Approaches for establishing partnerships in each phase of policy planning, implementation, and review

Hideyuki TAKAHASHI, Assistant Prof. Faculty of Policy Studies, Iwate Prefectural University

1. The current status of the Basic Environment Plan and recent trends in municipalities (cities, wards, towns, and villages)

(1) The Plan has been completed in a total of 153 municipalities across Japan as of March, 1999 => Increased to 235 as of March, 2000

(2) In most municipalities, citizens participated from the planning phase (in some cases a Citizens' Conference on Environment was held, with participating citizens taking the initiative in planning)

(3) Establishment of focal measures and major programs

(4) Progress management based on environmental indicators (Comparison of target values with achieved values => Setting issues to be addressed in the next year)

(5) Establishment of a framework for promotion within the agency (a general coordination structure)

(6) Introduction of the PDCA cycle into the progress management of the Plan (under planning by governments; the most advanced in terms of progress management and evaluation)

(7) Interfacing of the Basic Environment Plan and the Environment ISO as its promotion tool

(8) Preparation and releasing of an "Environmental Report" separate from the White Paper on the Environment (the current status of the local environment)

(9) Starting up of a local organization for promoting the Plan (partnership organization) and cooperation with the promoting organization in the agency

10) Development of an environment action plan and a global environment conservation (local) action plan that materializes the Basic Environment Plan through efforts by the major actor in the region or by a partnership

2. Points to be addressed in the Basic Environment Plan

(1) Only a few citizens participate from the establishment phase of the environment basic regulations upon which the Basic Environment Plan is developed => The structural part of the regulations such as the basic principles, information disclosure, progress management, promotion organization, and the basic course of action, are worked out under the direction of the government (controlled participation).

(2) The vision (an ideal image of the environment) appears so abstract and idealistic that it turns out to be a sort of advertisement copy.

(3) Measures that appear to cover too much (its nature as the general environment plan in the region may be the cause of this).

(4) Listing up of less innovative measures; Irritancy for being unable to
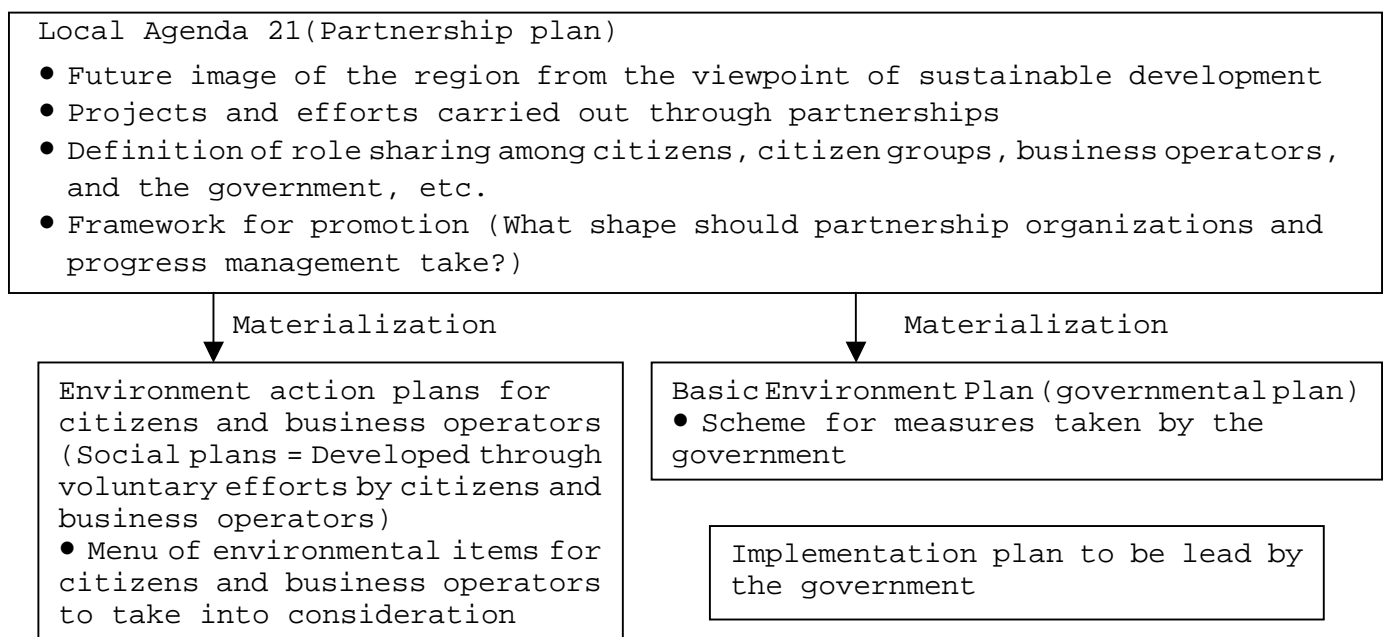
go so far as to realize individual projects

(5) The effort towards appealing to "the local individuality" has made their visions emotional. No individuality is shown in the lower level of basic principles, basic policies, and basic measures.

(6) Mismatch between the vision/basic principles and individual measures (programs) in content and procedures.

(7) We cannot tell what effect has been brought about by the listed measures and efforts for improving the 'status' of the environment (for example, the reduction of green effect gas exhaust within a local government). No priority has been given to measures from the viewpoint of their effect on attaining a target value.

(8) Increased routine measures for citizens' participation (in particular, the operation of workshops by facilitators)

(9) Selection of the Environment Council members and consultants without inviting the input from the opinions of the general public.

3. Proposals (draft)

3-1 (Planning phase)

(1) Can the Basic Environment Plan developed by the government be the guideline for efforts through the partnership of citizens, business operators, and the government?

- Should we not give priority to Local Agenda 21 since it is a partnership plan? (See the following figure for the relationship between Local Agenda 21 and the Basic Environment Plan and the environment action plan, etc.)

The system of the local environment plan under Local Agenda 21

Local Agenda 21(Partnership plan)
- Future image of the region from the viewpoint of sustainable development
- Projects and efforts carried out through partnerships
- Definition of role sharing among citizens, citizen groups, business operators, and the government, etc.
- Framework for promotion (What shape should partnership organizations and progress management take?)

Materialization | Materialization

Environment action plans for citizens and business operators (Social plans = Developed through voluntary efforts by citizens and business operators)
- Menu of environmental items for citizens and business operators to take into consideration

Basic Environment Plan (governmental plan)
- Scheme for measures taken by the government

Implementation plan to be lead by the government

(2) Now it is the time to abolish the current status of vertically independent plans corresponding to national laws and to promote coordination and cooperation between plans at the municipality level. In particular, as long as "town building" and "environment" are in close relationship, it is necessary to seek for an integrated approach to planning through Local Agenda 21, the Basic Environment Plan and the Master Plan for City Planning. (Ishikari City, Hokkaido Prefecture: Three plans of the Basic Environment Plan, the Green Basic Plan, Master Plan for City Planning are being integrally developed based on the proposals and views of the Citizens' Council for Three Plans. Nagaokakyo City, Kyoto Prefecture: The division responsible for the next General Plan and the Master Plan for City Planning, which are still under development, participated in the Nagaokakyo Citizens' Conference on Environment.)

(3) One possible procedure for creating draft regulations: Participation of citizens from the establishment phase of Basic Environment Regulations (To what extent do citizen groups such as the Citizens' Conference on Environment take part in the consideration of regulations? To what extent should the proposals of the Conference be reflected?) => Elaboration of each major item of regulations at the Conference workshop => Development of the elaborated items into regulations by the division in charge => Check on legal consistency by external experts (different from the check by the regulation review committee or law office within the agency) => Feeding back results to the "Citizens' Conference."

(4) There may be other possible procedures, particularly for rural areas, such as engaging in "manpower building" and "framework definitions for participation," through developing individual and specific plans according to local characteristics for these to then trigger the next step; that is, to develop Basic Environment Regulations and Basic Environment Plan (Development of "Imadate Energy Vision 31 Harmonized with the Environment" by Imadate-cho, Fukui Prefecture => Development of the Basic Environment Regulations and the Basic Environment Plan => Scenario of the "application to town building.")

(5) Participation of citizens and municipal officials before selecting consultants (the Basic Environment Plan of Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture.)

(6) Participation in the development of Local Agenda 21 and the Basic Environment Plan offers an opportunity for people to learn about environmental issues

and for fostering local environment leaders and coordinators ("A series of Eco-city lectures by Nagaokakyo Citizens' Conference on Environment" of Nagaokakyo City, Kyoto Prefecture; Kasugai Environment Seminars by "Kasugai Citizens' Committee on Basic Environment Plan" of Kasugai City, Aichi Prefecture, etc.: association by citizens of the policy making process and the environment learning process). However, such seminars may sometimes cause adverse effects depending on the capability and maturity of citizens and environment NGOs concerned (whether to let experts chair the conference or to operate it by citizens).

(7) Whether the Citizens' Conference on Environment should gather "all members from the public" or to include the representatives of business operators and regional self-governing organizations? (A Conference consisting entirely of members of the public may propose more innovative targets and measures. Would it be better however to include representatives of business operators and regional self-governing organizations from the viewpoint of forming an agreement between sectors and securing the implementation and smooth establishment of the steering organization after measures have been developed?)

3-2 (Implementation and review phase)

(1) It may be the best way to inaugurate a steering organization on the basis of the organization that develops the measures (Citizens' Conference on Environment, etc.) (If citizens' participation were nominal at the planning phase, it would be difficult to expect the smooth involvement of citizens and establishment of the steering organization, which follows the planning phase). However, building a partnership organization is useful even though citizens' participation was insufficient at the planning phase. (Citizens' Conference will prepare draft implementation and action plans and set target values. These issues will be described later.)

(2) Environment action plans are to be developed in the course of proceeding with specific projects undertaken by the working team in the steering organization (Citizens' Conference on Environment of Tsukuba City, Ibaraki Prefecture) => What is the validity of an environment action plan or a guideline that takes environment into consideration but where no promotion organization exists?

(3) Themes of the Basic Environment Plan should be narrowed down taking citizens' view into consideration ("Action Guidelines for the Basic Environment Plan

of Zushi City" developed on the basis of the draft proposal submitted by the Citizens' Workshop in which specific programs were developed by individuals or through cooperative actions regarding each of the three major issues of "Creation of city streets and green zones," "Waste problems," and "Reduction of carbon dioxide exhaust"). In addition, visible achievements should be shown through "Leading projects" and "Start up projects," which are the intensive short-term projects.

(4) Mechanism of citizen participation in progress management and progress status evaluation

· It is not enough to just publish and analyze the achievement status of environmental indictors in an annual report or in the White Paper on the Environment.

(I) Environmental report (annual report) style

　　1) Publication of an environmental report => Submission of citizens' opinions => Views of the Environment Council, etc. based on citizens' opinions => To be reflected in measures for the following year, while views of the city are stated in the environmental report of the following year (Kawasaki City and Date City)

　　2) Progress management through interaction and exchanges of views on the environmental report among the government, citizens, and the Environment Council (For example: Toyonaka City, Osaka Prefecture-one year cycle process: Interim report => Environment forum; submission of citizens' opinions => Opinions of the Environment Council => Stating the views of the city in the final report [at the end of the year])

(II) Implementation plan/annual plan development style

　　1) The working group in the "Environment Town Building Committee" (members recommended by the mayor and those recruited from amongst citizens) sets the targets and prepares a draft implementation plan for the next year (Sabae City, Fukui Prefecture).

　　2) Citizens and business operators prepare a report in the Environment Town Building Workshop, in which target levels to be achieved by the midterm are established, and submit it to the mayor. Based on this report, the city government develops an implementation plan (planning period of three years) for the Basic Environment Plan (Takefu City, Fukui Prefecture).

　　3) The government develops an "Annual Implementation Plan" and the Citizens' Council the "Citizens' Annual Action Plan" respectively. The progress status of both the plans are compared at the general assembly of the Citizens' Council (Kani City, Gifu Prefecture).

　　4) The government develops an "Annual Action Plan" => the city government reports on the progress status to the Environment Council => The Environment Council returns to the mayor an "Annual Report" on the basis of the reported progress (Citizens can submit opinions on the "Annual Report") => This is then reflected on the "Annual Action Plan" of the

following year (Tatebayashi City, Gunma Prefecture).

(III) External audit style
   1) The Environment Partner Committee, including recruited citizen members,
      checks the progress status of the Basic Environment Plan. The result
      is suggested to the mayor (Hikone City, Shiga Prefecture).
   2) An audit by external citizens is introduced to prepare an Environmental
      Report (Sendai City).
   3) Citizens participate in preparation and editing of a 'White Paper
      on the Environment' (Itabashi Ward, Tokyo)

(5) Necessity of a steering organization that encompasses all stakeholders
    in the region besides Environment NPOs and environment-oriented citizens'
    networks (Participation of regional self-governing organizations and
    business operators is essential). The government serves as the coordinator
    at the time of start up. Once the steering organization is underway, citizens
    and business operators will become the major players and the government
    will support them.

(6) Dilemma found in environment policies of municipalities = An initiative
    taken by the government in making efforts (such as in acquisition of
    Environment ISO) seldom leads to voluntary actions by citizens and business
    operators. While promotion and dissemination efforts are important indeed,
    a more effective result will be brought about in a long run through the
    effort of making a mechanism that allows "active citizens, business
    operators, and environment NGOs" to develop creative projects in association
    with the government (Making a mechanism for partnership rather than
    dissemination and promotion activity by the government.)

(7) Individual regulations, individual plans, and individual project levels:
    Change from the approach where the government develops drafts and citizens
    examine them, to a cooperative pattern in which a citizen group develops
    drafts on the basis of investigation and implementation activities, and
    the government completes them (the possibility of the partnership-type
    of municipality's environment legislation by citizens in place of direct
    action. Draft Ordinance on Clean-up Campaign of Kamakura City).