

# Important Step towards Land Ownership for Rural Population in Liberia



A web-based geodata solution has been launched in Liberia to support people's land ownership rights by improving cooperation between the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) and civil society organizations. Work is underway in the West African country to formalize customary land in order to issue legal deeds for land that the rural population previously owned solely by customary

law.

The launch of the online Community Land Intervention Monitoring Tool (CLIMT) is an important step towards securing the land rights of Liberia's rural population. The project is taking shape under the flag of Capacity Building for Inclusive Land Administration and Management in Liberia (better known as ILAMP), supported by the Swedish Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authority, [Lantmäteriet](#).

## Coordinating the formalization of land ownership

In Liberia, much of the land ownership is based on customary law – so-called 'customary land' – without ownership being formally registered. This is now changing and many civil society organizations are involved in that change process. However, there is a lack of coordination between these organizations and the Liberia Land Authority (LLA). To help tackle that challenge, within the ILAMP project, Lantmäteriet initiated the development of a tool that will facilitate the coordination of the efforts made in relation to land issues. The tool has since been developed by [Cadasta](#).

Christopher Byren, Lantmäteriet's project manager in Liberia, was the one who identified the need for coordination soon after arriving in the country. "It feels fantastic that by supporting this project as Lantmäteriet we can help to improve the opportunities for Liberia's rural population, and especially for women, to have legal access to the land they own," said Byren, who demonstrated the tool during the launch on 3 December 2021.



Many invited guests were present when the online Community Land Intervention Monitoring Tool (CLIMT) was presented in Monrovia. (Courtesy: Lantmäteriet)

## Transparency

Civil society organizations can now quickly report their efforts in the field, such as border enforcement work. This is done using a data model designed by LLA, which ensures that the information is consistent.

The tool also contributes to making the process more transparent, as members of the public will also be able to access certain information and monitor developments.

The launch in the country's capital Monrovia was attended by guests from various civil society organizations as well as managers from LLA. A number of representatives from the Swedish embassy in Liberia were also present, including Johan Romare (head of development cooperation, deputy head of mission) and Charles Lawrence (national programme officer).

## A crucial step for Liberia

Romare regards the cooperation between Lantmäteriet and its sister authority in Liberia as very important, since the right to land and the question of ownership was one of the main causes of the civil war in Liberia, and it continues to be the source of conflicts today. "Lantmäteriet's hard work in helping its counterpart in Liberia to implement the existing legislation, based on various types of land ownership and users, will have a crucial impact on Liberia's future," said Romare.

The significance extends beyond land issues since it is also about democracy, human rights, women’s rights – the ability to support themselves and take control of their lives by having power over their land – and also about sustainable economic development. ““We believe that this collaboration is essential and hope that it will lead to a real change,” Romare concluded.



Christopher Byren (Lantm  teriet) and Frank Pichel (Cadasta) answering questions from Liberian journalists. (Courtesy: Lantm  teriet)

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