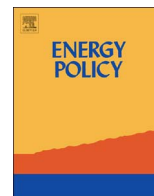




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Cross-sectoral coordination for sustainable solutions in Croatia: The (meta) governance of energy efficiency

Stamatios Christopoulos^a, Cansu Demir^{a,*}, Michael Kull^b

^a Sustainable Development Team, UNDP Europe and the CIS, Istanbul Regional Hub, Key Plaza, Abide-i Hürriyet Cd. İstiklal Sk. No/11, Şişli, 34381 Istanbul, Turkey

^b Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (Nordregio), Holmammälens Väg 10, 111 86 Stockholm, Sweden

HIGHLIGHTS

- This study identified how metagovernance has supported coordination among actors.
- State played a key role in the coordination by acting as a catalyst.
- UNDP acted as a mediator between government and society for capacity building.
- Public authorities are less likely to continue activities without external support.
- Private sector's knowledge and resources are crucial to support project objectives.

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ABSTRACT

Increasing the energy efficiency not only requires the improvement of current technologies, but also advancement of and more coherent institutional governance. This paper captures the major structural and organisational elements of institutional governance in place for promoting energy efficiency. Looking at Croatia – one of the most successful cases of energy efficiency programming of the past decade – the paper zooms in on governance coordination (metagovernance) between actors from different sectors and operating at multiple levels. By showcasing the positive implications of the programme, the authors contribute to the debate concerned with identifying better institutional frameworks to attain sustainable development. The programme showed effective governance through vertical and horizontal coordination among institutions and stakeholders resulting in simultaneous social and economic development and improved energy efficiency in public buildings. Through the case of Croatia, this study identifies how metagovernance has supported coordination among actors aiming to create sustainable development in general and how metagovernance functions in energy efficiency related projects, in particular. The paper also sheds light on communication frameworks of governance coordination and institutional constraints lying at the heart of the vagueness of sustainable development. It also discusses private sector involvement to achieve better institutional framework to attain sustainable development.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Governance of energy efficiency

Increasing energy demand, volatility in oil pricing, climate change negotiations and lasting energy-driven economic growth increase the concerns over providing adequate energy efficiency (EE) governance, which is a complex, multi-level set of social interactions between a variety of actors. Hence, adequate energy interventions require strong stakeholders to inform and coordinate the actions of various actors, such as consumers, producers, national and public authorities in the energy industry (Delina, 2012).

Abbreviations: CFL, Compact Fluorescent Lamp; CSO, Civil Society Organization; EE, Energy Efficiency; EMIS, Energy Management Information System in the Cities and Counties in Croatia; EPEEF, Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund; GDP, Gross Domestic Product; GEF, Global Environmental Facility; HEP ESCO, Energy Service Providing Company; HiO, Programme of Croatian Government "Bringing Own House in Order"; IEA, International Energy Agency; MLG, Multi-level Governance; MoC, Ministry of Croatia; MoE, Ministry of Economy; PMTSU, Project Management and Technical Support Unit; SD, Sustainable Development; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme

* Corresponding and first author.

E-mail addresses: stamatios.christopoulos@undp.org, schri@aua.gr (S. Christopoulos), cansu.demir90@gmail.com, cansu.demir@undp.org (C. Demir), michael.kull@nordregio.se (M. Kull).

The International Energy Agency (IEA) defines energy governance as a combination of legislative frameworks and funding mechanisms, institutional arrangements, and coordination mechanisms that work together to support the implementation of EE strategies, policies and programmes. According to the IEA, an effective EE governance system would:

- (a) confer sufficient authority to implement EE policies and programmes;
- (b) build political consensus on EE goals and strategy;
- (c) create effective partnerships for policy development and implementation;
- (d) assign responsibility and create accountability;
- (e) mobilise resources needed for EE policy implementation; and
- (f) establish a means to oversee results.

(IEA, 2010).

However, defining good governance for EE is challenging, as there is much of diversity within and between countries and their government structures. IEA claims that the public sector is in demand of creating a balance between enabling affordable frameworks, adequate institutional arrangements and comprehensive coordination mechanisms (IEA, 2010). Therefore, a sound combination of efficient market mechanisms, technology development and government policies is also required for achieving EE satisfying the diverse needs of millions of energy consumers, from large production plants to individual households (Jollands et al., 2011).

The authors of this paper contend that, to improve EE governance, governments, private sector and EE stakeholders must work hand in hand, and coherently, in order to achieve greater energy improvements and to ensure energy security. At the same time, joint interventions should foster economic development in a sustainable and secure way. This article sheds light on a successful case of steering and coordination of the governance for EE, by specifically looking at the issue of energy conservation in public buildings in Croatia. It analyses how market mechanisms, informal and formal actor networks, government, and technological interventions were coordinated to achieve 'effective EE governance'.

1.2. Governance, multi-level governance and metagovernance

The Croatian EE Programme is a remarkable example of an efficient governance framework that shows us how the combination of economic development and environmental protection improved social development in the country. Before analysing the reasons behind the efficiency of the governance framework and the success of the EE Programme, we shed a light on epistemology and ontology of multi-level and metagovernance and their conceptual histories.

Some scholars make a distinction between government and governance. Rosenau (1992) claims that governance is more comprehensive than government, not only involving governmental institutions, but also including informal and non-governmental mechanisms, where organisations and persons satisfy their needs and fulfil their wants under these mechanisms. Additionally, Rosenau differentiates between governance and governments in terms of power and acceptability of people:

"Governance is a system of rule that works only if it's accepted by the majority (or, at least, by the most powerful of those it affects), whereas governments can function even in the face of widespread opposition to their policies."

(Rosenau, 1992: 4).

Synthesising scholarly work conducted after the (re)emergence of the governance term from the early 1990s shows that some

scholars saw in the emergence of "new governance" a weakening of the state and of government, and a move from government to governance. A critical reflection on scholarly work and on the different manifestations of state and public sector transformation built on the extreme culmination of "governance without government" – the New Public Management doctrine – is provided by Peters and Pierre (1998). Jessop (2003) refers to the concept of "multi-level governance"¹ when discussing the emergence of new forms of governance and their relations to government. These new forms of partnership, negotiation and networking were created in order to cope with the declining legitimacy and governance failures in policy making and implementation. Yet, research on multi-level governance has identified a number of problems, such as participation, co-ordination, accountability, effectiveness, openness and coherence and sustainability (Dabrowski, 2014; Jeffery, 2000; Kull, 2014; Piattoni, 2010). Research shows that while new forms of governance were constructed as offering solutions to state or market failure, their complex environment and composition including actors with different functional backgrounds located at multiple levels causes remarkable coordination challenges (e.g. Chardas, 2012; Kull and Tatar, 2015). Jessop (2011) argues that the obsession with new modes of governance made its proponents at times blind for the failure of the new envisaged and realised forms of coordination inherent of new governance. In our view, European Union Member States, such as Croatia, the country this article focuses on, underwent important transformations because of the emergence and institutionalisation of new governance structures, e.g. due to European integration. Yet, national governments remain in a powerful position (Bache, 1999; Bache and Flinders, 2005; Bache and Andreou, 2010; Kettunen and Kull, 2009). The state has a key role in setting the framework and legal conditions for new governance. Operating at different territorial scales, the state is – in many cases – the key player in the coordination of governance, some scholars also define as metagovernance. Jessop (2011) identifies regulation, steering, structuration and organization in these contexts as metagovernance and refers to earlier research by Bortel and Mullins (2009) and Bovaird (2005).

Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen (2007) have shown that new governance systems may be more effective if a metagovernance approach is strengthened. Metagovernance is interested in the interconnectedness of government and new governance, and seeks to identify and strengthen the means for more participatory, effective and efficient governance outcomes. As research has shown, this requires a balanced patchwork of government, market, and social actions, each contributing in its own domains of comparative advantage (Christopoulos et al., 2012). This also means that different actors in metagovernance have joint functions as well as their own specific role.

Our literature review on the substance and meaning of metagovernance shows that there are nuances among metagovernance scholars and their perceptions on the role of the state and the coordination of public policies within a metagovernance framework (Jessop, 2003; Whitehead, 2003; Sørensen, 2005; Kooiman and Jentoft, 2009; Meuleman, 2010; Engberg and Larsen, 2010; Glasbergen, 2011). Ideally, metagovernance creates an inclusive environment for weak(er) actors through mechanisms of empowerment, mediation among parties that are in dispute, creation of accountability and responsibility. For successful metagovernance, the provision of and access to information, knowledge and institutional learning are highly important (Wetterberg,

¹ According to Jessop (2003) multi-level governance was introduced to describe new forms of public authority that link different territorial scales above and below the national level, and also mobilise functional as well as territorial actors.

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