Bringing Rural Land Administration Services to the Farmer's Doorsteps

Woldu Tadesse,[1] Tigistu G/meskel[21]

Rural Land Administration and Use Lead Executive, Ethiopia MoA, May 2024

---

[1] RLAS Lead at the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Land Administration and Use Lead Executive Office, SLSIP project.
[2] Lead Executive at the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Land Administration and Use Lead Executive Office.

Acknowledgement

Disclaimer: The views expressed herein are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Land Administration and Use Lead Executive Office, or its development partners.

List of Abbreviations

MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
RLAUD	Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate
CALM	Climate Action through Landscape Management
SLSIP	Sustaining LIFT Supported Intervention Project
MBOC	Mobile Back Office Centre
RLAO	Regional Land Administration Office
ZLAO	Zonal Land Administration Office
WLAO	Woreda Land Administration Office
KLAO	Kebele Land Administration Office
KLAC	Kebele Land Administration Committee
KLAE	Kebele Land Administration Expert
RLAS	Rural Land Administration System
RLAIS	Rural Land Administration Information Service
NRLAIS	National Rural Land Administration Information System
WoRLAIS	Woreda Rural Land Administration Information System
AMTV	Average Monthly Transaction Volume
RTOT	Regional Training of Trainers
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's
RLAUF	Rural Land Administration & Use Fee
RLT	Rural Land Tax
RLAUF	Rural Land Use Fee
RLT	Rural Land Tax
RTOT	Regional Training of Trainers
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's

Contents

Abstract

Rural land administration systems are critical for sustainable development, yet they often face challenges such as limited accessibility, inefficient and lengthy processes, non-affordable service, and a lack of transparency in the rural setup. Rural communities often face barriers in accessing land administration services due to geographical remoteness, inadequate infrastructure, and a dearth of service centers. Moreover, cumbersome, and time-consuming service provision contributes to a lack of formalized registration of land transactions. To avert these shortcomings, mobile service delivery has emerged as a transformative force in various sectors in general and land in particular and its potential in revolutionizing rural land administration services is undeniable. This abstract underscore an in-depth exploration of the critical role of mobile service delivery in revolutionizing land administration services, emphasizing its potential to enhance efficiency and citizen engagement. As technology continues to reshape land governance, integrating mobile services into land administration processes emerges as a strategic imperative.

Executive Summary

This study aims to provide background information on the implementation process of the Mobile Service Delivery approach, which was evaluated in two-sample model woredas. The study will demonstrate the progress made by comparing the performance in terms of organizational capacity, service standards, and transaction workflows/processes before and after the approach's adoption. Based on the comprehensive evaluation of the pilot implementation, the study assesses the following nine essential criteria/indicators, which measure the change in the woreda land office's performance and landholders' satisfaction with the quality of service.

Finally, the study concludes by outlining strategies and action points for launching a successful, long-term institutionalization and scaling up of Mobile Service Delivery to additional programme woredas. Primary and secondary data were collected based on a qualitative survey approach using interview techniques and on-site inspections as part of the field process. Interviewing and group discussion were undertaken with RLAO, WLAO, KLACs and landholders at the regional, woreda and kebele levels. The survey covered two RLAOs, two model WLAOs and thirty-two kebele land offices. It applied four methods to gather primary and secondary data. These included: review of documents, key informant interview (control group discussion), NRLAIS/WORLAIS transaction data and onsite observation.

An overview of the key findings is summarized below.

Finding 1: The Woreda land office recorded 348 transactions with the mobile centers in five days post introduction of the MBOC: The result of the AMTV recorded and served households prior and post-introduction of the MBOC is shown in Table.1. In the woreda, the AMTV showed considerable improvement post-operationalizing of the MBOC compared to the pre-Intervention period (See Table 1). In the woreda, the AMTV recorded post-introduction period showed an increase nearly more than 100 percent compared to the pre -Intervention period. The Woreda office managed to record 348 different transaction types with the mobile centers in just five days. However, without the established centers, the woreda office had recorded 120 transactions in 30 days.

Finding 2: The woreda office had managed to serve 234 rural households (rural farmers) within five days post introduction of the MBOC: In the woreda, the number of served landholders (rural farmers) has considerable improvement post-operationalizing of the MBOC compared to the pre-Intervention period (See Table 2). In the woreda the number of customers

who received rural land administration service post-introduction period showed an increase of nearly more than 100 percent compared to the pre -Intervention period. The woreda office had managed to process and serve 234 customers with different land transaction application types within the established mobile centers in just five days. The same woreda had been serving 100 rural households (rural farmers), thirty days before the established centers.

Finding 3: The woreda office had managed to approve and process a single transaction within one day post introduction of the MBOC: The study has gathered data about the time it takes to review, accept and/reject, approve land transaction applications submitted by the applicants (rural farmers) to the WLAO pre and post introduction of the MBOC. As such, the overall time took the woreda staff to review, approve, process, and deliver the certificate was just one day compared to 22 days pre-introduction. This had significantly improved the days which had been taken by the woreda office to deliver the requested land administration services to the farmers.

 Finding 4: The number of awareness raising events organized to the landholders by the WLAO has increased by more than 100 percent: The woreda office had organized two awareness raising events for the landholders in six months pre setup of the MBOC. The number has improved significantly where the woreda had managed to organize six consecutive events during the operationalization of the mobile service delivery with only three weeks' time which this has increased by more than 100 percent compared to the previous period. Most respondents have also confirmed that the organized events had a high likelihood of being effective. Those landholders who have participated and heard about the importance of formal land transactions during the organized awareness sessions significantly registered their transaction in a formal way in the established mobile centers.

Finding 5: The number of on-the-job- technical backup support provided to the KLACs and kebele land administration experts by the WLAO has significantly improved: This thematic area focuses on evaluating the number and frequency of the on-the-job technical backup support organized and provided to the KLACs and kebele land administrations by the Woreda land administration office (WLAO) in the last six months. Accordingly, the Woreda Land Administration Office (WLAO) provided technical backup support to the Kebele Land Administration experts and members of the Kebele Land Administration Committee (KLAC) once a month prior to the commencement of the MBOC. However, following the implementation of the MBOC, they increased their support to two times a month, organizing two to four MBOC events within that timeframe. The support includes assistance on the procedures on how to review and approve rural land transaction applications, the required

documents for the different land transaction types, filling-out and documenting the different application forms, and the existing rural land laws. This results in a minimum of two instances of support being provided each month.

Finding 6: The distance the households travel to the woreda office has significantly dropped from 19 to 2 KMs post introduction of the MBOC: Before MBOC, each landholder had to travel 19 kilometers on average to obtain land administration services from the woreda land office. After the intervention, though, the average traveling distance dropped dramatically to about 2 kilometers. In addition, the highest distance traveled by the farmers prior to the implementation of MBOC was 20 km, while the lowest was 17 km. The reduction in traveling distances for landholders post-MBOC had indicated a more accessible and convenient process for obtaining land administration services.

Finding 7: The overall average time taken for the landholders to get a land transaction service has significantly reduced from 40 days to 1 day. Most landholders who have been interviewed revealed that they were frustrated with the number of visits to the woreda offices required, the overall length of the process and a lack of clarity on requirements, length of the process and repeated trips required pre operationalization of the mobile service delivery. However, with the adoption of the MBOC, the total amount of time required to issue the updated land certificate and deliver it to the landholders in accordance with their land transaction request has been drastically reduced to only 1 day. The landholders were typically waiting an average of 40 days to get land administration services from the WLAO before the intervention period. This average duration includes both interactions with the KLAC and WLAO. This stark difference of 39 days between pre and post the intervention periods highlights the transformative impact of the mobile service delivery on the efficiency of service provision to landholders.

Finding 8: The overall cost incurred for the landholders to get land transaction service is significantly reduced by 100 percent. The frequent and repetitive trips to the woreda office, and the lengthy bureaucratic process have all been identified as contributing causes to the increased transaction costs that the respondents disclosed. They were typically charged on an average of 2155 birr for land administration services, which this cost covers, the processing of a single transaction. This cost encompassed expenses related to transportation, accommodation, and other associated costs until the issuance of the final updated certificate which is being requested by the farmers. However, the cost paid by the landholders to get the service has now been reduced considerably as the outreach approached them, from 2155 birr to no cost,

indicating a 100 percent reduction in total paid costs. Most responders stated that since they are receiving the service close to where they are, the amount they previously paid for meals and transportation has now been lowered to nil.

Finding 9: The customer/landholder's awareness and satisfaction towards the formal registration by the woreda office has improved: A separate assessment on customer satisfaction and awareness has been carried out to assess whether landholders were satisfied by the rural land service they get by the WLAO on land transaction. Accordingly, it has been identified that most respondents (100 percent) are happy and satisfied with the service they get through mobile delivery. The most frequently mentioned reason was the fact that they are happy because they get the service easily compared with the previous challenges.

1. Introduction

In Ethiopia, the First Level Land Certification (FLLC) started in the late 1990s with the aim of increasing tenure security and certifying long-term use rights of rural households. As such, rural land registration started in 1998 in Tigray National Regional State (TNRS) and the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) followed this path in 2002 and subsequently both Oromia National Regional State (ORS) and South Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS) pursued this work in 2004 (Monchuk, Stickler, and Fenner, 2014). Although this initiative is vital in promoting security of tenure, it had "limitations with respect to the maintenance and updating of land registration records" (Sosina and Holden, 2014:193). To strengthen the rural land administration system, the Government of Ethiopia is working with development partners to deliver second level land certificates (SLLC) to smallholder farmers and to improve the functioning of its rural land registry, the Rural Land Administration System (RLAS).

The world bank funded programme: Climate Action through Landscape Management (CALM) which has started its operation since 2020 has provided support in Rural Land Administration System (RLAS) focusing on four regions, namely Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regional states. The aims of the programme include, among other things, the following: to enable provision of map-based land certificates to farmers; to strengthen capacity in the rural land administration system; to facilitate increased investment and productivity through support to the development of the land market; and to strengthen the existing land policies and procedures. Further, the programme aims to demarcate and issue land certificates for 8 million parcels, of which around 70 percent is female headed or joint-registered and to contribute to a 20 percent

increase in incomes for over a half million households by integrating rural land, credit, and agricultural markets. In line with this, 341 woredas began implementing RLAS in July 2021 and have continued until now. However, the programme has noticed a number of operational problems and hurdles during the initiative's implementation. According to the program's study, among other things, the main issues are slow service delivery, low landholder awareness of RLAS, and the limited organizational ability of regional and woreda land administration offices. These difficulties have essentially compromised the RLAS's original intent in these areas and across the nation.

In an effort to address these significant issues, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in collaboration with development partners had developed "Woreda Land Administration Model Office Project." To carry out the model office project, two woredas are chosen from each of the following regional states: Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, and Tigray. These offices are supposed to implement best land administration practices, diffuse, and replicate proven practices and to provide technical backup support to the neighboring RLAS woredas.

In an attempt to put best practices into practice, a novel concept called "Mobile Back Office Center" was developed and tested on a few model woredas. This intervention is being carried out as part of the model woreda initiative in two of the chosen model woredas in the SNNP and Oromia regional states. Mobile services will be set up and remote kebeles will group together to function as "Mobile Back Office Centre" to process and complete transaction applications.

Thus, the Ministry has decided to carry out a study that includes two model woredas where the approach is piloted in order to obtain more information and statistics regarding the implementation phase. Data for this survey were gathered through a variety of methods, including document reviews, group discussions, on-site observations, Key Informant Interviews (KII), and the NRLAIS/WORLAIS land transaction data. The survey's data and information were provided by the head of WLAO and staff. Additionally, the study has made use of the monthly land transaction reports from each woreda in the sample. Using these data sources, more details on the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations are provided in the ensuing chapters.

2. Purpose of the study

Any mechanism aimed at reinforcing the formal land holding-rights transactions, and the Rural Land Administration System (RLAS) in general, should be grounded on effective land administration service provision that is accessible, comprehensive, flexible, and manageable. Both on the supply and demand side, rural farmers should view the services as appealing enough to satisfy their requirements, expectations, and desires prior to its implementation. To make the land administration service provision effective and bring closer to the rural landholders (rural farmers), the introduction of a mobile service delivery system plays key role.

The overall objective of this study therefore focusses on the potential impact of Mobile Back Office Centers (MBOC) in reducing time, cost and distance related to rural land administration services. Furthermore, the study will explore pilot learnings and best practices that could be diffused and replicated for the successful governance of rural land administration systems. Therefore, this study focuses on the following interlinked objectives:

- Evaluation and assessment of the scope, intensity, and nature of the main causative contributing factors obstructing rural households' ability to effectively utilize rural land administration services.
- Quantify the potential rural land administration service provision factors such as cost, time, distance savings offered to the rural landholders (rural farmers) by the introduction of the mobile service delivery in general and Mobile Back Office Center approach in particular.
- Develop recommendations for evidence-based strategies and actions that will enhance and reinvigorate the registration of transfer of land holding rights by bringing rural land administration services to the farmers doorsteps.

3. Methodology

This section describes the methodology employed to undertake the study. It details the population and sample selection, data collection methods, the data examination done to make the data relevant for further analysis, methods of data analysis and the development of the case studies.

3.1 Sample size

The number of woreda offices that piloted the MBOC intervention was used to calculate the sample size. Two woreda land offices from the SNNP and Oromia regional states, Meskan, and

Sire woreda, respectively, having prior experience deploying the Mobile Back Office Centre (MBOC), were chosen in total. Thirty landholders were chosen at random from among the 234 who had received services from the mobile centers, together with nine remote kebeles. This strategy guarantees a representative sample for the research, enabling insightful analysis and inferences on MBOC service and land administration services.

3.2 Data collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected from the above listed woreda and kebele land offices. Primary data were collected using questionnaires, observation and on-site inspection and in-person as well as interviews. Further interviews were also conducted with the federal and regional land administration offices. The data collection methods will include structured interviews with key stakeholders including landholders, land administrators, experts/heads, and kebele land experts. These interviews will be conducted to gather insights, opinions, and experiences related to the implementation of MBOC solutions and their impact on land administration practices. The structured nature of the interviews will ensure consistency in data collection and allow for direct comparison of responses across different participants.

3.3 Data Analysis

A framework analysis technique supported with narrative analysis was utilized based on the thematic areas (key assessment criteria). The existing situation of the service provision both at the woreda and kebele land offices (time to process a single transaction, capacity to serve customers, capacity to register volume of transactions, availability of awareness creations systems). Furthermore, the distance, cost, service satisfaction and awareness level of the farmers to the rural land administration services are the key themes the analysis revolves around. Data is thus sifted, charted, and sorted in accordance with these key issues and themes.

4. Genesis of the MBOC: Pushing Factors

As of July 2021, to May 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) installed and operationalized the National Rural Land Administration Information System (NRLAIS) in 341 woreda land offices where second level land certificate (SLLC) is completed. As a precursor to commence the operation, several preparatory works were undertaken including organization of trainings, awareness raisings to the woreda and kebele level stakeholders along with the supply of the required materials and equipment for the installation of the system.

Following the RLAS/NRLAIS system's operationalization, the Woreda Land Administration Offices (WLAOs) were given the responsibility to continuously update the land registry and provide consistent and efficient rural land administration services to the rural households through a "one stop window" (i.e. front and back office) arrangement. However, throughout the actual implementation process, the majority of the woreda offices have found that a major obstacle is the proximity of rural households to the woreda center and lack of skilled staffs affecting the range of services provided to update land right transfers in the rural areas. As a result, the WLAOs were unable to continuously update the registry and provide effective service to the rural households.

To further investigate and establish evidence on the key operational challenges facing the land offices, the Ministry had conducted a series of desk reviews on different studies and reports. As such, relevant studies and reports have revealed that one of the notable challenges for rural land right transfers to go on informal basis relate to accessibility factor, where the woreda capital town is relatively remote to residents living in kebeles which are remote from the woreda capital town. The distance to be travelled by the applicant residing in the remotest part of the woreda spent considerable travel time and inconveniences to deal transaction cases reported to the woreda office, which serves as the "Back Office". In fact, the depth and breadth of the problem being greater in woredas with larger geographic area and large number of kebeles. Some of the findings on the studies have discovered the following operational challenges affecting the formalization of rural land transfer of rights.

4.1 Factors Affecting Formal Land Transactions: Demand and Supply side

According to the study conducted by the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA), the need for frequent visits to the land authority offices and going through a long bureaucratic process were pointed out as factors affecting formal registration of land transactions. For instance, 25.1 percent of rural landholding households in Tigray had to go four or more times to the land authority office to successfully start the process for a formal land transaction.

In addition, a study conducted by LIFT programme on formal and informal land transaction (2019), indicates landholders are much more likely to formally register transactions in locations closer to the woreda center or an all-weather road as compared to landholders living in remote locations. A clear difference between remote and non-remote locations can be found. Landholding households in proximate locations were 50 percent more likely to have registered a transaction, at 15.6 percent versus 10.1 percent. These findings are statistically significant

and show that landholders in more remote locations follow informal practices much more frequently than landholders in locations proximate to a woreda center or an all-weather road. Higher transaction costs and weaker awareness outreach come out as some of the other additional main reasons contributing for the poor appetite of rural farmers in choosing the formal practice in transferring their use rights.

Moreover, landholders are frustrated with the number of visits to Kebele or Woreda offices required, the overall length of the process and a lack of clarity on requirements. Lack of clarity, length of process, unclear directions, and the distance and repeated trips required were all commonly identified disincentives for those who had formally registered a transaction. Several rural landholding households expressed the need to make the process clearer and shorter as a means of incentivizing formal registration. The woreda offices offering the rural land service to the rural households had also reaffirmed their witness on the hurdles of their office to manage and provide efficient services as lack of clarity on the procedures, length of the process couple with unclear directions, the distance and repeated trips required were all commonly identified as disincentives for the rural farmers to formally registered a transaction.

Furrher study on the customer satisfaction survey conducted by LIFT Customer Satisfaction Survey (2017) also assessed whether rural households were aware of the need for formally registering land transactions. Accordingly, it identified that most respondents (85.2 percent) learned about the benefits of registering transaction mainly during the Second Level Land Certification (SLLC) process. The most frequently mentioned reason was the fact that a land transaction among family members needed no registration and legal warranty. The lack of information on how to formally register land transactions was also an equally important factor mentioned by the respondents.

Therefore, awareness raising around formal transactions during SLLC process is effective but needs to extend its reach. Those who had heard about the need to register sporadic transactions during SLLC were significantly more likely to have formally registered a transaction. This is held across transaction types. This confirms that awareness raising regarding formal registration processes during the SLLC process has a high likelihood of being effective. The MBOC intervention piloted recently aims at expanding awareness raising activities to the rural households who are residing in the remote location of the woreda office increases its emphasis during the mobile service center setup.

All of the studies and assessment reports that have been reviewed demonstrate that among the issues causing the poor functionality of both the supply and demand are a lack of clarity regarding the procedures, lengthy processes, unnecessary repeated trips, rural households' unawareness of the formal registration process, landholders' requirement for a long travel distance, and poor service delivery by both front and back offices.

Therefore, the findings in the above studies as a backdrop and pushing factors, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has designed and developed a new groundbreaking idea "Mobile Back Office Centre"; a pioneering idea where mobile services will be set up and remote kebeles will form into clusters to serve as "Mobile Back Office Centre" to process and complete transaction applications. This intervention looks to address these barriers by providing awareness raising and rural land administration registration services closer to households living in more remote locations. The current pilot implementation phase should strive to make clear whether the MBOC intervention should be considered as one form of disrupting the provision of rural land services by the woreda offices or not. It would be also interesting to understand what the impact it will have on the change on the performance level of the woreda offices and the satisfaction level of rural farmers once the approach is implemented.

5. Results and Discussion: The Pilot Phase

Effective land administration services are necessary to guarantee the system's sustainability and the maintenance of all ensuing transactions in the national land registry. To do so, rural landholding households must formally register any subsequent land transactions with land administration offices for the land record to remain updated. The importance of updating ownership transfer using the accessible land administration services should also be clearly understood by the rural farmers.

Therefore, to enhance and improve the land administration service provision, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has implemented a novel approach to providing affordable rural land administration services to the rural underserved population. The approach has been successfully piloted and tested and put into practice in the SNNP regional state's Meskan woreda, significantly improving the rural land governance. 234 landholders who were living in remote kebeles received land administration services from the woreda office in the setup mobile service centers. In order to provide the requested service to the rural farmers closer to their location, the woreda teamed up two to three experts and equipped them with the necessary portable IT equipment, such as a portable mini generator, two laptops, a three-in-one printer,

and a land certificate template. They then moved to the remote set up mobile service centers by motorbikes.

Prior moving to the centers, the team has taken all the required database backups from the main server and restored them in the portable laptops to be used as server and client during the field operation. A peer-to-peer network connection is used to link the two portable computers. Following the completion of all necessary preparations, the team now starts processing the different rural land transactions on the system and they print updated land certificates and deliver them to the farmers on the day of the event. Once the field operation ends, the team returns to the woreda office and restores the database to the main server in order for the change to be applied. In this way, the team has established three mobile service centers by clustering six to nine remote kebeles and processed all the different land transaction types and delivered updated land certificates to the rural farmers right away during the event.

The overall findings of the pilot phase had clearly pronounced and evident that – kebeles farther from the woreda center now have a significantly greater transaction density, where a transaction was properly recorded in the NRLAIS[12] system. The Woreda land office has a noticeable improvement in transaction recording performance. As a result of the MBOC intervention, rural households are now receiving low-cost rural land administration services on time.

Key Informant Interview along with intense focused group discussions and onsite observation were conducted to gather and generate the data. In addition, the study has examined relevant documents available in the WLAOs, KLAOs and the NRLAIS system. The details of the findings are discussed in the following subsequent sections.

5.1 Change in Implementation Performance: An overview:

Post implementation of the established mobile centers, significant progress has been made in documenting rural land transactions and providing landholder services. The following four criteria/indicators were chosen and examined to evaluate how well landholders were being served and transactions were being recorded once mobile service delivery was implemented:

• Average Monthly Transaction Volume (AMTV) before and after the approach was put into practice

---

[2] NRLAIS is a comprehensive rural cadaster software system for handling systematic land registration (mass registration) and the maintenance of the land register through sporadic transactions with a capability to aggregate the cadaster data from woreda to federal levels. It is also the key element of the national ICT strategy for rural land administration. NRLAIS has reached operational status and further implementation will make it a strong driver for harmonization of land administration across the country.

• The number of landowners that the established centers cater to.

• The amount of time needed to serve landowners and process applications.

• The amount of time it takes woreda staff to approve and complete a single transaction.

Finding 1: The Woreda office recorded 348 land transactions in five established mobile centers within 5 days post introduction of the MBOC.

The woreda office had grouped fifteen remote kebele offices into clustered arrangement and established mobile back-office centers for land transaction processing. The Woreda team assembled the necessary supplies, moved the IT equipment into the setup remote centers, and completed processing land transactions in a close range to the famer's locations. Table.1 displays the outcome of the AMTV recorded and served households both before and after the MBOC was introduced. With an increase of more than 150 percent over the pre-Intervention period, the AMTV in the woreda demonstrated significant improvement following the operationalization of the MBOC.

There was a discernible improvement in the AMTV in the woreda when compared to the pre-Intervention period following the operationalization of the MBOC where the woreda office completed 348 land transactions with the mobile centers in a mere five days while the previous record was 120 transactions in 30 days.

Table 1: Total number of Land Transactions Processed and Completed in the setup mobile centers.

MBOC	Name of Kebele	Total Parcel	Number of Landholders	Total number of processed & completed transactions
Shershera Mechemena	Shershera Bedo	2,658	274	60
	Shershera Mechemena	1,924	365	15
	Jole 1st	3,235	442	68
	Jole 2nd & 3rd	6,234	440	18
	Wita	2,744	397	33
Werebe	Werebe	2,868	115	39
	Merab- Imbore	2,363	288	9
	Michaelo	3,763	630	100
	Gedena Aboret	3,157	1,138	6
Total		**28,946**	**4,089**	**348**

Source: The NRLAIS system

Finding 2: The Woreda office had managed to serve 234 rural households in the mobile centers in five days post introduction of the MBOC.

A team from the woredas office received applications for land transactions from 234 landholders living in remote rural kebeles. After reviewing all the applications, the woreda team was able to provide services to all the applicants within the centers. When compared to the pre-Intervention period, the number of served customers (rural farmers) has significantly improved following the MBOC's operationalization (See Table 2). Compared to the pre-Intervention period, there was an approximately 180 percent rise in the number of clients receiving land administration services after the introduction phase. In just five days, the woreda office was able to provide land transaction services for 234 farmers. The woreda office, on the other hand, had supplied and served 100 clients (rural farmers) in 30 days without the established centers.

Table 2: Number of Landholders served by the Mobile Service Centers.

| MBOC	Name of Kebele	Total Parcel	Number of served Landholders	Total number of processed & completed transactions
Shershera Mechemena	Shershera Bedo	2,658	49	60
	Shershera Mechemena	1,924	6	15
	Jole 1st	3,235	47	68
	Jole 2nd & 3rd	6,234	7	18
	Wita	2,744	13	33
Werebe	Werebe	2,868	39	39
	Merab- Imbore	2,363	9	9
	Michaelo	3,763	58	100
	Gedena Aboret	3,157	6	6
Total		**28,946**	**234**	**348**

Source: The NRLAIS system

Finding 3: The overall time taken by the woreda office to review, approve and process land transactions had dropped significantly from 22 days to 1 day post operationalization of the MBOC.

Data on the time taken by the woreda office to examine, approve, reject, and process land transaction applications submitted by landholders has been analyzed for the study. The woreda completes the requested application in three stages: first, it takes time for evaluation and approval, second, it takes time to process the application in the NRLAIS system and then it sends the landholders who requested the service the final updated certificate. Therefore, prior to the intervention, the team needed 15 days to evaluate, approve and process the application,

and another 7 days to send it to the applicants, for a total of 22 days. However, following the intervention, the approval, processing, and delivery times were cut to just one day. As a result, the woreda staff members reviewed, approved, processed, and delivered applications in a maximum of one day as opposed to 22 days prior to intervention. This had made a major improvement in how long it had taken the woreda office to finalize landholder applications.

Figure 1: Time Taken to Review, Approve, Process, and Deliver Land Transaction Applications by the Woreda office (in days).
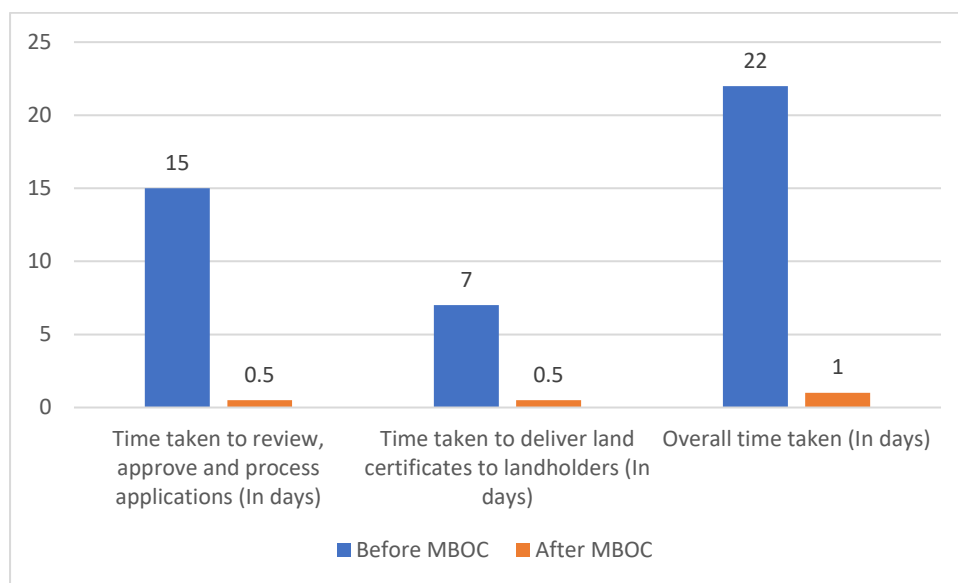
Source: The Woreda's Registry Archive

Finding 4: The number of awareness raising events organized to the landholders by the WLAO has increased by more than 100 percent:

The lack of awareness raising events around formal transactions to the landholders by the WLAO were pointed out as the key reasons for lack of appetite for landholders to follow the formal registration process as this is revealed by the respondents. Furthermore, the lack of information on how to formally register land transactions was also an equally important factor mentioned by the respondents for the poor rate of formally registered land transactions. The woreda office had organized two awareness raising events to the landholders in six months pre setup of the MBOC. The number has improved significantly where the woreda had managed to organize six consecutive events during the operationalization of the mobile service delivery with only 3 weeks' time which this has increased by more than 100 percent compared to the previous period. Most respondents have also confirmed that the organized events had a high likelihood of being effective. Those landholders who have participated and heard about the

importance of formal land transactions during the organized awareness sessions significantly registered their transaction in a formal way in the established mobile centers.

Finding 5: The number of on-the-job- technical backup support provided to the KLACs and kebele land administration experts by the WLAO has significantly improved:

This thematic area focuses on evaluating the number and frequency of the on-the-job technical backup support organized and provided to the KLACs and kebele land administrations by the Woreda land administration office (WLAO) in the last six months. Accordingly, the Woreda Land Administration Office (WLAO) provided technical backup support to the Kebele Land Administration experts and members of the Kebele Land Administration Committee (KLAC) once a month prior to the commencement of the MBOC. However, following the implementation of the MBOC, they increased their support to two times a month, organizing two to four MBOC events within that timeframe. The support includes assistance on the procedures on how to review and approve rural land transaction applications, the required documents for the different land transaction types, filling-out and documenting the different application forms, and the existing rural land laws. This results in a minimum of two instances of support being provided each month.

Figure 2: The number of Technical Back Support Provided
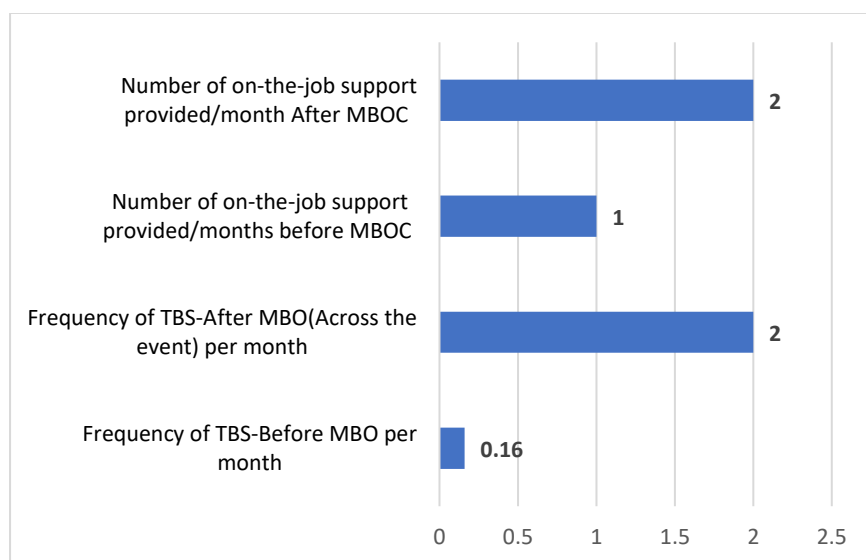
Source: The Woreda's Registry Archive

Similarly, regarding on-the-job training, WLAO experts conducted training once a month or less frequently, typically once per quarter. After the implementation, however, the frequency of training sessions increased to two times per month.

> **The quote of interviewed landholder 1.:** *'Going to the woreda to get service was even more difficult for the poor and elderly. Earlier, women/mothers were cheated to rent their land cheaply. Sometimes, they might only get a quarter of the actual cost. Now they have better awareness to negotiate reasonable prices formally with the MBOC setup. Kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.*

5.2 Changes in Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

To ascertain customer satisfaction and the extent to which the WLAO's adoption of the Mobile Back Office approach has altered the quality of services supplied to rural households, a control group discussion and interview were conducted. Thus, the following five criteria/indicators were chosen and examined to evaluate the performance changes in providing landholders with high-quality service following the implementation of mobile service delivery:

- The distance traveled by landholders both before and after the approach was put into practice.
- The time it had taken the rural households to receive a land transaction service.
- The expense that rural residents bear when travelling to the woreda to obtain land transaction services.
- The amount of knowledge that the households had both before and after the introduction.
- Satisfaction of Landholders.

Key finding 1: The distance the households travel to the woreda office has significantly dropped from 19 to 2 KMs post introduction of the MBOC.

The traveling distance and proximity to woreda centers to get a land transaction service by the landholders who reside in the remote area had been the major challenge for both the woreda office and landholders to get and serve the underserved population. Before MBOC, each landholder had to travel 19 kilometers on average to obtain land administration services from the woreda land office. After the intervention, though, the average traveling distance dropped dramatically to about 2 kilometers. In addition, the highest distance traveled by the farmers prior to the implementation of MBOC was 20 km, while the lowest was 17 km. The reduction

in traveling distances for landholders post-MBOC had indicated a more accessible and convenient process for obtaining land administration services.

Moreover, this reduction in travel distances has incentivized landholders to engage in formal land transaction applications, leading to an increase in the volume of formal transactions. The improved accessibility and convenience of accessing land administration services have played a crucial role in encouraging landholders to participate in formal processes, ultimately contributing to the efficiency and transparency of land administration practices.

Figure 3: The distance traveled by Landholders to the Woreda office in KMs Before and After MBOC
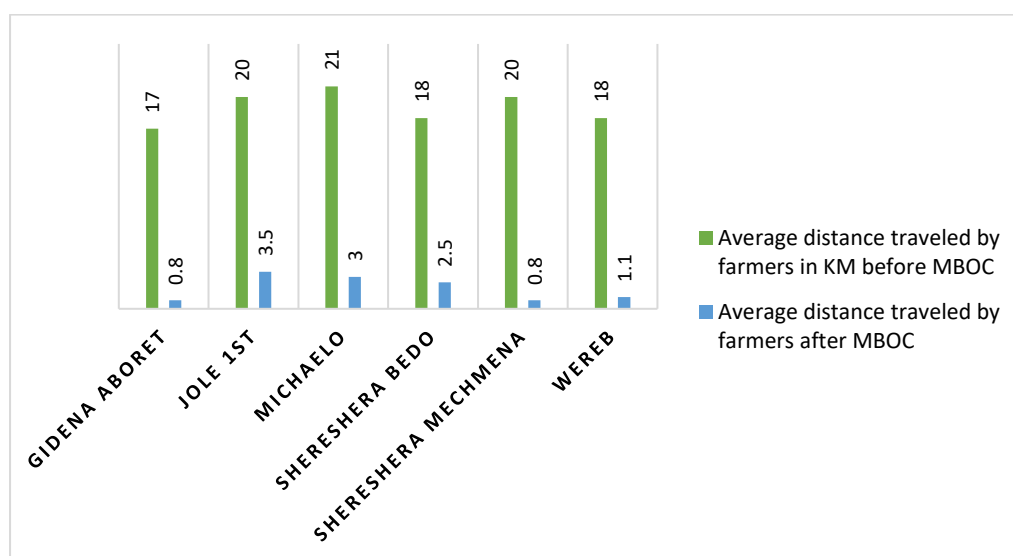
Source: The woreda's Registry Archive

These findings are statistically significant and illustrate how the woreda office's improved registration procedures were impacted by the mobile service delivery. Additional responses have also suggested that due to the closeness of the registration services, the higher transaction costs that the households were previously facing have greatly reduced.

Quote of interviewed woreda land office head: *'Transport access and affordability were the main challenges for landholders to come to the woreda center. The farthest kebele for instance, cost landholders 140 Birr for roundtrip. Woreda Level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office*

Quote of interviewed landholder 2: *'I could not find the woreda land administration office in the town after I went there on foot as I did not have money for round trip transport. After the setup of the MBOC, I went to the center on foot since it is very close to me and received my certificate right away during the event. Kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.*

Key finding 2: The overall average time taken for the landholders to get a land transaction service has significantly reduced from 40 days to 1 day.

Most landholders who have been interviewed revealed that they were frustrated with the number of visits to the woreda offices required, the overall length of the process and a lack of clarity on requirements, length of the process and repeated trips required pre operationalization of the mobile service delivery. However, with the adoption of the MBOC, the total amount of time required to issue the updated land certificate and deliver it to the landholders in accordance with their land transaction request has been drastically reduced to only 1 day. The landholders were typically waiting an average of 40 days to get land administration services from the WLAO before the intervention period. This average duration includes both interactions with the KLAC and WLAO. This stark difference of 39 days between pre and post the intervention periods highlights the transformative impact of the mobile service delivery on the efficiency of service provision to landholders.

Figure 4: The time taken for the Landholders to get a Land Transaction Service in Days
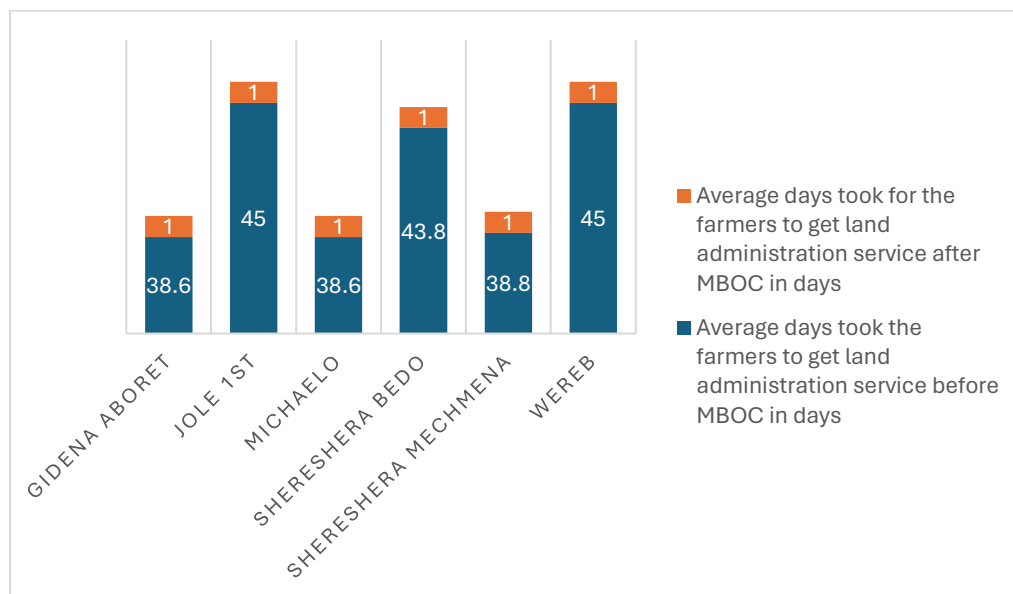
Source: The woreda Registry Archive

The quantitative data across the six sampled kebeles revealed variations in the time taken by landholders to request services. The highest duration recorded was 45 days, while the lowest was 38 days. Prior to the implementation, it would take the woreda office an average of 40 days to complete and deliver a single transaction to the landholders; today, that number has been drastically lowered to 1 day. About 98 percent of the respondents claimed that the approach had streamlined the procedures and reduced the unnecessary landholders' frequent

trips to the woreda office, which had aided in the prompt delivery of the requested land service. These findings underscore the importance of MBO in streamlining processes and reducing delays in service delivery, ultimately benefiting landholders by saving time and improving overall satisfaction levels.

Quote of interviewed WLAO staff: 'Most of the time, landholders argue with us as they did not get service timely after they paid for transport. Woreda level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office

Quote of interviewed landholder 3: 'I had to go to the woreda to get service repeatedly as many landholders came to get service in the town. I did not get certificates for all my parcels for such a long time, but after the MBOC, I received the certificates within one day. Kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.

Quote of interviewed landholder 4: 'As a landholder, I could not finalize my inheritance application case even though I went to the woreda office repeatedly. I could not even get time to take care of my wife while she was ill. With MBOC however, it meant a lot for me to finalize demarcation of three inherited parcels within a day. It did not affect my work and did not waste my time. I am very satisfied. Kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.

Key finding 3: The overall cost incurred for the landholders to get land transaction service is significantly reduced by 100 percent.

The frequent and repetitive trips to the woreda office, and the lengthy bureaucratic process have all been identified as contributing causes to the increased transaction costs that the respondents disclosed. They were typically charged on an average of 2155 birr for land administration services, which this cost covers, the processing of a single transaction. This cost encompassed expenses related to transportation, accommodation, and other associated costs until the issuance of the final updated certificate which is being requested by the farmers. However, the cost paid by the landholders to get the service has now been reduced considerably as the outreach approached them, from 2155 birr to no cost, indicating a 100 percent reduction in total paid costs. Most responders stated that since they are receiving the service close to where they are, the amount they previously paid for meals and transportation has now been lowered to nil.

Figure 5: The total cost incurred to the Landholders to get a Land Transaction Service in Birr
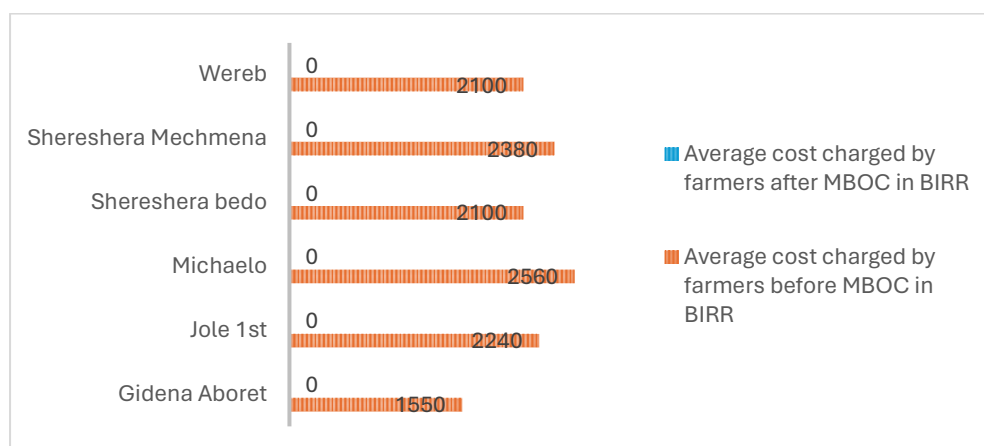
Source: The woreda Registry Archive

The landholders have benefited from the large cost savings under MBOC since it has removed the financial obstacles that had previously prevented them from requesting land transaction services from the WLAO. Before the intervention, because formal processes are expensive, a lot of landholders used to transact their land informally in villages. Furthermore, the findings have revealed that within communities, informal land transfers have been reduced because of the move towards formal transactions made possible by MBOC. In addition, the analyzed data showed that once MBOC was implemented, the volume of transactions were also significantly increased. The trend in transaction numbers suggests that landowners are now more likely to participate in formal procedures, which is made possible by the WLAO's efficient and reasonably priced services.

> ***Quote of interviewed landholder 5:*** *'I paid 2500 Birr for round trip transport to the woreda land administration office to be served and exposed to additional expenses for meals. We are so happy to get the service and receive our updated certificate so close to our location with no cost. Kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.*

Key finding 4: The customer/landholder's awareness and satisfaction towards the formal registration by the woreda office has improved:

With the notion "land administration services need to be effective" so that the population who get the service should be satisfied and regarded as the owner of the system, a separate assessment on customer satisfaction and awareness has been carried out to assess whether landholders were satisfied by the rural land service they get by the WLAO on land transaction. Accordingly, it has been identified that most respondents (100 percent) are happy and satisfied with the service they get through the mobile service delivery set up. The most frequently

mentioned reason was the fact that they are happy because they get the service easily compared with the previous challenges. 30 randomly selected respondents were asked if their awareness level of the formal registration of rural land transaction has improved post implementation of the MBOC. Findings are summarized in the following figure:

- Just over 3 percent were unaware of the availability of different types of land transaction services and the required supporting documents for land transaction applications.
- 97 percent of landholders had knowledge of both the services available and the necessary documentation.
- Following the introduction of MBOC however, all 100 percent of the respondents demonstrated awareness of the various land transaction services and the supporting documents required for applications.
- Moreover, both before and after MBOC, 100 percent of the respondents acknowledged that formal land transactions play a crucial role in securing land ownership rights.
- Almost none of the sampled respondents expressed satisfaction with the land administration services before the introduction of the mobile service delivery. However, post-MBOC, all 100 percent of the landholders confirmed their high level of satisfaction with the services provided.

The data highlights a significant shift in awareness levels and satisfaction among landholders following the implementation of MBOC. The improved understanding of land transaction services and increased satisfaction with land administration services indicate the positive impact of MBOC on enhancing transparency and efficiency in land administration practices.

Quote of interviewed landholder 6: 'Going to the woreda to get service was even more difficult for the poor and elderly. Earlier, women/mothers were cheated to rent their land cheaply. Sometimes, they might only get a quarter of the actual cost. Now they have better awareness to negotiate reasonable prices formally with the MBOC setup. Kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.

Quote of interviewed kebele land expert: 'Many landholders have different land issues. Some of them have land inheritance case and others did not get land certificate though their land was demarcated' kebele level key informant, SNNP Regional State, Meskan woreda land office.

6. Early Impact of the MBOC: Lessons Learned

Following the MBOC's implementation, the woreda office has documented notable progress in the WLAO's operational efficiency as well as in the landholders' satisfaction with the service delivery. Many noteworthy best practices and lessons that can be expanded to other RLAS woredas have been documented. Below is a list of some of the early impacts and lessons learned of the pilot learning's post-implementation phase.

6.1 Improvement in Rural Land Transaction Records:

The AMTV findings obtained prior to and after the introduction of the MBOC are shown in Figure 1. The MBOC's AMTV for the woreda showed a notable improvement following the intervention as compared to the pre-intervention period. The institutional capacities of the woreda and kebele offices had become more effective in registering transactions pertaining to rural land rights and improving recording capacity. Improved organizational values, professional ethics and culture, the creation of clear staff roles and duties, improved technical skills and competency of the staff, a more elaborate and clear transaction workflow/process, and the dedication and drive of both management and staff had all contributed to the performance change in the woreda offices' recording of rural land transactions.

6.2 Improvement in Organizational Leadership and Governance:

Good organizational leadership and governance determines the overall organizational effectiveness to deliver the core functions of the organization within the existing system. It includes elements such as the organizational strategy and principles to promote ethical practices that strengthen public confidence, managing staff accountability to deliver their core responsibilities, strategies for resource mobilization and others. Indeed, it is a central element that glues the multiple perspectives of organizational capacity (i.e. organizational structure, management system, processes for core functions), partnership and networking and vision and strategy). These conditions are necessary for effective service delivery of the core functions of an organization. In the woreda where the MBOC is implemented, good leadership and governance is in better conditions where the working environments for delivery of the major core functions of the organization is in good standing. In this woreda, the WLAO management provides a good working environment for continued skill building up of the staff and monitor the performance of all the core functions of the organization. Influences are most notable with respect to capacity of staff, transaction process elaboration to expedite the efficiency in transaction processing and monitoring the implementation process.

6.3 Technical skills and capacities of the WLAO & KLAE staffs:

The technical skills and capacities of the staff have continuously upgraded and improved to operate and manage the RLAS/NRLAIS system. A series of gap filling trainings were organized through provision of On-the -job trainings on RLAS /NRLAIS to the available trained and newly recruited staffs. Quite a dramatic change is evidenced in the number of available trained staff with sufficient capacity to operate the RLAS /NRLAIS system. Additionally, during the operationalization of the MBOC intervention, quite intensive training has been organized for the 22 Kebele Land Administration Experts (KLAE) and 150 Kebele Land Administration Committees (KLACs). In parallel an improvement in professional ethics and culture is noted where most staff showed commitment and good ethics in delivering functions related to RLAS operations. Indifferent from other RLAS woredas, the management of the WLAO freed the available trained staff from being assigned to other duties. Indeed, the WLAO has designated a working hour to all the staff to deal with transaction cases and percentage of registered transactions versus invested working hours are also being monitored on regular basis.

6.4 Systems to Provide Technical Backup Support to KLAC Office:

The KLAC offices are located far from the woreda center, and the WLAO management set up a system to give them continuous technical backup support. The goal of the support is to raise the KLAC members' levels of knowledge and awareness on two fronts: first, by raising their understanding of the significance of RLAS, and second, by enhancing their familiarity with the procedures involved in handling various transaction types. From two to five KLAC offices, one woreda-trained staff is tasked with providing technical backup assistance. A work plan was prepared by the management and trained staff to support the KLAC offices and the management routinely reviews and monitors the plan's implementation, which is an excellent practice.

6.5 Elaboration of workflow/processes on Transaction Procedures:

Certain processes in the transaction workflow have been clarified and shortened considering on the ground practices which have increased overall service delivery efficiency at the WLAO and KLAC office levels. This enhanced the overall service offerings at the KLAC office level and accelerated the flow of accurately completed transaction applications from the KLAC offices to the WLAO. Notable system enhancements include:

A) Feedback system to correct applications which are incorrectly filled and submitted by KLAC offices to the WLAOs: The WLAO offers comments on transaction applications that the KLAC has filled out incorrectly, mainly when field personnel with technical backup support visit the KLAC offices. In addition, the WLAO management notifies the KLACs in writing of the kind of error that occurred in the transaction application as well as the necessary corrective action. In fact, the awareness-raising programme for KLAC members greatly increased their understanding of the various transaction types and procedures, which increased the number of applications that were correctly filled out and, consequently, decreased the number of applications that the WLAO offices rejected.

B) Systems to access transaction application forms to the applicants: Pre-intervention of the MBOC, applicants were accessing transaction application forms at the WLAO due to unavailability of transaction forms at the KLAC offices. Post-introduction of the MBOC however, applicants are accessing transaction application forms either form the KLAC offices or photocopy shops located in rural towns near to their location. Now applicants can access, fill, and submit application forms at the KLAC offices rather than from the WLAO. The availability of the different land transaction application forms at the KLAC offices are also monitored through the following means:

- Telephone calls to the KLAC; and
- When trained woreda staff's field visit the KLAC offices to provide technical backup support.

Easy accessibility of the transaction application forms reduced the back-and-forth travels of the applicants from the WLAO and KLAC offices and the services improved.

C) Systems to collect and submit applications accepted by the KLAC to the WLAO: Pre-intervention of the MBOC, landholders' application's which are reviewed and accepted by the KLACs were not regularly and promptly submitted to the WLAO which this in turn have been creating delays in processing transaction applications. Post intervention of the MBOC, applications accepted by KLACs offices are promptly delivered to the WLAO without much delay right away during the MBOC event.

D) System to track transaction applications in the flow line: The woreda has also developed a simple 'Application Tracking System' (ATS) which is aimed to track the status of each transaction applications in the flowline for processes undertaken at the "Back & Front Offices"

levels. A hard copy "Register" is prepared which shows the timeline for completion of each key task undertaken by "Back & Front Offices".

6.6 Improvement in the Awareness Level of Landholders:
Not much was done in terms of increasing the awareness level of landholder on the purpose and procedures on how to fill in different transaction applicants' pre-intervention of the MBOC. Post intervention however, awareness raising to the landholders is organized on weekly basis often during the weekends and holidays. The awareness training is often organized at the kebele meeting halls focused on the following thematic areas:

Importance of RLAS; and

Procedures on how to fill in different transaction applications etc.

7. Building Sustainability

Although the concept of MBOC was initially conceptualized in early 2021, it took more than two years to properly develop the approach. After the concept was completed, several meetings and discussions were arranged with senior experts and higher-level officials from the MoA's RLAUD as well as the RLAOs, ZLAO, and WLAO land offices. Ownership was established through a series of consultation processes with important federal and regional stakeholders, which also raised demands from the government side. The intervention's origins are context-specific, addressing the RLAOs, ZLAOs, and WLAOs' current and future institutional capabilities to provide and serve rural households with the necessary, efficient land administration services. To build sustainability of the MBOC approach, the following elements remains critical and pivotal:

7.1 Increasing Demand and Ownership from the RLAOs:
Increasing substantive demands from the RLAO management is a prerequisite for successful institutionalization of the MBOC. As it stands now, a barrier to demand is the lack of awareness about the purpose of RLAS and the multiple core functions and the associated organizational set -up required to deliver efficient service provision to register rural land right transaction at the woreda and kebele levels. Functions to register rural land right transactions is one of the cores "Public Service" in the public sector. However, the current services provision provided by the WLAO and KLAO is entangled with a web of organizational related challenges resulting in poor service delivery which undermined good governance in general and land governance in particular. Therefore, it is central to secure strong buy-in of decision makers at the regional

level if substantive efforts are to put to sustain the MBOC. Continued reliance on donor-supported programs is not sustainable. Increasing substantive demands from the RLAOs the multiple short and long terms of the RLAS in improving public services and societal values should be underscored. Therefore, a series of awareness should be organized at the federal and regional levels focused on the following thematic areas:

A) Incentives as an important part to increase demands: Establishing demands and ownership of the MBOC by the RLAOs may not totally result to the institutionalization of the MBOC unless supported with immediate and tangible benefits. Demands and ownership for the MBOC will substantially increase if there are some tangible economic benefits from the RLAS operation. Currently although the full potential is untapped, the massive Second Level Land Certification (SLLC) databases could be easily used to generate revenues from the Rural Land Use Fees (RLUF) and Rural Land Tax (RLT). Improved revenues from the RLAUFs and RLT could be increased by consolidating and supporting the leady existing efforts which are already underway in some woredas where SLLC is completed. There are already RLAS programs woredas which started to realize economic benefits from RLAS information. These woredas use the SLLC database as a main data input to generate income from the RLUFs and RLT. These woredas were able to collect significant revenue from both fees using SLLC/RLAS database. The RLT dependent on the land area of a holding, the SLLC database provided accurate data compared to the traditional approach which is based mainly on land area estimate which is not measured. However, success on the above becoming benefits are not disseminated and shared with multiple government sectoral offices to demonstrate the significant of the RLAIS as potential source to increase revenues, typically to the Finance an Economic Development Bureaus (FEDB). This rudimentary but exemplary incentive measure should be consolidated and strengthened with the following interventions:

- Customization of the SLLC database in accordance with the data requirement and need of the Woreda Revenue Offices (WROs):
- Systemic institutional coordination between the WLAOs and the WRO to enable smooth and efficient data exchange mechanisms.

B) Powerful champion on RLAS operations: Another dimension of demand side which is a success factor is having a powerful champion who can lead and institutionalize the MBOC. A powerful higher official from the RLAO who could persuade and convince about the importance of RLAS and devote resources to building the capacities of the WLAOs in one part to increase the demand side of RLAS operation. In this case, the role played by a few higher

officials of the RLAO to institutionalize the MBOC and strengthen the organizational capacities of the RLAOs, ZLAO and WLAOs is remarkable. However, a powerful champion constitutes a success factor and may not provide a guarantee of success. At times when the champions are transferred or resign from their positions, will create caveats in the whole leadership imitativeness for the champion to evolve for RLAS operations, they should be very much aware and should have a good understanding on the purpose and multiple benefits to be derived from the RLAS.

7.2 Resource Requirement to Institutionalize the MBOC: When donor support for RLAS operation is withdrawn, the sustenance of the MBOC maybe falls in jeopardy. Therefore, the RLAOs and WLAOs must undertake several preparatory works to takeover and sustain the operations of the MBOC. The overall resources required to support and sustain the MBOC are relatively modest, however, with bigger impacts to capacity building process of the WLAO in providing efficient rural land administration services. Important preparatory works to be undertaken by the RLAOs and WLAOs includes:

A) Allocation of sufficient trained manpower: The design of the MBOC involves the designation of two to three well trained, capable, and committed staffs during the setup of the mobile canters. The staff to be placed should have very good technical skills and competencies on RLAS/NRLAIS to provide an efficient land-related service to the landholders. The staff should demonstrate a good and to standard professional ethics and culture, which is critical for success.

B) Allocation of budget for overheads, materials, equipment, stationery, and transport facility: The selected mobile canters should have adequate working accommodation such as portable materials and equipment, workstations and overhead and stationery and transport facilities. The required workstation includes laptop, printer/scanner, and others.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

8.1 Conclusion

The MBOC has been in pilot phase for around four to six months, during which time there have been a few disruptions to regular business operations due to a lack of operational supplies like inks and transportation infrastructure. The woreda office where the intervention is being piloted has shown improvements in customer satisfaction and service quality following the implementation of the MBOC, as well as changes in the organizational capacity of the WLAOs and KLAOs. This had a good effect on how efficiently services were provided to update the land rights transactions in remote areas. The WLAOs' results regarding the improvement in organizational capacity provided a plethora of knowledge regarding critical elements to consider creating result-oriented organizational capacity building. The idea of organizational capacity goes much beyond staff training, which places employees in larger organizational contexts and environments.

Leadership and governance of the WLAO is critical and pivotal in organizational management principles that either drives the promotion or hinderance for effective delivery of the core functions of any organization. Indeed, the commitment, drive and professional ethics of individual experts is strongly hinged with organizational working environment and work culture. Provision of series of hands-on training to individual experts without a concomitant support from the WLAO management will not guarantee to produce a skilled manpower with good professional ethics and culture. Effective organizational capacity process puts organizational leadership and governance as key driving factors in the whole organizational capacity building process. Indeed, there are already some "good/best practices" to be drawn from Mekan woreda which significantly improved in organizational capacity building process with a potential to be replicated to other RLAS program woredas. Some of the demonstrated aspect of the approach in improving the accessibility and efficiency of land administration services in the woreda land office includes:

Improved management system to deliver the core functions: Allocation of human resources as per the core functions of the organization, capacity building program, finical allocation with the available resources for RLAS operation and others.

Improvement of transaction processes: Elaboration of some of the processes which were not clear and elaborated in the Regional RLAS manuals, system for monitoring the RLAS implementation monitoring and others.

Change in handling land transaction related matters: the significant change in reducing land transaction processing times, the surge in both land transaction volumes and served rural households, the eliminated costs associated with travel and service fees for landholders, the substantial reduction in travel distances to access services by landholders, the improved awareness level of landholders and the improved satisfaction level of landholders have evidenced the importance of the mobile service delivery in changing the quality of service provision of the woreda land office.

Therefore, given the current organizational capacities of the RLAOs, ZLAOs and WLAOs, the MBOC will continue to be the best context specific pathway for developing the organizational capacities of the WLAOs for delivering efficient land administration services. The approach is context specific and with the growing demands from the RLAOs/WLAOs. There is already a favorable condition for the MBOC to be institutionalized, however, a long-haul effort is still required to increase the demands with introduction of tangible benefits from RLAS operation.

The results of the study have clearly indicated the need to broaden potential intervention strategies to enhance formal transactions. Hence, reducing the costs by improving the capacity of the service provision at Kebele and Woreda level would be important. Providing incentives and/or making the formal land transaction easy, fast, and accessible is a key factor for enhanced and sustainable formal land registration system. Furthermore, the study has also attempted to identify the range of success factors that have triggered farmers to be engaged in formal land transactions in the piloted area. According to information gathered from FGDs and KIIs, some of the main reasons for choosing formal land transactions include the established reputation and trustworthiness of the woreda office in arranging and introducing the mobile service delivery which significantly reduced the costs of registration that includes time and money required during the registration process (especially the court process farmers need to go through during inheritance and gift) to different actor institutions to complete a transfer of land rights.

Overall, to minimize farmers' inclinations for the informal channel, the land registry system should increase its institutional capacity and flexibility by implementing efficient service delivery schemes like mobile service delivery into its internal procedures. If not, the landholding rights data created by the SLLC and recorded in the Land Register will eventually

lose its significance and become unreliable, which will ultimately result in an unsustainable Rural Land Administration System. Political readiness and desire are just as significant as actions suggested for stakeholders both at high and lower-level land offices for the integration of mobile service delivery in public administration, recognizing its potential to revolutionize the way government services are accessed and delivered, ultimately fostering a more connected and responsive government.

8.2 Recommendations

The mobile service delivery approach has been effectively implemented in Meskan woreda, significantly enhancing the system of rural land administration. It should be distributed to additional woredas after the pilot test is over. This pilot's success will be a potent tool for fostering the dedication and self-assurance needed, as well as a favorable environment for the spread of the tried-and-true methods to other woredas. The following interconnected activities, which are categorized as "general" recommendations, shall be implemented, and monitored to spread and sustain the best practice to other woredas. The recommendations deal with mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of the MBOC and measures to be taken to institutionalize/sustain the MBOC:

A) **Improve service provision at woreda and kebele levels:** Service standards are needed to guarantee the implementation of governance principles such as efficiency, transparency, accountability, equity, security, and effectiveness. They define time and costs of completing land transactions to minimize corruption and to satisfy customers. An improved service concept which tackles the perceived costs should be developed and tested, preferably in more woredas. To meet the needs and the requirements of the farmers the service levels need to be improved. For instance: the service provision can be enhanced in different ways, e.g. service level practices/performance of the RLAS system: availability of a service standards/charter and knowledge of these standards by customers, availability of performance indicators [quantity of transactions/unit of time, elapsed time per type of land transaction), performance measurement's/monitoring practices, availability of complains handling and knowledge of handling procedures by customers, etc.

B) **Introduce paperless digital service provision:** The land service provision process is destined to be fully digitalized and there are many benefits in efficiency, security, and improved service quality. It will, for sure, also have positive financial consequences if managed properly. Furthermore, the trend of the use of digital submission of transfer request by customers is increasing. There are many positives to be gained from

establishing a paperless and self-financing land register. The service times are generally lower, more transparent, and more secure than in a paper-based process. Therefore, the Ministry must give more attention to introducing tailored technological solutions, making laws and regulations along with strong institutional setup for more digital friendliness to be able to fully transform the service provision towards paperless digital online platform.

C) **Introduce interventions that can lead to financial sustainability:** Financial sustainability is the capacity of the Rural Land Administration System to generate enough revenue to cover most of its ongoing costs. To do this, potential customers must be convinced of the benefits of using the system and be able to pay the fees for using the services. Consequently, the ministry needs to focus more on developing technological solutions, laws, and regulations as well as a strong institutional framework that can assist the land management offices in achieving financial sustainability by switching from providing free service delivery to charging rural land service users. With this approach, the land management offices will undoubtedly have the financial capacity to sustain the operational management.

D) **Harnessing mobile service delivery into RLAS core functions:** Mobile service delivery has emerged as a transformative force in various sectors, and its potential in revolutionizing rural land administration services is undeniable. It's also evidenced in the study that rural communities who often faced barriers in accessing land administration services due to geographical remoteness, inadequate infrastructure, and a dearth of service centers have now unraveled by the setup of mobile service delivery systems. Therefore, in order the approach to be effective and result-oriented and enhanced to be the core functions of the land processes, the following multiple measures should be undertaken to institutionalize and replicate the best practices/pilot learnings:

- **Increasing the awareness level of decision-makers from the RLAO, ZLAO and WLAO:** Organization of a regular awareness raising workshops to increase the awareness level on the benefits of RLAS in general and MBOC in particular and the required organizational capacity to effectively deliver RLAS operations.

- **Dissemination of lessons learned from experiences:** The knowledge gained from the pilot study; exemplary and useful lessons and successes from the pilot implementation phase should be widely distributed to the RLAO, ZLAO and WLAO so that good practices can be replicated, and challenges will be solved or at least minimized.

- **Tangible incentives as an important part to increase the demand**: Demands from the government side would increase if there were some tangible immediate benefits to

be drawn from RLAS operation. One immediate, realistic, and tangible benefit to be drawn from RLAS is to increase the revenues from the "Rural Land Tax (i.e. Rural land fee and rural land use fees)". There are already practices where in some woredas SLLC is completed, the Woreda Revenue Office (WRO) utilizes the SLLC database to collect the rural land taxes.

- **Supplying the required materials and strengthening the organizational capacity of the WLAOs to implement the MBOC:** The supply of all the required materials and equipment such as high performing laptops, portable generators, printers, scanners, and others to the woreda offices along with organization of On-the-Job training for the WLAO staff and management on the implementation of the MBOC approach.

- **Regular monitoring of the implementation process:** Acquisition of monitoring expert for rigor monitoring of the implementation process, placing adaptable and systemic monitoring procedures to beef up the implementation performance.

Reference

The Ethiopian Economic Association/ Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute September 2018: Study on Improving the Formal Registration of Land Transactions

SIAPAC AUGUST 2019: Study on Formal and Informal Land Transactions in LIFT Programme Woredas

RLAUD 2023: Analysis of Kebele Proximity on Reported RLAS Transactions

Sosina and Holden, 2014. Demand for second-stage land certification in Ethiopia: Evidence from household panel data.

Monchuk, Daniel, Mercedes Stickler, and Stephanie Fenner. 2014: Ethiopia Strengthening Land Tenure and Administration Program Follow-On Report:

GRACE NISHIMWE, SAM BIRARO: From Registration to Sustainability: Developments in Rwanda; 2019 WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY"