Open Tenure; a Crowd Sourcing Software Application Providing Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration Solutions

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SUMMARY

Late in 2013 UK DFID agreed to fund a project to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) (of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security). A sub-component of this project was to develop an open source software application that would facilitate the crowd-sourcing of tenure rights recording and mapping at the community level. This software application, Open Tenure, was developed in 2014 by a multi-national team of software developers engaged by FAO and in 2015 it was field tested in two quite distinct communities.

The first Open Tenure field test was in the context of an 18,000 hectare community forest in north-east Cambodia where both tenure rights and forest management details were recorded and mapped. The second field test was in Guatemala with a community of 48 families who were resettled by the government to a 550 hectare block on their return to Guatemala following this country's civil war in 1998.

The paper will describe other uses of Open Tenure in FAO VGGT implementation initiatives in Uganda to support customary registration and in Nigeria where it has been used in the mapping of gazetted forest and grazing reserves and stock routes, the digital capture of title (certificates of occupancy) records and for systematic registration field data capture (Nigeria). These Open Tenure implementations in Uganda and Nigeria all support main-stream land administration functions as well as attempting to contribute to solutions to reduce the tension between migratory herdsmen and farmers cultivating the land adjacent to the stock routes in Katsina State, Nigeria.

Recently, the World Bank has initiated a study to examine the use of Open Tenure in conjunction with drone captured map imagery in post conflict or disaster situations and the performance of

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Open Tenure in this study will also be described.

Based on this experience, the paper will make conclusions as to where Open Tenure does provide a fit-for-purpose solution for land administration tasks and identify further land administration functions that could benefit from its use.