THE JOURNAL OF INDONESIA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

VOL. 5 NO. 1 - APRIL 2024

E-ISSN: 2722-0842 | P-ISSN: 2721-8309

Available online at
journal.pusbindiklatren.bappenas.go.id

Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas Republic of Indonesia

Commentary

How to Know if Land Management is Responsible? Evaluating the 8R Framework of Responsible Land Management

Walter Timo de Vries

Technical University of Munich, Munich, Germany, Arcisstrasse 21, 80333 Munich, Germany

wt.de-vries@tum.de

The article of de Vries & Chigbu (2017) presented for the first time a design of a generic methodological framework to evaluate responsible land management, later referred to as the 8R framework of responsible land management. Whilst a number of subsequent publications (Babalola et al., 2022; de Vries & Rudiarto, 2023) have since used this framework in different ways, a main critique of this original paper is that the article does not specify the practical procedure and the associated empirical measures or indicators for each of the 8 Rs to derive a conclusive and concrete finding and judgment if a land management project would be sufficiently or appropriately responsible. Instead, the methodology in the article only provides suggestions on starting with the framework and then defining it using your own qualitative or quantitative indicators, which collectively should lead to some judgment. A second point of critique is that while the framework defines eight concepts, there is the underlying assumption that the variability of each of those concepts is relevant to describing and measuring a degree of responsibility. Moreover, the main assumption is that any land management project is pluriform and dynamic, making any responsibility assessment also dynamic and pluriform.

Nevertheless, the basic justification for introducing the framework was that most other land management frameworks tended to examine institutional and operational indicators at national levels

ARTICLE INFO
Received: January 03, 2024
Received in revised form: February 12, 2024
Accepted: April 23, 2024

doi: 10.46456/jisdep.v5i1.546

THE JOURNAL OF INDONESIA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
Published by Centre for Planners' Development, Education, and Training (Pusbindiklatren), Ministry of National Development Planning/ National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), Republic of Indonesia

Address: Jalan Proklamasi 70, Central Jakarta, Indonesia 10320
Phone: +62 21 31928280/31928285
Fax: +62 21 31928281
E-mail: journal.pusbindiklatren@bappenas.go.id

Supported by Indonesian Development Planners Association (PPPI)

Please cite this article in APA style as:
de Vries, W.T. (2024). How to Know if Land Management is Responsible? Evaluating the 8R Framework of Responsible Land Management. *The Journal of Indonesia Sustainable Development Planning, 5*(1), *76-80*. https://doi.org/10.46456/jisdep.v5i1.546

yet insufficiently focused on assessing individual land management projects or transitions. Reversely, assessments of individual projects or transitions often failed to include the broader effects of changing the status and locations of land rights, restrictions, or responsibilities. This gap created the need for a project intervention-based assessment tool specifically designed to assess in which aspect, when, and where a project is responsible. The resulting 8R framework drew, therefore, on an assessment of the extent to which an intervention is addressing eight aspects (responsiveness, resilience robustness, reliability, respect, retractability, recognizability, reflexiveness) from 3 perspectives (designed structures, operational processes, and derived and observable outcomes and impacts). Ideally, as the primary article argued, an assessment with the 8R framework would result in a comprehensive timestamp of a land management project displaying the extent of the gap towards responsible land management for each aspect and each perspective. This outcome could then be used to formulate preventive or corrective actions to improve those aspects or perspectives where the project is not appropriately or significantly responsible. Table 1 provides a generic overview of this assessment, which is also presented in the article of de Vries & Chigbu (2017).

Table 1. 8R Framework of Responsible Land Management.

8R Aspect	Structures	Processes	Outcomes and impacts
Responsive	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Resilient	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Robust	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Reliable	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Respected	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Retraceable	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Recognizable	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap
Reflexive	Extent /gap	Extent /gap	Extent /gap

Source adapted from: (de Vries & Rudiarto, 2023)

Addressing the points of critique and improving the current knowledge of responsible land management on the one hand and the applicability of the 8R framework is possible using a 'research by inductive reasoning' approach (Morse & Mitcham, 2002). This approach starts with a concept analysis of the concepts (in this article, a concept analysis of the 'responsible' concepts) and then devises a strategy to compile data (in this article, a pragmatic procedure to derive insights into the quality or quantity of responsibility). The inductive concepts analysis differs from the deductive reasoning approach, which starts by formulating the units of data and then deriving insights into the concepts. In this article, the concept analysis aims to bridge different types of knowledge domains which refer to 'responsible'. The construction of a strategy to compile data starts from what Morse and Mitcham (2002) call the development of a skeleton framework to delineate and measure relevant data to enhance the inductive inquiry.

The concept analysis of 'responsible' first depends on the axiological norm 'Responsible' when dealing with land management project implementations or land transitions. Hereby, the definition of what constitutes land management projects (and what does not) and why these are implemented is relevant. If one defines land management projects as intentional, planned, or designed changes in how citizens, States, or private agencies hold, own, use, allocate, distribute, or restrict access to land, one can derive that such changes can be in physical form or regulatory/administrative form. The first category includes the construction of an infrastructure (such as bridges, roads, railways, airports, buildings, irrigation channels, and parks - (de Vries, 2017; de Vries, 2021) or the construction of re-development of an existing and urban or rural landscape (such as urban development or revitalization plan, an urban land readjustment or a land consolidation - (Louwsma et al., 2022). Examples of the second category include assigning new legal rules to land (such as the introduction of a new land law land reform), execution of a land use plan, decisions on public rights restrictions, land exchange, or land re-allocation. The axiological norms refer to the underlying values and systems that play a role in an assessment. For land management projects, this indicates the intentions and bundles of assumptions with which decision-makers decide on changes in land management status. In this respect, the norms reflect the content of the guiding rules, whereas axiology reflects the moral principles derived from our actions. The core question is thus: what the guiding principles are of what one would consider 'responsible', and what actions are considered morally responsible when dealing with land matters. This question is relevant because multiple land policies aim for responsible land management strategies and responsible land administration, but when,

how, and why any policy or intervention is responsible remains often rather generic and is not accompanied by clearly articulated indicators or assessment means (de Vries et al., 2015; de Vries et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a need to make this more specific, so that one can assess in advance if a land management project may result in effects that society or professional judgments would consider irresponsible.

A second part of the concept analysis relates to the boundary object and cross-disciplinary nature of the term 'responsible'. Public administration and development planning perspectives are different from pure land management perspectives. These discourses advocate a better alignment of policy, politics, and policy implementation through projects. In other words, the framing of 'responsible' in this case depends on how politics and policies set the norms and adhere to the norms and how these translate into institutional practices in the policy implementations. As most land management projects are also in the public sector and spatial development realm, one could argue that the 8R framework needs to better align the concepts of 'responsibility' of these discourses with the practicalities of how these discourses advocate systematic assessments of policy implementation. In public administration literature, Bourgon (2007) presents a useful starting point for when and how a government can be responsive, responsible, and respected. This article argues that the public sector should focus on the public interest and serve citizens to advance the public good, yet in practice, public servants seem to have lost a clear, pragmatic reference for how to do this. This is partly the result of New public management discourses, which overemphasize the need for government agencies and government decision-making processes to follow private firms' practices and use the economic logic of private transactions. Instead, there is an urgent need to (re)gain 'trust in government, in public institutions and in the fairness of government decisions', but this also requires better guidelines and instruments. Overman & Schillemans (2022) add to this requirement that these guidelines should not just target public organizations or public decision-making processes but also target individuals who are part of these organizations or stakeholders in these processes.

Constructing a skeleton framework emerges out of the two parts of the concept analysis. The discourses demonstrate that assessing how much or to which extent land management projects are responsible requires a methodology or framework that can capture the dynamic and pluriform nature of land management projects, the way actors design and implement these projects, and the multi-dimensionality of the norm 'responsible'. Responsible and accountable behavior and felt and practiced accountability of individual actors are thus part of the notion of responsibility and responsible governance. Similarly, Bexell & Jönsson (2021) define responsibility as an obligation or a duty related to a role in which an actor has to take a specific action. This responsibility depends on the role politics and society demand, which is continuously reshaped and remodeled due to the dynamic nature of politics and society. Therefore, assessing whether any actor behaves or acts responsibly is not an assessment of a static artifact or phenomenon but a regular or continuous assessment in line with changing political or societal preferences.

Additionally, assigning a responsibility (or obligation) is not merely a legal or regulatory act but an alignment and mesh of intertwined political, legal, and moral claims and positions. These emerge, adapt, and disappear. In other words, responsibilities are resolved, absolved, and dissolved.

Deriving a scaffold for sampling and data collection is now possible by extending and interpreting each of the 8Rs in the original framework with the observable acts, obligations, and duties and verifying how this resolves, absolves, and dissolves land management claims. Finding supporting evidence to conduct the assessment for each cell in this table is crucial to distinguish where and when projects are responsible. Typically, this relies on a combination of data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods, the main purpose of which is to derive a concrete value or qualification describing the degree to which the project is responsible. This must rely on finding or detecting certain artifacts' presence or degree of presence. Indirect artifacts in the assessment need to come from frequently arising problems, such as protests, lack of acceptance, or critical assessments on land management projects, which tend to find their roots in societal perceptions that improper decision-making processes take place, which lack trust or neglect alternative voices or solution strategies for land management problems. Many of such problems are rooted in unclear responsibilities and accountabilities of both decision-makers and stakeholders, as well as the non-alignment of conflicting values and norms regarding what is considered right or wrong regarding a particular land problem. As the 8R framework of responsible land management

was originally designed to cope with such problems, it is also important to incorporate the artifacts arising from these problems as key indicative elements. The resulting design of Table 2 presents a scaffold of observable artifacts which would help to derive the values or qualifications of 'responsible' land management projects.

Table 2. Examples of artifacts to collect to make 8R assessment.

8R Aspect	Structures	Processes	Outcomes and impacts
Responsive	Citizen consultation meeting minutes; Q&A meetings; maps of conflicting claims	#participants at progress meetings; #feedback sessions	Citizen satisfaction polls
Resilient	Physical and social livelihood impact assessment reports	Construction test reports, minutes of public consultations, redundancy checks.	Geospatial monitoring of social livelihood and ecosystem indicators
Robust	Medium and long-term plans and strategies; vision documents; Vulnerability maps;	Presence of process management information systems workflow management systems;	long-term land and real estate market statistics; Employment and income statistics; population statistics
Reliable	Open access and transparency of formal decisions; evidence on motivation and justification checks; public approval.	Regular fact-checking and progress reports; societal endorsements in public media	Publicly accessible evaluation reports; independent audit reports
Respected	Responses, claims, and positions in (social) media; presence of advocacy groups; identification of benefits for all stakeholders;	Evidence of public awareness; campaigns	Duration of public debates; statistics on investments after project; continued presence of protests
Retraceable	Minutes where the land use plan is approved, Court decisions, and strategic political justifications.	Expropriation decisions, administrative acts, land transfers	Evidence of cost recovery; long-term social and economic livelihood statistics; documented land rights and land use changes.
Recognizable	Public debate platforms. Interactive portals. Possibilities to upload and exchange information.	Evidence of handling of questions, complaints, and concerns.	Satisfaction and public approval surveys. Statistics on (social) vitality and vibrancy. Land market statistics.
Reflexive	Evidence of timelines and milestones. Presence of phase-based approach. Claims in public and social media. Transparency of go/no-go decisions.	Presence of deadlines and discretionary decisions. Cost and budget evaluations and justifications. Deadlines on the issue of licenses. Expectation management systems.	Ex-post needed assessment reports. Audits on finances, social impacts, and land market impacts. Societal acceptance.

Source adapted from author

A land management project is only responsible when it meets all aspects of responsibility before, during, and after the execution of the project. This requires, however, a proper assessment with concrete observable artifacts of all these aspects in all these phases. Where the original methodological framework of the 8R assessment in de Vries & Chigbu (2017) merely focused on setting the boundaries and key elements of the framework, which is primarily generic, this commentary proposes to make the framework

more concrete and tangible by stating why which artifacts need to be collected and interpreted to make a proper assessment of the 8R's in a specific context. Using this enhancement can overcome the pitfalls and critiques of the 8R framework of responsible land management and make the framework not only conceptual but also practical and contextual. Until now, the framework has always been in the development stage, but proper tests are needed to verify how this framework can improve or be adapted and in which type of major interventions this can prove to be a major benefit to land management projects. The claim is that for major land mobilization projects, such as roads, (high-speed) railway, construction, or expansion of new (capital) cities and major (renewable) energy facilities, this framework will help both decision-makers and affected stakeholders with a mutually beneficial tool to discuss pros and cons of certain plans and execution thereof.

References

Babalola, K., Hull, S., & Whittal, J. (2022). Assessing Land Administration Systems and their Legal Frameworks: A Constitutional Focus. *International Federation of Surveyors*.

Bexell, M., & Jönsson, K. (2021). *The politics of the sustainable development goals: Legitimacy, responsibility, and accountability*. Taylor & Francis.

Bourgon, J. (2007). Responsive, responsible and respected government: towards a new public administration theory. *International review of administrative sciences*, *73*(1), 7-26. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852307075686.

de Vries, W. T. (2017). Instruments of land mobilization - concepts and examples. Coordinates, XIII(6), 31-35. http://mycoordinates.org/pdf/jun17.pdf

de Vries, W. T. (2021). Land management requirements and impacts when constructing Ultra-High-Speed and large-scale Transportation infrastructure projects such as hyperloops 1st International Conference on Ultra-High-Speed Transportation – Research meets Industry, Munich.

de Vries, W. T., Bennett, R. M., & Zevenbergen, J. (2015). Toward Responsible Land Administration. In *Advances in Responsible Land Administration* (pp. 3-14). CRC Press. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1201/b18988-3

de Vries, W. T., Bugri, J., & Mandhu, F. (2020). Advancing Responsible and Smart Land Management. In W. T. de Vries, J. Bugri, & F. Mandhu (Eds.), *Responsible and Smart Land Management Interventions. An African context.* (pp. 279-286). CRC Press.

de Vries, W. T., & Chigbu, U. E. (2017). Responsible land management - Concept and application in a territorial rural context. *fub. Flächenmanagement und Bodenordnung*, *79*(2 - April), 65-73.

de Vries, W. T., & Rudiarto, I. (2023). Testing and Enhancing the 8R Framework of Responsible Land Management with Documented Strategies and Effects of Land Reclamation Projects in Indonesia. *Land*, *12*(1), 208. https://doi.org/10.3390/land12010208

Louwsma, M., Vries, W. d., & Hartvigsen, M. (2022). Land Consolidation – The Fundamentals to Guide Practice (Vol. 79). FIG. https://www.fig.net/resources/publications/figpub/pub79/figpub79.asp

Morse, J. M., & Mitcham, C. (2002). Exploring qualitatively-derived concepts: Inductive—deductive pitfalls. International journal of qualitative methods, 1(4), 28-35.

Overman, S., & Schillemans, T. (2022). Toward a public administration theory of felt accountability. Public Administration Review, 82(1), 12-22. *Public Administration Review*, *82*(1), 12-22. https://doi.org/ https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13417