

Cadastral Entrepreneurs

Recognizing the Innovators of Sustainable Land Administration

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Key words: Cadastre; Capacity building; Digital cadastre; Professional practice; Security of tenure; Entrepreneurship; Innovation; SDGs; Cadastrepreneurs

SUMMARY

The role of entrepreneurship in land administration remains relatively unexplored. Whilst the opportunity for the private sector is understood, with Statement 5 of Cadastre 2014 being a notable example, amongst other reports on the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs), the scale and impact of cadastral entrepreneurs is not always widely acknowledged. Cadastral literature tends to have a ‘top-down’ focus, closely examining the role and activities of the public sector. A ‘bottom-up’ viewpoint, driven by non-for-profits and civil society organizations, is also evident, tending to critique the activities of the former. However, in many jurisdictions, private sector actors increasingly complete large amounts of cadastral work – and behind these SMEs sit cadastral entrepreneurs, or ‘cadastrepreneurs’. Core activities including cadastral adjudication, surveying, demarcation and mapping may be entirely privatized – with the public sector concentrating on policy, law, monitoring, and enforcement. Recognizing the importance of cadastral entrepreneurs seems important in emerging market-based economies, particularly those seeking to establish underpinning and sustainable land administration systems – where scaling and sustaining initiatives remain challenging, even in the era of fit-for-purpose. If services are intended to be delivered via the market, including cadastral services, then enabling policies, laws, fiscal controls, and educational offerings, for cadastral entrepreneurs and SMEs to prosper within, require fostering in parallel. In the 30-50 countries maintaining complete cadastres, good evidence of these enabling environments exists. However, such environments must be implemented responsibly, avoiding the (re)creation of privatized monopolies and rent seeking behavior. In other contexts, development projects have arguably not been sustainable due to a focus on government, and the failure to inspire and enable cadastral entrepreneurs – towards the common good. This paper seeks to ignite debate on the opportunities, challenges, and limitations of cadastral entrepreneurship – and to set an agenda for how to better incorporate the benefits of cadastral entrepreneurship into sustainable land administration.

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(9950)

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FIG Working Week 2019
Geospatial information for a smarter life and environmental resilience
Hanoi, Vietnam, April 22–26, 2019