

ZSOLT SZILVÁCSKU

**VALUE SCALE FOUNDATIONS AND METHODOLOGICAL,
INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT
ASSESSMENTS**

PhD dissertation thesis



Tájépítészeti Kar

BUDAPEST, 2012

Doctoral School:

**CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST
Landscape-architecture
and Landscape Ecology**

Field:

Agrotechnical

Head of PhD School:

**Prof. Atilla Csemez, DSc
Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of
Sciences
CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF
BUDAPEST**

Supervisor:

**Dr. László Kollányi, CSc
Associate Professor
CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF
BUDAPEST
Fakulty of Ladscape-architecture
Head of the Department of
Landscape Planning and Regional
Development**

**The applicant met the requirement of the PhD regulations of the
Corvinus University of Budapest and the theses are accepted for
the defence process.**

.....

Head of PhD School

.....

Supervisor

PRELIMINARIES OF THE WORK, OBJECTIVES

Since impact assessments, landscape conservation, nature conservation, and rural development are in the focus of my professional activities, I was the leader, or took part in the leadership and/or methodological development of a number of research and impact assessment projects, which helped me to directly experience the processes and values manifested in practice. I have witnessed, more than once, that excellent, professionally well prepared and committed people get into troublesome decision-making, activity, and communication situations within the frameworks defined by the different institutional and decisions-making structures. I could also experience, that decisions taken and projects, plans implemented under inadequately structured and organised procedures, or lacking the identification of the actual causes of the problems, or not being harmonised with the fundamental values, principles, interests and objectives were not successful, and had to be corrected and modified several times both in the short and medium terms.

The core issue of my interest, both as a lawyer and a landscape architect is the relationship and set of contacts between the landscape and the people, communities and the society living in and with the nature. Examining the value-centric interconnections and the possibilities for further development of the impact assessments applied during good public management and governance ¹ representing one of the frameworks for the coexistence and mutual development of the landscape and the people is in the centre of my present research. The management and methodological development of a number of strategic environmental impact assessments and other types of impact assessments have directed my attention to the issues of sustainability and sustainability impact assessments and the related questions regarding the scale of values, the institutions and the applied methods.

Basically, my research follows three trends, or focuses on three major issues:

¹ Governance, in my paper means the complex circular process of planning, management, process organisation, control, and feedback executed by the central, the regional and the local governments.

- (1) The basic starting point is the interpretation of sustainability, and development and examination of their core values:

With regard to the issue of sustainability, my objective is to clarify the relationship between sustainability and development, and to provide procedural and contextual proofs for the development of the core value scales of sustainable developments serving development and for the definition of basic values.

- (2) Analysis of the management systems, processes and institutions from the perspective of the enforcement of these values:

In the area of the management systems, processes and institutions, my objective is to analyse the theoretical background of the regulation of the current institutional and procedural practices, and to explore the extent and the way the different legal and institutional solutions promote or hinder the enforcement of the core values of development and sustainability. I also would like to identify the applicable best practices.

- (3) The third core issue is the development of impact analysis and their practical role from the perspective of the effectiveness of the core values of sustainability and development.

As to the analysis and development of impact assessments, my objective is to identify the organic relationships between the impact assessments and the decision-making processes with development objectives and to outline and continue to elaborate solutions which promote the assertion of the core values of development and sustainability.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In my research I strive after synthesis and the identification of correlations with regard to comprehensive issues. In the course of my work, I extensively build on literature, and on accumulated practical experiences which I have explored with the help of personal interviews, focus group meetings and questionnaires. In the course of my methodological investigations, I have applied the Driving Forces – Pressure – State – Impacts – Responses (DPSIR) methodological approach and the approach applied in the Competing Values Framework (CVA) model. Figure No. 1 presents the process and the methodology of the research.

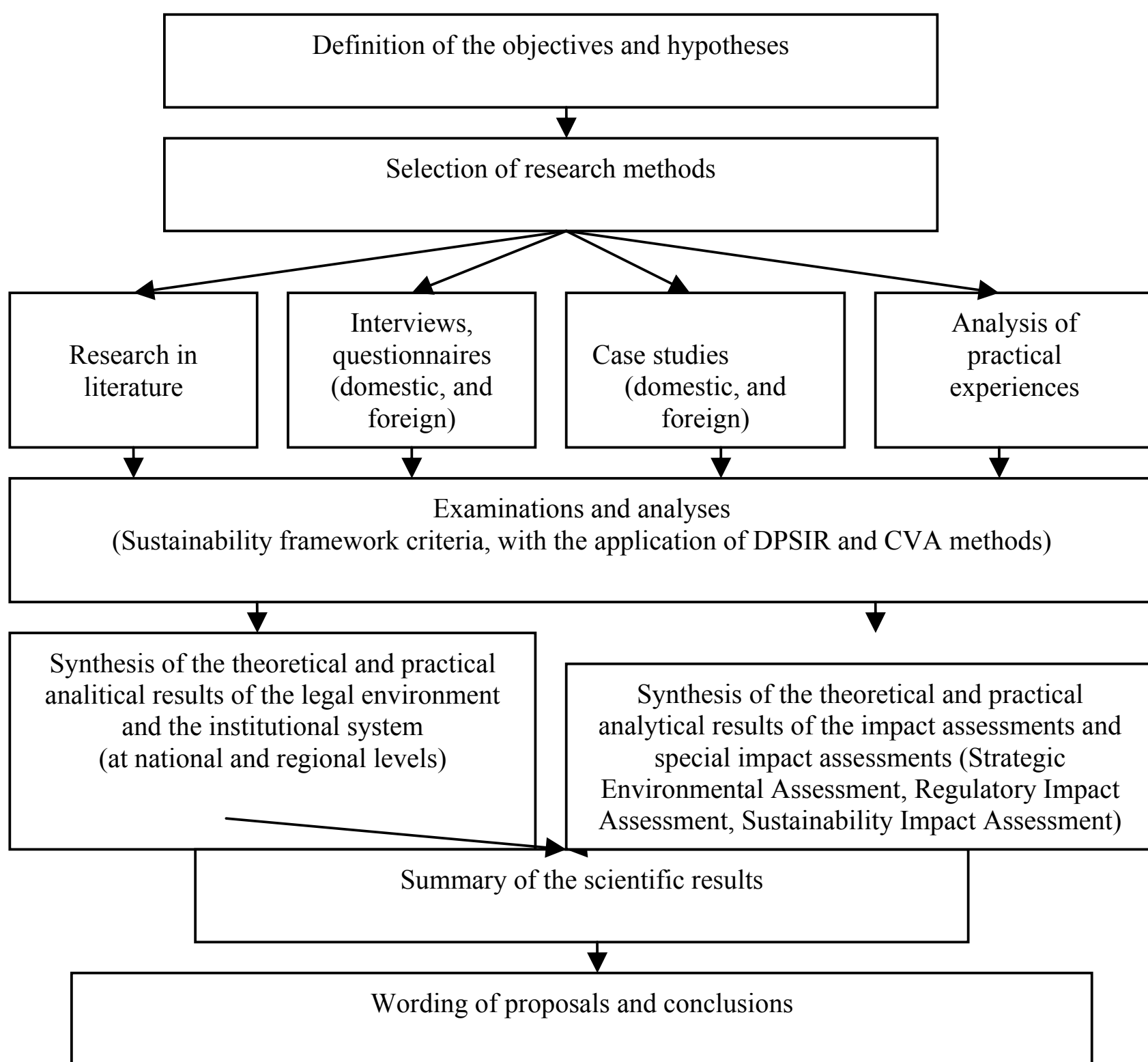


Figure No. 1.

The process and methodology of the research

RESULTS

Result No. 1: I succeeded to verify, that individual and social values and value scales and their management play a fundamental role in guaranteeing sustainability, the core values of sustainability can be defined, but their assertion in concrete cases takes place, in the first place, within the framework of personal and, in the second, community decisions and activities.

Based on the data in the literature, my own impact assessment studies and the analysis and evaluation at Hungarian and international levels of the examinations and surveys I verified, that sustainability may not be managed in a value-neutral manner. I reviewed and analysed the notions and concepts of sustainability and development. As a result of the analysis I concluded that should sustainability be managed in a value-neutral manner, human beings may consume and exhaust the essential living conditions of both the humanity and the ecological systems, and may maintain self-destructive procedures, as it can also be envisaged these days. I have defined those general core values which form the basis for the definition of the assessment criteria of sustainable solutions and interventions. I have worded, as a central core value, human beings and the blossoming out of their personal talents as community creatures. I also formulated, as a central core value, the ecosystems, as living systems, together with their internal self-regulatory system. Jointly, I call them life themes. Each and every attempt for sustainability shall have to focus on the protection, survival and development of these central core values. On the other hand, management, support, strengthening and rehabilitation of human life (individuals and communities) and ecosystems along the principle of subsidiarity, as a procedural value, shall be present while developing the framework conditions and evaluating the results of impact assessments.

Based on research in the literature, I have identified basic correlations with regard to the value-, objective-, and norm-conduct of human persons or individuals. Social, community and individual values play a decisive role in ensuring sustainability. In addition to the four basic factors identified by HANKISS (2004), namely the common objectives, values, interests and their awareness, I have identified, from the perspective of time approach and knowledge, the significance and the role of locality (spatiality) and relationship among the generations.

I managed to identify, and support with arguments, the importance of creating community values and openly presenting and confronting values from the perspective of sustainability, together with the role and significance of the procedures and tools promoting the communication of values, with special regard to communication realised in the landscape, defining a unit and in the landscape as a unit.

***Result No. 2:** I have verified that sustainability impact assessments must be and can be made suitable for the contextual and process oriented managerial/administrative, and impact assessment values and basic principles which make, via their application, the sustainability impact assessments executable. I have developed a SÉMA DPSIR based method applying a new approach, which was tested in several nationwide strategic environmental surveys.*

I have looked across, with regard to all the continents, the available experiences gained from the impact assessments. During my survey, I identified eight countries where the practice of impact assessments is manifested in the decisions taken during the preparatory phase of the different policies, programmes and projects. Based on the detailed analysis of the investigated sustainability impact assessments I concluded that sustainability studies represent a new approach and give added value to the decision-making process in those countries where the management, public policy, and governance structures and the participation culture reach a high level (see, for example, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland), and where well-prepared local communities capable of representing their interests operate. Participative and social learning characterise successful sustainability impact assessments. In certain countries, like, for example in Canada, Belgium, and Hong Kong, the applied practices targeted the strengthening of the values of sustainability and not so much the assessment and identification of the impacts (like, for example, in the United Kingdom, or Switzerland). I have justified, with examinations, that the enforcement of ethical aspects is necessary in the analysis and impact assessment of public policies.

Based on my diverse Hungarian and foreign experiences I defined those institutional, administrative/managerial and impact assessment values and basic principles, which, when applied, make the sustainability impact assessments executable. I have developed a SÉMA DPSIR based method applying a new approach, which was tested in several nationwide strategic

environmental surveys. During the past 5 to 6 years, the method which I developed was applied in other impact assessments as well (especially in the Strategic Environmental Surveys). In addition to the SÉMA method, the application of the CVA model might also be of special importance.

Result No. 3: *The success of an impact assessment is basically defined by the existence and the method of development and operation, or the lack thereof of a coherent and operating public service (public policy) planning system. A well-functioning public administration, public service system and planning culture is needed for the success of impact assessments, and the respective framework conditions can be defined. I managed to identify the core areas of good management enforcing sustainability, and worded system-level proposals on the Hungarian legal and institutional developments.*

I performed the theoretical and institutional analyses of the legal framework conditions. During the legal analyses, after having overviewed different attitudinal and typological approaches, I identified the factors and characteristics facilitating and/or hindering the application and enforcement of impact assessment and sustainability. I outlined the legal theoretical background of sustainability, revealing the significance of natural law care. I analysed the groups of the different legal systems identified by the researchers from the perspective of enforcing sustainability and the success of impact assessment practices. I defined those characteristics of the legal systems which may promote successful impact assessment practices and sustainability.

I have revealed the interconnections of the basic principles of law, especially the environmental law from the perspective of impact assessments and sustainability. Based on theoretical analyses and my Hungarian and international analyses of the institutional systems, I have defined the most important core subjects of good management enforcing sustainability, and worded system level proposals on the development of the Hungarian legal and institutional systems.

Result No 4: *Operation, at the level of the whole society, of the legal and institutional frameworks of impact assessments and operation of the law and the values in every-day interactions are of primary significance from the perspective of sustainability.*

I have identified those tools, processes and observational models, which promote the creation of social and community values, the renewal of the value scales and the open confrontation of the succinctly worded value systems, emphasising their differing characteristic features. I have examined the three-level model of the semi-autonomous social field (SASF), the participation theory of communication and the structures of the value scales and made a proposal for its implementation.

As a new task related to the planning, managerial/administrative and impact assessment tasks, I have concluded, that the rational views, interests, and value scales along which we think about the different problems shall be defined based on deliberate considerations and multilateral joint thinking and co-operation (social and organisational learning), carefully differentiating the components of the different problematic situations and not only reaching the intuitive posing of the issue. The declared (identified and hidden) opinions, interests and values, including, among others, the common elements of the value scale, shall be the subject matter of decision-making, prior to starting any kind of planning activity. This process might be promoted by sustainability impact assessments.

***Result No. 5:** I have identified, the landscape as an ecological and social spatial unit being the basic system component of impact assessment and public services systems.*

Based on analysing the definitions of the landscape, and building on the determinant tradition of landscape architecture, I have redefined it as a fundamental point of reference for sustainability and development being a formation and phenomenon representing the scale of values and the structure of values. I verified that the practically manageable appearance of the landscape in the regulation and practice of public service and administrative exerts a fundamental influence on the success and sustainability of impact assessments and public service planning.

The landscape, as a life-space category, is suitable to represent a clear-cut framework for the local citizens and the local governments in the area of identifying and managing the status of the society, the local communities and the ecosystems and the trends of the respective influences. However, proper internal relations and the reestablishment of the relationship between the people and nature are necessitated for this.

Understanding the operation and interdependencies of the ecosystem services in the landscape is the most transparent for the local communities. Conservation of the ecosystems is a basic precondition for guaranteeing the quality of life necessitated for human development. I would, as an expectation towards the sustainability impact assessments, that the interdependencies between the ecosystem services and the quality of life shall be managed and, in different steps, evaluated by them, in addition to being capable to contribute to the development of the management system with mosaic type adaptation.

Result No. 6: One of the most fundamental guarantees for the success of sustainability impact assessments is the flexible value-centric participation procedure capable to be adapted to the scales and the decision-making situations.

I have performed the systematisation and overview of the impact assessments, which is the first of its kind in Hungary covering all the impact assessments made in public policy and public administration. The basic aspect of systematisation was sustainability, since the fundamental factors of systematisation form the foundations of sustainability: life issues (like, for example, the flora and fauna, the ecological systems, human health, community and social conditions); spatial and regional frameworks; institutional and regulatory frameworks. By means of SWOT analysis, I have identified the strengths and weaknesses of the impact assessments, together with their opportunity and threat factors, then, by analysing the possible development trends, I defined the framework conditions determining the possible role and characteristic features of sustainability impact assessments. In addition to the sustainability impact assessment practices interpreted in a narrow sense, I separately and in more details have investigated via the Hungarian and foreign practices the experiences gained from strategic environmental assessments and regulatory impact assessments. I concluded in favour of the significance of connecting the impact assessments affecting the different levels of decision-making (impact assessment chain) which proved to be decisive for the enforcement of sustainability.

I divided the sustainability impact assessments into two categories: (1) supervision (continuous examination) of the actual, current status of sustainability within a given spatial category or administrative unit within the framework of examinations and surveys based on the landscape

sustainability of the country, a region, or a settlement; (2) enforcement of sustainability aspects in the different development, regulatory, governmental, or organisational decision-making processes. In the case of both trends, the development of a personal (each actor shall develop his/her/its own) internal value scales and word that at community level, which can be realised by guaranteeing personal freedom, dialogue between subsidiarity and solidarity and learning, and all this shall be based on flexible but, at the same time, transparent controls and feedbacks.

***Result No. 7:** I have elaborated the methods for individual, organisational and social learning which can be applied successfully during the sustainability impact assessments and completed them with presenting the possibilities implied in the results of systematic thinking and communication research.*

Identification of the basic conditions for sustainability and development (for example, system approach, feedbacks, spatiality, etc.) verifies the necessity to apply the learning aspect during the development related decisions. However, there are personnel, institutional, regulatory and other conditions necessary to do so. During my research, I have identified the values of sustainability regarding learning, communications and systematic thinking, and the respective solutions applied in impact assessments.

I managed to strengthen the sustainability and system based theory of the basic principles of environmental law. A detailed description and methodological guidelines were prepared for 16 tools which can be used in social learning.

I defined the landscape as the basic unit of communication, community learning and knowledge management strengthening sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

After having surveyed the impact assessment practices developed in the world during the past forty years and summarising the characteristic features of their different types, and after having assessed some of the social, legal and institutional conditions for the enforcement of sustainability values I can conclude that we have arrived at a milestone in the development process of impact assessments. During the forty year history of the development of impact assessments, a number of scientifically established and, at the same time, practically proven procedures and methods were developed and became common practices. Impact assessments were developed in a number of subject matters and at different decision-making levels (for example, health, environment, regional, etc.). It is becoming more and more evident that in spite of varied methodologies and broad incidence, impact assessments can, only very seldom, be in the focal point of sustainability related decisions, and can seldom achieve that impact assessments are not only one of the many boards to which the decision-makers either pay attention or not. It is a fundamental issue, whether impact assessments can actually contribute to putting the sustainability aspects into the forefront of the individual and community value scales. Based on my examinations and surveys I drew the conclusion that the possible trend for further development of impact assessments, the sustainability focused development, means, on the one hand, the renewal of the planning and management systems of public policy from a social-ecological perspective and, on the other, the development of decision-making and impact assessment culture focusing on the values of sustainability and development.

The example of the examined eight countries applying sustainability impact assessments clearly shows that the pure implementation of this method or tool did not result in successful impact assessment practices in every country. The example of Canada deserves special attention. The Canadian experiences also support my viewpoint, formed on the basis of my value- and communication-centric analyses, which can be summarised, as a development trend, in the following:

- (1) Sustainability impact assessments can be carried through if they are matched to the decision-making and planning levels, are shaped together with them, and are adapted to the given conditions (adaptation).

- (2) Development of a positive approach to sustainability and the joint interpretation of the frameworks of sustainability to the given space (for example, the landscape) and subject matter (comprehension).
- (3) Inclusion of the impact assessment chain into the regulation, and its consistent application, namely importance of reducing the distances with feedback both in time and space (feedback).
- (4) Development of a set of criteria on the basis of sustainability, identification and systematisation of the common value elements, especially in Hungary, due to the developed three-tier value scale structure (TOMKA, 1987) (value-centric approach).
- (5) Successful implementation of community participation facilitating for regular, if possible, continuous contacting, which benefits from the results of the participation-based theory elements of communication research (HORÁNYI, 2007) (participation based), and the tools and methods of the different communication and participation techniques also promoting social learning, of which I have elaborated 16 types contributing also to their utilisation.
- (6) Promoting the processes of community, individual and organisational learning and the conscious implementation of knowledge management (multi-level learning). For example, preparation of a guideline (the author of the present article also prepared such a guideline with regard to social sustainability), and continuous evaluation of the implementation of this guideline, together with its analysis representing a feedback, and the gathering, reporting of good examples, best practices, and the realisation of trainings represent an essential contextual element of it.
- (7) In the course of shaping public policy, the development of contextual (financial), co-ordination (institutional) and participation (procedural) systems of responsibility in public administration and public services.
- (8) Special emphasis shall be placed on curative developments in connection with the rehabilitation of the communities and on the development of personal competencies.
- (9) As to the values, guaranteeing vitality and resilience shall be researched and practically enforced in connection with the ecosystems and the local communities.
- (10) The values of personage, solidarity and subsidiarity shall be put into the centre. Every terminology is, basically, of relational type, expressing correct relations in different directions. By means of

this relationship, we may grasp the essence of sustainability, opening this way the road before development. It shall then be completed with the establishment of the right proportion between participation (internal focus and external focus) and regulation (control and flexibility) (CVA model).

(11) Further development of the legal and institutional frameworks necessitated along the core values of sustainability and development, and system level, comprehensive approach to planning.

(12) I propose that the landscape, as a living space, shall be managed as a unit, as one single system. The landscape, as an ecological and social unit, shall be managed in the planning, impact assessment, management and economic systems, promoting this way the strengthening of landscape knowledge, identity, culture and communication.

New task related to the planning, management and impact assessment tasks

Based on conscious consideration and by means of manifold co-operation and thinking together (social and organisational learning) the rational views and scales of values along which we think about the problems shall be selected. We should not stop at the level of intuitive hypotheses, but should also distinguish among the different components of the problematic situations. The declared (uncovered and hidden) views, interests and values, including the common elements of the value system, shall be the subject matter of decision-making, before starting any kind of planning activities. Impact assessment might be the promoter of this process.

With regard to the levels of implementation of the impact assessments, I propose the following:

Level No. 1: Supervision (continuous examination) of the current status of sustainability within a given spatial category, or administrative unit within the framework of landscape impact assessments performed for the country, an area, or a settlement. The status of the ecosystems, the situation of the local communities and the society as a whole, in other words, the status of the living systems, social and ecological resilience, the situation of the ecosystem services, and the factors influencing them shall be in the focus of the researches. Analyses of the influencing factors shall cover the levels manifested in the DPSI structure and also the actual interventions (responses). I specifically propose that the actual value

structures shall be brought to light and the common values shall be identified and analysed by using the major topics of good management/administration prepared by the author and the CVA model. As a result of the examination and supervision, the landscape and/or some smaller or bigger territorial/spatial units shall be viewed systematically, identifying this way the most important feedback processes and points of intervention.

As a methodological approach, the strategic environmental survey performed by the author and the practice of regulatory impact assessments can be adapted, with the condition, that the examination shall be performed by the local (landscape) actors applying the principles of subsidiarity. Local communities shall be prepared for this task. In my opinion, this is not a one-time process, but shall and can be converted into a process based on the tool-set of social learning knowledge management and organically embedded into the life of local communities. This way, the value scale for the sustainability of the landscape can be continuously renewed and refined.

Level No. 1: Enforcement of sustainability aspects in the different development, regulatory, governmental, or organisational **decision-making processes**. In my opinion, there are two development trends at this level of implementation:

- (1) Application of the already developed impact assessments with a focus on individual topics (health, mental hygiene, environmental factors), completed with the identification of the correlations related to the basic principles and core values of sustainability. Should the problem analysed in the targeted impact assessment not be solved, sustainability impact assessment can also be performed, in case of necessity.
- (2) The other solution is to perform sustainability impact assessments in close correlation with the designated decision-making procedures, prepared along the lines of the joint value scales worded according to the principles of participation for the given landscape or spatial unit, or, should the spatial effects of the decision not be assessable at the given level, along the lines of the basic principles of sustainability.

Publications of the author in the subject matter of the present paper

Published in scientific journals and conference publications:

- Mikházi Zs., Szilvácsku Zsolt. Országos tájérték adatbázis – A magyarországi vonzerők gyűjteménye (National landscape value database) – Collection of the forces of attraction in Hungary), In: Turizmus Bulletin, 2010, Vol. XIV, No. 3, pp. 12-16.
- Zsolt Szilvácsku: Challenge of Value Based Impact Assessments, Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Agriculture and Environment, Supplement 2011, 310–318 p
- Szilvácsku Zsolt, Rév Szilvia, Egyházy Ágoston, Fülöp Gyula, Parrag Tibor, Sipos Katalin and Szabó Balázs: Kezelés és gazdálkodás: a sokszempontú tervezés mint a pannóniai szárazgyepek jövőjének kulcsa (Pannon gyepek élőhelykezelése Magyarországon – LIFE-Nature projekt) (Management and farming: multi-aspect planning as the key to the future of dry lawns in the Pannonia region /Living space management of dry lawns in the Pannonia region – LIFE-Nature project/), „Gyepterületeink védelme: kutatás, kezelés, rekonstrukció és gazdálkodás” IV. (Protection of our lawn areas: research, management, reconstruction and farming), Magyar Természetvédelmi Biológiai Konferencia – műhelytalálkozó (Hungarian Nature Conservation Biological Conference – Workshop meeting), Tokaj, 29 – 31 March 2007, pp. 110-132.
- Szilvácsku Zsolt, Molnár Zsolt, Szabó Balázs, Fülöp Gyula and Karas László: A gyepterületek védelme és a biológiai sokféleséggel, a területhasználattal kapcsolatos döntéshozatal (Protection of lawn areas and decision-making related to biodiversity and land use), **plenary presentation**, III. Magyar Természetvédelmi Biológiai Konferencia (3rd Hungarian Nature Conservation Conference), 2005, Eger, pp. 52-64.
- Szilvácsku Zs.: Az értékalapú hatásvizsgálatok kihívásai és a TÉKA-program (Challenges of value based impact assessments and the TÉKA programme), In: Tájékadémia I.: Tájértékek szerepe a tájkarakter meghatározásában (Role of landscape values in the definition of landscape characters), Scientific conference, 2010, Budapest, pp. 147-154.
- Szilvácsku Zs.: Érték- és közösségalapú fejlesztések – Alapelvek, lehetőségek és korlátok hazai példák alapján (Value based developments – Basic principles, opportunities and limits presented through Hungarian

- examples), In: Tájakadémia II (Landscape Academy II): Tájmetria / Tájértékelés Tudományos Konferencia (Landscape Metrics / Landscape Evaluation Scientific Conference), 2011, Budapest, pp. 73-83.
- Szilvácsku Zsolt: Örségi beruházások környezeti kockázatai (Environmental risks of investments made in Órség), Ipari környezetvédelmi konferencia (Industrial environmental protection conference), 1995, Budapest, p. 32.
- Szilvácsku Zs.: A tájökölógiai szempontok a különböző döntéshozatali folyamatok során alkalmazott stratégiai környezeti vizsgálatokban (Landscape ecological aspects in the strategic environmental assessments applied during the different decision-making processes), III. Magyar Tájökölógiai Konferencia (3rd Hungarian Landscape Ecological Conference), 2008, Budapest, p. 76.
- Szilvácsku Zs.: Értékközpontú és eredményes térségfejlesztés a natúrparkok példáján (Value Centric and Successful Regional Development, the Example of Nature Parks), V. Magyar Tájökölógiai Konferencia (5th Hungarian Landscape Ecological Conference), 2012, Sopron, p. 86.
- Szilvácsku Zs.: Reguláció és participáció a kistérségi kormányzásban és területfejlesztésben (Regulation and participation in small region governance and in regional management), VI. Magyar Földrajzi Konferencia (6th Hungarian Geographical Conference), 2012, Szeged, p. 65.
- Szilvácsku Zs.: Challenge of value based impact assessments in transitioning to sustainability, IAIA10 Conference - The Role of Impact Assessment in Transitioning to the Green Economy, 2010, Geneva, www.iaia.hu, 20 pp
- Szilvácsku, Zs.: Natura 2000 in Hungary – Establishment and Evaluation, presentation, Annual Meeting of EUROSITE, 2002.
- Szilvácsku, Zs.: Agri-environmental program and the professional advisory activity, presentation, Workshop of EUROSITE, 2003.
- Szilvácsku. Zs.: Challenge of value based impact assessments (in especial SEA) for sustainability, 1. Transilvanian Horticulture and Landscape Studies Conference, 2011, Marosvásárhely (Tirgu-Mures)

Books, sections of books

- Szilvácsku Zs., 2011. Tájértékek szerepe a társadalomban (Role of landscape values in the society), In: Rejtőzködő Kincsek – TÉKA Tájértékek Magyarországon (Hiding Treasures – TÉKA Landscape

- Values in Hungary), (eds.: Máté Zs. –Kollányi L.), Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem Tájtervezési és Területfejlesztési Tanszék, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Nemzeti Örökségvédelmi Központ, Budapest, 26 pp
- Szilvácsku Zs. – Gilly Gyula, 2010. Országépítő tervezés (Country Building Planning), In: Keresztény gyökerek és a boldog magyar élet (Christian Life and Happy Hungarian Life), Keresztény Értelmiségek Szövetsége, Budapest, p. 16.
- Szilvácsku, Zs. 2003. Stratégiai Környezeti Vizsgálatok gyakorlata az Európai Unióban (Practice of Strategic Environmental Assessments in the European Union), Discussion, Regio et Natura series, I., Vitaregnat Bt., Budapest, p. 180.
- Szilvacsku, Zs. et al. 2004 Report on Birds Directive European Court of Justice Cases with Case Summaries, BirdLife International, London, p. 60.

Study plans and studies related to the subject matter

- Management of the strategic environmental assessment of the National Catch-Basin Management Plan), 2008-2010;
- Management of the strategic environmental assessment of the National Sustainable Development Strategy), 2006-2007;
- Management of the strategic environmental assessment of the National Strategic Reference Framework of 15 Operational Programs for the period between 2007 and 2013), 2006-2007;
- Management of the strategic environmental assessment of the Environmental Operational Programme for the National Strategic Reference Framework for the period between 2007 and 2013);
- Szilvácsku Zs.: Sustainability Assessment of Hungarian National Development Plan, CEEWEB, 2003

Within the framework of the legal harmonisation of the directive of the European Union on the environmental impact assessments of certain plans and programmes examination of the effects of the draft legislation on the environment, and the analyses of the related case studies from the perspective of implementation.

Guidelines for the enforcement of social sustainability for the project hosts, applicants and evaluators of the State Reform Operational Programme and the Electronic Public Administration Operational Programme.

Co-ordination and development of the preparatory works for the environmental impact assessment of regional plans (legislation and

guidelines). Preparation of the legal regulations for the SEA and methodological examinations. Co-ordination activities of international assessment team for the ESPOO treaty.

Szilvácsku Zsolt and Molnár Ferenc: Az EU egyes tervek és programok környezetre való hatásainak vizsgálatáról szóló irányelv jogharmonizációjának keretében a jogszabálytervezet környezetre gyakorolt hatásainak vizsgálata és kapcsolódó esettanulmányok elemzése a végrehajthatóság szempontjából (Examination and analyses of the environmental impacts, within the framework of the directive on the environmental impacts of certain plans and programmes, of the draft) Budapest, 2004. /R+D/, project leader;

Szilvácsku Zsolt: Tervek és projektek hatásainak vizsgálata az élőhely védelmi irányelv előírásainak értelmében – Szempontok a Natura 2000 területekkel kapcsolatos környezeti vizsgálatok elvégzéséhez az EU Bizottság Iránymutatásai és az egyes tagállamok gyakorlata alapján (Examination and assessment of the impacts of plans and projects in accordance with the regulations of the directive on the protection of habitats – Aspects for the performance of the examinations of the NATURA 2000 areas on the basis of the Guidelines of the EU Commission and the practices of certain Member States), Budapest, 2003, R+D, project leader.