



## DEPARTMENT OF TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING



*AN OVERVIEW...*



# INTRODUCTION



## Central Planning System

Department of Town and Country Planning is a central planning office responsible for preparing strategic plans requested by municipal councils and/or peri-urban and rural areas projected for development. It is also the approving authority to master planning, subdivision of land and building applications for the whole country.



## FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT

- Approve planning scheme and amendment
- Determine and decides on conditional development and relaxation on development requirements in approved town planning scheme area
- Determine development applications in Town Planning Areas which do not have approved Town Planning Schemes
- Determine and decides on Subdivision applications throughout Fiji
- Prepare or Revise town planning town planning scheme.
- Offer physical planning advise to the overall decision making process of the government and private sector

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### Planning Legislations in Fiji

1. ***Town Planning Act (Cap 139)***. This establishes the framework and system for managing land use and development, including *Town Planning Schemes* and the *Town Planning Act General Provisions*.
2. ***Subdivision of Land Act (Cap 140)*** specifically concerns the system for creating and reconfiguring lots - altering boundaries or amalgamating lots - to create allotments (on which development can then be planned and take place

## TOWN PLANNING ACT

The *Town Planning Act (Laws of Fiji Chapter 139)* establishes the tools and processes for the planning, restriction and approval of development across the country. The different parts of the Act establish the scope and key facets of the planning system



## SUBDIVISION OF LANDS ACT

- The *Subdivision of Land Act (Laws of Fiji Chapter 140)* provides for the regulation and control of creating and reconfiguring lots to create land allotments.
- The Act establishes the Director of Town & Country Planning as the approving authority for land subdivision, with the power to approve or refuse applications. It sets out the way in which an application for subdivision is to be made, including the contents and presentation of proposal plans.
- It applies to land on the islands of Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Ovalau. Outside of these areas, subdivision of land is regulated by the *Town Planning Act* under the Town Planning General Area.

## SECTIONAL FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT

### FORWARD PLANNING SECTION

- Prepare, revise and amend town planning schemes
- Prepare Local Advisory Plans
- Determine rezoning proposal from rural town planning areas
- Consider foreshore development proposal and make appropriate recommendations
- Provide planning advice to town councils, rural local authorities, and statutory bodies, stakeholders, private sector, ,public and internal referral

### SUBDIVISION SECTION

- Process of Subdivision of land applications
- Approval of Engineering Plan
- Clearance of Survey Plans
- Provide advice to land developers and consultants on land subdivision matters



## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SECTION

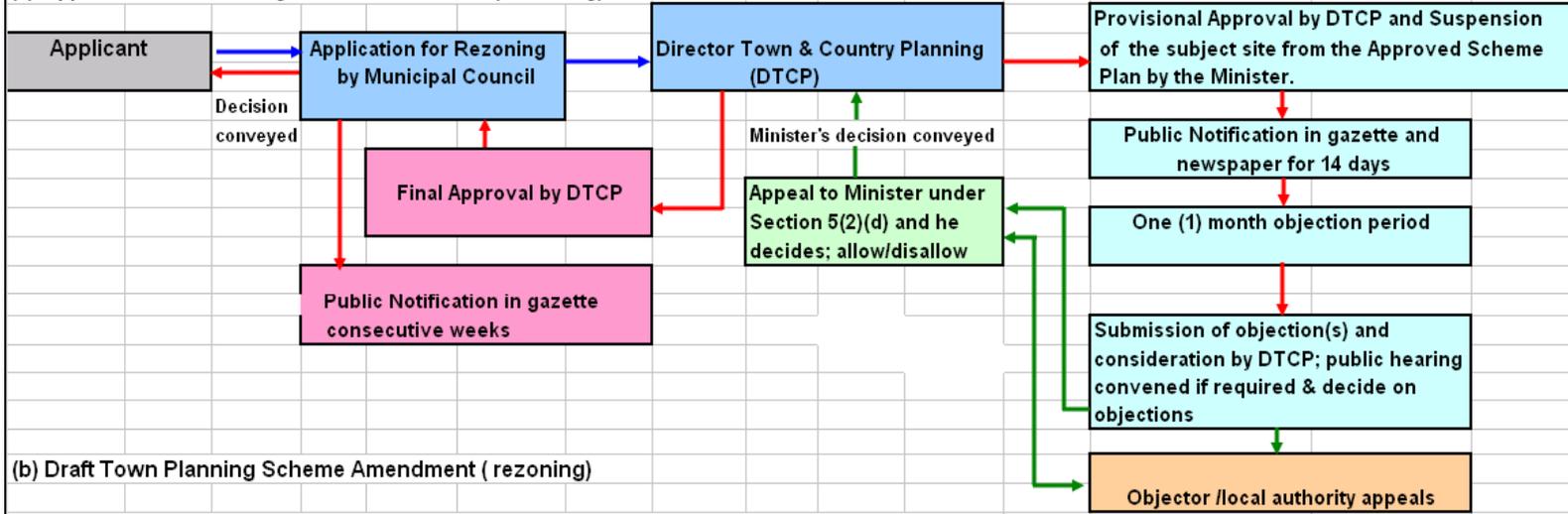
- Consider and determine applications under the development control procedures
- Advise local authorities and consultants on matters pertaining to the control of developments
- Respond to all correspondence enquiries relating to development control measures
- Provide the Minister for Local Authority, Housing and Environment with the planning background on appeal on application refused by the Director



# THE GENERAL PLANNING PROCESS

FORWARD PLANNING: (a) Approved Town Planning Scheme Amendment ( Rezoning) (b) Draft Town Planning Scheme Amendment © Rezoning in Rural Town Planning Areas APPENDIX 1a

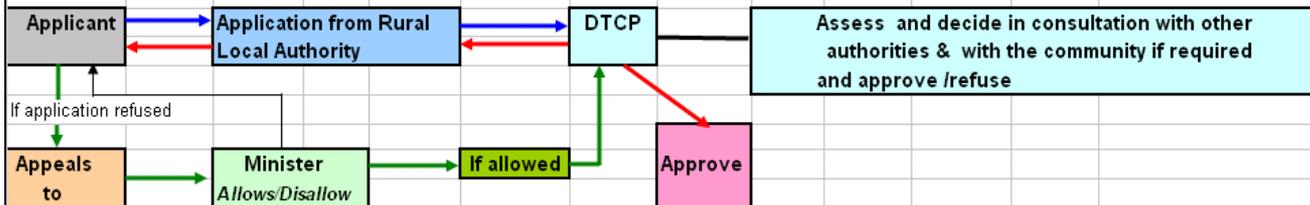
(a) Approved Town Planning Scheme Amendment ( Rezoning)



(b) Draft Town Planning Scheme Amendment ( rezoning)

Same process as in (a) above except that the site to be rezoned is not suspended by the Minister as the scheme plan is still in draft form and not finally approved.

© Rezoning in Rural Town Planning Areas & General Town Planning Areas

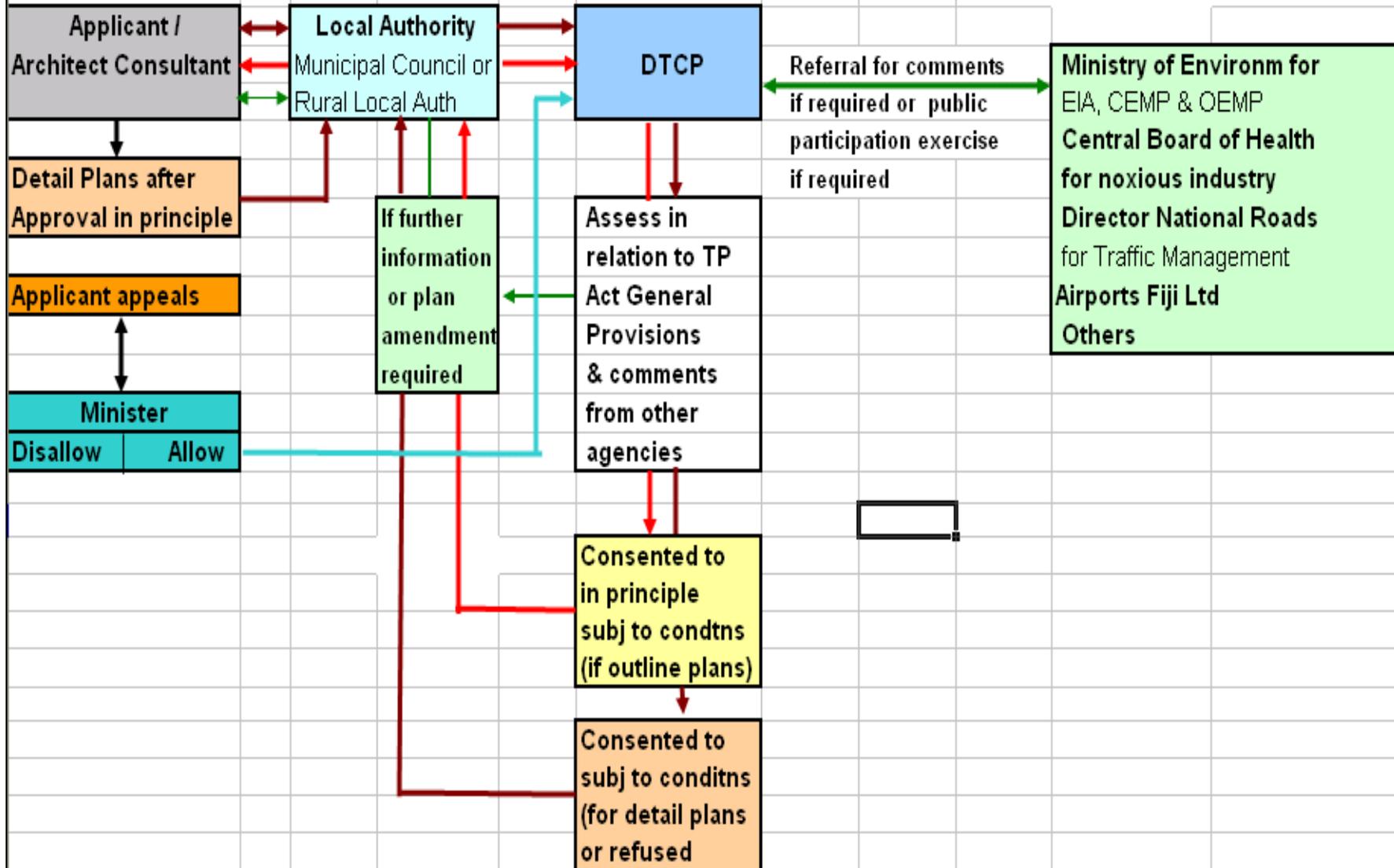


- Notes:**
- (a) For process (a) & (b) average timeline to complete the process is 2 to 3 months if there is no further consultation.
  - (b) The process will exceed the average timeline if consultation with other authorities is done and if the public notification is delayed because of late payment of advertising charges by an applicant.
  - © For process © average time for approval is 3 -4 weeks but well exceeds this if consultation and joint site inspection with Ministry of Environment to determine the need for EIA; time line increases to over 2 months.

# SECTIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL - BUILDING APPROVAL PROCESS

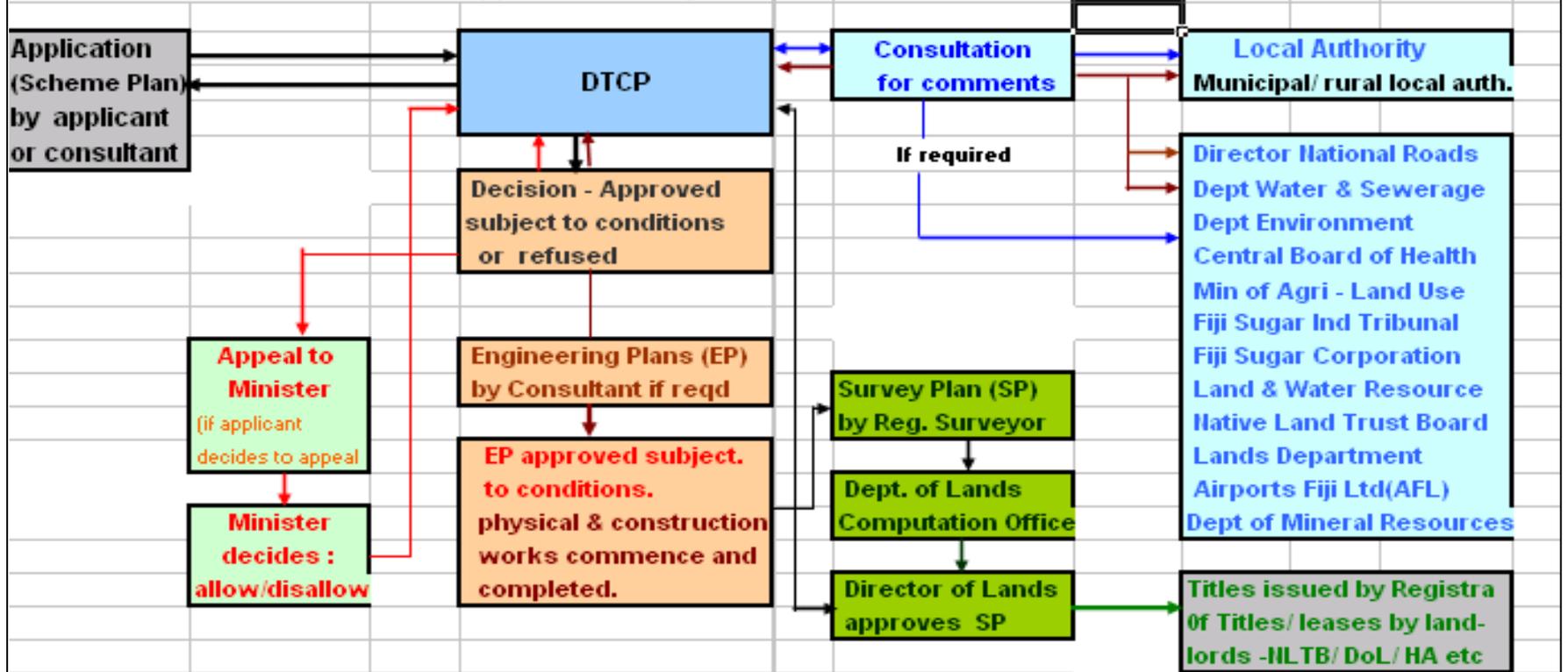
## APPENDIX 4.0



Notes

# SECTIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

## A) Submission of a Scheme Plan to Approval of Survey Plan



### NOTES:

#### Timelines for the various stages of the process

1). Receive, register and referral of applications to Local Authority & other agencies	5- 10 days
2). Comments from local authority/other ministries/depts and agencies	30 - 60+ days
3). Decision on application by DTCP ( depending on scale of subdivision) after comments recd.	2 - 5 days
4). Submission of Engineering Plans after Scheme Plan is approved.	1 - 6+ months
5). Comments sought from local authority / PWD - DNR & Dept Water & Sewerage.	30 - 60+ days
6). Decision on application by DTCP ( depending on scale of subdivision) after comments recd.	2 - 5 days
7). Physical , construction works to approval of Survey Plan ( depending on scale of subdivision)	6months - 3yrs+
8). Minimum timeline for a subdivision without Engineering Plan and with/without EIA	6 -7+ months
9) Minimum timeline for major subdivisions with Engineering Plans and EIA	2.5 - 3 yrs.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY THE DEPARTMENT

- Unrealistic high expectation by developers in terms of processing time against staffing/ experience constraints in the Department.
- Increase demand for relaxation in terms of yard clearance, setbacks, and non permissible use in respective zones.
- Public consultation and sub standard development /subdivision application submissions result in backlog of decisions

## INTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE PLANNING PROCESS

### Administrative

Substandard submissions: Applications submitted by consultants that contain insufficient information often requires verification. In requiring additional information, the decision on the development proposal is prolonged, thus slowing down development progress (Department of Town and Country Planning, 2008 )

### Technical Skills and knowledge

The present situation of the three planning arms of the department: Forward Planning Section is in itself a contributing factor to slow processing and decision of development applications. Majority of the staff have less than five years strategic planning work experience with the exception of three [3] senior experienced staff **and another** two (2) experienced senior staff undertaking studies (Planning degrees) overseas. The recent recruitment of new graduates and technical planning assistants contributes to slow processing of development proposals on processing time is diverted to coaching of new officers (Department of Town and Country Planning, 2008).

The very high turn-over rate of the department staff further contributes to this dilemma.

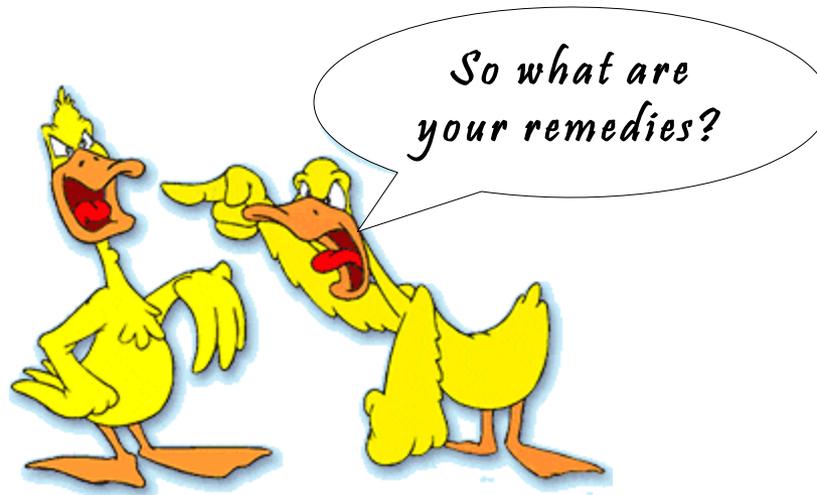


## Lack of understanding on development process

Most municipal councils and developers are not familiar with the development planning process. There is a distinctive experience between old town and new councils whereby the older often have experienced technical and administrative staff that are familiar with the processes; and likewise for new consultants (Department of Town and Country Planning, 2008).

## Insufficient information

Insufficient information on development applications often requires verifications from stakeholders and applicants. This often leads to unnecessary delays in decisions taken on strategic plans, advisory plans and rezoning proposals (Department of Town and Country Planning, 2008).



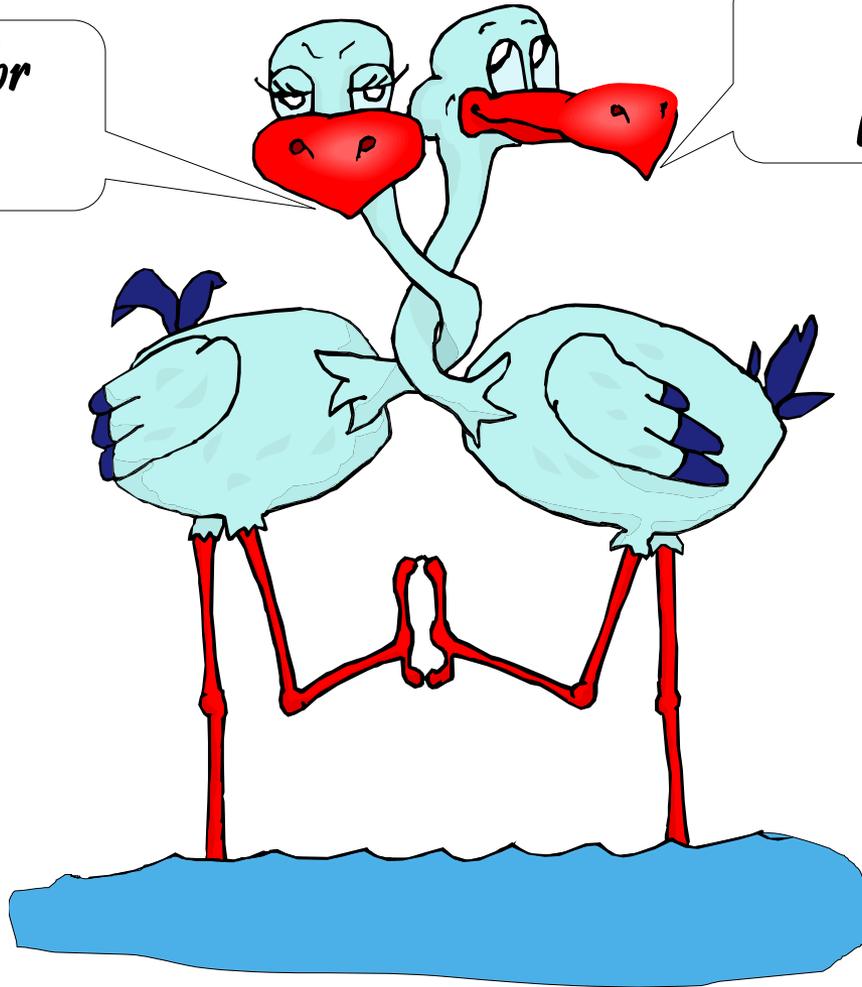
## EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PLANNING SYSTEM

- Organized workshops since last quarter of last year (to be an ongoing thing) with:
  - I. Developers, consultants, architects, surveyors, etc.
  - II. Line ministries, departments, CROP agencies, NGOs, Universities, etc.to get feedback and comments on improvement of the current planning system.
  
- Department website: Revamped and launched in the first quarter of 2010 – to enable more hasty and efficient correspondences with customers, clients and potential investors
  
- Staff Capacity Building and Skills Enhancement: Apart from local in-house and external training initiatives, the department staff continue to be sent overseas to attend workshops, obtain higher education, enrichment programs, etc. Bridging Courses/Programs – University of New England, Australia
  
- Establishment of a new EIA unit and also a GIS unit within the department.
  
- Others efforts and initiatives ongoing,
  
- Etc...



*Thank You for  
Listening!*

*Questions  
please???*



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