

Participatory Land Use Planning

creating space
for communities



What is Participatory Land Use Planning and what can it be used for?

Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) is a method of land use planning that involves all the stakeholders and land users from an area where space is contested, in decision making. The aim is to create political space for communities, to enable them to articulate and materialise their own land claims and their rights as users of resources. It is especially appropriate in areas where land and water rights are not clearly legally formalised. PLUP enables people to make informed choices about developments in their own area.

PLUP has the potential to prevent land use conflicts; it can be used to prevent land grabbing and can mitigate against the negative effects of large scale developments, such as dams, mining and plantations. PLUP makes it possible to identify areas that are (un)suitable for commodity production, to prevent or reduce conflicts and to maintain a balance between new developments and existing land uses (such as food production or settlements). It can be used to protect areas that have a communal use (pastures, forests, water bodies), to conserve biodiversity or to protect important ecosystems.

PLUP has a role to play in enabling local communities and poor people to cope with global processes and developments that make claims on land or resources that they own or have customarily used. This includes the large scale production of agricultural commodities, such as palm oil, soy and biomass/biofuels. It is also applicable when the development of river basins and deltas is being considered, as well as the creation of forest reserves and

special economic zones. PLUP makes these processes more participatory and gives local people a chance to have their voices heard.

Characteristics

- PLUP is a synthesis between top down spatial planning and bottom up community mapping. It is a method that can bring community members and government officials together.
- PLUP is about strengthening the tools which local communities need to participate in land planning processes.
- PLUP is about creating political space for local communities, in order to gain bargaining power in decision making.

Getting communities engaged

The application of PLUP depends on the policy and legal context. It can be started in various ways. If communities have already engaged in processes like community mapping, and have a clear picture of their own area, their aspirations for the future and possible threats and opportunities, then these community maps can be taken as point of departure. They can be integrated with the District Spatial Plan if the legal and political context allows this.

PLUP creates and strengthens the tools that local communities need to participate in land planning processes. One such example is 'professional gaming', computer based scenario simulations (such as a simulation 'game' for examining the management of a river) which can be used to establish multi-stakeholder dialogues (see the website of Tygron: www.tygron.nl).

PLUP can also help in:

- Increasing social mobilisation, NGO involvement, community map making and informing villages;
- Identifying sympathetic actors with technical expertise;
- Empowering people by providing technical assistance on using a geographical information system (GIS), to provide data for land claims;
- Inspiring, informing and lobbying government officials. Identifying people with influence, such as chiefs, village elders, local planning officers, district officials, etc;
- Matching inputs from NGOs, government offices, experts, science and farmers in workshops, meetings, papers, etc.

Both ENDS' experience with PLUP

Both ENDS is presently involved in a PLUP pilot project, working as the project leader on a PLUP exercise in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, that involves several scientific institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs). The aim is to develop a policy instrument that will guide palm oil production in a more ecologically sustainable and socially just direction. Through multi-stakeholder involvement the project aims to create a way of land-use planning that is participatory and promotes sustainable and equitable palm oil production development in the area.

Both ENDS aims to build on this experience with PLUP in Indonesia and offer assistance in applying PLUP in other areas. We aim to work with CSOs to enable communities to empower themselves and to obtain more political space to claim their rights over land and resources.

Making PLUP effective

PLUP is but one of the tools that Both ENDS is seeking to promote, as a means of supporting the rights of people whose livelihoods and ecosystems are at threat. Both ENDS intends to share experiences of PLUP, build an inventory of tools, organise seminars and other fora, assist other community based organisations in applying these tools and insights to their own situation and build the case for incorporating PLUP into (inter)national planning procedures.

Both ENDS is looking for organisations who want to start up pilot projects on PLUP or who already have experience on it and want to work together with us.

For more information on Participatory Land Use Planning

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