

# Development planning: balancing demands between performance and capacity

## A personal view

Forbes Davidson, IHS Rotterdam

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Forbes Davidson is an urban and regional planner and currently is senior faculty of the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Focal areas include policy, urban development planning, with a particular focus on participatory strategic and action planning. Work has included local government in Scotland, planning and implementation in Ismailia, Egypt and major urban development capacity building programmes including Indonesia, India, Zambia, Poland, Romania, Ethiopia and Kosovo. He also led an international team to develop guidelines for integrated urban development for the European Commission. This paper draws mainly on first hand experience.

### Abstract

There is considerable discussion on the appropriate form of development planning to meet challenges including those of sustainability, but unfortunately this discussion often ignores the capacities of those who have to lead and participate in the process. This short paper draws on the author's experience and argues that it is necessary to do more thinking, first on what we need a plan to achieve - the *performance* requirement of planning and second on the capacities available or developable to undertake this. From this can be developed a more appropriate *form* of planning to ensure that what is done has a reasonable chance of success. This may sound very simple and common sense. The problem is that formal statutory planning systems have often become too rigid to be able to respond to the changing needs in any situation.

The paper concludes that it is necessary to limit the prescriptive directions that are given to plan preparation. It is necessary to have a simplified support framework and to encourage adaptation in line with local issues and developable capacities. Capacities are needed to be able to innovate. Appropriate forms of support in terms of legal framework, guidelines and capacity building are briefly discussed.

### Demand: changing concepts

Demands on a planning system can come from several directions. It has to respond to changing local issues, it has to adapt to concepts of what should be done by external agencies with agendas that do not take into account local capacities, and it

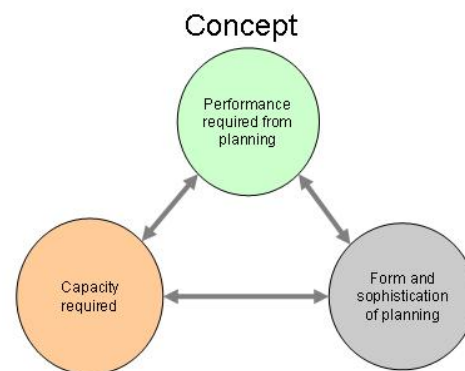


Figure 1 The relationship between demands, plan form and capacities

often has to work with prescribed standard tools. There are often significant conflicts between changing ideas about the best ways to plan development and the capacities available to develop and implement plans. In my experience, what is promoted as being the ideal solution at International and National levels is rarely realistic when it comes to implementation locally. The answer proposed to this dilemma is normally to aim to build capacity to meet the desired "ideal" level. The standard approach, however, is compromised by differences in culture, experience and working conditions. As a result, the new system often does not work, leading into another cycle of attempted improvement. What is needed is a system that can respond to key questions including:

- What performance do we want and need from planning for sustainable development?
- How do we manage the sometimes conflicting demands for plans that come from different sectors, either from Central Government or from external agencies?
- Can existing approaches including the statutory plans meet the needs?
- What capacity is realistically available to plan and to implement?
- If not adequate, how do we work with the conflicting needs of plans and capacities to produce a good result in terms of better development?

## Changing demands: the cycles of concepts

One factor leading to new demands on the planning system is the constantly changing concepts of what is the most effective approach. Concepts tend to be cyclical in nature (Davidson, 1999). Figure 2 illustrates that we are constantly searching for the ideal

### Cycles of concepts: the 5 H's

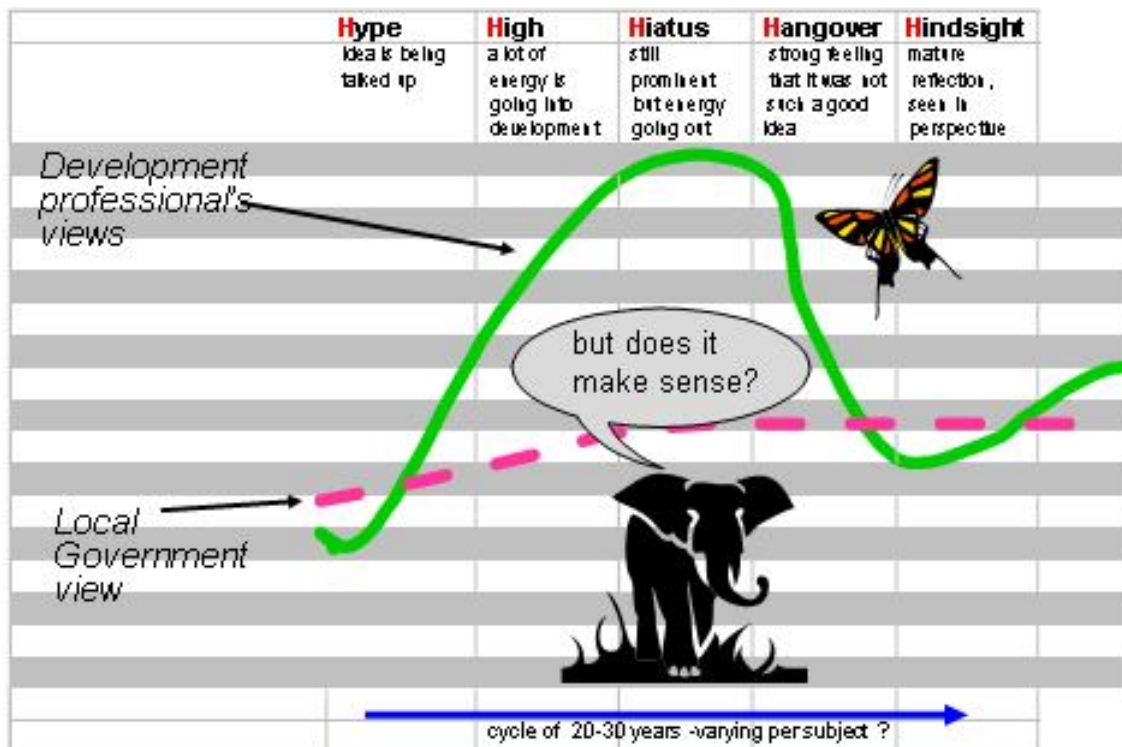


Figure 2 The cycles of concepts: the 5 H's

solution, and also often giving up and moving on before an answer is tested out and lessons really learned. The paper presents a slightly tongue in cheek classification of five stages of the cycle of key concepts that are used in urban development management. The “5 H's” are *Hype* when a new concept is being talked up; *High* when a lot of energy is going into a concept and everyone believes it is a great thing; *Hiatus* when it becomes mainstream, but the energy and interest start to be lost; *Hangover* when it appears that it is not the answer to dreams and was perhaps not such a good idea after all; and finally, *Hereafter or Hindsight* refers to the time in the future when we can look back at the effectiveness of concepts and their implementation on the basis of sound research and identify what is sound and what is a fad also illustrates that local government; especially smaller towns with weaker staffing is particularly vulnerable to these changes. They can ill afford to put limited resources into following up every change in intellectual fashion. For example, participation was promoted in the late 60's as a vital part of planning. Interest faded, but returned in the 90's, and is currently seen as an important part of planning in most countries, at least in terms of what is written and said, if not always backed up in action. Unfortunately, 'lip service' is often paid to participation, which is then implemented in a sub-optimal manner, precipitating decline in faith in the approach. Similarly, Master Plans went out of fashion, and strategic plans are currently seen as the most relevant form of development plan, but are likely soon to be also under pressure. Frank So in 1984 discussed the re-emergence of strategic planning (So, 1984). My paper on the subject was backed only by minimal research, but these concerns have re-emerged recently in a major review of research by the World Bank (Easterly, 2006), (Economist, 2007) .

### Demands: Changing performance needs of plans

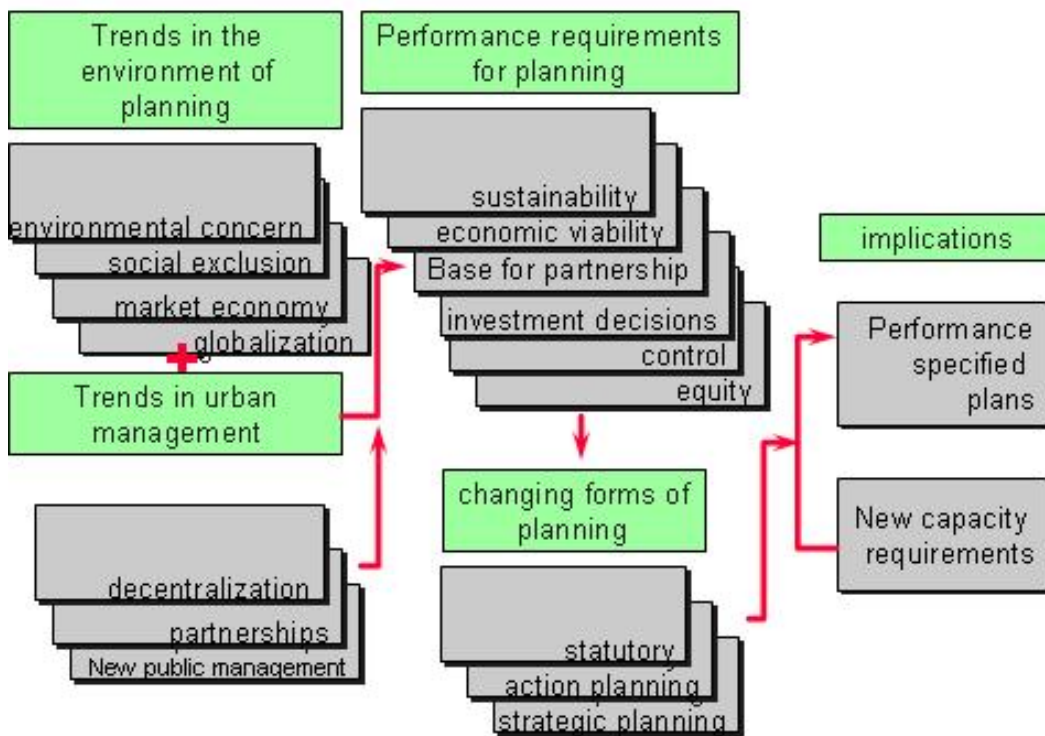


Figure 3 Changing demands from the context and form of planning

I argued in an earlier paper (Davidson, 1996), that it is important to be clear on what is needed from a plan. Sustainability may be an entry point, but it is not the only requirement. Its form will be different if it is necessary to use it as the base for land use regulations or building control as opposed to being a means to try to get residents and investors aligned behind a strategy to overcome urban problems or develop potentials. The concept is illustrated in Figure 4. Some of the requirements identified for sustainable development were:

- A participative planning mechanism that builds up understanding and co-operation between the multiple stakeholders concerned.
- a mechanism allows strategic decision making , and looks beyond individual short term interests to common good of a future generation;
- an integrated approach to ensure efficient use of scarce resources;
- legal backing and the institutional basis for enforcement; and
- Indicators for performance and a continuous monitoring, evaluation and adjustment

Recent trends in approach to planning include increasing emphasis on participation



**Figure 4 Overlapping of different forms of plans**

and getting things done. Nabeel Hamdi draws on his experience of action planning to promote the importance of allowing local, often small-scale initiatives (Hamdi, 2004). The global planners network their meeting in Vancouver in 2006 supported a new advocative governance paradigm for planning (Farmer et al., 2006) with 10 points including sustainability, integrated planning, planning with partners, subsidiarity, market responsiveness, concern with access to land, use of appropriate tools, being pro-poor and inclusive and respecting cultural variation. This direction indicates the range of competencies seen by the profession as needed to be effective, and thus also indicates recognition of the potentially high level of capacities needed. Writing on new demands in planning tends to emphasize creativity, interpersonal skills, ability to work in partnership (Healey 2004, Healey, 1995) These heightened capacities are far from the realities in most cases where capacity is low.

### Demands: The stress of overlapping plan types of plan

Plans are promoted by different agencies and interest groups. When these stimuli come from outside local government there is a real danger that each organization promotes its own approach to tackling the issues on its agenda. Thus, for example, local government may be encouraged to develop a “poverty alleviation action plan”, related to a programme of central government or a donor. It may also be required to develop a “local agenda 21” plan so that it can access funds aiming at more sustainable urban development. Britain’s DFID would look for sustainable livelihoods (Figure 4).

If we examine these proposed processes and products we find that there are many common elements. In most cases stakeholder analysis is done, some form of situation analysis, often SWOT analysis is done. Problems should be analyzed, Objectives have to be set. This can create confusion and additional work, as the common elements are may not be recognized. If the work is being carried out by consultants or NGOs there may be less ability to see duplication. The fact that in many cases the capacity of local governments is very low makes for further problems.

To be able look critically at a number of potentially competing programmes and to integrate the common elements requires significant capacity. This is not realistic in most cases where capacity is low.

So, to conclude on the demand side, the changing issues seen as important, the changing concepts of development and overlapping demand from different programmes combine to create an excessive potential demand on the limited capacity available in most local governments. Is the answer then to build up the missing capacity or is to be smarter in the demands we place by allowing more modest goals to be set and more freedom in how to meet them.

### The Capacity Building concept and its link to planning

Capacity building for urban development aims to produce institutions able to plan and run towns and cities effectively. They should be able to manage development so that it is sustainable, from the broad point of view of social, economic and



environmental conditions (Peltenburg et al., 1996) (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements., 2001).

As a concept, capacity building goes beyond training of individuals to strengthening the institutions and the frameworks that they work within.

Figure 5 illustrates this. This broad approach has significant implications for how capacity building institutions and their partners need to work. These partners include Governments at local, provincial and national levels, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector. Capacity is necessary if cities are to realise their potential roles in human and economic development and be able to tackle the major issues which vary locally and which are continuously developing and changing. It is, however, very important to ask “capacity building for what?”

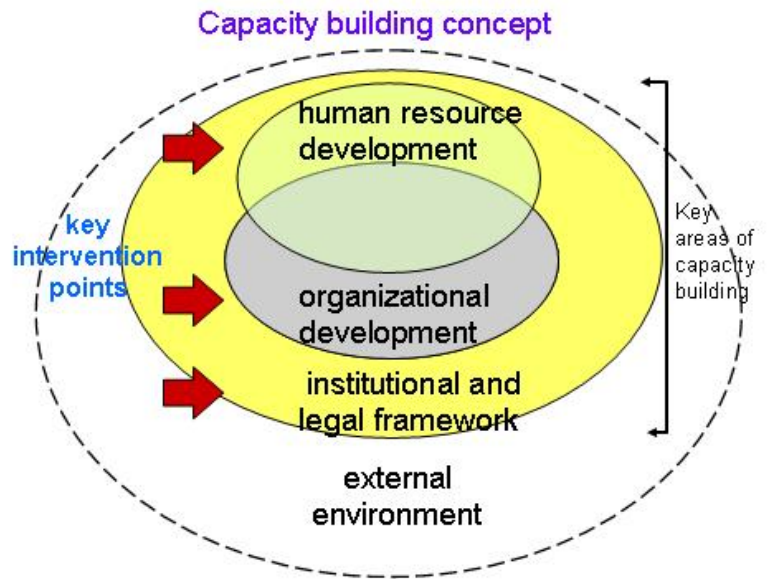


Figure 5 Capacity building concept

Figure 6 illustrates the concept of linking capacity building to the needs arising from strategy development.

Capacity building has to address deficits in existing conventional ways of working. In addition, it has the challenge of working with new approaches if the policies of governments and the recommendations of Habitat II and other global conferences are to be implemented.

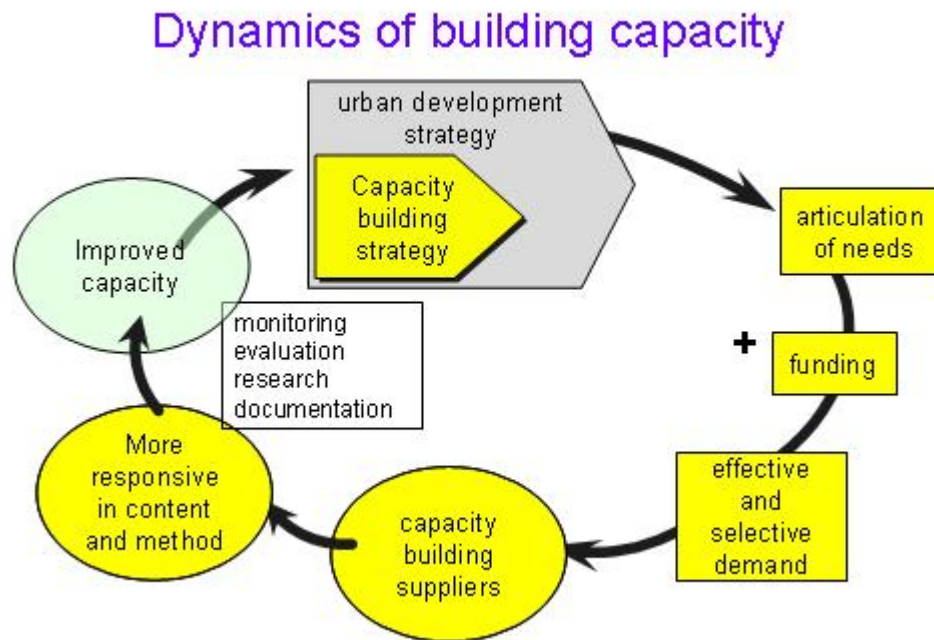


Figure 6 capacity building related to development strategy

## Plans and capacities: cases

In this section I review a number of planning experiences, most of which I have been involved in directly, and review the extent to which it was possible to adjust the form of the plan to help balance demands and capacity at the local level. The cases look briefly at the context, the form of the plan, the capacity for implementation and the lessons learnt.

### Case: Ismailia Master Plan

This case allows the perspective of many years of hindsight, as it was originally started in 1974 after the war with Israel (Davidson, 1981). Later, environmental issues were taken up again in the Sustainable Ismailia Programme, SIP. (Khoury, 1996).

*Context/ promotion of the plan* The context was of a strong central government slowly opening to decentralisation and market. Poor conditions for local government staff, especially low pay. Central Government promoted the development of the plan, UNDP provided financial support.

*Form of plan* The form of the plan was a detailed comprehensive plan with innovative approaches, especially in terms of housing policy and environmental management.

*Capacity for implementation* Capacity was very limited. Government did not take up institutional recommendations.

Implementation of parts of the plan, especially upgrading and new housing was aided by consultants.

*Lessons* Key lessons included:

Positive experience:

- The main structure of the plan including major infrastructure proposals gave a good base for later infrastructure investments
- The process of developing the plan gave a high level of ownership at the local level,
- The policy areas on housing and environment were taken up strongly in the upgrading and new



**Figure 7** Getting plans off the shelves and into use- a major challenge

- development projects and in the Sustainable Ismailia project
- The economic development proposals were a good framework for later development
- Adaptation of the plan to a more strategic framework linked to progressive capacity development worked well.

Areas which did not work well

- The plan detail was too great in relation to the commitment to invest in the institutional and financial framework needed for implementation.
- The comprehensive nature of the plan detracted from its strategic focus
- The plan was vulnerable to the major requirements of financial and institutional development which Central Government did not, in the end, follow through on. There was not, in the end, a capacity to implement the plan as it was.

### **Hai el Salam- Upgrading and new development**

This project developed from the Master Planning exercise, and was an attempt to utilise local resources, particularly land and peoples initiative (UNCHS, 1994, Davidson, 2000, Khairy, 1998, Matteucci, 2006).

*Context/ promotion of the plan* .The El Hekr area, later renamed Hai el Salam had a population of 40,000 in 1975 mainly of low income but with a wide range of occupations. There were no services within the area, water was from hand pumps but 50% was polluted from pit latrines. The plan was developed as a means of implementing the housing policy proposals of the Master Plan and involved re-blocking, laying out of new plots, basic infrastructure and was organised on a self financing basis.. It was developed with initiative from the consultants, but with strong local government and local elected member support. Central government also supported the approach as a pilot project. Donor funding was for design and limited starter actions at the physical level.

*Form of plan* Work went through two stages. In the first, there were detailed terms of reference and a clearly defined product. This meant a lot of energy went on report preparation and design to a level that was more detailed than was necessary. Initial design work was done almost entirely by consultants, though with efforts to ensure understanding of community priorities. In the second stage there was a very simple terms of reference and a lot of flexibility. Implementation was by a local government team, supported by consultants. The plan was developed in an open and participative process based on realistic resource availability. Adjusted based on the capacity of the local staff and adjusted based on experience.

*Capacity for implementation* Local capacity was very limited initially, but was developed incrementally. It was mainly by on job coaching, but supplemented with classes and stimulated with improved salaries through bonus systems

### *Lessons*

Positive lessons were:

- The simple, flexible terms of reference allowed for flexibility and adaptation
- The form of planning changed to fit resources including local capacity
- The direct experience with coaching and limited training support, worked well
- The low key hands on approach with better working conditions released the potential of staff,

Areas that did not work so well:

- It was difficult to modify the land prices once fixed



- The motivation of ensuring access to low income groups was not widely supported,
- Mechanisms to avoid speculation and corruption were not robust
- The incentive system was dropped when the area reverted to normal municipal management, and maintenance levels reduced
- The impact on central government policies was less than hoped for

### **IUIDP Indonesia**

The Integrated Urban Infrastructure Program in Indonesia was a major programme starting in the mid 80's to support decentralized local government by enabling it to take a central role in planning and financing its own infrastructure. Within this, a new form of planning had to be developed, which took account of the needs of infrastructure investment, but also tried to take account of the capacity of local government, which was in many cases very weak (Suselo, 1995, Wegelin, 1990, Davidson and Watson, 1995).

*Context/ promotion of the plan.* There was strong central government promotion, supporting integrated development, decentralization and capacity building. This was particularly from the Ministry of Public Works. Central government was supported in the programme by international donors, both in terms of technical assistance and finance.

*Form of plan* The existing land use plans were found not to provide an adequate base for the infrastructure planning. They were weak in terms of setting of priority areas for development and did not give a basis in terms of institutional organization needed or of the financial framework. A special form of plan was developed linking an integrated approach to infrastructure with institutional and financial reforms

*Capacity for implementation* Capacity was limited, but this was recognized, and a training support programme was developed with additional support from guideline development. Many towns were supported by consultants hired by central government.

#### *Lessons*

Positive lessons were:

- A new form of plan was developed related to the needs of the programme
- strong central support allowed development of a good support infrastructure  
Training support was given, linked in some cases to on-job coaching
- Local government was given the opportunity to start to take more control
- Donor support was coordinated

Aspects that did not work so well

- A lot of plans were prepared by consultants hired by central government. This resulted in limited local understanding and ownership of the plans.
- The form of plans was not adapted to different capacity levels
- There was limited understanding at local level of the potential benefits of an integrated approach, and this aspect was not reinforced by procedures
- Promotion mainly by one ministry made it difficult to get support from other ministries.

In conclusion- a very ambitious programme, with recognition of the capacity constraints, but too much focused on a standard product.

### **Integrated Development Planning, South Africa**

Integrated Development Planning was introduced in South Africa in 1996, with support from CSIR in South Africa and the German development organization, GTZ. The plans

were ambitious, and try to integrate priority actions and link them to budgeting and institutional responsibilities (Harrison, 2006, Todes, 2005) The process was introduced with substantial guidelines, and training support. South Africa has a good infrastructure to learning from the experience. This is showing that small municipalities find the exercise very difficult to implement, while larger municipalities feel constrained (DPLG, 2005 quoted in Harrison, 2006 (draft). The capacity to work on sustainable development issues was found to be included, but rather limited (Todes, 2005).

*Context/ promotion of the plan* .The system was introduced in the context of new government systems and strong international support. It was also introduced in the context of reorganization of local government.

*Form of plan* The aim is to integrated physical, institutional and financial aspects of development and to link it between levels of government. It is described in detailed guidelines.

*Capacity for implementation* Capacity varies greatly between relatively strong large cities and small, weaker municipalities.

*Lessons* It is still an ongoing process, but lessons are being learned in terms of the need to link sophistication to capacity. Some criticisms suggest that the process is rather bureaucratic, and that there needs to be room for faster moving creativity (Coetzee and Serfontein, 2003).

### **Ethiopia, integrated development planning (IDP)**

Ethiopia has made a strong effort to promote urban planning and management. The Integrated Development planning experience from South Africa has been taken as a model .

*Form of plan* This is described above.

*Capacity for implementation* The South African guidelines are being used, although they have been described as too complex for use in many towns in South Africa, where capacity is significantly stronger than in Ethiopia. Local capacity is very limited, as is the capacity of local consultants, leading to difficulties in implementation<sup>i</sup>

*Lessons* Positive lessons are:

- strong government commitment and support from new capacity building programme
- willingness of central government to promote more effective forms of plans

Problems include:

- The form of plan is rather sophisticated - it needs adaptation to local conditions, particularly to local capacities.

### **Andhra Pradesh Urban Services for the Poor (APUSP), India**

*Context/ promotion of the plan*. Significant funding from donor with policy to support pro-poor development and decentralisation (APUSP, 2006). The programme sought to promote local development of integrated infrastructure plans with a particular focus on the needs of the poor. The interesting aspect was that a simple or 'basic' form of plan was developed to make the starting point as accessible as possible. A second stage comprehensive plan could be used if there was success as the basic level.

*Form of plan* A special form of plan, the Municipal Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (MAPP) was developed to give a context to infrastructure proposals. It included physical, institutional and financial aspects. The entry point, the basic MAPP was made as simple

as possible so as to allow local government to make a start. A simple participatory tool was used to help prioritise locations for assistance. If municipalities were successful, they could move to a more ambitious form of plan the comprehensive MAPP and be eligible for larger funds.

*Capacity for implementation* Local capacity was very limited. The programme developed mechanisms to provide support from State level and consultants and also provided funds to support use of local professionals. Local capacity building institutions were integrated into the process

#### *Lessons*

Positive lessons:

- Starting with a simple, robust approach related to local capacities and realistic support worked well.
- A simple tool for priority setting was developed which was locally calibrated and was used by local committees. It overcame some of the political interference
- Funds to enable local government to access local resources was successful

Problems:

- Sustainability will be difficult as external funding was at a very significant level. It is hoped that by working mainly through government institutions that the problems will be minimised.
- The focus on poverty issues is not necessarily the focus of local government or state government.

### **Kosovo, Strategic Spatial Plan example of linkage capacity building**

*Context/ promotion of the plan.* UN supported transitional government needed a framework to guide investment planning. UN Habitat provided support by contracting the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies to provide technical assistance and training support.

*Form of plan* A participatively developed integrated, strategic plan providing a spatial and policy framework to guide central investment and local municipalities.

*Capacity for implementation* The capacity was very limited capacity at start of the process (there had been previously no opportunity for staff to gain experience). Capacity was built while working on the plan through direct experience and training and educational support.

*Lessons* What worked well was:

- Capacity built in managing participation as well as plan development
- Support and training while working on the plan was a good experience.
- The plan team tried to fast-track and be in dialogue with ongoing decision areas such as the development of lignite fields in the context of changing global energy perceptions
- Efforts were made to engage with local government which was in parallel preparing their own plans
- The plan received the approval of parliament

Problem areas include:

- low government salaries make it difficult to keep the staff who have been trained

### **Lessons**

What lessons come from this small review of experiences? In each case there was a concept of the plan and what it should do. In the first Ismailia plan there was a rigid terms of reference which did not take account of local capacities, making for a serious

mismatch between the capacities needed for effective preparation and implementation and the capacities existing or reasonably developable. The more modest action plan was much more attuned to the capacities available, was very action oriented, and was effective. In Indonesia, there was a realization that a new form of plan was needed, but it was adjusted more to the needs of integrated infrastructure investment than to the capacities of local staff. In that case the gap was tackled by a training programme and the use of consultants. These measures helped, but were not sufficient because of the size of the gap. APUSP in India went further in terms of adjusting the plan sophistication in line with local capacities, and had mechanisms for this to be improved over time. In Ethiopia, the gap problem is again emerging. There are serious, large scale efforts to build the capacity to meet the high ambitions, but this is likely to take some time to become effective. Adjustment of the ambition of the plans is required.

Specific lessons included:

- In most cases the form of plan to be prepared by local government or their consultants was decided at a higher level. There was little space for local creativity with the development of a flexible approach that could try to best fit priority needs to the capacities available in local government and its partners.
- Where the plans were mainly developed externally, the ownership and willingness/ ability to adjust and adapt were very limited.
- Where there was more flexibility and possibility of local adaptation, there appeared to be better results.
- Recognition of capacity issues by a) adapting to real situations by adjusting the sophistication and b) building in capacity building support mechanisms appears to have been helpful.

## The need for a creative and incremental approach

When buying socks we are assured that “one size fits all” In the forms of plans, governments often make the same assumption. One planning approach will not fit all, internationally or nationally. It needs to relate realistically to the performance needs of the situation, to the need for creativity and to the capacity available or developable to prepare, update and implement. This does not mean that government, central or local, has to do everything – they can work in partnership with communities and private sector, they can use consultants, but there must be a certain minimum level of capacity that can manage the process and use the results to help make better decisions.

I think that ultimately coordination and integration of programmes needs to be done at the local level –it is only there that it is possible to think critically about what is actually needed. But, of course, capacity is very limited and common sense often takes second

### Requirement – keep it simple

- Emphasis on commonalities in tackling issues – not all as separate.
- Build up to complexity, not all at once

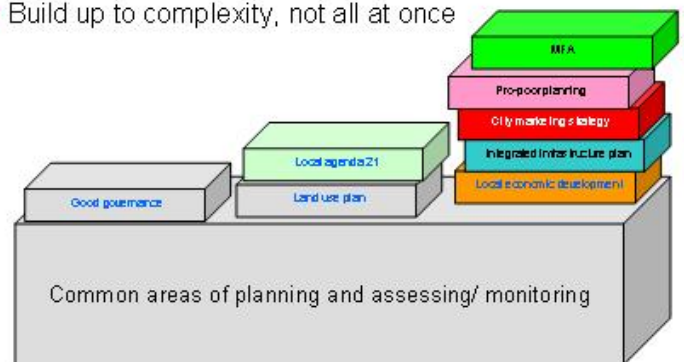


Figure 8 An incremental approach to planning

place to meeting the needs of the organizations that are supposed to help the local level. It is ultimately the responsibility of the organizations that are promoting different programmes and approaches to make sure that a) they are needed, b) that their adoption can help achieve better performance at the local level and c) they should help local government as to how to integrate their demands and link to local needs and capacities.

Strong concepts of planning and development, internationally held, are often a substitute for thinking, common sense and local creativity. It is necessary to have an approach which puts more emphasis on ensuring that there is a clear, simple planning framework, but one which can be filled in at different levels of sophistication relating to local needs and capacities. In this way there would be a much better chance that local creativity and resources could be tapped, that plans be successful and that those concerned develop a confidence and credibility needed to tackle urgent issues.

### *Role of guidelines and support strategies*

So, what are the tools available to work in this direction? I suggest that there are two related sets of tools. One relates to the contents, form and preparation of the plan or strategy. Here, the challenge is to support processes without prescribing them – an art rather than a science, and to support in a manner that allows flexibility in the sophistication of the product. It should emphasise the performance needed and a realistic appraisal of the resources available, including capacity to plan and implement.

The second group involves working to develop the capacity of those involved in developing and implementing the plans to a level that is perhaps ambitious but ultimately realistic. Capacity meaning not just the training and education in relevant areas, but also institutional culture and employment conditions that allow the development and keeping of good staff in government and the ability to work effectively with private sector and communities. The art is in balancing these two aspects in a dynamic manner, rather than taking either as a fixed point.

### *Use of Guidelines*

Over the years I have been involved in a number of efforts to develop guidelines, a highly challenging and difficult work. Lessons I have learned, though not always been able to put into practice include:

- Focus on setting realistic and locally owned objectives
- Focus on performance needed from a plan or strategy rather than prescription of what should be done
- Help in understanding issues and possible actions as a base for decision making
- Provision of practical examples of how things have been done, while discouraging copying
- Provision of practical guidance on how to do things
- Focus on process and participation with development of local ideas and initiatives,
- Indication of a minimum or “basic” level that is achievable with limited resources
- Encouragement of continuous link between what is to be done with who is responsible and involved and with what resources

Overall it is very important that guidelines are supportive and not prescriptive and that they encourage a progressive improvement rather than constant failure.



### Use of Consultant support

Consultant support for local planning will be a progressively increasing phenomenon for a number of reasons:

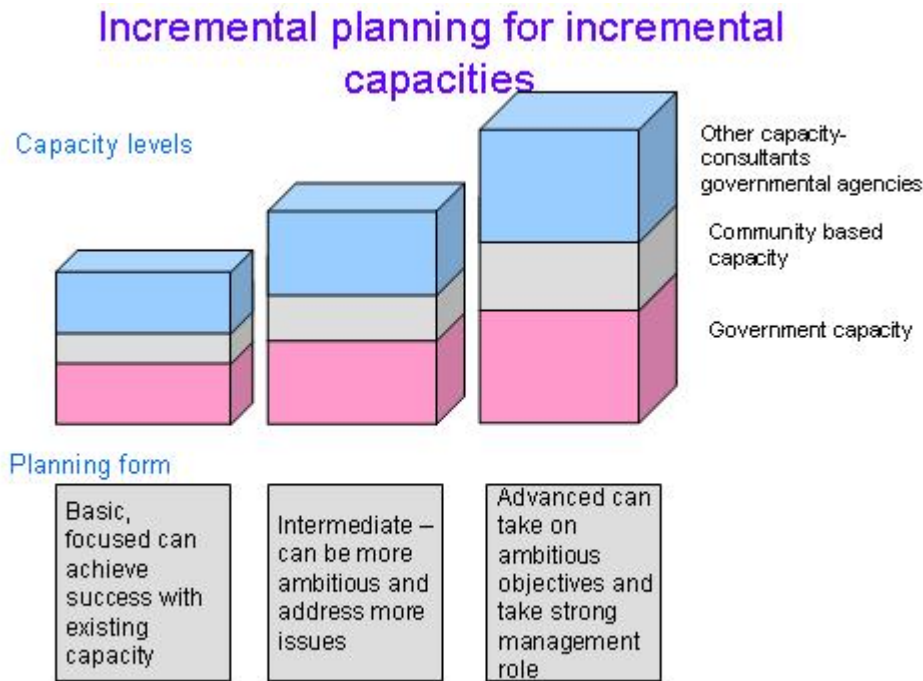
- Local government is often weak but is limited in what it can offer to attract and keep good staff.
- The general trend with New Public Management towards downsizing of government and outsourcing of services,

However, this does not mean that there is automatically less capacity needed by local government, rather that the capacity needed changes from one carrying out most work itself (if at all) to one which has to manage and coordinate inputs by others – possibly even more demanding.

### Capacity Building

On the capacity building side, the main lessons relate to:

- The need to see capacity as an issue beyond the knowledge, skills and motivation of individuals, but as something including the willingness and ability of an institution to manage its staff well, and the legal and administrative frameworks governing their ability to do so.
- The importance of integrating capacity development into development plans and using the process of plan and strategy development as a means of developing capacity.



**Figure 9 incremental capacity building linked to plan type**

## Conclusion

In conclusion, in this paper I have discussed changing ideas in terms of development concepts, planning, capacity needs and capacity building, and how these need to be considered together. The ideal of the perfect form of planning is something which will continuously be sought and never found. It does not exist in a form that fits every situation at every time and in every place. It also does not exist in terms of being able to be implemented by any institution with or without its partners.

This is not an argument against planning and planners, but rather to say we should get away from the idea that one form of planning can be used everywhere, but rather that the form of plan used should depend on the needs and the capacity.

Focus should be on simple frameworks that can be filled in at different levels. Thinking on the plan should take account of capacity but should go beyond to integrate the development of capacity for its implementation. Guidelines and consultant support are important tools, but they should encourage the seeking out of plans and strategies that are locally sensitive, innovative, appropriate and supported. They need to:

- Focus on local priorities
- Aim to provide a framework for better decisions rather than a detailed design
- Use existing and potential capacities
- Use what is useable from existing forms of plans and innovate where needed
- Use practical tools for monitoring performance
- Focus on practical implementation rather than on production of a perfect plan

Planning is often criticized as being a useless constraint on development. But towns, cities and regions are too complex to develop on a purely ad hoc basis. It is not sufficient to have plans which do not fit needs and which do not have mechanisms for implementation. It is better to have a simple framework that allows clearly better decisions and which can be elaborated according to need and capacity. This also means that it is critical to have good staff involved who are able to be creative, able to work in partnership and who are supported fully by their organizations, including having good employment conditions.

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<sup>i</sup> Source: discussions with local officials in Ethiopia and research carried out by participants in the Masters programme in Urban Management at IHS.