Training on Participatory Spatial Information Management and Communication

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Abstract

Land grabbing and disputes over land ownership are serious issues that affect livelihood of farm families, environment, economy, social welfare and human rights, especially in developing countries. Farmers often do not know the value of their natural resources and the exact geographical data of their land. Documentation may not be in order or does not exist at all, and farmers may not be able to defend their land against political and economic interests. In many countries, indigenous and other marginalised people are not well-engaged in effective policy dialogue on issues related to the territories they use, manage and occupy. The participatory creation of maps began in the late 1980s. At that time, development practitioners were inclined to use participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods. The international conference on mapping for changeïn 2005 was a landmark event where 154 practitioners from 45 countries convened to discuss state of the art participatory spatial information management and communication and its potential, constraints, opportunities and threats.

In response, the EU-ACP Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) conceived a training kit on participatory geographical information systems (PGIS) in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The English and Spanish versions of the training kit were produced over a period of two and a half years (2008–2010) with the contributions of more than 40 international specialists representing civil society and academic and development agencies from across the globe.

Use of the training kit by technology intermediaries, researchers, government officials and development agencies is expected to ensure that indigenous and marginalised communities participate in documenting, representing and communicating their knowledge, while taking control over the processes involved. The training kit, available online and on DVD, offers building blocks from which trainers can design and build their own workshops according to the needs of their audiences. The training kit includes 15 modules, each of which is comprised of units. A module is a comprehensive collection of training materials related to a specific topic. Each unit includes a number of components. A unit is the content to be covered in a single training session.

Keywords: Participatory geographical information systems, training kit

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