



Briefing Note

Land Use Planning

Background

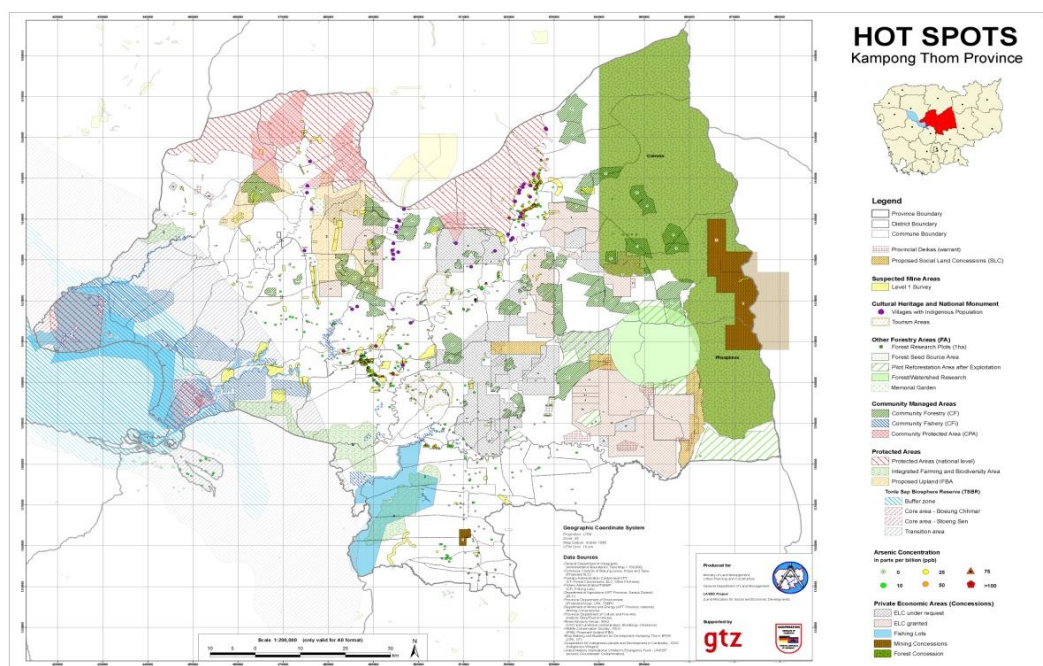
Land use, meaning all types of human usage of land areas and soils, is not static. It changes continuously. In some periods this change takes place more slowly, whereas in others – for example, at times of industrialisation, land reform, transformation, a financial market crisis or a global scarcity of fertile land and/or water – the pace of change is faster. Almost all the countries in the world have witnessed especially rapid changes in land use over the past few decades. The signs are particularly noticeable in rural areas. On the one hand, soils, land and other natural resources are coming under growing pressure from increases in usage for purposes such as the production of renewable resources, agrofuels, foodstuffs and feedstuffs. On the other hand, urban settlements are expanding into rural areas. At the same time, awareness has risen

of the need to protect certain areas in the interests of global environmental and resource conservation. An example of these efforts is the *Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)* programme.

Land use conflicts occur frequently as a result of the competition between land use interests with various economic, social and ecological aims. One of the key tasks of land use planning (LUP) is to anticipate these and prevent them occurring.

Accordingly the role of LUP is to identify the best and most sustainable ways of using scarce land resources in rural areas and to initiate and monitor implementation of corresponding land use plans.

Figure1: Hot-Spots Kampong Thom Province



Source: GTZ (2010) Kambodscha

One instrument used for this purpose is zoning (e.g. agro-ecological or economic-ecological zoning), which involves participatory, interdisciplinary and transsectoral analysis of current land use and the characteristics of the land in question (e.g. geology, fauna, utilisation potential, etc.). On the basis of this division into zones, the future use of land areas can be determined. The aim of LUP is to safeguard natural resources, thereby laying the economic foundation for long-term livelihood security in rural areas. The rational and equitable distribution of arable land helps promote the generation of economic benefit through investment.

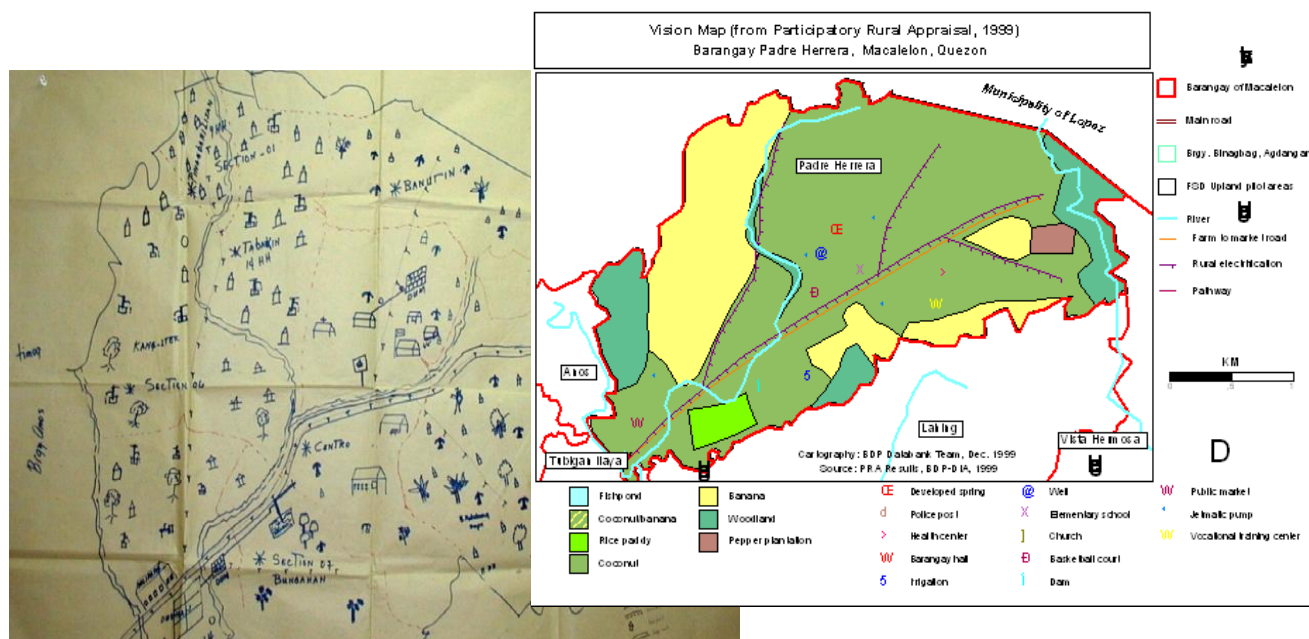
In the context of global developments LUP must confront new issues and methodological challenges. These include the impacts of climate change on land availability, the growing scarcity of irrigable agricultural land, and the expansion of settlements – as a result of population growth and poverty – onto marginal land that is highly prone to natural disasters. In addition, the challenges posed by the increasing privatisation of land in rural areas, the rapid growth in competition between different forms of land use and different users, and the exploitation of local resources by global actors require effective responses (see Briefing Note: ‘Foreign Direct Investment in Land’).

Development cooperation looks to LUP for new ways of solving these new and increasingly acute problems. For example, LUP may address issues of climate change and natural disasters by generating and evaluating climate scenarios, designating land for alternative production methods and mapping areas at risk from natural disasters and appropriate land use.

As a result, the task of sustainable land use planning has become increasingly complex. Copious data are required in order to identify appropriate land for certain uses or the best use for a given plot. The methodological and technological fundamentals and possibilities of LUP have undergone major advances thanks to technical progress in the field of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS). The key challenge remains the availability of data. Up-to-date information on existing and planned land use remains patchy. In particular the poor availability and transparency of national projects and programmes is increasingly hampering long-term and dependable land use planning at local and regional level.

The role of LUP is especially significant on account of the contribution it makes to the transparency of current and future land use, to enabling the interests of local land users to be represented, and to the goal of weighing up land use interests within the good *land governance* approach that is increasingly called for.

Figure 2: “Social mapping” / GPS orientation map



Source: GTZ (2010) Land Use Planning

GIZ's position

GIZ sees land use planning within technical cooperation as an iterative process based on a dialogue between all parties. The aim is to arrive at joint decisions on a **situationally appropriate, sustainable form of land use** in rural areas. As part of LUP, it is important to initiate and monitor measures in pursuit of land use objectives.

LUP goes far beyond the zoning recommendations of preparatory land-usage planning or community development planning. It creates the preconditions for socially and environmentally sustainable, socially desirable and economically productive land use arrangements. To this end, local needs and interests must be combined with measures at higher decision-making levels ('vertical integration'). This can only be achieved in a sustainable manner if **actors at all levels of decision-making** are involved and represented in the process and negotiations. LUP therefore sets in train processes of decision-making and consensus-building on the spatial utilisation and protection of private, community and public land. Their **participatory character** enables the population to make its own decisions about the distribution of resources, thus ensuring a **balancing of interests** and a **resolution of conflicts** where there are competing demands for land use. The planning is underpinned by knowledge, institutions and conflict resolution modalities at local level, and by transparent processes. This ensures the feasibility as well as the economic effectiveness and efficiency of implementation.

LUP is based on interdisciplinary cooperation and requires sectoral coordination ('horizontal integration') since the multifaceted functions and varied potential forms of land use necessitate the involvement of all relevant sectors. In general this requires long-term support for the **development of institutions** and the improvement of cooperation between ministries and authorities in different sectors. In this way LUP results in **improved stakeholder capacity**.

GIZ supports the LUP approach since it has great – and as yet underexploited – potential to support sustainable development, particularly in rural parts of developing countries, and to make a **contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals** and current priorities of German development cooperation. Among these are food security, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, peace building, promotion of democracy and good governance.

Action required

To be able to meet the challenges presented by current global developments, development cooperation must work at international level and in the partner countries on the following factors relevant to sustainable land use and land use planning:

1. Recognition, codification and strengthening of entitlements (rights of use and ownership).

Ownership rights are often uncertain, and aspects of land tenure systems are still under-represented in LUP. This leads to problems such as land conflicts and illegal transactions. Increasingly intense competition for land as well as land speculation must be countered by improving local peoples' rights of ownership and disposition over land and other resources. A link should therefore be established between LUP and secure land rights, since legal certainty can create incentives for sustainable resource use (see Briefing Note: 'Securing Land Rights').

2. Better land governance.

LUP should be reviewed with regard to manipulation, instrumentalisation, corruption and abuse as an instrument of power. It should also be reinforced and deployed as an instrument of good governance and equitable management of land and other natural resources. The goal is to strengthen the relevant institutional capacities and the political will for sustainable, participatory LUP. To this end, priorities and accessible resources must be mobilised in order to achieve good governance in the area of access to and use of land and other natural resources.

3. Stronger control of land markets and land transactions.

Without the necessary control of the land market and of land transactions as a response to increasing investment in land worldwide, there is a risk of speculation, misuse of power, corruption and illegal parcelling and land development. These generally serve aims which are completely at odds with sustainable land use. What is needed is forward-looking, broad-scale LUP, the implementation of which is strictly adhered to and controlled, and effective enforcement of building regulations and land use rules.



4. Legally binding force.

LUP is increasingly being enshrined in institutional frameworks. Nevertheless, it often lacks legally binding force. This is necessary, however, in order to meet the challenges mentioned and to prevent conflicts over land use. The aim must therefore be to anchor LUP in law, strengthen the relevant institutions and clarify their responsibilities.

5. Creating transparency.

Through participatory, legally binding or formally recognised and institutionally anchored LUP, transparency can be achieved far beyond the local level. In this way, both local and global interests, and socio-economic and ecological interests, can be defined and defended against individual commercial interests. To accomplish this, LUP must be able to rely on appropriate information systems with data on existing land rights, land uses, utilisation potentials and land availability, etc. LUP creates transparency for all stakeholders from the population to the government and foreign investors. On this foundation, decisions can be made about foreign direct investments in land and the awarding of concessions.

6. Clarifying responsibilities in resource management.

For state property that is used as community property or managed to permit free access, responsibilities are often not clearly regulated. Here the normative tasks of the state to safeguard state land (management, inventory, registration) need to be regulated while recognising local resources and rights of use. If state capacities are overstretched, responsibilities for resource management should be transferred in part to decentralised user organisations and this transfer of compe-

tencies anchored in national legislation (e.g. in the law on forestry and grazing).

7. Improving cooperation and data availability.

There is still a shortage of statistical data that needs to be collected locally; such data are often incomplete or out of date. Equally, the lack of cooperation between different authorities and other institutions poses a major problem. Key aims are to raise awareness of the need for LUP among stakeholders and the general public and to emphasise the importance of data collection, thereby improving willingness to participate. At the same time funds must be released for data collection and for capacity development of institutions and staff in order to improve data quality and availability in the long term.

8. Region-specific focus.

LUP approaches must be adapted to the very varied conditions prevailing in partner countries. Although the core instruments of LUP remain the same, they must be introduced in quite different ways in different national contexts, i.e. adapted to the influence of codified law and state-administered justice vis à vis traditional institutions (norms, rules, bodies), the administrative structure, the type of governance, the level of public co-determination, the degree of decentralisation, etc.

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