Land tenure administration: progress and challenges

Over the last decade, Rwanda has reformed governance of its land sector. This fact sheet, based on a survey of nearly 2,000 citizens and interviews with leaders in and outside government, provides a snapshot of how land tenure administration is working.

### Citizen awareness
- 99%, regardless of gender, age or education, knew of the land administration system.
- Nearly 66% said it is easy to get information about land transactions and easy to comply with requirements.
- But...
  - Only 44% knew how and when to register transactions.
  - Only 8% correctly named the district land bureau as the office to register transactions.

### Access to services
- Long distances to district land bureaus, high transportation costs, and high fees make it harder for people to register transactions.
- Most transactions take 2-3 days.
- Illiteracy is another barrier.

#### Fixed fee for registration: 27,000 Rwf
- 54% of monthly income for most respondents

#### On top of registration fees, landowners incur transportation and other transaction costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Transportation Costs</th>
<th>Other Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Province</td>
<td>5,844</td>
<td>4,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Province</td>
<td>8,888</td>
<td>9,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Province</td>
<td>11,645</td>
<td>12,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kigali City</td>
<td>9,393</td>
<td>28,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Province</td>
<td>31,525</td>
<td>18,667</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Corruption?
Some landowners were asked to pay a “fee” to expedite registration.

### Steps toward a stronger system
- Replace fixed transaction fee with cost systems based on 1) size and value of land and 2) non-market transfers such as inheritance, gift and umunani.
- Monitor activity to see if land transactions increase.
- Investigate allegations of illegal expediting fees.
- Reduce the time it takes to process transactions.
- Incentivize residential landowners to register property by lowering transaction and lease fees.
- Educate public on registration procedures through community meetings; train district/sector land managers on outreach.
- Complete hiring and training of sector land managers.

### Commercial and agricultural land
- Registered more than residential property.

### Resident satisfaction
- 87% said they were satisfied with the land administration system.

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**Access to credit**

Land certificates have not been a major factor in facilitating access to credit:

- **18%** said they had used a land certificate as collateral for a loan.

**QUESTION:**

Who is most likely to register titles?

**ANSWER:**

Females, young landowners, and people with high income and large property.

**Land markets**

Land markets have become more active after the issuance of land certificates:

- **67%** said land certificates made transactions easier.

*But an equal number think restrictions on land subdivision hinder land market activities.*

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**Land disputes**

The majority of land disputes occur within families:

- **49%** Immediate family members
- **31%** Other family members
- **17%** Neighbors who are not family members
- **4%** Central government

**Where did citizens turn for help in resolving land disputes?**

- **33%** Family
- **24%** Neighbors
- **19%** Legal assistants/CSO
- **14%** Other
- **7%** Court
- **4%** Central government

According to the survey, men prefer to resolve disputes within the family. Women prefer to use an institution outside the family. Overall, 62% said they were satisfied with family mediation.

96% of Abunzi (local mediators) said that land title certificates and boundary demarcation have helped resolve land disputes resolution.