

Deliverable 6
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REGIONET

(Strategies for Regional Sustainable Development: an integrated approach beyond best practice)

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Work Package 3: Regional Sustainable Development: Evaluation Methods and Tools

Deliverable 6: Conference proceedings WS3, Conclusions & Recommendations

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1. About REGIONET

REGIONET (Strategies for Regional Sustainable Development: An Integrated Approach beyond Best Practice) is an EU thematic network project, funded by DG Research under the 5th Framework Programme. REGIONET brings together best practice in regional sustainable development, linking science with policy, across the EU and the New Accession States. The REGIONET agenda includes 3 key themes:

- EU Structural Funds and regional sustainable development ('RSD');
- Multi-level governance for RSD;
- Evaluation methods and tools for RSD.

REGIONET has organized an international workshop for each of these themes, and a final conference will bring these together for practical applications across the EU. The project as a whole will deliver outputs and publications including this conference proceedings on the third workshop. For further information, please visit: www.iccr-international.org/regionet.

2. The Evaluation Workshop

The third workshop of REGIONET brought together a total of 75 experts from 21 European countries - *Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK*. There were also delegates from *Canada and Australia*.

This workshop provided a review and synthesis of **existing** and **new** methods and tools, in the evaluation of RSD. It aimed to cover a wide agenda, from technical **evaluation tools**, to social **evaluation processes**, in the belief that combining these is essential in moving towards RSD. The workshop objectives included:

- To make links between evaluation methods and tools, and their processes and applications.
- To bridge the gaps between the evaluation of an **ideal model** for RSD, and the evaluation of the **realities** of current policies and programmes.
- To explore how **economic, environmental and social** evaluation methods can be combined and integrated.

In particular the workshop aimed to provide guidance of a practical nature on:

- Extending and interpreting EU guidance, particularly the DG Regio “Thematic evaluation on the contribution of the structural funds to sustainable development”
- Increasing the effectiveness of various ‘integrated appraisal’ toolkits.
- Linking evaluation of regional programmes, to evaluations for other sectors and other levels.
- Overall, to point towards an **integrated best practice framework** for evaluation of RSD.

The workshop sessions were structured around 4 themes which are reported below: review of evaluation practice: technical tools: processes and applications: integrated frameworks for evaluation. There were also 3 parallel working groups, each focusing in depth on a real-life case study.

Unlike a standard workshop format, the subgroup structure allowed more time for the majority of participants to present papers, and to get into more in-depth discussions. In practice the case study approach was quite an intense experience for some participants, and deserved more time than was available.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

Plenary: introduction				
·	1: Review of practice:			
·	2: Technical tools	Urban case study	Rural case study	Regional study
·	3: Processes & applications			
·	4: Integrated frameworks			
Plenary: review & next steps				

The case study working groups were structured around a series of key questions, as a means of focusing the discussion. These were selected from the longer list of 24 questions shown below, i.e. 6 questions in each of 4 themes.

The workshop brought together decision-makers and other stakeholders from public, private and civic sectors, from regional, national and European levels, as well as researchers and analysts from a variety of disciplines.

The programme was designed for intensive interaction of the participants, including 49 paper presenters and 18 project partners, plus selected experts, regional policy makers and EU representatives. A total of 92 people attended the workshop at some point in the 2.5 day programme, and demand far exceeded the available space and time.

Workshop outputs

Selected papers from the workshop, along with the most important conclusions and recommendations, are being presented in a forthcoming special issue (2004) of the Journal of Environmental Assessment Planning & Management, edited by Joe Ravetz and Darryn McEvoy. This also includes a paper which distills the experience of the case study working groups. The full papers and presentation slides are all available on the organizer’s website (www.art.man.ac.uk/planning/cure), as are the Workshop Proceedings.

3. Position Paper for Workshop 3

Challenges

It is likely that most people will come by air to this workshop. This will add to the demand for air travel and airports, which doubles every 10 years, here in North West England. In this region, like many others, the airport is the brightest spot on the map, and the centrepiece of the regional development strategy. It is also the fastest growing source of climate emissions, resource consumption and other impacts. The social and cultural change which is accelerated by air travel brings many positive and negative impacts. So – how should we ‘evaluate’ for sustainability our regional strategy, which is based on doubling in size of the airport? There are many ways we might go about this.

- Look for trade-offs between air travel and other sectors.
- Shift the argument to national and international aviation policy.
- Ecological case – analyse the air travel total life cycle in the light of global limits.
- Economic case – look for value added and employment indices in the indirect / induced effect of the air travel system.
- Combined approach – evaluate a demand led strategy in the context of substitution, market measures, technological change and anything else going.

The challenge in this example, and for this workshop, is to construct a robust, practical and accountable framework, for evaluation of regional sustainable development (‘RSD’). Without this, how can we expect RSD to be achieved? But the reality of defining and evaluating RSD is often the opposite:

- goals and objectives are many and fuzzy
- information is scarce and unreliable
- cause-effect linkages are uncertain
- social and cultural perspectives are many and different

To tackle this challenge requires new kinds of thinking, and particularly new methods of integration:

- Horizontal integration, between sectors and institutions
- Vertical integration, between decision-makers and citizens, providers and consumers
- Lateral integration, between the causes ‘upstream’ and their effects ‘downstream’
- Cultural integration, to build understanding between different worldviews.

One way to apply this thinking is to take the established body of theory and practice of ‘regional science’ from the last 50 years, and to work through the implications of the RSD concept. This ‘RSD science’ shows how the former neo-classical approach to regional economics, shifts towards a more evolutionary and complex systems approach to economy, environment and society. It focuses on the interfaces and linkages between different sectors, between different sciences, and different worldviews.

The 'RSD science' concept also shifts the perspective on evaluation. In line with current thinking elsewhere, this is not only about 'objective' evaluators who analyse government programmes in search of measurable inputs and outputs. It is also about evaluation as a continuous process of capacity building, strategic intelligence and reflexive knowledge, in and around policy systems and their constituencies.

The design process for this workshop threw up a crucial debate on wording, and the differences which this might hide or expose:

- Regional sustainable development': a goal-led model of ecologically sustainable development, which is implemented at regional level as well as local and global.
- Sustainable regional development': a viable and self-financing process of regional economic development, with some fine-tuning for environmental performance.

Perhaps one of these represents the ideals of Agenda 21, and the other represents the reality of airport-based regional development as most people know it. We would propose that the challenge of this workshop is to develop a system of methods and tools which help to bridge the gap between ideals and reality.

Workshop themes:

The workshop has identified 4 cross-cutting themes. An outline with key questions on each is in the Call for Papers. Here, it is interesting to note the direction of travel in each theme, from the former sectoral and positivist approaches, to a more complex process-based model.

- Current practice: rapid spread of evaluations at every level and at every stage: increasing coordination between sectors, for example environmental assessments within structural fund evaluations: rapid
- Technical tools: greatly increased power and speed of IT: realization that models are very rarely forecasting machines, more like tools for mutual understanding. Policy demand for indicators and benchmarks, with some realization of the complexity involved.
- Social processes: much experimentation with evaluation as social participation and capacity building: increased awareness of the logic of governance, and how evaluation might add value: increased awareness of corporate management and the role of performance indicators / benchmarks.
- Integrated frameworks: strong policy pressure for workable systems of 'sustainability appraisal' or 'integrated assessment': also for integrated frameworks of indicators, targets and objectives: difficult fit between the technical information systems approach and the growing complexity of policy networks.

Alternative approaches to evaluation methods

Given this wide spread of interests it is likely that a variety of different approaches and methods are called for. These might be charted on various scales of validity, complexity, transparency and cost:

- Surface-level checklist – manual / expert judgement of policy effects against simple pre-determined criteria / objectives: this runs the risk of superficial and misleading results.
- Analytic matrices – assessment of policy effects on technical characteristics (e.g. countryside character types)
- Performance / decision support system – information processing to enable greater detail & consistency with decision subject & context
- Multi-criteria decision analysis & mapping: focus on the diverse values & perceptions of stakeholders in defining boundaries, ethical positions, risk assessment etc
- Systems modelling – pre-arranged characterization of regional economy / environment with internally consistent dynamic structure

Potential innovations in evaluation methods

In response to the challenge of policy integration for sustainable development, and the perceived limits of existing methods, there are many innovations taking place. Many of these are focused on the interface between environmental, social and economic perspectives;

- Institutional evaluation – closer fit to stages of the policy / management cycle via characterization of policy discourse, linkage and context
- Social / cultural – based evaluation: deeper & more active engagement with stakeholders to identify underlying needs/ values, and hence objectives & criteria
- Economic valuation – based evaluation: compares different economic perspectives from producers & consumers, to help quantify & rank differing values & criteria
- Future studies –based evaluation: uses trend analysis & participative scenario studies to enable whole-systems perspective as context for policy appraisal
- Agent-based modelling evaluation – aims at deeper understanding of constraints & opportunities of actors, and hence better representation of actual policy spaces.

Towards a ‘vision’ for integrated appraisal & evaluation

The above suggests the theoretical potential and ‘vision’ for a more integrated model of evaluation, as a guide to developing new methods:

- linking processes of evaluation to wider social processes of agenda setting, strategic planning, implementation / management, monitoring & evaluation.
- using the potential of ICT (information & communications technology) in coordinated information management for spatial, economic, sectoral & stakeholder data
- using innovative approaches to social deliberation, consensus forming, and participative decision-making.

Why the vision may be impossible:

Underlying this ‘linking-up’ dynamic is a fundamental and structural tension between two approaches.

- One approach is the 'new public management' ethos – aiming at democratic accountability through a rational framework of measurable outputs and outcomes.
- A second approach is a sustainability paradigm based on a 'complex systems' perspective – where underlying human values are not simple or rational, but are embedded in cultures and communities.

The tension between these two approaches can be seen with current attempts at regional sustainable development in the UK. There is active development of evaluation methods and tools such as resource flow / footprint studies: economy-environment modeling: business environment reporting: integrated sustainability appraisal: indicators and communications frameworks. Such methods and tools are often sophisticated in their technology, but naïve in their application to real-time policy and social process.

This throws light on the 'ideal' information system – in other words, given unlimited data and processing capacity, how might future ICT systems help with evaluation in the context of multi-level governance? One conclusion is that human interactions will always be ahead of the capacity of ICT, to deliver not only technical information but more complex and meaningful social and cultural signals.

Implications for integrated evaluation frameworks:

The implication of all this is that an effective evaluation framework will have a role not so much as an 'objective' evaluation but as an integral part of the planning and management cycle, not only in the public sector but across all others. So the practical agenda for evaluation practice might be to focus on the added agenda of sustainable development at the regional level, which is not otherwise covered by existing practice:

- Process factors: social participation: organizational capacity and intelligence
- Technical factors: cross-sectoral analysis and indices: databasing / modelling of complex systems.
- Economic factors: institutions, capacities, networks, innovations
- Social factors: multiple worldviews, cohesion, citizenship, capacity
- Environmental factors: resource flow, life-cycle and footprint analysis: environmental values and qualities
- Integrated frameworks: combining technical integration and process integration: identifying where this is not directly possible, in conflicts, trade-offs, social and cultural divergence and dissonance.

Back to practical challenges

What does all this offer the challenging situation of the airport-based regional strategy?

Most evaluators would probably not choose to shut the airport tomorrow, especially if it is the only practical way to get to this workshop. Some general issues come out:

- Firstly, that policy directions may be more useful than hard targets, for regional sustainable development as an evolving process.

- Secondly, that the exploration of options and alternatives in technology, policy, boundary effects and criteria, is a key to making evaluation a useful part of that process.
- Thirdly, that there is great potential in widening the circle of evaluation to consumers and citizens, using the power of ICT to connect the chains of cause and effect.
- Beyond that we need the advice of the workshop....

Sources

These notes are a summary of current thinking, based on various publications:

Ravetz J, 2000: 'City-Region 2020: integrated planning for a sustainable environment': with a Foreword by the UK Secretary of State, London, Earthscan:

Ravetz, J, 2000: 'Integrated Assessment for Sustainability Appraisal in Cities & Regions': Environmental Impact Assessment Review, 20(2000):31-64

Ravetz, J 1999, Citizen Participation for Integrated Assessment: new pathways in complex systems, Int. Journal of Environment and Pollution 11/3:331-350; special issue on citizen participation

ENSURE Proposal to DG Regio: 'Evaluation methods for sustainable development at the regional level': 2001

McEvoy D & Ravetz J, (2001): Toolkits for Regional Sustainable Development, (Introduction to guest edited special issue), Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal, 19 (2): 90-93

4. Main thematic conclusions

Working definition of evaluation

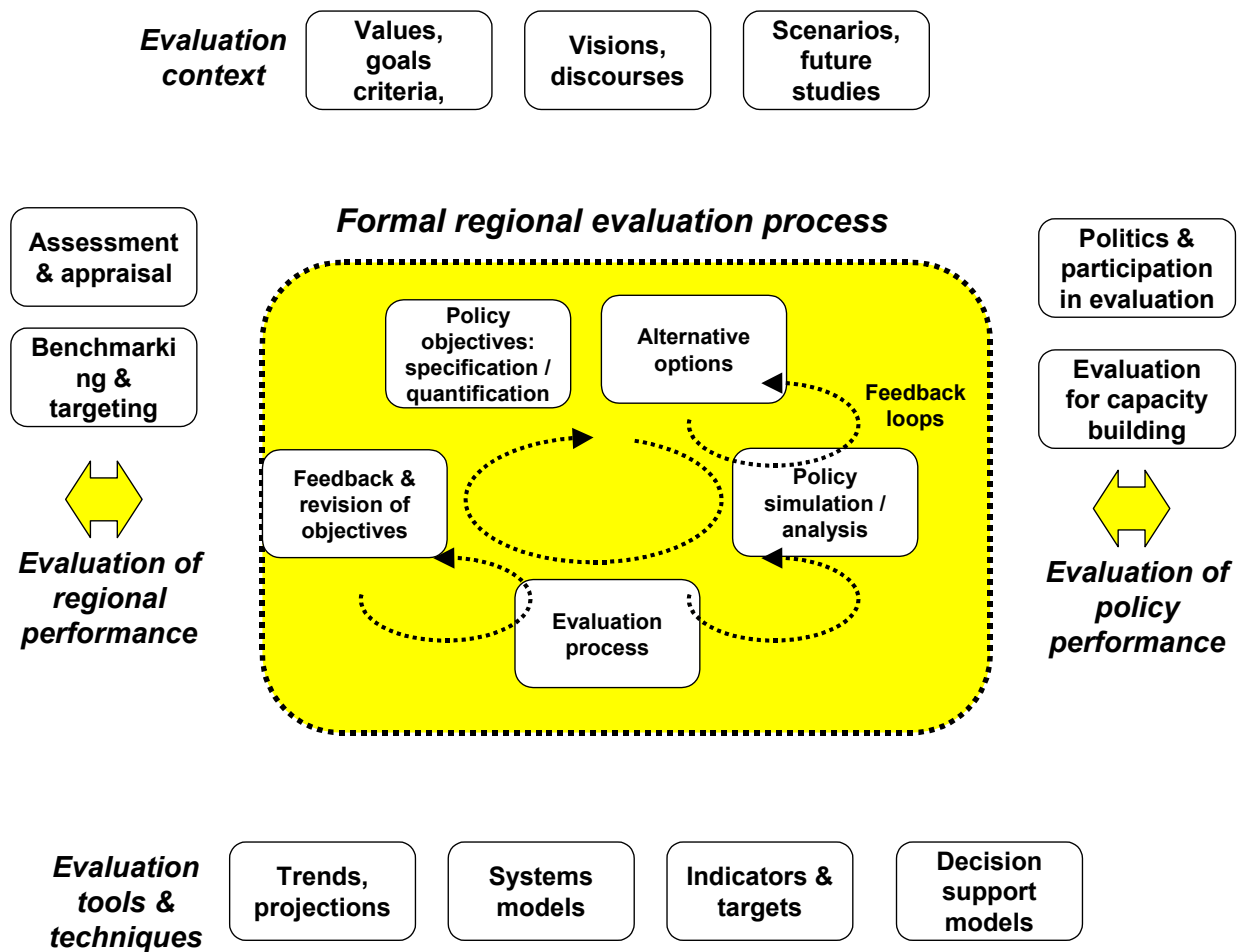
This definition is not so simple. There were topical questions raised on the difference between evaluation, assessment and appraisal. There were also questions on 'what is a region' – whether formal NUTS unit or other bio-region etc. Several definitions of 'evaluation for RSD' were proposed as:

- Applied science carrying out a systematic analysis of causal effects and relationships of an intervention, including criteria driven judgment, and / or recommendations in a transparent process (*Andre Martinuzzi + Workshop C participants*)
- Evaluation of regional sustainability is a dynamic decision making tool for different levels of the European governance system, supporting implementation of EU anticipated policies and standards aiming at “Sustainable Europe” (whatever it means now and in future); and assessments based on quantitative criteria being part of evaluation framework. (*contributed by Elzbieta Goncz*)
- Evaluation is an examination, as systematic and objective as possible, of a completed or on-going project / programme / strategy, to determine its efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and relevance (*OECD 1989*).

To explore this theme, various frameworks and concept maps were presented and discussed during the workshop. One overarching framework was presented by the organizers of the workshop at the beginning and end of the proceedings. The mapping shown below aims to represent the scope and depth of the workshop, in terms of several kinds of linkages:

- Formal evaluation of regional policy & programmes: as a sub-set of a wider field of appraisal and intelligence on all aspects of regional development.
- Evaluation of 'regional performance', i.e. the **outcome** of policy: in contrast to evaluation of 'policy performance', or the policy inputs and **outputs**.
- Technical tools and information systems for evaluation, with a quantitative focus: in contrast to the social processes and policy debates:
- Evaluation as an objective input to decision-making: in contrast to evaluation as a capacity building process.

EVALUATION MAPPING FRAMEWORK



Working definitions of 'regional sustainable development':

The design process for this workshop threw up a crucial debate on wording, and the differences which this might hide or expose:

- **'Regional sustainable development'**: a goal-led model of ecologically sustainable development, which is implemented at regional level as well as local and global.
- **'Sustainable regional development'**: a viable and self-financing process of regional economic development, with some fine-tuning for environmental performance.

One of these represents the ideals expressed in Agenda 21, and the other represents the reality of regional development as most people know it. The key challenge of this workshop was to develop methods and tools which help to bridge the gap between ideals and reality.

Implications for regional analysis

Taking a topical example, it is clear that all international visitors arrived by air to the workshop. This will add to the demand for air travel and airports, which doubles every 10 years in North West England, where as in most regions, the airport is the brightest spot on the map, and the centrepiece of the regional development strategy. It is also the fastest growing source of climate emissions, resource consumption and other impacts. The social and cultural change which is accelerated by air travel brings many positive and negative impacts. So – how should we ‘evaluate’ for sustainability the NW regional strategy, which is based on the continued doubling in size of the airport? There are many ways we might go about this:

- Look for trade-offs between air travel and other sectors.
- Shift the argument to national and international aviation policy.
- Ecological case – analyse the air travel total life cycle in the light of global limits.
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Regional evaluation in transition

For each of the 4 themes of the workshop there is a transition, from the former sectoral and positivist approaches, to a more complex and process-based model.

- Current practice: rapid spread of evaluations at every level and at every stage: increasing coordination between sectors, for example environmental assessments within structural fund evaluations: rapid
- Technical tools: greatly increased power and speed of IT: realization that models are very rarely forecasting machines, more like tools for mutual understanding. Policy demand for indicators and benchmarks, with some realization of the complexity involved.
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Workshop themes and findings

Theme 1: 'Evaluation in practice'

The evaluation or appraisal of 'sustainability' is now a reality in many regions at many levels. From a decade of experience, we should now be able to identify best practice: but in practice we find that the concept of 'sustainability' is often twisted around to almost any answer. This review of practice focused on how existing evaluation methods in environmental, social and economic fields, are dealing with the new agenda.

- ***Economic-based evaluation*** of regional policy: how do mainstream methods focused on growth and employment fit with the sustainability agenda?
- ***Environmental assessment*** at the strategic level: how does current practice fit with a wider evaluation of sustainability in regional policy?
- ***Social impact assessment***: how to evaluate intangible factors, and bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative methods?
- ***Evaluation processes***: the balance of ex-ante, mid-term and ex-post evaluation procedures: practical considerations of time, resources, data and politics.

- **EU practice:** how do existing / new Structural Fund programme / project evaluation methods manage the new agenda?
- **Governance:** how does the reality of evaluation methods link to complex processes of multi-layered governance?

The contributions reviewed each of these questions, in both the plenary session and the sub-groups, and in the first session of the case studies. The general findings saw a current lack of connection between the economic, social and environmental methods of assessment. The economic methods were centred on modelling which did not attract universal confidence. Environmental methods were well developed but sometimes confused by boundary effects and cumulative trends. Social impact methods were less well specified or rigorous.

The evaluation process was frequently complicated by multi-level governance structures between nations, regions and municipalities, and the project pipeline or process evaluation was often confused with the outputs or outcomes. In the more peripheral regions there was often a shortage of suitable projects, or a shortage of evaluators, or a shortage of democratic forums who could inform or respond to the evaluation. There was continuing debate on the criteria for evaluating sustainable development: a common feature in the regions was to regard any kind of development or investment as 'sustainable' simply because it was there.

Theme 2: 'Technical tools for evaluation'

With rapid development of hardware, software and databases, there is increasing scope for technical tools to inform and underpin evaluation methods. Methods such as the ecological footprint use accountancy principles to open up new forms of social awareness – but often there is a gap between the content and the application. There are also questions in how to balance technical complexity, with available data and resources:

- **Scoping methods:** what kind of simplified toolkits are appropriate for the various stages such as scoping or screening?
- **Ecological footprint**, environmental space and other accounting methods: how can these broad-scale measures be connected to specific policy questions?
- **Sustainability indicators**, audits and reports, trend – target analysis, performance benchmarks: how do these relate to a) sectoral studies and b) policy processes?
- **Integrated modelling** and spatial analysis: the state of the art and future directions for regional models in economy, development, environment:
- **Multi-criteria** and other decision support systems: applications to social valuation, scoping and weighting: focus on technology or social process:

A great variety of technical tools were reviewed in this session, some of them sophisticated in data processing, some of them more focused on policy significance. There were good examples of environmental information systems which provided a foundation for evaluation, without being an evaluation method in themselves. The questions above reflect the common themes which occur in many such conferences.

Ecological footprinting is an accounting and presentation method which appears difficult to define in rigorous terms: however it has great communications potential. **Systems modelling** has great promise but often is more complex and less communicative than hoped

for. Where modeling can be combined with **database systems** and a communications interface, and where spatial data can be combined with economic / environmental data, then there is great potential in further technical developments, as long as the limits are clear to users.

Theme 3: 'Processes and applications' for evaluation

Recent evaluation thinking often focuses on the process as much as the product. It sees evaluation not only as a top-down expert procedure, but as a means for capacity building, participation, and learning at every level. This might widen the scope and variety of evaluation, to a point where quality control and consistency becomes difficult. The ecological footprint example above, shows the challenge of finding applications to the policy process and the public agenda. The many possible roles of evaluation illustrate the challenge:

- **Evaluation of the 'policy process'**: how to link evaluations with the cycle of implementation, from goals & objectives, to plans, programmes and projects?
- **Evaluation as a 'social process'** in itself: who carries out evaluation, who participates or consults, and where are the results applied?
- **Evaluation as a management system**: links to environmental / quality management systems: is evaluation a catalyst for organizational innovation?
- **Evaluation as capacity building**: training and capacity building for participation: evaluation in community-based enterprise: use of communications & ICT.
- **Evaluation as strategic intelligence**: how to link evaluation processes with future scenarios, visioning, foresight, horizon scanning and similar methods?

The workshop found many examples of process-based evaluation, and evaluation as a catalyst in an organization or in regional development context. There were good examples from Canada and Australia, one of a modelling project within a process-based regional programme: one of a participative programme set up to deal with environmental crisis (water shortage). Both these showed how it could be quite difficult to 'evaluate the evaluation', in other words to say which methods were more or less successful, as the evaluators would become part of the mutual learning process. In this way evaluation systems tend to merge into a multi-level governance system, and become an essential part of a democratic process, and so the evaluation would be only as good as its context. Such a democratic process should ideally be not only on a 'fordist' hierarchical model: but also include for 'deliberative, inclusive, participative' processes of a 'ecological democracy'.

Theme 4: 'Integrated frameworks' for evaluation

Clearly there is a case for an 'integrated framework' which links together many evaluation methods and tools, with other dimensions of the policy process. Ideally this would combine both technical tools, policy applications and social participation. This raised the question of how such a framework can be wide enough to cover the sustainable development agenda, while still being focused on practical actions. It also raised further questions – what is the evaluation scope and boundary, for which criteria, set by which groups, for what purposes?

- **'Integrated appraisal'**: are there methods and tools which successfully combine economic, social and environmental evaluation / assessment?

- **Vertical coordination:** how to combine methods and tools between local, regional, national and EU scale?
- **Horizontal coordination:** can integrated programme evaluation be fitted with appraisal / assessment in other areas, such as transport, construction, products or services?
- **Information frameworks:** how can indicators, targets, objectives and goals, all fit together in a coordinated structure of governance?
- **Communications frameworks:** can the internet or other ICT be used for a more interactive 2-way evaluation process, in a new governance model?

The workshop was valuable in identifying the challenge of integration (although it was not its task to 'achieve' it). There were examples of methods and tools which provided an integrating framework, the largest initiative being the DG Regio '4 capitals' model. There were also reviews of existing methods and tools which provided such integration through analysis. It is clear that the pressure for integration (technical, organizational, sectoral) can only increase with the growing transparency and accountability of public policy. However there may be structural problems, particularly in the business sector. Here the integration and transparency required for sustainable materials management, for example, may conflict with the need for commercial confidence and competitiveness.

There was also evidence of different philosophies at work. One assumes that there are objective criteria for RSD, and targets the evaluation towards them. Another assumes that there are only subjective measures for different social groups, and explores the balance or trade-off between one and another. A third might see the concept of RSD as a technocratic power-play itself, and evaluation to be an exercise in self-justification. It is very helpful where it is possible to distinguish between these different approaches.

Case studies

Each of the above themes was discussed in greater depth through a case study approach, which aimed to explore in greater depth and detail the issues through 3 parallel Working Groups. Each case study was based on a package of material and analysis of an existing evaluation programme: this was led by the case study presenter, and chaired by a facilitator:

- Urban focus in a 'developed' region – **Greater Manchester**, the location of the workshop. The agenda included urban regeneration, transport, urban environment, social cohesion, competitiveness / training etc. The underlying themes included the multi-level governance in a large and complex conurbation, and the contradictions between environmental, social and economic goals.
- Rural and peri-urban focus in a 'peripheral' region – **Thessalia** region in Greece. The agenda included integrated rural development, agriculture, nature conservation, tourism, ICT etc. The underlying themes included the management of the project pipeline, and the rebuilding of social capital in a rapidly restructuring economy.
- Regional and infrastructure focus in a 'restructuring' region – **Midi-Pyrenees** in southern France. The agenda included regional / local programmes on industrial structure, communications, transport, water, agriculture etc, as well as rebuilding of social capacity in a changing rural area.

4. Policy recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from the results of the expert presentations and discussions, and do not represent any one viewpoint. They are presented as a direction to aim for, and recognize that this would be very challenging to achieve in practice.

Evaluation practice

The managers, providers and users of RSD evaluations should aim towards the following features:

- Identify clearly in the evaluation framework, which are project inputs, outputs, contingent factors, contextual factors, and policy outcomes.
- Analyse the critical pressures and 'pinch-points' for policy which are between economic, social and environmental domains, and therefore more difficult to focus with current methods.
- Identify a 'tree' of evaluations at different levels of a multi-level governance system: then identify a 'woodland' of evaluation trees which operate at different points in the policy and participation cycle: then identify a 'forest' which includes different cultural perspectives.
- Analyse the social conflicts, distribution problems and cultural differences underlying the regional development agenda: use these as the basis for the evaluation criteria.

Technical methods and tools

The providers, analysts and consultants should explore the possibility of further developments:

- Develop tools which link one domain to another: for example, economic activity to environmental pressures.
- Extend the modelling systems to information systems, and information systems to communications / data access systems.
- Identify clear sets of policy options: use scenarios and backcasting as a means to explore the options and the linkages: use trend analysis to identify cumulative effects: use 'story and simulation' approach to link scenarios and modelling.
- Identify social criteria and priorities and build them into a technical framework, using multi-criteria or similar method:

Social processes & applications:

This is very much the new paradigm of evaluation, and therefore there is much experimentation going on.

- Evaluation process is a kind of mutual learning and organizational intelligence, and therefore has to be managed like other educational programmes: focused on learning needs: skilled with communications and human resources: student centred.
- Evaluation process should be organized around the communications process and deliberative democratic process, where possible at ex-ante, mid-term and ex-post stages.
- The evaluation process should extend beyond the formal appraisal of programmes to a more continuous reflexive and strategic deliberation: and evaluation criteria should be generated through a public / organizational discourse / vision process

Integrated frameworks

The ideal of an integrated framework is likely to remain out of reach, in the sense that no one method or tool can deal with all possibilities at all levels in a large organization. However it is possible to envisage an integrated framework which is like a connected set of tools, rather than one tool which can do any job.

- Integrating between sectors: from public policy to business strategy: identify how the needs for transparency and social accountability can transfer evaluation models between public and private.
- Focus on the inter-connections between different domains: **Economic factors** including institutions, capacities, networks, innovations: **Social factors** including multiple worldviews, cohesion, citizenship, capacity: **Environmental factors** including resource flow, life-cycle, footprint analysis, socio-environmental values.
- Develop integrated frameworks which combine technical integration and process integration: identifying where this is not directly possible, in conflicts, trade-offs, social and cultural divergence and dissonance.
- Identifying where improved evaluation practice are directly part of improved strategic planning, management or monitoring practices: i.e. so that the evaluation is embedded in the organization.

5. Conference proceedings

Introduction and overview session

Participants were welcomed to the venue by **Joe Ravetz** who gave a brief introduction, and also made apologies for members of the panel who were unable to attend.

The programme commenced with **Michael Narodslawski** (Institute for Resource Efficient and Sustainable Systems in Graz and ENSURE) who gave an update and overview of REGIONET.

Presentations from **Sue Dean** (NWRA) and **Mark Atherton** (NWDA) represented two of the regional governmental bodies in the North West of England, and presented issues around the North West Action for Sustainability Framework. The North West is unique amongst the English Regions in that it created its Framework – *Action for Sustainability* – significantly ahead of the government's guidance and went further by formally adopting it within the Regional Assembly, on behalf of partners on 7th April 2000. Action for Sustainability (AfS) represents a powerful framework for joining up regional agendas and agencies in a common approach to sustainable development of our region and the delivery of an enhanced quality of life and well being for all its citizens.

Discussion focused mainly around **Andre Martinuzzi's** (Vienna University of Economics) presentation of the EASY-ECO conferences which evaluated sustainability in different countries; those aspects of most interest in the discussion included the need for more continuous monitoring and for critical, on-going reflection of performance.

Norman Lee (Institute of Development Policy & Management, UK) presented observations on the differences between theory and practice were exemplified by the point that there is good experience in assessing impact at the practical level, but little evidence of strategic knowledge. He defined *integrated assessment* (IA) which encompasses three types of integration:

- Vertical integration of assessments i.e. linking together separate impact assessments, which are undertaken at different stages in the policy, planning and project cycle (hereafter, the planning cycle).
- Horizontal integration of assessments i.e. bringing together different types of impacts – economic, environmental and social – into a single, overall assessment at one or more stages in the planning cycle. (It may also involve horizontal co-ordination between contemporaneous assessments for separate, but inter-related, planning cycles.)
- Integration of assessments into decision-making i.e. integrating assessment findings into different decision-making stages in the planning cycle.

Peder Christensen (Evaluation Unit, DG Regio) gave the view as a 'user' of evaluation from DG Region. Various questions centred on the need to keep the system of evaluation and reporting while at the same time needing to extend the evaluations to make them properly

comprehensive. For DG Regio the role of evaluation is essential in managing an investment of €60bn per year. While the DG is committed to improving the evaluation practice at all levels, such evaluation is both a technical and a political process. In terms of the political context, much of the agenda is fluid and fast-changing:

- The debate on the future of the structural funds: objective 1 will continue, Interreg will continue, and the big debate is on objective 2. A third cohesion report will come out at the end of the year.
- The role of evaluation in the future (nothing fixed, but unlikely to be less central. Maybe it will be a bit different. More operational, more focused on spreading best practice, more ex-ante oriented)
- Some of the debate on sustainable development in the Commission – behind the fine words, there are tough decisions. Who decides on the balance of economic, social and environmental priorities?
- Role of sustainable development in future structural funds programmes (it will be there, but as an overarching objective? If not, why not? Are there alternatives)

Joe Ravetz presented further analysis and a workshop method: this paper brought aims to bring together three themes:

- a) A discussion of ‘mapping the landscape’ in regional evaluation methods and tools
- b) exploration of one component of such a map – the concept of sustainability of ‘capitals’ and resource productivity.
- c) The implications of this for the workshop method in advancing the state of the art.

Theme 1) Practices

The afternoon sessions covered practice in France (**Corrinne Larrue**) and the Netherlands (**Geert Draaijers**), and also an overview of the application of econometrics to regional sustainability (**Saxon Brettell**). The presenters remarked, unsurprisingly, that practices and definitions vary between countries, but more importantly can also vary between the specialist experts giving advice which presents its own challenges.

The issue of public participation was raised in the discussion and there was a general acknowledgement, while stakeholder groups were involved in the processes, proper engagement with the general public was not always successfully achieved. And that this is a common problem in all countries.

The working group presentations included:

Bernadette O’Regan (University of Limerick, IE) presented research on the spatial policies emerging from the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) aimed at finding optimal ways in which to accommodate Ireland’s growing population in a manner consistent with balanced regional development and environmental sustainability.

Anna Mazzi (Università di Padova, IT) The “PadovA21” project of the Padua Municipality, within the traditional path to Local Agenda 21, a “Life Quality Observatory” has been

established that is a monitoring and evaluating system of sustainability through aggregate indexes appropriately defined.

Santiago Urquijo (Galician Ministry of the Environment, ES) looked at the monitoring approach of the Galician strategy of integration. For the appropriate follow-up of the strategy, an annual report will be elaborated that reflects all the obtained advances. This will show the extent of fulfilment of the strategic criteria of environmental integration for the sectoral policies and their performances: The extent of development of the proposed measures of integration; and the efficiency of use of the strategic instruments for the integration of the environmental variable in the sectoral policies and their contribution to the fulfilment of the performance guidelines designed for each policy.

Andrea Forni, Federica Scipioni (ENEA Frascati – Roma, IT), presented analysis of the relationship, discrepancy and synergies between touristic development and environmental themes in Campania, to identify a whole of leading planning actions for EU Structural Funds.

Tim Rayner (University of Cambridge, UK) presented a practical case study on roads appraisal in the South East region. This confirmed that for appraisal /evaluation exercises to generate learning or re-framing of perceptions of problems / solutions in a region or subregion, the centre must be clear about its normative policy commitments, so that more local actors are obliged to re-consider their own beliefs, rather than continue to cling to established “story lines”.

Elsbieta Goncz (Gdansk Higher School of Humanities, PL) made a powerful argument that national and European standards for RSD may be translated / distributed regionally and they may become a tool to measure, judge and formulate recommendations on RSD performance and anticipated policies. The 4 capitals evaluation framework has to be included into the indicator based assessment system of RSD. Anticipated values of indicators in the system to be reached within the agreed time horizon may become a management tool for European RSD in the coming decade. As any other tool evaluation framework may be misused. However, values of agreed indicators will limit such possibilities to the selected areas of policies and will leave less space for subjectivity or game of interests (if we choose to do so).

Theme 2) technical tools

The three speakers presented examples in different countries: Russia (**Natalia Penkova**), the Czech Republic (**Ivan Benes**), and Spain (**Rodrigo Jiliberto**). Their general focus looked at various approaches to modelling for sustainability, planning and assessment. Discussions centred around the difficulties with attempting to obtain data that is both reliable and relevant.

Natalia V. Penkova (State Hydrological Institute, RU) showed the diversity of approaches to presenting concrete and hypothetical environmental situations: from theoretically simple and rigor Neoclassical Economics models where environmental indicators are included as “constraints”, to institutionalist models that are typically “holistic” or pattern ones. The latter are often interdisciplinary, broadly inclusive, theoretically complex, detailed and messy; social, economic, physical, and political information are integrated and the success of model application depends on the intelligence, judgment, and creativity of analyst.

Ivan Benes (CZ) showed practical toolkit in the GEMIS model, As applied in the Czech Republic data is obtained from the International Energy Agency based in Paris, and results of their analysis are made publicly available via the web. Underlying assumptions were also brought under scrutiny by repeating the understanding that subjectivity is present at all levels and must be stated where possible. Furthermore, that the approach to planning and assessment for sustainability must inevitably be trial and error (heuristic).

Rodrigo Jiliberto Herrera, (TAU Consultora Ambiental, Madrid): the Murcia Region has initiated a Sustainability assessment in order to deliver a basic diagnoses for the definition of sustainability objectives and target for the next 20 years. The presentation focused on new analytic methods which link qualitative indicators for quality of life, with quantitative indicators for environmental pressures.

Theme 3) Processes

James Tansey's (University of British Columbia) paper on the evaluation of a technical model enabling users to build sustainability scenarios for a region generated some discussion of the wider application to encouraging greater involvement the political process and also its contribution to education. Questions concerned whether games should be constructed firstly to be appealing to the public, and that the technical applications should be secondary; and about gender bias in the use of computers.

Frank Vanclay (University of Tasmania) discussed the participation process in an Australian river basin. He argued strongly that evaluation should largely be an internal process that builds capacity and understanding from within and not one that focuses on producing analyses (e.g. reports) for external evaluators. Questions were raised around the proper involvement of all communities in a process, particularly in countries where there is a significant indigenous population.

Gerard Mullaly (University of Cork) looked at the theoretical issues of deliberative democracy in regional sustainability and the current situation in Ireland. He concluded that, while the strategies, institutions and mechanisms are in place, the vital missing ingredient is political will. Discussion ranged widely, but one important point raised was the need to consider 'future actors' in the political process rather than just those in the present situation. Also discussed was the importance of feedback mechanisms to ensure that processes maintain relevance and they are adaptive to changing requirements and new knowledge.

Working group presentations included:

Ingrid Norland (PROSUS, NO) looked at indicators / methods / tools in use for evaluation / monitoring at sub-national level (regional). She made the point they need to be optimized with regard to identify local characteristics / changes over time: developed in relation to local context: making use of local data (genuine), to strengthen the potential for use in policy-making processes. There was concern that the standardization of evaluation tools / methods across countries might easily limit the local use of "results" in local processes beyond public debate and information.

Jan Cadil, (University of Economics, Prague, CZ) spoke on the a new method for financial and property analysis" - FAPA. This analyses and optimizes utilization of the municipal

(regional) financial resources in the framework of the municipal (regional) property, the volume of municipal property, its price and expected ways of property utilization.

Sandra Alker (University of Nottingham) outline an integrated data and information project. The environmental information at the local level to make planning decisions is exactly the same as the information used at strategic and regional planning levels. The main argument is the matter of whether the information required can be presented at a scale and format which is useful at both the local and regional level.

Ton de Nijs (RIVM, NL) demonstrated a powerful modelling approach to the Fifth Spatial Policy Plan for the Netherlands describes so-called red and green contours, the red contours meant to limit the growth of urban developments and the green contours to protect the natural landscapes and nature reserves. Most of the urban growth is to be realised within existing built-up areas and new developments are to be compact. Will these plans be put into effect or will the calls for a liberalisation of spatial restrictions be answered?

Zseni Aniko, Hungary presented an analytic approach and practical examples to integrated information systems for environmental protection. The agenda can be divided into the following steps: firstly, interrelations between environmental elements and resource exploitation are to be revealed, secondly, the consequent conclusions, criteria and policy objectives, and thirdly the legal, economical, and operational regulations should be formulated.

Laura Petrov, (Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation, Hiroshima University, Japan). Urban growth has direct impacts on the use of land and is often harder on the environment than agricultural land uses it usually replaces, and the changes involved are more or less irreversible. In this demonstration project the recognized basic urban land types (residential, commercial, industrial, open-space, transport) become the key units for vulnerability assessment and development of adaptation strategies. The data obtained could be a base for the future scientific spatial analysis using an ARC/INFO function.

Annim Wiek, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich) presented an approach to construct consistent targets sets for assessing regional development. He focused here on two deficiencies: using lists of isolated indicators and neglecting a consistency appraisal of the targets set by the persons in charge. Nevertheless, there is an important demand for not over-simplifying, robust, and user-friendly target setting tools that can be applied for sustainable regional development.

Craig Simmons, (Best Foot Forward Limited, Oxford, UK) Ecological footprint analysis has become a popular means of measuring and monitoring sustainability at the national and regional level. This paper described a refined and extended version of the ecological footprint model (known as Regional Stepwise) developed by Best Foot Forward as a contribution to the European Common Indicators Programme (ECIP). Regional Stepwise is scalable – allowing for the calculation of both large and small regional footprints – and provides results comparable to other EU15 countries and regions.

Henry Leveson-Gower, (Environment Agency, UK): Around England and Wales there are regional development agencies and similar bodies, each tackling the challenge of resource productivity — gaining more added value with less environmental damage. The REWARD project aims to provide the tools and the data, to help in this vital task of linking between economic development and environmental protection.

John Davis and Sally Heslop, (University of Bristol, UK) introduced an ambitious decision support system: in this regions may be characterised as a set of interconnecting networks, within which there are five distinct sub-systems whose interplay determines the behaviour and performance of the whole: technical: economic: social: environmental: political.

Vyara Gancheva, (Institute of Sociology, Sofia, BG) Many of the social processes measuring methods are not standardized yet. In some cases, this makes the comparison of achieved results difficult. However, the adoption of uniform evaluation instruments is an ambiguous process. This process reduces one type of indefiniteness, but it may increase the risks during intervention, as the local context may invert and distort the evaluation.

Beatriz Izquierdo, (Universidad de Deusto, BILBAO, ES) described the process of the mid-term evaluation of the Rural Sustainable Development Plan for the Basque Country 2000-2006. The starting point was to consider that evaluation should be transformed into a form of collective learning exercise, designed to reinforce the ability of local and regional communities to find solutions to their problems and needs; the vision of evaluation as more than a impact study.

Norbert Gleirscher, (University of Innsbruck, AT) Organic marketing initiatives (OMIs) are expected to contribute to the long term competitiveness of regions reducing the disadvantages of rural areas and strengthening their potentials in a sustainable way. But the precise nature and the underlying mechanisms need to be explored in order to derive recommendations for policy processes. In the frame of the EU- funded research project "Organic Marketing Initiatives and Rural Development (OMIaRD) four case studies have been conducted to assess their actual contribution.

Thorsten Wiechmann, Institute of Ecological and Regional Development (IOER), Dresden, DE). Traditional planning used to assume that the capacity to act predominantly builds upon the 'plan' as the main instrument. Once adopted, the plan had to be implemented to be considered successful. In reality this model never worked. The addressees of the plans had too many options to avoid the plan. Instead of simply asking whether a plan (e.g. a Regional Agenda 21) was implemented or not, it is more instructive to analyse the affected decisions and ask, what people have learned from the plan.

Theme 4) integrated frameworks

Pauleen Lane (NWDA –UMIST) spoke on the topic of evaluation of sustainability and reporting, speaking as both an academic (Professor of Civil Engineering at UMIST), and as a practioner (Board member of the North West Development Agency). Her major focus was urban regeneration in the UK through her experience in her many roles and the essential for success. When considering places that have been blighted by economic, social and environmental decline, essence of understanding success whether the people who have left an area decide to return. Liverpool's success in achieving European City of Culture in 2008 will be an interesting illustration of this key feature.

Marialuisa Tamborra's (DG Research) overview of socio-economic tools for sustainability impact assessment as applied by the European Commission looked at the difficulty of achieving some transparency for the evaluator, the process being evaluated and public access. Questions were asked about how many Impact Assessments were contracted out – very few are. Some concerns included public access to the process and, while this has not been considered at this stage, it will be addressed in the future.

James Medhurst (GHK Consulting) spoke on the results of the DG Regio thematic evaluation of the contribution of the Structural Funds (SF) to sustainable development (SD). The view was not totally optimistic in the sense that the most important evaluation criteria are often the most difficult to measure. This was in many ways a difficult subject as objective assessment is not possible and the players are part of the system (e.g. is the role of evaluator a normative exercise?). The discussion highlighted the issue of indicators, where the ease with which economic indicators can be established means that processes tend to be driven by this sector. This led to discussions of social capital and its contribution, the point was raised that current evaluations see social capital as unequivocally good, but a more sophisticated assessment is required in order to identify and acknowledge areas where it can have a negative effect. Emotional capital was mentioned as a 5th capital available to society.

Working group presentations included:

Ulrike Weiland, (CONCEPT RuP, Freising, DE) presented a framework for the sustainable development of urban regions, which is characterized as follows: Space Management: Resource management: time management: process management. Discussion was on the possible uses of such a system.

Ezilde Constanzo (National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and the Environment, ITALY) presented an exciting comprehensive system for building sector policy integration in Emilia Romagna region: multi-level coordination of actions to reduce and to control energy consumption in buildings, and interactions between public authorities and research.

Jochen Gassner and Michael Narodoslowsky (Resource Efficient and Sustainable Systems, Graz University of Technology, AT) presented a new scheme, "The Sustainable Economy Indices" (SEI) and the related system of environmental-economic accounts evaluate the sustainability of national and regional economic systems. The SEI combine conventional environmental-economic accounting with aspects of alternative approaches, such as e.g. the ISEW. The set of indices comprises measures of effectiveness and efficiency.

Martina Schaefer, (Centre for Technology and Society at the Technical University Berlin, DE), is developing a method for estimating sustainable wealth contributed by a regional industrial sector. This uses an integrated framework for estimating regional sustainable wealth effects, based on two approaches. The first refers to quality of life, with criteria for individual subjective and objective well-being. The second uses modified management rules of sustainability to establish minimum criteria for global sustainable development.

Massimo De Marchi (University of Padova, IT): The preparation of structural funds 2000-2006 was the first important opportunity to take into consideration the need of environmental indicators for planning and evaluation and the need for a gender evaluation. But any discourse about evaluation for regional sustainable development should be put into the framework of evaluation, in one side, and into the framework of territory reproduction on the other side.

Sue Kidd, (Department of Civic Design University of Liverpool, UK) showed how partners in the North West of England have been charged with the task of developing an Integrated Appraisal Toolkit (IAT), reflecting regional sustainability objectives, for use at regional and local levels. This paper argues that although there are many positive features of such a tool, there is a danger that the environmental dimensions of sustainability may be overwhelmed by dominant economic and social agendas.

Simon Marvin, (SURF, Salford University, UK) examined the relations between regional strategies and the management of utility and infrastructure networks. It explores the linkages between the multiple constructions of a regional future and the style of utility network that would underpin these views of the future. This analysis is designed to highlight a key controversy that is poorly tackled in the wider debate about regional development and infrastructure – how competing visions of regional futures shape networks.

Martin Reynolds (Centre for Complexity and Change, Open University, UK) spoke on fundamental features of a generic framework which can assist in evaluating good practice as well as shortcomings in planning for regional sustainable development. He raised three main themes which an evaluation framework for sustainable development must address: (a) complexity and uncertainty; (b) multiple values; and (c) political effects. A more robust evaluation framework is developed using these experiences combined with ideas arising from systems theory (associated with C. West Churchman) and critical social theory (associated with Jürgen Habermas).

Final plenary session

This session contained presentations from practitioners and decisionmakers in the UK, and also the presentations from the case study working groups (next section).

Dave Carter, (Director of Economic Development at Manchester City Council) made a powerful account of practical experience of running the Operational Programme. The question was raised, whether in a situation of urgency and scarce resources, any kind of intervention would be welcome and deemed ‘sustainable’, without any further questioning.

Robert Runcie, (Regional Director, Environment Agency) presented various aspects of the regional environmental agenda, and experience in monitoring, targeting and regional policy formation.

Peter Jones (Director of Development, Biffa plc) was one of the few industrial representatives attending. He made a powerful presentation on the future for resource limits and integrated materials management as a driver for resource productivity and economic competitiveness.

6. Case study working groups

Each of the above themes was discussed in greater depth through a case study approach, which aimed to explore in greater depth and detail the issues through 3 parallel Working Groups. Each case study was based on a package of material and analysis of an existing evaluation programme: this was led by the case study presenter, and chaired by a facilitator in rotation.

Case study method

Each Working Group explored its case study in a parallel process to the main sessions, and made its final report to the plenary in the final session. Each working group contained a facilitator, a rapporteur, and a case study presenter. The process of discussion included:

- Taking on board the messages from the **plenary papers** in each session
- Incorporating the messages of the **working group papers** in each session
- Generating in-depth discussion around the **questions** below:
- Developing a **summary** of the implications and recommendations for the way forward.

Case study questions

General questions for all the working group sessions will include:

- How far does the evaluation of the case study bridge the gap between the **ideal model** for RSD, and the **realities** of current policies and programmes?
- How does the case study show **the links or the gaps** between technical evaluation methods / tools, and their policy processes / applications.
- How were **trade-offs** between objectives handled, and **conflicts** between stakeholders?
- How to identify the **successes or failures** of the evaluation process in the regional strategy?
- Is the DG Regio **thematic evaluation framework** useful and effective for the case study?
- How else could we **improve** the case study evaluation methods and applications?

The questions to be discussed within each session would include, generally for all the case studies:

- Theme 1) Applications: This will begin with a detailed explanation of the case study, its regional strategy, and its evaluation process. The questions then follow – how best to define evaluation scope and methods in terms of what fits the case study? How did the case study balance between economic, social and environmental objectives?

- Theme 2) Technical tools: What kind of information systems / models / databases are most useful / effective to the case study? How could more advanced or specialized evaluation tools be used for social or environmental themes?
- Theme 3) Methods and processes: How did the regional strategy engage with communities, consumers, managers etc. Does the case study show best or worst practice? Is the evaluation aiming to be a process or a product?
- Theme 4) Integrated frameworks: This brings the above questions together in terms of what fits the case study. Can the case study analysis point towards an **evaluation of the evaluation** process? Does or could the case study show how to integrate **economic, environmental and social** evaluation methods?

Counter-factual questions: Most important are the questions which raise difficult but wider issues:

- 'How to lie with evaluations' – can the evaluation be used to obscure or manipulate otherwise clear information?
- Did the evaluation make any difference at all to the decision making? Would a counter-factual case of 'no evaluation' show no effect?
- We now have the 'sustainable airport': 'sustainable nuclear power station': and many other examples. Does the 'capitals' / 'limits' approach have anything to offer the evaluation of these?
- Did the evaluation take any account at all of 'alternative development models' and cultural perspectives?
- Was the evaluation simply a techno-cratic cover for a politically driven development agenda with some 'sustainability' gloss?

Case study 1: Urban focus in a 'developed' region.

Greater Manchester had the benefit of being the location of the workshop, and the case study presenter was Patrick Steele of the Greater Manchester Research Unit. This also fitted with the presentation in the final session by the Director of Economic Development for Manchester City Council.

The agenda included urban regeneration, transport, urban environment, social cohesion, competitiveness / training etc. The underlying themes included the multi-level governance in a large and complex conurbation, and the contradictions between environmental, social and economic goals.

There has been increased awareness of the need for more proactive policies on sustainable development. However, the pressures on government to facilitate economic prosperity still dominate. Consequently the need to develop evaluation methods for RSD remain as strong as ever, while the practice has a long way to catch up.

For example, the 1994-1996 Operational Programme drew down some £260m of EU funds. Subsequent EU programmes have continued in the same mode. In conjunction, with private investment it has contributed a huge boost to flagship facilities and the economic prosperity of a key European city and its environs. However, the lobbying was on largely economic grounds, using traditional methods of evaluation and analyses. Since then, not only are the

goal posts are changing, but so are the rules of the game. Now much discussion is taking place on the future of EU Structural Funds post 2006. The importance of urban areas is emerging as a strong issue in this debate.

The Greater Manchester Strategy was initiated in order to facilitate the allocation of EU, national and regional funds to appropriate sectors within the conurbation. The document can be found on the web site www.agma.gov.uk. GM Research have a prime role in facilitating the exchange of the data and statistics, which are set out in a technical appendix. The basis for this is that much of the data that can assist local authority policymaking is now collected by other key players themselves. Our role in local government has changed from being a basic data provider to one of facilitator of information exchange and interpretation. This in turn makes for empowerment of key actors, a shared vision, and more holistic policy making, for the greater good of the sub-region.

The starting point for discussion was a critical perspective on many parts of the strategy. For instance the public transport strategy has an almost impossible task, with tiny resources. It also sees an increasing gap or dissonance between the 'public transport is good for you' message of the policy-makers, and the practical choices of 86% of travellers. The sceptical view sees that evaluation is a technical tool which can be made to confirm the easy assumption of the status quo ('we need a bigger road'). It is also a political tool which helps to maintain a degree of consensus amongst the ruling techno-cratic elite.

Case study 2: Rural / peri-urban focus in a 'peripheral' region.

Thessalia region in Greece raised the agenda of integrated rural development, agriculture, nature conservation, tourism, ICT etc. The underlying themes included the management of the project pipeline, and the rebuilding of social capital in a rapidly restructuring economy.

The geographical location of the Region of Thessaly, population 740,000, in the European space is characterized by the general disadvantage of Greek space but is compensated, to a certain extent, by Thessaly's central location in Greece. Regional economy presents common characteristics with the productive structures of other European economies of the South. Recently, it suffered from the impacts of a – relatively intense and spatially concentrated in large urban centers – decline of industrial employment while is still witnessing social tensions due to the inability to confront the structural problems associated with the primary sector.

The development strategy for the Region of Thessaly for the period 1994 -1999 was primarily based on the implementation of the 2nd Regional Operational Programme for Thessaly (1994 – 1999), oriented towards the (a) development of rural space and increase of the competitiveness of agricultural products, (b) support of the secondary sector, (c) development of infrastructure projects for the transportation sector, and (d) elaboration and implementation of environmental policy.

The evaluation of the 2nd ROP, which focused on the entire Programme as well as on each specific measure, provided several generic conclusions:

- There is a limited contribution of private expenditure on total commitment of the Programme while a significant acceleration of the Programme's financial progress has been witnessed during the last two years of the programmatic period.
- There are significant variations between the various measures both in respect to commitment and, payments (and consequently absorption).

- The average size of projects is limited, not allowing - for most project categories - the implementation of a significant physical object and was considered as an indication for the dispersion of resources with negative consequences (lack of economies of scale, weakness for the implementation of critical thresholds for the existence of structural impacts).
- Although several references were made for the lag in development faced by the Region of Thessaly, this dimension was not addressed adequately by the 2nd Regional Operational Programme's priorities and implementation (i.e. need for emphasis on strong development actions, multiple small works with limited significance for development).
- Estimations – targets for employment rates in the primary sector and industry were regarded as over – optimistic. Consequently, the officially estimated figures represented an unreal base for the distribution of ROP's resources between sectors, for the sectoral distribution of vocational training programmes, etc.

The overall assessment of the 2nd Regional Operational Programme for Thessaly (1994-1999) as well as the revision of macroeconomic objectives have indicated three main policy options for regional development - mutually supported but at the same time independent and self sufficient : *acceleration of development*, *identification of quality elements* both in respect to economic activities and every-day life issues, as well as *sustainable development*.

Case study 3: Regional / infrastructure focus in a 'restructuring' region

Midi-Pyrenees in southern France raised the agenda of regional / local programmes on industrial structure, communications, transport, water, agriculture etc, as well as rebuilding of social capacity in a changing rural area.

One benefit of this particular case study was that it could report and build on the results of 4 studies on evaluation methods which have focused on the same region.

Another particular feature of this case study was the question of how far it was possible to specify a single framework for evaluation and participation. This referred to the proprietary scheme SQM (Sustainable Quality Management) of the presenter, Ruggero Schleicher-Tappeser, or EURES (Freiburg, DE). SQM provides a structured framework which helps to facilitate discussions between local actors, politicians and experts and between experts of different disciplines.

In France, Midi-Pyrénées is considered to be one of the most advanced regions concerning sustainable development. It can be questioned whether this fame is still founded today. But undoubtedly Midi-Pyrénées was among the first movers in the mid-nineties. The history of different projects over the last seven years shows the ups and downs with different political majorities, the opportunities and the difficulties of an approach to sustainable development which emphasises the necessity of new forms of governance. The experiences to be reported are not limited to evaluation in a strict sense. The management of programmes should be considered over the whole policy cycle. Defining clear objectives as well as appropriate monitoring and evaluation are essential in order to allow for a collective learning process and high efficiency.

The presentations and discussions concerned the evolution of political and institutional context and focus on the experiences in connection with a series of projects on behalf of the two major players in Midi-Pyrénées politics – on one hand for the Regional Council, or more precisely its Regional Environmental Agency, and on the other hand for the Préfecture de

Région, the representation of the central state administration. All these projects were based on the SQM approach developed earlier in the EU research project INSURED. They considerably helped to further develop the system of “SQM – Sustainable Quality Management®”. Over the years, the SQM approach had a considerable impact on the understanding of sustainable development in the region and is spreading across a variety of minor projects.

These experiences and the broader discussion on sustainable development in Midi-Pyrénées show that

- An integrated approach does not necessarily scare, but can instead be very convincing for local actors who have never heard about Sustainable Development
- The latin culture of dialogue is helpful for multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approaches
- Structured qualitative appraisals are extremely useful for strategic discussions and where quantitative data are missing
- Efforts for increasing transparency may challenge existing local powers and therefore sometimes encounter fierce resistance
- Finding appropriate allies and coalitions for the introduction of new forms of governance is essential for promoting SD and successful evaluation
- Participative programme development of pertinent and evaluable programmes is possible and can help considerably to motivate and empower local actors

Annex 1: Papers and presentations presented at the REGIONET Workshop 3

The long versions of the papers can be read from the CD-Rom which forms Annex 1 of this document.