Towards sustainable land administration systems: Designing for long–term value creation

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SUMMARY

Many developing and transition countries have adjudicated or redesigned land registration and cadastral systems over the past two decades. The (re)establishment of the systems and the massive collection of information in the field is done in the form of projects, often (financially) supported by donors. However, to have a lasting effect on tenure security and especially on facilitating a land and credit market, the systems need to keep running after the donor has left. The end-users or clients of the land systems are to a large extend the citizens, at least those who have or are acquiring a registered right in land, and the professionals in the real estate market, like banks, realtors and insurance companies. Making their engagement with the land registration and cadastral system effective and efficient has to be a key design requirement when the system is being completed. Specific services, both institutionally and in form of ICT functionality, are needed for this. Receiving an extract to proof ones rights, registering a sales transaction, notifying the new right holders (heirs) after the death of the original right holder, mortgaging the property, are some of the key services for the citizens. Local and national government agencies often also need overviews, esp. to prepare land policies and implement land management decisions. These services, which have to be offered at a cost (in money and time) should take into account the clients' financial situation and other costs bourne by the client (related to accessibility, ease of use, etc). These costs next to the perceived benefits are key success factors for the use of the land administration from a client perspective. Enough income is however also needed to sustain the local offices, and thus an active enough market has to exist in the area that the local office serves. Based on existing documentation, business experience and recent project experience, we analyze how the above can be taken care of. We look at the extent to which this has been taken into account in several projects, and what choices have been made in that regard. We also pose the question whether project for land registration and cadastre can come too early. Most likely this will vary between certain types of areas, also within a country.

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