

## **SCALING UP GROUPED CERTIFICATION IN MADAGASCAR**

### **THE PRODUCTION OF 100,000 LAND CERTIFICATES IN 7 MONTHS**

#### **Facing the slow evolution of land certification**

In order to promote land tenure security, Madagascar embarked in 2005 on a land reform based on a legal renovation abolishing the presumption of Malagasy state ownership, and conferring the municipalities the formalization of land rights through the local services of the land office.

A four stage public and contradictory procedure and its validation at the local level allow a land certification in two months.

In 12 years of decentralized land management implementation, 524 Communes (1/3 of the Communes) get land offices and 142,067 land certificates have been issued for the benefit of the local population. The Malagasy State affirms its willingness and commitment to strengthen this reform with the adoption of the new Land Policy in 2015 and the preparation of the strategic framework document on the improvement and consolidation of decentralized land management.

With the support of the World Bank, the Malagasy government has launched since 2016, the Agricultural Growth and Land Security Project (CASEF), focusing on land tenure security and support for agribusiness development.

In addition to the security and social peace, several objectives and hypotheses, rank land tenure security as an important issue for 80% of Malagasy households living from agriculture. The identification and registration of land rights stimulates investment in family farming. Also, an official document give farmers the opportunity to borrow funds or access to contract farming, inherent to food security promotion. At the community level, the availability of land database facilitate the application and the management of property taxation, which would also providing an incentive to update property information after the sale of a parcel. Also, ownership documents facilitate the transfer of rights by succession or sale. In terms of land management, the identification of existing rights allow to distinction of the available areas for the extension of family farming or for investments. Finally, land tenure security can protect and formalize secondary rights contracts for a longer period, facilitating land access for the most vulnerable.

Land certifications at the national level does not follow a regular rhythm because the land certificate is subject to a fee. The revenues collected support the operation of the land office,

which is not subsidized by the Government, while Malagasy municipalities have very few resources. Self empowerment can be supported by property tax resources but this requires the identification of plots. The results thus depend on the demand for land certification and the user's ability to pay. The average time for land certification is 228 days and the average cost of land certification is USD 10 per plot. With a few scattered lots of land, households prioritize the plots to be certified.

To struggle with this unstable land certification, the CASEF project, in collaboration with the Decentralized Land Management Department of the Ministry of Land challenges to produce 130,000 land certificates between 2017 and 2018, almost the equivalent of realization in 10 years, and 2 500,000 land certificates until 2022.

### **Innovation of the grouped certification process**

In order to overcome the low capacity of users to pay, the CASEF project covered the costs and services for the production of the land certification. However, the municipalities charged a minimum fee to avoid the low value for a free document.

The emergency operation targeting 100,000 land certificates in 7 months is based on grouped certification. The concentration of the operation on 13 municipalities aims to control the monitoring and implementation of the activity. This area includes 110 fokontany and 496 hamlets.

Intensive mobilization, information and preliminary animation actions helped to build enough trust and incited the request for a land certificate. These operations are based on a local animation system and are carried out in a diversified manner adapted to the local context (dialect, culture, integration of local notables etc.).

Strategy is based on strong involvement of local authorities, recruitment of local human resources, development of technology, and deployment of resources. The increase of number of actors working in the field enable the accomplishment of at least five simultaneous actions within a Commune (receiving applications for land certificates and local recognition commissions).

Several locally recruited temporary agents are mobilized. The management of the operation at the village level is entrusted to local facilitators. Pairs of land agents have carried out simultaneous field work with other groups, planning and managing the procedure, as well as

certification and registration files. The Communes have mobilized additional municipal officers for local recognition. A form of task-based compensation has been used to motivate these local resources; activities were coordinated by the Mayor.

The project provided the operation with all the required material resources for implementation and monitoring and equipped the regional representatives of the Land Administration with vehicles.

The use of computer technology has facilitated the management of the database and simplified the recurrent tasks of information registration. GIS software automate the editing of the public display form, parcel register and land certificate.

Compliance with technical, legal and regulatory standards were considered to achieve significant land certification results. The Decentralized Land Management Department is involved in the definition of operational strategies, the regional coordination of activities, the implementation of technical support.

Land rights on 106,054 parcels were recognized. Expenditure at municipal level, apart from the recurrent costs of the project, is around USD 261 703.

Based on Land certificates issued, apart from the skills and resources mobilized within the CASEF project, the certification of a plot costs USD 3.00. The fees paid by the user vary from USD 0.7 to 1.7 per plot. Theoretically, all Communes would have received USD 122,000. On average, a Commune would have recovered USD 9,500, allowing it to carry out a similar operation, but this would depend on the users' ability to pay.

### **Lessons learned and perspectives**

The control actions revealed registration errors on less than 10% of the data collected (illegible, incorrect, missing or unsigned information, parcels marked in the PLOF are poorly drawn or not closed, forms and parcel codes in the PLOF do not correspond or are not available). These errors have generated a waste of time in their correction, affecting the process. Training and supervision should be prioritized to minimize errors.

An earlier availability of computers should accelerate the steps by relying on the automatic editing of forms and registers. Sometimes, the instability of the software has generated loss of information, requiring daily data backup.

The innovation of massive land certification processes carried out with the CASEF project will be developed and capitalized with other projects working on Land registration in order to standardize practices.

The lessons learned from this operation, as well as the expectations of the Communes, will be taken into account in the implementation of the CASEF project's objectives of producing 500,000 land certificates until 2021.