

Land Reforms and Implementation of the Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA): a Case Study for Customary Land Registry Implementation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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SUMMARY

Since 2012, the Democratic Republic of Congo has been engaged through the support of GLTN in a land reform process, which aims to develop a national land policy as well as a new legal and institutional framework for effective land management. The development of the land information system was one of the innovative outcomes of the process made possible through a customary land registry implementation approach as a tool/driver for the effective land administration framework implementation.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has a complex land governance system that has led to mixed results, including insecurity of land tenure in urban and rural areas, land disputes, and the proliferation of land hoarding. In this context, the land reform program piloted jointly by GLTN with national and local partners has initiated pilots' projects in Ituri and Maindombe provinces on Customary land registry as a participatory and inclusive tool that empowers local communities to manage their land rights and resources and contributes to peacebuilding and sustainable development in the post-conflict context.

One of the land administration innovations that the Framework for Effective Land Administration supports is the development of customary land registries, which are designed to capture and document the rights and interests of customary landholders, who often lack formal recognition and protection. The case study in this paper focuses on the case of community land registry implementation in Babila Bakwanza Chiefdom, Ituri Province, a conflict affected region with a diversity and complexity of land tenure systems. The paper innovative approaches that combine participatory mapping, legal empowerment, and customary authority recognition can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of land administration interventions in rural areas. The paper presents the main features and outcomes of the community land registry project, which aimed to

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secure the land rights of local communities and prevent land conflicts in a post-conflict context and advocates for a flexible and participatory approach to land information management as part of a broader land reform initiative. The paper also discusses the challenges and lessons learned from the project, as well as the implications for scaling up and replicating similar initiatives in other parts of the DRC and beyond.

These interventions in Mambasa and Mai Ndombe produced encouraging results as it made possible that more than 340 families' plots being identified and mapped in Ituri. More than 100 land conflicts have been identified and resolved thanks to the local land committee, which is one of the institutional components of the Community Land Registry, while about sixty land certificates have been produced and issued to local communities. In Mai-Ndombe, more than 250 families have been identified/mapped and more than 60 land conflicts identified and about 60% resolved.

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