



# Land Governance in an Interconnected World

ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY  
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## The Geodetic Surveyor in the heart of the Land Management

towards the concept of « *Sustainable Fit for Purpose* »

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## **Abstract**

As land professionals, we believe that the idea of making "fast and cheap" lacks sustainability.

To implement a Sustainable Fit- For-Purpose land administration it is important to call-in specialists who have mastered the subject and who can demonstrate the effectiveness of the systems recommended by their experience.

On this condition, participatory methods are quite conceivable and even desirable. Indeed, local owners are best placed to indicate the supposed position of their parcel boundaries

## **Key Words:**

Sustainability, Fit-for-purpose, boundaries, cadastre, land policy, land management, Geodetic Surveyor



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CLGE wishes to express its views on the "fit for purpose"<sup>1</sup> (FfP) land policy, widely commented in recent publications of the International Federation of Surveyors ([www.fig.net](http://www.fig.net)) and transmitted to the United Nations the World Bank<sup>2</sup>.

Indeed, for several years, numerous presentations on the subject have described the FfP approach. It is based on four basic principles:

- General boundaries rather than fixed boundaries. Using general boundaries to delineate land areas will be sufficient for most land administration purposes especially in rural and semi-urban areas. In the present context, the term "general boundary" means one whose position has not been precisely determined, although usually, the delineation will relate to physical features in the field.
- Aerial imageries rather than field surveys. The use of high resolution satellite/ aerial imagery is sufficient for most land administration purposes. This approach is three to five times cheaper than field surveys.
- Accuracy relates to the purpose rather than technical standards. Accuracy of the land information should be understood as a relative issue related to the use of this information.
- Opportunities for updating, upgrading and improvement. Building the spatial framework should be seen in a perspective of opportunities for on-going updating, sporadic upgrading, and incremental improvement whenever relevant or necessary for fulfilling land policy aims and objectives.

Moreover, the authors want the method to be flexible, inclusive, participatory, affordable, reliable, attainable and upgradeable. For them, the FfP approach needs to include following elements:

- Flexible in the spatial data capture approaches to provide for varying use and occupation.
- Inclusive in scope to cover all tenure and all land.
- Participatory in approach to data capture and use to ensure community support.
- Affordable for the government to establish and operate, and for society to use.
- Reliable in terms of information that is authoritative and up-to-date.
- Attainable in relation to establishing the system within a short timeframe and within available resources.
- Upgradeable with regard to incremental upgrading and improvement over time in response to social and legal needs and emerging economic opportunities<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fig.net/resources/publications/figpub/pub60/figpub60.asp>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2015/06/18/institutionalizing-fit-for-purpose-land-administration-in-practice>



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During a dedicated workshop of CLGE in Potsdam (DE), on 29 September 2018, European domain experts have especially insisted on the importance of the last element in this list. It appears that the upgradability is often neglected or even forgotten.

The CLGE applauds the undertaken initiative and appreciates the quality of the work that was provided for the development of this theory. However, as land professionals, we believe that the idea of making "fast and cheap" lacks sustainability. Very often, the first three above mentioned principles are in contradiction with the latter, which undermines the sustainability of the efforts made. This "fast and cheap" should therefore evolve towards "fast, cheap ... and well". Of course, developing countries need the establishment of land systems which are in line with their economical wealth, but the systems have to be as efficient as possible. We argue that it is possible to start with something simple but that nevertheless guarantees at least the legal security.

To do this it is important to surround to call-in specialists who have mastered the subject and who can demonstrate the effectiveness of the systems recommended by their experience. On this condition, participatory methods are quite conceivable and even desirable. Indeed, local owners are best placed to indicate the supposed position of their parcel boundaries.

To succeed, FfP projects must raise sufficient capital, adapted technical and computerized means, a thorough knowledge of local land use but also, and above all, the know-how of geodetic surveyors, specialists in land development.

It seems essential to us, from the conception of a project, to call in the geodetic surveyors, capable of adapting the general principles of land management to local specificities.

The training of local surveyors is also very important. The idea of using para-geometers may seem attractive at first, to compensate the lack of skilled labor. However, in the long term, it is important to see emerging countries acquire their own geodetic surveyors, guarantors of the delimitation of land ownership and the evolution of the systems put in place.

CLGE has developed a system for the recognition of professional qualifications which could be used in this respect. In fact, a code on the professional qualifications for property surveyors<sup>3</sup> responsible for land delimitation has been developed. It provides for a solid academic background (Master), complemented by a two-year professional training period with an geodetic surveyor and a proficiency test in front of a jury. The Code also provides rules for continuing education, the existence of a professional code of ethics and the obligation of the holder to have a professional insurance.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fig.net/resources/publications/figpub/pub60/figpub60.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.clge.eu/news/index/131>



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At the beginning of 2018, a round table will be organized in Paris to determine the factors explaining the success or failure of cadastral projects according to the classic Fit for Purpose principles, in order to determine the guarantees necessary for a sustainable approach.

On the other hand, the work carried out within the framework of the International Land Measurement Standard Coalition will consolidate the results obtained and lay the foundations for a coherent development. The Fédération des Géomètres Francophones' initiatives to improve the quality of surveyors' services by adopting a code of ethics and standards for vocational training and professional activities of surveyors in Subsaharan Africa (both endorsed in 2013) will also be very useful<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.geometres-francophones.org/publications>