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Proposition of an analysis grid for SEA processes

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Outline

1. Research context
2. Grid presentation (objectives and originality)
3. Validation of the grid - case studies
4. Results
5. Conclusion

Research context

- Project financed, from January 2001 to December 2004, by the Research and Innovation Direction of the Ministry of the Brussels Capital Region.
- Aims to propose methodological recommendations for the application of SEA in urban European contexts.
 - The recommendations have to take into account the general characteristics of urban planning, knowledge coming from decision aid theory and from SEA experiences.

Research context

Work realized in relation with the project:

- the analysis of the European SEA Directive (2001-42-EC);
- the identification of relations between SEA and decision aid;
- the description of different planning theories;
- **the detailed description of SEA case studies and the elaboration of an analysis grid for evaluating SEA processes.**

Presentation of the grid

- The grid is a normative one.
- It aims to improve the practice by analyzing, in a formal way, existing SEA processes. By its normative characteristics, it serves also as a guideline for the development of new SEA processes.
- The grid is based principally on performance criteria already presented in the literature.
- Its originality resides in the context elements considered for its elaboration (planning theories) and in its structure.

Presentation of the grid

Context:

The grid is associated to a model combining strategic planning and communicational planning because of...

- the predominance of strategic planning in urban European administrations and ...
- the need for more participative approaches (as stated by the white book on governance of the European Commission and the Aarhus Convention).

Presentation of the grid

Strategic planning:

- Process with clearly defined steps (with retroactions).
- Based principally on communication between groups in charge of planning (experts) and the decision-makers.
- Recognizes the importance of listening to other actors but is often restricted to experts and to a limited implication of the public.

Presentation of the grid

Communicational planning:

- Iterative process.
- Planning based on a participative approach that includes various actors (importance is given to public participation).
- Based on a constructive approach.

Presentation of the grid

Structure:

- The grid is divided into four sections: generic characteristics, process steps, actors involved, tools used.
- For each section, criteria are defined with an accompanying scale (with 2 of 4 levels depending on the criterion).
- Some criteria are identified as particularly relevant for strategic and/or communicational planning.
- For every criterion relevant for communicational planning, a gradient level is defined which gives an indication of how much communication is taking place.

Presentation of the grid

CRITERIA (examples)	SCALE (examples)
GENERIC CHARACTERISTICS (G)	
G1) Integrated	Completely Sufficiently Insufficiently Not at all
STEPS OF THE PROCESS (S)	
S2) Scoping	Yes No
ACTORS INVOLVED (A)	
A3) A supporting organization is associated to the process	Yes No
TOOLS USED (T)	
T1) The tools used in the SEA process are described for each step of the process	Completely Sufficiently Insufficiently Not at all

Presentation of the grid

Example

CRITERIA	DEFINITION	SCALES
Steps characteristics		
S2) Scoping	The process includes a step which aims notably to structure the assessment by identifying, for example, the alternatives to consider, the actors to imply, the constraints to take into account, etc.	Yes No

 Criterion which corresponds to strategic and communicational planning

Levels of communication:

Low (ex. information)

High (ex.: concertation)

Validation of the grid - case studies

The grid has been applied to two SEA case studies in a European urban context :

- Dennis agreement
(Stockholm, Sweden)
- Rennes' P.O.S. - *Plan d'Occupation des Sols*
(Rennes, France)

Validation of the grid - case studies

Dennis agreement:

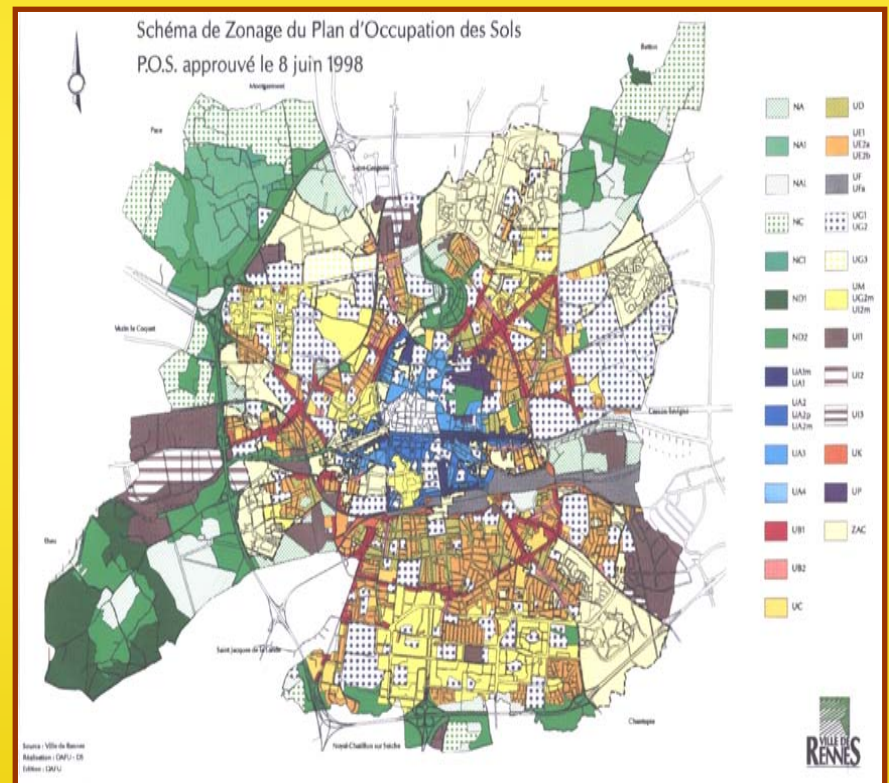
- Transport program negotiated between three political Parties in Stockholm in the 90's.
- Objectives: improving the accessibility and the environmental conditions in the Stockholm's Region, and stimulating regional development.
- Three SEAs realized at different steps of the planning process: one at the beginning and two at the end.



Validation of the grid - case studies

Rennes' P.O.S.:

- Development plan adopted at the city level (commune) in the 90's.
- Objective: Improving the quality of life by considering different factors: protection of natural areas, contribution to the economic development of the city, etc.
- One SEA realized at the beginning of the planning process.



Results

- Principal results related to the analysis of the case studies:
 - Poor performance of the four SEAs on more than the half of the criteria.
 - Very good performance of the four SEAs on the effectiveness criteria (the SEAs allowed to take into account environmental considerations in the planning process).
 - The SEA of the P.O.S. is more communicational than the three SEAs of the Dennis agreement.
 - The last SEA of Dennis agreement and the SEA of the P.O.S. (Rennes) are more strategic than the two first SEAs of the Dennis agreement.

Results

- Relevance of the grid (positive points):
 - The grid allows to identify explicitly the methodological components which are considered or not in SEA experiences.
 - Using four-leveled scales, it gives information on how much certain methodological components have been considered.
 - It allows to identify the strategic and communicational characteristics of a SEA process.

Results

- Relevance of the grid (negative points):
 - The grid is only a framework for analyzing SEA processes.
 - It doesn't give suggestions about the approaches to use for improving SEA performances.
 - It considers only certain characteristics of SEA (it doesn't consider the institutional framework for example).

Conclusion

- The grid is an interesting tool for a formal characterization of SEA processes.
- It can be considered as a way to improve the practice or to guide the elaboration of new SEA processes.
- It can also be considered as a way to better understand the relation between the SEA process and some planning characteristics.