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**Effectiveness as a quality in public planning**  
*Massimo Morisi*

Measuring effectiveness of local government is a complex procedure. These short remarks must therefore keep to a minimal concept, namely effectiveness as an evaluation of the ratio between what you want to do and what you are actually doing. A number of considerations which are as fundamental as they are prejudicial immediately spring to mind which albeit with some abstractions can be taken as the conceptual premises that give sense and measure to a given set of tools of government.

1. Good territorial government is first and foremost a political-administrative issue. And like any function of government it is legitimised by the political capacity it is able to express in reaching its objectives; it is the quantum of problem solving discernable in the exercise of government from the standpoint of who has the right and responsibility to govern.

2. But government action is also legitimised by the institutional yield it can produce in favour of who is being governed; through the impact of government action in areas of intervention and crucial public sector policies. These include the quality of government of the territory both in terms of its town planning or specifically landscape or infrastructural achievements as well as the other, no less important results it obtains such in hospitality and attractiveness, its organisation in networks of functions, services and integrated and integrating opportunities, its capability to safeguard and renew the worth of its environmental, cultural and productive resources and the skill in declining the citizenship as the outcome of social and

territorial cohesion.

3. Political capability and institutional yield are very thorny issues which stem from the complexity of the modern-day political and administrative system. This complexity makes obsolete any claim on the part of legal tools or of the governing authority or of the power hierarchy to become the legitimate public authority or the public and private 'obligation' it is based on which it must in any case create. The mere formal and technological rationality of the juridical command, and its permanent anchorage to some kind of sovereign voluntas is not enough to ensure that 'constraints', 'prescriptions' and 'conformity' are sufficient to guide and drive the use and enhancement of the resources and the assets that go to make up the common heritage and the social capital which we call territory.

4. It follows that effectiveness must be taken to mean the extent to which the public power, and public planning is capable of 'social regulation'; mediating between the multi-faceted objectives, values, interests, powers and conflicts which are both individual and of the community, public and private, territorial and categorical, economic and cultural, among local, regional and national government perceptions, among demands and local and translocal opportunities; and coordinating human activities and relations between individuals, the action of social actors and that of the institutional authorities within their becoming, and of the relationships they act within.

5. It also follows that 'politicking' by governing the territory must necessarily make use of clear and known practices of governance, a mechanism that is juxtaposed to the modality of government.

6. Faced with so much

'liquidity' in the processes of governance, the quality of a territorial government becomes the congruity of expectations and decision-making processes that the plan can feed and guide through the various levels of government, amidst the multiplicity of market dynamics, social settings that it wishes to correct and compensate, without falling for the illusion of their promptitude. In other words it is a plan which is fully aware of how 1) it is impossible to know in advance the social consequences of the spatial decisions it makes; 2) it is not plausible to take the effectiveness of a plan as being merely some effectiveness of its effects; 3) it is unadvisable to confuse the formulation of a plan with its implementation. And, 4) effectiveness is firstly built by the same process as the plan and then evaluated.

The response of the Pit lies in the self-coordination of the institutional 'stream' in building the Plan as a 'pact'; within competition as a tool for selecting private planning offers aiming towards its effectuality; in norms as a contractual resource and means of intergovernmental cooperation; in integrated assessment as a technical presidium of the Plan's effectiveness as a binding fabric for social innovation and for active conservation of the worth of territorial assets.