

A MODEL OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

As a follow-up to the paper “Project evaluation and social capital: Investment Plan for the Madrid districts of Villaverde and Usera (1998-2004)”, presented in the X congress of Project Engineering (Valencia, 2006), a Model of Management by Project for Local Development is presented. The model is rooted in the new paradigm of New Public Management whose basic principles are founded in effectiveness and efficiency of public management, in promoting public participation in decision-making for policy design, and in the search for transparency through mechanisms of control and follow-up. The model also considers reflections on the results obtained from the evaluation conducted by the Research Group GESPLAN (Sustainable Planning and Management of Rural/Local Development) of the Polytechnic University of Madrid and on the evolution of the first investment plan toward the new Special Investment Plans of Villaverde (2007-2011) and of Usera (2009-2013).

It is definitely hoped that this Model of Management by Projects will become a new tool for the management of public administrations in the sphere of local and urban development.

Key words: *new public management, projects, development, model.*

Introduction

Traditional public administration in the first half of the XX century was founded in the bureaucratic theory of Max Weber, who defended the imperious need to organize the administration through creating a set of norms and regulations, establishing authority of the hierarchical organization, and selecting personnel by merit and competence. Although, today, the concept of bureaucracy has acquired negative connotations related, in populist terms, with an excess of files and paperwork, or the inclination of functionaries toward strict application of the regulations and routines that cause inefficiency, this has nothing to do with what Weber understood in his day. His thoughts were on a bureaucracy as an efficient organizational structure, that is, a model of public management to face an economic context founded on capitalism.

However, by the 1950s criticism of the bureaucratic theory had already begun, arguing that it was not practical and was not able to solve the problems of public administration (Simon, 1946; Dahl, 1947). Some criticisms that continue to be heard in our days stress the tendency of the bureaucracy to manage public affairs in such a way as to seek only to solve its own needs. This trend became more transcendental as more funds were controlled and more tasks were undertaken (Gaebler and Osborne, 1992).

But not just criticism has existed. In the last two decades there have also been many contributions to the field of Public Management (OCDE, 2005). *Reinventing Government* (Gaebler and Osborne, 1992), *Public Value* (More, 1996) and *New Public Management* (Good, 1991; Boston et al., 1996) are some of the most outstanding examples.

Here, we will deal with the last of these concepts, *New Public Management*, as the integrating framework of the “Model of Management by Projects for Local Development”, which is the object of this communication.

1. New Public Management

The first report in which the OCDE (1995) mentions the New Public Management paradigm highlights the importance of aspects such as vocation for serving citizens, development of competence, flexibility in actions, improvement of resource and quality management, strengthening central leadership, and assuring performance, control and accountability. In effect, as Gómez-Pomar (2007, prologue) states, the New Public Management, together with other ideas, puts forth the role of governments and public administration as that of responding effectively to the demands of the citizens, by acting with transparency, having the capacity to adapt organizationally to social changes, and applying new technologies and quality criteria. These principles are actually a new way of behavior, giving citizens an increasingly more active role in demanding effectiveness and efficiency from government in carrying out its tasks and in designing systems of control to verify fulfillment. United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia were the countries where mainly developed management principles of the New Public Management.

There are, however, varying opinions. Barzelay (2001; 2002) argues that New Public Management is a sphere of professional debate over the structure, management and control of the administration of the public sector, that it is not an international current of thought, nor a set of novel ideas, nor a model for organizing public services, nor even a theory. Hood (1995) considers New Public Management a term that brings together different initiatives that were emerging in the sphere of the public sector in different countries at the same time. Thus, it can be seen as the intention to give the best responses under the circumstances. For Leeuw (1996), New Public Management underlines the application of effectiveness and efficiency in government organization, as well as the instruments and programs, to seek quality in the service with no special attention to procedures and norms.

This collage of pronouncements regarding New Public Management should not diminish its importance; all of the authors coincide in that the aim is to improve public management.

Summarizing, as García Sánchez (2007) has expressed, the aim of New Public Management is to create an effective, efficient administration that satisfies the needs of its citizens together with systems of control that grant complete transparency of the processes, plans and results and that favor their participation. Thus, we speak of a paradigm that proposes citizen participation, effectiveness and efficiency, and transparency in Public Management.

2. A Model of Management by Projects for Local Development (MPLD)

The selection and putting into practice of a given model of public management should satisfy the more or less generic aspirations regarding what an efficient, responsible government is. In this sense, the doctrines on government constitute the background for the management models New Public Management deals with, although, logically, these doctrines do not have a universal projection but depend on each concrete political or bureaucratic system (Barzelay, 2002).

The “Model of Management by Projects” presented here fulfills the expectations of responsibility and efficiency of New Public Management. It is presented as yet another tool available in the management sphere of Public Administration, specifically for local and urban development and comprehends the three basic pillars of this new paradigm: public participation, effectiveness and efficiency, and transparency.

Following Barzelay (2002), who stated that the intention of New Public Management is to avail the best responses under the circumstances, the model we present was the best response to a

concrete circumstance: the design and execution of the “Plan for investment in the Madrid districts of Villaverde and Usera (1998-2004)” and the “Special plan of territorial investment and action of Usera (2009-2013)”.

2.1 MPLD model. Public participation

Local governments have an important role in modern Public Administration (Hsu and Wang, 2004). In the sphere of local government, numerous attempts have been made to develop forms of public participation dating from the 1960s and 70s (Cockburn, 1977). The most modern version of these attempts, which is included in the debated issues of New Public Management, was what was called the “Local Government Agenda”, which advocated the involvement of the users, citizens and civil society in decision-making at the local level (Hoggett and Hambleton, 1987; Stewart and Stoker, 1988; Clarke and Stewart, 1991; Isaac-Henry and Painter, 1991).

In this sense, the first⁷ of the New Public Management postulates, which calls for public policies oriented toward the citizen, gains more relevance. This postulate has, nevertheless, been questioned by different authors, not because of the multitude of opportunities it offers local government, but because it does not delve more deeply into the connection between local government and citizens. It was thus proposed that the idea of local government be strengthened to cover this weakness in New Public Management (Pierre and Peters, 1998).

In this way, it remained clear that orientation toward citizen is fundamental in public management, but citizen participation is also crucial. Lowndes (1995) reflects that “public participation is the most valuable element of representative democracy. Therefore, the public has the authority to evaluate needs, value demands, assign priorities and follow up on the results of the political system”.

In the same line, Haus and Heinelt (2004) recognize two advantages to participation of the society: definition of the objectives expected of public policy, together with those responsible for the policies, and effectiveness in reaching those objectives, since society can help solve problems associated with initiation and execution of the policies.

In this process of change in public administration toward good government, citizen participation is the driving force (McTavish and Pyper, 2007) for planning and executing policies, plans and programs oriented toward the citizen. Indeed, citizen participation contributes to good government and at the same time encourages local governments to be more sensitive to citizens at the levels of municipal administration, the neighborhood and grassroot organizations.

Therefore, citizen participation acts as a true source of well-formed force, experienced knowledge (Friedmann, 2001), in the public sphere, with the responsibility of safeguarding their interests in establishing a system of responsible and transparent government (Salih, 2003) and in working together with its expert knowledge.

The “Plan of investment in the Madrid districts of Villaverde and Usera (1998-2004)” and its later Special Plans for the period 2007-2011 in Villaverde and 2009-2013 in Usera are examples of how to include citizens in decision-making at the local policy level, together with the Regional Administration—Community of Madrid—and the Local Administration— Madrid City Government⁸.

⁷ The postulates of New Public Management refer to public participation, efficacy and efficiency and transparency. The order of the postulates—first, public participation; second, effectiveness and efficiency; and third, transparency—is arbitrary and was decided by the author of this paper.

⁸ The first Investment Plan covered the two districts, Villaverde and Usera, and management was under the responsibility of the Community of Madrid and the Madrid City Government. Currently, each district

Although originally the first Investment Plan was seen as the response of both the regional and local administrations to demands made by residents, participation of the population was taken into account in its design, incorporating their expert knowledge of social reality. Thus, different sectorial rounds of discussion were held in which resident associations, represented by the Regional Federation of Associations of Residents of Madrid (*Federación Regional de Asociaciones de Vecinos de Madrid-FRAVM*), played a relevant role in defining the projects (Cazorla, Cano et al., 2001), and even in allotting budget.

The positive results of this public management (Aparicio, Cazorla et al., 2006) have determined that, in later Special Plans of Territorial Investment and Action, participation of the citizens has been transcendental and decisive. In the preamble of the Special Plan for Villaverde (2007-2012), the Mayor of Madrid points out that “first, it was Plan 18.000⁹”, and now we complete it with the Plan of Action in Villaverde 2006-2011, fruit of the intense collaboration with the *Federación Regional de Asociaciones de Vecinos*. In all of these plans, two priorities of the City of Madrid converge. The first is to increase levels of territorial cohesion. The other is to promote citizen participation to achieve greater democratic efficiency and quality.”

In this same sense, the new Plans for the Barrios¹⁰ of the City of Madrid for the period 2009-2012, managed by the Madrid City government, according to the FRAVM, are defined in their presentation as plans with “the aim to progress toward social and territorial re-equilibrium of the city through planned social intervention in the least favored neighborhoods of Madrid. This initiative represents the intensification of the model of citizen participation established in the city and the consolidation of the principles of territorial co-responsibility and solidarity that have sustained the design and execution of the Special Plans of Territorial Investment and Action since the year 2003.”

Citizen participation, besides constituting experimented knowledge that has the ability to recognize and prioritize its needs, also assumes leadership in public management. This is what has been called empowerment, or shared leadership. Empowerment is related fundamentally with the distribution of power in a group or organization, whether public or private, but its meaning goes beyond sharing power with others (Manz and Sims, 1980). The idea of empowerment is centered in the notion that people in the lowest levels of the organization have solid reasonable judgment as to the actions that are the most appropriate for the organization to carry out, even better than others that are found in the highest levels (Craig, 2002).

Finally, I coincide with Alberich (1999) in that in Europe the trend is to consolidate a model of management based on the collaboration of public and private powers, and that we should go beyond simple cooperation and develop a structure formed by private (enterprises and local banks) and public (government administrations, universities, etc.) entities, associations (private entities with social objectives), and users (citizens). Following this proposal, the Model of Management by Projects also recognizes four agents: economic agents, high-level political agents (administrators with political interests), management technicians (administrators), and population (beneficiaries), so that the model, in its first stage, defines a process of planning in which expert knowledge of the Administration composed of technicians and high-level political leaders is combined with the experimented knowledge of economic agents and citizens. It is in this debate where the two types of knowledge complement each other giving fruit to ideas and proposals emerging from needs and opportunities of the citizens, which are evaluated for their

has its own Special Plan of investment, which is under the sole responsibility of the Madrid City Government.

⁹ The Plan of Investments in the districts of Villaverde and Usera (1998-2004) is also known as Plan 18.000, for the significant amount of its budget: 18 billion old pesetas.

¹⁰ There are 16 neighborhoods, or “Barrios”, in the City of Madrid, distributed in eight districts, that are especially marginalized in terms of social benefits and employment.

feasibility and pertinence by the administration. The result is thus a plan or program that contains feasible doable ideas. This first stage might also be called “from knowledge to action.”

2.2 MPLD model. Effectiveness and efficiency.

As described above, administrations evolve toward effective, efficient management models, that is, models that can satisfy the needs of citizens with lower resource costs.

The model of Management by Projects presented here incorporates these two concepts in its second pillar, beginning with project formulation. In effect, in the Plan of Investment in the districts of Villaverde and Usera, the project expressed the result of the concerted knowledge, expert knowledge of high-level leaders and management technicians and the experimented knowledge of the associations of residents. Therefore, the project is the fruit of the union of the two types of knowledge: management of knowledge in its general aspect.

What is considered in this section is that, if the search for effectiveness and efficiency constitute the second postulate of New Public Management, in the Model of Management by Projects, the project is the basic unit of action, which is in itself because of its scientific nature (Trueba, 1995), effective and efficient, and moreover, has the capacity to transform reality and cover needs of the citizens. In this way, the project, or the sum of projects constituting the Plan of Investment, comprehends needs, effectiveness and efficiency. Although launching and executing the project fall under the responsibility of the technical team, the needs of the population are expressed in its genesis and the compliance of the Administration in its acceptance.

2.3 MPLD model. Evaluation

Evaluation is a professional practice that has extended into the field of public policy (Furubo, Rist and Sandahl, 2002). New Public Management, as an Administration reform movement characterized essentially by the introduction and application of market criteria and principles of business management by public entities that adapt them to their specific conditions (Aibar, 2004), has made evident the increasing importance of evaluating results. Consequently, evaluation of public policies, plans and programs is a key instrument to legitimate public action before civil society, which is, moreover, the funder. Evaluation is, therefore, a transcendental instrument that entails transparency of public management and accountability to the citizens, which is, in the end, a mechanism of creating public value (Moore, 1996).

As Díaz-Puente (2007) points out, the usefulness of evaluation depends on the current of opinion from which we position ourselves: interpreting the results of a policy (current of theory); obtain evidence that the policy functions (current of evidence); or learning lessons from the experience of its application. All are essential for transparency in public management, to satisfy the third postulate of the New Public Management.

Equally interesting is the role that evaluation is playing in development policy and plans, such as in the Plan of Investment in Villaverde and Usera. Correctly, attention is placed on the “process of evaluation” and not merely on the results. It is through an articulated, coordinated process that the population acquires capacities (transforming participatory evaluation), or by giving space to persons with interests and have been involved in decision-making (practical participatory evaluation) (Cousins and Whitmore, 1998). The former has been developed mainly in Latin America, Africa and India, while the latter emerged in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Norway and Sweden.

Thus appears again the concept of *Empowerment*, which requires the participation of the population also in the evaluation of policies, and more concretely, in *Empowerment Evaluation* (EE) (Fetterman, 2001). This new theory, which revolutionized the field of participatory evaluation, is defined as a fundamentally democratic process. It is distinguished from the other

types of evaluation by its recognition and profound respect for the people's ability to create knowledge and generate solutions by examining their own experience. In essence, *Empowerment Evaluation* represents the process by which evaluation becomes part of planning and management of public policies (Díaz-Puente, 2007).

It is precisely on this new methodological approach that the evaluation proposed for the Model of Management by Projects is based. It is intended that the model contribute to a new forma of evaluating policies, plans and programs that have been the fruit of consensus between high-level political leadership and citizens, together with the participation of management technicians and economic agents, thus easing the way for future management of the administration to attain the quality of integral service that is required.

The novelty of this evaluation system lies in the role of protagonist the citizens, economic agents, public technicians and high-level political leader play. It could be called self-evaluation, consisting in five stages:

1. Identification and selection criteria: participants
2. Selection of participants
3. Policy/Plan/Program objectives
4. Valuation of the objectives
5. Planning the future

Below we elaborate on each of these stages.

1. IDENTIFICATION AND CRITERIA OF SELECTION: PARTICIPANTS

Concordant with what was presented above, the methodology of this evaluation begins with the selection of participants. For this we will take into account a series of criteria that will permit us to judge which are the most ideal.

First, we will identify the four groups:

- a. Population (or beneficiaries)
- b. High-level political leaders
- c. Technicians of the administration (pubic employees)
- d. Economic agents

The criteria are:

- *Degree of involvement.* This is understood as the time dedicated to the design, execution and later follow-up of the Plan, Program or Policy in function of the level of qualification or representation in each case of the different participants.
- *Degree of knowledge.* This refers to how much knowledge of the Administration management the different participants have in function of his level of qualification or representation in each case.

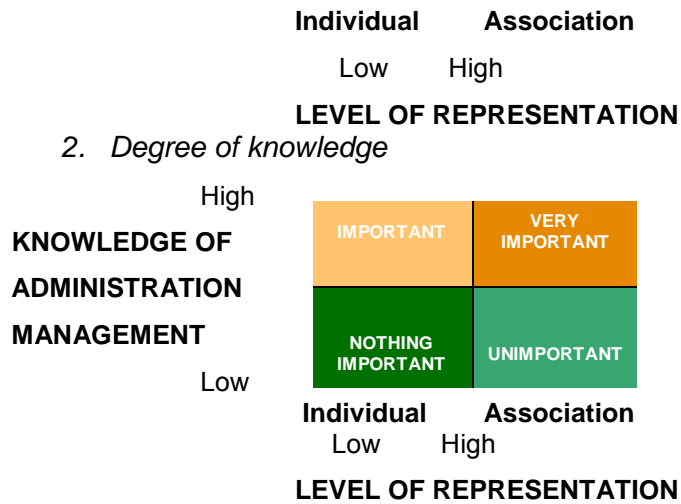
Comparing the two criteria, the degree of involvement acquires greater value since it definitely measures the relationship of a participant with the Plan, Program or Policy more directly.

1. Population

1. Degree of involvement

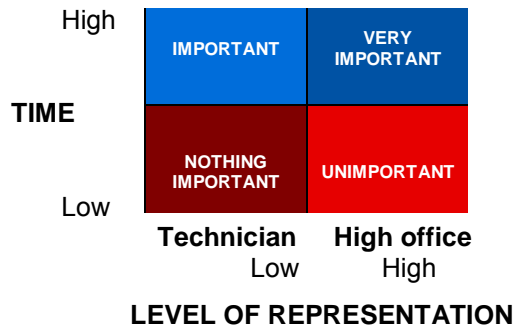
TIME	High	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
	Low	NOTHING IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT

"Selected Proceedings from the 13th International Congress on Project Engineering".
(Badajoz, July 2009)

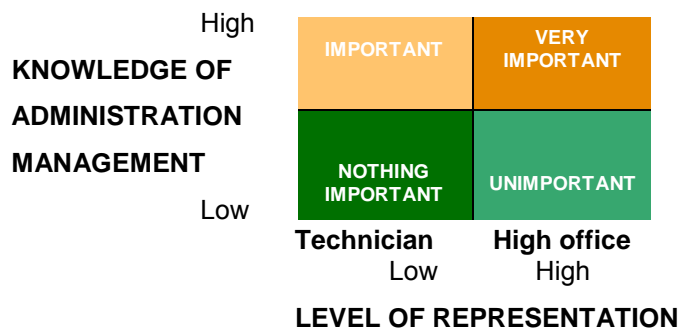


2. High-level political leaders

1. *Degree of involvement*

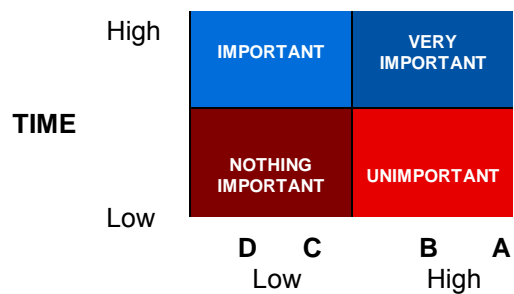


2. *Degree of knowledge*



3. Management Technicians

1. *Degree of involvement*



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

2. Degree of knowledge

KNOWLEDGE OF ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT	High	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
	Low	NOTHING IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT
		D C	B A
		Low	High
		EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	

Where:

- A: Public employee Level A
- B: Public employee Level B
- C: Public employee Level C
- D: Public employee Level D

3. Economic Agents

1. Degree of involvement

TIME	High	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
	Low	NOTHING IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT
		Merchant Low	Association High
		LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION	

2. Degree of knowledge

KNOWLEDGE OF ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT	High	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
	Low	NOTHING IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT
		Merchant Low	Association High
		LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION	

3.-Selection of Participants

Once the criteria are defined, selection of the participants is the next step. Values are assigned to the criteria, and we calculate how important a participant is.

Scale:

NOT IMPORTANT	(1 Point)
OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	(2 Points)
IMPORTANT	(3 Points)
VERY IMPORTANT	(4 Points)

Weight of the criteria:

Keeping in mind the initial consideration mentioned above, that the degree of involvement has greater relevance than the degree of knowledge, a correction factor is applied to each of the criteria. We will call this factor criterion weight, which will have the following values.

<i>Degree of involvement</i>	(0.7)
<i>Degree of knowledge</i>	(0.3)

Selection of participant:

To illustrate the application of these values, let us consider, for any of the identified groups, the two criteria:

<i>Degree of involvement</i>	IMPORTANT
<i>Degree of knowledge</i>	OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE

The value of each criterion would be:

IMPORTANT	(3 Points)
OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE	(2 points)

Finally, the result is calculated by multiplying the value of the criteria by their weights, then adding the two products.

VALUE	WEIGHT	PRODUCT
3	0.7	2.1
2	0.3	0.6
TOTAL		2.7

In this case, the participant is found in the interval $2 < a = 2.7 < 3$, posing an alternative, which is solved by rounding off the number to the nearest whole number.

Specific case:

In the case in which a decision must be taken among several participants with decimal scores, that with the highest score will be selected.

Number of participants:

Although the number of participants is not limited, a certain balance (equal number of participants from each of the identified groups) would facilitate the methodological process.

The process of *Empowerment Evaluation* comprises three stages or well-differentiated steps, which are presented briefly here:

1. First step. Among all of the participants, that is, population and personnel of the Administration, define the mission of the policy, plan or program. A list is made in the order in which the different objectives are mentioned.

Example 1:

- Objective a
 - Objective b
 - Objective c
 - Objective d
2. Second step. This stage is subdivided into two sections. In the first, the list made previously is ordered by importance of the objectives. Each of them is valued according to the results after executing the Plan/ Program/ Policy.

For the first section, we proceed in the following manner: Each of the participants will have five points to be used among the objectives in such a way that they must give points to those they consider more important. They may use all of the points on a single objective if they consider it pertinent.

When all of the participants have used all of their points, the points given to each objective are added. Thus, it is possible that some objectives receive no points and are thus discarded.

Example 2:

- Objective a ● ●
- Objective b ●
- Objective c (Ninguno)
- Objective d ● ● ● ●

The list is then ordered.

Example 3:

- Objective d
- Objective a
- Objective b

With the list of objectives ordered according to the value assigned by the participants, each of the objectives is valued. Each participant gives a score of 1 to 10 to each objective to express the degree to which he judges it to have been achieved.

Example 4:

	P1	P2	P...	Pn	Mean
Objetive d	2	3	...	5	m1
Objetive a	4	4	...	5	m2
Objetive b	7	5	...	6	m...
...	mn
Mean	M1	M2	M...	Mn	M

P1, P2, ..., Pn participants.

From the means obtained, the degree of satisfaction is determined for each participant in reference to the achievement of the Policy/ Plan/ Program. Moreover, calculation of the mean total indicates the perception of the entire group.

3. Third step. Plan for the future. This last stage consists of reviewing the previous stages, expressing the final results concretely, and proposing new actions for the future. These may be corrections of the objectives that were not achieved satisfactorily or new objectives to be achieved. The procedure in this stage consists in establishing goals, and strategies to reach them, and in defining the evidences that will demonstrate that they have been reached.

The Model of Management by Projects for Local Development incorporates precisely *Empowerment Evaluation*, which was successfully carried out in the evaluation of the Plan of Investments for the Districts of Villaverde and Usera (1998-2004).



Figure 1 EE work team. Plan of Investments for the Districts of Villaverde and Usera (1998-2004).

3. Graphic expression of the MPLD model

To conclude, we present a graphic representation of the Model of Management by Projects, in which its principal characteristics and operation can be observed.

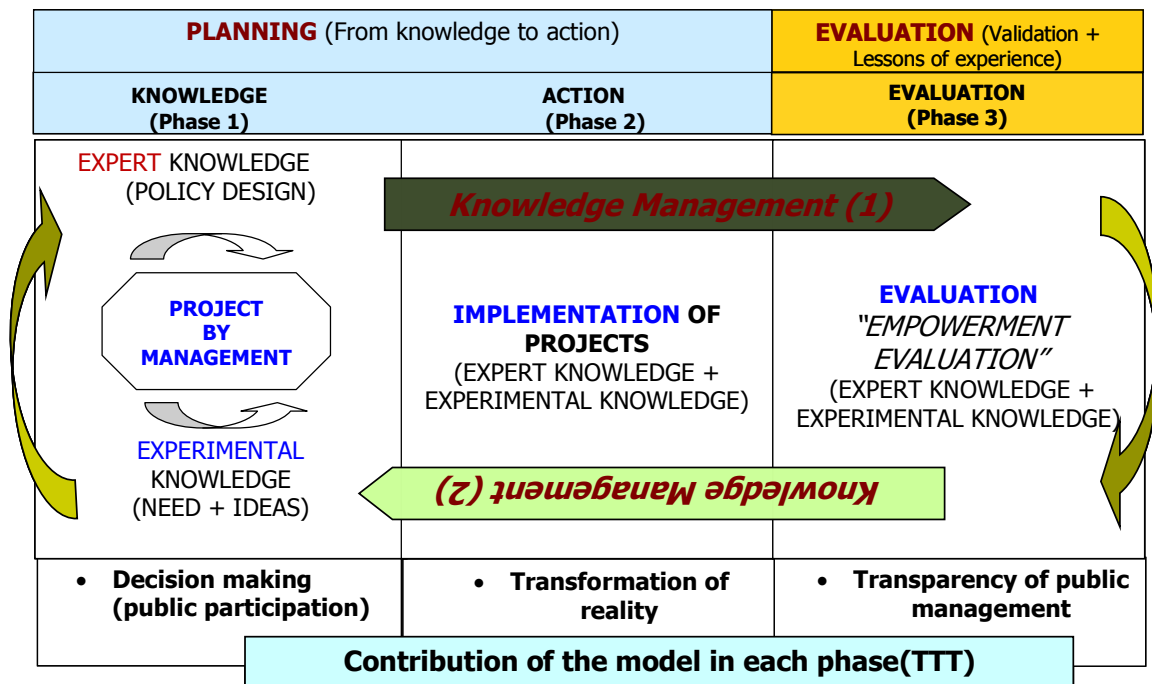


Figure 2 Scheme of the Model of Management by Projects (MPLD) Constructed by the author

As we can see in the graphic representation, the model of Management by Projects involves a two-way street, and thus becomes a cyclical model. This situation is derived from the initialization process itself, concretely in terms of knowledge. That is, the citizens contribute experienced knowledge in the first instance of constructing the plan (in our case, the Plan of Investments 1998-2004), in the execution of the Plan through the projects, and in the later evaluation, as does the administration with its expert knowledge. In successive plans (Special Plans), the knowledge of both becomes a mixture of expert-experience and experience-expert social learning (Friedmann, 2001), which constitutes one of the key points that enrich and characterize the model.

This Model of Management by Projects definitely joins a long list of specific management models that have developed in the framework of the New Public Management and is therefore intended to be one more management tool to aid Public Administration, in general, and local public administration, in particular, to reach high levels of good government sustained in public participation in decision-making, in effectiveness and efficiency, and in transparency through processes of evaluation.

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