

Reinventing the planning process: Monitoring and Evaluation Istanbul case study

(Reinventing the planning process: Monitoring and Evaluation. Istanbul case study)

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INTRODUCTION

With recent developments in planning approaches and increasing importance of strategic planning, building a proper planning process is becoming more important than ever. Subsequently, the importance of the implementation process and specifically monitoring and evaluation (M&E) make significant debate in planning theory and practice today.

Lack of coordination between plans and planning institutions and inefficient legal frameworks have impaired the plan implementation processes in developed and developing countries. Moreover, with the added flexibility strategic planning brings, new approaches transform the planning process negatively in developing countries that don't have proper M&E background or systems.

This paper argues that the existence of an effective M&E system in a well-designed planning process is the key driver to strengthen relations between different plans; leading to fewer problems in plan execution. The first section of the research summarizes the planning process concerning the development of planning approaches, the relations between different plans and also effects of strategic planning on these. The next section is based on research analysing Istanbul Metropolitan Area plans' M&E stages. As part of this research, the planning process and M&E activity in various plans are revealed by face-to-face interviews with several members of governmental bodies in Istanbul Metropolitan Area who participate actively in the planning process. In the final section, research findings are used to propose a general M&E model for Istanbul Metropolitan Area. The study model aims to provide solutions to the integration problems of different plans that are prepared by different planning institutions, in order to increase the efficiency of the planning process by way of improving the M&E system.

This paper is intended to become a guide for cities that experience similar problems centred around integration of different plans and coordination between different planning institutions; for creating an easier, better and faster decision making structure by using the provided M&E model in reinventing the planning process.

1. Development of Planning Approaches and M&E Process

Since the 1940's, no significant change has occurred in the definition of the planning process, which was identified as plan preparation, implementation and revision stages. Ratcliffe (1974) has also summarized the planning process as "decision to adopt planning; formulation of goals; identification of objectives; preparation of alternative strategies; evaluation; implementation; monitoring and review".

Yet from 1970's planning approach has started to evolve from 'rigid' comprehensive planning to 'flexible' strategic planning and the importance of these stages have changed (Ayrancı, 2013). The implementation phase in the planning process became much more important than ever with strategic planning approach.

On the other hand, changes in planning approaches created new issues due to increasing number of plans and planning institutions and also variety of stakeholders. In addition to this, the power of local governance and importance of participation have become key factors in planning. However all of these developments have involuntarily led to an apparent lack of coordination between planning institutions and plans. This research focuses on the planning process, specifically on the implementation and revision of (Figure 1).

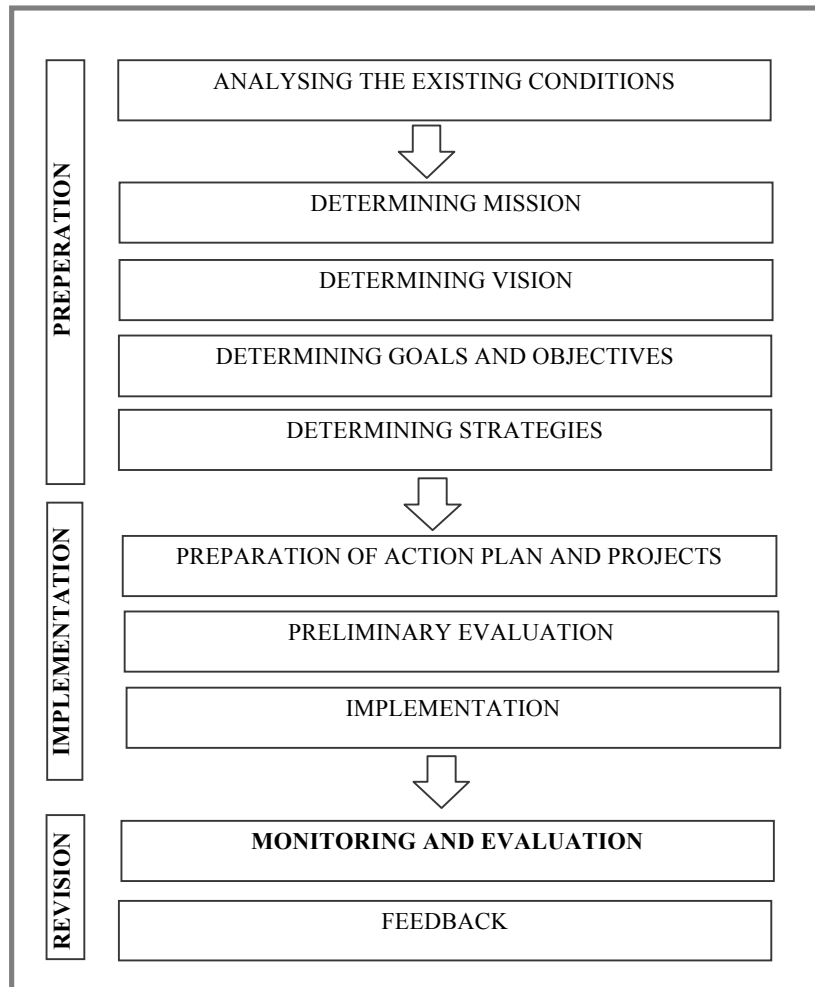


Figure 1. Planning process (Ayrancı and Zeren Gülersoy, 2009)

Focusing on the planning process, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is found to be the key driver to strengthen relations between different plans; leading to fewer problems in plan execution and success at implementation. Considering literary definitions of M&E, monitoring is “the systematic documentation of aspects of performance that indicate whether or not activities are functioning as intended or according to some appropriate standard” (Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsey, 1999). And evaluation is “the systematic assessment of the operation and/or outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement” of the activity (Weiss, 1998).

During the past decade, monitoring and evaluation in planning gained importance with the strategic planning approach and became the main subject of development of planning policies, academic discussions and planning implementation studies (UN-Habitat, 2009). Especially in developed countries, not only planners but also governance authorities have recognised the importance of M&E and started to use it effectively in planning (Chen, 2009).

Period	Planning Approach	Planning Characteristics	Monitoring and Evaluation
Late 19th century	Classical Planning/City Beautiful	Non-governmental, individual planning	(-) none
1930-1945	Comprehensive Planning	Central, state governance and planning	(*) insignificant
1945-1960	Incremental Planning	Central but more flexible and fragmentary planning	
1960-1980	Advocacy Planning and Pluralism	Criticising central planning	(**) less important
1980-1990	Collaborative Planning	Neoliberal strategies	(***) increasingly
1990-2000	Strategic Planning	Participation	(****) important
After 2000	Flexible planning	Coordination problem	(*****) very important

Figure 2. Development of Planning Approach (Ayrancı, 2013. Unpublished PhD Thesis)

In developing countries, planning process is centered on preparation and implementation of the plan which is seen a purely technical work and is rarely followed by a well-designed M&E practice.

2. M&E in Istanbul Metropolitan Area

The conceptual background of M&E has still not matured in Turkey despite the growing number of academic research. Planning process is still not considered as a whole that indicates also the revision phase. Preparation and implementation of the plan is seen a purely technical work and rarely followed by a well-designed M&E practice. And the fact that an appropriate M&E system can increase efficiency of the planning process by integrating different plans has still not been recognised. Focusing on the top to down urban governance structure in Istanbul, has still not been recognized problems about the links between different plans prepared by different authorities are easily perceived (Figure 3).

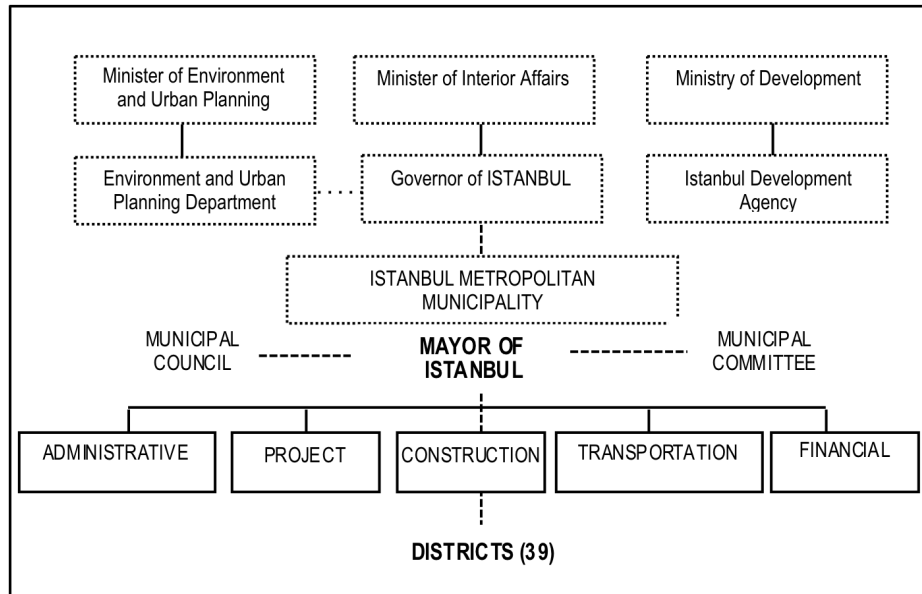


Figure 3. Istanbul Governance Structure (Ayrancı, 2013. Unpublished PhD Thesis)

In Istanbul, there are numerous planning authorities, which generally focus on the preparation of the plan and disregard the broader planning process.

Istanbul is the leading city in Turkey with its population and economic significance. But it did not have an integrated plan until 2005, when Istanbul's boundary was overlapped with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) jurisdiction area. Though this was an attempt to resolve plan implementation and coordination problems by preparing a single plan per area, it proved to be inadequate.

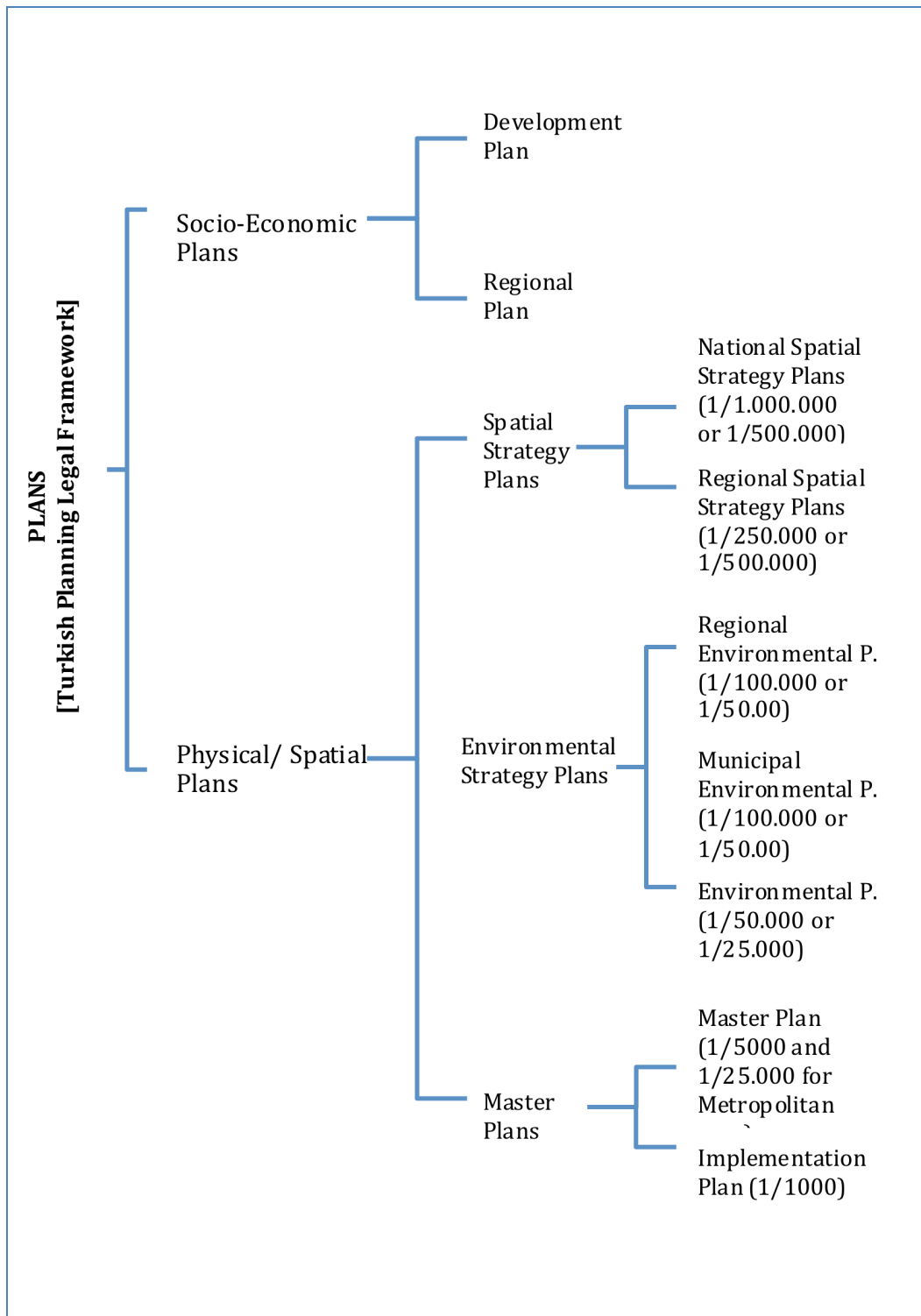


Figure 4. Turkish Planning System (Ünal, 2015)

This research evaluates Istanbul's plan and jurisdiction hierarchy with regards to M&E stages in these plans. Responsible authorities in Istanbul's plan hierarchy are listed below:

- Istanbul Regional Plan – Istanbul Development Agency
- Environmental Master Plan (1/100.000) – IMM Department of Housing and Urban Development, Urban Planning Directorate
- Istanbul Metropolitan Area Plan (1/50.000) – IMM (cancelled)
- Master Plan (1/5.000) – IMM

Other plans:

- Istanbul Transportation Master Plan – IMM Transportation Department, Transportation Planning Directorate
- Istanbul Historic Peninsula Site Management Plan – Istanbul Site Management Directorate, IMM Investigation and Projects Department, the Historic Environment Conservation Directorate
- IMM Strategic Plan – IMM Strategic Planning Directorate

This study is based on a PhD research on the relation of planning and urban development management in Istanbul Metropolitan Area by İrem Ayrancı at Istanbul Technical University. The research question posed was “How is the relation between planning and urban management structured in Istanbul Metropolitan Area?”. In this context the research discovers monitoring and evaluation in Istanbul Planning System.

As a method, face-to-face interviews were conducted by a structured questionnaire. This interview strategy enabled the comparison different participants and allowed opposing opinions to be shared. It is important to have open-ended questions, in order not to restrict the participant and bring forward different approaches.

Interviews were carried out with the people actively involved in the planning and plan execution of Istanbul planning system. The interviews executed with regional and local governance bodies (top-down) are grouped under the following headings:

- Ministry of Development, Istanbul Development Agency,
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Urban Planning Directorate,
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Planning Directorate,
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Transportation Planning Directorate,
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Historic Environment Conservation Directorate,
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Strategic Planning Directorate.

All plans were analysed on effectiveness and efficiency of M&E during the interviews. However, since there isn't any systematic M&E framework explicitly defined in Istanbul Planning System, questions were prepared to find out whether M&E exists in the planning process and how it works in Istanbul's planning system. The aim was to put forth the importance of M&E in planning process for better urban governance. The interviews with managers and technical staff show that (Ayrancı, 2013):

- There is no systematic M&E framework in any plans.
- Despite describing M&E in the planning process of Istanbul Regional Plan and Istanbul Environmental Master Plan, there is no defined M&E system put in place in the planning and implementation process.
- There is project-based M&E existing in the Regional Plan, which is mandatory for performance evaluation of the funding program.
- The managers/planners, who are responsible for large-scale plans progressively realised the importance of M&E due to the strategic planning approach.
- There is a gap between plan preparation and implementation in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Different people are responsible for preparation and implementation phases. This causes a critical coordination problem in and in between the plans.
- Evaluation is more of a political process especially on large-scale, more visible plans/projects. Evaluation and revision depend on politicians and policies in these plans.
- Istanbul Transportation Master Plan (ITMP) and Istanbul Historic Peninsula Site Management Plan (HPMP) are found to be exceptions in the research. Despite the lack of a systematic and active system, M&E is defined in the plans for planners and managers to become more knowledgeable about the process. In both ITMP and HPMP, planning process evaluations are reported and shared with the stakeholders, which provides a knowledge flow and integration.

The research proposes proper implementation of M&E into the Istanbul Planning System because the findings indicate that Planning System is lacking these stages. Interview findings indicate that M&E in planning aims at “controlling plan implementation; increasing efficiency and productivity; accelerating feasibility, providing feedback; specializing on

implementation; inspecting the plan". It is important that M&E is perceived as a 'positive' process that is necessary for effective planning.

Findings show that the general perception of planning process mainly consists of plan preparation and implementation. M&E is not outlined in planning process and none of the revisions are carried out with/as a result of systematic M&E. Most of the plan revisions are mainly conducted as a result of political conflicts (in large-scale regional plans) and personal objections or property value contradictions (in master plans).

It is clearly evident that M&E is widely neglected in the Istanbul planning system. Lack of M&E does not only damage the planning process itself; but also, it impairs the link between the different plans and also entire planning system.

3. M&E Model Proposal for Istanbul Metropolitan Area

Based on the results of the research, a comprehensive M&E model has been prepared for Istanbul Metropolitan Area. The model has been structured around a matrix which has four main subjects: stakeholders, process, tools and results and communication (Figure 5).

3.1 Stakeholders

First and most important point at the model proposal is determining the stakeholders of M&E process. In this context, M&E should be defined in the current planning and management structures with the main actors being central and local governance bodies, NGO's / associations, neighbourhood councils, investors and others. Determining the stakeholders are also important for the integration of the different plans.

Another important point is the roles and responsibilities of the actors. Two separate project units are proposed for the Model. The monitoring unit must incorporate a core selection of the planning team involved. Its actions must be sustained through the whole planning process and be communicated at regular intervals. The evaluation unit should incorporate a core selection of the monitoring unit and can include other stakeholders as well. At some cases, it might be suitable to totally outsource the evaluation process.

3.2 Process

Considering the variety of the plans in Istanbul, structuring the M&E process of the plan is a very critical issue. M&E process must be designed depending on the type and scale of the plan. Building blocks of M&E process are feedbacks mechanisms, such as conferences, meetings, round table discussions, workshops, documents, surveys, polls, on-line tools and etc.

Phasing the process and M&E frequency must be structured with in the planning process, during preparation of the plan.

As an on-going process, monitoring progress must be reported on regular intervals. The reporting frequency can be determined according to the plan, quarterly, annually, etc. These interim reports will form the basis of the evaluation.

Evaluation, depending on the plan type and scale can be carried out before, during and after the implementation phase.

3.3 Tools

The effectiveness of M&E model depends of determining the indicators and criteria. Data collection methodology is diversified with a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. Commonly used qualitative technics are face-to-face interviews, examination of external-source documents, measurement and subjective observations, surveys, etc. Quantitative technics are questionnaire and statistical data / GIS applications.

Multiple KPI's for the plan are determined by using a participatory approach; such as stakeholder meetings. Strategic goals of the plan should be used for determining these KPI's. For secondary goals, softer indicators can be used where a hard targeted and measured KPI cannot be put in place. Evaluation criteria are led by monitoring indicators and plan objectives.

STAKEHOLDERS	PROCESS	TOOLS	RESULTS AND COMMUNICATION
Actors / Stakeholders / List of participants	Building blocks	Data collection methodology	Communication
Central government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment and Urban Pl. Ministry of Development Development Agencies Local government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met. Municipalities District Municipalities NGO's / Associations Neighbourhood councils Investors and others...	Feedback mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conferences meetings round table discussions workshops documents surveys polls on-line tools others 	Qualitative Face-to-face interviews Examination of external-source documents Measurement and subjective observations Surveys Quantitative Questionnaire Statistical data/ GIS applications	The interim reports of the Monitoring Unit must be made available on many mediums as they become available. (web, e-book, print, others) The final Evaluation report must be announced with a press conference and be opened for discussion via a general stakeholder meeting.
Roles / Responsibilities	Phasing and M&E frequency	Indicators / criteria	Turning results into action
Two separate project units are proposed for the Monitoring and Evaluation processes: MONITORING UNIT The monitoring unit must incorporate a core selection of the planning team involved. Its actions must be sustained through the whole planning process; And be communicated at regular intervals EVALUATION UNIT The evaluation unit should incorporate a core selection of the monitoring unit and can include other stakeholders as well. At some cases, it might be suitable to totally outsource the evaluation process.	MONITORING As Monitoring is an ongoing process, its progress must be reported on regular intervals. The reporting frequency can be determined according to the plan, quarterly, annually, etc. These interim reports will form the basis of the evaluation. EVALUATION Evaluation, depending on the plan type and scale can be carried out before, during and after the implementation phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-evaluation Peri-evaluation Post-evaluation 	Monitoring indicators / KPI's Multiple KPI's for the plan are determined by using a participatory approach; such as stakeholder meetings. Strategic goals of the plan should be used for determining these KPI's. For secondary goals softer indicators can be used where a hard targeted and measured KPI cannot be put in place. Evaluation criteria Evaluation criteria are led by monitoring indicators and plan objectives.	Revision of the plan.

Figure 5. M&E matrix in planning (Ayrancı, 2013. Unpublished PhD Thesis)

3.4 Results and communication

Results and communication are very significant for the M&E model. Most important result of M&E is receiving feedback for the plan. A successful planning process depends on communicating the M&E results. In this context, interim reports of the Monitoring Unit must

be made available on many mediums as they become available (web, e-book, print, others). And also the final evaluation report must be announced with a press conference and be opened for discussion via a general stakeholder meeting.

M&E in planning

M&E model proposal was prepared on the basis of the M&E matrix and was defined in Istanbul Historic Peninsula Site Management Plan, which was prepared with strategic planning approach. According to the model, monitoring and evaluation processes flow together with the planning process. Following chart displays stakeholders, tools and results for M&E process (Figure 6).

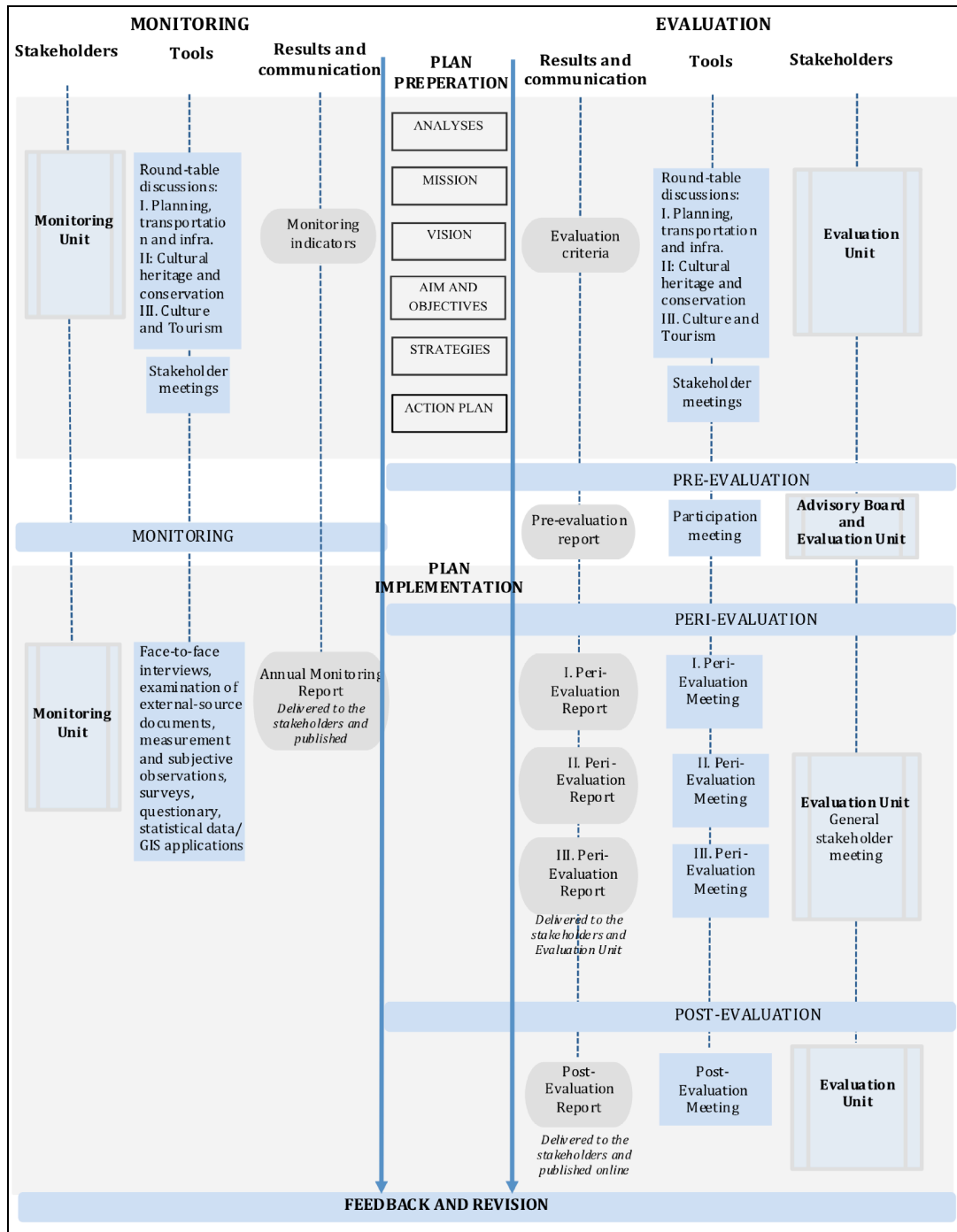


Figure 6. M&E in planning process (Ayrancı, 2013. Unpublished PhD Thesis)

As seen in the model chart, stakeholders actively participate in the whole process, requiring the inclusion of all responsible institutions of relevant plans for Istanbul. In M&E process, the participants and participation tools are defined properly, which is very important for the success of implementation process and also the relation between the different plans.

4. Conclusion

A well-designed planning process is one of the founding stones of efficient urban governance. Especially due to recent developments in planning theory leading to the predominance of strategic planning, the connection between planning practice and urban governance has become more important than ever.

In this context, efficient urban governance requires a comprehensive understanding of the planning process, with an emphasis on the fact that at times, management of the implementation is becoming even more important than the preparation of the plan itself.

The proposed M&E model aims to provide solutions to the integration problems of different plans prepared by different planning institutions in order to increase the efficiency of planning. Developing M&E in all plans will support implementation and management of the plans, construct a link between the plans and and policies from top to down.

This paper aims to become a guide for cities that experience similar problems centred around integration of different plans and coordination of different planning institutions; for creating an easier, better and faster decision making structure by using the provided M&E model in reinventing the planning process.

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