

4. STAGES IN REGIONAL PLANNING

J.M. van Staveren

4.1 The need for phasing

The regional planner begins his task with vague and tentative goals, as they are provided by his principal. After having collected and analysed a great many resource data, he will make a first appraisal of the development potential of the region. He will then compare this appraisal with the tentative goals and the available means, which may lead to an adjustment or a reformulation of those goals. The planner, then, will conceive various alternative development strategies, which have to be translated into broadly defined sectoral projects; from these he has to select the best combination. By constantly comparing and combining these sectoral projects, he will strive towards a sensible and consistent overall plan. The plan that is ultimately adopted must then be translated into concrete programs of action, - including estimates of funds and manpower, - and their phasing. This rather complex process implies repeated consultations between the planner and the principal to verify whether the planner's provisional conclusions comply with the principal's expectations. Moreover for budgetary and policy reasons, the process has to take place within a certain limited period of time. Obviously, this calls for carefully programmed operations.

A logical basis for such programming is to split the planning into a number of *stages*.^x Each stage makes up a kind of cyclic sequence; the entire process follows a kind of spiral-like progression. During each 'cycle' new

x *The term 'stage' in the present context is not to be confused with the same term often used by economists to indicate the concepts of macro -, sector - and micro planning (in this book replaced by the term 'level'; cf. 2.4)*

data or new hypotheses can be introduced, which may call for adjustments of earlier findings and, thus, lead to a critical reconsideration of the earlier developed projects and programs.

The stages that will be described in this chapter are regarded as parts of a sequence. There may be reasons, however, to interrupt the sequence after one of the early stages. This may be so, for instance, when the existing data base is (too) scarce, or when the existing management capacity of the administration is under-equipped (cf. 2.8). Under such conditions, it may not be justified to further elaborate the regional plan. The sequence can then be terminated and possibly resumed at a later date if conditions should warrant it.

4.2 The pre-planning phase

The pre-planning stage, which precedes the actual planning exercise, is the concern of the national government.

A governmental decision to adopt regional planning as development policy will be a first step in this stage. This will be followed by a survey to select one or more suitable regions. The selection will be based on such criteria as a high development potential, the need to create employment in a region or to open it up for settlement, or a lag in development compared with other parts of the country.

The government must then decide whether one or more national agencies will be assigned the tasks of executing and supervising the planning exercise, whether foreign expertise will be called in, and whether requests will be made under multilateral or bilateral cooperative programs.

It is recommended that the government appoint a body of officials to bear the responsibility of guiding and supervising the planning exercise. This body, which will be referred to in the following as *Regional Planning Commission*, should be given the necessary power to take action and make the decisions that are required to accomplish the planning task. At a later date the Commission might guide the implementation of the ultimate plan as well.

How a Regional Planning Commission is composed depends on the prevailing government policy and on existing government organisations. Possible members of the Commission are: representative(s) of the national planning authority,

of national and regional government departments, and of important regional sectors; local leaders; etc.

If it is decided to entrust an independent engineering bureau (national or foreign) with the planning exercise, it is common practice to invite several such bureaux to submit tenders. The final choice of bureau will be decided by the quality of the tender, the combined knowledge and experience of the proposed team members, and the costs.

When technical or financial assistance is being sought through a multilateral or bilateral program, the government will first have to submit a *project request* to the relevant *Supporting Agency*; a vital component of this request will be the *Terms of Reference*. Under such an arrangement, the expertise required will usually be subcontracted by the Supporting Agency itself, in line with a procedure similar to that described for engineering bureaux. In whatever way the planning tasks are allocated, the parties involved will have to draw up a number of documents to define each party's tasks and to specify their responsibilities.

The documents used for that purpose, which are sometimes complementary to one another, are: *Terms of Reference*, *Work Plan*, *Contract*, *Plan of Operations*, and others.

Typical contents of these documents are:

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference define the government's commission including:

- a delimitation and characterization of the region;
- a description of the type of development that is envisaged;
- a list of the resources that could be utilized in achieving that development;
- an outline of available information and of previous studies;
- an indication of how the regional plan will fit in with the national plan and the sectoral planning and
- an indication of the degree of detail to which the plan should be elaborated in the first instance.

The Terms of Reference form the basis of negotiations with the agencies that are being considered for participation in the exercise.

Work Plan

The Work Plan - to be drawn up by the appointed planning agency - should

specify, in as much detail as possible, the activities to be performed and the agencies responsible for each part of the whole. Essential components of this plan are a time schedule for the activities (incl. reporting) and a bar chart for the personnel who will be employed. Figure 3 (Chapter 3) gives an example of a bar chart with the time schedule for each discipline.

A well-thought-out interdisciplinary Work Plan is vital to the success of regional planning. *Network planning* can be of great help in this respect. If, right at the beginning, it proves impossible to plan in any great detail, one must be satisfied with first planning the main lines, to be followed by a more detailed schedule as more insight is gained into the feasibility of later activities; an appropriate time for this may be at the end of the reconnaissance stage (cf. 4.3).

Contracts

If a non-government agency is to conduct the exercise, an official contract must be drawn up specifying the separate responsibilities of the parties in accordance with the rules laid down by the government, or by the Supporting Agency if any. The Work Plan forms an essential part of the contract.

Plan of Operations (also called Project Document or Work Plan)
A Plan of Operations is especially applied in bilateral or multilateral cooperative programs. This document lays down the formal agreement between the government and the Supporting Agency, and specifies, the separate responsibilities of each of the partners.

Because there are (at least) two financing partners, each responsible for a certain share of the costs, the Plan of Operations may be an elaborate document, especially if parts of the operation are to be subcontracted to third parties.

Development cooperation agencies often have format-prescriptions for the contents of such documents.

The Plan of Operations will in any case contain sections on the Terms of Reference and on the Work Plan. Further, sections will be needed to specify:

- the responsibilities of each of the cooperating parties; the designation of their representatives and of everyone's legal competence;

- the items to be made available by each of the parties: personnel,

technical information, equipment, buildings, transport, services, etc.; all with time schedule;

cost estimates of all items, including services in kind, to be provided by each of the financing parties and broken down per budget year;

the formalities required for the appointment of domestic and foreign personnel;

the schedule of reporting and of reviewing the project progress, etc.

4.3 Recommended stages, their sequence and duration

For the planning exercise proper, we of the Research Group, in the light of our experience, consider that the following sequence of six stages will cover most eventualities.

Stages	Approximate duration
1. Preparation	1 month
2. Reconnaissance	1 to 2 month(s)
3. Main field study	6 months
4. Additional field study (optional)	unpredictable
5. Preparation draft plan	4 to 6 months
6. Editing final report	1 to 3 month(s)

The end of most stages is marked by an interim report, which is discussed with the Regional Planning Commission, or another appropriate government authority (cf.4.2). In principle proceeding to the next stage requires the official approval of that Commission or authority.

As will be noted, the time and manpower required for the various stages differ, with stages 3 and 5 requiring the most of both.

Stage 4 is optional, depending on circumstances in the region; under favourable circumstances Stage 4 may be omitted.

The above procedure will, in principle, avoid superfluous activities and costs, on the understanding that contracts, if any, include provision for termination at certain stages.

The above table gives only rough estimates of the time needed per stage. These times should not be regarded as absolute values; they are intended

merely to give an idea of the time ratio between the stages; see also Fig.4.

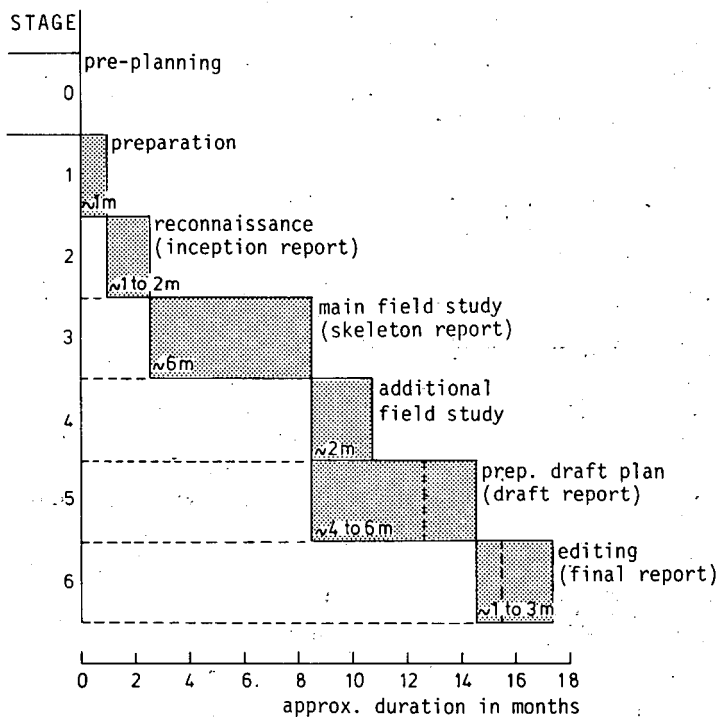


Fig.4. Stages in regional planning and their approximate duration.

The total duration of the planning exercise will depend much on the extent and complexity of the region, the available information, the size of the planning team and the efficiency with which it works, and the efficiency of the government organizations in general. Even under favourable circumstances, few regional plans can be completed within one year; it is more realistic to think in terms of two years.

4.4 Main activities per stage

The main activities to be undertaken in each stage are outlined below. For more detailed information, see Annexes I to IV.

Stage 1. Preparation

During Stage 1 the team members appointed by the relevant agency(ies) will come together for the first time, and will make all preparatory arrangements needed to fulfil their tasks. A number of meetings will be held under the chairmanship of the team leader:

- to present an extensive briefing on the objectives of study;
- to instigate a literature search;
- to define the composition of the team that is to undertake the reconnaissance study (usually the team leader and the key members) and to prepare their instructions;
- to discuss a tentative work schedule;
- to organize the logistic needs for the next stages.

Stage 2. Reconnaissance

The main purpose of Stage 2 is to provide answers to such questions as:

What are the government policies towards national and regional development?

What national and regional data are available on human and physical resources?

The reconnaissance stage can be subdivided into the following four *steps*.

Step 2.1 - General orientation in the national administration

Reconnaissance begins with visits to the ministries and to any of their divisions or departments concerned with national, sectoral, or regional planning. Objectives with respect to income growth and distribution, employment and settlement, nutritional and health standards must be ascertained and verified. Other activities are to gain an insight into the organizational structure of the departments and their functioning, to collect information on national policies and any regulations on planning, and to get an idea of the availability of statistics and other data that are of direct or indirect importance for the regional plan.

Step 2.2 - General orientation in the region

Visits, as described above, are paid to governmental agencies in the region as well. In addition, field visits are made to obtain a clear picture of the region, its population, main activities, infrastructure, and its problems. During these visits possible assistance (in staff and materials) to be provided by the regional and local authorities should be arranged.

Step 2.3 - Drawing up the Inception Report

The *Inception Report* is the first interim report; it summarizes the information collected during the previous two steps. This relatively short report contains no details but concentrates on the main ideas for develop-

ment, the main procedures for the studies, and the programming of the studies.

It should contain:

- a brief, general description of the region;
- a tentative evaluation of the development potentials and their chances of success under the present management and development strategies;
- an analysis of the main problems identified so far, not only in physical terms but also in non-physical terms; such problems may be a shortage of organizational and technical skills, disincentives of various social groups, etc;
- a review of previous studies and projects in the region (documentation);
- a list of additional data to be collected, and their priority;
- a statement on the constraints to development which cannot be solved without government interference (national, regional, or local);
- a proposal for adjustments in the Terms of Reference, if necessary;
- a detailed program of study for the next four stages;
- a tentative outline for the final main report (cf. Chapter 5).

If the planning exercise is to be interrupted or terminated at this stage (cf. 2.8 & 4.1.), the inception report must also contain a description of the projects and programs that are considered ready for implementation. The planning exercise then ends after approval of this report and can immediately be followed by implementation.

Upon completion, the Inception Report is submitted to the Regional Planning Commission.

Step 2.4 - Discussion of the Inception Report with the Regional Planning Commission

As the Inception Report covers the adjusted program for all further studies, the presence of all participating agencies is recommended. The purpose of the discussion is to obtain:

- approval of the work schedule;
- confirmation that the services requested from technical agencies will be provided;
- approval of any adjustments in the Terms of Reference.

Stage 3. Main field study

In Stage 3 emphasis is on field work. All remaining data considered essential for the regional planning exercise must now be collected through observations, inquiries, and systematic surveys by all disciplines. In the beginning the surveys may be executed by each discipline individually; later the findings will have to be combined and verified with those obtained by other disciplines. Care should be taken that duplication of the work of team members is avoided and that information, as far as possible, is collected at a common level of detail.

The following four steps are distinguished:

Step 3.1 - Field surveys

The methods of surveying will differ with the methodology of each discipline. For the professional items to be covered during this step, see Annexes I to III.

Step 3.2 - Preliminary planning

With the aid of the synthesized new information from the field surveys, the team will draft a set of alternative development proposals in the form of rough preliminary projects for each sector. These projects should be critically tested for their social acceptability and economic justification. A comparison of the consequences of the different projects will reveal which appear promising, and these can then be selected for further elaboration.

Step 3.3 - Drawing up the Skeleton Report

Each discipline produces its own *facet report* first. On that basis the team leader and the key members compose the second interim report, the *Skeleton Report*. This report describes and comments on the promising development proposals and tentatively formulates the selection criteria for projects and programs. It also proposes a number of possible development *strategies*. The report is then submitted to the Regional Planning Commission.

If the planning exercise is to be terminated upon approval of the Skeleton Report, this report must also include a description of the project and program proposals that are ready for implementation, and a clear indication of the necessary administrative measures (budget allocations; etc.).

Step 3.4 - Discussion of the Skeleton Report with the Regional Planning Commission

The meeting should select the most appropriate plan proposal which, together with one or two alternatives, are then recommended for further elaboration. The meeting should voice an opinion on the proposed development strategies and on the selection criteria for plan components. On the basis of the decisions made, the meeting can also decide whether additional field studies are needed and, if so, how these should be programmed. Should these additional studies be so extensive that they will upset the original budget and work program, the meeting must decide on the possible provision of additional funds and services in kind.

Stage 4. Additional Field Study (optional)

Depending on the decisions made in Step 3.4, additional field surveys may or may not be necessary. As the nature and volume of such studies can vary widely, it is not possible to specify how they should be organized. Surveys of a limited volume that are to provide additional details only may be executed parallel to the first step of Stage 5.

Stage 5. Preparation of the Draft Plan

Stage 5 can be regarded as the climax to the planning exercise. To a large extent, it reiterates the planning activities executed in Stages 2 and 3, but goes into greater depth and detail to refine the formulation and evaluation of identified projects and programs. This stage also contains four steps.

Step 5.1 - Revision and optimization of the preliminary plans

Numerous variables in the preliminary plans of Stage 3 will still be undefined and open for decision; examples are the final selection of farm types, the area to be occupied by the specific farm types, the major crop and livestock combinations, crop rotations. These variables are conditionally interrelated through their inputs and outputs.

In the present step the draft plans are submitted to an integrated evaluation. The projects identified sectorwise will be revised in accordance with the additional information collected in Stage 4. These projects will then be tested by the provisionally adopted selection criteria (cf. Stage 3) and will be compared as to their side effects.

An integrated plan is now drawn up, in line with the tentatively chosen development strategies and giving due attention to the interdependency of

the various projects and their competitive interest in resources and means. For an objective selection of the most appropriate overall plan, optimization of the many variables is needed. If necessary, a *linear program* procedure and computerized programs may be employed to make *optimization* calculations. Economists and sociologists will analyse the optimization results of the different scenarios on the basis of the relevant criteria (income level, employment opportunities, food production, social requirements, etc.). Finally, the team will make an integral evaluation to classify the alternative plans as to their suitability.

Step 5.2 - Formulation of programs of action

Programs of action are formulated on the basis of the selected overall plan and in consultation with government agencies. Concise descriptions of all projects and programs are presented with the accuracy usual at identification level, inclusive of the cost estimates for investments and recurrent costs, the proposed time phasing for realization, the personnel needed, etc. The projects can differ a great deal in character, as is illustrated by the following examples: the construction of a reservoir dam with corresponding irrigation system; the reclamation of land; the reforestation of an area; the introduction of an agricultural extension service or of a health service; the installation of (agro-)industries; the establishment of service centres, public utilities, etc.

To ensure that plan components are realized in a logical order, priorities should be determined for each component. The formulation of proposals for new government policies and regulations to change existing inadequate socio-economic structures is another essential part of the programming. Such proposals may refer to price policies, land tenure policies, taxes or subsidies on commodities, the establishment of new institutional services, etc.

The programs of action for the plan components must be tested on their mutual consistency. These programs are finally projected in long, medium, and short terms.

Step 5.3 - Drawing up the Draft Final Report, the Annexes, and the Draft Summary.

Drawing up the *Draft Final Report* and its Annexes is the task of the whole team. For the contents of these texts, see Chapter 5.

Step 5.4 - Discussion with the Regional Planning Commission

The Draft Report is submitted to the Regional Planning Commission for review, comment, and approval.

For the administrators responsible for various public sectors, this is the last opportunity to present their deliberated views on the proposals. The planning team must provide all information needed to determine the consequences of alternative proposals and adjustments, if any. At this meeting an attempt must be made to reach final agreement on the programs of action for the regional plan.

Stage 6. Editing the Final Report

Once the Draft Final Report has been approved, *the Final Report* must be edited and printed. This work can, for the greater part, be handled by the team leader and some key members.

The relevant steps are:

Step 6.1 - Adjusting and reviewing the Draft Report

The comments and adjustments agreed upon the Regional Planning Commission meeting (Step.5.4) are included in the text of the Final Report.

Step 6.2 - Discussion with the Regional Planning Commission

This discussion is only necessary if important changes, having unforeseen consequences, are introduced. If the adjustments constitute minor changes only, this step may be omitted.

Step 6.3 - Final editing and printing

This step covers editorial activities only.