

Chapter 25

Incorporating Social Indicators of Sustainability in Public Policies for Environmentally Degraded Areas: The Case of the Asopos River

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will discuss the incorporation of sustainability indicators in the formation of public policies. We will focus specifically on policies that aim to tackle environmental degradation from the industry sector with subsequent socio-economic consequences for the local community and will analyze the area of the Asopos River in Greece as a case study.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2458-8.ch025

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a crucial term in the environmental and social sciences over the past decades (United Nations, 1987). Through this incorporation the need to find a balance between economic, social and environmental goals in public policies is emphasized. An important challenge in this context is to create indicators which will measure the level of sustainability and formulate policies around these measures. These indicators can help decision makers to monitor environmental change and formulate sustainable environmental policies (Shen et al, 2011; Rametsteiner et al, 2011). Another important issue is to develop techniques which will use these indicators in participatory decision-making processes. These are processes which aim to include citizens and actors from the civil society in deliberation techniques in order to assist in the creation of public policies which take into consideration local needs.

Despite the wide development of sustainability indicators in the past decades (UNCED, 1992; Boulanger, 2004), social aspects of sustainability are often neglected. This can be attributed, to a significant extent, to the difficulty of quantifying social indicators and make them comparable to other indicators from the economic and environmental sciences. The present paper will discuss the incorporation of sustainability indicators in the formation of public policies. We will focus specifically on policies that aim to tackle environmental degradation from the industry sector with subsequent socio-economic consequences for the local community and will analyze the area of the Asopos River in Greece as a case study.

Figure 1. Location of the Asopos River area



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