

Spatial Planning - Comayagua Case

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Honduras is located in Central America and its territorial extension is 112,492 km², with a political division composed of 18 departments and 298 municipalities. The municipality of Comayagua is in the department of the same name, which is in the central part of the country.

Comayagua is the municipality with the most complete and up-to-date cadastre in the country. Several initiatives were developed until Comayagua became an Associated Center of the property registry under the Property Institute. Therefore, the municipality of Comayagua administers the National Cadastre within its jurisdiction, making use of the Unified System of Registries (SURE), which is the official platform of the Government for Cadastre and Registry.

Comayagua has the following advances in land administration:

- The municipality was declared a Catastrada Zone (meaning that has a complete cadastre), where there are 25,775 urban properties and 38,290 rural properties, forming a territorial area of 78,930 hectares (≈ 790 Km²).
- Definition of the original legal nature of the land, which is called Sitios, which has the categorization of: National, Ejidal, Private and Fiscal.
- Regularization processes that have been promoted by the municipality with the support of the Property Institute.
- Land Management Plan implemented.
- Certified Technical Staff, equipment and logistics of the Municipal Cadastre Unit.

Likewise, a Municipal Development Plan, with a territorial approach for 2012-2022 was completed covering the valleys of the Comayagua Region. With the aim of having an instrument that guides and collects the problems and the social, economic, environmental, institutional and social networks potential, infrastructure; prioritizing and planning actions that promote the sustainable development of the Region.

The Central Government decided to build a new international airport for the capital city in the Comayagua Valley, 70 kilometers to the north and on the most important highway in the country. This decision has required for the municipality of Comayagua to conduct several studies to consider, inter alia:

- Expansion of the Urban Perimeter to the year 2030
- Declaration of Special Zones
- Analysis and readjustment of the zoning established in the Land Management Plan
- Development of infrastructure and provision of basic services
- Expansion of the Sanitary Landfill Project

The most important challenges to achieve adequate spatial planning include: (a) linking central and local government planning (municipality), where, based on the prioritization of projects, there is an investment plan; (b) the consolidation of the Municipal Associated Center model in Cadastre, which includes a delegation of powers by the Property Institute; (c) institutional coordination between the General Directorate of Territorial Organization as a technical entity of the Executive Directorate of the Nation Plan that belongs to the Secretary of the Presidency and the Municipality; (d) use of open

source or licensed GIS tools that allow the interoperability of information, analysis and management of regulations and municipal ordinances linked to the territory and (e) processes of regularization of land tenure, guaranteeing legal tenure security in the municipality.

The International Airport Project is expected to be completed by September 2021, which requires the municipality to work quickly in the analysis and readjustment of the planning instrument such as the Territorial Planning Plan, as well as considerably expand the coverage of basic services, such as: potable water, sewer system and solid waste collection.

The inhabitants of Comayagua decided in the last local elections to re-elect for the fifth time the incumbent Mayor, who has governed the municipality for over 20 years. During this period, Comayagua has become a model city in the provision of services and in territorial planning. This achievement is also due to the technical capacity and experience of local government officials.

KEYWORDS

Acronym	
IP	Property Institute
CAM	Municipal Associated Center
MC	Cadastral Maintenance
PATH	Land Administrations Program of Honduras
PMD-OT	Municipal Development Plan with a Territorial Approach
RPI	Land Registry Property
SURE	Unified Registries System

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1. General Objective

This paper's objective is to show how the municipality of Comayagua is using its geo-referenced cadastral base, its Municipal Development Plan with a territorial approach and other spatial planning instruments, to foster an orderly territorial growth based on economic activity, zoning and provision of efficient public services.

2. Legal Framework

The Law of Territorial Ordinance was approved by Decree No. 180-2003 of October 30, 2003, with the general objective of establishing that the territorial order is constituted as a State policy that incorporates national planning, promotes integral management, strategic and efficient of all the resources of the Nation, human, natural and technical, through the application of effective policies, strategies and plans that ensure human development in a dynamic, homogeneous, equitable and equal opportunities, in a sustainable process that reaffirms the human person as the end of society and at the same time its most valuable.

The PMD-OT is the technical instrument that guides activities of the economic, environmental and social sectors in the municipal sphere and serves as a reference to the different sectoral plans and strategies and is constituted by the territorial use and occupation plans at the municipal level.

The relationship between the PMD-OT and the Law of Country Vision and Nation Plan is described below:

Decree 286-2009 on the Law for the Establishment of a Country Vision and the Adoption of a National Plan contains the conceptual framework that will guide the process of planning the development of the country. The Country Vision represents the desired scenario, the Country Image that Honduras will have to reach in the next 28 years (2010-2038), through the execution of successive nation plans and complementary government plans; it contemplates principles, national objectives and national priority goals.

The Nation Plan is a set of strategic guidelines, objectives and indicators, formulated every twelve years (2010-2022) in accordance with the prioritization of the challenges facing the Nation. This plan will guide public and private action during three consecutive government periods, through government plans.

The Government Plan has a validity of 4 years and represents the approach of policies, programs and projects to be executed by each government administration, independently of the political party that it represents.

According to this law, the guiding principles that should prevail in the government planning process to ensure consistency and harmony between government plans and the nation plan are:

- Focus on the human being and its equitable and integral development.
- Respect for the dignity of the human person.
- Solidarity and equity as criteria for state intervention.
- Subsidiarity as a State policy.
- Freedom as part of the development of the human being.
- Human development as a process that generates opportunities.

- Economic growth as a means of generating development.
- Democracy and political pluralism.
- Citizen participation as a means of governance.
- Gender equity as a transversal axis.
- Respect and conservation of the culture and customs of the ethnic groups.
- Integrity and transparency as the basis of the action.
- Macroeconomic stability as an indispensable element of growth.
- Sustainable development in harmony with nature.
- Decentralization of management and decisions related to development.
- Shared public-private development management.
- Planning for development.

The Country Vision establishes four main national objectives and 23 national priority goals, which define the Country Image that is aspired for the year 2038. In conceptual terms, the national objectives and the national priority goals will be specified under the progressive execution of the National Plans (2010-2022 and 2022-2034).

For its part, the Nation Plan (2010-2022) contains eleven strategic guidelines described according to their current situation. These guidelines will be monitored through the monitoring of 65 sectoral indicators, with the purpose of measuring the progress of compliance with the National Plan and guiding the formulation and management of the Government Plan of successive administrations.

Con formato: Inglés (Estados Unidos)

3. History of Spatial Planning in Comayagua

The Municipal Development Plan with a Territorial Approach (PMD-OT) for Comayagua was prepared in 2004 in a fully participatory manner, making available to citizens the cartographic information including the identification of hazard risk areas (such as floods and landslides). People living in the municipality, including villages and hamlets, made their contributions through legitimate organizations such as workers' organizations, water boards, religious organizations, . These organizations were joined by local government officials in groups (mesas) organized by various themes. The PMD-OT, in the first instance, was made available in a Public Consultation (Public View) in the City Hall, giving all citizens the opportunity to review and provide comments and feedback. Subsequently, it was approved in a Citizens Assembly (Cabildo Abierto), which gave the opportunity to the population to approve this planning instrument. As a result, the municipality of Comayagua now has more solid geospatial information for the effective implementation of the PMD-OT and the associated regulatory instruments, such as Municipal Laws. Likewise, citizens now have a greater level of awareness regarding participatory planning and a better knowledge of their territory with respect to its boundaries, the rural and urban macro-zoning, the inventory of tenure rights, land use, the cadastral value of the properties, as well as hazard risk areas.

These advances have been decisive factors not only for improving participatory planning, but also for the implementation and monitoring of the Plan, through the Municipal Transparency Commission (CCT). This objective is pursued by conducting social audits in the municipality, which are based on a process of citizen participation, including men and women, aimed at monitoring the processes of public management that ensure the transparent execution of projects and programs, as well as the provision of public services in an effective and efficient manner. The CCT is composed of five (5) representatives of civil society selected in assemblies including community organizations, trade

associations, business and other organizations existing in the municipality. CCT's members are selected for a period of three (3) years, and may be reelected for a longer period.

The PMD-OT and complementary instruments such as: i) assessment of the growth of the city of Comayagua, review of its current zoning and delimitation of its urban perimeter projected to the year 2030, ii) housing plan of the city of Comayagua, iii) selection, evaluation and classification of potential sites for the construction of the sanitary landfill of the city of Comayagua including technical recommendations for the design, iv) regulation of conformation of the urban perimeter, zone of mixed use (ZUM) of the municipality of Comayagua, zone of mixed use with restrictions of the municipality of Comayagua, v) master plan of the historic center of Comayagua, and vi) regulations for approval of urbanization projects in the municipality of Comayagua, are available to the public at the municipal offices, where a geoportal is being developed. Similarly, the Property Institute through the geoportal IP (geoportal.sinap.hn) and Web page (www.sinap.hn), provides access to citizens and institutions to view public information on the national cadastre, property registration and special considerations on a given territory.

4. Competencies of the Municipal Governments under the Territorial Planning Law

In accordance with the Law of Territorial Planning, municipal governments, are mandated to the following:

- 1) The overall management of territorial planning at the municipal level to promote the most appropriate development conditions for community life;
- 2) The broad management of the control and regulation of the human settlements within their jurisdictions, for which municipal governments will take action on:
 - The finalization and implementation of layout and urban development plans of the municipality, and consequently of the control and regulation of land uses for the economic, social, leisure and other necessary activities in the human settlements, as well as of the regulation of commercial, industrial and service activities;
 - The definition of the perimeter of cities and other forms of human settlements, as indicated by the Law;
 - The provision of municipal public services infrastructure;
 - The development and promotion of programs that provide housing solutions;
 - The management and control of risk areas;
 - Environmental protection;
 - The promotion of local culture and values; and ,
 - The protection of historical and cultural heritage.
- 3) The responsibility of harmonizing the Municipal Development Plan with the sectoral planning and the plans for areas under the national special regime and with the National Plan, in aspects such as:
 - The promotion of activities related to sectoral programs and projects;
 - The development of activities to promote local production;
 - The management of natural resources; and ,
 - Other coordination activities with the policies and sectoral programs of the nation.
- 4) Other responsibilities related to the framework of municipal autonomy included in the Municipalities Law (published in *La Gaceta* of February 18, 1993).

5. Implementation Experience

As a result of the cadastral survey initiated by PATH, the cadastre of Comayagua now has georeferenced mapping by GPS of 90 percent of the urban and rural parcels within the municipality's area. Thanks to the strengthening of local capacities, the municipality is empowered to manage the cadastre and geospatial information system. This has allowed Comayagua to obtain a national certification that allows it to connect and interact, through the web, with the Integrated Registry System (SURE). Taking into account these advances and achievements, in November 2017 the IP signed an agreement with the Municipality of Comayagua to operate as a Municipal Associated Center (CAM). With this agreement, the municipal cadastre currently provides remunerated services for maintenance and updating of the national cadastral system, on its territory.

Each of the public services provided by the local government is now based on spatial planning taking as reference the cadastre-registry information contained in the SURE. This allows for the provision of public services, such as drinking water through the municipal company Aguas de Comayagua Service, the more efficient design of routes for the collection of solid waste, and in general for the efficient management of social infrastructure such as the paving of streets, the construction of bridges and the development of electricity lines and sanitary sewer systems.

This new form of territorial management has generated direct benefits for the population and the municipality, such as:

- ✚ *Processes of Regularization of Land Tenure in municipal lands, since it has been easier to identify property regimes in the territory.*
- ✚ *Greater efficiency in the resolution of conflicts related to property boundaries and alignment with neighboring parcels, since 90 percent of the urban and rural parcels that make up the municipality are now georeferenced.*
- ✚ *The development of new social infrastructure and services for the population by maintaining an updated inventory of urban and rural plots and increasing tax collection.*
- ✚ *The development of a more solid geospatial information for the effective implementation of the Municipal Plan of Territorial Planning and other instruments related to the territory, such as municipal ordinances.*
- ✚ *Better risk management by having identified the most vulnerable areas and sectors of the population.*
- ✚ *Greater awareness of citizens in the planning and implementation of all these geospatial planning instruments.*
- ✚ *Increased tax collection, by maintaining an updated inventory of urban and rural plots.*
- ✚ *Improved land tenure security, which has encouraged the population to request the concession of full ownership of their plots, increasing the income of resources to the municipality.*

In conclusion, it is evident that Comayagua has several planning instruments linked to the territory, which allows all departments and units within the municipality to implement a more efficient spatial planning. This, in turn, will allow them to be better prepared for the new challenges in infrastructure, public services and social projects that will help improve the quality of life of citizens.

6. Recommendations

The Municipality of Comayagua should continue to focus on the following activities in the short term:

- ❖ The PMD-OT should be made available in a GIS tool that is easy to understand and manage by all the Municipal departments and units and Units, so that any decision made on the territory is based on the current planning.
- ❖ A Geoportal should be established where the general public could access the territorial planning of the municipality, including the display of the cadastre and municipal ordinances that are linked to the territory. The municipal ordinances must be georeferenced under the polygons criterion.
- ❖ The georeferenced planning and municipal ordinances should be officially submitted to the Property Institute to have them published in the SURE.

To take advantage of the SURE and Geoportal of the SINAP, where the specifically designated uses/areas (protected areas, disaster risks, sitios, etc.) could be published, the municipality should carry out the following actions:

- ✓ Conduct a data reconciliation for the creation and linking of regions.
- ✓ Categorize and generate parameters for the entry of information by topic.
- ✓ Preparation of the maps generated in the PMD-OT for its geographical link with the metadata.

7. Annexes

The following are the most important projects for the municipality and that were raised in the PDM-OT, for this the municipality has managed with Cooperators having its own counterpart resources.

Sanitary Landfill Project

The project is already in operation, a situation that has considerably reduced environmental pollution in the area, also reducing the presence of carrion birds, a situation that will reduce their presence in the areas surrounding the international airport.

In the same way, the toxic wastes and that require an adequate handling, are being deposited in specific areas, complying with the international norms.

Below are some photographs that reflect a before and after in the management of solid waste:



Drinking Water Project (expansion)

One of the most important projects for the population has been the provision of drinking water, which is why the municipality, based on a defined plan, has managed to build a new dam and a new water treatment plant. This project will guarantee the supply of potable water for a horizon of 30 years, bearing in mind the new constructions generated by the operation of the Palmerola international airport.

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