



Practice and Reflection on the System of Responsible Planner from the Perspective of Whole Life Cycle

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Abstract. Space planning serves as the guiding ideology for national spatial development, providing a blueprint for sustainable development and forming the foundation for various development, protection, and construction activities. It is crucial to ensure that plans are feasible, implementable, and verifiable, with a focus on the authenticity, flexibility, and operability of plans in urban and rural spatial planning and governance. Grassroots planners and planning management are directly linked to the effectiveness of planning and represent weak points within the entire planning life cycle. As China enters the stage of high-quality development, corresponding changes are needed in the mechanisms of land and spatial planning. The institutionalization of responsible planners, optimization of planning management methods, guidance for career transitions of planners, and the establishment of public participation platforms are essential for addressing complex problems.

Keywords: Responsible planner, System value, High-quality Development, Spatial governance

1 Introduction

Research on the system of responsible planners primarily focuses on urban renewal, public participation, and the provision of technical services [1-5]. However, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis from the perspective of the entire planning lifecycle, including formulation, implementation, and supervision, to study the institutional development, significance, and effectiveness of responsible planners [6-10]. By analyzing the existing issues in land spatial planning formulation, implementation, and supervision, it becomes evident that responsible planners are indispensable and of great importance [11-15]. This study compares responsible planners domestically and internationally in terms of promoting entities, job responsibilities, work methods and role positioning, institutional implementation methods, and compensation. It identifies the key issues faced in promoting the system of responsible planners and proposes targeted policy recommendations [16-19]. These recommendations include guiding the transition of traditional planner professions, clarifying the rights and responsibilities of responsible planners, establishing platforms for multi-party participation, pro-

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L. Moutinho et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2023 International Conference on Management Innovation and Economy Development (MIED 2023)*, Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research 260, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-260-6_21

moting intellectual services in rural areas, encouraging collaborative assistance, and expanding channels for the realization of the value of responsible planners [20-25].

2 Current Situation and Existing Issues

2.1 Conflicts in Planning Management

During the land spatial planning process, conflicts of interest may emerge among diverse stakeholders. These conflicts can arise due to differing responsibilities, rights, and interests among various management entities, resulting in challenges related to cooperation and information sharing. Effective planning management heavily relies on robust data support. However, there are shortcomings in the accuracy, completeness, and accessibility of data sources. These deficiencies impede the collection, integration, and quality management of planning data, thereby diminishing the precision of planning management. As a consequence, plan implementation becomes less effective and encounters obstacles.

2.2 Single Source of Demands

Relying solely on a single source of demands can result in centralized decision-making during the planning process, potentially neglecting the interests and demands of other relevant stakeholders. In certain instances, governments may prioritize economic development, inadvertently overlooking the reasonable demands of local residents. This disregard for local demands poses challenges in garnering public support and cooperation. Urban expansion, in particular, can have adverse impacts on local communities, leading to decreased public acceptance of planning initiatives and suboptimal implementation outcomes. Moreover, some governments excessively prioritize infrastructure construction, resulting in a lack of dynamism in planning efforts and insufficient adaptability to future urban development trends.

2.3 Shortage of Talent Resources

The implementation of the responsible planner system is confronted with a scarcity of talent resources, characterized by a limited number of professionals with expertise in the field of planning. As of 2019, the nationwide count revealed a mere 40,000 registered planners among the 531,000 certified social workers. Furthermore, as of May 31, 2022, there were only 50 accredited colleges and universities offering urban and rural planning programs, with an estimated annual production of 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students. This number is insufficient to satisfy the talent pool requirements for a "comprehensive rollout" of responsible planners. Additionally, planning professionals in China are predominantly concentrated in major cities, while responsible planners tend to be primarily stationed in specific areas. This dearth of field investigations and a comprehensive understanding of local conditions by external rural planning experts can lead to unreasonable and impractical planning outcomes.

3 Strategies and Recommendations

3.1 Clarify the Rights and Responsibilities of Responsible Planners

To ensure the effective participation of responsible planners in land spatial planning, it is essential to clearly define their roles and authority. Firstly, the hiring and utilization of responsible planners should be distinct, with a focus on centralized management and local accountability. Secondly, empowering responsible planners with specific rights, including access to information, investigation, advisory, and consultation rights, enables them to supervise the implementation of land spatial planning and governance. Furthermore, for major projects, particularly government-funded initiatives, the opinions of responsible planners should be regarded as significant evaluation references in terms of technical guidance. Lastly, the roles and responsibilities of responsible planners should be precisely defined at the institutional level, facilitating effective coordination with non-planning departments, and highlighting their role in coordinating planning-related matters.

3.2 Guide the Transition of Traditional Planner Professions

Previous land spatial planning processes primarily relied on indicator-based formulation, often disregarding the opinions and demands of grassroots stakeholders, such as streets and communities. This top-down approach resulted in the implementation of specialized plans by various departments, including civil affairs, electricity, and municipal administration, without adequate coordination, leading to low public satisfaction with the outcomes. With the reduction of statutory spatial planning types, it is necessary for some traditional planning practitioners to gradually transition into responsible planners, immersing themselves at the grassroots level and providing professional technical services that bridge the gap in planning implementation, thereby enhancing specific spatial governance and improving residents' quality of life.

3.3 Encourage Collaborative Assistance and Enhance Professional Skills

In accordance with recent policies, rural development remains a key focus, encompassing public infrastructure construction and the preservation of traditional and distinctive landscapes. Responsible planners encounter challenges in rural areas due to weak foundations, demanding tasks, and limited talent and financial support. To promote well-organized planning in rural areas, it is crucial to facilitate intellectual services, establish assistance mechanisms, and assign planning agencies and universities to provide guidance and support for rural planning in specific counties and townships. Responsible planners should offer professional consulting, guidance, and design control during the planning implementation process. They should actively engage the public in planning through activities such as receiving plans, providing explanations, and collecting public opinions. Additionally, responsible planners should provide feedback on public comments, thus establishing a closed-loop system encompassing planning formulation, public disclosure, opinion feedback, and implementation.

3.4 Establish Diverse Platforms for Collaborative Cooperation

Construct communication platforms involving streets, communities, residents, local organizations, experts, and scholars to continually strengthen fundamental data and information. These platforms should facilitate collaborative efforts in addressing planning tasks and finding solutions based on identified issues. Enhancing the annual assessment and commendation system for responsible planners, as well as promoting professional exchanges, training, and continuing education, will enable responsible planners to provide improved professional services for land spatial planning.

4 Conclusion

Land spatial planning entails not only technical challenges but also requires navigating numerous trade-offs and compromises among diverse interests. Therefore, responsible planners must possess robust professional competence, effective communication skills, and coordination abilities. They should provide technical advice at critical decision-making junctures, strike a balance between various interests, mediate conflicts and contradictions, oversee plan implementation, and maintain a neutral stance throughout the process.

Acknowledgments

The research work was greatly supported by Research and Development Fund Project of China Institute of Geo-Environment Monitoring: Research on Geoscience Knowledge graph for the Improvement of Land Spatial Governance Capability.

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