

March 2016 Newsletter:

THE VALUE OF EFFECTIVE LAND REGISTRATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Seychelles launches national Public Private Partnership policy

The Government of Seychelles has launched a national Public Private Partnership (PPP) policy with the aim of increasing private sector participation in the provision of public infrastructure and services in the country. PPPs enable governments to mobilize resources, share risks with the private sector, make infrastructure investments more manageable for the Government.



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A Word From our CEO

A modernised land administration and registration system provides a range of benefits to African nations. It enables property owners to access finance and it stimulates the property market. ICF is very proud to support and be involved in projects across the continent that improve land tenure and property rights for all African citizens.

William Asiko - CEO of ICF Africa



ICF assists to simplify land registry processes in Sierra Leone

ICF has helped the Government of Sierra Leone to implement a reliable electronic system for registering land which is more secure, transparent and provides greater accuracy. The objective of the project is to increase overall certainty over property rights for all citizens of Sierra Leone, to stimulate the land market and facilitate improved access to credit.



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ICF projects address land registration and property rights in Africa

Property rights is not only a basic human right, it is also key in helping countries to stimulate economic growth. ICF works with African governments to modernize processes involved in registering land in order to reduce the time and money spent on transferring property.



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March Activity Map

ICF has been involved in successful projects with three African Governments to improve land registration systems and facilitating improvements to processes for property transfers. The main aim was to improve the business environment by making it easier to transfer property.



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Seychelles launches national Public Private Partnership policy

The Seychelles Government has launched a national Public Private Partnership (PPP) policy with the aim of increasing private sector participation in the provision of public infrastructure and services in the country. The policy provides a framework for Government and the private sector to interact in partnership arrangements that are mutually beneficial to both sides.

The policy was launched at a Public Private Dialogue event which brought together Government officials and the Seychelles private sector to discuss the new policy. The event provided a platform for both sides to discuss the opportunities and expectations that the policy presents.

The event was attended by the Minister of Finance, Trade and Blue Economy, Mr. Jean-Paul Adam, the Minister of Investment, Entrepreneurship Development and Business Innovation, Mr. Michael Benstrong, as well as ICF and the Africa Development Bank who are the funding partners who supported the set-up of the PPP policy. Speaking during the launch, Finance Minister Jean-Paul Adam, said, "Government is entering into PPP collaborations because it is looking to provide a superior quality of services as well as and cost savings to tax payers and consumers of these services."

Various Government ministries highlighted a sample of initiatives that they have identified as good potentials for PPP collaboration with the private sector. These include the development of residential estates and construction of sports facilities. Investment Minister Michael Benstrong reiterated that there were many opportunities for private sector participation in Seychelles. "The new policy will help encourage enterprise development and encourage small businesses to flourish," he said.

Speaking at the event, ICF CEO, William Asiko, commended Seychelles for taking this step, saying, "Public Private Partnerships enable governments to mobilize much needed resources and share risks with the private sector, making infrastructure investments more manageable for government."

During the event, participants from the private sector welcomed the new PPP policy and expressed their interest in collaborating with government. They encouraged the Government to create a portal that would provide adequate information to the private sector on all the potential PPP projects that are available. They placed a strong emphasis on transparency to ensure that all private sector entities are treated with the same level of fairness when being considered for PPP collaborations.

The Seychelles Chamber of Commerce cautioned on the need to look at the country's absorptive capacity in order to prioritize projects properly. Bank representatives who attended the event also expressed their excitement and indicated their willingness to introduce new financial products to support PPP project financing arrangements.

The Government of Seychelles has entered into PPP arrangements in the past but with this new policy in place, Government ministries and institutions now have a guiding framework to make the process much smoother, easier and less risky. Over 60 participants attended the event.



Seychelles Finance Minister Jean-Paul Adam speaks at the launch of the PPP policy.

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ICF assists to simplify registry processes in Sierra Leone

In 2008 it used to take about 235 days to register land property in Sierra Leone due to laborious manual processes of recording land titles. Information about land was submitted by members of the public and stored as hardcopy paper archives resulting in long delays and high costs which in turn caused reluctance among commercial banks to accept property as a form of collateral for credit.

ICF saw a clear need to intervene and work with the Government of Sierra Leone to implement a reliable electronic system for registering land which was more secure, transparent and provided greater accuracy. Working together, ICF and the Government of Sierra Leone implemented the Sierra Leone Land Registration System Project.

This project aimed to streamline and automate procedures for acquiring land by establishing a Geographical Information System (GIS)-based land use cadaster system and creating a reliable electronic database for storing registered land titles. This database serves as a one-stop-shop for land parcel information and documentation. The project established a Central Unit for land registration and administration in the capital city Freetown and also instituted two satellite stations in the Western Region of the city.

The objective of the project was to increase overall certainty over property rights for all citizens of Sierra Leone, to stimulate the land market and facilitate improved access to credit. The project has now established a bases for effective urban land administration and management and the Government of Sierra Leone will aim to replicate this model widely across the country.

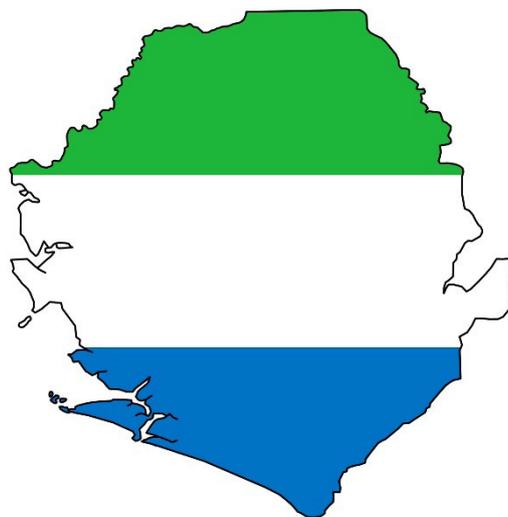
Through the Sierra Leone Land Registration System Project, ICF has helped the Government to reduce the number of days it takes to register property in the country to only 19 days for residential leases and 16 days for commercial leases, from the original 235 days. The project also reduced the number of procedures it takes to register land from eight procedures to only six. The cost of transferring land ownership also decreased from 15% to 10% of the property value.

In another project, ICF assisted the Sierra Leone Government to modernise the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General (OARG). As a result of the project, OARG procedures have been streamlined and administrative processes have been automated to reduce the time and costs related to filing and retrieving documents from the OARG. Three regional centres have also been established.

Commenting on the project Mariama Seray Kally, Sierra Leone's Administrator and Registrar-General said that, "with the organisation's help the office was able to conduct activities to create awareness around the new provision of registering a business as part of the overall project to modernise processes. The major component of the project was to automate all records stored at the office, which is in line with the President, Ernest Bai Koroma's Agenda for change." All records dating from 1985 onwards have been digitized.

As part of the project, the OARG has been connected to the Ministry of Land's spatial database and the Fast Track Commercial Court (both of which were projects supported by ICF) to provide access to key information needed for land registrations. This has greatly helped to reduce the time it takes to process land transactions.

During the 2016 Africa Forum, the first Africa to Africa business Forum held in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt earlier this year, delegates called for greater trust and cooperation between government and the private sector to improve doing business on the continent. Throughout the Forum, it was agreed that Africa's long-term success is underpinned by the





digital revolution, among other things.

Projects such as the Sierra Leone Land Registration System Project and the Modernisation the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General, supported by ICF are vital for Africa's development and digital migration. ICF has been working with other Governments to create similar systems and processes in other countries in an effort to improve land registration and property ownership for more African citizens.

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ICF projects address land registration and property rights in Africa

During the past few years the topic of land registration in Africa has been addressed numerous times. Recently, the Ethiopian Urban Development and Construction Affairs Standing Committee pressed for sound land registration systems in the country, to maximise efforts to upgrade the documentation of land registration systems.



Prominent political and business leaders have discussed the issues pertaining to land registration for the continent in an effort to improve overall processes of land registration in Africa. The intention is to ensure sufficient rights for both property and business owners. Property rights is not only a basic human right, it is also a necessity for countries to create a free market and drive improved economic growth.

As the procedures that govern land tenure in African countries are often complex, ICF's goal is to find ways to simplify these processes. A modernised land administration and registration system will provide a range of benefits to African nations, as both individual and commercial property owners will be able to secure their property rights through simple and transparent methods.

The 2015 International Property Rights Index revealed that the African countries that attained the highest scores for property rights were (on an index scored out of 10) South Africa at 6.6, Mauritius at 6.1 and Botswana and Rwanda with the same score of 5.9. The ranks are based on three main components, namely: legal and political environment, physical property rights and intellectual property rights.

The index provides a comparative analysis using political and economic data from the countries. The report also clearly indicates that nations with strong property rights achieve improved national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita compared to countries without strong property rights. The benefits of proper land registration systems should never be overlooked. Land ownership also provides increased access to credit to the land owners, as the land can be used for collateral. ICF has been involved in a number of projects aimed at promoting effective land registration systems in various African countries.

In Sierra Leone, for example, transferring property used to take an estimated 235 days, involve eight procedures and cost 15% of the property value. ICF worked with the Government of Sierra Leone to establish a land registration system which has reduced the number of procedures for transferring property from eight to six procedures. The project also resulted in reduced time to transfer property to 16 days for commercial property and to 19 days for residential property. Rwanda is one of the countries doing very well when it comes to land tenure. According to the World Bank's 2015 report How

Innovations in Land Administration Reform Improve on Doing Business, Rwanda is the only country in Africa that has succeeded in documenting all rights to land. The Government of Rwanda made land policy reform a priority to clarify and secure land rights for all citizens and thus create positive conditions for economic development.

ICF has been involved in two projects with the aim to improve property registration and land tenure in Rwanda. The Rwanda Investment Climate Project improved land registration by creating an electronic Land Information Administration System (LAIS) to improve titling and boost mortgage registration.

The second project was the Rwanda Land Administration Enhancement Project which worked to integrate legal and spatial information into one database and to operationalize LAIS in all districts in Rwanda. As a result of these efforts, the



number of days to register property in Rwanda were reduced from seven days to two. Rwandan citizens no longer have to travel to the Office of the Registrar of Land Titles in Kigali to transfer their land – they can now do it in their districts.

Being able to register land and protect property rights is a crucial factor for the development of any economy, with far reaching impact. ICF continues to be involved in the issues relating to property rights and land registration, as the demand for new projects to address these issues in African countries remains a high priority.

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In Next Month's Issue: Trade Facilitation

Cargo dwell times at Africa ports are major obstructions to trade and often cause an adverse effect on a country's economic growth. In our next issue we will examine how modernised systems are re-engineered processes for cargo clearance can significantly reduce dwell times.

ICF Funding and Support

ICF provides a unique partnership between the private sector, African governments and development organisations to deliver a better investment climate for Africa. We continue to seek additional funds to enable us to increase the scope and impact of our work.

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