

Experiences of Civil Servant Exchange in the Netherlands during Autumn 2011

Sami Mantere, Finland

Key words: exchange, cadastral surveying

SUMMARY

I participated to civil servant exchange program during autumn 2011 in Netherlands. In this paper I am going through my experiences I had while working in different country and in different organization. This paper tries to encourage land surveying professionals to participate civil servant exchange programs, because it is always valuable to have experiences in different cadastral systems, proceedings and also ways of dealing with similar problems.

My exchange was possible because of Centre for International Mobility's civil servant exchange program and National Land Survey of Finland was willingly to send me abroad with full salary.

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1. PURPOSE OF CIVIL SERVANT EXCHANGE

Civil servant exchange is one way to have experience working abroad. It is quite light way to have experience from different cultures, because exchange is temporary period, it takes usually couple of months. There is no need to major arrangements; you don't have to move abroad for a long time, you need an apartment only for short time. You are able to explore different culture and having a deeper understanding to different organization.

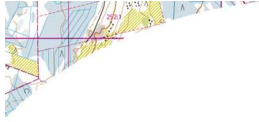
In dictionary exchange is defined that it is 'the giving and taking one thing for another'. That definition gives the right impression of having an exchange. It is not only taking what receiving organization would give you to take with you but it is also giving back from sending organization. What would be then exchanged? For example knowledge, experiences, information, ways of working and things outside the working hours.

2. ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED TO EXCHANGE

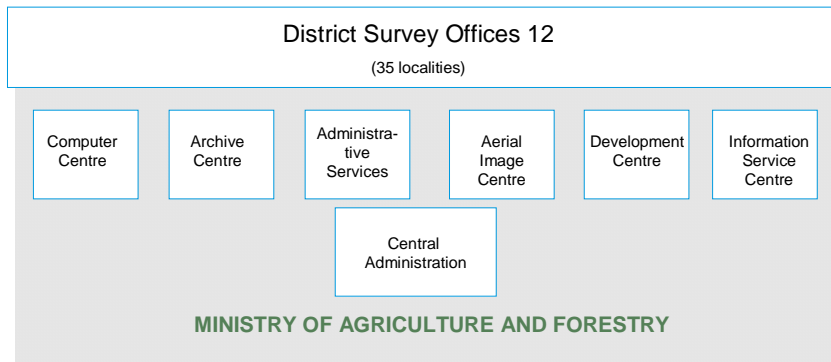
2.1 National Land Survey of Finland



NLS is an independent agency which takes care of cadastral survey proceedings, cadastral information, topographical mapping and Land Registry. NLS has ca. 1900 employees, about 1600 working in district offices in different processes, about 250 is working for national wide service centrals and the central administration has 40 employees. Average age of employees in year 2010 was 49,3 years.



The organisation of the National Land Survey of Finland



District Survey Offices are responsible to central administration of production of cadastral proceedings, topographical mapping, cadastral registration and Land Registry. District offices have also customer service.

Central administration is responsible of general developing of cadastral and topographical mapping issues, financial planning and performance management, general administration, human resources, labor market policies, strategic planning of IT management and information security. Central administration is taking care also internal inspections, legal services and public relations. NLS has one director-general.

Computer centre is responsible for a agency's communication network, computer and support services.

Archive centre's tasks are archive services and document administration's support, planning and developing. Archive centre is responsible for permanently stored archives, digital archives and document production to digital archives. For example all documents of cadastral proceedings are made and archived only in digital archives since year 2010.

Administrative services duties are to give developing and support services to human resource, material and financial administration.

Aerial image centre produces aerial photos and terrain laser scans.

Development centre task are to develop and support cadastral, topographical and GIS issues. It also develops administrative information systems.

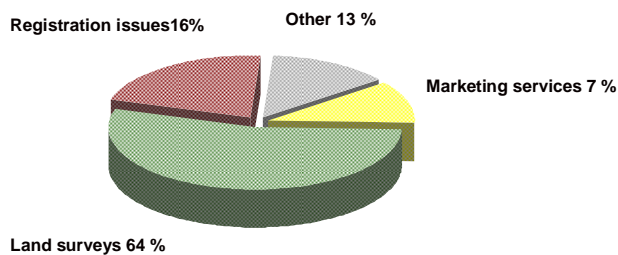
Information service centre takes care of sales and marketing of agency's products. It is responsible of Land Information Systems administration and customer support.

Agency's different functions are organized to processes. Every process has an owner of process and owner is responsible of developing process in cooperation of process team. In process team there is totally 6-10 persons, like specialists from district offices and process executives. Process team instructs working methods and solves the problems have arisen from work situations.

NLS is a net budgeted agency, so all expenses need to be covered by incomes. Most of incomes are from land surveying processes.



Income 2010 (€77 million)



NATIONAL LAND SURVEY - DOWN TO EARTH
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NLS also have budget money, for example, to develop and improve the quality and reliability of cadastral map and database.

In Finland there is one Land Information System and it is maintained by approximately 80 municipalities and NLS. In Finland it is possible that municipality takes care of maintenance of cadastre and also cadastral proceedings at binding plot division plan areas. Database is owned by NLS.

From LIS, it is possible to search for real estate divisions, parcels, unseparated parcels and units of usufruct. It is possible to receive printouts of Cadastral register extracts, map extracts, land register extracts, mortgage register extracts, and certificates of basic data about properties or designated areas.

Cadastral proceedings are executed by civil servants and proceedings are comparable to local court hearings. Proceedings include not only land surveying but also juridical issues. Cadastral surveyor is making decisions of land owners owning and rights.

District Survey Offices carry out cadastral proceedings:

- parcelling
- private road surveys
- border reconstructions
- road and rail surveys
- partitioning
- redemption surveys
- allotments
- and other surveys such as the establishment of a mining patent

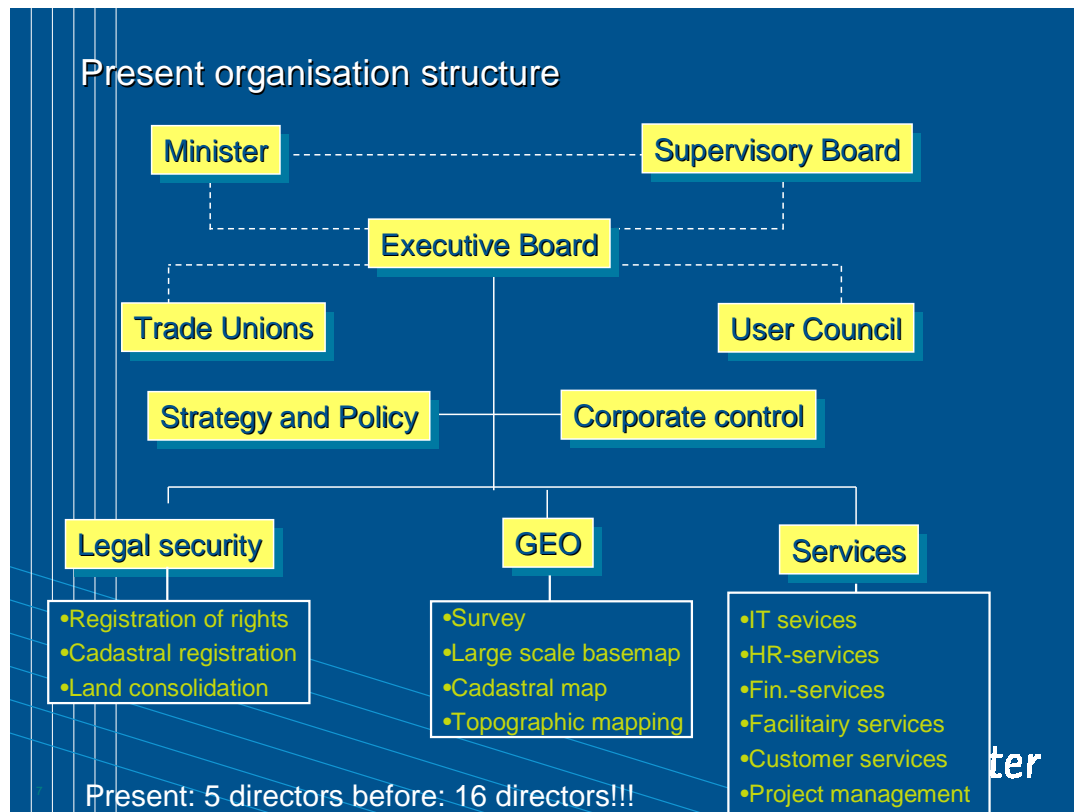
2.2 Kadaster, Netherlands



Kadaster is independent agency and is taking care of property registration and information for legal security purposes, cadastral mapping and survey, land development activities, topographic mapping and National Reference System (CORS). Kadaster has also market activities like Kadaster International and Kadata.

Kadaster has ca. 2000 employees and average age of employees in year 2010 was 50,6 years.

Kadaster is under Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment



Kadaster headquarters is located in Apeldoorn De Grift, where all the core functions are placed. ICT department is located in Apeldoorn De Brug.

Kadaster has 6 district offices where employees of GEO (surveying), RZ (legal security, land consolidation) and KCC (customer service). District offices are located in Amsterdam, Arnhem, Eindhoven, Groningen, Rotterdam and Zwolle. Topographical mapping is located only in Zwolle. Ship and aeroplane registering is located in Rotterdam.

Organizational chart will be changed in July 2012.

Kadaster is net budget agency. Total incomes in 2010 were 261,6 M€ and total expenditure in same year were 234,3 M€. Most part of incomes is coming from registration fees.

Kadaster owns cadastral database and Land Registry. Normally data input to cadastral database is made by Kadaster but nowadays some municipalities are able to make fieldworks by themselves and produce cadastral data to database.

Cadastral proceedings are parcelling out, border reconstruction and land consolidations. Cadastral proceedings include no juridical issues.

2.3 Centre for International Mobility

Centre for International Mobility, CIMO, is an independent agency under Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. CIMO promotes cross-cultural commisation and mobility in training, education, working life and cultural field.

CIMO's main operations are to co-ordinate and run scholarship and training programs as well as EU education, culture and youth programs. CIMO also promotes teaching and learning of Finnish language and culture universities abroad and supports internationalization with training, information, advisory services and publications.

CIMO is funded from state budget and from external funding (e.g. EU, Nordic Council of Ministers) Total budget in year 2010 was 40,2 million Euros.

2.3.1 Civil Servant Exchange Program

In Finland the civil servant exchange programs, are financed by the Ministry of Finance. The Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) coordinates the programs and administers the funds in practice. CIMO operates under the Ministry of Education and it promotes wide-ranging international cooperation in education, work and among young people. To achieve its goals, CIMO cooperates with authorities, educational institutions, a variety of associations and other organizations both in Finland and abroad.

The civil servant exchange programs aim to give the opportunity for individual civil servant to develop their careers and their professional skills. At the same time this brings benefits to both the parent department and the host organization. The program gives also opportunities to pursue work-related post-graduate education in another country. There have been around 15-20 exchanges annually for the last six years in addition to the around 10 Nordic exchanges.

Civil servant exchanges tend to concentrate to certain parent ministries or government agencies. Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education have been most active for the last few years. Of the government agencies the Statistics Finland has a long tradition in international cooperation and every year it has at least two exchanges. In the future the overall focus is marketing the civil servant exchange program to those ministries and government agencies that are not familiar with it yet.

Especially before Finland joined the EU in 1995 the emphasis of the civil servant exchanges was to improve civil servants language abilities. The consequence was that the host countries were then focused on the old EU-countries like Belgium. The focus has widened in the last few years, but the cooperation with other EU-countries has remained strong. Because of the long tradition with the civil servant exchange program in Nordic countries, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are among the ten most popular host countries.

3. MOTIVATION AND PREPARATION TO HAVING AN EXCHANGE

3.1 Motivation

In January 2011 I frustrated really deeply to my work. In that time I had worked for NLS about six years and all of that time I had worked for same district office. My point of view to professional issues was like a tube: I didn't know how people were dealing with cadastral issues in different countries and in different systems. I wanted to learn different ways to do my work and have wider perspective.

I haven't worked abroad ever before and I wanted to have some experience working in different country too. I also wanted to boost my career because abroad experience is always looking good in your CV.

3.2 Funding the exchange period

CIMO's program for civil servant exchange requires the sending organization pays salary to employee during exchange period. Employee has to estimate the costs of travelling and accommodation and then he has to apply the financial support from CIMO.

This civil servant program did not caused any direct costs to receiving organization. Of course some costs followed from working time used to introductions and e.g. Kadaster paid travelling costs between different offices.

3.3 Contacting to organizations

Before I started to ask place for civil servant exchange I contacted Mr. Ari Tella in NLS central administration. He suggested me to have place from Netherlands or Germany, because these countries are very highly developed in cadastral issues. Because I was working for public sector I think it would be most valuable to my own organization to have experience from public sector too.

NLS had good connections to Sweden, UK and Hungary but not in these countries. I had no other option but trying to have contact via contact forms I was able to find from different organizations websites.

I contacted to Netherlands' Kadaster, Bavarian Office for Surveying and Geographic Information, Land and Property Services in Northern Ireland, Swisstopo in Switzerland and land surveying agency in Luxembourg.

At first there was no response and I resend my requests. Then I got response from Netherlands and Northern Ireland. My request was rejected from Switzerland.

Now I had some contact persons and I would be able to have some conversation to arrange the place for exchange. Conversation took whole spring 2011 and at first

Kadaster was able to offer me 3 weeks introduction to their functions. In Northern Ireland they were still thinking possibilities to arrange place. But at the end of may Kadaster's Paula Dijkstra informed me that Kadaster supports exchange for three months starting at September 2011. I agreed to begin my exchange period then.

Week after Paula Dijkstra's message I got response from Bavaria too and there was place for three months. I had to reject that place.

3.4 Preparations

3.4.1 Finland

After I got confirmation about place in Netherlands I started to arrange funding and also leave of absence from my agency. I send an application to CIMO to have individual financial support to cover rent of apartment and travelling expenses.

NLS granted me leave of absence for three months with full salary and CIMO also granted me individual financial support too. Confirmation of financial support came in couple of weeks and after that I was able to arrange following things:

- Accommodation for three months from Apeldoorn, maximum cost is 900 €/month
- Flights from Oulu airport to Schiphol

For accommodation I searched websites of different rental agencies and some other organizations websites. Paula Dijkstra sent me links to search for accommodation. In Apeldoorn there were not so much furnished apartments and most I contacted would not like to rent it for three months. During my apartment search couple of impostors contacted me and offered accommodation. They wanted a paycheck beforehand and that was the signal they were frauds.

A week before my departure I managed to get apartment from Apeldoorn via rental agency. Apartment located northern part of Apeldoorn about 1 kilometer from Kadaster headquarters.

3.4.2 Netherlands

In Netherlands Paula Dijkstra from Kadaster International was planning schedule for my exchange period. She contacted different departments of Kadaster and she asked for if is it possible for me to come to visit. Her main idea was, my location is in Kadaster International, where I would take visits to other departments. It would give me the big picture of Kadaster functions which I was not able to have if I would spend whole period with land surveyor for example.

4. EXPERIENCES

My role in Kadaster was more observing; I could not do the operational work, because of my lack of Dutch skills. All of the work on field and contacts to customers were made using Dutch, and which is very understandable. My home base was in Kadaster International where I went to different departments for a day or couple of weeks. Longest time I was in innovation department and on the field with surveyors.

My schedule worked quite well at first, I followed planned timetable precisely first month. But then I had to return back to Finland for two weeks because of my dad's deceasing. After I returned back to Netherlands I had to rearrange cancelled meetings.

4.1 Difficulties

I had difficulties to achieve the place for exchange. I had no contacts abroad, different organizations websites had no information about contact persons in organization and contact forms didn't worked as well as those should be working.

Second difficulties came up when I was asking for place for living. In area of Apeldoorn were not so much furnished apartments and it seemed to be almost impossible to rent an apartment for three months. It was difficult to do the negotiation via email. But fortunately everything went well after all.

4.2 Similarities

Kadaster and National Land Survey of Finland are both net budget agencies. All the cadastral surveys are made by civil servants and private sector is not involved to cadastral issues.

Both agencies are maintaining society's key registers: cadastre and Land Registry.

In future organization chart of NLS will take influence from Kadaster's present organization. For example district survey offices will vanish and whole country will be under one office.

4.3 Differences

The main difference was the society in Netherlands was based strictly to Montesquieu's principles of separation of powers. For example Kadaster is having just executive power and cadastral surveyor has no power to make decisions if customers were arguing. They had to solve their disagreement in lower court. In Finland the role of cadastral surveyor is

more powerful, civil servant has public power to make decisions and those are comparable to lower court judgements.

In Netherlands land owning is based on deeds and in Finland it is based on titles. Netherlands has negative system and Finland has positive system.

In Netherlands Kadaster is maintaining cadastre in whole country. In Finland some major cities are maintaining cadastre in city planned areas.

The cadastral map in Netherlands was not accurate and its value was index map. The main reason for that is the topographical map and cadastral map are strictly connected. All measured and accurate co-ordinates have transformed to less accurate according to the topographical map. In Finland NLS is making cadastral map as accurate as possible and there is much more information visible e.g. easements and city plans.

In Netherlands process of parceling out is lighter and it has less bureaucracy. Parceling out includes only determination of new border on the field. In Finland parceling out deals deeper the rights of parcel and there is given decisions about land owners ownership.

5. FIG'S ROLE TO PROMOTE HAVING AN EXCHANGE ABROAD

FIG could have great role to encourage professionals to have exchange period in other country. Also FIG Young Surveyors would encourage young professionals too. It doesn't matter what is age of participant, exchange would give different point of view to more experienced professional too.

Under FIG would be also network of contact persons in different organizations who are aware of international co-operation or at least know somebody inside organization who is responsible of international affairs. Having such a network would make easier to contact organizations to start the negotiation for the place for exchange.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Having an exchange abroad not only benefits the participant but also the sending and receiving organizations.

Personal benefits are e.g. improvement of foreign language skills, networking to colleagues in receiving organization and deeper understanding about different systems, legislation and working culture. Exchange would boost career also.

Benefits for sending organization are new ideas to develop processes and working methods. Also showing the fact the way 'we' are doing is not the only and correct way to deal with cadastral issues. Also the awareness of different systems and experiences in different country are always interesting the employees of 'own' organization.

Conclusion is the exchange between different organisations is valuable to all parties and it also benefits persons who are involved in the exchange. For example: having new a point of view to their every day work and also awareness of different systems and different ways of dealing with similar problems.

Having an exchange abroad is a great opportunity. I highly recommend having an exchange; it gives so much to participant and also the organizations involved to exchange.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Sami Mantere is a cadastral surveyor. He is worked for National Land Survey of Finland in North-Ostrobothnia district survey office from year 2005. He was working in private sector company Mitta oy after graduating from Rovaniemi University of Applied Science in year 2002.

CONTACTS

Mr. Sami Mantere
National Land Survey of Finland
Kansankatu 53, PL 121, 90101
OULU
FINLAND
Tel. +358 40 7729913
Email:sami.mantere@nls.fi
Web site: www.maanmittauslaitos.fi