



## PARTICIPATORY AND ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF RURAL REVITALIZATION IN CHINA

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### INTRODUCTION

Rural revitalization refers to the process of rural transformation towards sustainability and competitiveness of rural areas by solving principal economic and social problems, faced by the region in a specific period. It is a strategy, which is constructed upon a foundation of different dimensions of equality between urban and rural areas.

Rural revitalization strategy, adopted in China during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on 18 October 2017, is a response to the rural challenges, which pursues balanced agricultural and economic development. Furthermore, rural revitalization intends to cover all other aspects, including cultural, social, and ecological progress.



Figure 1: Aspects of Rural Revitalization

This study draws the lessons learnt from the pilot project undertaken by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS) in Sichuan Province in People's Republic of China, during 2016/2018, which is energizing the Chinese rural revitalization strategies.

### STUDY AREAS

The pilot project was undertaken in Baoping, Ylong county and Jinyuan, Xichong county, in the city of Nanchong, which is experiencing the problems of hollow villages due to the rapid growth of rural-urban migration. The region lost 86 percent of its rural population. Agriculture's contribution to GDP is only 15 percent and 30 percent of the total area is abandoned cropland.



### RESULTS

The key principle of the pilot project was to empower the rural communities to be able to examine their own priorities for improving their sustainability, in response to the challenges from urban biased development.

The pilot project adopted two innovative approaches to ecological assessment and landscape planning – first, providing input and training to the rural people in order to ensure their participation in decision making process and second, advanced recording of results in apps, i.e. database and GIS.

The project was consisted of following main stages:

#### 1. Advanced inventory of landscape and determination of core challenges

- ❖ Analyzing ecological functions
- ❖ Mapping and evaluating landscape structure
- ❖ Surveying landscape ecology functions

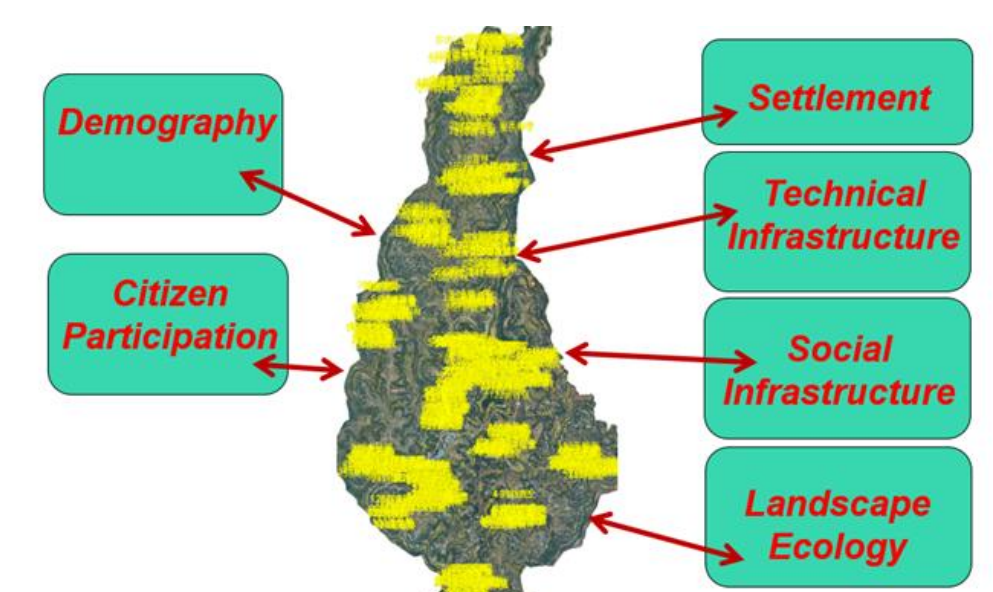


Figure 2: Modules of an Integrated GIS supported database

#### 2. Formulation of targets and measures for Master Plan

- ❖ Through workshops
- ❖ Participation of all agencies at central and local levels

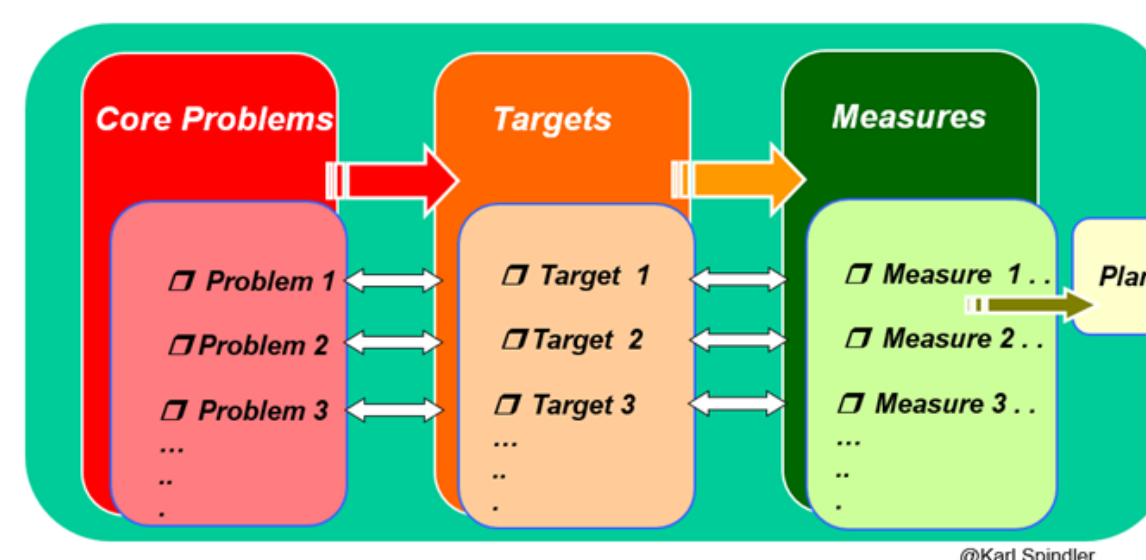


Figure 3: Master Plan Development Process

#### 3. Coordination and finalization of Master Plan

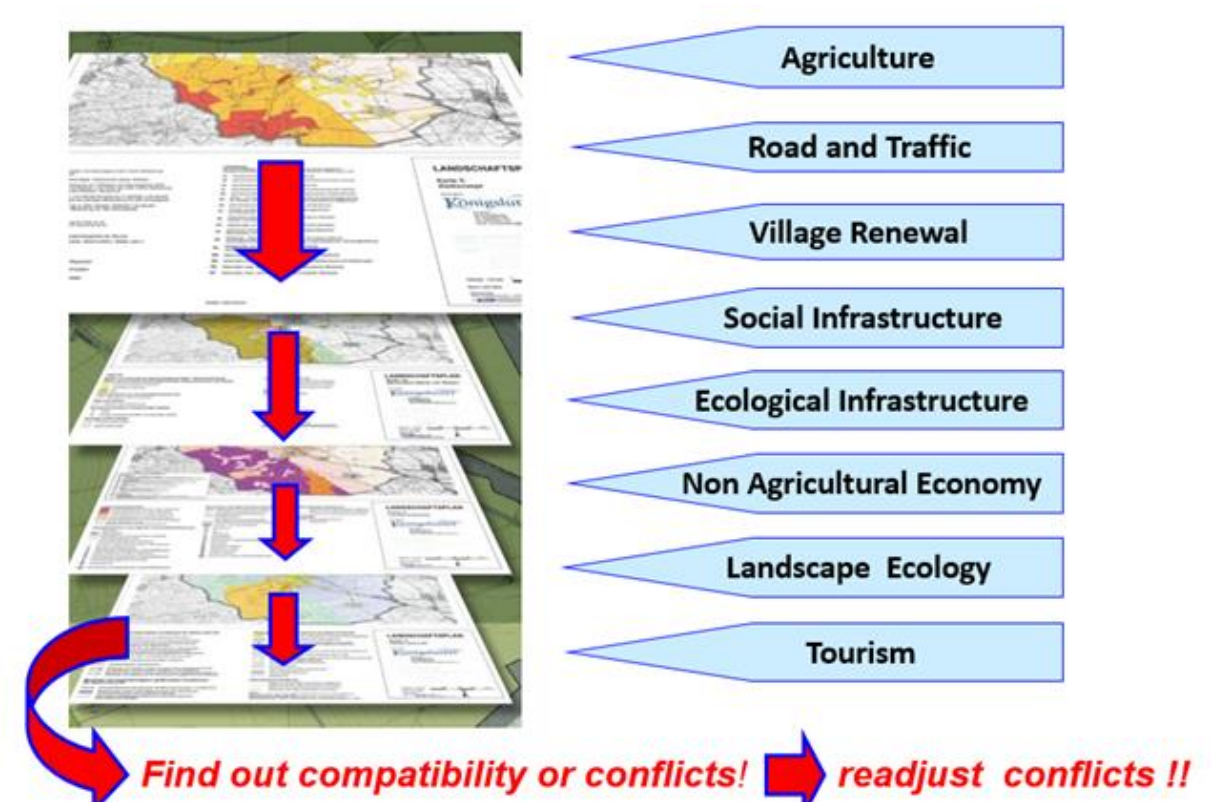


Figure 4: Putting layers of sectorial planning together

### CONCLUSIONS

Core challenges determined from field study not only help to formulate targets for landscape planning, but also to develop strategic planning in the field of agriculture, settlement and village renewal, road infrastructure, non-agricultural activities, social services and tourism.

The pilot project explored new modes of landscape planning for rural revitalization and mobilized the rural people to develop themselves and their communities. On the whole, it provided experience and guidelines for the implementation of future projects related to China's new rural revitalization policy.

Based on the lessons learnt from the pilot project, the study suggests the following:

- Investing in social, technical and ecological infrastructure;
- Strengthening self-responsibilities of communities and villagers;
- Creating innovative job opportunities in rural areas;
- Considering environmental sustainability in long term strategic plan and policies;
- Promoting education and social infrastructure as key quality of life; and
- Encouraging capacity development and citizen participation in planning process.



# Catalyzing Innovation

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The projects aimed at adopting two innovative approaches to ecological assessment and landscape planning – first, providing input and training to the rural people in order to ensure their participation in decision making process and second, advanced recording of results in apps, i.e. database and GIS.