

# Dynamics in Responsible Land Administration; Change at Five Levels

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## SUMMARY

Fundamentally, the term ‘administration’ suggests bureaucratic, controlled and steady, if not slow, paces of change. However the relations between people and land, that land administration attempts to capture, are the very opposite. At all levels of abstraction, land administration can be seen as multi-faceted, crosscutting, inter-disciplinary and above all dynamic. Dynamics in land administration is currently visible in the social and political recognition – or negotiations on recognition – of land tenure typologies. The developments in geo-ICT create their own dynamics. They offer the opportunity for previously unforeseen methods of land data capture, visualization and sharing. Geo-ICT disturbs more than technical elements of land administration systems: organizational and political contingencies are placed in flux when technology selections are made.

Dynamism in land administration is most prominently viewed in large-scale land tenure regularization programs, usually at the national level. Formal recognition of land rights changes the status of people, land, and the relationship between them. Fit-for-purpose approaches to data collection and management change the core characteristics of land administration: systems become flexible, inclusive, participatory, affordable, reliable, attainable, and upgradeable. After the intervention, the perceptions of landholders change: they might invest in the land, transfer it to other people; ultimately changing land use and land value. The changes must be monitored and evaluated – particularly in the contemporary era – where accountability of donor agencies, and all parties involved in the programs, is heightened. Measuring the interventions is no trivial task: isolating meaningful dependent and independent variables is an ongoing challenge. Socio-technical approaches are needed as are skilled personnel to implement them. This suggests substantial changes to social capacity, embodied in scaled capacity building programs: to reap the rewards of well-designed interventions, integrated capacity development activities are needed at individual, cross-organizational, and societal levels. When all the above changes coalesce in a harmonious

fashion, ‘responsible land administration’ appears more readily achievable.

Or to summarize the dynamics focus on changes regarding the following five issues:

1. Changes in the status of people-to-land relations
2. Changes in the conceptual and technological core characteristics of LA
3. Changing land use and land value
4. Measuring the change
5. Change agents

For each issue we will further elaborate the meaning of ‘change’ for that issue, with references to recent studies, with an emphasis on ITC’s MSc and PhD students.