PLUREL

Module 3

Framework for the Assessment of Regional Strategies [Final Draft]

D 3.2.1 extra

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December 2008

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Contents

1 Introduction to the assessment

Assessment and description of regional differences: what says the DoW?
In 2008 the M3 regional research teams will finalise their regional case study reports (D.3.3.1-3.3.7) in which a description and analysis is given of the regional governance and spatial planning strategies concerning their urban fringes. These reports describe the main players, their objectives, actions and interactions. They describe on how these strategies result in land use changes in the fringe. The regional strategies described in these case studies are subsequently subject to an assessment, resulting in an assessment report for every region (D.3.3.8-3.3.14). The present document provides the framework for this assessment. With this it answers the following research question, question 3a from the Joint analytical Framework, needed for the Ex post evaluation of spatial planning and governance strategies for the urban fringe : *Which are the useful criteria ... for assessing and comparison of the performance of the ... strategies?*
The Description of Work (pages 62, 63, 69, 72) gives a number of indications on the themes the assessment should contain, the task to integrate regional differences, the approach and the purpose of the assessment.

The main themes are:
- partnership/governance;
- discourses;
- identity;
- spatial integration;
- effectiveness;
- efficiency.

The comparison and description of regional differences should be done according to the M2 provided typology of dynamics in urban regions. Also the DoW mentions the categorization of enhanced approaches in the following phase - this should be supported by the assessment and benchmarking results.
The *main purpose* of the assessment is to deliver a benchmark of the strategies in different regions in support of the exchange of good and bad practices in land use planning and management in the final project year, 2010.
The assessments help practitioners in European regions to easily get an idea how strategies compare. In what respects do the performances of strategies differ? Benchmarking sublimates the wealth of rich information documented in the case studies. Because it inevitably holds a danger of simplifying, it should be specifically noted that the assessment report must be read in close connection to the underlying regional case study report.
The DoW and the New Implementation Plan specify the stakeholders participation in the assessment (local workshops, interregional benchmarking).

Workflow 2008-2009
In chapter 3 below we describe the process followed to develop a list of assessment criteria. During 2008 the insight developed that our understanding and hence the assessment of the strategies can be improved by means of the regional scenarios exercise in 2009. Several M3 researchers consider the modelling of the possible workings of the strategies and the resulting regional scenarios as a way to become more precise about how the strategies work, what conditions are essential to their performance and how they actually influence upon the land use in the case study areas. In the minutes of the The Hague meeting (to be found at www.plurel.net under M3) we have called this using 'modelling as a learning instrument'. This notion is also based on the experiences with modelling presented by the IALUC[1] conference organized by the Sensor project in April

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[1] Impact Assessment of Land Use Change

2008. Therefore we wish to extend the assessment process, to enable to add up to the assessment on the basis of the modelling exercise in the regions.

The assessment criteria enable to characterize strategies in terms of outcomes and process. Although most of the criteria are relevant and pertinent to the case studies and to European urban regions in general, we nevertheless want to allow for eventual valuable some improvements in 2009. Autumn 2009 the assessment of the strategies should however be concluded, so major modifications are excluded.

Linking up with M2 typology
The list with assessment criteria is accompanied by another list that summarizes the context of the region in which the strategy was applied. This is relevant information for the benchmarking and also for the reader of the ultimate good practice handbook. This list is to be improved in cooperation with the authors of the typology of regions. At present two typologies exist on the morphological/physical aspects by Steinnocher et al, and by Korcelli et al. A third typology exist on planning cultures by Tosics and Lalenis, partly based on M3 research. It is also relevant to link up with this typology. During the first six months of 2009 communication with Module 2 can still help to improve this second list.

2 Building blocks

2.1 Ideas and decisions from four M3 meetings and two telephone conferences

A first set of criteria was derived from the local analytical frameworks that each research team wrote early 2007. This list was aggregated in the Joint Analytical Framework. In Koper (Sept. 2007) it was agreed that the assessment should have different levels:
- within the region,
- between the regions (benchmarking),
- be able to tackle different thematic strategies and
- should be considered to take notice of regional specificities, such as for example growth or shrinkage.

Figure 1 presents this in a diagram to which later on the growth and shrinkage banners were added. Shrinkage or growth are examples of main regional contextual differences . The diagram presents the different perspectives to exploit and for which we want to develop criteria that help to evaluate and benchmark/compare the strategies. In the left part of the diagram some criteria from the earlier JAF work in 2007 appear:
- On proces: how does a strategy contribute to public support, etc. - this relates to the policy arrangements concept suggested for the analysis.
- On outcomes: social effects (quality of life, social inclusion); ecological effects (biodiversity); economic effects.

The matter of scale was also mentioned in Koper: assessing the performance at the level of the region in terms of sustainability is likely to be evaluated differently from performance at the individual or European level. (see 5th dot at page 5)

Do note that policy aspects may correlate: a process can integrate the 3 pillars of sustainability via integration of different sectors through the formation of coalitions of sectors. On the other hand, also top down government, like in former Eastern Europe, with a good knowledge base can be effective in integrating the three pillars of sustainability. For example, in Eastern Europe high biodiversity areas were preserved in the vicinity of the cities without involvement of environmental lobby groups. Similarly, the top-down buffer zone policy in the Netherlands has been successful in preserving nature areas in urban environments. (Bervaes, et al. 2005)
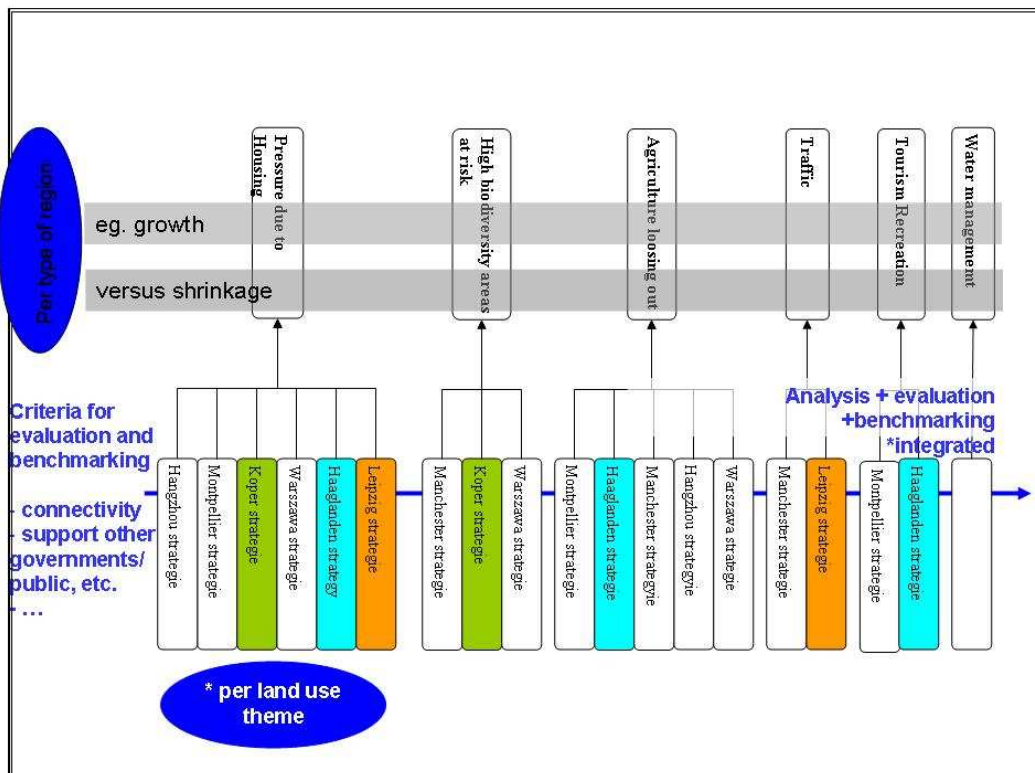
Figure 1 First comprehension of the assessment and benchmarking, 2007

In Warsaw (April 2008) we started anew with an open discussion, gauging what images existed within the group on how to perform this assessment. The discussion was mainly on finding proper criteria for the assessment. It is quite challenging to come up with a list. What do we mean by criteria? How should we deal with sustainability in relation to the criteria? How can we define criteria that are unambiguous, so that we all have the same understanding on the word?

We decided on a number of choices:

1. We base the assessment mainly on the information gathered in the case study analysis.
2. The scores on the criteria will be expressed qualitatively. We will not device numerical systems to measure performance.
3. We have to include the subjectivity of an assessment by asking both actors and researchers what their idea is of sustainability in relation to the strategy being used or developed.
4. We assess the full impact of a strategy. That involves processes and consequences in addition to an end situation.
5. The exact scale of impacts (in terms of time, place and causality) to consider for the assessment cannot be *a priori* defined. It will have to follow from the exact strategy what range of impacts can or cannot be ignored in the assessment.
6. We have to connect to existing standard sustainability lists that are already used in practice.

In Autumn 2008 the regional research teams have presented the results of the stakeholder consultations. These have led to an improvement of the existing list of criteria. During a second telephone conference in December six of the seven regions participated to finalize the Framework. Unlike previous ideas, spatial levels have been integrated into the formulation (criteria 4 and 5), and questions have been improved, making them better fit to present the level of complexity. Also the indication of different

actors was enabled. Qualitative criteria like commitment, monitoring, evaluation, overarching policies (!), awareness raising were added.

Also, as mentioned in the introduction, a separate second list in the form of a table was developed for the description of the context in which a strategy is applied. Contrary to the previous idea, this second table does comprise quantitative data.

Although the intention was to benefit from *standard sustainability assessment lists* used in municipal governments, we do not link up to existing sustainability lists. First of all we have agreed from the onset of PLUREL to develop 'endogenous' knowledge from the regions. Secondly we focus especially at the process aspects and decision making mechanisms, which is a specific focus not. Thirdly we found that the criteria used in those lists were much too wide and ambiguous. These standard sustainability criteria are likely to trigger many questions on what exactly is meant, resulting in questionable results. We therefore plea against using such standard lists for the M3 assessment reports. The list we now have developed is based at a certain common understanding among the researchers and stakeholders of Module 3, which is important for the internal communication and shared knowledge development.

## 2.2   Key definitions

What do we mean by criteria?

A criterion is a distinguishing quality that helps to construct an image of a phenomenon. It serves as a basis for comparison; of judging whether the phenomenon fits a particular frame. A criterion thus is a condition or a rule which enables a choice; upon which a decision or judgement can be based. If the phenomenon scores 'X' on criterion 'Y', then I decide to do 'Z'. What criteria exactly to select from the array of qualities each phenomena has, depends on the purpose of the decision it has to support.

In PLUREL, end users should be enabled to choose a strategy that fits their purpose, type of region and problems: "Does the strategy work in my shrinking region?" "Will it increase social justice?" "Does it help me to get support from the business sector?". Therefore, for their relevance, the stakeholders are to be asked on what criteria would matter to them (see section 3).

What do we mean by strategy?

Strategy was defined in the JAF. It says: A strategy is a designed course of action that an actor has made, it comprises a succession of decisions and actions to achieve goals, objectives. It assumes a unity of decision making and actions. The first part of the diagram below visualizes this definition. Point of departure is that in the context of governance, with its notion of multi-level and multi stakeholder interference, we encounter a range of actors, all with their own attempts to steer developments in view of reaching their own goals or objectives. *A strategy is defined by a coherent succession of decisions and actions to achieve goals, objectives. It assumes a unity of decision making and actions. Any actor can only be effective if it can employ means of influence: capital, legislative power, communication.* Any actor only has a limited set of means and is subject to the means of influence of other actors. Effects may be intended or unintended. Intended effects will probably only satisfy the original objective to a certain degree.

A strategic actor can be characterized by its goals (see 'objective' in figure 2); a unity of decision and action, and its rationality in a context of action.
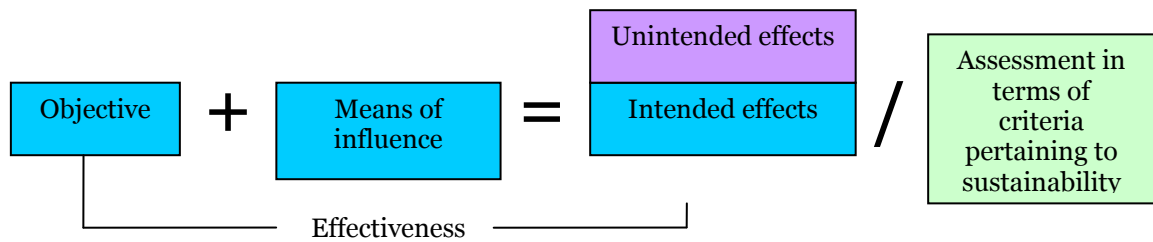
Figure 2: a strategy, effects, effectiveness and assessment

Room for 'agency', enabling innovations
There may be important stakeholders that are not active in the policy network or only indirectly and for which we might wish to develop strategies to become involved. In the EU Greenscom research project the University of Technology of Helsinki defined the concept of agency: *the property of the policy network and the planning and communication tools, contained in them as possibilities for specific actor to realise.*

The concept of agency makes it possible to evaluate whether a planning tool in its context enables different actors to take part in the process, or if a tool limits access of these groups. (Lapintie et al, 2001). The case study of for instance Koper shows how a students group can develop a new approach of involving citizens and making development plans for an area. The Haaglanden case study describes how a project developer can develop a new concept of use for the Scheveningen harbour. These innovations might be valuable and were enabled by the policy network.

It is important to consider whether the policy network leaves room for such initiatives and is able to integrate improvements that might be related to these innovations. Buizer (2008) describes aspects of this room for innovation in her study about interactions between local initiatives and established policy. A point of attention in the assessment should be whether the strategy is open to new stakeholders to join because enabling innovations by new stakeholders can lead to more sustainable directions of development in a region.

3   Process of involving stakeholders to develop this assessment framework

The process of assessment must intensively involve stakeholders, for two reasons:
- First of all, because it is important to know what the stakeholders consider to be the qualities of a strategy – they need to be allowed to rank a strategy on several criteria. Assessment is in the eye of the beholder. After the criteria are set, a selection of stakeholders of each strategy was asked to give his or her opinion.
- And equally important, we must involve stakeholders because we need to know what criteria they find important to assess foreign strategies on. Indeed, for stakeholders the ultimate goal of M3 is to effectively learn about relevant strategies in other regions and to assess what foreign strategies might be adopted into their own practices – therefore they need to help defining relevant criteria for benchmarking.

Figure 3 shows what the process of stakeholder involvement looked like. For a clear understanding of the process, we describe the process chronologically in a number of phases:

Phase 1: drafting the "Researchers' list of criteria" (Spring '08)
We first set out to define a list of criteria in a joint process with the M3 researchers. This process started already in Koper (Sept. 2007), but was further fuelled by an open discussion in Warsaw, April 2008 that led to a number of decisions on criteria (under 2.1).

Phase 2: Regional local workshops to detect opinions of actors (Summer '08)

In phase 2, the stakeholders were invited to contribute their thoughts about proper criteria. There are obviously cultural differences between the regions that required tailor-made workshop designs for every workshop. Nonetheless, we suggested to broadly take the following model for those workshops, in the following order:

- explain what the role and character of the assessment will be: giving scores on strategies for its sustainability – in terms of outcomes and process. Helping to judge whether foreign strategies would be relevant to their region.
- open discussion on what stakeholders would like to know about strategies in the PLUREL regions. Inviting to name their own criteria. This discussion compiles the "stakeholders' lists of criteria: one list for each region.
- only then showing the "researchers' list of criteria". Asking feedback on the criteria we came up with in the process.
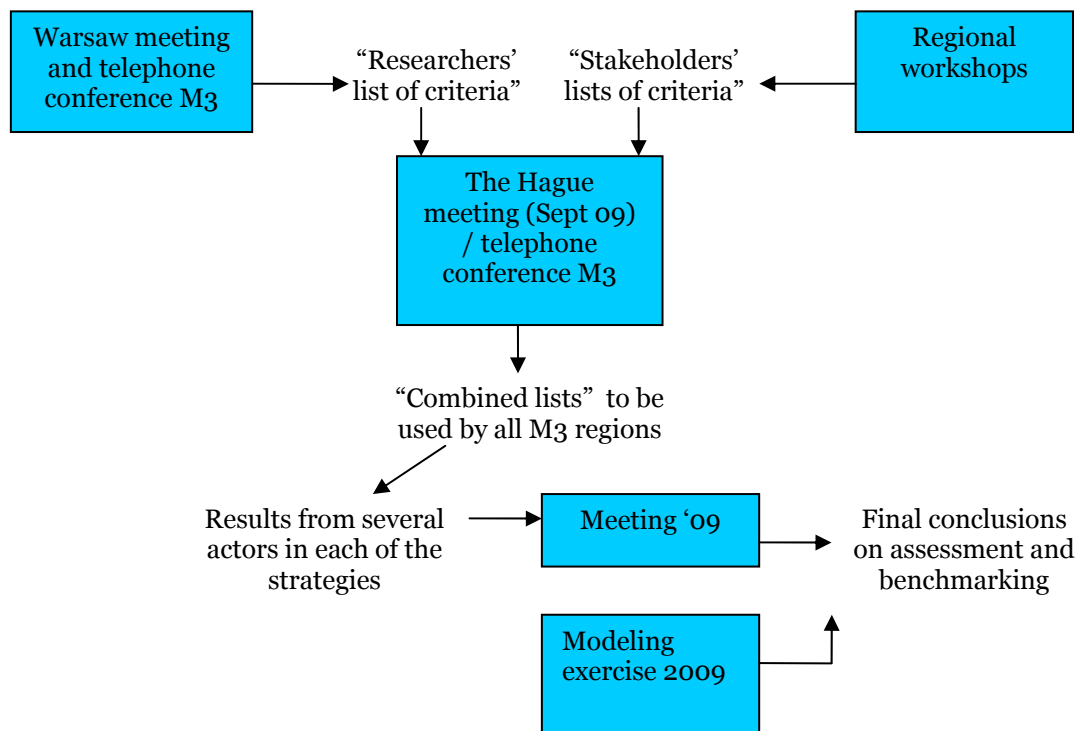
Figure 3:   **Process of stakeholder involvement in assessment and benchmarking.**

Phase 3: Making a combined list to be used by all (September- December 2008)

In the The Hague meeting of September 2008, the outcomes of phase 2 were presented by the regions. Every region presented a "stakeholders' list of criteria". The lead partner wrote a proposal for their combination with the list of researchers criteria. A telephone conference was organized to share the outcomes and agree on improvements. This contributed to one 'combined list of criteria' and one separate list for description of the regional context. Both were developed in table form.

In order to show the limits or contrary, the width of a strategy, a question about the 'Field of Action' of the strategy is added at the beginning of the table with assessment criteria . The question enables the choice between the four main land use issues that were put central during the stakeholder consultation in the Hague in 2007:

- strategies to reduce the pressure of housing on urban fringe;
- strategies to strengthen agriculture in the urban fringe;

- strategies to sustainably integrate tourism and recreation in the regional development;
- strategies to preserve high value nature areas in the urban fringe.

During 2008 other issues have come (back) into the discussions:
- the awareness raising (skipped from the list of issues in April 2007 in the Hague),
- monitoring and evaluation, and
- overarching regional plans or policies.

The latter three were added to the classification of strategies. However, it is still uncertain because of the late delivery of some analysis reports whether we will have strategies in the analysis reports that indeed focus at awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation or are overarching and studied at sufficient depth to add to the assessment. We might wish to drop these three fields of action in 2009 for lack of information.

Phase 4: Collection of information (Winter 2008-spring 2009)

All regional strategies will be sampled with the help of the combined list and context list (see chapter 4). The experience with the modeling per region can contribute to further the understanding
of the workings of the strategies and the resulting scenarios. It obliges the researchers and stakeholders to become more precise about how the strategies work, what conditions are essential to the performance of the strategies and how they actually influence upon the land use in the case study areas. This strengthens the information and knowledge base for the assessment.

Phase 5: Assessment and benchmarking between regions

With these two lists the assessment will be done, where necessary collecting additional data, gathering with regional parties – both researchers and stakeholders - and connecting to the modeling exercise of 2009. The use of this one list by all is important as it ensures uniform data and thus allows comparison across strategies. Regionally additional data might be collected and added to the assessment. For the city of Leipzig, for instance, facing a situation of shrinkage, this is expected.
During the first 2009 meeting, the outcomes of the fieldwork will be gathered and first conclusions can be drawn in terms the performance of strategies.

4   Criteria to assess the strategies and to describe the region in which they are applied

Answering research question 3b and c from the JAF:
This assessment framework should help the regional research teams, both stakeholders and researchers to answer the research question from the Joint Analytical Framework:

3b   How do the main strategies perform in terms of the developed criteria?
3c.   How can we explain this level of performance by looking at the content of the strategies, the policy process, the policy organization and 'external' trends?

Two tables to fill in by researchers and stakeholders
As mentioned we have developed two lists in table form. In the first part of the combined list with criteria, concerning the outcomes of the strategy, every criterion is articulated as an assertion, as you see below: every sentence makes a claim about the strategy. The assessment criteria are formulated as distinctive questions about the adopted strategy. They do not suggest wishful or sustainable situations. They enable to get an insight into the workings of the strategy. All assertions have to expressed in terms of : we fully agree, we agree, we are neutral, we disagree, we very much disagree. This choice for using assertions stems from the fact that most criteria could not be quantified; there were criteria that were likely lead to a myriad of non-comparable answers. The advantages of

working with assertions is that the answers become better comparable. Also the researchers and stakeholders can fill out the questionnaire relatively quickly.

In the second part of the combined list with criteria, concerning the process, more specific information is asked. This is possible because it concerns the heart of M3's governance research. The case study analysis reports provide most information already. For every strategy described in the Regional Case Study Reports, a number of people (minimum 3) that are familiar with the strategy should be involved in filling in the answers. Diverging answers to the statements on one strategy can be interesting as an indication of regional discord in opinions and should be documented.

Dissemination is a next step
We have to consider, in cooperation with Module 5, whether these assessment criteria are also useful for the dissemination purposes of 2010, or whether for some a rewriting is necessary. Because analysis and assessment of strategies on the one hand, and promotion of strategies for more sustainable development are different matters. The promotion should be based on good assessment, but not necessary the same information form is needed to serve the practitioners audience. This is a matter for further research and discussion within the Module 3 team in 2009. also the complexity research results might then be joined.

4.1 The criteria to assess the strategies

Assessment criteria	Answer (Tick the right answer in this column)					
Concerning field of action of the strategy: more choices possible:						
a) Reducing land pressure due to housing/ industry						
b) Strengthening agriculture in the urban fringe						
c) Protecting high biodiversity nature areas at risk						
d) Integration of tourism and leisure						
e) More comprehensive overarching policy						
f) Awareness raising						
g) Monitoring and Evaluation						
Concerning outcomes of the strategy:						
(blue boxes are to be answered for all strategies, white boxes only for the regions for which the subject is specifically formulated)	We fully agree	We agree	We are Neutrale	We disagree	We very much disagree	We do not know
1) The strategy is resilient – robust and flexible enough to cope with changes in its context and stays effective at the long term (>25 years)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2) It serves multiple objectives – it employs synergy to create maximum effect (PP or PPP2) or creates many 'winners'.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3) The strategy is effective – it actually produces the outcomes it was designed for.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4) The strategy pushes land use away, creating new land use conflicts elsewhere or at another level.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5) The strategy pushes land use away, not causing new land use conflicts elsewhere nor at another level.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6) The strategy strengthens the unique qualities of the area it pertains to.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

[2] People, Planet, Profit

Assessment criteria	Answer (Tick the right answer in this column)					
7) The strategy contributes to a sustainable dispersion of land use at a regional level, with a balance between resource availability and use.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8) The strategy enables existing rural types of land use to stay or to develop.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9) The strategy creates new or additional urban economy	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10) The strategy leads to accessibility for city people to peri-urban, open landscapes/agricultural land	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
11) The strategy protects land with best agricultural production capacity, based on soil quality						
Concerning the process comprised by the strategy						
12) The strategy helps the process of decision-making by making a complex situation more clear.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
13) The strategy raises awareness among (more choices possible)	❑ Business	❑ Developers in specific	❑ Scholars	❑Citizens	❑ Other sectors of authorities	
14) The strategy involves different actors (more choices possible)	❑Individual Business	❑Business interest groups	❑ Individual citizens	❑ Civic soci. Groups	❑ Nature NGOs	❑ Other Authorities
15) The strategy enables bottom up initiatives by citizens or business, semi-private organizations (more choices possible)	❑Individual Business	❑Business interest groups	❑ Individual citizens	❑ Civic soci. Groups	❑ Nature NGOs	❑ No
16) There is a clear time span for meeting the objectives contained in the strategy.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
17) The objectives of the strategy are clearly defined and in a comprehensible manner	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
18) There's legal, statutory, financial or cultural commitment to support the process.'	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
19) The strategy provides for monitoring and evaluation of its internal and external consistency and impacts over time, using existing available data	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
20) The strategy empowers … (more choices possible)	❑ producers	❑developers	❑ citizens	❑Local gvt.	❑supra local gvt	❑nat. govt.
21) The strategy restricts free riding behaviour / costs incurred with those who carry the benefits	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Assessment criteria	Answer (Tick the right answer in this column)					
22) The design of the strategy is area based, tailored to the specific actors, land use pattern, land market and legislation and timewise, influencing the right decisions at the right moment. (more choices possible)	❑ no	❑ timewise	❑ To spec. actors	❑ To land use patt.	❑ To landmrkt	❑ To legislatio

Table 1 Combined list with criteria to assess the performance of the regional strategies

The table above provides insight in the distinctive qualities of a strategy that make it possible to assess its performance. It needs to be used in combination with the table under section 4.2.

Additional information should be added in written For instance:
Criteria 6: which are these unique qualities and in the eyes of whom?
Criteria about accessibility: for what in the local situation/culture is considered relevant for daily recreation, not excluding less mobile or specific groups.
Criteria 12: to describe in what way it involves, eg. Are citizens actually involved are is only their interest raised?
To criteria 14: add in the description whether it concerns local business and citizens and NGOs that are involved or business, citizens and NGOs from outside the area.
Ad criteria 19: external consistency concerns the fact whether the strategy is well embedded of the strategy in the overarching regional policies. Internal consistency concerns whether the different objectives pursued are not controversial.
To criteria 8: define what you consider rural land use type(s).

Criteria 7 does not have the consent of all M3 researchers but will be tried out nevertheless by those who want to use it. The experience with its application will be discussed in 2009.

4.2   Criteria to describe the regional context

The characterization of the context should help to explain the level of performance of the strategies, by looking at the policy organization and 'external' trends. In the table below these are formulated from the perspectives of the regional research teams. This table should be developed further in 2009, linking up with the regional typologies by Steinocher and Korcelli et al. and maybe also with the typology of planning cultures by Tosics and Lalenis (WP2.2).
The information and knowledge will also enable to estimate the chance of critical factors for transplanting a strategy from one region to another.
Also the visualizations by Ravetz (CURE) shall be discussed and possibly adapted to support the interregional comparison.

Describe the context of your region						
1) Real estate prices in the urban fringe are very high and negatively impact rural types of land use.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2) Non-urbanized land in the fringe is typically owned by:	❑ Private owners	❑ State organisati	❑ Envir. NGOs	❑	❑	❑
3) The peri-urban/open landscape/agricultural landscape just outside the city is appreciated by our citizens.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4) The peri-urban/open landscape/agricultural	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

	landscape just outside the city is accessible for outdoor recreation.						
5)	All social groups have equal opportunities to enjoy the fringe landscape.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6)	Our city region structure is	❏ polycentric	❏ monocentric	❏	❏	❏	❏
7)	Our city region's core population density is						
8)	Our city region's fringe population density is						
9)	Our city region's core growth is	+ … or - …					
10)	Our city region's fringe growth is	+ … or - …					
11)	The standard of living in the urban core is higher than in the fringe.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12)	There is a formal planning system that enables governments to be influential.						
13)	There are immigrant communities in our city region.						

To issue 13: Define what you consider immigrant communities. See for instance definition in the Hague regional report, chapter 3.

PLUREL

Appendix : First draft Index for the Assessment Reports

The Assessment Reports have to provide the answer to the research questions 3b and 3c from the Joint Analytical Framework.
3b   How do the main strategies perform in terms of the developed criteria?
3c.   How can we explain this level of performance by looking at the content of the strategies, the policy process, the policy organization and 'external' trends?

This suggested index has not yet been discussed between the M3 partners. This shall be done early 2009.

(Colophon)

Abstract (200 words)

Summary (1000 words)

Introduction: (1000 words)
introduce your local research approach, the tables used and eventual additional criteria employed.

Chapter 1: The regional context (1000 words)
present the filled in table 2 on the context. Plus explanatory text

Chapters 2 to 4: Assessment of regional governance and spatial planning strategy x   (max. 3000 words per chapter, plus the tables)
Each chapter describes the performance of one of the three main strategies you have studied in your regional case study report in chapter 3.

These chapters are each to be divided into three sections:
2.1 / 3.1/ 4.1 Content and results of regional discussions. How does the strategy perform in terms of the developed criteria. The filled in table 1 (field of action, outcomes, process) plus explanatory text and definitions used.
2.2/ 3.2/4.2 How do you explain this level of performance, by looking at the content of the strategies, the policy process?
2.3/ 3.3/4.3 How do you explain this level of performance by looking at the policy organization and 'external' trends?
So you will be presenting an assessment table for each strategy you have studied in depth in your region.

Chapter 4: Conclusions (2000 words)

A short conclusion on the apparent performance of the regional strategies. (500 words).
Making the link to other case studies in similar field of action???
Evaluation of the research method used for this assessment report.

References

LITERATURE
(under process)

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