

2. THE PLACE OF REGIONAL PLANNING IN THE PROCESS OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

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2.1 Planned development and planning

Planning is an activity of all human beings and of many organizations. Planning methods and techniques have been developed under numerous different circumstances. As a result the terms used in planning literature can have various meanings. It might therefore be wise to outline the train of thought from which the Framework evolved, and to explain some of the major concepts. First of all, a distinction will be made between the terms *planned development* and *planning*.

Planned development is the type of development that one tries to influence via planning. The process consists of the following phases:

- formulation of goals
- stocktaking, research, and surveys
- drawing up the plan
- acceptance of the plan
- implementation of the plan
- evaluation (ex post)

These activities follow a certain sequence, but occur with a considerable overlap as is shown in Figure 1.

Planned development is a continuous process. The evaluation phase may be the bridge between two cycles of planned development. The evaluation in a previous cycle may be part of the research and stocktaking in a following cycle. Within the process of planned development those components with a specific planning character together make up the 'planning process' in the narrow sense.

This process thus comprises:

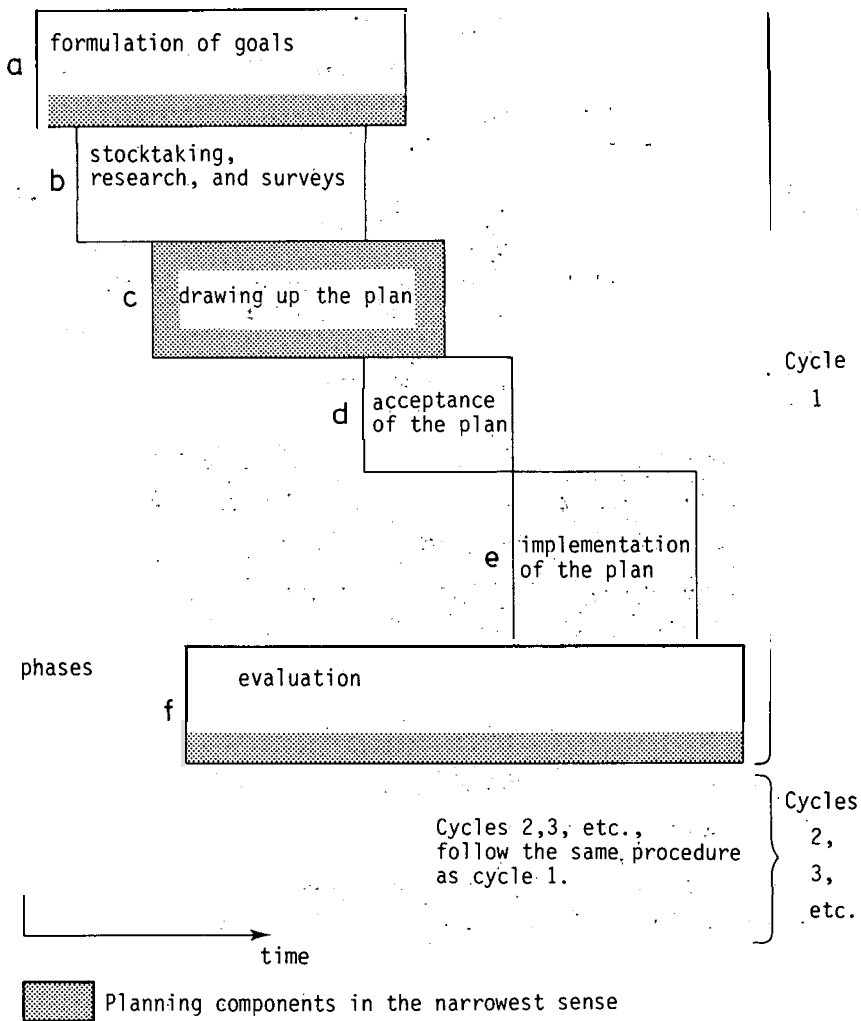


Fig.1. The planned development process.

the formulation of the goals to be planned for (inferred from national and local aspirations);
 the research, survey, and stocktaking as far as is needed for the particular purpose;
 drawing up the plan;
 the evaluation of the planning components and the formulation of the development program(s).

The planning process thus stops short of the acceptance and implementation of the plan. It is in this sense that the terms 'planning process' and 'planned development' will be used.

Since the main concern of the Framework is the interdisciplinary approach to the formulation of a *regional plan*, further discussions will be confined to the type of planning whereby:

the *planning object* is a region (including its population) that is part of a country and under the authority of its government;

the *planning subject* is a government organization or a group of experts charged by the government with preparing a plan.

It is possible for the planning object and planning subject to coincide. This will be so, for instance, when extension officers, health officers, teachers or farmers are preparing plans that they will implement themselves. The purpose of planning is to formulate programs of action that will influence on-going development processes or that will start new processes which will change the existing situation in such a way that at a certain date in the future (the end of the plan period) a situation is reached that is in accordance with the goals formulated at the time the plan was drafted (This is known as target planning). The programs of action must correspond to the needs of the population and be geared to its aspirations.

The programs of action must be so scheduled that they allow the responsible authorities (government, ministers, or others) sufficient time to introduce any necessary changes in their administration and to take decisions on such matters as budget allocations. In the meantime, the authorities, for their part, must be taking the preliminary steps to pave the way for these impending changes and decisions. In this way, it will be possible to avoid undue delays in implementing the successive programs of action.

In principle, planning can be a rational and effective activity only if certain conditions are fulfilled. These are:

The government must be capable of formulating the goals that the society or part of it wants to have realized.

The government (i.e. its planning organizations) must know the processes and their interrelations that have to be activated to reach a situation that is in accordance with the formulated goals.

The government must have the power and the means to activate the relevant processes.

The government must be willing to use such power and means.

These conditions are never fully met. Planners must be aware of this and, on the basis of the presence or absence of these conditions, should indicate the limitations of the plan prepared by them.

2.2 The position of the regional planner

The main task of regional planners is to provide the government with the information it needs to make 'final' decisions on how to reach the goals that have been formulated for a region, within the given available means. The planner, therefore, has to work as an adviser within the structure of government policies. He is not supposed to impose his own political views and produce plans that strongly deviate from the ideas of the principal; were he to do so, he would at least have to add sound arguments for his cause and allow comparisons between alternative solutions. Of course, it is impossible for a planner, as it is for almost anyone, to work entirely as an impartial agent. The planner has the difficult task of being an adviser who must act as objectively as possible towards the government he is serving, especially when controversial issues are concerned. These considerations emphasize the need to distinguish between the separate responsibilities of the government and the planner. Broadly, these separate responsibilities are as follows.

The government selects a planning team or agency, either from its own services or contracted from elsewhere. In consultation with that agency it draws up the terms of reference. It provides the agency with all available relevant information. It deliberates the pros and cons of alternative development proposals made by the agency and selects from among them. It decides on any suggested changes in, or extensions to, the planning studies. It judges the tentative results of the studies and indicates any necessary changes. In these tasks the government will usually be represented by one of its own agencies (e.g. a National Planning Board) or will form a special organization (e.g. a Regional Planning Committee) for this purpose.

The planning agency's responsibilities are to draw up a program of studies to supplement the already available information, and to conduct these

studies. The planner analyses the resources available for development. He harmonizes and optimizes the various proposals. He identifies projects that can be recommended for further elaboration or implementation. He compiles cost estimates. Finally, he draws up programs and strategies for short-term, medium-term, and long-term implementation.

Government decisions will be required at each separate stage of the planning studies. Studies and decisions should follow one another so as to form one logical whole.

During the elaboration of *goals* into more specific *objectives*, and objectives into even more specific *targets*, there will often be several possible choices. In the beginning of the planning process the planner has to work with tentative goals formulated in general terms. Gradually, as the results of the studies become known and the goals are geared to the required programs and available means, more specific objectives will be formulated, to be followed by definitive targets.

Once the future targets have been established, it is in most cases possible to indicate various action programs by which they can be realized. If there are alternatives to be chosen from, decisions will have to be made.

In such a case, political views will come into play. It is therefore important that the regional planners, in the interim reports they have to produce (inception, skeleton, and draft final report; see Chap's 4 and 5) clearly indicate the various possible alternatives as well as the corresponding advantages and disadvantages. Only in this way will it be possible

for the principals of the planner to fulfil their responsibility of making decisions based on a weighing of the pros and cons of the alternatives, and

for the planners to remain advisers and not themselves become the hidden decision-makers.

During the discussions between planners and their principals, it is possible that new alternatives will appear and/or that the former policy framework will be adjusted by the politically responsible persons in the government. The limited amount of time available for the preparation of regional plans, however, means that only a limited number of alternatives can be elaborated.

Hence, in this Framework, the specific position conferred on the planning team is that of an independent group of advisers provided by an agency from

inside or outside the country¹. If the planning team is regarded in this light, it becomes obvious that the two parties - the principal(s) and the planner(s) - each with their own responsibility - will have to consult with each other on essential occasions during the planning process (see Chap.4). If a government agency or a group of government experts is charged with the preparation of a regional plan, the danger exists that the pattern of consultation becomes vague, takes place in an informal way, or does not take place at all. This happens because, in such cases, the planners have their own channels of information, or assume that they are familiar enough with the views of their principals that they can by-pass the consultation. This can have serious disadvantages. The principals are denied the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the alternatives that were considered and discarded in the preparation of the plan. As a result, the principals have had no chance to direct the planning process or, if necessary, to adjust the policy concepts provided to the planning team. As tentative goals provided by the policy-makers to the planners are often based on (over-) optimistic views on the potentials for development, it is important that these policy-makers, via regular well-organized contacts with the planners, gradually make themselves familiar with the regional plan under preparation; this avoids disappointment when it becomes clear that not all the tentative goals can be realized.

Moreover, the regional planner through his increasingly intimate knowledge of the region, may want to call the attention of his principals to the opinions that local or regional representatives have on desired developments. At the national and regional level, such opinions or desires are not always known; nor are they correctly valued as to their relevant importance. It is one of the actual tasks of the regional planner to pass on any information on needs and ambitions that bear any possible development potential. It is up to the principal(s) to consider if and in how far these ambitions correspond to national aims and whether they can reasonably be incorporated in the goals of the regional plan (see further 2.8).

¹ *If planning expertise is available in the country, or even in the region itself, it obviously makes sense to recruit these experts as this will bring planning object and subject closer together.*

Whatever the composition of a regional planning team may be (outside consultants, institutionalised government planning organizations, or *ad hoc* planning teams of government officers), it is important that the consultations indicated in Chapter 4 take place. In any case it must be avoided that principals and planners have their first formal consultations only when the draft final report is available; that is far too late. It can lead to unnecessary confrontations and a considerable loss of time due to required adjustments in the draft final report.

2.3. The concept of a region

In the literature on planning, the term *region* has many meanings. When used in this book it will always mean a *subnational geographical unit* that is 'a convenient device to keep planning problems and functions within manageable proportions'.¹

The criteria or principles used to delineate a geographical unit that constitutes a region can be brought together under four categories:

The principle of homogeneity

When this principle is applied, the various regions that can be distinguished are characterized by a certain *homogeneity*. The kind of region that emerges depends on the criteria used. If, for example, the criteria are physical, the region would have a certain uniformity in topography, amount of rainfall, and so forth. If the criteria are economic, the region may be homogeneous in its economic production system (small-scale farming, plantation farming, etc.) or the type of product (rice, corn, coal, etc.). If the criteria are social, the homogeneity can involve language, religion, ethnic groups, etc.

The principle of functionality

This principle employs the concept of areal linkage: a network of interconnection which gives a region its unity². *Functional regions* are sometimes also called *nodal regions*, because they generally possess a centre (node, urban area) which performs certain functions for an area.

Within this principle a number of different criteria can be used for subdivision; for example, a governmental function (municipal government → municipality), a retailing function (may extend beyond municipal boundaries), or an educational function (for a university town, the radius of influence may include the whole country or even go beyond national boundaries).

¹ National Resources Committee, U.S.A., 1935.

² BERRY, B.J.L. and T.D. HANKINS: *A bibliographic guide to the economic regions of the United States*, Chicago University Press, Dept. of Geography, Research Paper 81087, 1963.

River basins

Here the main principle for delineating a region is its hydrologic coherence. This type of region has a certain homogeneity because of its hydrologic entity. At the same time one can say that it is a functional region because the regional parts are functionally interrelated via the hydrologic network (rivers, streams). Hydrologic events upstream can influence parts of the downstream areas of the region. River basins are often obvious units for development activities. Well-known examples are the Tennessee Valley in the U.S.A. and the Damodar Valley in India.

Ad hoc regions

It is possible to create regions on an *ad hoc* basis. These can be depressed areas or areas devastated by earthquakes, floods, etc.

For regional planning and planned regional development, the functional or nodal region is the most suitable. The main reason for preferring a functional region is that regional planning, in aiming towards an integrated development, requires an organization that is ready and able to coordinate the activities of various government departments, and which maintains intensive lines of communication to both the local and the national levels. In most countries this coordinating organization can be provided, at least in *status nascendi*, by the public administration. The geographical division into entities of public administration (states, provinces, districts, villages) is of itself of great importance because many of the social and economic statistical data on population, agriculture, and industry are available on the basis of these geographical entities.

If regional planning applies to an *ad hoc* region, an organization that can be charged with the coordination must be created. The same applies for river basin development; such organizations are often called 'authorities'. Depending on the size of the country, it is possible to distinguish various tiers of regions. MISRA¹, for instance, distinguishes three tiers: the *macro*, *meso* and *micro* functional region.

At the *macro level*, regional plans will have the characteristics of national plans. The region is then too large to detail the plan to the level of project identification; the plans will often remain at the level of integration of regionalized sector plans. Examples of macro regions are the Deccan states and the Ganges Valley in India, the islands Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi in Indonesia, and East Malaysia in Malaysia.

¹ MISRA, R.P. (Ed.): *Regional planning. Concepts, techniques, policies and case studies.* Prasaranga University of Mysore, 1969, p.17.