

Comprehensive Land–Use Management: Understanding the Interrelationship Between Spatial Planning, Land Management and Land Administration

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SUMMARY

This paper argues that comprehensive land-use management as a policy domain should be understood on the basis of the interrelationship between three fundamental sets of policy tools, namely spatial planning, integrated land-use management and land administration systems. There is wide perception amongst planners, policy-makers, land managers and surveyors that these three sets of policy tools hold common functional characteristics in dealing with land-use management. All too often, however, spatial planning, land-use management and land administration systems hold the terminological condition of being portrayed as synonyms or, at least, of being conceptually confounded with respect to their precise aims and scope of action. In clarifying this semantic perplexity, the paper firstly contends that such strongly interrelated sets of policy tools are also individually distinctive, and that in synergy they turn out to constitute an overarching policy arena, namely comprehensive land-use management. Secondly, the paper argues that in catering to comprehensive land-use management each of these individual sets of policy tools operates within ad hoc dimensions of performance: i. The strategy dimension, comprised of spatial planning policies and practices established and defined by planning institutions at different territorial scales. In western Europe, for instance, such policies and practices have been increasingly associated with place-making strategies at city-region, metropolitan, regional or even national levels. While this situation has entailed that spatial planning deal less with land use or land policy per se, to come into effect spatial planning and development strategies are highly reliant on land-use management and land administration systems; ii. The management dimension, embraced by land-use, sectoral and natural resource management policies and regulations, relates to the activities associated with the management of land and natural resources that are required to fulfil political objectives to achieve sustainable development. Land management is then about the processes by which a country's land and natural resources are put to good effect. iii. The administrative dimension, encompassed by land administration systems includes the four functions of land tenure, land value, land use and land development, which constitute the operational tools for allocating and controlling rights, restrictions and responsibilities on land. Property rights are concerned with ownership and tenure, whereas restrictions are aimed at controlling use and activities on land. Moreover, responsibilities relate social and ethical commitments geared towards enhancing environmental sustainability.