

## **Chapter 3. Over viewing of the planning process**

### **3.1. The need for flexibility**

The detailed procedures described under each, should not be followed rigidly. The circumstances of different land-use planning projects are highly varied and the guidelines presented here should be adapted to make the best of the local situation. What is important is to understand the purpose of each step or detailed procedure so that a decision can be made on whether it needs to be followed through, modified or omitted in the specific situation.

Land-use planners are often called in when a problem situation has already been identified, for example severe soil erosion or the onset of salinization in an irrigation scheme. An immediate diagnosis has to be made on the basis of a field visit and whatever information is to hand.

Planning does not necessarily have to proceed by means of specific, time-bound plans. It can proceed incrementally, by making small local changes. An advantage is that mistakes, for example a crop variety that is attacked by a pest, can be identified early on before losses have become serious. This is how individual land users operate, but planners can also contribute. They can assist change by offering their own skills, for example technical knowledge of small-scale irrigation methods, and by being agents in bringing in outside resources. The initiative for incremental planning is likely to come from the land users (bottom-up planning). It requires that the planning agency should be on the spot and continuously in touch with the land users, and it is therefore more likely to be conducted by a national land-use planning agency or its district branches than by a specially convened external team.

### **3.2. Planning as an iterative process**

Planning has to be continuous. There is never enough knowledge about the land and its response to management and, as more information and experience are gained, plans have to be changed. The planning process follows progressing in logical steps, one after another, although in practice it is often necessary to repeat earlier steps in the light of experience. Further changes may be needed during the lifetime of a plan because external conditions change, for example the development of new markets for a product or a change of government policy. The planner's task is never finished! Some of the changes in land use may have proved unsuccessful. Frequently,

changes that were desirable five, ten or 20 years ago are no longer suited to present circumstances.

Iterative planning is based on a continuous learning process. It requires the readiness of all those involved to keep asking and learning more and more. Each activity, each interaction between those involved in the planning process provides new information and experience. This improves the understanding of the situation and increases the knowledge on the measures carried out. In case the measures have not the effects intended, the iterative planning makes it possible to react swiftly and make the necessary changes or adjustments. Land use planning is not a straight step-by-step procedure, but is iterative and cyclical. This means that its course is sporadic, requiring backtracking resulting from experience. Also approved objectives need to be constantly rechecked and changed when they are no longer appropriate.

### **3.3. Participation in the land use planning process**

Participation is an interactive and co-operative process of analyzing, planning and decision-making in which all relevant groups and organizations – stakeholders -take part. It is a process "...which allows all participants to formulate their interests and objectives in a dialogue, which leads to decisions and activities in harmony with each other, whereby the aims and interests of other participating groups are taken into account as far as possible" . Within the framework of these guidelines, this definition is extended in the sense that also disadvantaged groups participate in the land use planning and decision-making process.

#### **The objective is to increase:**

- ☞ the planning competence,
- ☞ the self-responsibility and
- ☞ Organizational capacity of disadvantaged target groups.

Existing deficits should be balanced out by a more intensive dialogue and an improved co-ordination. This also requires a change in thinking of the project collaborators, government services and participating NGOs, i.e. changes in the conception of their position and their role in the participation process. This form of planning emphasizes the joint learning by and with the local population. It requires their capacity and willingness to take part in the dialogue. The usual cascade principle transfers hierarchically important knowledge. It has been practiced until now

by technical advisors and should be changed completely. The contribution by the population to decisions made during the conception, planning and implementation process must be respected as being of equal value.

There are not only the partner and the target group, which should change their thinking and go through the learning process, but also advisors should enter it. Above all, one has to be careful with too quickly made technical proposals. An attitude has to be adopted, which allows understanding the problem solving strategies, capacities and the potentials of the local population. Only with this basic attitude a dialogue can be initiated.

### **Quality of planning**

- ☞ Only those subjects are to be planned which the population can achieve;
- ☞ modern technical knowledge, indigenous knowledge and specific local knowledge are linked in planning;
- ☞ the starting point is the way in which the different local groups see their problems and their initiative to analyse problems, to plan, to make decisions and to implement;
- ☞ by applying the principle of co-operation in LUP, competing or poorly co-ordinated sectoral planning approaches and levels of responsibility converge.
- ☞ All those concerned are participating in community planning and decision-making within the framework of the organizational development of communities. Simultaneously, participation gives the representatives of local groups an insight into the institutional "rules of the game". They learn how to better represent their own interests or the village interests to others. In addition, local groups are more capable to demand rights and actions from the government.
- ☞ Sharing of social responsibility in utilization and conservation of natural resources at local level based on the principle of subsidiarity is introduced step by step. This releases the government from administrative, social, and economic transfer actions.
- ☞ Structures are developed for comprehensive, self-determined community and village long-term development, which is a solid basis for decentralization measures.

### **Further important aspects are:**

- ☞ the learning process of all participants due to the heterogeneous composition of the groups participating in LUP;
- ☞ all participants are better informed;
- ☞ the local population is more willing to accept and can better identify themselves with the activities;
- ☞ an improved relationship between population and administration leads to more binding agreements and sustainability in planning;
- ☞ The fact that the participating groups involved are encouraged to represent their interests, to express themselves, their organization and self-determination, and in their co-ordination and planning processes, leads to an increased capacity to negotiate planning objectives;
- ☞ The development of co-operation and communication structures and the capacity of local institutions to implement plans.

### **Who participates in Land Use Planning?**

The potential participants in LUP are all groups which:

- ☞ are affected by decisions on land use in a planning area;
- ☞ are interested in the results;
- ☞ are involved in a land use conflict (even in the widest sense);
- ☞ have a considerable influence on it or;
- ☞ are affected by its outcome.

Participation by the groups concerned does not mean that they are always physically present during the planning process. However, it must be guaranteed that they are at least represented by a delegation or by other binding forms of communication. Many projects have been unable to realize the goal of a socially accepted and sustainable use of land resources because relevant groups and/or their interests have been ignored. Users and user groups in a planning area have

varying relations with other actors, even outside the planning area. These stakeholder groups affect each other. **This is because:**

- ☞ The use of natural resources by one group has ecological effects on the use by or quality of life of another group, e.g. in watershed areas, drinking water production or irrigation systems can be damaged in settlements downstream due to destructive arable farming practices on steep slopes upstream;
- ☞ Economic exchange relations are often very tense, and there are relations of dependence and competition. This can be the case between resident farmers and nomadic livestock owners, between tea planting or tobacco companies and rural seasonal workers or between timber companies and forest farmers;
- ☞ Complex social and political networks of relations link the individual groups. An example is the relation between landless people, tenants, and large landowners, complex "patron-client"-relations, or the influence which powerful parties and government organizations have on the rural communities.

### **3.4. Important steps in preparing land use planning**

There are ten steps in land-use planning. **These are:**

**Step 1.** Establish goals and terms of reference

**Step 2.** Organize the work

**Step 3.** Analyses the problems

**Step 4.** Identify opportunities for change

**Step 5.** Evaluate land suitability

**Step 6.** Appraise the alternatives: environmental, economic, and social analysis

**Step 7.** Choose the best option

**Step 8.** Prepare the land-use plan

**Step 9.** Implement the plan

**Step 10.** Monitor and revise the plan