

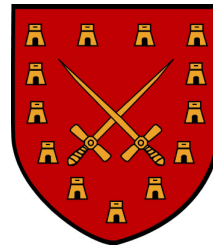


## MED Programme

Project : Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development of Mediterranean Rural Areas - MedStrategy

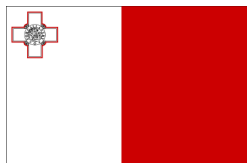
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### Guidelines for Implementing the Analysis of Institutional Framework



**Pembroke Local Council**

**Malta**



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***Ninvestu fil-Futur Tiegħek***

# Guidelines for Implementing the Analysis of Institutional Framework

## Component 3 – Territories and institutions: diagnosis and evaluation

### Phase 2 – Analysis of institutional framework

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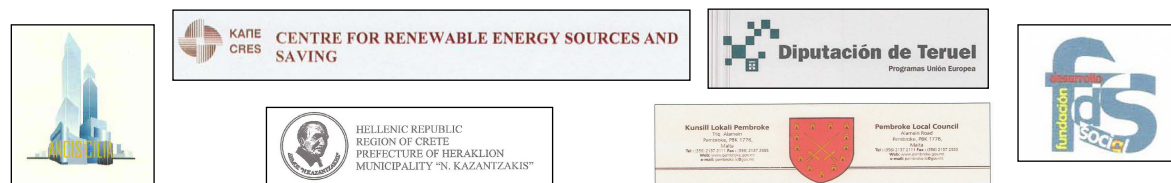
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 *Overview*

In line with the declared aims of the Med Programme to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of territories within the overriding principles of the EU, national and regional programmes, the MedStrategy project aims primarily at experimenting an innovative governance process through the setting up of a planning model that encourages the sustainable local development of Mediterranean rural areas.

MedStrategy focuses on 3 themes:

- Integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability in planning;
- Development of integrated & shared strategies and actions through the cooperation of local authorities and the engagement of local communities (key actors, stakeholders) for the innovation of territorial governance;
- Setting up of common objectives & activities (preservation of cultural and natural heritage, competitiveness of territorial system, social & gender equality, etc) for local and transnational synergies of rural areas.

The success of the project's overall plan will ultimately depend to a large extent on the ability or otherwise of local authorities to influence the policy-making process and their real propensity to develop policies and programs. It is hardly necessary to stress the importance of the interdependences of the various institutional levels and the performance of the local authorities in fostering growth and innovation in a competent, efficient and effective manner.

## **1.2 *Institutional Framework***

The Working Plan of the project provides for the implementation of 4 reports on the institutional framework. These reports are intended to present an in-depth analysis of the governance system of the local authorities in the respective MedStrategy countries, namely Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta. The reports will be propagated and publicised with a view to increasing the awareness of the various interactions between local institutions and the environment.

The aim of the current document is to propose an effective working framework for analysis in the various countries, and to lay down a harmonised methodology that will be used by the partners in the analysis proper and in the drafting of the reports. The guidelines are being presented by Pembroke Local Council, Malta (Partner No. 6) as the partner responsible for this phase.

## **1.3 *Purpose of the Institutional Analysis***

In carrying out an institutional analysis of the subject area it is intended to investigate the interdependences of the various institutional levels, and particularly the performance of the local authorities in fostering synergies and to influence the policy-making process. Institutional Analysis studies how institutions behave and function according to both empirical rules (informal rules-in-use and norms) and also theoretical rules (formal rules and law). The field deals with how individuals and groups construct institutions, how institutions function in practice, and the effects of institutions on society.

## Constructs of Governance

### **1.4 Multi-Level Governance**

According to Marsden and Murdoch, 1998, the governance of rural areas can be seen as multidimensional in that it involves:

- a multiplicity of actors,
- different levels of government and participation in the policies,
- different functions and various modalities of relations between levels of government and actors.

To understand the systems of governance it is desirable to start of by mapping the various levels of government and participation, and of the actors involved at each level. Institutional changes and public policies have been created and overlapped at different levels, and different actors to enter the scene at varying times, making the mapping process that much more difficult. However, any levels and actors identified at this stage will feed into the institutional analysis framework as will be described later in this document.

Wherever several institutions and social players are involved, governance becomes crucial. Institutional systems in the EU are moving towards administrative decentralisation, while supra-national institutions (like the European Commission) tend to guide public policies by establishing a framework of common rules for Member States. Many systems of governance, including those that involve rural policies, are multi-level. The multi-level aspect is a reality in many countries with developed economies, wherein the emphasis is placed on the distribution of powers among the different levels of government not according to a hierarchical order, but rather, a logic that recognises the existence of interdependence among levels and actors, where each contributes with specific

resources and skills. However, in these countries there are many obstacles and difficulties in attaining real multilevel coordination (Mantino, 2010).

### **1.5 *Principal Levels and Leading Actors***

The main levels and leading actors involved are:

- (a) the national level, generally coinciding with the State (in some systems, the federal State)
- (b) the regional level, where the concept and dimension of region can also vary greatly internationally, which among other things creates problems of comparability between/ among countries
- (c) the intermediate level (sub-regional), which can be very important in highly decentralised systems and/or ones with very large regions: this basically involves a level somewhere between the regional and local level, which can play a role especially in countries with a variety of territorial contexts
- (d) finally, the local level, which is the one closest to local communities, civil society, and public and private operators that promote development projects on a local scale

Local actors - authorities and emerging civil society groups – are demanding ever-higher participation in policy formulation and management. Factors affecting such demands include the negative effects of globalisation, the crisis of traditional values, and the deterioration of the state of the environment in industrialised countries. Local actors now cooperate to formulate strategies for development, monitor relevant policies, etc. In the European context, multilevel governance is obviously made more complex by



the presence of a fifth level that is supra-national: the European Union, which comprises such institutions as the European Council, European Parliament and European Commission. All of these play a decisive role in the definition of a legislative and conceptual framework of reference for many common policies, including rural development policies in all the Member States (Mantino, 2010).

## **1.6 Systems of Governance**

The second step in analysing governance is to distinguish between different systems of governance:

- (a) Centralised systems
- (b) Decentralised systems
- (c) Mixed systems

*Centralised systems* are characterised by the main share of the planning and management functions coming under national competencies. The selection of local partnerships and/or local-scale projects is of national competence, and most frequent problems of coordination arise at the national level among different sectors of the national administration.

In *Decentralised systems*, the presence of the national administration in current management is less pronounced. National administration exclusively concerns strategic planning, the allocation of financial resources among the lower levels, and the establishment of common rules for functions important for planning. There is a greater role of the regional level and greater participation of the intermediate and local levels, while the election of individual projects occurs at local level. Decentralised

financial management and greater number of actors (institutions, associations, different types of organisations, etc.) entail a need for coordination at several levels, including local.

*Mixed systems* (based on concerted action among the actors) involve a great number of actors, with a system of rules and procedures making it possible for the vertical and horizontal actors to mutually agree on decisions concerning the functions of planning and management. Certain crucial steps in the planning and management phases are established within a framework of co-decision by important groups of actors, while operational phases assigned to the regions or other intermediate bodies/agencies (Mantino, 2010).

## **2 Understanding Institutions**

### **2.1 *Institutions and Organisations***

Institutions can be defined as structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behaviour of two or more individuals. Institutions are "complexes of norms and behaviours that persist over time by serving collectively valued purposes" (Uphoff, 1986), long-standing rules and rights governing social and productive behaviour. By "institutions" contemporary sociology means the complex social forms that reproduce themselves such as governments, the family, human languages, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems (SEP, 2007). Organizations, by contrast, are sometimes viewed as the players and structures, or "groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose to achieve objectives" (North, 1990). In this view institutions thus form the 'framework' upon which organizations are based.

In ordinary language, however, the terms "institutions" and "social institutions" are used to refer to a miscellany of social forms, including conventions, rules, rituals, organisations, and systems of organisations. Social institutions need to be distinguished from less complex social forms such as conventions, rules, social norms, roles and rituals. The latter are among the constitutive elements of institutions. Social institutions also need to be distinguished from more complex and more complete social entities, such as societies or cultures, of which any given institution is typically a constitutive element. (SEP, 2007).

## **2.2 Organisations as Institutions**

Scott (2001) makes an argument whereby social institutions are often organisations, and many institutions are systems of organisations. As an example we may cite capitalism as a specific kind of economic institution consisting of specific organisational forms organised into a system. Governments may be regarded as meta-institutions that organise other institutions or systems of organisations, regulating and coordinating economic systems, educational institutions, police and military organisations and so on largely by way of legislation (Scott, 2001).

Some institutions are not organisations, or systems of organisations, and do not require organisations. Under this category fall such things as the English language, an institution that can exist independently of any organisations specifically concerned with language. SEP (2007) describes an economic system that does not involve organisations, namely a barter system involving only individuals. An institution that is not an organisation or system of organisations involve specific interactive activity involving:

- (i) differentiated actions, e.g. communication involves speaking and hearing/understanding, economic exchange involves buying and selling, that are;
- (ii) performed repeatedly and by multiple agents;
- (iii) in compliance with a structured unitary system of conventions, e.g. linguistic conventions, monetary conventions, and social norms, e.g. truth-telling, property rights (SEP, 2007).

These guidelines are mainly concerned with social institutions (including meta-institutions) that are also organisations or systems of organisations. The term “institution” in such expressions as “the institution of government” may sometimes mean a particular

grouping, such as the current local government in Pembroke, but at other times it may mean a type, such as a set of characteristics of a local government.

### **2.3 *Types of Institutions***

Sociologists recognise a number of institutions, many of which need to be considered in an analysis of the institutions of a particular territory. A few are listed hereunder:

- Marriage and the family
- Religion and religious institutions
- Educational institutions - schools
- Research community - Academia and universities; research institutes
- Medicine - hospitals and other health care institutions
- Law and legal system – courts, judges, the legal profession
- Criminal justice or penal systems – prisons
- Military or paramilitary forces
- Police forces

- Mass media - including the news media and the popular media
- Industry - businesses, including corporations
- Civil society or NGOs - Charitable organizations, advocacy groups, political parties, think tanks, virtual communities
- Government
- Public service.

### **3 Analytical Frameworks**

#### **3.1 *Forms of Institutional Analysis***

Many academic fields make use of some form of institutional analysis, and the term is therefore variously used accordingly to denote a number of different meanings. Thus we may speak of an institutional analysis referred to the analysis of data from health or education institutions. Sociology has applied institutional analysis in order to study how social institutions such as the laws or the family evolve over time (Durkheim, 1983, 1995). Another meaning refers to institutions as ways of thinking that have a direct impact on behaviours, such as why economic behaviours do not conform to the theory of supply and demand. This school of thought goes back to early 20th-century economists like Pareto (Pareto, 1935), whilst Douglass North is one of the most prominent contemporary figures of institutional analysis in economics (Davis and North, 1971; North and Thomas, 1973).

#### **3.2 *A Hybrid Movement***

Sociological and economic approaches to institutional analysis have fused to produce a new focus on how organizations and individuals within organizations make economic and managerial decisions, particularly by investigating the non-rational, the non-economic, and the non-psychological. This movement emerged in the 1980s, producing the multi-faceted New Institutional Analysis. One facet tries to improve economic models based on the theory of public choice, and one of its applications is known as the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework (Ostrom, 1990). The IAD framework is the most notable of the many approaches to conducting institutional analysis, and is particularly useful in understanding a wide variety of institutional

arrangements in both developed and developing countries. The framework emphasizes the careful consideration of contextual factors, whilst it contains no normative biases and does not presume a priori that one type of institutional arrangement is preferred to another. Another variant of the New Institutional Analysis is influenced by organizational sociology and seeks to integrate Max Weber's work on bureaucratic mentality (Weber, 1978; Di Maggio and Powell, 1991).

### **3.3 Frameworks, Theories, and Models**

The traditional approach to understanding public policy involves dividing the process into distinct units, or stages: problem identification, agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. This way of thinking about policy has been termed the "stages heuristic" (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The stages heuristic has proved a helpful teaching tool, but it is less useful in allowing us to address research questions and understand the complexity and interconnectedness of factors affecting policy processes and outcomes. In fact, it provides no basis for causal linkages, no testable hypotheses, and no means to aggregate knowledge across individual studies of different policy sectors using different disciplinary approaches. For these, we need more carefully constructed approaches (Koontz, 2003).

Ostrom, 2011 proposes that the study of institutions depends on theoretical work undertaken at three levels of specificity that are often confused with one another. These essential foundations are (i) frameworks, (ii) theories, and (iii) models.

Frameworks are the most general forms of theoretical analysis, identifying the elements and general relationships among these elements that one needs to consider for institutional analysis. They provide a general set of variables that can be used to analyze all types of institutional arrangements (Ostrom, 2011).



Theories enable the analyst to specify which elements of a framework are particularly relevant to particular questions and to make general working assumptions about the shape and strength of these elements. Theories make assumptions that are necessary for an analyst to diagnose a specific phenomenon, explain its processes, and predict outcomes. Multiple theories are usually compatible with one framework. Economic theory, game theory, transaction cost theory, social choice theory, covenantal theory, and theories of public goods and common-pool resources are all compatible with the IAD framework (Ostrom, 2011).

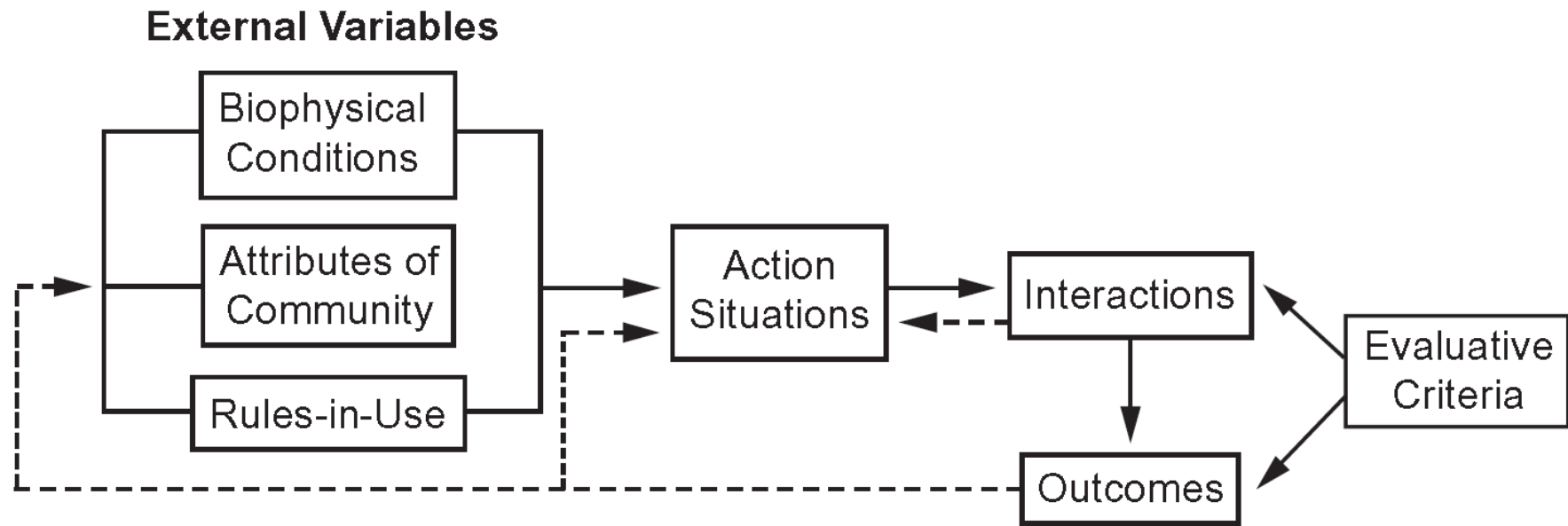
Models involve making precise assumptions about a limited set of variables and parameters to derive precise predictions about the results of combining these variables using a particular theory. Logic, mathematics, game-theory models, agent-based models, experimentation and simulation, and other means are used to explore systematically the consequences of these assumptions on a limited set of outcomes. Multiple models are compatible with most theories (Ostrom, 2011).

For scholars and policymakers interested in issues related to how different governance systems enable individuals to solve problems democratically, the IAD framework helps to organize diagnostic, analytical, and prescriptive capabilities. It also aids in the accumulation of knowledge from empirical studies and in the assessment of past efforts at reforms (Ostrom, 2011).

### **3.4 Overview of The IAD Framework**

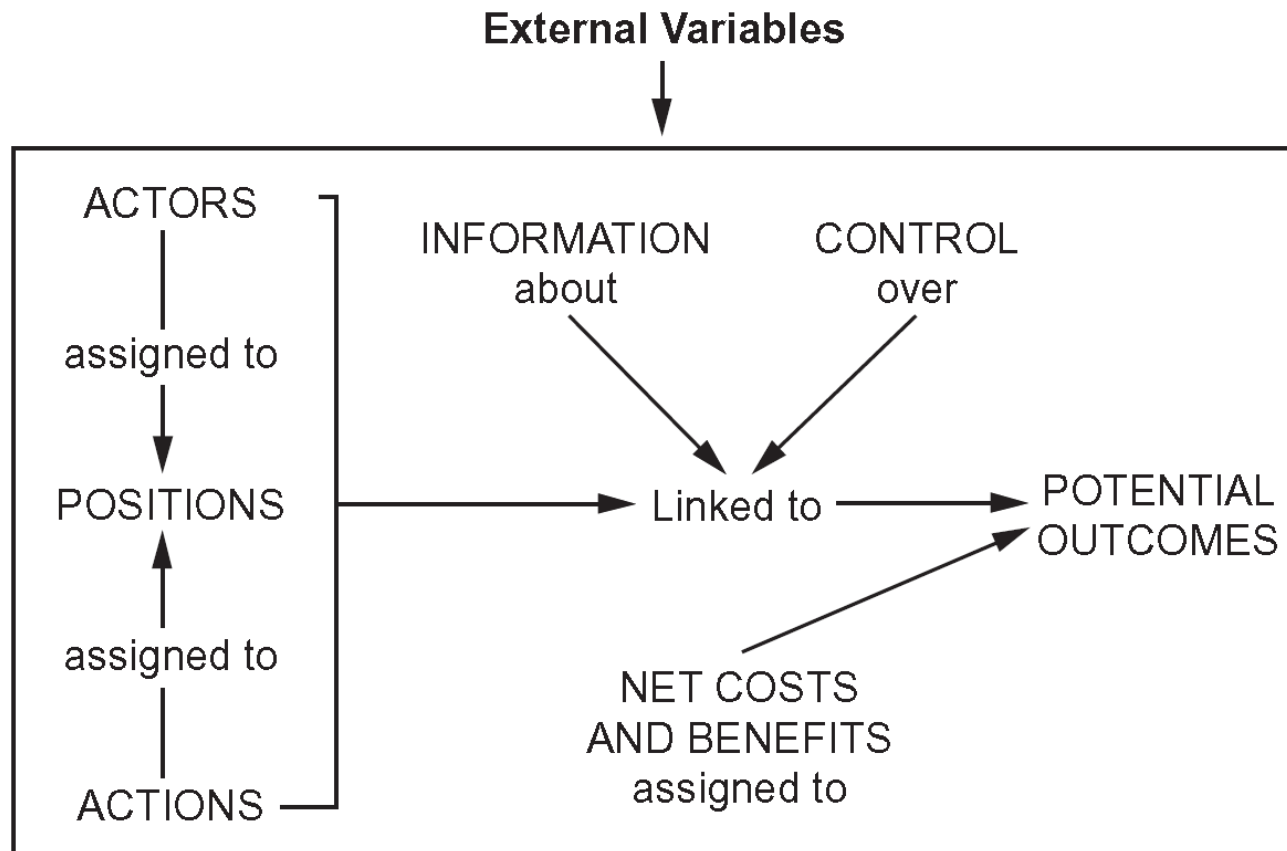
The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework that had been formulated over a number of years by Dr. Ostrom and her colleagues at Indiana University's Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis (Blomquist and deLeon, 2011). The framework focuses on how rules (institutions) and attributes of the physical and cultural world combine to shape outcomes.

An institutional framework should identify the major types of structural variables that are present to some extent in all institutional arrangements, but whose values differ from one type of institutional arrangement to another. The IAD framework is thus a multi-tier conceptual map. The original framework started with the action arena as the unit of analysis and focus of investigation. The terms “action arena” and “action situation,” used until recently when arraying the IAD framework, have confused many users, with the “action arena” intended to contain an action situation and actors. When integrating the IAD into a broader framework for social–ecological systems, it was not possible to keep as much detail about the difference between actors and the situation. Thus, as shown in Figure 1, Ostrom (2011) has endorsed a simplification, as discussed by McGinnis (2011), focused on the action situation leading to interactions and outcomes. Then, as in Figure 2, when one opens up the action situation and looks at the component parts of it, one can specify how one is analyzing the actor at that level. An action situation is the “social space where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, engage in appropriation and provision activities, solve problems, or fight” (Ostrom, et al., 1994).



**Figure 1 A Framework for Institutional Analysis**

(Source: Ostrom, 2011)



**Figure 2 The Internal Structure of an Action Situation**

(Source: Ostrom, 2011)

## **3.5 Using the IAD Framework**

### **3.5.1 The Action Situation**

Ostrom (2011) identifies the key steps of using the framework as being the identification of an action situation and the resulting patterns of interactions and outcomes, and evaluating these outcomes (see Figure 1). The action situation must be chosen such that it can be utilized to describe, analyze, predict, and explain behavior within institutional arrangements. An actor within an action situation (an individual or a firm) includes assumptions about four clusters of variables:

1. The resources that an actor brings to a situation;
2. The valuation actors assign to states of the world and to actions;
3. The way actors acquire, process, retain, and use knowledge contingencies and information; and
4. The processes actors use for selection of particular courses of action.

### **3.5.2 External Variables**

The IAD framework focuses the analyst's attention on individuals who make decisions over some course of action. Policy processes and outcomes are assumed to be affected by four types of variables external to individuals:

- *Attributes of the physical world:* Rules governing must be compatible with the underlying physical setting and the nature of the resources being managed,

- *Attributes of the community within which actors are embedded:* Norms of behaviour, level of common understanding, homogeneity of preferences, the distribution of resources, relevant political and socioeconomic factors. The term “culture” is often applied to this bundle of variables, and
- *Rules that create incentives and constraints for certain actions:* Existing Institutional Setting - Analysts should recognize that institutional change tends to be incremental and path dependent rather than totally reconstructive or destructive.

### **3.5.3 Other Variables**

A common set of variables is used to describe the structure of an action situation including:

- (i) the set of actors (i.e. how many people are involved?)
- (ii) the specific positions to be filled by participants (e.g. mayor, executive secretary)
- (iii) the set of allowable actions and their linkage to outcomes (e.g. what interactions between positions are permissible? What decisions can be taken?)
- (iv) the potential outcomes that are linked to individual sequences of actions (what events are affected by participants in these positions? What chain of events links actions to outcomes?)
- (v) the level of control each participant has over choice (Do appropriators take the above actions on their own initiative, or do they confer with others?)

- (vi) the information available to participants about the structure of the action situation (How much information do appropriators have about the condition of the resource itself, about other appropriators' cost and benefit functions, and about how their actions cumulate into joint outcomes?), and
- (vii) the costs and benefits—which serve as incentives and deterrents—assigned to actions and outcomes. In addition, whether a situation will occur once, a known finite number of times, or indefinitely affects the strategies of individuals (How costly are various actions to each type of appropriator, and what kinds of benefits can be achieved as a result of various group outcomes?) (Ostrom 2011).

#### **3.5.4 Predicting Outcomes within an Action Situation**

Depending upon the analytical structure of a situation and the particular assumptions about the actor used, the analyst makes strong or weak inferences about results. In tightly constrained, one-shot, action situations under conditions of complete information, where participants are motivated to select particular strategies or chains of actions that jointly lead to stable equilibria, an analyst can frequently make strong inferences and predict the likely patterns of behaviour and outcomes. When no limit exists on the number of appropriators from a common-pool resource or on the amount of harvesting activities they undertake, for example, one can develop a mathematical model of an open-access, common-pool resource.

### 3.5.5 Evaluating Outcomes

In addition to predicting outcomes, the institutional analyst may evaluate the outcomes that are being achieved as well as the likely set of outcomes that could be achieved under alternative institutional arrangements. Evaluative criteria are applied to both the outcomes and the processes of achieving outcomes. Analysts should focus on (i) economic efficiency, (ii) redistributive equity, (iii) accountability, (iv) adaptability (sustainability).

- (i) *Economic Efficiency*: determined by the magnitude of net benefits associated with an allocation of resources. The concept of efficiency plays a central role in studies estimating the benefits and costs or rates of return to investments, which are often used to determine the economic feasibility or desirability of public policies. When considering alternative institutional arrangements, therefore, it is crucial to consider how revisions in the rules will alter behaviour and hence the allocation of resources.
- (ii) *Redistributive Equity*: or policies that redistribute resources to poorer individuals are of considerable importance. Thus, although efficiency would dictate that scarce resources be used where they produce the greatest net benefit, equity goals may temper this objective, and the result is the provision of facilities that benefit particularly needy groups. Redistributive objectives may in some settings conflict with the goal of achieving fiscal equivalence.
- (iii) *Accountability*: in a democratic polity, officials should be accountable to citizens concerning the development and use of public facilities and natural resources. Concern for accountability need not conflict greatly with efficiency and equity goals. Indeed, achieving efficiency requires that information about the preferences of citizens be available to decision makers. Institutional arrangements that effectively aggregate this information assist in realizing efficiency at the same time that they



serve to increase accountability and to promote the achievement of redistributive objectives. Conformance to Values of Local Actors. In addition to accountability, one may wish to evaluate how those outcomes fit the values of those involved. Are public officials or local leaders able to cheat and go undetected to obtain very high payoffs? Are those who keep promises more likely to be rewarded and advanced in their careers? How do those who repeatedly interact within a set of institutional arrangements learn to relate to one another over the long term?

- (iv) *Adaptability (Sustainability)*: Finally, unless institutional arrangements are able to respond to everchanging environments, the sustainability of situations is likely to suffer. Rural areas of developing countries are often faced with natural disasters and highly localized special circumstances. If an institutional arrangement is too inflexible to cope with these unique conditions, it is unlikely to prosper. For example, if an irrigation system is centrally controlled and allocates only a specific amount of resources to annual and periodic maintenance, it may not be able to meet the special needs associated with a major flood that destroys a section of the canal system (*Adapted from: Ostrom, 2011*).

### **3.6 Reporting**

All the Medstrategy regions should carry out the analysis using the foregoing methodology. The results of the analysis will be an average score of the evaluation of the outcomes on the basis of the four criteria outlined above. For this purpose the regions can use the attached Excel workbook. On the basis of the analysis the regions will fill out the SWOT matrix for each of the thematic areas agreed upon during the meeting in Crete, namely:

- The capacity to cooperate with the different levels of government for the territorial management

- The ability of the Local Authorities in fostering growth and innovation in a competent, efficient and effective manner
- The capacity of the Local Authorities to develop policies, programs e gouvernement actions oriented at the sustainable development
- The capacity of the Local Authorities to promote a shared (common) ""Vision"" of the sustainable development through the activation of participative processes

Item	Action Situation	Biophysical Conditions	Attributes of Community	Rules-in-Use	Actors / Positions	Interactions	Outcomes	Efficiency (Score 1-5)	Equity (Score 1-5)	Accountability (Score 1-5)	Adaptability (Score 1-5)	Average (Score 1-5)
1	Coordinating between different scales of governance	Any underlying physical setting and any resources being managed	Norms of behaviour, relevant political and socioeconomic factors: "Culture"	Institutional setting: Laws, regulations, legal norms	Number and positions of actors	Interactions between actors	What plans or programs have been elaborated and/or adopted by the Local Authorities in relation to those foreseen by the Legislative system for the territorial Areas (Region, province, county etc...)?					
2	Synergy between the institutions and the political leadership						What sustainable management activities (by sector) have been activated by the Local Authorities?					
3	Support for strategies and action plans aimed at the integrated development and the territorial marketing						What strategic and/or regional marketing plans or programs have been elaborated and/or adopted in collaboration with other institutions/Authorities (specify the year)?					
4	Compliance with the objectives and deadlines expected in the territorial programming						What strategic and/or regional marketing plans or programs have been elaborated and/or adopted in collaboration with other institutions/Authorities (specify the year)?					
5	Decision-making: The role of stakeholders in review at the national, local and other levels, in relation to local socio-economic contexts						How many stakeholders (civil society, NGOs, citizens) have been involved in decision-making during the last 5 years?					
6	Capacity to use EU funds and specific financial commitments to support the carrying capacity						Which and how many resources from EU funds have been used by Local Authorities in the last five years?					
7	Use of local resources to improve governance oriented to the integration of environmental, social, and economic aspect						How many local resources have been devoted to programs and activities aimed at the valorization of cultural and environmental heritage in the last three years?					
8	Training, education, and awareness activities						How many training and environmental education courses have been activated in the last five years?					
9	Promotion of participative processes						How many participative processes have been activated towards citizenship in the last five years? How many participative processes have been activated towards institutions/Associations/communities in the last five years? How many participation channels have been activated towards citizens in the last five years? How many participation channels have been activated towards citizens in the last five years?					

**Figure 3** Grid for recording the IAD Framework results

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