Innovation Zone. Paralelo Vivo, a Sustainable Innovation Hub located in the 4th District near Shopping Total and Nós Coworking, is the first innovation ecosystem/startup hub/shared workspace in Latin America to focus primarily on promoting and supporting sustainable/green/cleantech businesses.

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Students in the course will work together in groups on each of these six elements, engaging in detailed library and online research, and conducting extensive interviews with key stakeholders and community leaders, to produce Asset Maps and Network Analyses, and prepare Strategic Action Initiatives generating specific initiatives and concrete progress in 2016 to organize an economically successful and culturally vibrant Sustainable Innovation Zone in Independencia and Floresta.

All students enrolled in the Tuesday night Sustainable Innovation Zone course are also welcome to participate (for no additional fee) in the Thursday night (7-10 pm) Business Academy coaching at PV, furthering the work of the recent Entrepreneurship Challenge at UFRGS. The PV-Pulsar-GUD Business Academy coaching will provide technical advice, mentoring, and collaborative activities helping enable students to startup and expand sustainable/green/cleantech businesses that will grow dynamically inside the new Sustainable Innovation Zone.

Class Schedule:

October 27: Introductions of faculty and students. Overview of the course. Description of the six working groups to be formed: 1) Innovation and Technology; 2) Entrepreneurship and Startups; 3) Sustainability and Resource Efficiency; 4) Creativity and Collaboration; 5) Participatory Community Management; and 6) Business-Friendly Environment. Description of each group's two main assignments in strategic planning for a Sustainable Innovation Zone: a) Asset Mapping and Network Analysis; and b) Strategic Action Initiatives. Introduction of group mentors. Team exercise. Formation and initial meeting of the six groups.

November 3: Lecture and discussion of GUD's 2015 Rio Grande do Sul report (http://www.globalurban.org/2015_RS_LEAPFROG_ECONOMIC_STRATEGY.pdf), the assigned reading for this class session. Groups present lessons learned from the Leapfrog Strategy to apply in the Sustainable Innovation Zone. Discussion of Asset Mapping and Network Analysis with the six working groups.

November 10: Lecture and discussion of NoMa case study. GUD's OECD NoMa report will be the assigned reading for this class session: (http://www.globalurban.org/GUD_OECD_NoMa_Report.pdf). Review pages 38-43, 125-131, 140-141, and 144-148 from the RS Leapfrog Economic Strategy. Active working group process on Asset Mapping and Network Analysis. Planning for walking tour and site visit of the Sustainable Innovation Zone.

November 17: Extensive discussion by the six working groups, and an Asset Mapping and Network Analysis exercise.

November 24: Brief presentations of the draft Asset Maps and Network Analyses by the six working groups, with extensive discussion and feedback, including from invited community leaders, followed by a co-creation workshop.

November 25: Community ShareFest evening event at PV Hub, including presentations and discussion by the six working groups about the Sustainable Innovation Zone.

November 29: Global Climate Change Rally at Parque Farroupilha/Redencao, including a march from the PV Hub highlighting the Sustainable Innovation Zone.

December 1: Intensive workshop on designing Strategic Action Initiatives.

December 8: Final presentation of Asset Maps and Network Analyses by the six working groups, with discussion and feedback from faculty, students, mentors, and invited community guests.

December 15: Final presentation of Strategic Action Initiatives by the six working groups, with discussion and feedback from faculty, students, mentors, and invited community guests.