

Systematic Land Regularization in Lesotho

Jan Van Bennekom-Minnema (Netherlands), Jakob Riise (Denmark) and Ian Corker (United Kingdom)

Key words: Cadastre; Digital cadastre; Informal settlements; Land management; Security of tenure; Systematic Land Regularization

SUMMARY

Systematic Land Regularization in Lesotho A new efficient way to do systematic regularization. The USAID funded Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the Government of Lesotho signed a five year Compact in 2008 to facilitate reduction of poverty through economic growth in Lesotho. Systematic Land Regularization was one of the projects under this Compact. The Systematic Land Regularization Project was awarded in March 2012 to the Joint Venture COWI-ORGUT formed by Danish company COWI A/S and Swedish company ORGUT SA. The main objective was to assist the Lesotho Land Administration Authority (LAA) with the regularization of 46.000 urban and peri-urban parcels. Given the very tight time schedule of 16 months for the realization of a project of this kind, involving a very large amount of data, COWI-ORGUT developed a work concept, in which field data collection, quality assurance and control, and data management and delivery were purely digital. The problems associated with manual systems, like reading claimant's handwriting and transcription errors are non-existent in a digital approach, and a full QC trail from field data capture to distribution of leases is established. For the collection and handling of spatial data a general boundary survey system was used, where land parcel boundaries was defined on the basis of the properly demarcated physical objects and features identified in the orthophotos. Only if physical boundaries could not be seen in the orthophotos additional GPS surveys were performed. The system involved an entirely digital and adaptable workflow based data management process and environment for rights adjudication, which recorded all activities, providing a detailed status of any adjudication record throughout the project as well as the automatic generation of statistics at any time. This was an extremely important tool as bottlenecks and problem areas were detected at an early stage, enabling a continuous and proactive adjustment and optimization of the process. A focus point was to make women and minors aware about their land rights, and special community meetings were held to facilitate this awareness. All the field team leaders were female lawyers, who could give special guidance about the gender issues. In a relatively short period the project registered 48000 surveyed parcels and rights adjudication records, exceeding the project targets. These adjudication records have been handed over in a complete database, and Land Administration Authority is currently well underway with registration of these adjudication records, expecting to complete lease distribution to claimants by the end of 2013.