

Title: Policy Coherence in Green Infrastructure management: insights from six European case studies

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Policy assessment has traditionally been studied by assessing how well single policy instruments are achieving their respective objectives. Interaction between policy instruments is often not taken into account or very succinctly. This creates potentially flawed results since a given policy instrument might be performing very well but also negatively influence the objectives and results of several other policy objectives.

It seems there is no tool available to analyse policy coherence at territorial level in an easy and coherent manner. In practice such analysis is often done based on lengthy qualitative reviews listing relevant policy instruments and their impacts. Such methods however fail to produce clear overviews and as a result are often too complex for policymakers to be readily used. Also they fail to address synergies and conflicts between policy instruments in a comparable manner.

To address this, we developed a Policy Coherence Analysis (PolCoA) tool and tested it in six European case studies from the Biodiversa project (IMAGINE) on Green Infrastructure (GI). We used a participatory approach with matrices to carry out an expert based PolCoA. For each case study we collaboratively determined (i) the GI challenge faced by stakeholders and identified (ii) key policy instruments, (iii) GI elements (e.g. hedges, grasslands) and (iv) ecosystem services and socio-ecological functions (e.g. erosion prevention, economic viability of farms, etc) associated with this challenge. Local policy experts scored (on a 7 item Likert scale) the impact of each policy instrument on each of these GI elements and functions. Then, they scored also the synergies and conflicts between the policy instruments. The result is a concise overview of policy coherence at case study level creating a shared knowledge basis and allowing policymakers to quickly pin-point issues and opportunities, and supporting focused deliberation. Additionally it provides the foundation for a policy coherence indicator on given issues (e.g. GI policy).

Keywords: policy coherence, green infrastructure, ecosystem services, policy assessment, biodiversity