ENABLERS FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF TENURE

Standards and Smart Systems

The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security were officially endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) at its 38th (Special) Session on 11 May 2012. Since then implementation has been encouraged by the G8, G20, Rio+ 20, United Nations General Assembly and Francophone Assembly of Parliamentarians. The Voluntary Guidelines represent an unprecedented international agreement on the governance of tenure, and place secure access to land, fisheries and forests firmly in the context of food security. Their CFS endorsement followed on from an inclusive, transparent consultation process started by FAO and including the participation of civil society organisations, private-sector representatives, academics, researchers and international organisations. The aim of the Guidelines is to promote food security and sustainable development by improving secure access to land, fisheries and forests and protecting the legitimate tenure rights of millions of people, many of whom are poor and food insecure.

Appropriate and transparent land administration systems are key concerns of countries wanting to implement the Voluntary Guidelines. Such systems include support for recording of rights, valuation, taxation, regulated spatial planning and resolution of disputes; all of these topics are dealt with in the Voluntary Guidelines. Some of these systems have, as key reference points for their implementation, international standards of one kind or another, from the broad standards of the Voluntary Guidelines themselves to ISO 19152 (Land Administration Domain Model) and to the IVSC's IVS (International Valuation Standards Council's International Valuation Standards). What these have in common is that they are all founded on parcel-based and legally, geographically and temporally defined data; data that can be recorded, extracted, manipulated and used on the basis of standard data models and appropriate software.

LADM

The Land Administration Domain Model (LADM) – as the principal example of a standard discussed in this article – was officially accepted as international standard ISO 19152 on 6 November 2012 following a four-year consideration by the ISO TC 211 technical committee. The goals of the LADM are: (i) to facilitate a common understanding of a data model supporting core land administration functions, (ii) to support the development of land administration software applications, (iii) to facilitate cadastral data exchange, and (iv) to support data quality management in land administration. A subset of LADM is represented in Figure 1.

SOLA Open Source Software

The Solutions for Open Land Administration (SOLA) open source software project is an implementation of LADM insofar as the design of the SOLA database is based on LADM. LADM has also facilitated the refinement of not only the SOLA database design, but also the specification of software functionality required in different countries to support good land administration and responsible governance of tenure. The endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines came at a time when public concern about the problems of weak governance of tenure had increased. As a result, many countries are now looking at ways to improve governance of tenure. Obviously, responsible governance of tenure is more than just the introduction of computerised systems. However, once policy and legal frameworks have been overhauled, public information campaigns have increased awareness of the services provided and costs involved, work processes in agencies responsible for tenure administration have been streamlined and offices suitably refurbished, then computerised systems become a must. These systems must be affordable, sustainable and be able to support improved work processes, improved service delivery, record management and transparency (to land records and requests for services).

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