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Evaluation of Sustainable Development

EASY-ECO CONFERENCE

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Introduction

- General evaluation of the governance model standing behind the strategic concept of SD. It is about the governance model of the „Rio process" and the „Agenda 21"

- This model of environmental governance is worth being evaluated and further developed not only because it was to a certain degree remarkably sucessful but also because we urgently need improvements

- A few conclusions

- The role of EIA in the context of SD.

An Explosion of Complexity

The importance of the Agenda 21 (or Rio) model of multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder governance:

It is the only governance model taking into account the extremely high complexity of the field of action.

There has been an "explosion" of complexity in the configuration of actors of environmental governance since the early 1970s.

Original Actor Constellations in Environmental Policy

National Government → Business

Civil Society → National Government ↔ Business
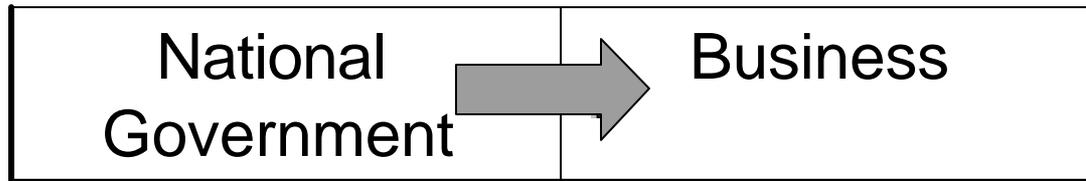
DIMENSIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE
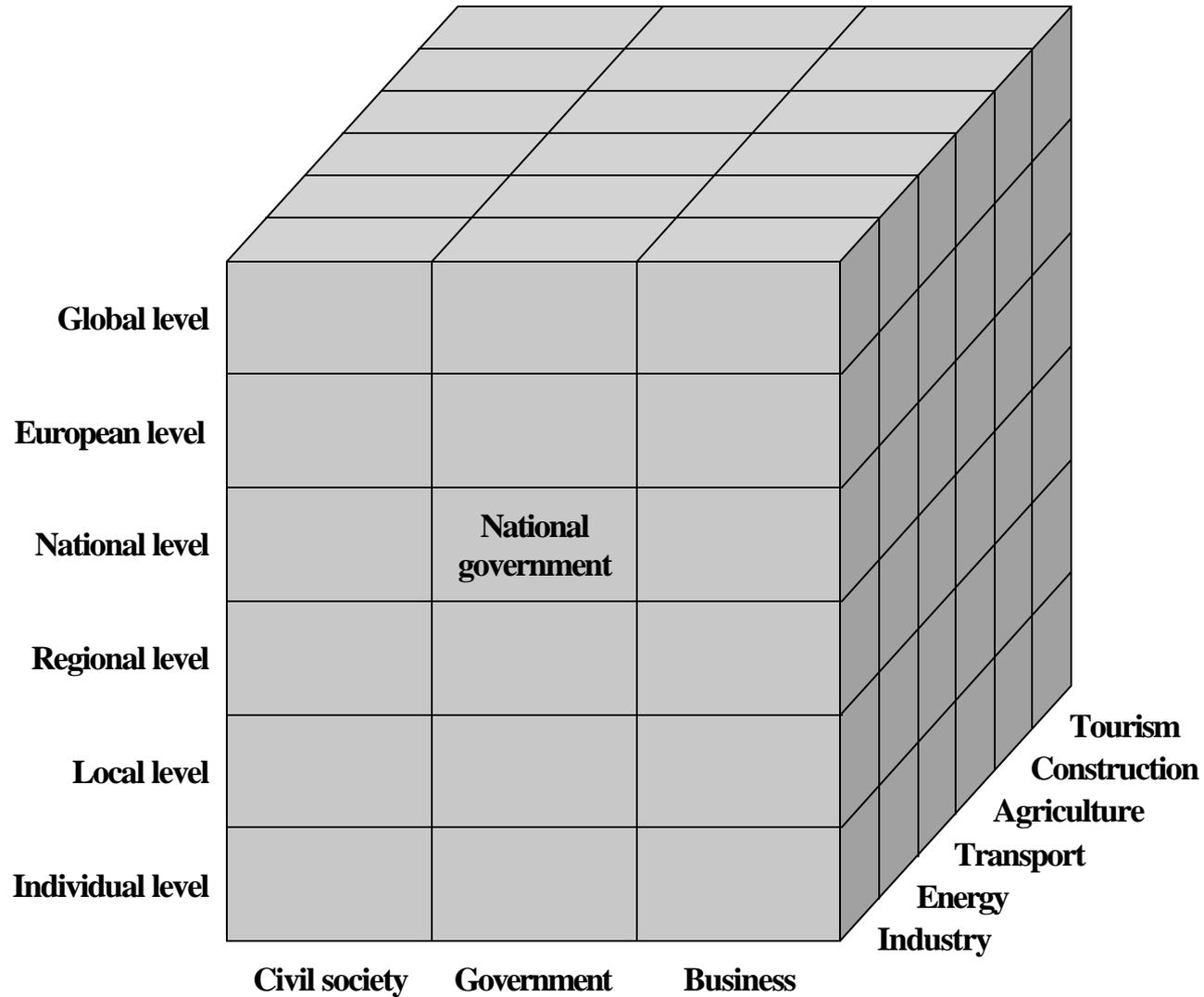
The "Rio Model" of Environmental Governance

- Strategic goals, timeframes, monitoring and assessment (Management by objectives)
- Co-operation, activated self-regulation
- Integration / Sectoral strategies
- Participation
- Multi-level games

Main strategic document: Agenda 21 (Rio 1992)

Achievements of the "Rio Model"

- **SD Strategies in almost all countries**
- **6.400 local Agenda 21 processes in 113 countries**
- **Rapid diffusion of environmental policy innovations since 1992 (more than 130 Environmental ministries)**
- **Some "greening" of sectoral policies (e. g. energy) EU-Treaty innovations**
- **Broad environmental policy learning: Creation of a strong informational and motivational basis for decentral actors.**
- **Strengthening of NGOs at all policy levels.**
- **Successful multi-level games.**

Critical Issues of the "Rio Model" of Environmental Governance Model"

- Final responsibility: If everybody is responsible nobody will be responsible.
- Final guarantee for „co-operative" approaches
- Goal-orientation means control and resistance
- EPI may contradict the inherent logic of sectors
- The role of government (regulation)
- Institutional capacity and resources
- Restrictive concepts of the "3 pillars"
- The nation state in multi-level governance

(1) The Need to Reinvent *Government* in the Context of Environmental *Governance*

- Co-operative approaches are indispensable but they often need the final responsibility, guarantee and capacity of governments

- Elected constitutional governments have a higher institutional responsibility

- Regulatory approaches still dominate and have so far proven comparably effective. (But they need more flexibility and goal orientation and have to be complemented by economic instruments)

- Currently there is much innovation in government regulation ("top-runner" approach, feed-in tariffs, emissions trading).

(2) Capacity Needs

- Capacity defines the limits of possible actions within a given political, economic and informational opportunity structure

- Lack of institutional capacity can be answered by:
  - capacity-building (manpower, institutions, knowledge...)
  - „demand reduction" (no holistic mega strategies, prioritisation...),
  - or capacity saving strategies (internet consultation, „ negotiation in the shadow of hierarchy", policy termination...)

- Capacity Need Assessment should be the first step in any strategy

(3) Strengthening the Environmental Dimension

- It has its own right, problems and interests

- It has its own specific support structure (NGOs etc.). The "Three pillar approach" has not even "diffuse support".

- It needs its own expertise and specialisation (more or less holistic approaches create the danger of amateurism)

- It is the weakest if there is a conditionality between the three dimensions; **some** autonomy is indispensable

- The antagonisms between the "three pillars" are a reality and need pro-active, open conflict resolution by competent proponents in inclusive networks

- Overcome negative coordination (environment policy only if economic or social interests are not negatively affected)

- Seek positive coordination whenever possible (win-win)

(4) The Need to Reinvent the Nation State in the Context of Global Multi-level Governance

Compared with other actors, the (developed) nation state

is best equipped to take the <u>final responsibility</u> within the complex structure of global multi-level governance:

- Highest political visibility; first address in case of crises

- Highest pressure of legitimation

- Highest manpower (EPA: ca 18.000, staff of environmental regimes: some hundred)

- Professional competence of the administration

- Situated at the core of relevant global expert network

- Monopoly of coercive power.

Globalisation has created a policy arena for pioneer countries (Germany, UK and Sweden claiming to be "pioneers" in environmental policy)

Ex-post and Ex-ante Evaluation

Agenda Setting

Problem Percept-ion

Policy Formu-lation

Ex-ante Evaluation

Policy Cycle

Evaluat-ion

Decision

Ex-post Evaluation

Implemen-tation
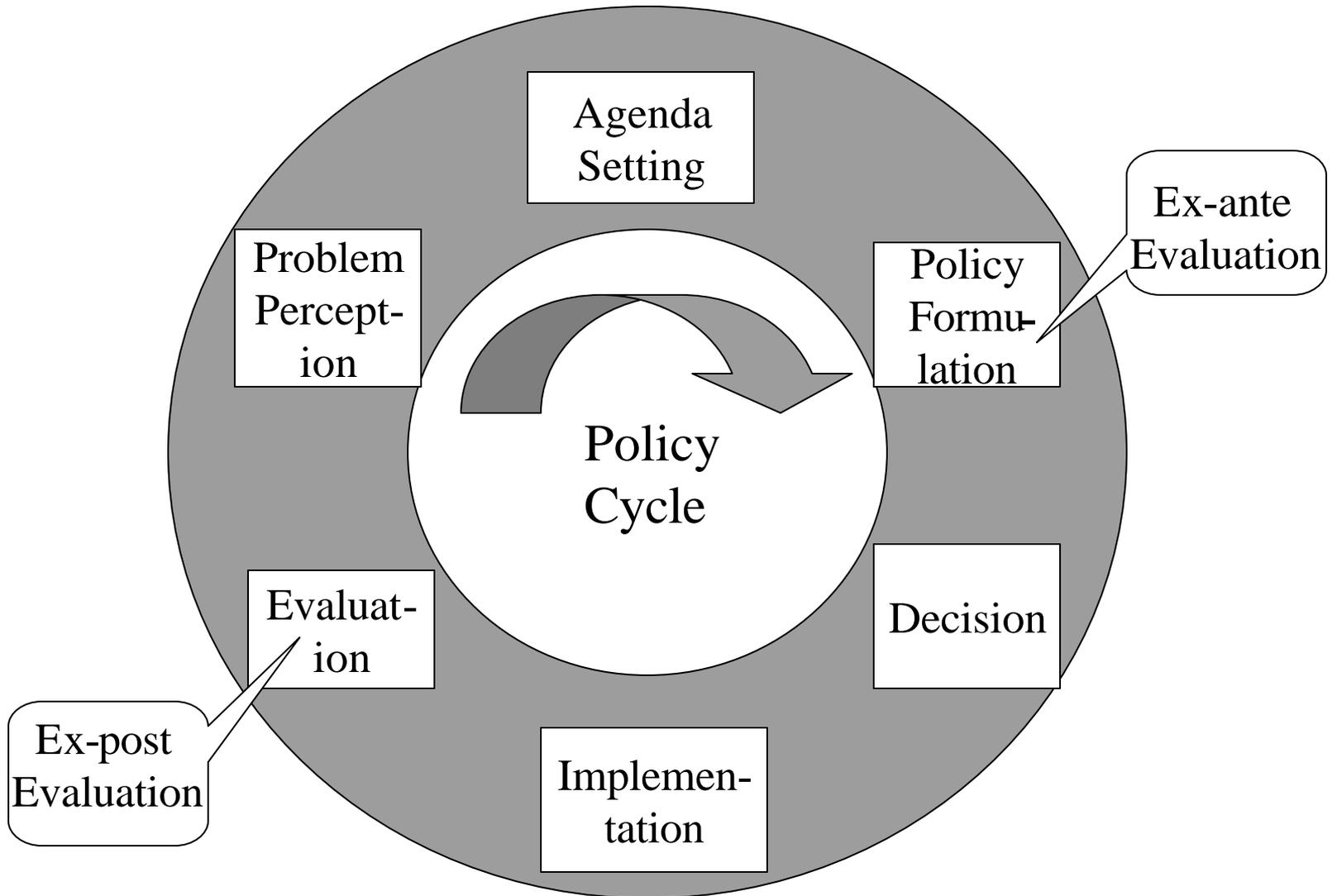
Ex-ante and ex-post Evaluation

Ex-ante Evaluation:
 - Programm:
      objectives, timeframes, instruments
 - Process:
      capacity, recources, responsibilities,
      practicability
 - Impacts.

Ex-post Evaluation:
 - Effectiveness (environmental dimension)
 - Efficiency, win-win (economic dimension)
 - Acceptance, equity (social dimension).

Ex-ante Environmental Assessment (EIA)

- Implicit part of the Rio model of environmental governance

- Ex-ante assessment already routine as:
  - legal assessment (conformity with existing law)
  - budgetary assessment (financial need)
  - cost-benefit analyses (partly)
  - general political assessment (parties, the media)

- Environmental Impact Assessment should be (and often is) part of this routine

- However, its effects depend on certain conditions

EIA: Some Caveats

- Don't overestimate this instrument as a steering mechanism

- Policy formulation in a pluralist democracy will never be a technocratic process!

- Use simple tools and check lists to structure the policy discourse

- Extended assessment should be the exception (capacity problem, weak green position in the struggle of expertises, lack of transparency)

- Integrated Assessment should be mainstreaming not sidelining of environmental criteria

Ex-post Evaluation: top-down *and* bottom-up!

- *Top-down*: starting with the SD strategy and its targets. *Bottom-up*: starting with real improvements and asking for their possible causes.

- The evaluation of SD strategies will be different (and often more positive) if it starts with „outcomes"

- This is also to consider the effects of policy learning in a higly complex actor constellation

- Many positive „outcomes" have different causes and cannot be explained by SD strategies (alone)

- Examples: climate protection and the explosion of oil prices, greening of agriculture and WTO...

- SDS often provides additional discourse and legitimation

- You sometimes feel better with bottom-up evaluation...

Summary

Global Environmental Governance is necessarily multi-actor, multi-sectoral and multi-level governance. The Rio model is an adequate answer. It is the only model taking the highly complex actor configuration into account. As such it is without alternative. However:

- The role of government in the context of cooperative g*overnance* should be recognized and strengthened

- The nation state is indispensable and has regained importance in the context of multi-level governance

- Ambitious SD strategies, their implementation and evaluation generally need additional capacity

- Capacity is also the main reason why ex-ante Impact Assessment should rely basically on easy criteria and checklists.

There is a high potential in global environmental governance if these challenges lead to better solutions.