SUPPORT FOR SOUND LAND USE PLANNING IN SURINAME

Lessons Learned in Comparable Countries

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Focus

• The project involved identifying useful best practices and lessons learned of sound LUP in countries similar to Suriname
• The TOR makes specific reference to LUP in French Guyane and Guyana
• As part of France, French Guyane has human, material & financial resources for LUP available to it that are not similar to Suriname
• Although Suriname is a big country, administratively it has more in common with the Caribbean SIDS
• Hence, we have focused on the experience of other CARICOM countries, especially Guyana
History of LUP in the Region

• Legislation for LUP to be carried out by a CHPA was 1st introduced in Trinidad & Tobago in 1938
• Aimed at remedying bad living conditions during the great depression & focus was slum clearance/better housing
• This model was “exported” to all the British West Indian islands, Belize & Guyana
• These laws provided for the preparation of LUP for designated areas & the control of land development in those areas
• It was replaced in Trinidad & Tobago & Barbados by modern LUP laws in the 1960s & in the OECS countries in the 1990s
• This old law is still in force in Guyana
LUP has been described as an activity that has been marginalised in the Caribbean.

Few countries have met the legal obligation to produce national, regional LUPs or urban plans.

Those who have done so (e.g. Trinidad & Tobago NPDP 1984) have failed to comply with the legal obligation to review & revise the LUP periodically.

In the OECS where UNCHS & other donors helped prepare LUPs in the 1990s, these are not in use.

Planners have failed to deliver relevant & timely LUPs.

Development control takes place on an ad hoc basis.

Only Barbados has prepared and “rolled over” its LUP and actually uses it to guide development.
Why has LUP worked in Barbados?

- The LUP legislation enacted 1966 has been repeatedly amended (1968, 1981, 1983 & 1998) & kept relatively up-to-date
- The legislation binds the State (applies to development by the Government)
- The national LUP initially produced 1973 has been revised from time to time (last 2003) & kept relevant
- The LUP agency exercises its development control & enforcement powers effectively
- There is a culture of compliance in the society
- There is a high level of political support for LUP (the TCPDO is in the PM’s Office)
LUP in Guyana

- LUP law (TC&P Act) was introduced in 1946
- It enables but does not compel the CHPA to prepare three types of LUPs
  - regional schemes
  - town planning schemes
  - supplementary schemes (for parts of regions)
- The law actually applies only to 5 municipalities in Guyana
- Town Plans were produced for Georgetown (1951), New Amsterdam (1969); Bartica (1986); Linden (1987); & Anna Regina (1998)
- No regional LUPs were ever produced by the CHPA
- CHPA exercises development control over a wider area
The power to prepare LUP for areas other than the municipalities was transferred to the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission (GLSC) in 1999

Like ROGB, the GLSC is responsible for all unallocated State Lands; its other traditional role is control of land surveys

The GLSC’s capability to undertake LUP is in its infancy

During the period when GLSC was headed by a LU Planner, the GLSC produced a Regional LUP for Berbice (Region 6)

Under the EU-funded Guyana Development of LUP Project, the GLSC has produced a National Land Use Plan (2013) with technical assistance from a firm of UK Consultants

The UK Consultants were embedded in the GLSC LUP Unit in order to transfer skills to local counterparts
Lessons Learned

✓ LUP is generally a secondary task of an agency with another important mandate (housing or devel. control)
✓ Failure to share LUP functions with local governments has led to a lack of hierarchy of plans
✓ Public participation mechanisms are weak – “top down” planning is the norm – no public ownership of plans
✓ Legal tools for LUP implementation (land acquisition & development control) are weak – no legal conx to PSIP
✓ This lack of continuity after plan formulation stage leads to abandonment of LUPs – they are just books
✓ Technical assistance yields only short term results, unless LUP skills are transferred to local counterparts
✓ Lack of political support for LUP is a major problem
Applying Lessons Learnt to Suriname

- LUP functions should be placed in an agency/agencies where there are synergies with other functions
- Personnel responsible for preparation of LUPs should be dedicated to this task (not have competing responsibilities)
- All LUPs in hierarchy need not be prepared by same agency
- The legal framework for LUP must be clear, strong & kept up-to-date
- If technical assistance is granted for consultants to prepare LUPs, there should be a skills transfer to local counterparts
- Public participation in the LUP process is key to community ownership of/compliance with LUPs
- Public sector investment must conform to LUPs and be subject to same controls as private sector investments
- Political support for LUP is essential