



Developing Regulatory Frameworks for Green Infrastructure: Issues to Be Addressed

Suvi Borgström, researcher, and Jukka Similä, division manager, Finnish Environment Institute, Environmental Policy Center/Environmental Governance Studies Unit

ABSTRACT

Ecosystems are under a great pressure from intensive human use, habitat fragmentation and climate change. As a result, biodiversity and associated ecosystem services are declining. Green infrastructure (GI) is an emerging policy response to these challenges. The central idea behind the concept is the understanding of the natural environment as an infrastructure resource capable of delivering variety of ecological, economic and social benefits (Frischmann 2012). Just as “traditional” infrastructure such as road systems and mobile networks requires investment and management, so does GI. Investing in GI can make significant contribution towards number of policy objectives including protecting natural capital, helping species and people adapt to and mitigate climate change, increasing human health and well-being as well as facilitating sustainable growth (COM (2013)249).

In order to maximize GI benefits, comprehensive policies and actions are needed at different scales. At the EU level GI strategy will provide an enabling framework for promoting GI initiatives and policies within the context of existing legislation, policy instruments and funding mechanisms (COM(2013)249). However, new policy instruments and changes in existing regulatory frameworks may be needed at the national, regional and local level. Development of GI policies and initializing effective and cost-efficient initiatives and projects at different scales requires further investigation in scientific paradigms behind the concept and development of new planning and measuring tools. Furthermore, research is needed to assess the role of existing regulatory frameworks in sustaining and enhancing GI. The potential regulatory gaps to be filled and legal barriers to be removed need to be identified. Also the potentiality of different policy instruments for mobilizing green infrastructure investments should be assessed. This paper discusses the challenges and possibilities for green infrastructure governance and aims to develop a tool for assessing regulatory frameworks for GI. The tool provides means for identifying relevant policy measures and instruments for GI and criteria for their assessment.

REFERENCES

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