

Background paper

Mainstreaming EPM at Local Level

The current phases of SCP and LA21 are implemented from January 2003/2004 respectively to end of 2007. These long term initiatives build on achievements and recommendations of previous phases emphasising that the EPM approaches and policies must increasingly be institutionalised. The main thrust of both the programmes is therefore on capacity development and policy impact for national replications, including engaging urban institutions for EPM-anchoring both nationally and in sub-regional resource networks. Overall a consolidation and institutionalisation strategy to ensure sustained EPM support at local level, and policy response at national level for wider impact. **This brings us to the importance of mainstreaming lessons of experience of Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) at the local level.**

Institutionalising, mainstreaming, making new approaches and changes into routine are never easy tasks, or quick achievements. From the outset it may be useful to ask ourselves – mainstreaming EPM? what does it mean, and try to better clarify: which specific work and functions, where, with who and which functions can contribute to mainstreaming EPM, and how can it be enhanced; - through examples in typical areas of relevance like Urban development, Governance, Poverty reduction, Environmental management a.o. An attempt to identify ‘key’ responses to that effect is shown in the annexed matrix, and discussed as follows along five EPM key clusters.

1. Cities Improve Environmental strategies and Decision-Making

Through a broad-based process with high degree of inclusiveness and subsidiarity ‘drive’, focus strategies and decision-making on locally prioritised and clearly defined environmental issues; and clarify policy options. *Is the proclaimed bottom up approach always real?*

Consider available implementation options, including their financial, economic, technical, legal, social, and physical dimensions during strategy formulation. Especially pro-poor/gender sensitive development strategies for better access to services and environmental resources. EPM must help to address often sensitive and complex aspects thru conflict resolution like for example unplanned settlements ‘(il)legality’ issues, and negotiate cross-subsidization, affordability, accountability, equity, transparency measures.

Involve all relevant stakeholders in analysing issues and policy options, and developing strategies; building consensus and developing a sense of ownership and commitment amongst the stakeholders, leading to better implementation and follow-up. Integration of stakeholder routines must include private sector interest/contribution in urban development, civil society, highly placed officials, councillors, and opinion-makers as change agents. EPM approach can help build bridges and confidence citizens ⇔ public sector thru attitudinal changes and behavioural shifts. Key is that basic EPM understanding and acceptance must be build and exist not only in local authorities but among all stakeholders.

Consider strategies within the existing framework for urban development and plan implementation, to foster inter-agency collaboration for joint action. There are good cases of establishing municipal development planning & coordination/sustainable development functions for maintaining more dynamic/strategic/participatory planning approaches, environmentally sensitive land use planning and urban growth patterns. It is important to prove the EPM planning approach thru action on the ‘ground’, in order to influence policy shifts and legislative aspects in decentralisation law and by-Laws and i.a. PRSPs.

2. Cities Improve Environmental Information and systems, Technical Expertise and use of tools and guidelines.

Organise basic overview information into a city environmental profile, involving all those whose cooperation is required in environmental planning and management. Introduce SCP guidelines for environmental resources and risks management ⇔ better environment – development understanding.

Systematically identify stakeholders in the private, public, NGO, CBO and popular sectors so that there is full awareness and participation of all interest groups thru improved information base, access and dissemination flow.

Set priorities among environmental issues through broad agreement among the stakeholders so that issues affecting quality of life, especially of disadvantaged groups, can be addressed expeditiously. *Is EPM e.g. sufficiently contributing to achieving MDGs thru introducing pro poor guidelines, promoting right to environmental information, and alleviating voicelessness, and powerlessness in 'systems'?*

Address cross-sectoral and cross-institutional implications and responsibilities squarely when elaborating and clarifying agreed priority issues. The profile must be maintained, expanded and elaborated into an environmental management information system (EMIS). *Does it adequately help needs assessment, identify environmental 'hotspots', and rural-urban linkages?* Options should also be explored to include technology/risk assessment and to introduce Eco-budgeting, and ISO 14001 principles.

3. Local Capacity building mechanisms, National training support options, engaging urban Institutions.

Build capacities system-wide, involving all sectors of society, through a long-term and continuing process of enablement of local authorities thru local leadership training, training of urban practitioners, and training of NGOs and CBOs, and private sector, including improving skills and income generation.

Strengthen existing mechanisms for cross-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination; and enhance capabilities through information, education/training and communication efforts at all levels. *Is there a legal framework for broad-based participation in decision-making?*

Demand-led training and expertise by EPM anchoring urban institutions and specialised training organisations, Universities and EPM consultants. *Are cities sufficiently engaged with support institutions to help customising tools and training, translation, developing national EPM C-B agenda/ToT, and influencing to further assess and define improvements of existing urban planning, development, environment, and social curricula?*

Establish measurable and time-based indicators to monitor and evaluate institutional and participatory capacities; disseminate monitoring results to all concerned, for a transparent review and adjustment of the EPM process. Have a mechanism in place for exchange of experiences – documentation – learning relationships – interaction by all partners.

4. Cities make more efficient use of Financial and Technical resources and support mechanisms (incl. CBOs, private sector) for effecting change.

Make optimal use of existing local and national resources through an approach that is not only participatory, but also transparent, and intersectoral including EPM technical backstopping, and

pro poor socio-economic support - for example from national technical support team, sector experts and course facilitators.

Focus on local, community based activities that are replicable at all levels; establish learning – exchange needs and mechanisms to agree concept and technical understanding. *To what extent is EPM helpful in mobilising local business and partnerships for capital investments e.g. thru urban pacts - promoting cost effectiveness, cost recovery, profitability, economic growth and employment?*

Share experiences through knowledge management, case studies/examples and networking at the local, regional and national levels. Improve local resource mobilisation thru budgetary allocation, and influencing national distribution of development funds. Ensure international cooperation between existing programmes and projects, and external support agencies (ESAs, ESPs).

5. Cities improve effective implementation of environmental strategies thru provision of basic urban services (strategies, implementation, demos, upscaling).

Application of the full range of implementation capabilities (e.g. regulations, economic incentives, investment programmes, and public information campaigns).

Agreement on action plans for implementation within a coherent strategic framework that has wide acceptance, managerial and political support. Use a demo → replication/upscaling approach (capture/share/evaluate/synthesise) that is ensured national strategic support, coupled with socio-economic reforms.

Prepare packages of mutually supportive interventions; continuing involvement and consensus of all stakeholders; and mainstreaming of environmental responsibilities. In very many cases the EPM approach/SCP/LA21 process has been used to address overcrowding, poor environmental health, lack of basic services and insufficient shelter delivery – *is the EPM ‘way’ suitable for helping to improve provision of urban services in a large scale – or too many demos and only limited upscaling for wider impact? Again with reference to the MDGs, is the EPM a good ‘way’ to help protect against exploitation and discrimination (poor, gender, caste)?*

Reconfirm political perception, mobilisation of resources and regular monitoring, evaluation and feedback of implementation results. Involve NGO/CBOs, private sector capacity, and community skills in implementation monitoring which helps to strengthen ownership, capacity enhancement thru practice and income generation. *Does it happen?*

Conclusion on Mainstreaming at the local level

In mainstreaming EPM at the local level, the approach and SCP/LA21 processes and tools are integrated into the way local actors conduct their business every day. Programmes/projects activities should contribute to improvements in urban planning and environmental management. They should also contribute to significant improvements in aspects of poverty reduction, and to better local governance in general. Mainstreaming at the local level translates into changes in local policies, institutional arrangements and the relationship between different actors. However from experience it is important to document not only the ‘gains and gaps’, but equally important to realise what EPM cannot do.

Have you assessed/discussed this in your city?

Is the EPM approach an added value to your urban planning and management practices?

Is the EPM/SCP approach and process in complementarity with other urban environmental planning & management approaches, or not?

In your municipal authority will the EPM approach be sustained beyond the SCP/LA21 project support?