Data collection: SOLA

Solutions for Open Land Administration (Samoa)

Problem addressed

Traditional land tenure governance is often unclear and accompanied by specific costs to access information such as land ownership, size, and boundaries. Tenure rights are essential to identify the landowners and decide on its resource management. In case of confusion, the land may be exploited without related ownership. Moreover, such land details are critical in community affairs to deal with land trading, land use, and construction and farming projects. Therefore, there is a need to compile all accurate information in one register and make it easily accessible to all to improve land management.

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Solution

SOLA (Solutions for Open Land Administration) is an open-source software for land title registration and cadastral mapping. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in Samoa is the first country-level stakeholder to deploy a customized version of SOLA in 2012. This technology enables the island land mapping, management of freehold land to support land deals, and easy access to land information for the public. This solution had been developed to promote good governance of tenure and adequate land management.

Innovations and features

This GIS-based cadastral environment has helped streamline information sharing from the Ministry to the public and vice versa.

As such, SOLA software has two major packages:

- The first one aims at land administration with a registry, state land, and systematic registration.

- The other is an open community tenure which directly supports data collection from the community, such as land claims and land contracts. The software can be used to map the land through geo-localization. This serves to build the community's knowledge and consensus on how the land is used. Then it can be submitted to the government for official recognition.

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Evidence and viability

- SOLA has been used since 2012 in Samoa.

- It allows for transparency in land ownership for governmental and individual stakeholders.

- Landowners have access to a tool to claim their land ownership.

- Boundaries are determined and recorded, preventing land conflicts.

- The mapping helps to prevent encroachment and supports natural resource conservation.