

The Land Toolbox Is Full



Within the land sector, we all know the stories about ambitious land administration projects that have generally failed...they were too costly, too time-consuming and too demanding in terms of capacity. It was not possible to keep up the political momentum, and the push for change to existing legal and institutional arrangements eventually faded. Barriers also relate to vested interests from land professionals, according to FIG's Stig Enemark.

(By Stig Enemark, honorary president, FIG)

However, we are facing new times. Over the last ten years a whole range of new land tools have emerged, and technology developments have fostered opportunities for quick and affordable land parcel mapping as well as easy management of large-scale land

information.

Today we have reached a global consensus around the continuum of land rights as promoted by GLTN/UN-Habitat, and the Social Tenure Domain Model (and other similar tools) enables registration of informal and legitimate land rights at local level that can eventually be recognised and registered as formal and legal rights. Furthermore, the Gender Evaluation Criteria offer a flexible tool to improve the rights of women and other vulnerable groups.

The UN Committee on World Food Security, through FAO, has developed and promoted the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure that provide internationally accepted standards and best practices for dealing with rights in land, land value, land use, and land development. The Guidelines are globally recognised and set the scene for building sound and sustainable land institutions.

Mapping techniques, whether photogrammetry, satellite, drones, or hand-held GPS, are developed to a stage where traditional land parcel surveys are no longer a constraint in large-scale land projects. Time as well as costs have been seriously reduced. Furthermore, the Open Geospatial Consortium is taking the lead in creating new standards for comprehensive land information management in support of sustainable land administration.

The World Bank has developed a framework for assessing national land administration systems as a basis for innovation, improvement and capacity development.

Finally, a comprehensive 'Fit-For-Purpose' tool has emerged that provides an overall framework for quickly delivering affordable, nationwide land administration solutions. The tool was developed by FIG and the World Bank and further unfolded by the recent publication from GLTN / UN-Habitat providing advisory guidelines for country implementation. This comprehensive tool looks at applying the spatial, legal and institutional methodologies that are most fit for the purpose of providing secure tenure for all by addressing the current constraints and allowing for incremental improvement over time.

Against this backdrop, it looks like the land toolbox is full and ready for use – and the timing is apt. The 2030 Global Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, have highlighted the key role of secure land rights in achieving many of the global objectives. Land issues are currently high on the political agendas. Therefore, the timing appears to be right to initiate a global campaign to close the security of tenure gap.

Let's get to work.