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PROJECT EVALUATION

6

INTRODUCTION

Moderate- to large-scale urban design projects are aimed at improving social, economic and infrastructure conditions rather than focusing on the single objective of physical urban renewal. For instance, projects aimed at regenerating inner cities are planned as a series of interrelated actions in which the increase of employment levels is interlinked with sustainable improvement in general. For this type of project the issue of methods and techniques needs to be considered from an economic and social perspective. There is the need to integrate the traditional urban design evaluation instruments with methods and techniques which can give an insight into the social, economic and environmental impacts the project is intended to produce.

ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF URBAN DESIGN PROJECTS

The most important technique used to carry out an economic evaluation of urban design projects is cost-benefit analysis. This assessment is necessary when there are several alternative proposals among

which decision-makers have to choose or where they have to appraise the feasibility of one single project.

The overall objectives to be achieved through the project are the starting point of this assessment. As stated in Chapter 1 the goals of urban design are threefold: 'to design and build urban developments which are both structurally and functionally sound while at the same time giving pleasure to those who see development'. These three main goals are guided by the main aim of sustainable development. These general principles are then to be tailored to the local situation. For the successful achievement of project objectives these objectives should be defined in measurable terms.¹ Ill-defined objectives can produce a misunderstanding about what the programme is meant to achieve. Widespread problems arise when objectives are presented in a vague form. When the objectives are stated in a clear and measurable form an *ex-ante* assessment in terms of cost-benefit analysis can be carried out more easily.

The cost-benefit analysis is an evaluation method based on the estimation of costs and benefits a specific project produces, in relation to the stated objectives. The cost-benefit ratios of several projects are compared in order to choose the most