

Building the Technical Expertise of LGUs for the Robust Implementation of Ridge to Reef Approach/Watershed Ecosystem Approach to Local and Provincial Land Use and Development Planning in the Philippines

Activity Report/Completion Report

1. Title:

Provincial Land Use Forum (PLUF)

2. Duration and Date:

The activity was conducted for one (1) day, on August 30, 2024. The activity was held from 8 AM to 5 PM.

3. Venue:

The activity was held at the International Convention Center (ICC), Hall B, located at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University North La Union Campus (DMMMSU-NLUC) in Bacnotan, La Union. This venue provided a conducive environment for learning and collaboration among participants.

4. Content and Methodology:

This activity, integral to the ongoing update of La Union's Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPFP), serves as a vital platform for in-depth discussions and knowledge exchange. It will focus on important topics that directly impact land use planning and development within the province. Key areas of discussion will include Land Capability Zoning, a process that ensures land is utilized according to its capacity and sustainability; the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) Approval Process, which is essential for aligning local plans with national and regional frameworks; and the Procedures and Requirements for Land Reclassification, which dictate how land can be repurposed to meet emerging development needs.

By facilitating these discussions, the activity aims to strengthen the technical competencies of provincial and local government units (LGUs) and align their planning processes with the updated policies and best practices. Additionally, the event will promote cross-sectoral collaboration by inviting participation from stakeholders, including planners, engineers, environment officers, and policymakers, to share experiences and coordinate solutions that will guide the sustainable development of La Union and its neighboring provinces.

This platform will not only address the processes of land use and zoning but also provide a space for participants to explore challenges, innovations, and strategic approaches to integrating environmental sustainability, economic development, and social equity into the PDPFP update. The outcomes of these forums will help ensure that the final plan is responsive to current needs while preparing the province for future challenges and opportunities. The activity program flow is as follows:

Table 1: Provincial Land Use Forum Program of Activities

Time	Agenda	In-charge
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Registration	UP Los Baños

8:00 AM - 8:10 AM	Preliminaries	PGLU
8:10 AM - 8:20 AM	Message	Hon. Raphaelle Veronica Ortega-David Provincial Governor Province of La Union
8:20 AM - 8:30 AM	Message	Hon. Mario Eduardo Ortega Provincial Vice Governor Province of La Union
8:30 AM - 8:40 AM	Expectation Setting	Ms. Roshelle Mamaril, EnP <i>PO IV, PGLU - OPPDC</i>
8:40 AM - 9:40 AM	Integrating the Land Capability Zoning to Land-use Planning	Dr. Rex Victor Cruz <i>Project Leader, APN</i>
9:40 AM - 11:00 AM	Revised Review and Approval Processes of Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Zoning Ordinances	Engr. Anne Danielle C. Fabro and Engr. Kier Lorenz B. Fernandez DHSUD Regional Office 1
11:00 AM - 12:00 NN	Open Forum	
12:00 NN - 1:00 PM	Lunch Break	
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM	Reclassifying Agricultural Lands into Non-Agricultural Uses	Ms. Maria Cristina R. Rarogal and Leslie M. Catungal DA Regional Field Office 1
1:45 PM - 2:30 PM	Land Use Conversion	Atty. Glaiza Bernadette Pinto-Tadeo DAR Regional Office 1
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Land Use Conversion: Interest Cases in La Union	Atty. Jose Rodolfo Y. Diaz and Atty. Lobayto P. Lang-ay DAR Regional Field Office 1
3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Land Use Conversion: Documentary Requirements	Ms. Noemi Biligan DAR Regional Field Office 1
3:15 PM - 4:00 PM	Guidelines Governing the Reclassification of Agricultural Lands within the Province of La Union in accordance with Provincial Ordinance No. 311-2021	Sangguniang Panlalawigan
4:00 PM - 4:35 PM	Open Forum on Land Reclassification Procedure and Requirements	Mr. David Rabelas, EnP Moderator <i>PO III, PGLU - OPPDC</i>

4:35 PM - 4:45 PM	Synthesis	Ms. Michaela Louise Delfinado, EnP <i>PLUC Chairperson, Province of La Union</i>
4:45 PM - 5:00 PM	Moving Forward and Closing Remarks	Hon. Aaron Kyle Pinzon SP Committee Chair on Housing, Relocation, and Land-use

5. Participants and Facilitators

The activity was attended by a diverse group of 55 key participants representing various offices within the Provincial Government of La Union. Notable attendees included members from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, the Office of the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resource Office, the Office of the Provincial Assessor, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, and the Local Economic Enterprise & Investment Promotions Unit.

In addition to these provincial offices, representatives from various local government units (LGUs) within La Union participated in the forum. The academic sector was also well-represented, with attendees from Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University and Pangasinan State University, emphasizing the importance of integrating educational insights into the planning process.

Moreover, participants from neighboring provinces that share watersheds with La Union, including representatives from the Ilocos Sur Provincial Government, contributed valuable perspectives to the discussions.

The forum also featured resource persons from regional government agencies, including the Department of Human Settlements and Development, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Agrarian Reform. These experts addressed critical concepts and pressing issues related to land use planning and development policies, providing the participants with a deeper understanding of the regulatory framework and best practices in the field. The collaborative nature of this activity facilitated knowledge sharing and strengthened partnerships among stakeholders, ultimately aiming to enhance the effectiveness of the Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPFP).

6. Reflections/Concerns/Recommendations/Lesson Learned:

The forum featured seven speakers who discussed land use planning, zoning, and other related topics. The capacity-building effort is essential for informing stakeholders about the revised review and approval process for Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Zone Ordinances (ZOs). The forum also aimed to educate stakeholders about the updated guidelines and regulations on land reclassification and conversion requirements and procedures. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to share their experiences, best practices, and challenges encountered in meeting land reclassification requirements and procedures. This forum highlights that proper education on the matter results in better understanding, deeper appreciation, and efficient action on the part of the stakeholders.

Integrating Land Capability Zoning to Land-Use Planning

During the forum, Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz provided a comprehensive discussion on

integrating land capability zoning into land-use planning. One of the key concerns raised by the stakeholders focused on determining suitable human settlements in the area. Emphasis was placed on the importance of land capability zoning in classifying lands based on their ability to support specific uses, such as protection, occupation built-up areas etc. Additionally, stakeholders raised questions about addressing the growing number of informal settlers. Additionally, settlements along the roads were identified as illegal. According to Rule No. 23.8 of DAO 2019-05 IRR of the ENIPAS Act, occupants not classified as Tenured Migrants should resettle outside protected areas. Stakeholders reported ongoing communication with the affected occupants and local government units (LGUs) on this matter, acknowledging that it is still a work in progress. It is recognized that identifying the problem is the first step in addressing it, especially considering that many of these occupants are experiencing poverty. Their safety and well-being must be prioritized upon relocation. It also highlighted the impracticality of designating the entire watershed as a protected area. This emphasizes the importance of land-use planning and land capability zoning.

The forum also addressed the advocacy of incorporating the ridge-to-reef (R2R) approach into the design of CLUPs and the compliance of the LGUs in adopting this approach. A study conducted by PCAARRD in 2017 revealed that the public has not widely embraced the R2R approach for integration into their updated CLUPs, as the reports remained consistent since 2014. During the discussion, stakeholders inquired about the practical process of planning. It was emphasized that land use planning does not begin from scratch as it takes into account the existing uses of the watershed, and in doing so, appropriate mitigating measures must be established.

Revised Review and Approval Process of Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Zoning Ordinances

During this part of the forum, the role of Sanguniang Panlalawigan (SP) was clarified. It was explained that all processes must go through the SP because the province is represented by the Provincial Board Land Use Committee (PLUC), which examines concerns and recommendations. The Committee on Housing and Land Use endorses the CLUPs to PLUC as part of the review process. Regarding enforcement and monitoring, once the plan is approved, LGUs handle enforcement. While there is currently no penalty for non-compliance, DILG emphasizes strict monitoring. Non-compliance may have consequences on the governing body, with this, proper communication and coordination among stakeholders are essential. Digitizing land formulation and implementation is also recommended for strict compliance, and annual training on ZO formulation and implementation is offered to LGUs to ensure enforcement.

The issue of illegal settlers in the area was raised again during the discussion. It was emphasized that they should not settle in the protected areas, and strict compliance with the Strict Protection Zone and buffer zones is necessary. Moreover, NGAs provide programs for their settlement. Mainstreaming biodiversity was also highlighted, with the inclusion of this in the Forest Land Use Plan portion of the CLUP. Overlay zones with key biodiversity are also present, while land capability zoning identifies areas with flora and fauna. It was suggested that the SP should be involved in crafting the CLUP to ensure that their knowledge of biodiversity conservation is incorporated.

Reclassifying Agricultural Lands into Non-Agricultural Uses | Land Use Conversion | Interest Cases in La Union

No questions were raised during the discussion on Reclassifying Agricultural Lands into

Non-Agricultural Uses, Land Use Conversion, and Interest Cases in La Union. During this forum section, the DA Memorandum Circular No.26 Series of 2022 and Section 65 of RA 6657 were discussed in detail. The speakers clarified misunderstandings and misuses of terms relevant to reclassification and land use conversion. Among the terms are conversion, reclassification, non-agricultural lands, agricultural lands, etc.

Guidelines for various land uses were emphasized. These guidelines will be used as baseline data to be incorporated into the CLUP. The procedure for land use reclassification was also specified, including the criteria of DA for reclassification, issuance, and effectivity. In the latter portion, non-negotiable areas for conversion were enumerated, as well as the areas highly restricted from conversion.

After these two topics presented by Ms. Maria Cristina R. Rarogal, Leslie M. Catungal, and Atty. Glaiza Bernadette Pinto-Tadeo, Atty. Jose Rodolfo Y. Diaz and Atty. Lobayto P. Lang-ay discussed the interest cases of land use conversion in La Union. This discussion includes the following key points: areas non-negotiable for conversion, irrigable lands, process of securing applications, posting bond, performance bond, exception from bond, approving authority, documentary requirements (per agencies), land use conversion procedures, and penalties and sanctions. This was followed and supported by Ms. Neomi Biligan's discussion on documentary requirements. Before converting a land to another land use, there are proper and specific procedures that must be followed and criteria to be attained. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to negative consequences on the land and the people who benefit from it.

Guidelines Governing the Reclassification of Agricultural Lands within the Province of La Union in Accordance with Provincial Ordinance No. 311-2021

One of the key concerns addressed during the discussion pertains to the conversion of land use, particularly the potential conversion of forests into agricultural land. It was clarified that such decisions fall within the scope of Congress and that a formal application process is in place for such activities. However, one stakeholder inquired about the exclusion of Bacnotan from the conversion process. With this, the distinction between reclassification and conversion was also highlighted, with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) possessing the authority to convert land, whereas LGUs can only reclassify it.

The discussion also focused on who should be responsible for monitoring the conversion process. It was emphasized that a standardized procedure must be followed, including securing permits and issuing necessary approvals. Once approved, LGUs may collaborate with relevant agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), to ensure effective monitoring. It must be considered that certain areas are non-negotiable for conversion, including irrigated areas, as any conversion would violate existing laws. LGUs may report any violations to the corresponding authorities.

In the context of reclassification, a certification is required to update the CLUP. To implement this process, it must comply with the standard parameters and procedures. Relevant documents, including titles, forms, and other land ownership documents, may be necessary for taxation purposes. However, individual applications and implementations do not necessarily involve the assessor. Landowners are informed about reclassification through public hearings, and all requirements must be submitted to the Municipal Development Council.

Based on the topics and concerns raised during the discussion, it is evident that there is a

pressing need to enhance the implementation of policies. The lack of clearly defined and strictly enforced penalties has led to a widespread disregard for laws and policies among the people. However, a more systematic approach might be required to address the underlying issues that drive individuals to violate these regulations. For instance, individuals living in illegal settlements often resort to utilizing land for purposes not intended by its designated use due to the experience of poverty. The relevant agencies must provide assistance to ease these settlement-related concerns. Furthermore, active involvement and participation from the community are crucial in monitoring reclassification and conversion activities.

7. Activity Materials

A copy of the program containing the schedule of lecture presentations per resource person and their topics was distributed to participants before the forum began. Many attendees brought notebooks and pens to take notes, whereas the project team provided pens during registration. On the other hand, technical equipment such as microphones were available at the venue for speakers and stakeholders to ask questions, make comments, and express concerns.

Furthermore, resource persons from Regional Agencies, such as DHSUD, DAR, and DA, along with a representative from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and the project leader and watershed expert, Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, delivered their lectures through in-person discussions and utilized a PowerPoint presentation to engage the participants. The link to the Google Drive containing the lecture materials of the resource persons is provided below:

Google Drive Link: <http://bit.ly/3ZSQlkz>

Participants who completed the post-assessment forms were provided with the PowerPoint lecture presentations prepared by each resource person. Uploading the materials aims to reinforce the learning experience by giving attendees access to the materials used during the sessions, allowing them to review key concepts and details at their own pace.

8. Appendices

Appendix - Directory of Key Participants

ATTENDEES

No.	Full name	Address/Agency
1	Cherish M. Rillera-Carasi	LGU - Agoo
2	John Carl Lodevico	LGU - Agoo
3	Jessica A. Tucay	LGU - Aringay
4	Rinalyn Parrocha	LGU - Aringay
5	Ericson B. Corpuz	LGU - Bacnotan
6	Philmar O. Guerrero	LGU - Balaoan
7	Cristino Valdez, Jr.	LGU - Balaoan
8	Charlie F.O Balanon	LGU - Balaoan
9	Roberto M. Valencia	LGU - Bangar

10	Ferdinand G. Ramos	LGU - Burgos
11	Celine Kylie G. Ramos	LGU - Naguilian
12	Vondeimarr P. Perez	LGU - Naguilian
13	Rolando Cabutotan Jr	LGU - Rosario
14	Adrian E. Dulay	LGU - Sto.Tomas
15	Michael David R. Salazar	LGU - Sto.Tomas
16	Susan O. Natividad	LGU - Sudipen
17	Jeffrey V. Hidalgo	PG Ilocos Sur
18	Vanessa C. Badua	PGLU - OPAg
19	Christopher T. De Vera	PG Ilocos Sur
20	Reymark P. Rivera	SUC - DMMMSU
21	Eunice Dea Villapando	SUC - DMMMSU
22	Ruby Anne Olbinado	SUC - DMMMSU
23	Isaiah M. Diza	SUC - PSU
24	Alejandro Nelmidia	LGU - Luna
25	Noel M. Ramos	DICT R1
26	Rafael Mosuela	Sangguniang Panlalawigan - Provincial Government of La Union
27	Kier Lorenz B. Fernandez	DHSUD R1
28	Anne Danielle Fabro	DHSUD R2
29	Joseph Casem	LGU - Luna
30	Cesar D. Ocampo	Province of La Union - Multi-Sector Governance Council
31	Mark Rodel A. Tan	LGU - San Juan
32	Irlim Janette L. Bernavo	Provincial Government of La Union - OPASS
33	Glo Ann Miranda	Provincial Government of La Union - OPPDC
34	Arnulfo A. Cacho	Provincial Government of La Union - OPASS
35	Jerome Orate	Provincial Government of La Union - OPPDC
36	Alayne Valerie Gundran	Sangguniang Panlalawigan - Provincial Government of La Union
37	Ernesto Callanta	Provincial Government of La Union

38	Michael Lopez	Sangguniang Panlalawigan - Provincial Government of La Union
39	Erick Soriano	LGU - Naguilian
40	Andreciano F. Rulloda	Provincial Government of La Union - PDRRMO
41	Angela Peralta	Provincial Government of La Union - LEEIPO
42	Annalyn Rosario-Valdez	Provincial Government of La Union - PGENRO
43	Dearkyle Anicee Galvez-Taqued	LGU - Naguilian
44	Rosalia D. Morla	LGU - Caba
45	Jenny Fernandez	LGU - Bagulin
46	Marvin P. Pagaduan	LGU - Caba
47	Glaiza B.P. Ponto-Talio	DAR
48	Lang-ay Lobayto	DAR
49	Noemi R. Biligan	DAR
50	Jose Diaz	DAR
51	Rhoderia Vergara	DAR
52	Maria Cristina Parogal	DA
53	Leslie M. Catungal	DA
54	Christian Joy Picar	LGU - Caba

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

