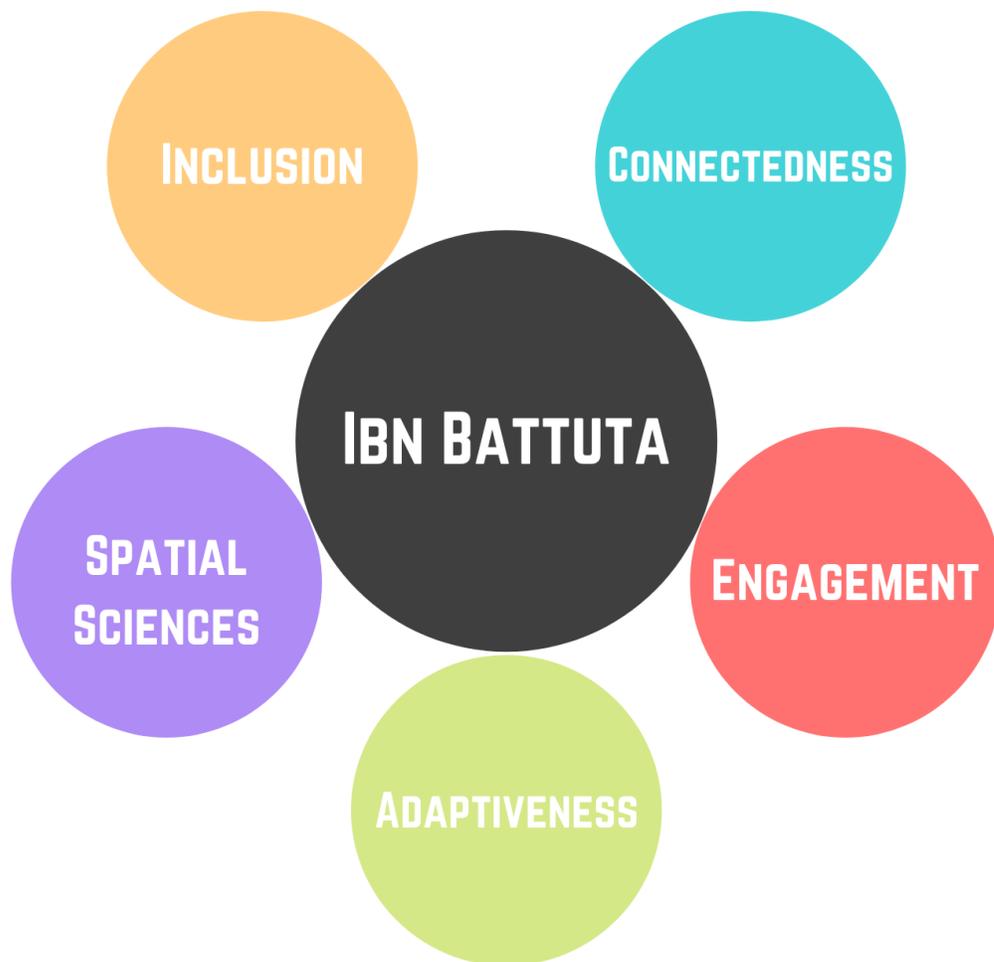


STRATEGIC POLICY IBN BATTUTA

2020-2025





Ibn Battuta

Preface

Dear reader,

This is the Strategic Policy 2020 - 2025 of the Faculty Association of Spatial Sciences Ibn Battuta. This Strategic Policy was introduced in 2020 and shows our vision for Ibn Battuta for the coming five years. This document will guide boards to follow the course as envisioned by its members. The Strategic Policy can be used by boards to base their Yearly Policies on and will therefore connect the different association years to each other. This document will be a guideline for future boards and ensures the continuity of Ibn Battuta.

Enjoy reading!

With kind regards,
The 59th Board of Faculty Association of Spatial Sciences Ibn Battuta,

Tess ten Have
Charlotte Breunis
Yildiz Heeringa
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Ibn Battuta

Reading Guide

To be able to read and understand the relevance of the Strategic Policy, it is important to know the format and how it came to be. This format has for the main part been set up by the 58th Board in collaboration with former Board members that worked with the previous ‘Strategic Vision’. The complete format proposal, as written by the 58th Board, can be found in the Appendix.

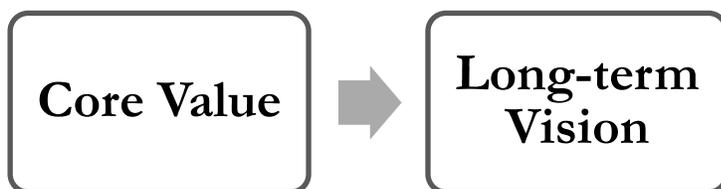
The Strategic Policy is centered around the Core Values of the Association; *Inclusion, Connectedness, Engagement, Adaptiveness, and Spatial Sciences*. These broadly formulated values are made more concrete with a subtitle that defines what the Core Value means for Ibn Battuta specifically. The Long-term Vision brings the time component into play and describes our vision on how to sustain the Core Values in the coming years. For some topics, it is valuable to have a concrete objective to work towards. In these cases, Long-term Goals are attached to the Long-term Visions. The Yearly Policies are not part of the Strategic Policy but are the lowest scale step in the implementation of the Strategic Policy and therefore part of the process.

Core Values

To be able to formulate a vision for the future of Ibn Battuta, it is important to acknowledge the principles of the Association that we as members value the most and want to preserve in the coming years. The values form the base of the Strategic Policy so that the document can guarantee the continuity of the Core Values, and in doing so, of the Association.

Long-term Visions

How to expand and/or preserve the formulated Core Values in the next five years, depends on the expected developments within and around Ibn Battuta and their effects on the Association. The Long-term Visions within the Strategic Policy are more variable than the Core Values and should be reviewed critically every year to decide if they still serve the Core Values, and thus the continuation of the Association, in the most optimal way.



Long-term Goals

For certain topics in the Strategic Policy, it can be possible to attach Long-term Goals to the Long-term Vision to make it more concrete what to achieve over the coming years. The Long-term Goal supports the Long-term Vision but is much more controllable and therefore different from the vision.



Ibn Battuta

Yearly Policy

Every year, the Board writes a Yearly Policy in which they explain which policy-related matters they would like to keep, obtain, or change within their year. Although boards have a lot of freedom to decide the course of this document, it should be guided by the Core Values and Long-term Visions that are established in the Strategic Policy. If the Yearly Policy is seen as the lowest ‘scale level’ of the Strategic Policy, it should be easier for boards to substantiate how their Yearly Policy supports it.

The Strategic Policy will be reviewed yearly to keep the Long-term Visions and Goals up-to-date. It is valuable to see how and why visions and goals change over the years. The changes made to the visions and goals will therefore be preserved in the Appendix. Every Core Value is followed by a ‘Status Quo’. Preserving the previous ‘Status Quo’ will make it easier to see how the Association has developed over the years. A manual on how boards should review the Strategic Policy is added to the Appendix.

Member involvement

By using various means, members and interested parties have been involved in the writing process to make it a Strategic Policy that is formed by a broad and diverse group of ‘stakeholders’. The table below shows all activities/initiatives organized during the Association Year 2019-2020 to gather input. Throughout the year, several statements/questions regarding the Strategic Policy were shown on the television screen and social media channels for members to respond to.

| Month | Activity | Participants | Extra information |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>October</i> | October GMA | Around 50 | The format was presented and input was gathered using beer coasters. |
| | Committee Meetings | Committee members (Around 75) | The Strategic Policy was a discussion point on the agenda of each committee. |
| <i>November</i> | Input Sessions Strategic Policy | 7 | During the input sessions we presented a list of concept values to discuss their relevance. <i>Core Values: Internationalization, Transparency, Professionalization, Employability, Openness, Sustainability, Introduction Period</i> |
| | TGIF-drink: The Future of Ibn Battuta | 21 | During the drink, a new list of values was presented. Participants could respond and give new ideas by writing on blanc posters. <i>Concept Core Values: Being International, Being Transparent about the Structure & Administrative Power within Ibn Battuta, Professionalism, Career Preparation, Openness & Social Networks, Being Future-Proof, Engaging Students through an extensive Introduction Period</i> |
| <i>December - January</i> | Meetings - Strategy Advisor of the Faculty | - | The Strategy Advisor helped set up clear Core Values and make sure they were in line with the Faculty. |
| | Online survey | 22 | Robin Neef helped to set up a survey, with the purpose of reaching inactive-/non-members and Friends. |
| <i>February</i> | February GMA | Around 40 | The Core Values and introductions to the Long-term Visions were presented during the GMA. |
| <i>February - July</i> | Meetings (former) Board members | | During this period, the Strategic Visions were written and discussed with former Board members, members of the Advisory Council, and the 59 th Candidate Board. |



Ibn Battuta

Overview

Ibn Battuta stands for *Inclusion, Connectedness, Engagement, Adaptiveness, and Spatial Sciences*.

Inclusion

Ibn Battuta is about having an open atmosphere that will make everyone feel welcome to join the Ibn Battuta-community.

The supporting Long-term Vision will explain how Ibn Battuta will develop in making everyone who is interested in joining the Association feel welcome to do so. It will elaborate on the role that the Coffee Room, the Board and other active members have in achieving this vision.

Connectedness

Ibn Battuta is about offering students a platform to create social, professional, international, and faculty networks.

The supporting Long-term Vision will explain how Ibn Battuta helps students make connections with other students through a wide range of activities and how the Association will function as a bridge between the students and the Faculty (Staff). It will also reflect on how Ibn Battuta facilitates opportunities to create networks outside of the Netherlands by maintaining contact with international alumni and Exchange students, and what role the Association has in helping students to connect to and orientate on the working field of spatial sciences. Part of being able to offer these platforms is by keeping close connections to alumni of the Faculty and Friends of Ibn Battuta.

Engagement

Ibn Battuta is about actively engaging Bachelor, (Pre-)Master and Exchange students.

The supporting Long-term Vision will explain how Ibn Battuta will try to characterize itself more as a 'Faculty Association'. The focus, which is still mainly on Bachelor students, will be expanded to (Pre-)Master and Exchange students as well. To actively engage these students, the Long-term Vision will explain the role of the introduction period, and the role of promotion and a general activity/year planning that will contribute to achieving this vision. In addition to suggesting how to engage students, the vision will also elaborate on how to make sure that students stay active within Ibn Battuta throughout their student period.

Adaptiveness

Ibn Battuta is about stability while being able to adapt to expectations from inside as well as outside the Association.

The supporting Long-term Vision will explain how this adaptiveness has to start with a robust basis, which includes a stable financial situation. From there on, the Association will be able to live up to expectations from inside the Association, such as being transparent about the organizational aspect of the Association, clear acquisition goals, and internationalization. On the other hand, the vision will focus on how the Association has to stay up-to-date with expectations from outside the Association, such as having a professional corporate identity and trends like sustainability and the current student financial situation.

Spatial Sciences

Ibn Battuta is about uniting geographers and planners.

The supporting Long-term Vision will explain how Ibn Battuta brings together students with a common interest in geography and spatial planning. It will elaborate on how the Association tries to fuel this interest by organizing activities that give a deeper understanding of the field of study.



Ibn Battuta

1. Inclusion

Ibn Battuta is about having an open atmosphere that will make everyone feel welcome to join the Ibn Battuta-community.

Status Quo 2020

The Coffee Room is often described as the heart of the Association. Nevertheless, the main language spoken within the Coffee Room is Dutch. Therefore, it is mostly Dutch students that are present in the Coffee Room. International students do find their way to our committees and activities. In the past year, seven out of the twelve committees have contained at least one international member. From 2019 onwards, also the Board is open for international students to apply, and with success. In 2020 the first international member entered the Candidate Board. Also regarding the Master students, inclusion is getting better. With the renewed Master Network (the Master Committee), Master students who were not active during their bachelor found their way to this committee.

Especially on Ameland and on the introduction day, Bachelor students that are already members of Ibn Battuta try hard to include new first-year students. Active members especially convey their enthusiasm during these times. Although in general Ibn Battuta is often described as welcoming, we also hear contrasting opinions from non-active members. It may well be that Ibn Battuta is fun on the inside but hard to reach from the outside for some people.

Long-term Vision

Inclusion

Ibn Battuta is about having an open atmosphere that will make everyone feel welcome to join the Ibn Battuta-community.



Every student at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences should feel welcome to become an (active) member. Also after their first year and outside of the introduction periods. The Board has an exemplary role and should beware of exclusion through inclusion.

In everything that Ibn Battuta does or where her members are, inclusion should be taken into consideration. Not having a group of friends beforehand to join an activity with, should not be a problem because the Board and ideally also the (active) members will accept and include this person. Also, the Coffee Room should be welcoming to everyone. The Board should have an exemplary role and always be alert for ways to increase the inclusion in the Association.

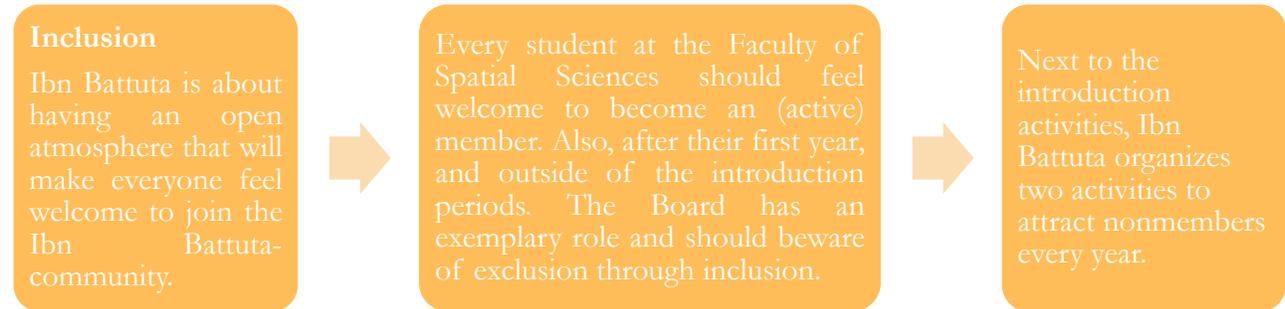
In essence, everyone from the Faculty of Spatial Sciences should feel free and welcome to become an (active) member of Ibn Battuta. This also includes people who are not in their first year anymore or people that want to become a member outside the introduction periods of either the bachelor or master programs.



Ibn Battuta

Besides, it must be ensured not to exclude through inclusion. For example, to include international students in the Coffee Room, you might force the rule to only allow English in the Coffee Room. However, this might lead to the exclusion of students that feel less comfortable speaking in English. Instead, search for ways in which difficult changes occur fluently.

Long-term Goals



Ibn Battuta

2. Connectedness

Ibn Battuta is about offering students a platform to create and maintain social, professional, international, and faculty networks.

Status Quo 2020

Ibn Battuta focuses on three types of activities: social, course-broadening, and career-related. Especially the trips Ibn Battuta organizes are important for the social bonding between members. The Social Drinks, that are bigger and more anonymous, are a great way to attract a broader group of members. Another great place for social bonding is the Coffee Room, which attracts a smaller group of members than activities do. To get members into contact with the Association's professional contacts, the Career Day is an important event. In addition, the LinkedIn page and Career tab on the website are used to provide information about the working field. Over the past three years, the Master Network has been the Association's platform for other career-related activities.

Faculty Staff sporadically visit activities of Ibn Battuta, but these are often the same activities, such as the Spatial Sciences Quiz and the Career Day, every year (and often the same staff members as well).

Long-term Vision

Connectedness

Ibn Battuta is about offering students a platform to create and maintain social, professional, international, and faculty networks.



Ibn Battuta should offer her members a range of activities and other platforms to promote the interaction between students. In addition, she has to promote interaction between students and relations in the field of spatial science, international relations, and Faculty Staff.

By mentioning Social Networks, the relations built between students is meant. Ibn Battuta has to offer the right platforms to promote social bonding between members. To achieve this, the Association has to offer a wide range of activities with differing focuses for all types of students at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, and activities focused on bringing these types of students together. Next to physical activities, Ibn Battuta should promote other ways of maintaining contact to strengthen the bond between members.

By mentioning Professional Networks, the connection between students and relations in the field of spatial science is meant. Ibn Battuta has to offer the right platforms for students to get into contact with, and orientate on the working field. To achieve this, Ibn Battuta has to maintain connections with and keep a well-maintained administration of former members. There should be an active policy regarding Friends of Ibn Battuta, and close collaboration with the Professor Keuning Vereniging (PKV). In addition, Ibn Battuta has to offer her members a range of career-related activities. The Master Network will have a big role in organizing these activities.



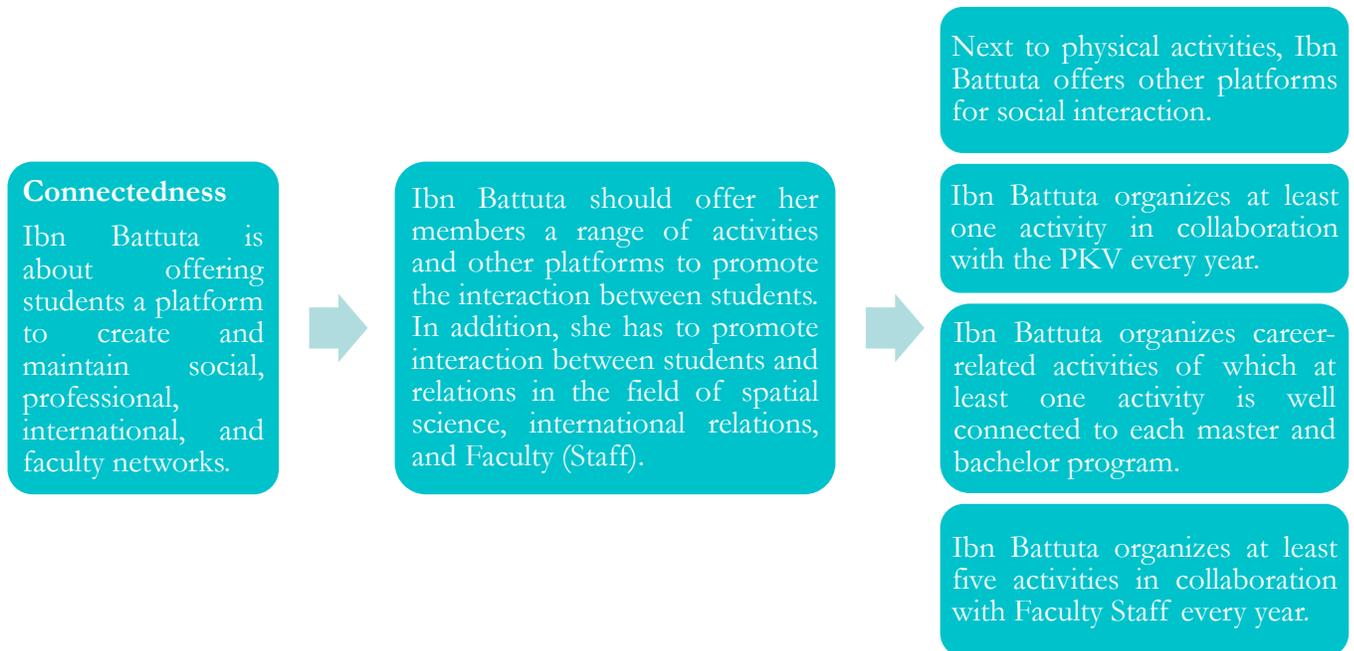
Ibn Battuta

Since Employability is a big focus point of the new Strategic Vision of the University, the University is planning on investing in their Career Services. To ensure that the Career Services will not compete or collide with what Ibn Battuta offers, contact with Career Services will become even more important.

By mentioning International Networks, the connection between students and international relations is meant. Now being an international organization, Ibn Battuta will be able to offer students an international network. To achieve this, the Association has to actively engage international alumni, especially when they are not stationed in the Netherlands anymore. In addition, having an International Network during their student time helps students gain a deeper understanding of different cultures and how to act accordingly.

By mentioning Faculty Networks, the relation between students and the Faculty (Staff) is meant. As a Faculty Association, Ibn Battuta tries to bridge the gap between students and the Faculty. To achieve this, the Board has to maintain good contact with the Faculty Board and other staff members. Faculty Staff should be involved in the organization of activities and invited and motivated to join the activities. In case the Faculty moves or lectures move to somewhere else on campus, Ibn Battuta strives to have a place where they are the easiest to reach by students, but which also promotes interaction between students and Faculty Staff.

Long-term Goals



Ibn Battuta

3. Engagement

Ibn Battuta is about actively engaging Bachelor, (Pre-)Master and Exchange students.

Status Quo 2020

Over the years, the focus of Ibn Battuta has become mainly on attracting Bachelor students. Bachelor students get a well-organized introduction, and the promotion is mostly focused on Bachelor students. However, in recent years, with the new Masters' Welcome Cafes and Master Network the Association has been trying to focus more on attracting Master students as well. The Master Network, with its own corporate identity and social media account, has been able to attract a different target group than the channels of Ibn Battuta have been able to. However, there is not yet a big group of active Master students.

Ibn Battuta gets the chance to introduce itself during the introduction days for Exchange students and Pre-Master students before the start of the academic year. However, this does not lead to many subscriptions.

Long-term Vision

Engagement

Ibn Battuta is about actively engaging Bachelor, (Pre-) Master and Exchange students.



Ibn Battuta has to characterize itself more as a Faculty Association by actively engaging all different types of students. This will be achieved through an engaging introduction period, targeted promotion, an ordered Activity Year Planning, and by making sure students stay active throughout their student time.

Ibn Battuta has to characterize itself more as a 'Faculty Association', by which is meant that the focus of Ibn Battuta has to shift from Bachelor students to Pre-Master, Master, and Exchange students as well. In addition, the Association should focus more on bridging the gap between students. This will be achieved by actively engaging all different groups within the Association through an engaging introduction period, targeted promotion, an ordered Activity Year Planning, and by making sure students stay active throughout their student time.

There has to be an engaging introduction period that spreads out over the first weeks and contains, next to the Introduction Days and Introduction Weekend, activities for all types of students. The activities are focused on introducing students to each other and the Association, and what she can mean for students during their student time. A second introduction moment should occur halfway through the year, to welcome students from the February intake and Exchange students.



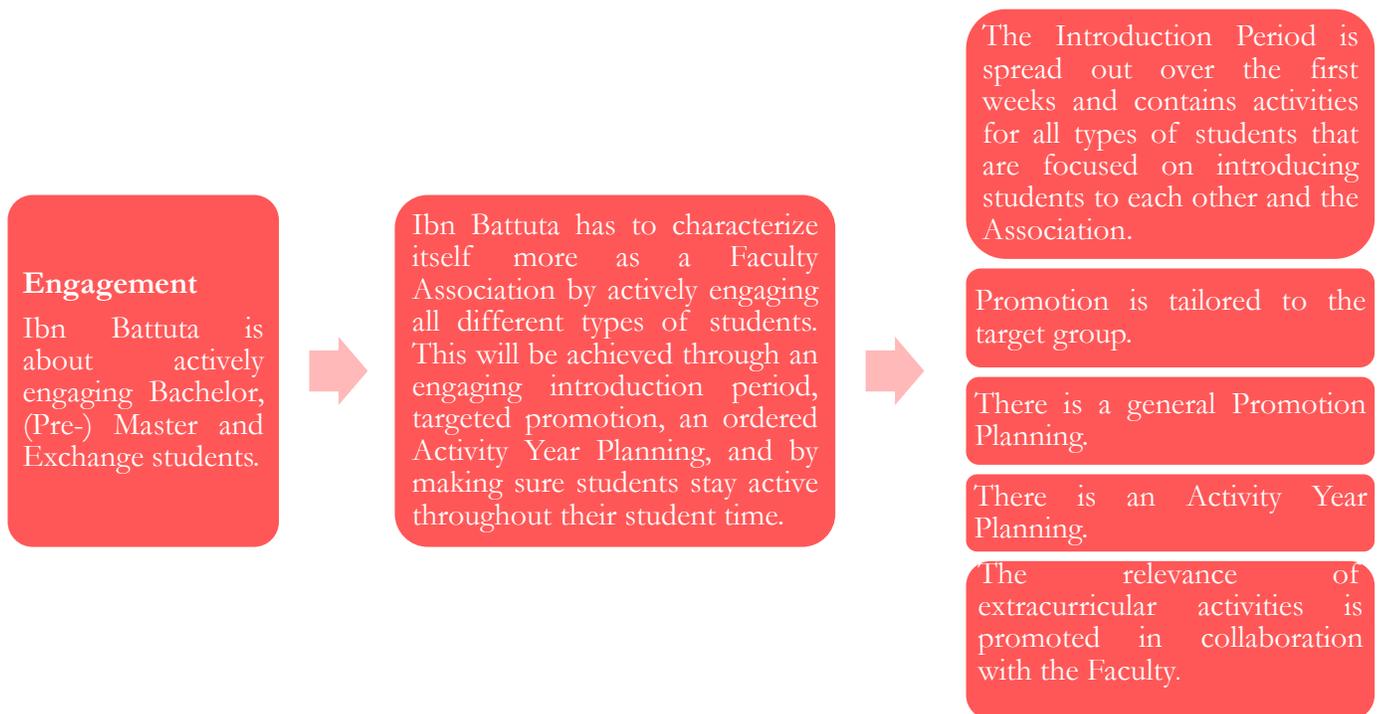
Ibn Battuta

Promotion must be tailored to the target group of the activity in several ways; the writing style and layout of the posts, but also which channels are used and when the promotion is started. A general Promotion Planning must ensure activities are promoted enough and on time. The promotion needs to have a fixed corporate identity that ensures a clean and recognizable character of Ibn Battuta’s promotion. The Association has to keep up with contemporary social media, if it fits the target group.

The Activity Year Planning will ensure that activities comply with the schedules of the target groups and that activities are spread out evenly. In addition, big events have to be taken into account to avoid low participation rates. The Year Planning should be discussed with the other organizations at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, to make sure that the activities do not compete or collide, especially regarding career-related activities. The Activity Year Planning should have a fair distribution between activities with a social, course-broadening, and career-related character, to be able to offer students with different interests an equivalent amount of activities.

To make sure members stay active throughout their student period, they need to feel valued by Ibn Battuta for the commitment they show towards the Association. Due to the high study pressure, students can be less inclined to take part in a committee. In collaboration with the Faculty, the importance of extracurricular activities and the relevance of committee (and board) experience should be promoted amongst students from all study stages.

Long-term Goals



Ibn Battuta

4. Adaptiveness

Ibn Battuta is about stability while being able to adapt to expectations from inside as well as outside the Association.

Status Quo 2020

To have a stable basis, Ibn Battuta depends mainly on three things; a stable financial situation, a structured organization, and a stable and active pool of members. Ibn Battuta is currently in a good financial situation. The Association gets its income from contribution, acquisition/partners, the Faculty, Friends of Ibn Battuta, and Caffeine Cards, and in the past year, we have also received subsidies from the Green Office. Over the past three years, Ibn Battuta has had a stable acquisition of around 8.000 euros per year.

The internal organization of Ibn Battuta consists of the General Members Assembly (GMA), the advisory bodies, the Board, and the committees and Projectgroups. The GMA has the ultimate power and is ideally the voice of all members of the Association. The Board executes the Yearly Policy, accepted by the GMA, and watches over the committees and Projectgroups helping to execute the policy. The advisory bodies give both solicited and unsolicited advice to the Board.

In total, Ibn Battuta currently counts around 100 active members within the twelve committees and three Projectgroups. In addition, there are around 50 to 100 members who frequently visit activities or are active within a fellowship, and can therefore also be characterized as semi-active members. With this stable basis, Ibn Battuta has been reacting to expectations from inside the Association, like transparency, and outside of the Association, like sustainability. Ibn Battuta has received a silver label for this effort from the University's Green Office.

Long-term Vision

Adaptiveness

Ibn Battuta is about stability while being able to adapt to expectations from inside as well as outside the Association.



To ensure stability, Ibn Battuta depends on a stable financial situation, a structured organization, and its active members. The stable basis enables the Association to live up to expectations from inside and outside the Association. The GMA is important in exploring the internal expectations of members. The expectations from outside the Association are influenced by trends and societal matters.

Stable financial situation

To ensure this stable financial situation in the coming years, Ibn Battuta has to maintain a steady income. To achieve this, good contact with partners has to be maintained and partnerships should be evaluated yearly. Good, long-term partnerships are more likely to remain loyal to the Association, even in times of lesser financial security. The attainable target amount of acquisition is very sensitive to the economic situation. Therefore, a new acquisition goal should be set by the Board every year.



Ibn Battuta

Concerning the debtors, a maximum of 1.500 Euros of debtors must be maintained, measured with the half-year balance over five years. The debtors included in the maximum amount of 1500 Euros should have been registered for at least two months, to prevent large invoices that have recently been sent from influencing the amount.

The different sources of income can fluctuate. For example, over the coming years, the Booksale will no longer be a noticeable source of income, but more of a service to offer members and an incentive for students to become a member. It is therefore important that the Association continues to look for new sources of income every year. Different organizations in Groningen, like CUOS and the Green Office, offer subsidies to associations. Whether Ibn Battuta is eligible for the subsidies should be monitored well. In times of lower financial security, budget cuts will have to be made to less essential posts, depending on the policy of the Board and the approval of the GMA.

Structured organization

It must be ensured that members make use of the power that the GMA enables them to enforce. To achieve this, members must be triggered to be present at the GMAs. Ibn Battuta should strive to have at least thirty people present at every GMA.

Due to the increasing costs and study pressure, it might get more difficult to find members who are willing to perform a board function within the Board of Ibn Battuta. To motivate members to perform a board function, they should be stimulated financially, socially, and by getting official recognition. In order for the Board to receive a wide and varying range of advice, the continuity and diversity of the Advisory Council and Audit Committee must be ensured.

Active members

An active group of members is essential to keep the Association running. Over the coming years, more Bachelor and Masters students have to be stimulated to become active at Ibn Battuta, also without actually taking part in a committee. The forming of Fellowships and Ibn Battuta Residences has to be stimulated and other ways have to be found to make people feel they have an active role within the Association. Making members feel like they are contributing to the Association and that they are appreciated for their efforts will help create a continuous flow of active members.

Expectations from inside the Association

Since Ibn Battuta has a stable basis, there is room to live up to further expectations from inside the Association. These expectations can change a lot over the years. The GMAs are the most important tool to enable members to show their expectations. Members highly value transparency about the organizational aspect of the Association. Next to the GMAs, members should be enabled to participate in decision-making processes in other ways.

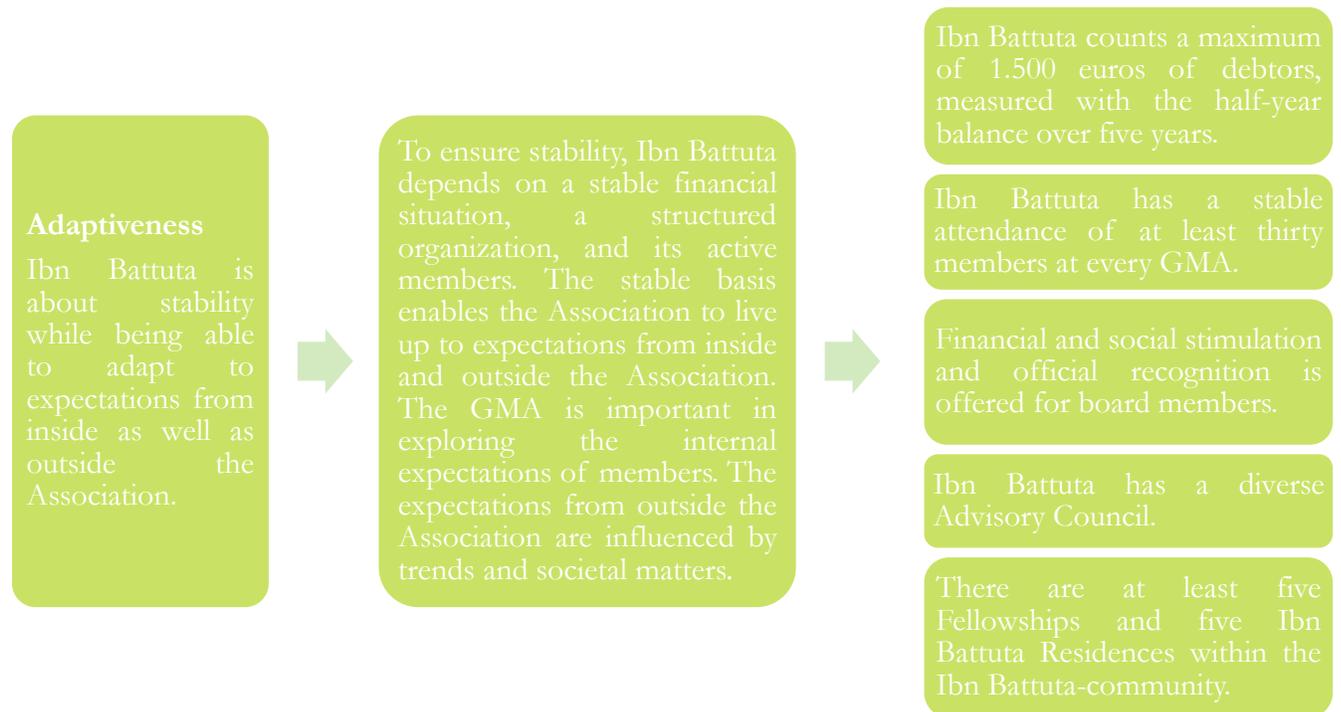


Ibn Battuta

Expectations from outside the Association

Since Ibn Battuta has a stable basis, there is room to live up to further expectations from outside the Association. Trends or political statuses can influence these expectations over time. An example of a current, so-called, trend is sustainability. A professional corporate identity is expected from us by third parties and it is also assumed that Ibn Battuta takes notice of the current student financial situation. These current expectations may change into long-lasting policy points, so it must be ensured that these are picked up in early stages. The active members, but especially the Board of Ibn Battuta, should be innovative and should take in the position of a role model for all members and other associations.

Long-term Goals



Ibn Battuta

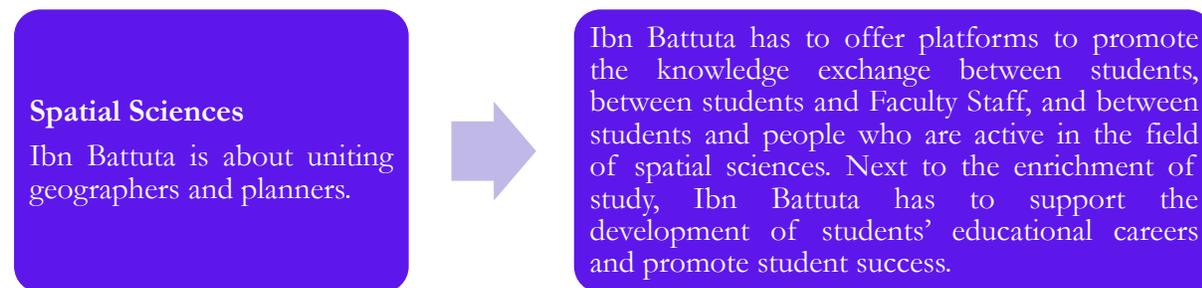
5. Spatial Sciences

Ibn Battuta is about uniting geographers and planners.

Status Quo 2020

Since Ibn Battuta is the Faculty Association of Spatial Sciences, all of its members are interested in an aspect of geography and/or planning. A share of the activities that Ibn Battuta organizes is therefore in the interest area of geography and planning. Examples of activities that fuel this interest are the Spatial Sciences quiz, the Teacher of the Year Lecture, and this year's excursion to Weusthuis en Partners. Also, bringing people with this interest together is important and is practiced by the yearly organization of the NGPS, where geographers and planners from all over the Netherlands come together and learn about topics related to the field of spatial science.

Long-term Vision



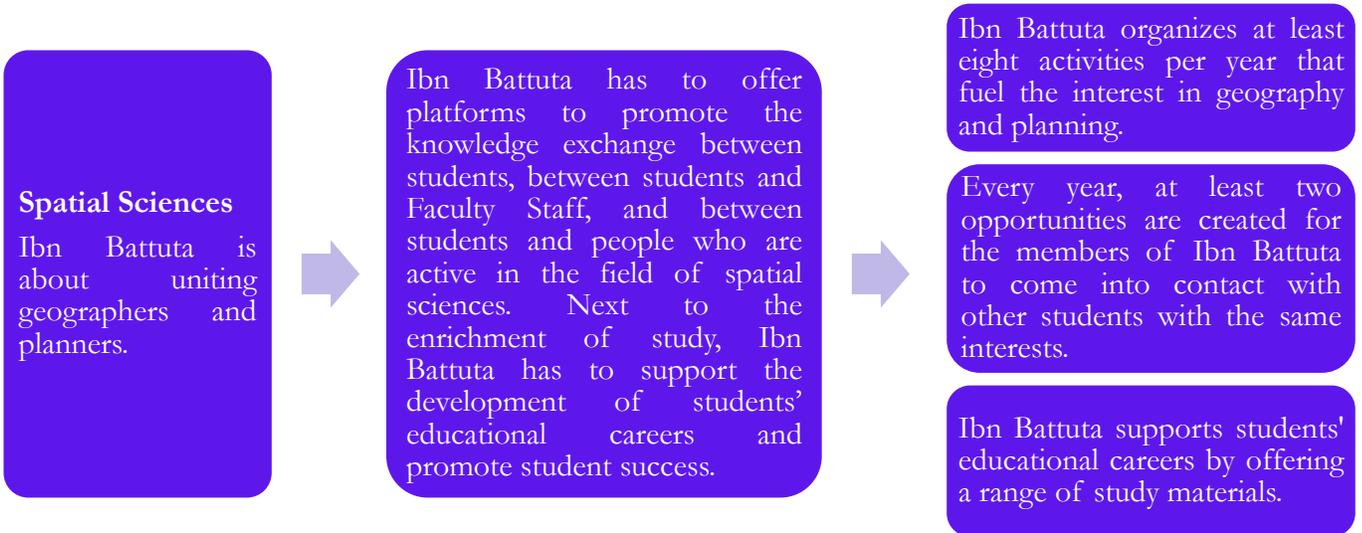
As the Faculty Association of Spatial Sciences, what makes Ibn Battuta 'Ibn Battuta', is that it brings together those who are interested in geography and planning. To achieve this, Ibn Battuta has to offer the platforms to promote the knowledge exchange between students, between students and Faculty Staff, and between students and people who are active in the field of spatial sciences. Good contact with the sister associations is therefore important to be able to share knowledge with similar students. The Association should frequently provide activities with the goal of broadening the knowledge of members with respect to spatial sciences and fuel the interest in geography and planning. This can be done through lectures, excursions, but also by offering the opportunity for knowledge sharing through conversation. Good contact has to be maintained with the Faculty in order to align certain activities with courses at the Faculty.

Next to the enrichment of study, Ibn Battuta has to support the development of students' educational careers and promote student success. The Association can support students by offering a wide range of study materials. In addition, the Association should promote personal development and wellbeing.



Ibn Battuta

Long-term Goals



Appendix

1. Board Manual
2. Format Proposal (2019)



1. Board Manual

Introduction and goal

The current strategic policy (from now on: SP) is made by the 59th board, with a lot of help from previous board members who worked with the first strategic vision. Since this SP is very different in quite some aspects than the previous document, it is needed to provide the coming boards with this manual. This document will explain the coming boards on how to build upon this SP, how to create your status quo, and how to evaluate it during the February GMA. It also explains when to change some things, but more importantly, why not to change too much. If there are any questions left after reading the SP and its appendixes, please do not hesitate to ask either one of the following people:

Tess ten Have - tess.th@hotmail.com

Charlotte Breunis - charlottebreunis98@gmail.com

Gijs Homans - gijs_homans@hotmail.com

How to build upon the SP

The SP is meant as a guideline towards a better future for Ibn Battuta in five years. It means to ensure continuation over five different boards so that boards build upon each other's policy rather than to work against each other. That is why every yearly policy can be seen as one-fifth of the SP. Make sure to 'pick' a few points of the SP that your board finds important and think of policy to ensure the growth of these points. Be, however, prepared to answer questions about all five core values. Ignoring one of the five values is not recommended. Be aware that your yearly policy is a tool for the greater good. In five years, your policy was one part of why Ibn Battuta is where it is at that moment.

Creating your status quo

Every year a new status quo needs to be written. Make sure to keep the previous status quo in the appendix, so that the differences over time can be evaluated. The status quo contains everything that is going on around the core value in your year. You do not have to write about what this or that board did, but rather write about the consequences. It is important that you are honest about the current events, also if it is not too positive. Not everything that is in the vision needs to be written about in the status quo. The following lists are topics that need to be included in your status quo so that it can be compared with other years. If other topics occur around the core value that is not named below, also add it to your status quo.

Inclusion

- The Coffee Room
- Committees and Projectgroups
- Internationalisation
- Active members

Connectedness

- Activities
- (Online) platforms
- Faculty relations



Ibn Battuta

Engagement

- Attention for Bachelor versus Master students
- Attractiveness to non-members

Adaptiveness

- Finances
- Internal organisation
- Active members count
- Current expectations, both inside and outside of the Association

Spatial Sciences

- Activities in the theme of spatial sciences

Evaluating the SP during the GMA

In previous years, the SP has become a checklist that boards tried to finish before the February GMA. With this SP we are aiming to create conversation. Where are we on this setup road towards our vision? Are we still aiming high enough? What is already going really well and what needs more attention? So, use the goals to indicate if there have been steps towards the vision. Evaluate if these goals are still relevant, but do note that achieving all goals of a vision is not the same as achieving the vision! The goals are only there to guide the boards and to create some practical handles in your way towards the vision. Instead, evaluate if the SP is effective enough and if the long term visions are still relevant. What does the GMA think about Ibn Battuta's current status concerning the core values?

Changes in the SP

As already hinted upon by the previous piece 'evaluating the SP during the GMA', changes can be made to the SP. However, be very careful and scarce in these changes. Be sure to make a proposal of the changes for the GMA, since members should be able to give their opinion.

The core values are practically set for the coming five years. If you see a reason to change the core values, you need to have a very good reason why this core value is not relevant anymore. The long term visions are also practically up for no change but are sooner up for change than the core values. The long term goals can be evaluated every year to its relativity and its aim. These are less strict than the core values and the long term visions. The status quo needs to be revised every year, as can be read under 'creating your status quo'. Why this is as it is, can be read in the document about the Format Proposal (2019).



2. Format Proposal (2019)

Format Strategic Vision 2020-2025

1. Explanation

The current strategic Vision 2015-2020 is approaching the end of its term. The time has come to evaluate the use of the document, and its effect on the Association within its term. Moreover, we can look ahead to the coming (five) association years, and ask the question: do we need a new strategic vision that guides the Association and its policies, and how should it be structured? And how do we create a new vision, and with whom?

In the past months, we started discussing these questions with members of the Advisory Council and previous boards that have worked with the current strategic vision. In the past five years, they have all changed, discussed, and used the Strategic Vision in their own way.

Together we discussed if we think, based on our own experiences, that the Association could use, or even needs, a new strategic vision for the coming years. From this question, we came to concrete views on the strong points and the areas of improvement of the current Strategic Vision, and how these can be used to create a new Strategic Vision. This led to a proposal for the format of a possible new Strategic Vision, and the process of how to create its content in the coming months.

Process description (up until now):

- March 14: First meeting with members of the Advisory Council/previous boards
- March-April: Setting up first version of the Format Proposal document based on the first meeting
- April 29 – May 1: Evaluating the first version within the board
- May 9: Second meeting with members of the Advisory Council/previous boards
- May-September: Setting up second version of the Format Proposal document based on the second meeting
- September 18: Third meeting with members of the Advisory Council/previous boards

2. From 2015-2020 to 2020-2025

The Value of a Strategic Vision

At the previous February GMA, the current Strategic Vision has been revised and discussed for the final time to adjust it to the current developments within and around the Association and prepare it for the next association year. The strategic vision has been a valuable document for the past boards as a guideline to base their yearly policy on. It is a bridge between different association years and guarantees the continuity of the Association. Moreover, it is a vision for the future of Ibn Battuta.



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We think that a new strategic vision for the coming years can be even more valuable than the current one, as we can combine the strong points of the current strategic vision with new insights to make it a more effective and structured document. We think that a Strategic Vision remains to be vital for the continuity of the Association and its core characteristics, because of the yearly board switches, and current developments like f.e. internationalization, increasing student numbers, and digitalization.

Evaluating the Strategic Vision 2015-2020

The Strategic Vision 2015-2020 is built upon seven main themes, being Introduction, Study pressure & Study load, Internationalization, Finances, Acquisition, and Career. Every theme starts with a status quo, that is (or can be) revised every year by the then current board. It is followed by a vision, that elaborates on the strong points and points of improvement of the status quo, and looks forward to changes that may influence the Association in the near future within that specific theme. Thereafter, the course of action describes how the Association should deal with these changes and can improve itself. Some themes also have their course of action translated into short goals that can be achieved. Just as the status quo, the vision, course of action, and the goals can be revised by the current board before the February GMA.

The presentation of the adjustments that are done by the current board often causes much debate during the February GMA among members. Although debate is of course a good thing, especially during a GMA, we think that part of it is caused by the way in which the Strategic Vision is set up and revised, and therefore more about its 'shape' than about its 'content'. To elaborate on this statement:

The themes of the Strategic Vision are centered around its status quo. This status quo is up-to-date, and not written at the creation of the Strategic Vision. Therefore, every board changes it according to their experiences and views. The same happens with the other components of the Strategic Vision. As this overrides the version of the previous board, the new document does not show which changes are made as opposed to earlier versions of the document, which can cause confusion. It makes the debate more about the description of the status quo, than about a vision for the coming years.

We think that adding a time component to the Strategic Vision, that shows more of a timeline of the adjustments in different Association years, would help to make it more clear how opinions, views, and visions change during the years. This would help the debate during the GMA, as a new version of the document would no longer completely override the previous version. Moreover, it will make it easier for the current board to compare their own status quo with the ones of previous years and put it in a more long-term context.

Proposing a new Strategic Vision format

A strategic vision is not something that can be made up by one board. It transcends a board year, and should be a vision for the future of Ibn Battuta that is broadly supported by the members of the Association. Therefore, we think that members should have different possibilities and ways to contribute to the new strategic vision. Of course, the current board can play a structuring role in this process and will be responsible for the end result.



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Based on the experiences of the different boards, we made a proposal for the format of a new strategic vision. With input of as much interested members as possible, we hope to refine this proposal to a definitive format. This format can serve as a guideline to the process of shaping a new strategic vision document. In the coming months, the content of the new vision can be created through various means, like discussion meetings, surveys, and consultations with the Faculty and external parties. The goal is to have a new strategic vision presented in the year 2020 by the 59th Board.

3. Format proposal

Explanation

We propose a format that exists out of four main sections, being: Core Values, Long-Term Vision, Long-Term Goals, and Yearly Policy. The Strategic Vision will then be centered around the Core Values of the Association, instead of the status quo. The Long-Term Vision brings the time component into play, and describes our vision on how sustain the Core Values in the coming years. Long-Term Goals are optional, as we think not every topic is suitable to connect clear goals to. However, for some topics it can be valuable to have a concrete objective to work towards. The Yearly Policies are not part of the Strategic Vision, but are the most lowest scale step in the implementation of the Strategic Vision and therefore part of the process.

Core Values – What are the core characteristics and principles of the Association that ‘we’ (the members) value most and want to maintain?

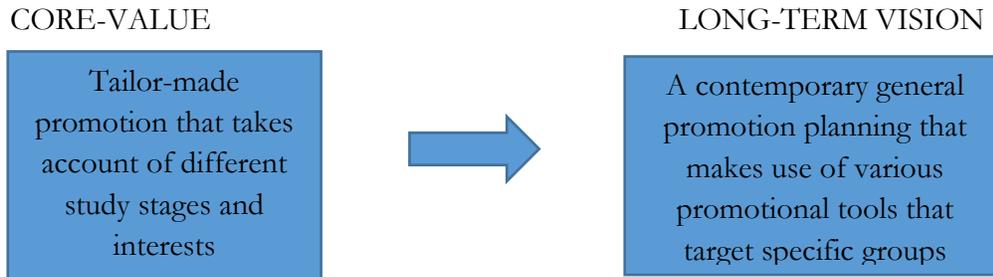
To be able to formulate a vision for the future of Ibn Battuta, we think it is important to acknowledge the principles of the Association that we as members value the most and want to preserve in the coming years. Looking at the current strategic vision, this could be things such as: ‘A balanced distribution of activities that are tailor-made to social bonding, immersion in our discipline, or preparation for the working field’, and ‘A professional financial- and acquisition policy to establish and maintain a healthy financial situation’. They are very broadly formulated and can be maintained in many different ways, but they show the core of what members value and expect from Ibn Battuta. We think that such values should therefore form the base of the next strategic vision, so that the document can guarantee the continuity of those core values, and in doing so, of the Association.

Long-Term Vision – How do want to preserve and/or expand these core values from 2020 to 2025?

How to expand and/or preserve the formulated core values in the next five years, depend on the expected developments within and around Ibn Battuta and their effects on the Association. Internal or external developments could provide slight shifts in the vision on how to maintain ‘A professional financial- and acquisition policy to establish and maintain a healthy financial situation’ or ‘A balanced distribution of activities that are tailor-made to social bonding, immersion in our discipline, or preparation for the working field’. Therefore, we think long-term visions within a strategic vision are more variable than the core values and should be reviewed critically every year to decide if they still serve the core values, and thus the continuation of the Association, in the most optimal way. It is possible that one long-term vision serves multiple core values. An example of a connection between a core-value and a long-term vision, based on the current strategic vision 2015-2020:



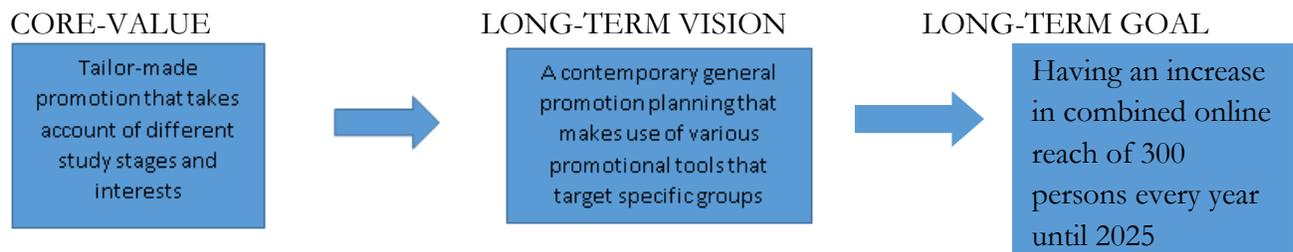
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In this conceptual model, the arrow means as much as ‘is supported by’. The core-values are at the heart of the Strategic Vision, and their preservation and/or expansion are supported by the Long-Term Vision.

Long-Term Goals – Do we have concrete goals that we want to have achieved in 2025 to support our Long-Term Vision?

For certain topics in the Strategic Vision, it can be possible to attach Long-Term Goals to the Long-Term Vision to make it more concrete what to achieve over the coming years. Whether or not this is desirable, can be decided by the members when creating the content of the Strategic Vision. To take the example on the previous page: you could say that the vision to have ‘a contemporary general promotion planning that makes use of various promotional tools that target specific groups’ could use some clear more-year goals to make it more controllable and to let it contribute as much as possible to the core value it supports. For example:



This Long-Term goal supports the Long-Term Vision, but is much more controllable and therefore different from the Vision. One Vision can have multiple goals attached as this is desired by the Association.

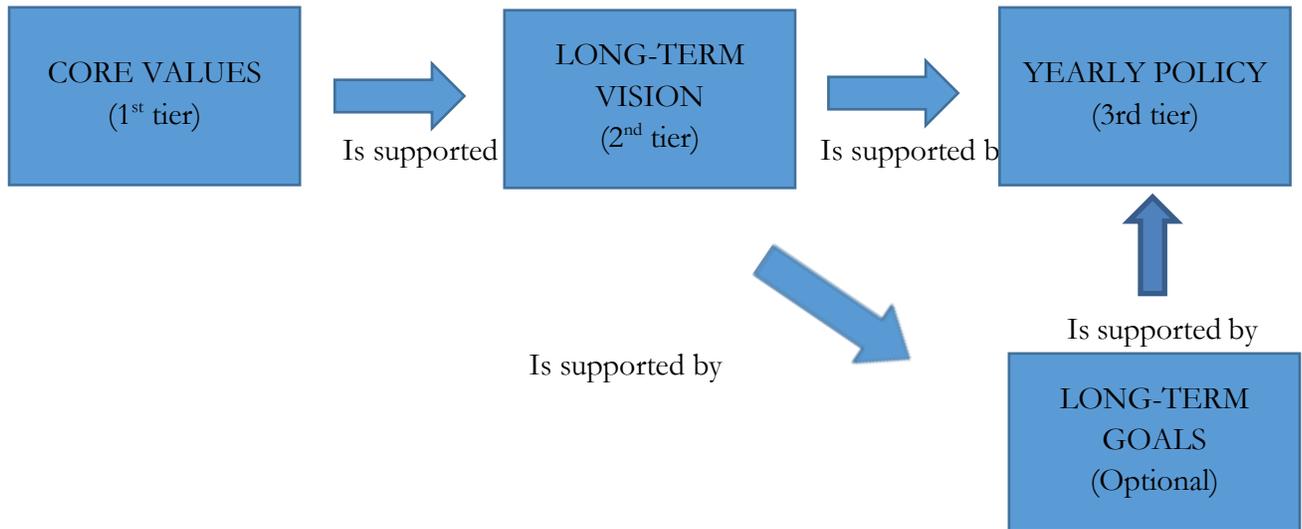
Yearly Policy

Every year, the board writes a yearly policy in which they explain which policy-related matters they would like to keep, obtain, or change within their year. Although a board has a lot of freedom to decide the course of this document, it should be guided by the core values and long-term Visions/Goals that are established in the strategic vision, to ensure their continuity. If the yearly policy is seen as the lowest ‘scale level’ of our ‘three-tier’ strategic vision, it should be easier for a board to substantiate how their yearly policy supports the two ‘higher scales’. In other words: what the policy will mean for the Association beyond their board year.

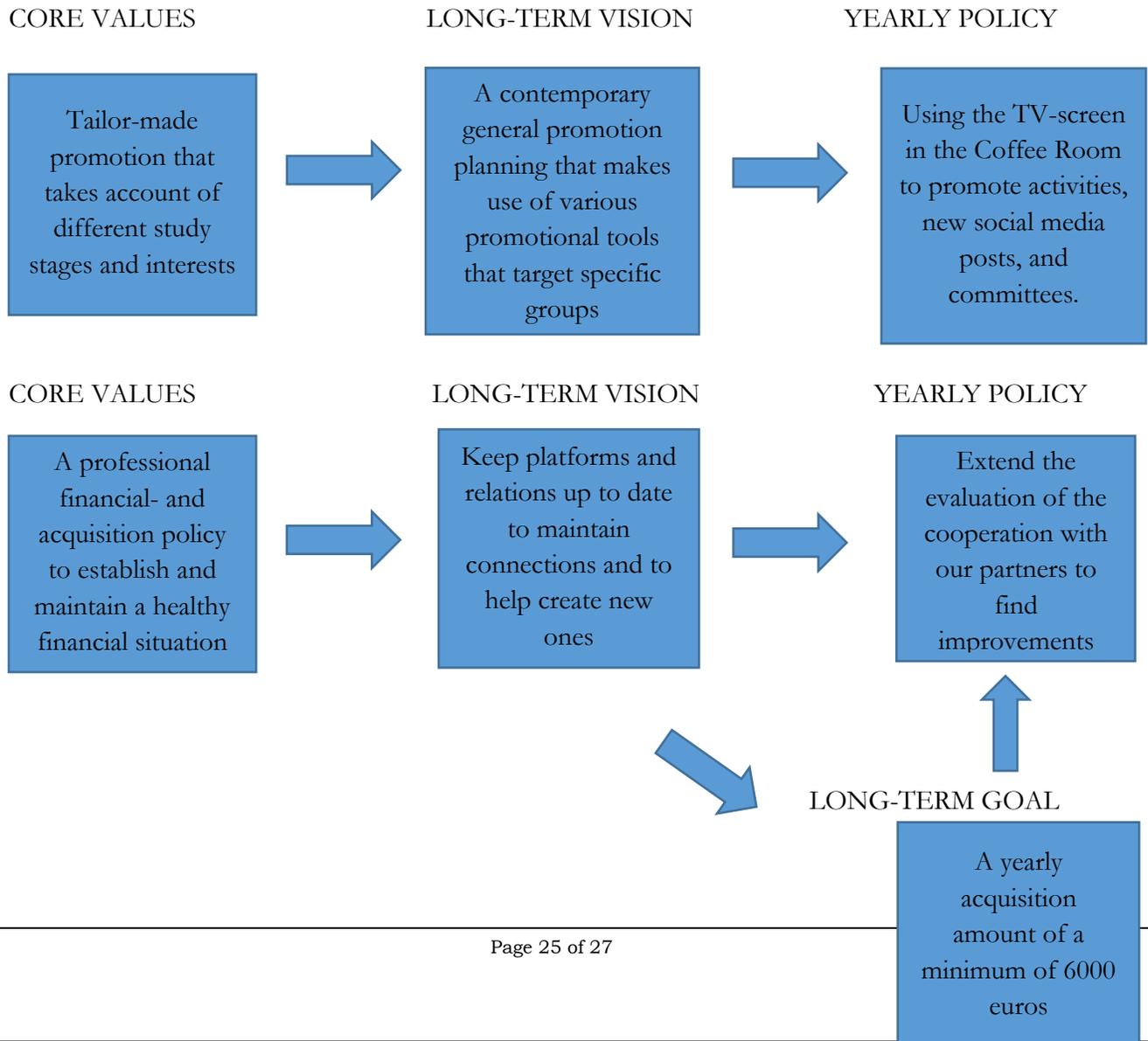
A conceptual view of the three-tier strategic vision:



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Two examples of the connection between the three-tiers, based on the current strategic vision 2015-2020 and Policy 2018-2019. The Second example also has an LONG-TERM GOAL:



4. Yearly review

The current strategic vision is critically reviewed every year by the current board, and then discussed at the February GMA, to keep it up-to-date and adjust it to the developments in and around the Association. Although it is very important to keep the strategic vision effective and relevant with a yearly review, we also think that it is valuable to be able to see how and why the (long-term) vision on certain topics changes throughout the years, or remains the same. This is one of the reasons why we propose to make a clearer distinction between core values and long-term goals. Core values make the Association 'what it is' and do not change (that much) over the years. Long-term goals expand and/or preserve those core values as good as possible, taking account of the spirit of time and the developments in and around the Association.

Status Quo

Just as in the current strategic vision, this can be supported by a description of the 'status quo' per topic, that is revised every year. This status quo reflects on the development and changes in the past year that are related to certain core values and long-term goals, and discusses possible changes to the structural vision. This reflection can be used to adapt to the future of the Association and its environment.

Moreover, we think it will be valuable to add an appendix to the document that includes an overall reflection on the structural vision by every board between 2020-2025. This will make it easier to compare different association years and make the Structural Vision more effective as a guideline that connects multiple board years and maintains the continuity of the Association.

5. Writing process

A big part of the actual writing process will take place in the Association Year 2019-2020 under the 59th board. By using various means, the board will involve members and interested parties in this process to make it a structural vision that is formed by a broad and diverse group of 'stakeholders'. This can be done directly, for example by organizing input-sessions about the content of the structural vision, but also indirectly, by doing surveys among different groups of members. Moreover, the writing process will be accompanied by people with a professional experience in policy writing, f.e. from the Advisory Council or Faculty staff.

