



PARTICIPATORY LOCAL PLANNING

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INTRODUCTION

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Participatory Local Planning is a methodology and structure for local development planning prepared by the Urban Institute (Washington, DC) in collaboration with and for the Albanian Development Fund (ADF) as part of the World Bank-financed Second Community Works program. The methodology was tested on five pilot communes and accordingly enhanced based on participant observation and most importantly the experience of the commune participants themselves.



Based on this methodology, a Field Guide and Toolkit on Participatory Local Development Planning is prepared for ADF staff and local public administration staff who will spearhead the Local Development Planning process in their community. Also the Field Guide and Toolkit can be used by everyone, State or non-State actors of local and regional planning, who are interested on the Local Development Planning. The field and toolkit is divided in two parts. Part A aims to provide the core understanding of an LDP, clear explanation of steps to be taken, and duties and roles to be carried out by each participant in the facilitation of the planning process and its implementation. Part B contains all necessary tools, documents, training materials, data collection instruments, and other materials for the successful implementation of the ADF Participatory Local Development Planning methodology. Each document is numbered and can be cross referenced to the requisite phase and step of the process as presented in the Field Guide.

Local development planning is a vital process that allows local government and the citizens they represent and work for, to take control of and shape their future. A Local Development Plan provides information on the community's course of action. An LDP is a roadmap to be followed by the elected officials, local government staff, and the community-at-large when shaping their desired future. Local development planning is proactive. It is about strategic thinking, planning, and anticipating the kinds of things local communities need to do in order to achieve their desired goals.



Effective local development planning entails that the local government understand who their customers are and how well they are meeting community needs and expectations. When done well, local development planning involves input and participation from a broad cross-section of the community and other stakeholders. This guarantees that the process is harnessing the best resources possible in planning the future, as well as providing an all-important forum for civic participation, ownership and engagement.

Participatory Local Development Planning compared to other solutions provides clear explanation of steps to be taken, duties and roles to be carried out by each participant in the facilitation of the planning process and its implementation. It also provides all necessary tools, documents, training materials, data collection instruments, and other materials for the successful implementation of the ADF Participatory Local Development Planning methodology. Other options, such as different guides on Strategic Local Planning, provide a general introduction of local planning process, presenting the core knowledge and basic concepts of local development planning process.

Ensuring the participatory nature of LDP group composition has been a problem encountered at local level. This is caused due to the lack of incentives for participation for ordinary citizens, especially those living on remote areas or representing vulnerable groups of the communities. The incentives for participation are necessary for reimbursement of traveling cost. Another problem identified is lack of technical assistance related to local plan implementation. The methodology focuses just on the plan development. As soon as the LDP is approved by the Commune Council local government and communities have to plan the implementation in order to take ownership of the LDP. ADF should strengthen its capacity building role, developing training curricula to start providing technical assistance and training in order to help LDP group get started with the LDP implementation.

Since the methodology presents a process whose scope is the know-how transfer related to local development planning, it is the planning process in itself which ensures the sustainability. In the future, local administration staff will be able to start and realize such planning process without the need of external assistance. As stated above, besides the World Bank that financed the program under which the methodology got started and tested, it is the Council of Europe Development Bank which has financed the further application of this methodology in five extra communes.

WHAT PROBLEM DOES IT SOLVE

The strategic goals and action steps articulated in the Local Development Plan are not solely the domain of the local government. Local Governments cannot do it all, nor can it address the community's needs alone. Inherent in the LDP is the notion that the entire community has a stake in and a contribution to make to the achievement of a sustainable commune.



The commitment and actions of various community members, groups, and other stakeholders are critical to the successful attainment of the community's vision, goals, and actions that comprise the Local Development Plan.

A Local Development Plan is only effective when it is rigorously used to plan and design services and projects, allocate resources, identify fiscal gaps and needs, measure the results of local government work, and communicate these results to the community. It is a process and document by which communities can hold their leadership accountable for getting things done in a manner that is responsive to their needs and priorities. It ensures a wise and effective utilization of scarce resources to ensure the community is positioned to meet its goals.

Since its creation, ADF has promoted and applied the Field Guide and Toolkit continuously through the Regional Development Department (former the Unit of Local Development Planning). The number of local development plans designed by local government units with the assistance of ADF amounts to 18. Hereunder follows a program progress timeline for this component:

- March 2004 – ADF contracts the international consulting company, URI Washington office. The participatory working group is established at ADF;
- June 2005 – Pilot testing of the methodology and adjustment; five communes with different socio-economic characteristics express their commitment to implement the established methodology;
- March 2008 – ADF assists eight LGUs in drafting Local Development Plans in the framework of “Community Works Program II” financed by World Bank;
- January 2009 – September 2009 – ADF assists five LGUs in drafting LDPs in the framework of “Community Works III”, financed by CEB (Council of Europe Development Bank).

The methodology presented here was tested on pilot sites and accordingly enhanced based on participant observation and most importantly the experience of the commune participants themselves. As such it can be used by LGUs, despite their different socio-economic characteristics.

PARTICIPATORY LOCAL PLANNING, IN PRACTICE

The ADF methodology concerning Participatory Local Development Planning aims at realizing this promise. The methodology and structure contains the following guiding principles, framework, components and participants for a well-rounded, highly inclusive, and feasible approach to local development planning in Albanian communes.

The guiding principles of the Local Development Planning in Albanian Communes

The Commune Local Development Plan is composed by follow fundamental values:

Strategic in nature: The LDP looks at the long-term needs of the community and identifies the best strategies to address them; it strategically looks at local assets, too, and the best positioning of those assets in relation to effectively resolving problems of common concern. The process also engenders the culture of strategic thinking among all participants, a vital aspect of successful sustainability.

Simple: The LDP/PME methodology and process will be understandable and manageable by the commune for purposes of feasibility, ownership and sustainability.

Participatory and Inclusive: The LDP/PME development process, implementation, and monitoring will involve a broad representation of the Commune, including representatives of each constitutive village, women, youth, senior or other vulnerable groups of population.



Feasible: The LDP as a plan will contain concrete, feasible action steps and projects. It will aim to strike a balance between actions/projects that can be incorporated into the commune budget or achieved by the community with little financial requirements and those, which might need external support (e.g., donors, grants).

Aligned with regional and national priorities and goals where relevant: Although the starting point for the content of the LDP is the community, special attention should be paid by the local government to the adherence of their LDP with high level plans. This attention will ensure that LDPs do not contain actions/projects that contradict regional or national plans but rather enhance and support them.

A tool to Demonstrate Responsiveness, Accountability and Transparency: By involving the community in the development process, the LDP is responsive to the community's needs and preferences but it is also a tool to hold the local government responsible for its work.

Components of ADF Local Development Plan

A Common Vision

Albanian communities face many development challenges and scarce resources to address them, but there are many opportunities, too. The task is to coalesce these opportunities and the community behind a common vision toward which they can leverage and target scarce human, natural, and financial resources. To achieve this, the LDP process invites the Council and the community to "paint a picture" of their future in the next 10-15 years. This activity results in a "Community Vision."



A Plan for the Future

The future of any community undoubtedly changes and local governments need to ensure that they, with their community's voice, are the authors of that change as opposed to letting circumstances shape their future. The LDP contains feasible goals and action steps, which are achievable step by step on the way to attaining the Community Vision.



Four Pillars of Development

The ADF methodology seeks to cast a wide net to ensure all development priorities are covered in the LDP. All strategic goals and action steps are hence organized according to the following four priority areas: Economic Development, Social Development, Public Infrastructure and Services; and Good-Governance.

One Community, Many Voices

Communities are comprised of many voices: women, men, children, senior citizens, business owners, farmers, teachers, unemployed, ethnic groups, and so forth. It is critical for local governments to understand the often differing needs and expectations of these equally important community members. The LDP process encourages all the residents of a community to participate in the development of the plan and take ownership of its successful implementation.

Communication with the Public

A Local Development Plan is a conversation with citizens. It is developed through input and guidance from the citizens; however, to be sustainable, it requires a continual conversation. The local government needs to rigorously pursue dialogue and feedback in order to ensure its work is having the right impact on their citizens.

People Involved in Drafting the Local Development Plan

With the aim of having an open and transparent process in drafting the development plans for the Commune, a broader participation is targeted by establishing consultation groups based on community participation. Participation of community members is of vital importance for the successful drafting and implementation of the LDP.



Planning Process realization

ADF Methodology contains ten key steps for designing a local development plan. The phases of the method are:

Phase I: Building Support

- *Ensuring Commitment:* ADF meets the Chairman of the Commune who in turn elicits the conceptual approval from the Council of the Commune to head with the designing of the development Plan; The LDP group is established.
- *Providing assistance:* ADF provides intensive training to the LDP group.
- *Initiation of Work:* The LDP group and its subgroups organize meetings and outline the plan of activities to be followed.

Phase II: Community Evaluation

- *Gathering information:* The Commune profile, surveys and a Council Strategizing session are some of the key activities which shall provide with the information needed for the designing of the plan.
- *Community participation:* Village idea fairs are organized in each village and focus groups are established to target special groups.

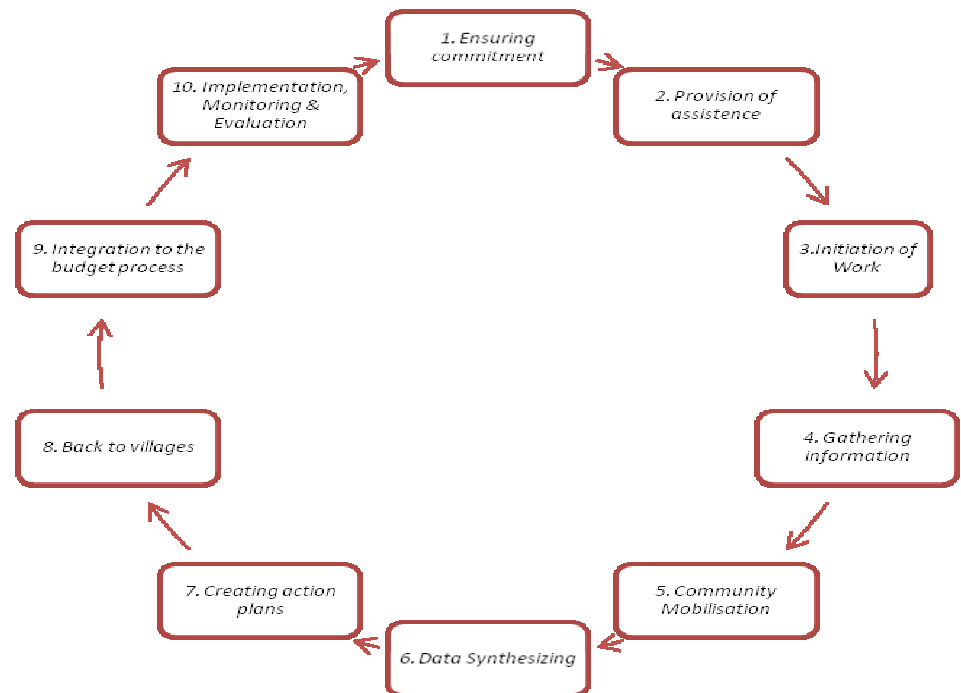
Phase III: Preliminary framework of the plan

- *Data Synthesizing:* LDP group analyzes the inputs and determines the vision and strategic goals.
- *Designing Action Plans for Priority Sectors:* subcommittees of priority sectors identify and prioritize projects/action steps and conduct pre-feasibility studies. LDP group does the summarizing of the plan.
- *Back to villages:* "You talked, we listened, did we get it right? Opportunity to review the draft plan with the community and make sure it meets their expectations.

Phase IV: Implementation

- *Integration with Budget Process and approval by the Council:* LDP provides information on important decisions dealing with allocation of funds and gets the approval of the Council.
- *Implementation and continuous monitoring and evaluation:* The LDP group gets started with the implementation of the plan and continues to monitor and evaluate its progress.

The steps detailed above are reflected in the following diagram.



Structure of a Local Development Plan is presented in the following scheme. LDP includes short, medium, and long-term action plans. The vision includes a period of 10-15 years and strategic goals to 5 years. Each action step has a timeline for its implementation.

Structure of LDP Process

This report differentiates between the *structure* of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) and the *methodology* by which the LDP/PME is realized. The Structure of the LDP/PME defines the constituent components and content that enable the local government to understand its current situation in relation to the future, the direction it wishes to head, how it will get there, resources for attaining its vision (both fiscal and community assets), and the way in which it will monitor its successes and failures. The Structure of the Local Development Plan and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is comprised of the following components:

- Situational Analysis
- Commune Vision
- LDP Priority Areas
- Strategic Goals
- Action Steps/Projects
- Pre-feasibility study for action steps

- Budget and preliminary identification of funding sources
- Schedule and accountability assignments
- Measurable outcomes
- Communication/Public Information Plan

The process by which these components come to life in a dynamic LDP entails a variety of actors and institutions.

RESULTS

One of the advantages that this innovation brings concerning human development is about training of local administration staff and citizens involved in the planning process. According to the methodology, the whole planning process provides ongoing capacity building activities for members of the working groups: local administration staff, local elected officials, citizens, representative of civil societies, business groups, etc. The main training topics provided are: Citizen Participation in local governance; Participatory local planning; Data collection; Community mobilization; Visioning and strategizing; creating local action plans etc. The planning process will result in well-trained local administration staff with the necessary know-how on participatory strategic planning.

In addition, the participatory local planning process gives opportunity to local working groups to put human development in the agenda of the local strategic planning. This is done by crafting human development concrete action plans which address critical issues of this sector, since the local strategic plan cast a wide range of problems through its four priority development areas: economic development, social development, infrastructure and public services and good governance.

The innovation show the studies of scientific evaluation elaborated by institutions, national or international qualified universities, specialized Agencies of the United Nations and give detailed of state art of national and international awards won by the innovation, national patent for innovation, international patent for innovation.

INTERNATIONAL INTEREST

Innovation is adopted or is in the phase of adoption in any other part of the country or in another country, and describe the necessary conditions for application of the innovation in another country. Particularly state the involvement of which institutions, laws and procedures, approve is essential.

The methodology can be applied by any local government unit that needs a local development plan. Also, non-state actors engaged in assisting local government units in any country can benefit from the methodology in their work. The methodology emphasizes the need for reviewing each of the tools in order to adapt with the specific situation in the local communities. Thus, a review of each tool is deemed necessary in case of application to any country. ADF is capable of giving the technical support for the innovation transfer in another country also.



TO KNOW MORE

The Participatory Local Development Planning. A Field Guide and Toolkit, ADF (2005).



CONTACTS

The Albanian Development Fund is available to provide technical support and innovation transfer to the interested countries. In order to establish collaborations, contact:

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