Decision Pathway

For Cities Commissioning Resilient, Sustainable Infrastructure

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Note: The Decision Pathway does not represent a linear process, since there are many points at which the process needs to loop back before moving forward again. At every point along the Pathway the operating principles of transparency and accountability should be observed, along with an inclusive stakeholder engagement that includes government, communities, private investors, NGOs, academics and others.

The Decision Pathway

1. A sustainable development vision and policy for the city.
2. A sustainable development needs-analysis: What infrastructure does the city need for its vision to be realised?
3. An Infrastructure masterplan
4. Priority setting within the masterplan. Effectively this is the point at which councillors debate and agree which problems (from the needs analysis) they wish to solve in what order, allowing for budgetary and other constraints.
5. Design the criteria for choosing a solution to each prioritised problem (ie without designing the solution, decide what a good solution must deliver.This enables officials to evaluate solution options at point 7 below).
6. Conduct a conceptual solution scan (ie what solutions are available or being tried elsewhere in the world?). This can be a desktop exercise and can be outsourced.
7. Choose a solution (a solution by definition can be a technical infrastructure project approach, or a social behaviour change approach, or a combination of both. Solution examples of a waste management problem are: public recycling facilities using latest technologies and an education programme to change residents' behaviour, or an infrastructure project ie a sewage plant, or an entire waste management programme combining all solutions.

   Choosing a solution should include:
   - a well-defined solution approach with a strong logic link to an identified problem
   - estimated cost of the solution
   - funds and guidance for taking next step towards the feasibility study.
8. Conduct a feasibility study on the chosen solution. Include an assessment comprising economic, environmental, social and governance risks and opportunities that will arise from the project at its various stages.
9. Secure the relevant level of government approval for the project's feasibility. Consider councillor sensitisation, education and consultation throughout the process to ensure a high quality decision-making process and longer term buy-in. Also consider community and other stakeholders' education and consultation throughout the process.
10. Mobilise the necessary resources and finance
11. Implementation stages should include:
    - procurement
    - construction
    - operation and maintenance
    - monitoring and evaluation.

Questions that need to be asked at multiple points along the pathway:

1. Where can it go wrong?
2. Are the steps institutionalised (i.e. not dependent upon individuals)?
3. Do the key project decisions have the understanding and buy-in of critical stakeholders before moving to the next step?
4. In particular, do relevant councillors understand the need for these decisions and their importance to the city?
5. Is there enough capacity building and knowledge management when it comes to infrastructure decision-making and risk management?
6. To what extent are politics and bias driving the process?
7. At what points should the private sector be involved?
8. What is the correct level of decision-making (local, city and national) and what is the optimal time to engage each of those levels?