

Summary and outcomes

Scientific review of the Eurbanlab Assessment Method

Eurbanlab has developed an assessment method that gives confidence and trust in innovative urban concepts (products, technologies, systems). It provides organisations with a means (1) to evaluate or predict the positive impact of a (proposed) project, (2) measure and learn from the achieved sustainable impact of a completed project and/or (3) identify the process required to accelerate the achievement of sustainable results. The assessment is an indicator-based method. It scores plans or projects on over 60 indicators. Adding process and context, to the standard people, planet, profit categories creates a unique breadth that ensures a comprehensive and holistic assessment of sustainable urban innovations. This enables Eurbanlab to recommend improvements for the project, on content and on process. Eurbanlab has developed an assessment version 1.0 on which in 2013 Eurbanlab executed several test assessments. After that, a scientific review was executed by a scientific review panel between November 2013 and January 2014, consisting of the following people:

- Dr. Fred Steward - Professor of Innovation & Sustainability at Policy Studies Institute, London, UK
- Prof. Frédéric de Coninck - Director of Urban Futures Research Federation, Marne-la-Vallée, FR
- Dr. Pekka Lahti - Chief Research Scientist, Energy Efficient Solutions at the Technical Research Centre of Finland, FI
- Prof. Raoul Bunschoten - Professor of Sustainable Urban Planning and Urban Design at the TU Berlin, DE
- Prof. Dr. P.P.J. Driessen – Professor at the University of Utrecht, NL

The goal of this scientific review was to check both the quality as the robustness of the assessment method. The panel has discussed the uniqueness, the breadth and the quality of the assessment method during two meetings. The following main conclusions and recommendations were the outcome of the discussions:

Uniqueness

- The panel reviewed that the Eurbanlab assessment method is interestingly different from the wide variety of existing urban assessment tools because of its holistic approach. Especially the indicators on the potential for propagation of urban innovations are a unique feature.

Breadth

- The panel advised to create versatility, avoid narrowness from too much specialization, and adapt the method to be used in a variation of urban projects.
- Therefore, the panel suggested to build a roadmap starting from the built environment perspective and evolve from there.

Quality

- There is a need to reflect on the advantages and risks of the current analyst-based weighing scheme; consider the opportunities and downsides of switching to an actor-based instrument.
- Regarding the Executive Assessment Report, there is a need for better connection between the quantitative results and the narrative; provide more robust conclusions.
- Transparency is essential; indicators, methods and underlying choices should be better explained to the customers.

Further development

Eurbanlab appreciates that the uniqueness of its assessment method is being recognised, because this is exactly what Eurbanlab wanted to achieve.

Eurbanlab strives for a continued improvement of the assessment method. Therefore in 2014 Eurbanlab has been working on widening the breath of the assessment method by looking at the possibilities for transportation, smart-city development etc.

In line of quality improvement of the method, a tool has been developed to control and increase the quality of the assessments performed by the Eurbanlab assessors. To promote more robust conclusions, the Executive Assessment Report and the evaluations templates have been connected. Next to this Eurbanlab is working on increasing the transparency of the method by explaining the method in flyers and several reports. Furthermore an open access, online assessment tool has been created.

More information about the assessment method can be found here:
<http://eurbanlab.eu/assessments/>