

## Public Participation in Spatial Planning: improving processes and outputs

Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018

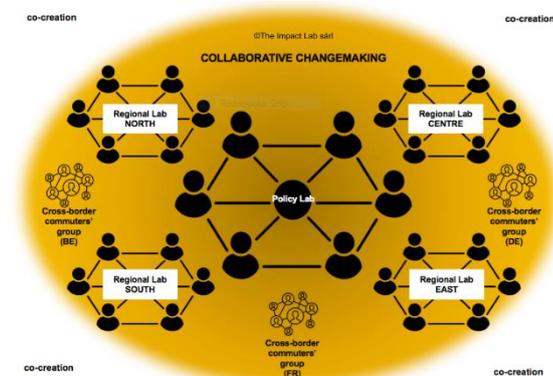
University of Luxembourg, Campus Belval, Maison des Sciences Humaines, Black Box, Esch-Belval

**Nicolas Rossignol from the ESPON EGTC** opened the workshop and introduced ESPON, and, following on from the workshop organised by the ESPON Contact Point Luxembourg at the University of Luxembourg in the morning<sup>1</sup>, remarked on the importance of context in spatial planning. The ESPON Luxembourg workshop is part of a roadshow on spatial planning for the countries in the Western Europe group. This workshop builds on previous seminars in Paris (methodology) and Dublin (content of plans) and will be followed by a seminar in Brussels (implementation) on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018, and then in 2020 a final conference in the Netherlands pulling together the main messages of the four events.

**Pascale Junker from the Luxembourg Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure** welcomed the 50 participants to the workshop and stressed the importance of learning from the planning systems of other countries. A strong role for public participation has been a major factor in the new Luxembourg Master Programme for Spatial Planning. The result of the public participation process is a list of concrete recommendations that will guide and influence the drafting process in 2019.

**Dr Lidia Gryszkiewicz, the co-founding partner at the Impact Lab**, presented how they designed and implemented the strategy for collaborative changemaking for Luxembourg and put emphasis on involving a wide and diverse range of participants along the way. The main aim of this participatory process, as Dr Gryszkiewicz said, was to co-create shared development visions, challenges and recommendation for the purpose of revising the Master Programme in Spatial Planning (Programme directeur d'aménagement du territoire (PDAT))<sup>2</sup> with strong focus on collaboration and not just consultation. The revision of the Master Programme therefore focused on a greater

involvement of both the public and government in the development of the plan through Innovation Labs. An Innovation Lab was defined as a place to bring together a wide range of participants from different backgrounds and professions to fuel collaborative innovation. The Innovation Lab approach was broken down into two aspects: Policy Labs and Regional Labs. The Policy Lab was an inter-ministerial group that set the scope of work, identified themes, processes and methods and retained strong links with relevant ministries. Most importantly, the Policy Lab members have co-created the



spatial planning manifesto ('charte') that made it possible for the Minister to partially give his decisional power

<sup>1</sup> <https://espon.public.lu/dam-assets/publications/ESPON-Seminaire-1-FR-FINAL-24092018.pdf> and <https://espon.public.lu/fr/actualites/2018/retour.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.developpement-durable-infrastructures.public.lu/fr/actualites/articles/2017/10/24-ConfdePresse-PDAT/20171024\\_Presentation\\_PDAT.pdf](http://www.developpement-durable-infrastructures.public.lu/fr/actualites/articles/2017/10/24-ConfdePresse-PDAT/20171024_Presentation_PDAT.pdf)

away to the participatory process. The Spatial Regional Labs were set up in four areas of Luxembourg: east, south, north and centre. Links to cross-border commuter groups were also established for opinion collection purposes.

The process was organised on nine interrelated steps:

- Policy Lab kick-off
- Creating a framework for creative changemaking and ministerial validation
- Evaluating the current Master Programme (PDAT)
- Mapping of stakeholders and synergies
- Fresh perspective on spatial planning communication
- Stakeholder engagement campaign including - structured lotteries to choose invitees to Spatial Labs
- Action plan recommendations
- Sectoral split (recommendations per sector)
- Final report

The participatory process focused on real collaboration vs. mere consultation, which, in itself, proved quite unique at this scale and at this level of policymaking. The participation strategy involved a great emphasis on involving a wide range of people (not just ‘the usual suspects’) through a range of carefully designed methodological choices (e.g. stakeholder selection balancing the actors already engaged in spatial planning with those who have never got involved in this domain yet, or using ‘buckets’ to bias for more diversity in age and education level of open call applicants before the lotteries, to name a couple). An important aspect of working with the government was the use of innovative techniques to encourage an even closer understanding of citizen needs, as well as a true collaboration – cross-party and cross-sector – for the benefit of spatial planning.

**Lex Faber, Planner-developer, Zeyen+Baumann, Luxembourg** examined participation issues through the Luxembourg Local Plan or Plan d’Aménagement Général (PAG) defines the future use of land and is a key instrument of urban development. The PAG guides the development of the city and its neighbourhoods while creating good living conditions and taking into account existing structures. PAGs are complex and technical and often prescribed by existing contexts. Therefore, there is less room for influence and so any participation process at this level must guard against creating false expectations as the final plan will be decided at the political level.

## Participatory process



- public participation campaign in anticipation of the PAG-procedure
- mixed methodology based on existing routines



ESPON // Participatory processes in urban planning (Lex Faber, Zeyen+Baumann)

24/05/2015

Public participation at this level is a challenge – NIMBYism, usual suspects and lack of representation often being cited. For Luxembourg City, the participation process started with a launch conference and was followed up by an on-line questionnaire (over 2000 responses) and ten neighbourhood meetings (1000 participants overall). This was considered a success, but this raises the question of defining success which may be different for different stakeholders e.g. Quantity of participation – measuring numbers; Quality of participation – measuring ideas; Consensus

building – can we find agreement?

According to Lex Faber, it is important to gain political support and commitment for the process but also remain flexible and adjust where necessary. It is also important to consider the expectations of the participants and check

what is important for the participants – not just photos for a brochure. Public participation should be structured and institutionalised.

The workshop then invited four experts from Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium and France to illustrate their thinking and practical experience of public participation.

**Colm McCoy, Senior Executive Planner, Fingal County Council** noted that Ireland is facing growth challenges. The National Planning Framework is a high-level strategic plan shaping growth and development in Ireland up to 2040. The plan was needed to break the ‘business as usual’ approach. Participation in the planning phase was focused on four areas:

- Aims and Objectives for Consultation
  - Good governance and transparency.
  - Empower stakeholders to participate in shaping national planning policy.
  - Prompt contributors to think strategically.
- Identifying Stakeholders
  - Political System, Government Departments (CDSG) and Planning System (Regional Assemblies and Local Authorities).
  - Key stakeholders and Wider Public: Advisory Group, Technical Working Groups; Sectoral.
- Building in Opportunities for Participation
  - Awareness: Multimedia approach including video, radio adverts, social media and national and regional newspaper adverts.
  - Informal Engagement and Formal Consultation.
- Stakeholder Analysis
  - People want to see their views reflected in National Planning Policy.



Some of the interesting aspects of the participation revolved around seeking opportunities to engage different publics. Schools took part in a competition for ‘Green Schools’ and stakeholders were targeted at the national ploughing championships (an important event in rural Ireland).

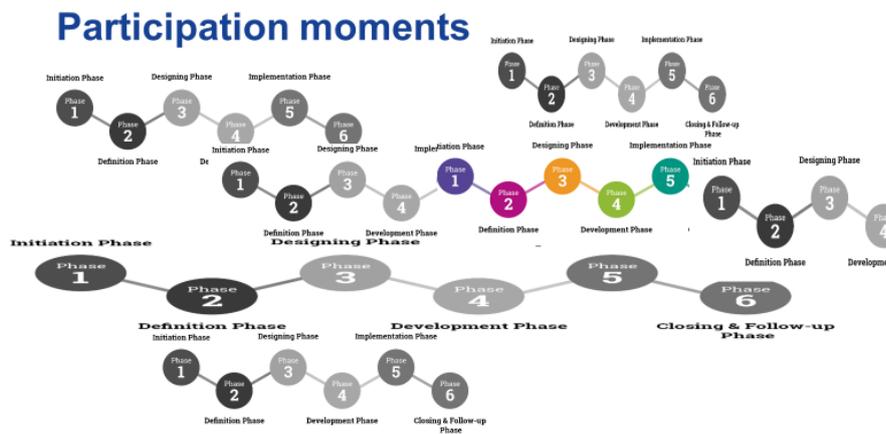
The key challenges for public participation in spatial planning are that meaningful engagement requires significant planning, resources and creative thinking. Getting the public and individual to engage in strategic and national level planning is difficult as there is a tendency to focus on the local and short-term

perspectives. Also, the diversity of views needs to be channelled into a coherent long-term strategy/plan.

Successful public participation requires good governance systems to ensure successful engagement and feedback. People and stakeholders expect Government to set out a long-term strategy for the future. The resounding message from the consultation was that reliance on sprawl and uncoordinated development - i.e. ‘business as usual’, has got to end. However, these changes require complementary sectoral vision (key priorities and headline



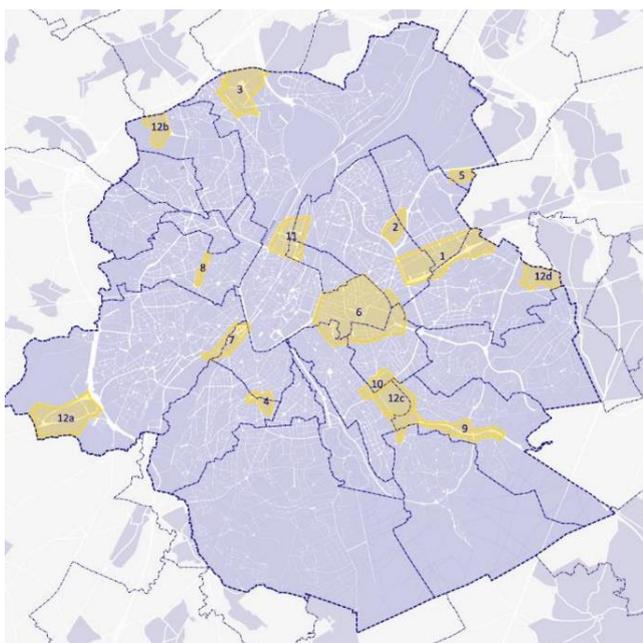
Participation needs to be placed in the system at all points of the planning process as in the diagram.



One interesting point is that public participation can in some cases be linked to public financial participation. In the case of wind farms, public opinion may be linked to the degree of financial involvement. Who receives the profit from the wind farm: the company, the village, or the landowner?

In conclusion, there is a gap between theory and practice: planning theory advocates public participation in planning, influenced by Arnstein, Jacobs and Davidoff. In practice, this is more complex given political realities and interdependencies with other projects and decisions occurring in parallel. While participation is anchored in law: input does not guarantee impact. There is often tension between participation and role of local government: for example, should local levels represent their constituency or open to a wider common good and public interest? Participation depends on the type of plan. Different plans engender different types of participation and different stakeholder groups, for example, inner city redevelopment vs a business park on a highway or a wind park.

**Sven de Bruycker, Chargé de projet, Territorial Strategy, Perspectives Brussels** noted that Brussels is a very diverse city and is often perceived as a new and developing region (established 1989). The region has just approved a Regional Sustainable Development Plan which has an advisory capacity and will provide a framework for the overall planning of regional development up to 2025-2040 and set the general and sectoral development objectives. Public participation activities were focused on the action zones identified in the plan e.g. the canal zone, the Europe zone (see image). The official public participation took place between January-March 2017 and nearly 6000 observations were considered many more than the previous development plan approved in 2002. Participation input was mainly from middle class respondents and there was a lack of input from immigrant communities such as Turks and Moroccans.

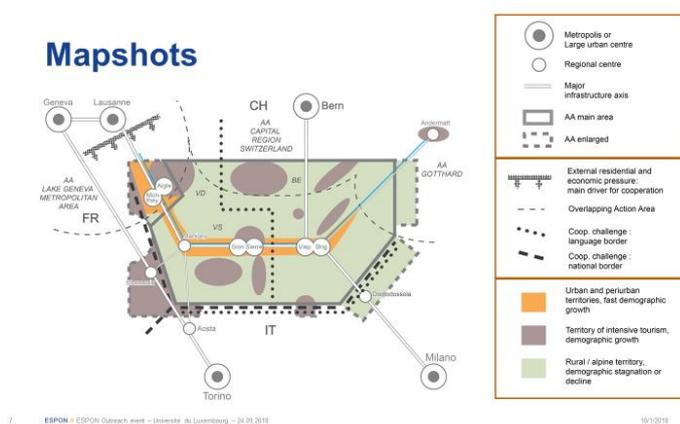


The public participation has resulted in a new introduction and changes to make the plan clearer, more accurate and up to date. In conclusion, Brussels is in a learning mode in terms of public participation and as in the case of the Grand Est in France, public participation has an important role of place-building and helping a new or diverse public identify with the region.

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**Clément Corbineau from Spatial Foresight** presented the ESPON ACTAREA project which examined the role of soft governance in territorial cooperation. Soft territorial cooperation has a strategic medium to long-term objectives and seeks to enhance the capacities of involved players making them actors in their own development. Soft governance can be characterised as open and fuzzy in terms of levels, sectors, sectoral scope, geographical boundaries and partnership.<sup>4</sup>

Soft governance is useful when there is a willingness to cooperate (expressed by a set of territorial actors/organisations) combined with a weakness of pre-existing inter-organisational ties. Open agendas then identify issues and ways to reach a ‘territorially embedded consensus’. Soft governance models can be useful for ‘cross-border’ issues. One of the key aspects of the ACTAREA project was the use of representational mapping which helps to define issues and critical factors.



Therefore, different maps may engender different dialogues and different ways of interpreting a ‘problem’ or ‘issue’. Maps can therefore help to engage participants, support consensus-oriented dialogue and territorialise issues. Soft governance techniques can help to create a connection between participants and generate a ‘community of intent’. So soft governance can be a major tool when developing public participation strategies and processes.

### World Café: Effective public participation – improving processes and output

Following the presentations, participants were organised into four groups. Each group discussed one of the questions listed below.

- What is the added value of public participation?
  - Bringing new ideas, widening the scope (if a wide range of stakeholders involved)
  - Legitimisation of the process and the product (the plan)
  - Public participation strengthens awareness and reduces misunderstandings and strengthens the democratic process
  - Public participation will improve the content of the plan and may generate solutions and prevent future blockages by anticipating possible future issues
- What are our concerns about public participation in spatial planning?
  - Possible chaotic situations due to diverse and contradictory inputs
  - Possible over-simplification of problems
  - NIMBYism
  - Strong lobbying from some groups that can hijack discussion
  - ‘Statism’ – a lack of innovation
  - Guidance is needed (rules of the game/ clear objectives) regarding expectations, limits to avoid disillusion

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.espon.eu/actarea>

- What are the necessary conditions for effective public participation?
  - Transparency
  - Expectation management
  - Good preparation, result oriented, clear role for citizens
    - What should and should not be discussed
  - Selection of participants (keep the process open) – heterogeneity
  - Continual follow up going beyond monitoring and focus on implementation and involvement
  - Methodology and moderation are important with a mix of techniques such as questionnaires and workshops
  - Important to get political backing e.g. the mayor and mobilise knowledge
  - Explanations by experts and a well-informed and mixed organising team
  - Developing synergies between the different regional levels
- How can planners and policy-makers use these outputs?
  - Make sure you know what type of output you want before the process starts e.g. vision or rules
  - Public participation brings risks so need to be clear on benefits
  - Expectation management – not all things may change
  - Develop a causality chart so you can show input and impact
  - Participation can build legitimacy and help the administration connect to the public.

The above reflections were presented in a final session and then Nicolas Rossignol ESPON EGCT thanked speakers and introduced Sven de Bruycker who gave a short overview of the next roadshow event in Brussels 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (see [www.espon.eu/brussels](http://www.espon.eu/brussels)).

## Annex 1: Luxembourg Meeting Agenda

<b>13.30</b>	<b>Registration and welcome coffee</b>	
<b>PART 1: Setting the scene</b>		
<b>14.00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome</li> <li>The reform of the Luxembourg Master Programme for Spatial Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicolas Rossignol, ESPON EGTC,</li> <li>Pascale Junker, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure, Luxembourg</li> </ul>
<b>14.15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public participation processes and outputs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr Lidia Gryzkiewicz, The Impact Lab</li> </ul>
<b>14.45</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participatory processes for the City of Luxembourg</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lex Faber, Planner-developer, Zeyen+Baumann, Luxembourg</li> </ul>
<b>15.00</b>	A view from outside - panel discussion with representatives from:	
	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colm McCoy, Senior Executive Planner, Fingal County Council</li> </ul>
	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benoît Leplomb, Chargée de mission SRADDET, Direction de l'Environnement et de l'Aménagement, Conseil Régional Grand Est, France</li> </ul>
	The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. David Evers, Senior researcher spatial planning, Department of Spatial Planning (ROL). Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)</li> </ul>
	Belgium (represented by Brussels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sven de Bruycker, Chargé de projet, Territorial Strategy, Perspectives Brussels</li> </ul>
<b>15.40</b>	Coffee	
<b>PART 2: Discussion and recommendations</b>		
<b>16.00</b>	ACTAREA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clément Corbineau, Spatial Foresight</li> </ul>
<b>16.20</b>	World Café: Effective public participation – Improving processes and output <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the added value of public participation?</li> <li>What are our concerns about public participation in spatial planning?</li> <li>What are the necessary conditions for effective public participation?</li> <li>How can planners and policy-makers use these outputs?</li> </ul>	
<b>17.00</b>	Conclusions and welcome to the next roadshow event in Brussels 24 <sup>th</sup> October	