

Open Access Data in the Cadastral Environment – An Evaluation

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SUMMARY

An evaluation of open access to data in the cadastre is required to determine and address the impact of it on countries with incomplete datasets and inadequately resourced systems. This paper evaluates the readiness of the cadastre in general to become open access with reference to Trinidad and Tobago using the criteria of resourcing including funding, legal liability and concerns, differential and equitable access, and integration of quality and integrity of data.

Many professionals and workers depend on the cost of services in the maintenance of the cadastre for a livelihood. Providing data openly without charge can impact on income for many in the supply chain. Providing data without disclaimers on the validity can expose the provider to legal liability and even with a disclaimer can result in claims of damage. When data is accessible there can still be cost and capacity restrictions to retrieving the data that in effect limit the access for vulnerable populations and put power in the hands of politically dominant groups. Seeking low cost including crowd sourced ways of acquiring data in order to provide open access data to stakeholders can present many challenges of integrating formats and variable quality and integrity. This can lead to distrust and loss of confidence in the information system as a whole. All of these various difficulties arise in the provision of open access data. The management and security of the data and its supporting technology are also necessary to address.

The existing status and challenges to progress on the journey to open access of cadastral data in Trinidad and Tobago are presented in this paper leading to the recommendations to advance with alacrity in particular areas while moving more cautiously in others. Areas of concern are the large vulnerable population in informal tenure with limited access to technology and capacity to negotiate digital systems, and the lack of resources in the state institutions for land administration.