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The preliminary Document of the provincial territorial Plan gets underway with the recognition and definition of local settlement environments (Ail) which become areas of special reference for consensually formulated projects and scenarios for local government. Such an approach would regulate environmental assessment procedures so that they might pursue a similar course and therefore to deal with settlement contexts defined in the preliminary section of the plan, the analysis, drawing up comparisons and the outlook for possible environmental scenarios in the future arising from suggestions set forth in projects and from transformational operations at local sites.

The assessment requires two preliminary steps focused respectively upon that way in which the acquired knowledge may be defined and upon the tool used for such assessment:

- definition of the environmental system under examination, namely the arranging of an environmental relationship relative to the entire provincial territory and articulated according to single Ail;

- definition of the metrics of assessment, namely the definition of a system of reference indicators through which individual project operations may be measured and the setting up of consequent environmental scenarios. The assessment procedure starts off from the creation of an environmental Report (through the selection and measurement of the indicators) and defines a matrix of the territorial context; it develops through a synthesis of relations

between territorial and planning operations (matrix of territorial coherence), taking stock of the impact level of the projects (critical matrix). Such a course which provides for verification feedback and winds up with some indicators on the eventual remodelling of the projects based upon foreseeable impacts (sustainability matrix) and is articulated stage by stage.

The first stage provides for the reformulation of the environmental framework, identifying in this reformulation discreet domains and reference sectors (air, water, soil...). The selection of a set of reference indicators will allow us to assess the state of resources and the effects that might be generated by implementing the plan. The assessment of the environment, to be carried out through the set of indicators chosen, is developed through specific operative cards. The cards contain, for each macro indicator (and for each of its components) information relative to the consistence of the phenomena investigated, to the relative weight of the various components, to the relative positioning of the indicator (for the entire province or for single Ail) as compared to the reference value. Subsequent to the description, detailed through cards, as well as to the ex ante condition of the environment, it is possible, and opportune, to carry out a synthesis of the reference environment. For this purpose the tool used is the matrix of the territorial context, a framework of synthesis which contains the information relative to the state of natural resources in relation to pressures bearing down on them by anthropical and productive factors, expressed through key indicators organized according to environmental themes (air, water, soil and

subsoil, refuse, natural ecosystems, etc.). The assessment model finds expression, therefore, through a series of tools that are easy to apply and to understand. This necessarily involves a limited number of indicators relative to the various environmental components: rather than build up matrixes which tend to be exhaustive at the formal level, yet overly complex, it is preferable to identify a limited number of indicators relative to the strategic components in the transformations. The choice of indicators is thus conditioned by the need to point out, singularly or in combination with other parameters, the major features of the territory and its components.

The second stage, starting from the context matrix and from the cards, will yield an initial assessment of the environmental compatibility of the various operations (as well as their priority), in relation also to their 'strategic positioning' in the Plan. In other words, the information will be classified both in relation to the level of environmental impact produced by the implementation of the projects and in relation to the importance they take on in the framework of the Preliminary of the Ptcp. In this way a reading of the information will be possible which will tie in the environmental assessment with the importance of the resources involved and the relative projects.

The operative outcome of the second assessment stage will be the creation of project scenarios made up of selected works on the basis of a dual criterion as set forth previously (resources involved/strategy) and synthesized in a Matrix of territorial coherence.

The third stage provides for an assessment on the part of persons with territorial interests (substantially sub-

provincial local bodies) of the proposed scenarios. The construction of the scenarios and the assessment of strategic projects that make them up gets underway, at this stage, by the interference they bring about *vis-à-vis* the environmental system, as described in the matrix of territorial coherence. The effects, whatever they might be, represent an unquestionable sign of interaction between the Plan and the territories concerned. Evidently the presence of a negative effect would have to be, wherever possible, eradicated or at least mitigated whenever the project indicates that it cannot be deferred (invariably within the limits of its encumbrance on the environment as allowed for by legislation and by common sense). A case, however, may arise where, faced with a degraded environmental situation caused by pressures extraneous to the Plan, or a condition of suffering of particular biotopes, the preliminary Document does not pronounce any judgement. The short shrift given to themes of risk or environmental degradation, although not classifiable among the effects determined by the strategic projects, represents however an element of weakness in the Plan itself, a factor which must be pointed out within the assessment process. For this reason from the Matrix of territorial coherence emerges an assessment specification expressed again in a matrix form and defined as the Critical matrix.