The 1st Strategic Planning System in Lisbon, implemented between 1990 and 1995 was developed over three levels – the Strategic Plan approved in 1992, the Municipal Master Plan, approved in 1994, and Priority Projects and Plans, developed over this period.

The aims of Lisbon Strategic Plan were programmed to be implemented in phases targeted to be accomplished in 2000. It must be stressed that during the last decade Lisbon suffered considerable changes which greatly improved the infrastructure levels of the environment, its road network, its green areas the selective collection of solid residues and the provision of a number of public equipments – namely the leisure. In 1998 there were also effective important requalification works in riverfront areas by the Lisbon Port Authority and the Eastern Sector of the city in association with the World Exhibition site agency.

These objectives aimed to allow the progress of the city as a world of profound changes orientated towards the future, thus suppressing the most critical problems of the city in the residential and urban structure sectors. This substantial progressive effort required a clear definition of the objective major guidelines, reinforcing Lisbon as the great metropolitan Centre of its surrounding districts and as a major metropolis in a National and International scale. This drive towards requalification of the city’s spaces and its urban infrastructures aimed to attend to real needs of its users.

In 1995, the change of executive of the Lisbon City Council allows for a moratorium period in the Strategic Planning Department of the municipality.
The election of a new council executive in 2001, led to organisational restructuring, wherein strategic planning was resumed, including the creation of the Strategic Planning Department (DPE). The municipality thus resumed an attitude and returned to methods related to business strategic planning, thereby aiming to ensure that planning has a global, interactive and participative dimension - making it flexible but not necessarily casuistic.

In a first stage, the current executive drew up a Strategic Vision for the city of Lisbon, positioning it as an Atlantic Capital of Europe and as a European Mediterranean Port, thus taking advantage of a set of factors of undeniable value, in particular the city’s geographic position, natural, built and cultural heritage, economic dynamism and its distinction within the European context. This strategic vision was based on four Urban Development action lines:

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<th>Lisbon – City of Neighbourhoods</th>
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<td>Lisbon – City of Cultures</td>
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<td>Lisbon – City of Modernity and Innovation</td>
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Specific objectives of urban and social intervention are associated to each of these action lines, that aim to transform Lisbon into a vibrant and more active and creative city, that invests in improving the quality standards of urban life for its residents and visitors.

As a result, a summary was drawn up of the City’s Weaknesses and Strengths, prepared on the basis of all the Analytic Studies and aimed at fostering Focalised Participation. On the basis of the Focalised Participation method, thematic Workshops were organised, focusing on the various associated topics: Mobility, Urban renewal / Local agenda 21, Distribution and logistics, Economic Activities, Loading and Unloading of goos, Education, Instruction, Housing and Social Action, Commerce and Supplies, Archaeology and Tourism, involving a total of 400 invited guests, with the support of institutions, city agents and specialists. Over the last decade, the actors that intervene in the city have expressed a demand to improve the local environment, the quality of life, and rehabilitation of existing buildings and unoccupied dwellings, thus constituting a premise for the development of Lisbon as the nation’s capital and its role as a European Atlantic Capital in the Iberian and European context.

With the other Executive (2001-2005), conservation and urban renewal - hitherto regarded a residual area of urban policy restricted to one-off interventions in the Historic residential zones - assumed a greater relevance within the framework of intervention policies and began to be viewed as a Strategic Area and guideline of urban
management for the city as a whole, expressed in the development action line - “Lisbon, City of Neighbourhoods”.

The new strategic vision is tailored to the socio-economic and urban realities faced by the city and corresponds to work conducted within the framework of Revision of the Municipal Master Plan and preparation of the Strategic Vision for the City, whose prime objective is Integrated Urban Renewal and Urban Enhancement of Lisbon’s Neighbourhoods, attracting residents back to the city’s neighbourhoods, through traffic constraints and creation of proximity transport facilities and equipment, in order to make the city more attractive as a place to live, work and visit. This is a complex project involving a wide array of programmes and actions – Inventory, Urban Renewal, Administrative Modernisation, Mobility, Urban Renewal aimed at overcoming the lack of proximity facilities and green spaces - that jointly contribute to enhancing the city’s identity and improving the quality of life of its residents.

It is a fact that in the city of Lisbon, around 60% of current requests for building permits are for urban rehabilitation initiatives as compared to the European average of 33% and the national average of 5% in 2001.

This corresponds to a New Urban Culture, based on a global strategic vision for the sustainable development of Lisbon, including an emphasis on rehabilitation and resettlement of central zones in opposition to unbridled and low quality growth of surrounding areas. The new strategy aims to attract investments and motivate property owners and real-estate promoters to invest in Urban Renewal and enhancement of Lisbon’s urban spaces.

We are certain that the project of strengthening the identity of historic neighbourhoods has contributed towards Lisbon’s urban requalification and increased its international projection. This project requires a continued commitment to urban rehabilitation of the city and implementation of a set of structuring strategic projects that require considerable good will, quality and value. Both of these aspects constitute essential pre-requisites for renewal of the city’s urban competitiveness and its internationalisation and integration within global networks of economic and social systems.
On the other hand, the extensive historic zone in Lisbon is inextricably associated to the duality of the river/hills. Lisbon aims to be more strongly connect to its estuary without loosing its port facilities.

Much more than a mere “estuary–city” – a characteristic shared by many of the world’s cities, Lisbon is a paradigm example of the distinctively Portuguese tradition of city-building, i.e. the city was born from the “combination of a bay or sheltered cove and a craggy hill” thus constituting an open port of call for all types of people and merchandise.
The water Front Urban requalification is also a major challenge. In the city’s eastern zone, in continuation of the Expo98 initiative, we are concluding the Plan for the Eastern Riverside Zone, that will welcome around 25,000 new residents by 2010 and Alcântara XXI, an obsolete industrial area with strong affinities with the Portuguese overseas territories. Presently is under way a major multifunctional urban conversion – Which comprehends residential and new economic activities, with the capacity to attract 5,000 new residents, with several urban projects monitored and planned in association with Lisbon Municipal Council by Lisbon City Council in association with private enterprises and adjudicated to architects of international renown such as Renzo piano, Jean Nouvel, Norman Foster.

Last but not least, the renovation of urban policies and the choice in favour of greater social cohesion will also serve as a therapy against the trends of depopulation and ageing of the resident population, thus delivering clear advantages for local residents, users (who work but do not live in Lisbon) and visiting tourists.

The present new executive of the Lisbon City Council delineates a new Strategic Vision for Lisbon 2012 to be included in Second Strategic Plan of the city. This Second Plan’s guidelines implement a progressive through the innovative concepts such as attracting new clusters to the municipality core – such as Biotechnology; Biomedicine; Audiovisual, Media and Multimedia Technologies; and Creative Industries ranging from Fashion to Design – Environmental Sciences and Renewable Energies – thus strengthening the historic core of the city with a wide range of activities and residential.