



Deliverable 6

Policy options

**"Sustainable Settlements in Periurban Areas,"
(Acronym: PERIURBAN)**

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Work Package 6

The objectives of Work Package 6 were to develop a set of policy options for sustainable settlements in periurban areas with specific reference to the impacts of energy and transport on natural resources. The approach was to build upon the other work packages in the programme, namely, work packages 2 to 5.

Activities

Under this work package, the following activities were undertaken

- 1) A review of the literature on policy options for the periurban interface: The national and international literature on the periurban interface was consulted. This included papers in international refereed journal, books, conference proceedings, and workshop reports.
- 2) Networking among a large number of actors, both nationally as well as internationally, for a better understanding of the periurban interface. This included NGOs, periurban dwellers, policy-makers, researchers and academics both in India and abroad.
- 3) Development of familiarization case studies for a first hand understanding of the periurban interface as well as for direct interaction with periurban dwellers. This promoted an understanding of periurban and helped network with periurban dwellers. The case studies were built around Delhi and Bangalore.
- 4) Organization of the policy workshop on the periurban interface in New Delhi on September 19 and 20, 2005

Results obtained

The results were obtained primarily from a study of the literature, networking activities and a policy workshop. These are summarized as follows:

The periurban interface has been described as a 'space crying out for attention' (Brook *et al* 2003: 134). Given the unique characteristics of the periurban interface developing policy options for sustainable settlements is a very challenging task indeed. Not only is this task complicated by the diversity of interests and processes characterizing the periurban interface, but also by its constantly shifting boundaries. Given that there is a great diversity in local periurban settings also means that it is not possible to work with a blue-print approach. Most importantly, addressing the periurban agenda requires close cooperation between urban and rural governments, as well as governments at the local, state and national levels.

Developing policy options for natural resource management in periurban areas requires a two-pronged strategy. First, interventions should aim at protecting rural-urban linkages that impact upon periurban livelihoods. Second, there is a need to protect the natural resources and the environment that becomes vulnerable to changes induced by urbanization. At the same time, given the diversity in periurban settings, it is important to

abstain from a “one size fits all”, blueprint approach. Policy interventions need to take account of specific local contextual conditions that vary from one periurban setting to the other.

One of the reasons for the failure of policies that, since the 1960s, have attempted to draw upon rural-urban linkages to promote regional development is that they were based on assumptions that did not necessarily reflect the real circumstances of specific locations and the people living and working there (Tacoli 2003). Tacoli (1998) argues that while rural and urban relations should be seen as mutually reinforcing, generalizing on the nature of rural-urban interactions across different locations and in terms of how they affect different groups must be avoided; interventions need to be tailored to the specific context of each urban centre and its surrounds. The variations in the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions and livelihood patterns both between and within different locations underline the necessity to tailor policies to local circumstances and to the specific needs and priorities of different groups, especially the poor and vulnerable ones.

This, in turn, calls for a decentralized approach that is driven by local demands and priorities and both urban and rural specialists need to work with each other to this end. This requires the straddling of the rural-urban divide (Tacoli 2003), that has been normally ignored by policy-makers. The following are the critical areas that need attention from local governments- rural as well as urban.

Livelihoods and occupational diversification

An important ingredient of policy interventions for periurban areas should be interventions aimed at protecting livelihoods and facilitating occupational diversification. Tacoli (2002) argues that policy interventions for the periurban interface should aim at improving access to a wide range of assets with the aim of expanding livelihood options, rather than assume that agriculture is the best, or indeed the preferred activity for rural residents and that urban residents’ reliance on rural resources is limited to backyard farming for household consumption.

Policy interventions should concentrate on improving access to assets with the aim of expanding livelihood options, rather than assuming that households are spatially homogeneous and that individuals engage in one type of activity only. The assumption of rural households and communities as relatively stable units of production and consumption are no longer valid in many locations, and this needs to be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of rural development initiatives (Tacoli 2003).

Transport and access to markets

Given the dependence of periurban residents on linkages with urban centres, there can be no doubt that policies that improve access to towns and cities need a clear emphasis. This requires a focus on improving and meeting local transportation needs more effectively.

In fact, high transport costs are often identified as bottlenecks in shaping access to markets (Tacoli 2002). Improved roads greatly enhance rural-urban linkages by increasing the value-added and marketability of certain kinds of rural produce such as citrus fruits, tobacco, timber and other produce characterized by fragility and perishability. Improvements in rural-urban links would also increase accessibility to urban social services, such as medical facilities and secondary schools for rural people. During the construction of transportation infrastructure, however, authorities need to pay heed to the livelihoods of periurban population that can get affected through road construction, as demonstrated in the work of Brook *et al* (2003).

Agriculture and access to assets

While agricultural production is assumed to benefit from proximity to urban markets and the development of infrastructure and transport, the degree to which households can take advantage of this proximity depends on their physical, human and financial resources as well as their social capital and their access to markets. Within specific regional contexts, while there is potential for rural-urban linkages to contribute to poverty reduction, this will only occur in a climate in which policies, social relations, institutions and incentives allow an equitable access to the assets necessary to support sustainable livelihoods (Tacoli 1998).

Public participation and institutional contexts

Given the patterns of flows of goods and services between rural areas and urban centres, there are implications for patterns of control over resources. Households who stay behind in rural areas often have little say in the management of local resources as control remains with the migrant members (Tacoli 1998). This is particularly the case for women although it is also mediated by a range of factors such as culturally-specific gender roles and relations, gender divisions of labor within households, land tenure and women's workloads. This should be taken into account when targeting extension messages in rural areas, so that assumptions are not made about who controls resources.

It is also important that any definition of target groups for specific policies correctly reflects the some times wide variations within these groups in terms of their needs and priorities (Rengasamy *et al* 2002). This means understanding the characteristics of the livelihoods of different groups (including those not specifically targeted by the initiative but likely to be affected by it), the direct and indirect impacts of the policy initiative on their livelihoods, and incorporating the policy elements which address potential negative impacts on specific groups.

Policy-makers should consider that people require time to adapt to the changes brought out by policies and any abrupt policy change can increase security, especially for poor and vulnerable groups who can not rely on alternative assets and comprehensive safety

nets. Jaquinta and Drescher (2000) underpin the need to better understand the institutional settings in different periurban types. They identify clear differences in the needs for change and the resistance to change from different settings. A better understanding of the typologies could therefore be helpful in addressing the right institutions.

Rural-urban linkages and policy implications

Much attention has been given to poverty in rural areas. However, relatively little is known about poverty in urban/periurban areas (Jayebo 2003). For a complete understanding of poverty in a country, poverty in rural, urban as well as periurban areas needs to be understood and documented.¹ This calls for a further research agenda on periurban poverty to capture its interesting dimensions and complexity.

While examining policies and strategies that affect the periurban interface, it is necessary to take a broader perspective, considering not only policies that have more immediate impacts on periurban areas but also those which affect a variety of flows between rural and urban areas over a longer term (Allen 2003). Environmental planning and management approaches to urban, rural and regional planning already present many of the methods that need to be applied in environmental planning and management of the periurban interface; however, work still needs to be done in the consolidation and application of a specific approach that links these methods into a coherent system.

There are also important issues related to definition and concepts of the periurban. In fact, the Indian census has so far had no concept of periurban (Kundu *et al* 2003). Town groups, urban outgrowths, and urban agglomerations are accepted concepts to denote core-periphery relationships.

An important thrust in the report of the Rural Urban Relationship Committee (1966), was to explore inter-institutional problems to deal with rural-urban interactive growth; essentially the committee recommended urban development in the twilight zone of rural urban interaction. The current 9th and 10th Plan Indian Urban Policy document also bypass the major issues concerning the periurban regions around the urban agglomerations (Kumar 2001). There is a need for strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks to minimize the transfer of environmental costs to periurban regions and outgrowths.

Challenges in developing and implementing policies for the periurban interface

Developing innovative solutions to the problems of the periurban interface, however, is fraught by important considerations and practical problems. Frequent interventions by urban institutions and visits by politicians and government generate patron-client attitudes in periurban villages (Halkatti *et al* 2003). Since their natural resources are controlled by urban or rural institutions, natural resource management is more difficult to organize. Urban and rural authorities need to collaborate, for which there is no precedent.

¹ A discussion on periurban poverty and its complexities is also provided in Brook *et al* (2003).

An example is sewage flowing into periurban areas, which is partly the responsibility of the urban government and partly of the rural government.²

Devising policy options for natural resource management for the periurban interface is further complicated by inherent tensions between peri-urban dwellers and municipalities. These tensions concern changes in land-use, the management of waste from the urban centres and that of water resources; since these issues are likely to become increasingly central, mechanisms for inter-local government negotiation need to be developed (Tacoli 2002).

The relationship between elected local governments and traditional authorities is critical; this is especially where there are tensions between the statutory rights system of land tenure and the customary system (Bah *et al* 2003; Tacoli 2002). In periurban areas, these are underpinned by informal land markets and the resulting conflict of interest between traditional chiefs who attempt to retain control, including over private sales of land under customary tenure, and elected governments whose responsibilities include the provision of infrastructure for which access to land is essential. The potential for conflict is higher in areas with low levels of social and political cohesion (Tacoli 2002). The role of migrants is important because they bring with them their institutional and socio-cultural background and knowledge.

Tensions between rural and periurban communes and urban municipalities also concern changes in land use, and the management of water resources and of domestic and industrial waste from the urban center (Bah *et al* 2003). These issues call for the development of mechanisms for negotiation and collaboration between neighboring local governments.

Options for earning incomes in the city year-round and consequent migration is an incentive for people to seek opportunities, but also a disincentive for self-help and for investing in their own villages. Thus, whilst multifaceted solutions are possible in peri-urban areas, drawing on both rural and urban opportunities, mobilization of the community is often more difficult (Halkatti *et al* 2003). We also need to take account of the non-static nature of the PUI needs that needs to be factored into administration (Brook *et al* 2003).

Improving synergies between between local governments, NGOs, local civil society and private sector can play an important role in supporting the positive aspects of rural-urban interactions while reducing their negative impacts (Tacoli 2002). In particular, local governments can play an important role in supporting positive rural-urban linkages (Tacoli 2003) and while local decision-making, supported by adequate resources, can support positive rural-urban linkages, wider issues such as land tenure systems, institutional structures of markets and broader national development strategies are likely to affect local initiative.

² In the Participatory Action Planning Project undertaken by Halkatti *et al* (2003), the solution of a sewage treatment plant had to be dropped as it was not clear who –the urban or the rural government- would pay for it.

Finally, where decentralization is relatively recent, substantial efforts are necessary to ensure the legitimacy and capacity of local institutions to carry out their mandate. Local government responsibilities include local economic development, and there is clear scope for the development of a regulatory framework and the provision of a regulatory framework and the provision of incentives to private investors in the areas of transport and processing of local produce. This requires improved capacity from local governments as well as increased legitimacy (Allen 2003).

In the Indian context, the 74th Amendment to the Constitution of India provides for the creation of District Planning Committees and Municipal Planning Committees for effective integration of rural and urban planning and spatial and economic development for the entire district (Brook and Purushothoman 2003).³ The state of Karnataka has seen the emergence of the joint Planning Boards to bridge the gap between urban and rural planning in each district. However, in practice, only one such example is found in Bellary District of the state. There is a need for creating such organizations on a larger scale to integrate and address the concerns of the periurban interface.

The potential of local level approaches

The balance of evidence on the periurban interface points to the potential of local level approaches. In periurban areas, which are in transition from rural to urban, and have inadequate institutional cover, civil society organizations have enormous potential to improve local environmental conditions, to resolve political conflicts in governance and to scale up environmental management activities (Dahiya 2003). There are several cases of local level action in addressing the periurban challenges.

For instance, an integrated environmental plan was developed by the inhabitants of informal settlements in periurban areas of Lima, Peru that formed the basis of local action (Parkinson and Tayler 2003). Dahiya (2003) describes the activities of the Shri Shankara Mahalir Manram, a civil society led organisation, as well as their relationship with the local government, and with the residents of the Pammal, a small town on the periphery of the city of Chennai in Southern India. Mandihal and Daddikamalapur, two peri-urban villages in Dharwad district in Southern India formed Village Forest Protection Committees that work towards protecting, maintaining and enhancing the forest cover surrounding the village (Sali 2003).

In a similar vein, The Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) adopted new approaches to address the problems of periurban areas (Dayaratne *et al* 2003). The CMC introduced a programme to intervene in the low-income communities of urban and periurban areas. Its main conceptual thrust was to organize periurban dwellers into community-based, self-help groups called Community Development Councils (CDCs). Supported by the Public Health Department, the programme was aimed at low-income groups, with activities focused on health education, social awareness, self-help methodology and environmental hygiene. Environmental Management was an important focus, especially sanitation that

³ In the study of the Hubli-Dharwad Area, conducted by Brook et al, The Hubli-Dharwad Urban development Authority was found to focus purely on physical planning rather than taking a broader holistic approach.

was either not available or inadequate. 300 settlements with a population of about 75,000 residents were organized into CDCs. Community Action Planning was undertaken.

This project enabled most of the 300 communities to obtain financial and technical assistance from the CMC and other agencies to upgrade and scale up communal amenities in the periurban areas, such as communal toilets, stand posts for water, covered drains, and paving of access roads, as well as women's income generating activities. They also made links with nearby churches and temples to obtain regular religious services that were normally denied to new inhabitants. Since 1987, and after the setting up of the provincial councils the CDCs have extended beyond the urban region to the periurban and rural areas of the western province.

A similar case of Municipal water supply in Karachi is documented by Ahmed (2003). Municipal water supply in the city had become grossly inadequate with regard to users' needs and expectations; this was particularly true of periurban locations, especially low-income settlements, that have very limited access to municipal water supplies (Ahmed 2003). A solution to this problem was found in the use of community-managed public tanks (*awami* tanks). Communities with the support of public agencies were able to generate cooperative solutions to address their basic needs by reviving the *awami* tanks.

However, the assumption that there would be some day, soon a piped water supply put off extending *awami* tank operations. Ahmed argues that the reality of the situation concerning the lack of performance of the piped water supply needs to be clearly communicated to the inhabitants so that they can consider other options: unfortunately, according to Ahmed, the authorities and elected representatives have been unwilling to do this as they are concerned with maintaining their political and administrative hold on the communities.

In Cagayan de Oro, the Philippines, urban and periurban low income dwellers organized themselves in allotment garden associations and supported by an EU Project, established garden sites in the pilot *barangays* involved. The planning process was supported by participatory community mapping processes (Holmer et al. 2002).

Research and community-based action plans were formulated in 2000-01 on improving livelihoods and enhancing the natural resource base in six periurban villages of Hubli-Dharwad in Southern India (Hunshal and Brook 2003). These action plans were implemented from 2001 and will continue till 2005 using approaches in Participatory Action Planning.⁴

⁴ A review of these approaches is found in Halkatti *et al* 2003. The implementation of these approaches brings out the strong relevance of partnerships among several actors in addressing the periurban agenda. In this case, these interventions were made possible through collaboration among the University of Agricultural Sciences, the BAIF development research foundation, India Development Service, Best Practices Foundation, the University of Wales, Bangor, Community-Based Organisations and public organizations as the Hubli-Dharwad Municipal Corporation, Hubli-Dharwad Urban Development Authority, the Dharwad Zilla Panchayat, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board and others.

The above cases point out to the strong potential of local level approaches in addressing periurban concerns. It is important for governments at various levels to provide support to similar initiatives.

Problems Encountered

Several problems were faced by the project team. Problems were faced with regard to networking with concerned individuals and authorities, especially via email. Problems were also faced in developing the familiarization case studies, as initially it was difficult to approach people and solicit their time and attention. However, through gradual perseverance these problems were overcome. As mentioned earlier, an important problem, especially in the early stages of the project was in developing a common understanding of the term periurban. This was overcome through familiarization case studies, exchange of periurban literature and through a series of workshops and management meetings.

Conclusion

This work package concluded that developing policy options for sustainable settlements in periurban areas requires a two-pronged approach (1) strengthening rural-urban linkages and protecting periurban livelihoods (2) mitigating the adverse impacts of the periurban interface on natural resources and the environment in these areas. This calls for a very specific local level approach that builds upon an understanding of local contextual conditions in which the periurban interface is found to exist. This necessitates a deeper understanding of local rural-urban linkages and local livelihood options and opportunities as well as constraints. This, in turn, calls for a mix of in-depth, ethnographic approaches and process documentation research to generate a better understanding of rural-urban linkages and their impacts. There is also a need to mainstream periurban concerns into planning for urban and rural development, rather than view periurban as an isolated space for which we need a distinct “white paper” or “periurban policy”.

Integrating rural and urban planning will, first and foremost, be the most important step in addressing concerns of the periurban interface. This requires overcoming the dichotomy between urban and rural development. There is a need for platforms where rural and urban planners, researchers and academics can interact. One approach is undertaken by the Network PUDSEA (Peri-urban Development in South East Asia), that created a program named LinkCoRe (Linking Communities with Researchers – creating a platform for sustainable periurban development in South-East Asia.⁵ While there is a provision in the Indian institutional environment to set up District Planning Boards to address the management concerns of periurban areas, much will depend upon the political will to set up these organizations in different Indian states.

The following were the key messages that emerged from the work packages 2 to 6 as summarized at the policy workshop organized by TERI in September 2005 in New Delhi.

⁵ For more Information: <http://www.uni-giessen.de/fbr09/pudsea/newsletter.htm> 11th Newsletter.

Specific interventions that are needed

- Overcome rural urban divide and recognise PU as an area and do not dilute/merge with either urban and rural.
- DPCs (District Planning Committees) need to be set up as a body linking/working for fringe areas. Fringe areas to be involved in planning.
- DPCs should be empowered: concept of regional planning should be brought in place
- DPC does not have technical capacity to undertake planning
- Nagar Panchayats (NPs) are ideal institutions which get convergence of rural and urban areas (forum for civil society engagement)
- There is a need to look at the roles of NPs and differentiate between the roles of DPCs and NPs (clarity required)
- Census should consider NPs as one of the hierarchies in planning process
- District/Regional planning forum could be set up as an institutional arrangement for PU areas
- Participation and sustainability should be seen as important aspects of the PU planning process: role of civil society, education and access to basic facilities are important to be met for PU dwellers
- 73rd and 74th Amendments should have details on rules and regulation for the DPCs and the NPs
- Pushing the industrial/pollution problems to PU areas should not be adopted as a solution. Rather, there is need to design strategies/policies to solve such problems
- Environment should be included in the development of Master Plans for cities (considering environmental aspects of PUI as well)
- In general, it is difficult to generalise indicators for PU settings: inferences from case studies should specifically discuss indicators for that PU setting
- Make livelihoods of PU households more productive and provide them access to markets for sale of produce
- Provide health and education access to PU dwellers
- Build strong participatory approach to tackle ill effects of urban society (by way of social mobilisation and capacity building)
- Idea of cooperative governance (task force to set up with some allocated budget and decision making powers)
- Pro poor and gender sensitive policy recommendations

- Specific interventions for the periurban transport
 - Need for planning authorities to decide/provide transport options (both strategic and short term) integrated with land use policies
 - Need for access to and integration between various types of transport
 - Within PU areas
 - To nearby cities
 - To other cities/states
- Need to promote facilities for safe non-motorised transport (NMT) within PU settings
- Develop a classification of different types of PU area and investigate the transport needs associated with each type of area (taking into account the characteristics of the city to which the PU area is near)
- Find empirical evidence of the role of private institutions (both local and global) in the development of transport infrastructure within/connecting PU areas. Use this evidence to help build a theory to understand dynamic urbanisation processes
- Find empirical evidence on the access to rail, road and other transport options, and use this evidence to develop indicators on transport for PU areas
- Find empirical evidence on traffic safety in PU areas

The following points emerged as important in evolving policy options for energy in the periurban interface

- Assessing energy needs of poor: access and equity issues
- Planning based on emission norms for meeting transport and energy needs of PU settings
- Suggesting options to protect NR along with providing access to various energy sources
- Planning needs to be localised and flexible (models of agro-horti-forestry (with limitations of non inclusion of landless) and pro landless: access and control/management of natural resources (CPRs) by user groups. Eg.VFCs.
- Creating norms for energy consuming bodies (“polluter pays policies”) in PU areas