

PROPOSING A GOVERNANCE-RELATED COMPONENT AND INDICATORS EVALUTION MATRIX TO ASSESSING THE SOCIAL INCLUSIVENESS DIMENSION OF THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUSHAUS PROEJCTS

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Abstract

Governance is the political facet of 'inclusiveness', one of the three main pillars of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) projects, alongside 'aesthetics' and 'sustainability'. Governance is embodied by rules and norms and implemented through hard tools (laws, planning designs and strategies, funding schemes, etc.) and soft tools (ways of decision-making, targeting, capacity building, etc.) to implement sustainable goals effectively and democratically. In essence, the article presents a methodological proposal for assessing hard and soft governance elements of projects and policies, including elements such as spatial planning legislation, participatory approaches, multi-level governance, and administrative capacity frameworks. As a case study, the analysis is focused on the assessment of governance-related components and respective indicators of the NEB inclusiveness dimension. The proposed methodological approach

resulted from more than a year of systematic research and consultation with existing literature and external experts on hard and soft governance. Expectedly, it can be applied to assess the influence and impact of governance-related processes in all sorts of projects and policies, as increasingly policymakers seek to assess their degree of positive impacts, effectiveness, and efficiency. The proposed methodological approach can be of use to a myriad of interested stakeholders and be associated with multi-disciplinary policy evaluation tools.

Keywords

Administrative capacity; hard governance; multilevel governance; participatory approaches; soft governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Governance is the political facet of ‘inclusiveness’, one of the three main pillars of the New European Bauhaus (NEB), alongside ‘aesthetics’ and ‘sustainability’. Governance is embodied by rules and norms and implemented through hard tools (laws, planning designs and strategies, funding schemes, etc.) and soft tools (ways of decision-making, capacity building, etc.) to implement sustainable goals effectively and democratically. In this context, this paper proposes a set of concrete indicators for assessing governance-related processes in projects and policies. It uses as a case study, the analysis of governance-related processes influencing the design and implementation of the NEB projects, following the work being developed by the European Commission (EC) Joint Research Centre (JRC) to create a NEB Knowledge Management Platform (KMP), aiming at self-assessing the NEB projects.

According to the EC, the NEB Initiative “connects the European Green Deal to our daily lives and living spaces. It calls on all Europeans to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls”. Here, it goes without saying that Hard and Soft Governance processes embrace crucial aspects that directly or indirectly affect the design and implementation of NEB projects which are to be self-evaluated via the NEB

KMP. Crucially, the three core dimensions of the NEB (Sustainability- from climate goals to circularity, zero pollution, and biodiversity; Aesthetics - quality of experience and style beyond functionality, and Inclusion - from valuing diversity to securing accessibility and affordability) are all regulated by legislation and influenced/affected by democratic participation and the public services' effectiveness. Hard governance processes, in a simplified lens, relate to how existing legislation, regulations, and strategic spatial plans can enforce or encourage the design and implementation of NEB projects. Instead, soft governance processes influence the level of democratic (participatory, clarity, co-creation, and consensus) and effectiveness (i.e., administrative capacity – see Potluka and Medeiros, 2021a; 2021b) in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of the NEB projects.

The selection of the 'hard' and 'soft' governance is appropriate for analysing the implementation of NEB projects in its social dimension of inclusiveness. Critically, both 'hard' and 'soft' governance tools are related to binding legislative/regulation aspects involved with the identification and classification of available requirements, standards, and codes of practice related to the inclusiveness dimension of the NEB. As such, this paper proposes a methodological approach supported by a list of governance-related indicators considered to be relevant in assessing projects or policies which are influenced and affect governance-related processes. Essentially, it aims at adding a novel and more comprehensive scientific approach to analyse both 'hard' and 'soft' governance processes in projects and policies, thus contributing to policy evaluation and social-governance analysis. The article is structured as follows. The next section discusses the concept of governance and its main analytical components. The following section presents a set of 'hard' and 'soft' governance that can contribute to defining governance-related indicators which are developed in the following section.

2. GOVERNANCE AS AN UMBRELLA CONCEPT

According to a general literature review, there are several main types of governance, including 'decentralized governance' (Cheema & Rondinelli 2007), 'corporate governance' (Mallin 2013), 'global governance', 'good and bad governance', and 'modern governance' (Hufty 2011), among others. The selection of the 'hard' and 'soft' governance tools is appropriate for analysing the implementation of NEB projects on their potential 'good governance-related aspects'. Regarding the concept of governance, Hufty (2011), recognizes that its definition varies and is widely fuzzy. A wealth of literature, however, proposes operational definitions of governance. For Rose & Peiffer (2013, v) for instance, "governance is a behavioural relationship between governors and governed. The government is a set of institutions established by a constitution and laws. A narrow definition of governance is that it is about relations within the government between principals, who decide what government institutions do, and public officials who act as their agents in the process of governance (cf. Peters and Pierre 2004). Kaufmann & Kraay (2007, 8) instead, sustain their understanding of governance as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them".

According to Schmitter (2007, 2-3) governance refers to the broadest imaginable notion of "getting things done by mobilizing collective resources" and, hence, tends to lose any specificity it might have. In the World Bank's frequently cited definition, governance is equivalent to the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. More specifically, Goodwin (2009) proposes five governance propositions; (i) governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are not only drawn from but also beyond government; (ii) governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues; (iii) governance identifies the power dependence involved in the

relationships between institutions involved in collective action; (iv) governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors; (v) governance recognizes the capacity to get things done, which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide.

Among several other analytical perspectives on the governance concept and related components, the United Nations presents an organized set of premises for implementing good governance processes. In detail, the Human Rights Council has identified the key attributes of good governance: (i) transparency; (ii) responsibility; (iii) accountability; (iv) participation, and (v) responsiveness (to the needs of the people). These are all soft governance-related processes. However, when relating good governance and human rights, the United Nations encompasses hard governance tools as well, to this formula, including the 'rule of law': "when it comes to the rule of law, human rights-sensitive good governance initiatives reform legislation and assist institutions ranging from penal systems to courts and parliaments to better implement that legislation. Good governance initiatives may include advocacy for legal reform, public awareness-raising on the national and international legal framework, and capacity-building or reform of institutions". The same entity defines governance as "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance, and local governance".

As related to hard governance, a European Union (EU) report acknowledges its relevance to fostering environmental sustainability in particular via the 'EU Directive on the energy performance of buildings' (EC 2010). Indeed, the implementation of the NEB's main goals requires sound and effective support of the rule of law and regulations. Moreover, the implementation of these legislative and regulatory bodies is often implemented via national, regional, and local development planning instruments (ESPON 2018). Ultimately, hard governance influences existing legislation, regulations, and strategic planning instruments related to sustainable, beautiful, and inclusive processes. As regards soft governance, this relation is far more obvious and is clearly expressed in

NEB project submission platform, in which governance processes such as participatory approaches (Medeiros 2021) and multilevel governance processes are assessed, following the work of the NEB Compass report, which concludes that “an NEB project should embrace three working principles: participatory process, multi-level engagement, and a transdisciplinary approach. These principles describe the process through which a project should operate and work to achieve the highest level of ambition in the three values” (EC 2022b, 13). In detail, this report asserts that participatory processes “refer to the degree to which the communities affected by the project are involved in the design, decision-making, and implementation phases. It starts from the premise that an NEB project will always involve civil society (‘the stakeholders’) within a highly participatory framework” (EC 2022b, 15). Moreover, the same document highlights the need to foster multi-level engagement and co-creation processes for effective implementation of the NEB projects: “A multi-level NEB project should implement an effective exchange both horizontally (with peers) and vertically (with others operating on a different scale) and then advance to a well-defined collaborative framework integrating the two” (EC 2022b, 17).

3. A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ASSESSING GOVERNANCE-RELATED PROCESS OF INCLUSIVENESS APPLIED TO NEB

As seen in the introduction, governance is a complex and multifaceted process, making it particularly difficult to assess quantitatively. Moreover, as an umbrella concept, governance influences all the dimensions and respective components of the NEB. In practical manners, however, the proposed assessment of governance is based on the three main dimensions already discussed in the previous section and their respective analytical components (Table 1). Hard governance relates to the influence of existing regulations, legislation, and strategic planning processes and is supported by elements related to the rule of law and strategic spatial planning. Instead, pro-democratic

soft governance processes consider the evaluation criteria focused on two main domains: (i) multi-level governance/co-creation and (ii) participatory approaches. Clarity and consensus serve as minor additional analytical elements which will not be further discussed in this article. Finally, pro-effective soft governance is mostly analysed via the level of administrative capacity to effectively implement projects/policies. The complementary minor elements of responsiveness and targets are also not further discussed in this article.

Table no 1. Governance main domains and analytical components for policy evaluation

Governance Domain	Components
Hard Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rule of law: Legislation and Regulations enforcing/encouraging sustainable, beautiful and socially inclusive policy processes (or absence of): Type and level of legislative and regulatory measures - Strategic Planning guidance: Public guidance on funding sustainable, beautiful and inclusive policy goals: Type and level of incorporation of environmental sustainability, social inclusiveness and architecturally elaborate strategic goals in actual and prospective funding plans
Pro-Democratic Soft Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory Approaches: Type and level of involvement in the design, decision-making and implementation processes - Multi-level and Co-Creation: Level of multi-level engagement by agents potentially involved - Clarity: Level of access to information by agents potentially involved - Consensus: Level of acceptance of the project strategy and goals by agents potentially involved
Pro-Effective Soft Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative Capacity Building: Level of knowledge, training, and expertise of stakeholders- Responsiveness: Level of decision-making time in implementing a green and inclusive design

	(comparative rapidity) - Targets: Level of effectiveness in achieving the project goals
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Source: own elaboration

As relates to the selection of indicators to measure hard governance associated with the NEB projects, the EC proposes a European Climate Law to write the 2050 climate neutrality target into binding legislation. Hence, the EU Green Deal makes a clear link with the need for hard governance tools to implement environmental sustainability policy goals. Crucially, along with its text, this Deal states that it “will make consistent use of all policy levers: regulation and standardization, investment and innovation, national reforms, dialogue with social partners and international cooperation” (EC 2019, 4). In a complementary way the EC report: *Buying Green! A handbook on green public procurement* highlights relevant hard governance to the implementation of environmental sustainability processes. Here, for instance, it brings to the fore the need to promote public buildings with minimum energy performance standards that are set at the national level based on a common EU methodology: “From 1 January 2019, all new buildings occupied and owned by public authorities must be ‘nearly zero-energy buildings’ (Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings (recast)). The Energy Efficiency Directive also sets mandatory requirements regarding renovation of public buildings and purchase or new rental agreements meeting minimum energy-efficiency standards” (EC 2016, 6). Similarly, the European framework for sustainable buildings[i] acts as a common language for assessing and reporting on the sustainability performance of buildings. It is a simple entry point for applying circular economy principles in our built environment. In particular, this framework aims at integrating circularity principles into building projects, which links clearly with hard governance Tools.

A more comprehensive report on the relationship between the NEB and its main policy goals and respective analytical dimensions is the NEB Compass. When relating the NEB with hard governance, this document highlights, for instance, that “an inclusive project fosters and equalises relations between users and/or communities, safeguarding the principle of equal treatment and social justice

over time. Inclusion and open access to services are enabled via structural mechanisms such as funding instruments, business models, planning, policies, regulations, and other institutionalisation processes” (EC 2022b,12). In addition, the Davos Declaration suggests, for instance, that “high-quality Baukultur fosters vibrant and mixed-use neighbourhoods. It creates built environments that embrace contemporary cultural expressions while at the same time respecting cultural heritage. It provides sustainable living conditions and strengthens social resilience by producing decent, affordable, and accessible housing” (Davos 2018, 11). Ultimately, NEB projects should follow the existing legislation and rules. Promoting these goals (where these hard-governance tools exist) and overcoming their absence in contexts where they don’t.

When it comes to soft governance tools associated with maximizing administrative capacity, participation, and multilevel and co-creation processes the NEB Compass concludes that “an NEB project should embrace participatory principles. These principles describe the process through which a project should operate and work to achieve the highest level of ambition in the three values” (EC 2022b, 13). Moreover, the same document highlights the need to foster multi-level engagement and co-creation processes for effective implementation of the NEB projects. In a complementary manner, another EC report discussing the shared culture of architecture states that investing in a high-quality living environment for everyone reinforces the need for ‘strengthening competencies’ and the need for capacity building on multiple governance levels, as well as qualifying the decision-makers (EC, 2021). Hence the justification for including administrative capacity building as a key topic to achieving effective governance processes has been widely debated in past decades in EC reports (e.g., EC 2000) and literature (e.g., Polverari et al. 2022).

3.1. Selection criteria and list of indicators

To be effectively operated, policy evaluation tools must be both sound and simple. Despite the challenges of selecting adequate quantitative indicators to assess all four selected governance targets, this paper proposed four concrete

analytical dimensions to assess governance processes in projects and policies. It is also worth noting that governance tools vary according to the context in which projects are implemented, such as the environment, and the effectiveness and efficiency of systems. However, when it comes to the selected criteria for assessing governance-related aspects of the NEB projects, the following dimensions are particularly relevant:

1. **Hard governance:** Although not directly related to the NEB projects' submission platform questionnaire, aspects of hard governance (legislation, regulations, and strategic planning processes) have a concrete influence on the design, decision-making, and implementation phases of the NEB projects. Indeed, it is expected that the design of NEB projects is positively affected by existing local/regional/national and EU legislation and regulations, as well as local, regional, and national strategic spatial plans fostering pro-sustainability, pro-aesthetics, and pro-inclusiveness processes. Hence, the evaluation of governance should include concrete indicator(s) that assess how far existing legislation/regulations/strategic plans influence the design, decision-making, and implementation phases of projects/policies.
2. **Participatory approaches:** There is one question in the NEB project application formulary related to the general participatory approaches or involvement of actors in the design phase of the project. The respective question aims at assessing not only how many stakeholders participated in the project design meetings, but also what type of stakeholders provided comments/recommendations on the design phase of the NEB project proposal. Hence, there is a need to use a concrete indicator(s) related to these participatory approaches when assessing the NEB, as this process is largely relevant to the project selection phase, and largely affects the design, decision-making, and implementation phases of projects/policies.
3. **Multi-level governance:** There is also one specific question in the NEB projects' submission platform related to the general multi-level governance (from local to EU actors) approaches in the design and decision-making phases of the project. Again, there is specific information requested on the spatial level (from local to the EU level) of the involved entities in the

design phase of the project. Hence, the types of entities involved affect the design, decision-making, and implementation of the project. This question is very much related to the co-creation aspect of governance as well. Hence, the evaluation of governance should be a concrete indicator(s) related to these multilevel/co-creation approaches, as a paramount process towards a sound design and implementation process of projects/policies.

4. Administrative capacity: Unlike the other two previous indicators that are related to pro-democratic governance tools, administrative capacity is related to the effectiveness lens of governance and is increasingly regarded as a key element for the sound implementation of projects, programmes, policies, and strategies. More precisely, administrative capacity relates to several components such as structure efficiency (e.g., stable regulatory framework), process efficiency (e.g., level of bureaucracy), human capital efficiency (e.g., academic training), system efficiency (e.g., transparency), and efficient and modern administrative tools (e.g., modern software). Hence, the evaluation of governance should include concrete indicator(s) that assess the degree of administrative capacity that facilitated, or not, the design, decision-making, and implementation phases of projects/policies.

3.2. Proposed governance indicators and related questions.

The proposed methodological approach is supported by a matrix of four main governance qualitative indicators and respective questions to be assessed under an impact score of 1 (very low impact) to 5 (very high impact) (Table 2). As seen, they incorporate hard and soft governance-related aspects and in particular the influence of existing legislation, regulations, and spatial plans in the design and implementation of the NEB projects, as well as the degree of participatory, multilevel, and co-creation approaches and the degree of administrative capacity in managing these projects. Each question is analysed on the mentioned 1 to 5 impact scale. Each indicator will have the arithmetic average of the scores from all questions. On the other hand, for each question.

Table no 2. Proposed lists of indicators and guiding to assessing governance of the NEB inclusiveness dimension

1 - Indicator: Degree of compliance with Legislation/Regulations/Spatial plans (score from 1 to 5)

Guiding questions:

- 1A - How would you evaluate the impact/influence of legislation / regulations/ spatial plans used by your project in promoting the NEB principles of sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusiveness?

Score 1: Very low level of influence (close to none pieces of legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 2: Low level of influence (influence from around 5 pieces of legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 3: Average level of influence (influence from around 10-15 pieces of legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 4: High level of influence (influence from around 25 pieces of legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 5: Very high level of influence (influence from around more than 25 pieces of legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

- 1B - Identify the degree of in which your project is using international legislative, regulatory, and spatial planning frameworks.

Score 1: Very low degree (use of close to no piece of international legislation/regulation/spatial plan)

Score 2: Low degree (use of around 5 pieces of international legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 3: Average degree (use of between 10 to 15 pieces of international legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 4: High degree (use of around 20 pieces of international legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

Score 5: Very high degree (use of more than 25 pieces of international legislation/regulation/spatial plans)

2 - Indicator: Degree of participatory intensity from agents and entities (from

1 to 5)**Guiding questions:**

- 2A - How would you evaluate the involvement of stakeholders in the design of the project?

Score 1: Very low degree of involvement (effective contribution from less than 5 stakeholders)

Score 2: Low degree of involvement (effective contribution from 5 to 10 stakeholders)

Score 3: Average degree of involvement (effective contribution from 11 to 20 stakeholders)

Score 4: High degree of involvement (effective contribution from 21 to 30 stakeholders)

Score 5: Very high degree of involvement (effective contribution from more than 30 stakeholders)

- 2B - To what degree the project budget allocated to engagement events during the design stage contributed to foster participatory approaches which facilitated the design of the project?

Score 1: Very low degree (less than 2% of the budget of the project dedicated to participatory workshops)

Score 2: Low degree (around 3% of the budget of the project dedicated to participatory workshops)

Score 3: Average degree (around 5% of the budget of the project dedicated to participatory workshops)

Score 4: High degree (around 7 of the budget of the project dedicated to participatory workshops)

Score 5: Very high degree (more than 8% of the budget of the project dedicated to participatory workshops)

3 - Indicator: Degree of multi-level engagement intensity from agents and entities (from 1 to 5)

Guiding questions:

- 3A - How would you evaluate the impact of the participation of different

stakeholders from several administrative tiers in the design of the project?

Score 1: Very low impact (less than five national/international entities with effective participation)

Score 2: Low impact (around 7 national/international entities with effective participation)

Score 3: Average impact (around 10 national/international entities with effective participation)

Score 4: High impact (around 15 national/international entities with effective participation)

Score 5: Very high impact (more than 20 national/international entities with effective participation)

- 3B - What was the impact/influence of international entities to the design of the project?

Score 1: Very low impact (less than five international entities with effective participation)

Score 2: Low impact (around 7 international entities with effective participation)

Score 3: Average impact (around 10 international entities with effective participation)

Score 4: High impact (around 15 international entities with effective participation)

Score 5: Very high impact (more than 20 international entities with effective participation)

4 - Indicator: Degree of administrative structure effectiveness (from 1 to 5)

Guiding question:

- 4A - How would you evaluate the level of administrative capacity for managing your NEB project?

Score 1: Very high level of bureaucracy in submitting and implementing the project

Score 2: High level of bureaucracy in submitting and implementing the project

Score 3: Average level of bureaucracy in submitting and implementing the project

Score 4: Low level of bureaucracy in submitting and implementing the project
 Score 5: Very low bureaucracy (more than 20 international entities with effective participation)
 - 4B - In which measure does the administrative system which manages the NEB project promotes evaluation, monitoring, and audit of the NEB project?
 Score 1: Very low use (no use or one time a year use of project evaluation and monitoring frameworks)
 Score 2: Low use (two to three times a year use of project evaluation and monitoring framework)
 Score 3: Average impact (four to six times a year use of a project evaluation and monitoring framework)
 Score 4: High impact (seven to nine times a year use of a project evaluation and monitoring framework)
 Score 5: Very high impact (more than 10 times a year use of a project evaluation and monitoring framework)

Source: own elaboration

3. CONCLUSIONS

This paper presents a methodological proposal for assessing hard and soft governance-related processes in projects and policies. This proposal is supported by a qualitative policy evaluation framework supported by four main governance-related analytical elements: (i) hard governance (legislation, regulations, and spatial plans); (ii) participatory approaches; (iii), multi-level governance, and (iv) administrative capacity frameworks. The analysis is developed via the examination of the NEB inclusiveness dimension, following from the elaboration of the ongoing NEB KMP, aimed at self-evaluating NEB projects. It presents a potential solution to analyse the potential impact and influence of key-governance-related aspects in implemented projects in policies, such as the NEB projects and policies, both in soft and hard governance-related processes.

The proposed methodological approach embraces key governance-related elements that are easily analysed in ongoing local, regional, national, and supra-national projects, such as the importance of participatory and multi-level governance approaches. Additionally, mostly followed by EU Cohesion Policy financial support to improve administrative capacity building, at all territorial administrative levels, the analysis proposed scrutiny of the level of administrative capacity frameworks as a 'key ingredient' to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of project and policy implementation. Besides these three soft-governance-related elements, hard-governance-related elements that influence the design of policies such as ongoing legislation, regulations, and spatial plans, are also considered in the proposed governance analysis.

The design of this methodological approach resulted from the known challenges posed by measuring governance processes, especially at the project design level. The initial attempt to use merely quantitative and objective indicators was soon replaced by mostly quasi-qualitative indicators, based on more or less concrete guiding criteria/thresholds for each guiding question related to the four selected analytical dimensions. One prevailing vision in policy evaluation is the need to appropriately counterbalance simplicity with soundness. This is a difficult equation to be attained by all policy evaluation methodologies that can only be effectively tested after it is applied in practice several times in different contexts. Hence, the main challenge ahead is to apply the proposed methodological approach to analyse NEB and other projects for the next couple of years.

Despite not being fully tested, the proposed methodological approach resulted from more than a year of systematic research and consultation with existing literature and external experts on hard and soft governance. Expectedly, it can be applied to assess the influence and impact of governance-related processes in all sorts of projects and policies, as increasingly policymakers seek to assess their degree of positive impacts, effectiveness, and efficiency. To this end, the proposed methodological approach can be of use to a myriad of interested stakeholders and be associated with multi-disciplinary policy evaluation tools. Ultimately, the result of the proposed methodological approach could contribute to engaging and increasing, as much as possible, sound and effective participatory, co-creation, and multilevel governance approaches which can

enforce sustainable and inclusive policy implementation practices, and help improve local, regional, and national administration frameworks towards high levels of administrative capacity, sound participatory and multi-level governance approaches.

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