The processes involved in the application of the new Lombard law on land governance are particularly complex especially with regard to environmental assessment in and by plans. They therefore required methods of analysis capable of bringing out all of the local variabilities and specificities as the premise on which to base sustainable urban planning decisions, by making use of the enormous potential of “Geographical Information Systems”. The map of potential action\(^1\) met the requirement to provide a summary, accompanied by multivariate geographical statistics, which – by estimating the socio-economic environmental and landscape interdependencies – identified the virtues of the places and the pressures they are subject to, by examining aspects related to the visual field, to the diversity and complexity of the urban morphology and type, to the border effect – the relationship with significant borders – to the quality of the structures, to the historical and cultural value and to the form and environmental quality of outdoor spaces (traffic, noise, etc.). An assessment protocol based on the notions of *structure*, *determinants*, *terms* and *elements* taken from “inverted pyramid” logic was used to deduce the geographies of the urban morphological-settlement characteristics (by estimating the values of urban vitality and centrality) and the landscape-environmental vocations, interpreting the interdependencies between accessibility (physical, gravitational and panoramic) and the internal and external pressures of the urban fabric. Finally a multidimensional spatial value was derived for the intensity\(^2\) of: \(a\) the spatial and settlement structure, \(b\) the historical identity dimension, \(c\) the environmental quality of the places, \(d\) the socio-economic dynamism of the urban fabrics. It was therefore possible to define the level and ways of intervening in local contexts, by assessing the appropriate conservation, redevelopment and transformation measures that urban plans assign to land and environmental governance. The map of potential action therefore represents an evolved approach for the development of an urban planning discipline designed to bring the phenomena discovered by the analyses performed within the scope of governance through full knowledge of local specificities obtained through effective use of geographical information systems.

\(^1\) That map was the most concrete result of the environment report of the Sondrio strategic environmental assessment (given the task of explicitly stating the condition of local contexts) and it supported the formulations of policies and local constraints in the generation of the Como urban governance plan.

\(^2\) With respect to the determinants of \(i\) positive value, \(ii\) negative value, \(iii\) risk. \(z\)