



A critical review on current practices of the monitoring and evaluation in the preparation of strategic urban plans within the Egyptian context

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A B S T R A C T

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Worldwide, strategic urban planning is found in very different contexts and planning schemes, where it is always a tool strongly linked to enhancing urban management. Under the umbrella of strategic urban planning different approaches can be perceived, in which within these broad shared characteristics there are significant variations. A key component in the strategic urban planning process is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) element and these differences can be seen in the way that M&E is approached. Egypt is currently on the track to reform its planning system shifting from the conventional master plans towards strategic urban plans (SUPs). This paper reflects on the current practices of M&E the preparation of SUPs within the Egyptian context. It sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of the employed techniques and concludes with some recommendations to improve the process of M&E, which builds upon the strengths in the employed techniques.

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Introduction

As new approaches of urban planning emerge, new techniques for monitoring and evaluating the entire process of strategic urban planning need to be developed to respond to these innovative approaches. Egypt is currently on the track to reform its planning system, shifting from the conventional master plan, which is top-down and expert led (UN-Habitat, 2009), towards the strategic urban plan, which is a public-sector-led and socio-spatial focus (de Graaf & Dewulf, 2010). Preparing SUPs for the Egyptian cities on the national level has been carried out since 2007. It is carried out on two levels. One targets large and medium sized cities, while the other targets small cities. The former is fully sponsored by the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP),¹ while the latter is a mutual cooperation between the GOPP and UN-Habitat. Through a participatory process, local stakeholders are involved in preparing a strategic urban plan, which should provide a road map for developing their city for the next two decades (GOPP & UN-Habitat, 2007). Consequently, the system for monitoring activities and evaluation of results has dramatically changed in

order to ensure the successful implementation of this newly adopted participatory planning process. A review of the literature on contemporary urban planning approaches indicates that while much literature has addressed the process of preparing SUPs, very few authors have tackled the issue of how to monitor activities and evaluate the quality of deliverables through the entire process of preparing SUPs. Therefore, in this paper the author reflects on her practical experience, as a M&E consultant, where she has participated along with the M&E team of the UN-Habitat in developing a genuine system for M&E applied to the preparation of Strategic Urban Plans for Small Cities Project (SUPSCP) in Egypt. Furthermore, the paper explores the differences between the preceding mentioned M&E system and the one which is currently practiced by the review committee of the GOPP in the national project of preparing the Strategic and Detailed Urban Plans for the Egyptian Cities Project (SDUPECP). The purpose of exploring these differences is not to state which system is better than the other. Rather, it aims at highlighting the strengths in each of them in an attempt to improve current practices of M&E in the preparation of SUPs by integrating these positives together in an enhanced M&E technique, which can be applied to similar projects in different contexts.

This paper consists of 4 sections. The first section reviews the evolution from modernist approaches to contemporary innovative approaches to urban planning. The next section explores the need for strategic urban planning in Egypt, given the urban and political challenge, and reflects on current practices of strategic urban planning within the Egyptian context. The following section explains the different techniques of M&E the entire process of

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¹ The GOPP is the national Egyptian authority responsible for the planning process. It was established in 1973, and since then, the GOPP has been responsible in formulating urban development general policy, preparing plans and programs for urban development at the national, regional and governmental levels, revising and approving of urban plans at the local level and preparing planning guidelines and the coordination of planning processes all over Egypt (GOPP, 2009a).

preparing SUPs within the context of the two working projects of the SDUPECP and the SUPSCP in Egypt. It then suggests some recommendations to enhance current practices of M&E in the preparation of SUPs, building upon the strengths of each of them. The final section includes the concluding remarks.

The evolution from modernist approaches to contemporary innovative approaches to urban planning

Worldwide, planning systems differ from one country to another according to the social and cultural norms of individual places. They are essential in order to guide urban development in the majority of cities in the world (Searle & Bunker, 2010). Currently, the premise is not whether there should be urban planning, but rather what form it should take. A review of the evolution of urban planning approaches since the second half of the 19th century to present time indicates that the modernist approach to urban planning or so called 'master plan', which is top-down and expert led, was the dominant and still persists in many parts of the world (UN-Habitat, 2009).

However, planning systems based on master planning were criticized for their bureaucracy and adherence to a rigid blueprint of development, which excluded other development stakeholders from participating in the planning process (Halla, 2007; Farhoodi, Gharakhlou-N, Ghadami, & Khah, 2009). Furthermore, these have focused exclusively on spatial and physical planning. Opponents have argued that municipal governments believe that the current urban master plan is not suitable for providing strategic guidance for urban growth due to its limitations. They emphasized the urgent need for strategic urban planning as an important instrument for enhancing the cities' economic and social development (Fulong & Jingxing, 2007).

Over the last two decades, in response to this criticism, some cities have developed their planning systems on the basis of the belief that the traditional instruments of physical planning have not been sufficient to create effective city projects and guide the development process within their cities. They have used new methods of urban planning based on the principles of strategic planning. This approach is guided by a paradigm of urban management and embodies notions such as transparency, flexibility and stakeholders' participation. It provides a dynamic framework that allows input into development decisions by all in a city interested parties (Halla, 2002, 2007). Therefore, stakeholders' participation and public-private partnerships can be considered to underpin strategic planning.

The strategic planning process has been depicted as the development of decision making rules that guide future organizational actions (Andersen, 2000). Within the urban planning context strategic urban planning is well illustrated by Steinberg (2005) as: "A process which permits the articulation of the initiatives of public and private stakeholders which seek synergies for the development of a city. It is about (i) an adaptable, non-rigid methodology for which flexibility is an indispensable precondition; (ii) a tool for local development which conceives strategic interventions that guarantee the quality of life, and economic and social progress; (iii) a mechanism to promote progressive forms of governance, substantially improving local democracy through a real collaboration between public and private urban stakeholders; (iv) a modern, participatory and democratic form of thinking about urban development which permits to establish a reference for all those economic and social actors who can harmonize their own strategies with those scenarios which are desired for their city or territory; (v) a new instrument which facilitates the management of a city in a period of frequent and substantial changes which stimulates the necessary imagination to deal with this" (Steinberg, 2005, p. 1).

As can be clearly recognized in Steinberg's illustration of strategic urban planning, the involvement of stakeholders in shaping the future of their city is crucial; social and economic progress has equal importance to urban development. Moreover, flexible thinking and effective participation are key issues in realizing the objectives of the strategic urban planning process.

The need for strategic urban planning in Egypt

The challenge posed by urban situation is of crucial importance to Egypt. The total land area of Egypt is about one million square kilometres, of which only about 3.5% is cultivated, principally in the densely populated Nile Valley and Delta and only 7.6% of its total area is inhabited (GOPP, 2008). The total population is approximately 80 million inhabitants, where the ratio of urban to rural population is 43% and 57% respectively (CIA, 2010). Egypt is facing a series of threats to the livelihoods of people caused by limited access to natural resources in relation to the population size and economic growth. Urbanisation competes with agricultural land use for the same very limited area; industrial and agricultural development as well as uncontrolled rural and urban settlement threatens the quality and availability of land and water resources (Khalifa & Connelly, 2009). Unplanned urban growth is estimated to have consumed about a sixth of the country's traditional agricultural land in the past 20 years (UNDP/INP, 2004). Continuous urban encroachment on agricultural land, the lack of effective and efficient planning mechanisms and the lack of vision in urban management can be considered to be the most challenging urban issues within the Egyptian context. Therefore, the need for effective urban management and future development planning is indisputable.

In Egypt, before 2005 planning schemes were guided by the master planning approach. They were usually called 'General Plans' or 'Comprehensive Plans'. Whilst following the broad characteristics of master planning in general, the focus was exclusively on the spatial and physical planning of the city; principally drawing the new physical boundary "Haiez"² of the city is the ultimate goal of the master plan. Infrastructure needed for service and utilities for new development have had much attention, while social and economic contexts despite their complexity and significance have much less emphasis. There was a lack of consideration of stakeholder involvement by any means because there was no mechanism for including them in the preparation or implementation of plans. Therefore, citizens' needs and priorities were not well addressed in the plans. Furthermore, key issues of concern specific to the city might not be tackled as well, as the plan at the end reflects the perceptions of the planner along with other experts who carry out the preparation of the master plan. Given this, it becomes very unlikely that the plans will be implemented.

It is worth mentioning that this lack of stakeholder participation in the planning process is a direct consequence to the political regime³ in Egypt. Though the constitution establishes Egypt as a "Democratic State", deriving its sovereignty from the people, however, practicing participation is considered an unfamiliar activity and governance is only nominally democratic (UNDP/INP, 2003). The political culture of both governmental and in society at large is still in general hostile towards explicit public involvement in policy making. Effective opposition is not tolerated, and civil society organizations are heavily regulated and monitored by law, and harassed if they display signs of opposition (Connelly, 2009, 2010). Public's mistrust of the government is

² Haiez is the Arabic name and the well known one of city boundary or its physical demarcation within the Egyptian context.

³ The political regime refers here to the situation before the Egyptian Revolution of 25th January 2011.

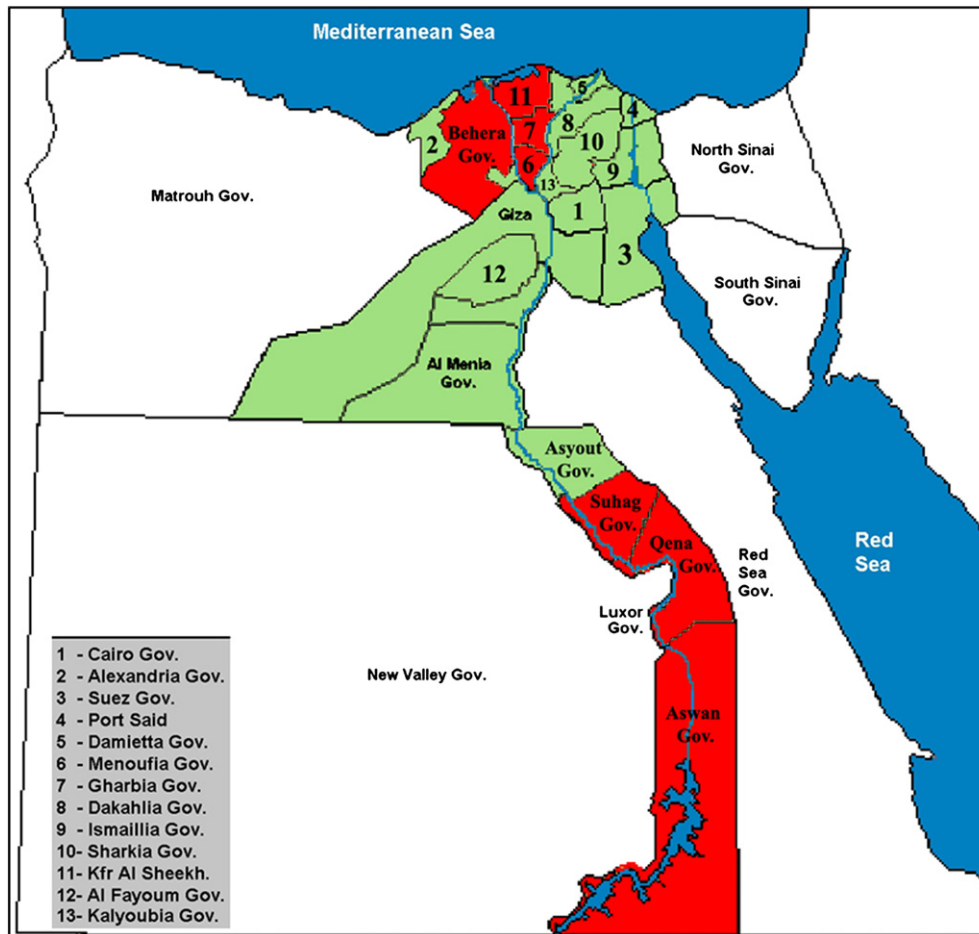


Fig. 1. Location of the 7 governorates of Egypt, where the SUPSCP is currently implemented.

a common stance amongst the different tiers of the Egyptian society. Therefore, changing Egypt into a participatory society requires fundamental adjustments to the legislative framework, new approaches to education and the media, an improved economic situation, and the establishment of transparency and accountability in Egypt's institutions to win the trust of the Egyptian people (Abdel Halim, 2005).

Recognizing the drawbacks of the master planning approach on the international scale as explained in the previous section of this paper, and on the national scale as illustrated above, the GOPP has adopted a strategic urban planning approach to reform its planning system. It aims at formulating an integrated future vision for development to achieve sustainable development, reaching a practical applicable strategy with the involvement of different stakeholders groups, guaranteeing benefit from available natural resources and determining the necessary funding resources for implementation (GOPP, 2009a). The successful application of strategic planning started in 2005 in preparing the General Strategic Plans for the Egyptian Villages Project (Khalifa & Connelly, 2009), following this in 2007 two projects have been initiated to prepare strategic urban plans at a national level, which will be explained thoroughly in the following section.

Current practice of strategic urban planning in Egypt

Strategic urban planning for the 227 Egyptian cities is carried out through two projects. The first one is the "Strategic and Detailed Urban Plans for the Egyptian Cities Project" (SDUPECP), which targets

the large⁴ and medium sized cities, in total 177 cities. It is wholly sponsored by the GOPP, who hired Egyptian universities, research centres and consultancy firms to carry out this task. The project has started in 44 cities including the capitals of all governorates and some medium sized cities in the first phase. It has then continued with the rest of medium sized ones in the following phases (GOPP, 2009b). The second one is the "Strategic Urban Planning for Small Cities Project" (SUPSCP), which targets the 50 small⁵ sized cities. It involves mutual cooperation between the GOPP and UN-Habitat, where UN-Habitat is fully responsible for managing the project and preparing SUPs for the 50 cities, then delivering the final product to the GOPP. The UN-Habitat delegates the task to professional technical teams (TTs⁶), where the team leader of each team is responsible for composing his/her team according to the required specialties indicated in the project TOR (GOPP & UN-Habitat, 2007). The SUPSCP is currently being implemented in 7 of the 29 governorates of Egypt, namely, Behera, Kfr Al Sheekh,

⁴ Size here refers to population size. Large size cities are usually the capitals of the governorates of Egypt. Apart from Cairo and Alexandria, it can be said that the average population size is about 500,000 inhabitants. Medium size cities are usually more than 50,000 inhabitants and not the capitals of the governorates.

⁵ Small sized cities are usually less than 50,000 inhabitants.

⁶ TTs include the following specialties; Team Leader, Team Manager, Urban Planner, Population Consultant, Housing Consultant, Local Economic Development Consultant, Water & Sanitation Consultant, Transportation Consultant, Social Services Consultant, Environment Consultant, Governance Consultant, Vulnerability Consultant, GIS Consultant and a Facilitator.

Gharbia, Menoufia, Suhag, Qena and Aswan governorates, as shown in Fig. 1.

The achievements of the two projects up to the end of 2009 in terms of accomplished SUPs, ones in progress and not yet started are illustrated in Table 1.

The methodological approach and outcomes of strategic urban plans

In both projects the methodology of preparing SUPs is almost similar. Differences lie principally in the tools utilized to produce the SUP and prepare the report. The preparation of SUPs is built on a limited set of well connected principles, of which the most important and far reaching is sustainable development. It seeks to strengthen the political sustainability of leaders and social sustainability by including vulnerable people at every step of the process, economic sustainability of the projects, and environmental sustainability of resources used. The methodology predominantly adopts a decentralized and integrated approach to address three main substantive areas, namely (i) land and shelter, (ii) basic urban services and social services, and (iii) local economic development. Furthermore, environment, governance and vulnerability are additional cross-cutting issues that are addressed to inform the process. Through a participatory process, local stakeholders prepare a SUP with priority actions to improve housing conditions, urban services and the local economy. Ultimately, the SUP aims at providing a road map for the development of their city over the next two decades until the target year of 2027 (GOPP & UN-Habitat, 2007). Preparation of a SUP encompasses six main phases; Start-up Phase (stakeholder mobilization), Data Collection Phase, Data Analysis Phase, City Consultation, Strategy Formulation and Approval of the Strategic Urban Plan in addition to Action Planning Phase within the framework of the SUPSCP or the Detailed Plans Phase within the framework of the SDUPECP (GOPP, 2006; GOPP & UN-Habitat, 2007).

Within the SUPSCP those phases are divided into 3 milestones, while in the SDUPECP they are further detailed into 10 phases and then divided into 5 milestones as shown in Fig. 2.

For each phase, a specific set of outcomes is expected. However, key outcomes of SUPs can be summarized as follows (GOPP, 2009a):

- A new urban boundary “*Haiez*” for the city that allows planned urban expansion until the target year of 2027,
- An integrated urban development plan with the involvement of stakeholder groups until target year 2027,
- Proposed land use, planning and building regulations for development areas within the new boundary,
- Detailed feasibility studies and action plans for a group of priority projects, which have been agreed upon by stakeholders,
- Delineation of informal areas in the city and preparation of detailed plans to develop these areas,
- Proposed mechanism for partnership with the private sector, and
- Integrated data base using GIS system.

Table 1
Progress in both of the SDUPECP and SUPSCP up to the end of 2009.

	No. of Egyptian cities in each project	Accomplished SUPs	In progress SUPs	Not yet started
The SDUPECP	177	40	45	92
The SUPSCP	50	11	17	22
Total	227	51	62	114

Source: author based on GOPP (2009b).

Monitoring and evaluation procedures

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a significant component of development programs and projects particularly those funded by international donors such as the World Bank, United Nations and USAID. It ensures the most effective and efficient use of resources and assists in determining the success or failure of a program or a project. Generally M&E often convinces donors that their investments have been worthwhile (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Monitoring focuses on the implementation process and progress towards the achievement of program objectives, while evaluation measures how well the program activities have met expected objectives and/or the extent to which changes in outcomes can be attributed to the program (UN-Habitat, 2003). A good review as pointed out by Clements (2005) is founded on several types of evaluation techniques⁷ and the characteristics of “quality” evaluations can be found in Kusek and Rist (2004), which serve as a useful reference. Within the planning profession, there were relatively few criteria for evaluating the quality of general plans and as Baer (1997) noted, the planning literature is surprisingly narrow when it comes to what constitutes a good plan.

Accompanying the era of the modernist planning approach, the focus of the “plan evaluation” or “plan assessment” or “plan appraisal” was on developing criteria for determining “good plans”. As Alexander and Faludi (1989, p. 127) noted “*If planning is to have any credibility as a discipline or a profession, evaluation criteria must enable a real judgment of planning effectiveness: good planning must be distinguishable from bad.*”

With the paradigm shift to a strategic urban planning approach, planning is perceived as an ongoing process, rather than merely making particular plans. As Altshuler (1965 cited in Baer, 1997, p. 9) noted, a common planning principle held that “*planning is more important than any plan.*” Moreover, the technical and factual underpinnings of physical plans were deemed insufficient; “*The city was no longer thought of as simply an artifact to be shaped by criteria for physical design; it was viewed as a mechanism of interrelated parts to be selectively transformed by applying criteria derived from systems theory. The social sciences were introduced to equip planners with more understanding of urban cause-effect relationships. Modelling urban processes, not drawing up a blueprint, was the key component shaping the criteria for this system*” (Baer, 1997, p. 9). It can be concluded that the focus of monitoring and evaluation within SUPs becomes not on the quality of plan but instead on the methods and processes of plan making.

Within the Egyptian context, monitoring and evaluation systems have developed alongside contemporary approaches of urban planning worldwide. When planning schemes were principally adopting the master planning approach, which is in principal expert led or top-down, the focus of M&E process was on the quality of technical content. Currently, the strategic urban planning approach is dominant. Within this approach, *ensuring the successful enabling of local development and high probability of implementation is the core focus of the M&E process*. Therefore, monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of stakeholder participation through the entire process of preparing the SUP of a specific city has the highest priority.

In the following sections the author reflects on her practical experience, as a M&E consultant, where she has participated along with the M&E team of UN-Habitat in developing a genuine system for M&E the preparation of SUPs within the SUPSCP. Furthermore, the paper explores the differences between the preceding mentioned M&E system and the one currently practiced by the

⁷ Evaluation techniques encompass performance logic chain assessment, pre-implementation assessment, process implementation evaluation, rapid appraisal, case study, impact evaluation, and meta-evaluation.

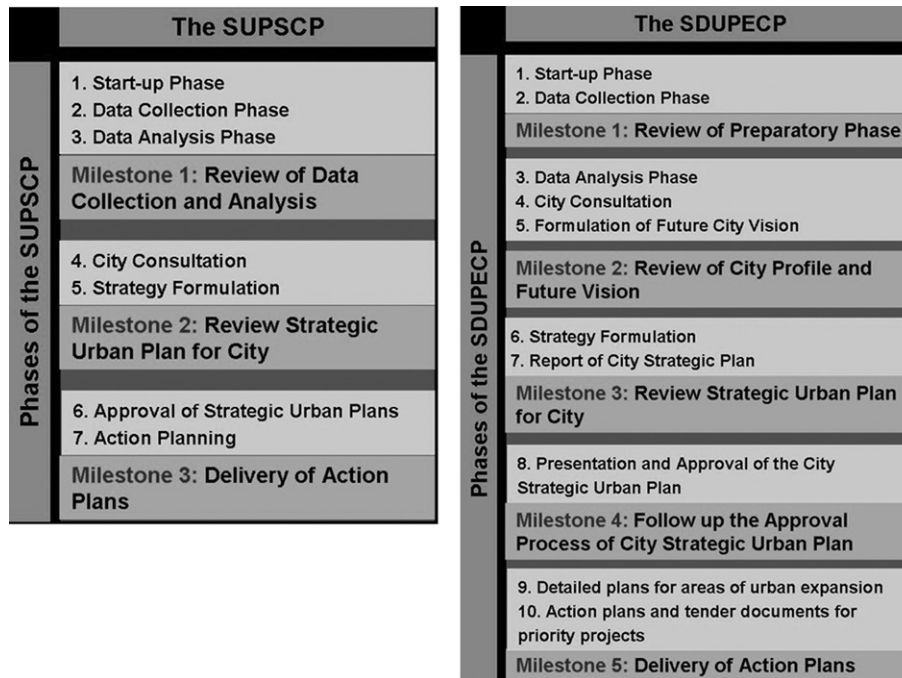


Fig. 2. Work flow phases and milestones of the SUPSCP and the SDUPECP. Source: author based on GOPP (2006) and GOPP and UN-Habitat (2007).

review committee of the GOPP in the SDUPECP.⁸ The GOPP approach can be considered to be “the standard”, while the UN-Habitat approach can be seen as a “newer approach”.

The M&E process for the SUPSCP

As explained earlier in this paper, the process of preparing the SUPSCP is structured to deliver local and inclusive decision making and to ensure a high likelihood of implementation. Consequently, the primary thrust of the M&E process is to:

1. Monitor and ensure participatory and subsidiary decision making
2. Evaluate by looking forward to the potential for implementation

The M&E system is therefore established to achieve the above objectives. It includes general responsibilities through the entire process of preparing the SUP alongside specific activities for each phase of the project. General responsibilities can be summarized as follows:

- Monitor that all the various stakeholders including balanced representatives from local executive authorities, elected leaders (local popular council), NGOs and the private sector are participating and apparently committed;
- Monitor that cross-cutting issues including governance, environmental and vulnerability (poverty and gender) issues are well represented through out the entire process;

⁸ It is worth mentioning that the author was the Environmental Studies Consultant for three cities namely, El-Mansoura; the capital of Dakahlia Governorate, Asyout; the capital of Asyout Governorate and El-Khanka; one of the medium size cities in Kalyoubia Governorate, within the SDUPECP. Therefore, most of the illustration of the review process of the GOPP is the result of the author's direct observation to the process over more than two years (the time span of preparing the SUPs of the mentioned 3 cities). Thus the author's position in the SDUPECP is completely opposite to her position in the SUPSCP, but this allows the chance to closely monitor the entire process of the GOPP review system.

- Monitor that all outputs have been delivered, according to the TOR or following sample outputs; and
- Monitor the overall consistency between sectors and that the documents are free of inconsistencies, contradictions, or conflicts in text and between text and graphics, maps or tables.

As for the specific activities, they differ according to the set of milestones activities undertaken by the TT.

Three fundamental tools are employed through out the entire process of M&E to enable the TTs fulfill both general and specific responsibilities successfully. Each has a certain role to play. These tools will be explained through a case study to demonstrate how the M&E process operates in practice. Furthermore, it shows how this ties in with the theoretical expectations of the M&E team of UN-Habitat of how the process was intended to work. The case study is one of the small cities in Menoufia Governorate, named Qwesna city. The city privileged unique position because of its location on both of the agricultural road and the railway Cairo/Alexandria. It is also considered the main entrance to Shebin El Koum city; the capital of Menoufia Governorate. The population size of Qwesna according to the latest census of CAPMAS 2006 is approximately 44,567 inhabitants. The Urban fabric of Qwesna is characterized by a regular urban grid despite absence of legal planning for land uses and urban expansion since its establishment. The residents of Qwesna were freely committed to follow the original grid; a tradition is rarely seen in small Egyptian cities. Such action has led to regular extension of main roads, which helped the supply of water and sanitation networks along with garbage collection mechanism successfully (Hassan et al., 2008). Fig. 3 indicates the current land use and a panoramic view of the city.

Tool 1, the evaluation sheet

The evaluation sheet is the *core* tool, which is genuinely developed by the M&E team of the SUPSCP. It is an excel file, which contains certain items to enable reporting and evaluating the deliverables of each milestone. It includes the expected outputs as specified in the TOR, delivery status for each output, indicators of output quality and comments on the completeness of each output.

Table 2
Part of the final version of Qwesna's evaluation sheet for milestone (1).

#	Phase	Output	Del. status	Indicators for output quality	Comments
					Complete, partial, some, none
1	Start-up phase	1.1) Stakeholder list;	1	· Stakeholders are a balanced representation of the city, i.e. all actors as identified in the TOR are represented; · Contacts are provided	Complete
		1.1.1) Appendix A/tool 1: questions for city leader/s	1	Filled	Complete
		1.2) Stakeholder analysis;	1	· A group of influential stakeholders are on board, i.e.: · Key interests within each group cover the substantive and the cross-cutting themes; · Governance, environmental and vulnerability (poor and gender) issues are well represented; · Type of contribution is identified: finance, information, etc. · Reasoning for the assessment of their current and potential contribution is identified	Complete
		1.2.1) Appendix B/tool 2: stakeholder analysis matrix	1	Filled	Complete
		1.3) List of secondary data sources available at city and/or governorate; and	1	· Data sources are classified to comprise history, context, programs and studies of the city and/or governorate. · Cover sheet, abstract and the table of contents of each is attached.	Complete
		1.4) City 'champion' Identification	1	· Reasoning for selecting leader as a 'champion' is clearly acknowledged	Complete

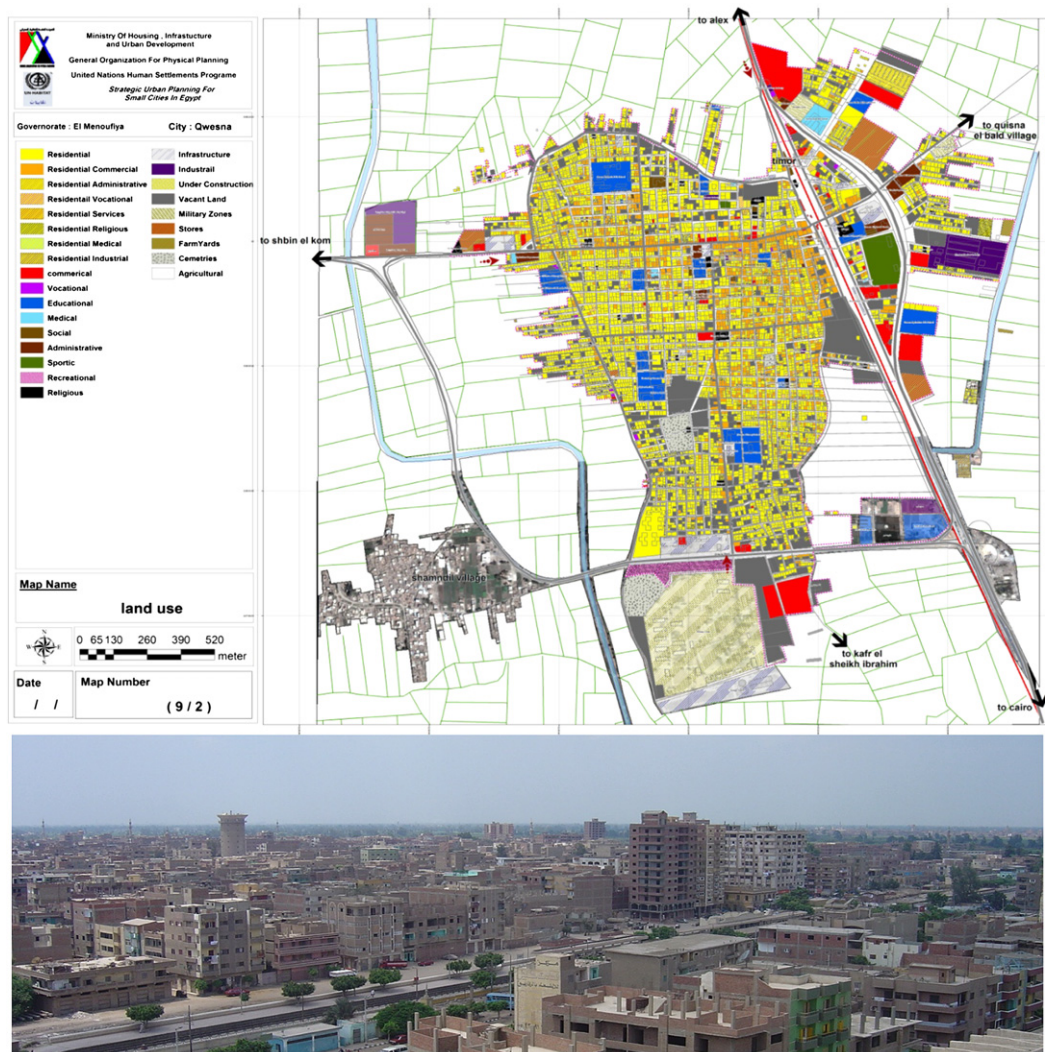


Fig. 3. Land use map and a panoramic view of Qwesna city – Menoufia Governorate. Source: Hassan et al. (2008).



Fig. 4. Photographs from the city consultation of Qwesna – Menoufia Governorate.

Therefore, the principal aim of the evaluation sheet is to evaluate the completion and to some extent the technical quality of the SUP deliverables. The evaluation sheet is handed to the TTs at the start of the project and is updated periodically and officially distributed. It is updated in the light of empirical experience from submitted data, but should not conflict with the TOR or previously issued one. In the case of Qwesna, within one week after the first submittal of each milestone, a first version of the evaluation sheet along with a M&E report has been produced and sent to the TT to indicate whether all required outputs are included and formatted as in TOR. Furthermore, the M&E report includes comments on each output and explanation of the items need to be revised. Table 2 shows a part of the final version of Qwesna's evaluation sheet for milestone (1). There is no limit for the number of revisions. In some cases it was only once, while in others which have faced difficulties it could reach six times of revision until fulfilling all the needed changes. For Qwesna, the final version of evaluation sheet along with M&E report has been issued after two submittals in milestone (1) and three submittals in milestone (2). Once the final version is issued, the TT can move to the following milestone.

Tool 2, monitoring progress tool

This tool is adapted from the Sustainable Cities Program (SCP)⁹ Source Book Series, Volume 9; Measuring Progress on Improving Urban Decision-Making Processes (UN-Habitat & UNEP, 2003) and modified to fit with the SUPSCP framework. The tool aims to assess the level of stakeholders' participation through the entire process of preparing the SUPs. It aims at ensuring that the right people are involved, by assessing who is participating, in which activities, and what their concerns and contributions are. It also allows the assessment of their level of participation and its evolution over time.

Within the SCP monitoring activities can be summarized in "three-plus-one" activities; assessment and information activities, strategy and action planning, implementation and institutionalization. Within the context of the SUPSCP, this tool is particularly used in two major events¹⁰; (i) city consultation and (ii) strategy formulation and approval of the strategic urban plan. The *City Consultation* is a major event which brings together the work of milestone one, consolidates social and political participation and support, and launches the SUP project into milestone two. The

⁹ The SCP is a global program of UN-HABITAT and UNEP. It is one of the leading technical cooperation programs in the field of urban environmental planning and management and is the principal activity of the United Nations system for operationalizing sustainable urban development and thus contributing to the implementation of the globally-agreed Agenda 21 and Habitat Agenda.

¹⁰ The city consultation within the SUPSCP is equivalent to the assessment and information activities, and final stage of strategy formulation phase is equivalent to strategy and action planning.

quality of information and assessment activities are measured through the variety of sources of information used and the level of consensus on priorities. The second event took place by the end of milestone two; *Strategy Formulation and Approval of the Strategic Urban Plan*. Measurement of the quality of strategies is done by considering resources available and the level of consensus on strategy. The indicators used for this are not based on statistics or raw data, but on a rating given by the stakeholder groups themselves. Rating scales are provided for each indicator. The ratings range from 0 (totally negative appraisal) to 3 (totally positive appraisal). Each stakeholder group rates its own performance according to the proposed scale. The rating process is participatory, and the final rating is a consensus.

In the case of Qwesna city consultation, by the end of the city consultation before closing, the author has held a sort of conversation with each of the stakeholder groups independently using the monitoring progress tool, as shown in Fig. 4. It aims to interpret; to what extent did the presentation made by the TT reflect and consider their contributions at the previous phase (data collection and analysis) and address their priorities. Each group of stakeholders has evaluated the level of their participation in providing information and assessment activities and whether the final list of city development projects represents their priorities. All stakeholder groups chose rate (3), which is totally positive appraisal. In fact, the communication between the TT who prepare the SUP for Qwesna and the stakeholder groups was quite successful. The TT could gain their trust and encourage them to participate in shaping the future of their city. Through more than five meetings before the city consultation event the TT has succeeded in helping them to overcome their inherent feeling of marginalization and building a trust that their voice is really count; a belief that people lost due to the non-transparency and corruption they witness in political participation.

Tool 3, technical team self assessment

This tool aims at allowing the chance for TTs to report on every stage in both milestones one and two and express their reflections by answering questions assessing the achievement of objectives, monitoring results and evaluating methods used through the entire process of preparing the SUP. The tool encompasses a number of forms. Each form enables reporting on a specified phase of either milestone one or milestone two and should be completed by the team leader. Reflections and comments on the process and procedure could include the following:

- Additions: items or tools to be added to the process,
- Omissions: items or tools to be removed,
- Amendments in flow and report structure: changes in work order and submittals, and

- Recommendations on how to improve on the method/tools used (Salheen, 2008).

In Qwesna case, the use of this tool was of a significant influence on enhancing the project ToR after the completion of the first round of the SUPSCP. The M&E team usually compiles comments and recommendations on how to improve the methods/tools used and consider them while updating the TOR after each round of the project. A common recommendation by several team leaders suggested expanding the time allowed for accomplishing milestone (2) and modifying report structure to avoid redundancy, which have been modified in round two of the project. Furthermore, the team leader of Qwesna city has developed a tool for stakeholder analysis to better identify stakeholders. It proved to me more efficient than the original one (see Table 3). Therefore, in the second round of the project the newly developed stakeholder analysis tool replaced the old one and it has been used by the all of the working TTs in the project.

As can be noticed, each tool in the M&E package has a certain role to play in achieving the overall objectives of the integrated participatory planning M&E approach, which is employed by the SUPSCP. By the end of the process each city should have its own strategic urban plan which is considered to be a road map for developing the city for the next two decades. Fig. 5 indicates the future land use plan for Qwesna, and by comparing the proposed plan with the current one as shown in Fig. 3, the location of priority projects identified by stakeholder groups and future planned extension of the city can be obviously recognized.

The review system of the SDUPECP

The review system, which is employed by the GOPP in the SDUPECP, is quite different from the M&E system employed in the SUPSCP. The former aims at ensuring a high quality of the technical product “good plan”, while the emphasis of the latter is on ensuring participatory and subsidiary decision making and a high likelihood of implementation. The former is still dominated by the concept of the master planning approach, while the latter is more

oriented to deal with the notion of the strategic planning approach.

Within the context of the SDUPECP, a team is set up with experts from various departments of the GOPP to take responsibility for reviewing different studies supported by external consultants who conduct the preparation of the SUP. The basic standard for the review system is the project TOR. There are no specific tools are employed in the review system. Therefore, the primary trust of the review system of the GOPP is to ensure that outputs are completely compliant and formatted as in the TOR. In order to highlight the strength and weakness of the M&E system of UN-Habitat and the review system of the GOPP, the author has set a number of criteria for comparison between the two systems, as shown in Table 4.

Recommendations for enhancing current practices of M&E in the preparation of SUPs

As can be recognized from the above comparison, both systems have positive aspects which should be built upon it to assist the process of M&E in the preparation of SUPs within the Egyptian context. Key positive aspects of the M&E system within the SUPSCP can be summarized as follows:

- A well established integrated system for M&E combines varied tools which improve the monitoring of activities and measure achievement of results.
- Efficient use of resources in terms of less staffing number and time consumed.
- Ensuring coherence and consistency between the different sectors included in the study is achieved to considerable extent.
- Ensuring effective participation from different stakeholders' groups is monitored effectively through the entire process of preparing the SUP by using a diverse mix of M&E tools.

On the other hand positive aspects of the review system within the SDUPECP can be principally summarized as the assurance of

Table 3
Part of the filled forms of the technical team self assessment tool for Qwesna city.

Step 1a: Conducting an urban stakeholder analysis		
Objectives	Identify stakeholders to maximize their opportunities for engagement in urban development planning and investments	
Expected outcome	Identification of the varied interests stakeholders may have in participating in planning and co-funding urban improvements and development	
What to monitor and evaluate	Questions	Answers by team leader
Assessing achievement of objectives	■ How have the stakeholders' opportunities for engagement in urban development investment been enhanced?	The involvement of the city mayor, the chairman of city council, the Emam of mosque, in the whole process encourage all the officers, the governmental institution, the NGOs, the PS and the inhabitants for engagement in urban development and investment.
	■ To what extent are the stakeholders able to engage in urban development planning and investment?	Most of them are very well engaged in the meeting of data collection and identifying Strength-Opportunities (S/O) meeting (the repetitiveness of their attendance in meetings specially the last one indicate that)
Monitoring results	■ Does the analysis include all stakeholders (women, youth, poor, etc.)? If not, explain why?	Includes variety of institutions (NGOs, LC committees) that represent (women, youth, poor, etc.)
	■ Why do you believe that stakeholders will participate in planning and co-funding?	Because of the previous experience in participation of many of them, also there is about 5 stakeholders have access to funds and co-funds (PS, NGOs, mobilization of sources for projects implementation).
Evaluation of method	■ How has the method and/or tools used helped to identify stakeholders?	This tool was very general and gave results more or less subjective which can differ from one to another.
	■ Give recommendations on how to improve on the method/tool.	A developed tool for stakeholder analysis was created to identify the level of participation, the financial ability as well as the ability of making decision, that is filled by stakeholders themselves, then the analysis is more objective.

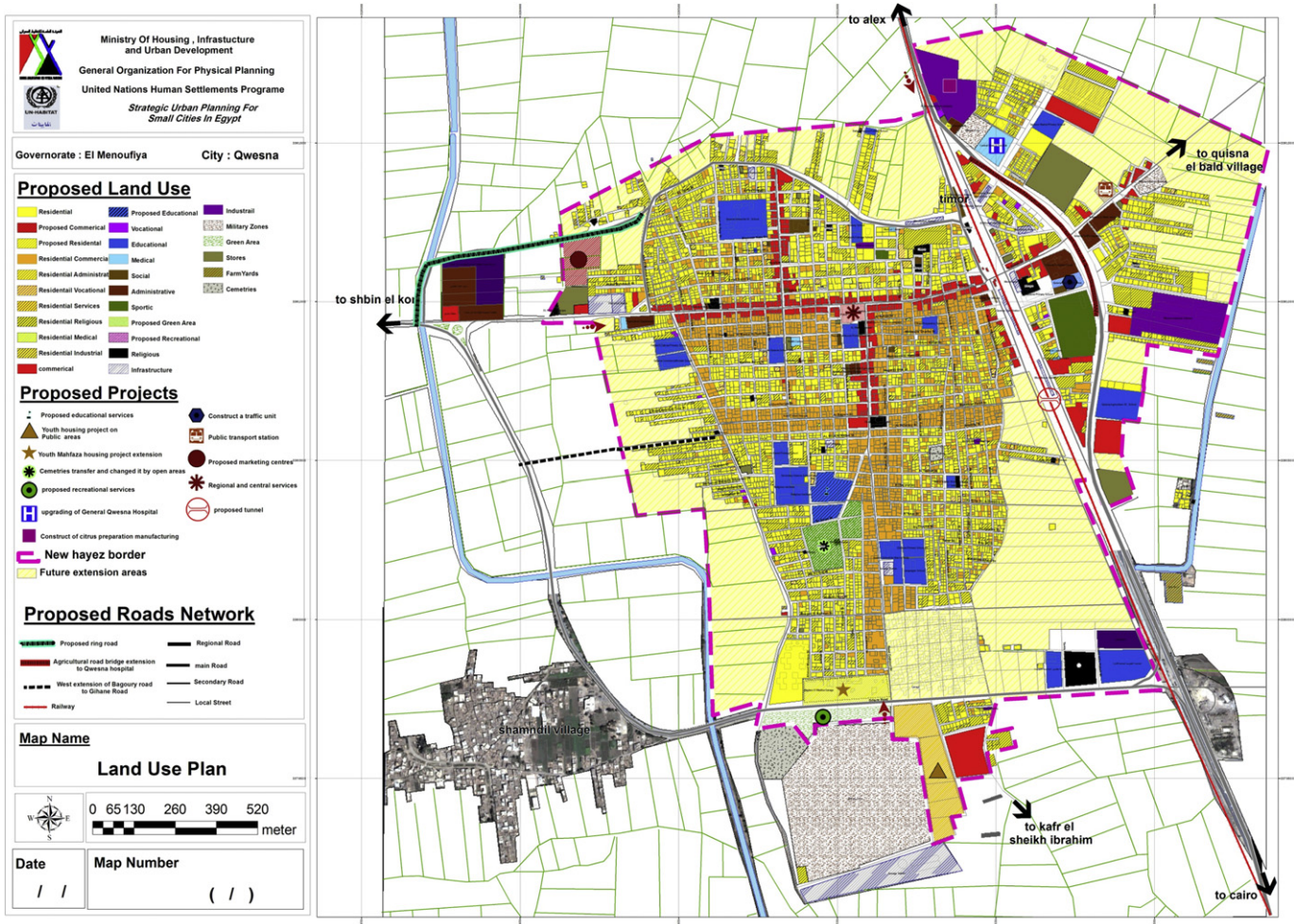


Fig. 5. Future land use plan of Qwesna city – Menoufia Governorate. Source: Hassan et al. (2008).

Table 4

A comparison between the M&E system of UN-Habitat and the review system of the GOPP within the context of the SUPSCP and the SDUPECP respectively.

Criteria for comparison	The SUPSCP	The SDUPECP
Staffing levels	One consultant specialized in urban planning is in charge for M&E the entire process of preparing the SUP along with a GIS expert	For each speciality one of the review committee is in charge for reviewing the technical study and communicating with the consultant who has prepared the study. Usually the review committee is not less than 11 members.
Time used	Having the M&E consultant on one side and the team leader on the other side means that there is one contact point on both sides which makes it incredibly responsive, traceable and the time used to communicate is kept to minimum.	More time is spent in meetings and communication between the members of the technical team and the members of the review committee than in correspondence in the SUPSCP.
Tools used	Three fundamental tools are used to enable M&E of the entire process for preparing the SUP; (i) the evaluation sheet, (ii) monitoring progress tool and (iii) technical team self assessment tool.	No specific tools are utilized by the review committee of the GOPP. Compliance with the project TOR is the only basis standard for evaluation.
Technical quality	Considering that the consultants who conduct the work have already passed a screening process in the qualification process, therefore these are not usually questioned unless they are clearly out of the norm.	In-depth sectoral review is performed by the review committee of the GOPP. Though the TOR is the standard basis for evaluation, conflicts usually appear due to differences in point of views between the TTs and the review committee members.
Coherence and consistency	Ensuring coherence and consistency between the different sectors of the SUP is one of the main responsibilities of the M&E consultant. Usually it is successfully performed given that it is one person who is in charge of checking the study thoroughly.	Given that each member of the review committee is in charge of reviewing his/her own sector only, usually checking coherence and consistency between sectors is relatively weak.
Ensure effective participation	This is the core of the M&E system of the SUPSCP. This is well reflected in two of the M&E tools. The first is the evaluation sheet, where some of the output quality indicators are particularly developed to measure the effectiveness of stakeholders' participation. And the second is the tool of monitoring progress at consultations, which principally aims at assessing the level of stakeholder participation.	Though it is the underpinning of the SUP process, there is no specific tool developed by the review committee to measure the effectiveness of stakeholder participation. However, it is worth mentioning that some of the tools which are employed in preparing the SUP are meant to carry out this task partially, such as a stakeholders' analysis tool. Thus it can be considered an additional tool to assist ensuring effective participation.

a high quality of technical product due to the in-depth technical review of the different sectors of the study.

Therefore, integrating these positive aspects together could lead to an enhanced integrated participatory M&E technique which is, on one hand, ensuring effective stakeholder participation and ensuring integrity and coherence among the substantial sectors of the SUP and on the other hand ensuring a high quality of technical content. However, this integration will be on the cost of the efficient use of resources in terms of staffing number and time consumed. Emphasis on assuring a high quality of technical contents simply means more staff members to review in-depth technical contents thoroughly and consequently more time consumed in carrying out the review and communicating with consultants. Therefore, these concerns should be taken into consideration while proposing actions to enhance the process of M&E in general.

Concluding remarks

Conventional planning systems, particularly master planning have been criticized in terms of both practice and academia for their bureaucracy and adherence to a rigid blueprint of development, and are characteristic of being drawn up by experts without consultation with communities. The problems associated with the master planning approach along with the changing urban, economic and environmental context have led to the emergence of more innovative approaches to urban planning, particularly the strategic urban planning approach which is currently adopted by many countries worldwide. Since 2005 Egypt has started to reform its planning scheme shifting from conventional master plans towards strategic urban plans, with emphasis on stakeholders' participation through the entire process. This has been started firstly in rural communities and then moved to urban centres. Through a national project initiated in 2007, all of the Egyptian cities should have their own strategic urban plan by the end of 2011, which is considered to be a road map for developing the city for the next two decades. This is carried out through two projects; the SDUPECP and the SUPSCP. The former is fully sponsored by the GOPP, while the later is a mutual cooperation between the GOPP and UN-Habitat.

Within the focus of this paper the M&E element is perceived as a key component in the strategic urban planning process. Reviewing the M&E systems for the preparation of the SUPs indicates substantial differences within the context of the two projects. While the M&E system in the SUPSCP is more oriented towards ensuring participatory and subsidiary decision making and a high degree of implementation, the review system in the SDUPECP is principally focused on ensuring a high quality of the technical product. The former focuses through out the entire process of preparing the SUP on ensuring effective participation and emphasizes coherence and consistency between the different sectors of the SUP, while the later principally emphasizes the in-depth sectoral review of the technical contents of the SUP. Noticeably, the former is more oriented to cope with the notion of the strategic planning approach, while the later is still dominated by the concept of the master plan approach. Furthermore, in both projects, though there is a system for M&E through the preparation phase of SUPs, an adequate one is lacking during the implementation phase.

In this paper an attempt has been made to present a way to enhance the M&E system used in the preparation of SUPs by integrating positive aspects of current practice by the M&E team of UN-Habitat and the review committee of the GOPP. It is principally aimed at retaining the use of diverse M&E assisting tools to ensure effective stakeholder participation and emphasizing the importance of ensuring coherence and consistency between sectors,

which is successfully achieved in the M&E system of the UN-Habitat team along with paying more attention to in-depth technical review of the SUP contents, which is at the core of the review system of the GOPP.

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