

How to Fix a Land Agency in One Year

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SUMMARY

This abstract was submitted in consultation with the World Bank for possible featuring in the World Bank coordinated ECA Land Administration Success Story session.

Georgia represents an example which illustrates that reform in land administration can be effective and sustainable only if it has government commitment, is supported by proper legal framework, is done comprehensively and includes several important areas such as: financial autonomy, depoliticizing technical services, streamlining organizational and institutional complexity as well as introducing new organizational culture. Georgian land administration system had inherited a large bureaucracy, poorly paid and unmotivated staff that lead to high level of corruption with well organised system of bribes, fragmented institution with overlapping functions and monopoly in the field of land survey.

In 2004 Georgia took the opportunity to transform the land registration agency into a self-financed institution. The first and foremost the government initiated institutional separation of land management and land administration functions resulting in establishment of a property registry - National Agency of Public Registry. The new agency was given greater autonomy in decision-making, but leaving the supervisory Ministry responsible for budget oversight and the approval of the head of the agency. National Agency of Public Registry cut down the number of staff, introduced new recruitment process and capacity building mechanisms, streamlined registration procedures, established new tariff system, increased salary remuneration and formalized bonus package, introduced new management system, which encompassed organizational management as well as management of procedures for property registration, separated responsibilities of central office from the local/registration offices to isolate policy development and registration transactions. The above mentioned illustrates the magnitude of the transitional

challenges, but also demonstrates that such reforms are feasible and successful.

Within a year the property registry was established as unified, self-financed institution based on approach “running registry as a business”. As a result of a robust reform the income of the institution increased twenty fold, the steps for registration decreased from 22 to 4, salaries increased 12 times and number of staff decreased three times. Subsequently, Reforms implemented was ranked as top reform and for almost a decade Georgian land administration system has been ranked as one of the top by WB doing Business publication.

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