Landscape function research applied in environmental planning and policy making

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Abstract

The functionality of landscape is shaped by humans to obtain goods and services that are beneficial for society. Examples of these landscape functions are food production, recreation, flood protection, and habitat provision (Verburg et al., 2009; de Groot et al., 2006). To comply with the increasing demand for land, landscape (multi-)functionality is increasingly used in environmental development policies and plans (Renting et al., 2009). It is therefore important to quantify and map landscape functions and to recognise relations between landscape functions and their environment. Because numerous different landscape functions exist, there is not one single method to identify and map these landscape functions (Gulickx et al., in prep), which makes their assessment complex and difficult. Next to scientific research, environmental policy makers and planners develop maps to establish the spatial consequences of their policies. Both disciplines use their own methodologies, whilst they can enhance each other's methods to achieve improved results.
This research developed three landscape function maps for two case study areas in the Netherlands. For each map a different methodology was used, one based on environmental policy, one on environmental research, and one on a combination of the two (Figure 1). Interactive interviews were conducted with the governing coalition, including engineers, local decision makers, and the water board to agree on terminology and objectives. The methods were compared and consolidated throughout three workshops. The authors generated a 'combined landscape function' map using the combined methodology, which were compared with the 'policy landscape function' and 'scientific landscape function' maps for both case studies. The results and methodologies were discussed in a feedback workshop and useful recommendations were specified to enhance collaboration between environmental policy makers and planner, and environmental scientists. This research shows that close collaboration between scientific environmental research and environmental policy making and planning can lead to an improved product.

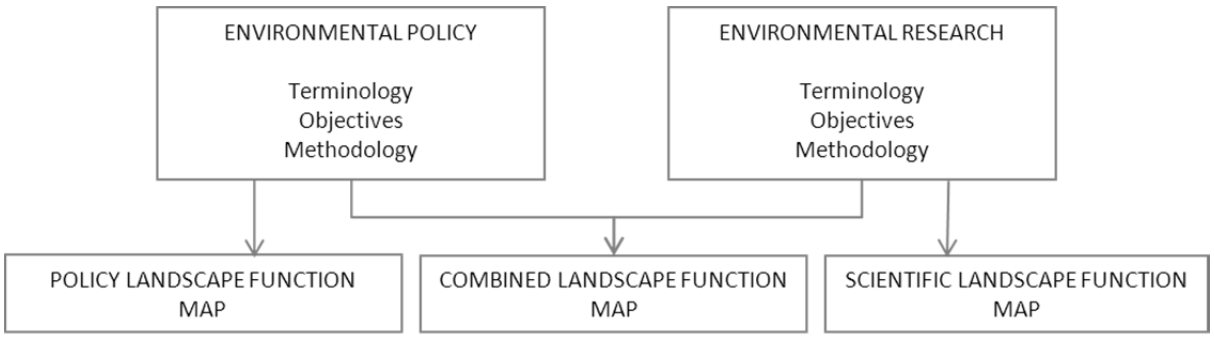

Figure 1. Methodological framework

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