

IMPACTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT – LAND-USE PLANNING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Summary

Land is a vitally important resource and a foundation for socio-economic development. Land-use planning is a technical instrument for managing the use of land. It is designed to harmonise potentially conflicting demands made on land, ensure sustainable natural resource management and facilitate an inclusive and transparent allocation of land.

Technical Cooperation (TC) for land-use planning focuses on capacity development at multiple administrative levels in partner countries. This means it often attains a high degree of complexity. The evaluation report 'Impact, diffusion and scaling-up of a comprehensive land-use planning approach in the Philippines' (Leppert et al., 2018) therefore provides a comprehensive and rigorous impact assessment of a technical approach of such complexity.

The evaluated approach of Philippine-German cooperation was implemented over a ten-year period. It links systemic capacity development on multiple administrative levels with the achievement of long-term development goals. The intervention is a typical example of the challenges faced when building capacity for planning and rural development, implementing plans, scaling up TC interventions to national level and ensuring national ownership.

On the one hand, this TC intervention in the Philippines led to measurable gains in effectiveness in local planning administrations and increased the perceived quality and comprehensiveness of plans. On the other hand, statistically significant positive effects on impact proved to be lower than expected or could not be demonstrated. In some cases effects were even negative. Detailed discussion of the low to non-existent long-term and secondary impacts suggests causes in the depth of implementation of the development measure and in local

implementation. Causes at the local level point to (i) capacity limits and inefficiencies in political and administrative structures, (ii) poor or contrary implementation of plans in some cases, and (iii) cumbersome power structures at various levels.

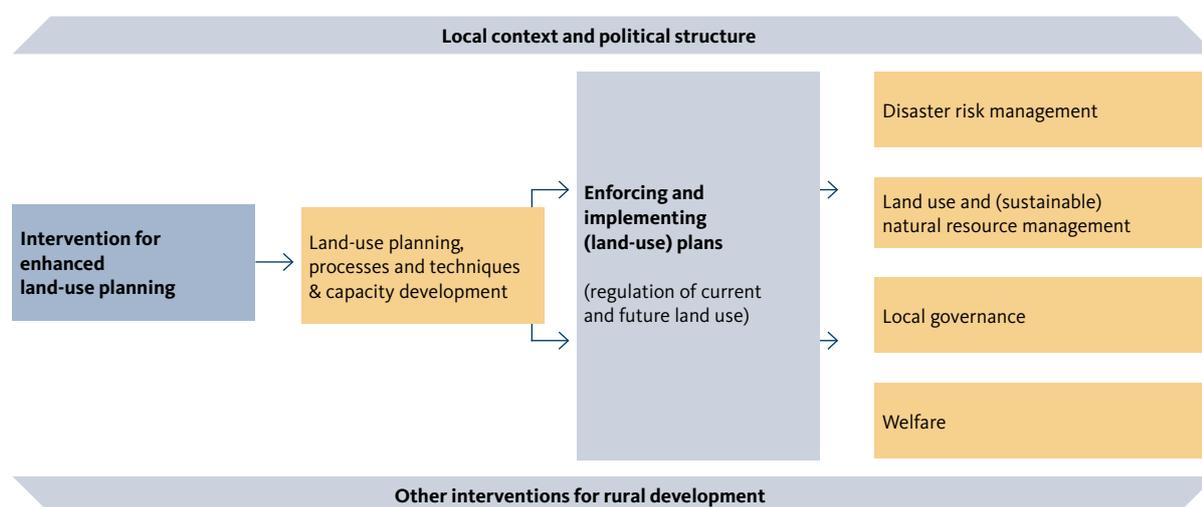
This leads to various conclusions and recommendations for the design of future TC interventions. These include a stronger focus on underlying local power structures, the promotion of civil society, closer interlinkage with accompanying interventions for rural development and a stronger focus on the implementation of plans.

What results are evident for the TC approach to land-use planning in the Philippines?

The evaluation uses multiple methods to provide comprehensive and robust measurement of the impacts of 10 years of Technical Cooperation (TC) for development in the field of land-use planning in the Philippines (Leppert et al., 2018). It demonstrates in an exemplary manner that complex TC interventions are also susceptible to evaluation. The findings reveal a differentiated picture of the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a typical TC intervention.

In the course of implementation the technical approach under evaluation shifted from a local to a national focus. The planning approach was implemented from 2005 onward by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Through close cooperation with Philippine institutions the Sustainable Integrated Management and Planning for Local Government Ecosystems (SIMPLE) approach, which began as a pure TC intervention, has since emerged as a country-wide integrated planning approach. The lead agency in this process was the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB).

Mechanism of transmission from inputs to development results in comprehensive land-use planning



Source: authors' own graphic.

Since key elements of the approach were integrated into Philippine planning processes under the term 'enhanced Comprehensive Land-Use Planning (eCLUP)', it has no longer been possible to draw a clear distinction between exogenous development cooperation and endogenous development. From a development-policy perspective this is a favourable outcome. Having said that, it is no longer possible to clearly attribute development results or problems to particular inputs. National ownership was facilitated, promoted and supported through human resource inputs at an early stage.

The technical approach was developed within the framework of the Environment and Rural Development (EnRD) programme, for which the GIZ and Philippine partners shared joint responsibility. The aim of the intervention was to improve processes and structures for land-use planning and development planning in the Philippines. This long-term intervention, which evolved significantly over the course of time, encompassed a package of measures at various administrative levels. At the local level, for instance, local planners received further training in land-use planning which now enables them to use improved techniques and processes that are suitable for making a long-term contribution toward socio-economic and environmental improvements. The graphic provides an overview of the theory of change and the relevant mechanisms of transmission to impact.

The evaluation provides manifold findings on the intervention's effectiveness and impact. The local capacity development and training measures helped significantly increase the effectiveness of local planning administrations, for instance through training in the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and the implementation of an integrated, participatory, cross-municipal planning approach. The measures increased the perceived quality and comprehensiveness of plans and more frequently led to the legally valid adoption of land-use plans by the local authorities.

The intervention also aimed to generate long-term, secondary impacts. These include for instance the conservation of natural resources, a growing public awareness of sustainable natural resource management and capacity building for disaster risk management. A further aim of the intervention was to help reduce claims on hitherto untouched municipal territory, mobilise the population for local participatory processes and contribute to long-term welfare gains.

Regarding impact it emerged that the anticipated positive effects were either less pronounced than expected, or could not be demonstrated at all. In some areas, such as the perceived quality and performance of local governments, the effects were even negative. In other words, the positive effects on local planning administrations contrast with the lesser effects or no effects at

all on achieving the development-policy goals. The positive effects in the field of sustainable natural resource management, for instance, include an increased number of protected areas and conservation and livelihood projects. In the field of disaster risk management, greater local, technical and planning capacities were demonstrated. In the field of local governance, positive effects were identified in terms of more active conflict transformation by municipalities and villages. However, there were also negative effects on public perceptions of local governments – due among other things to underlying local power structures. No measurable effects were found regarding the improvement of people's lives in affected rural households. One reason for this was the length of the causal chain. Accompanying measures to complement rural development tended to reinforce the positive effects.

What caused the TC approach to have limited effects in some of the impact fields?

The evaluation permits conclusions as to why the intervention did not quite meet expectations in some impact fields. While the technical implementation of the intervention can be considered a success, weaknesses are evident, particularly as regards adaptation to local political conditions. Although the intervention is highly relevant to the global development and Philippine policy agendas, there are deficits with regard to its integration into institutional structures and areas of responsibility (Lech and Leppert, 2018).

Particularly in partner countries of medium development status, TC interventions usually involve the consolidation and improvement of existing planning processes and structures. The connectivity of support measures is therefore of pivotal importance. In the Philippine case, this problem is reflected among other things by the fact that land-use planning issues are spread across various public agencies, which leads to overlapping responsibilities and high transaction costs. Only land-use planning on municipal territory is overseen by the regulatory authority HLURB.

The options for policy-makers and planners to control other 'types of land' are restricted. Responsibility for agricultural land-use planning and land repurposing, the management of vast swathes of Philippine forests and socio-economic planning, i.e. the achievement of abstract planning goals through specific activities, is spread across various ministries and authorities. This is why the changes in planning principles prompted by the

HLURB will only be effective if their implementation can also be ensured within the sphere of responsibility of the neighbouring ministries (e.g. through legal mechanisms). The TC intervention did result in a number of improvements with regard to cooperation between different agencies. However, even after the approach was scaled up to national level and the development intervention was completed, unfavourable institutional mandates have still continued to make comprehensive land-use planning difficult.

To achieve impact it is essential to implement and enforce the plans drawn up and achieve the planned targets. This is dependent on political and social conditions. To this day, de facto dependencies of the landless population on landowners persist. As well as this economic dependency, sections of the rural population are also politically dependent on powerful landowners who are often active political players. Not infrequently, local land ownership structures or the political influence of local elites also determine political voting processes, for instance in local elections or planning processes. As a result, land-use plans and planned targets are implemented either not as planned or not at all.

If TC interventions are to achieve their full impact they will need to take these circumstances into account. Conflicts of interest between development cooperation, and local or national political and power elites, can undermine development results. Local interventions – such as the technical approach evaluated here – therefore need to be integrated into overarching and strategic governance interventions at country level in order to ensure the sustainability of the TC intervention. The analysis of the national uptake of the intervention does show that early and integrated national scaling-up of the approach can ensure the sustainability of the planning activities and processes. However, reform of institutional and political frameworks – particularly planning structures and administrative mandates – remains incomplete or requires further implementation.

Looking ahead, and recommendations

The evaluation shows that several factors were causally responsible for the limited impact of the technical approach. To achieve greater impact it will be helpful among other things to conduct long-term and comprehensive training measures, integrate the population into planning and implementation processes, and include accompanying measures for rural development. However, development results are also dependent on the complex

frameworks in place in the country. The empirical findings permit several conclusions for the design and implementation of future TC measures for rural development and land-use planning:

- Existing land and land-use conflicts, and the underlying economic and political power structures, should be incorporated into the risk assessment and design of such TC interventions early on and to a greater extent, in order to bind actors to goals that serve the common good. Interventions should include systematic participation by civil society in order to strengthen marginalised groups in land use.
- Where insoluble conflicts of interest and unfavourable frameworks lead to poor or contrary implementation of planned targets, and impact then falls short of expectations, TC should discuss whether the development cooperation intervention makes sense, and consider ending it prematurely (either partially or entirely).
- Since other interventions for rural development increased the measured effectiveness and impact of land-use planning, new interventions should be – already at the planning stage – more closely interlinked and harmonised with other interventions of German, local and international actors.
- In all interventions for (land-use) planning, equal weight should be attached to the implementation and enforcement of plans and planned targets, as this is an important precondition for generating development results.
- As well as implementing local measures, efforts should be made to create political structures and frameworks that enable legal certainty for the local implementation of planned targets and define mandates and data sharing between institutions.

References

Lech, M. and G. Leppert (2018), *Current Issues of the Philippine Land-Use Planning and Management System - Challenges and Way Ahead*, DEval Policy Brief 1/2018, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), Bonn.

Leppert, G. et al. (2018), *Impact, Diffusion and Scaling-Up of a Comprehensive Land-Use Planning Approach in the Philippines. From Development Cooperation to National Policies*, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), Bonn.



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The German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) is mandated by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to independently analyse and assess German development interventions. Evaluation reports contribute to the transparency of development results and provide policy-makers with evidence and lessons learned, based on which they can shape and improve their development policies.