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Inter-Organizational Collaboration in the Management of Geoinformation: Towards an Appropriate Institutional Arrangement

Access to reliable and affordable spatial information is a critical component of a country's future economic, environmental and social development. However, this information which is mainly about tenure, values, use and condition of land, is normally collected and kept in separate databases and controlled by separate agencies. In Ghana, there appears to be lack of cooperation among the various agencies and organisations involved in the management of land. The research investigates on inter-organisational collaboration efforts in the management of geoinformation. It examines the institutional setting for land management in Ghana with a view to proposing an appropriate framework that defines the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders as well as the rules and regulations to facilitate effective collection, storage, analysis and exchange of geoinformation.

A case study of the Concurrence (certification of customary land transaction) and Land Registration process, as part of the land management/administration system was made. Semi-structured interviews with key persons, observations of key processes and extensive review of relevant documents were carried out. This case study is based on an extensive theoretical framework in which the relevant aspects had been identified and discussed.

The main purpose of the process is to ensure security of tenure for socio-economic development. The key stakeholders in the management of geoinformation were varied and cut across several fields. Six key stakeholders were identified and examined for the purpose of

the study. The overall interest of the stakeholders was not singular; each agency was enabled by its mandate to attain its individual goal, without taking into account its impact on the overall purpose of the process. The regulatory framework for land management in general was also found to be ineffective; the sheer number of laws relied upon in land management is threatening, some are conflicting and/or unclear. Parochial interests of organisations and certain persons seem to override any effort to comply with laws which seek to ensure cooperation. There is no legal backing for the existing framework established for the management of geoinformation, making it ineffective. There is also no policy on data standards and exchange procedures.

The success of any inter-organisational collaboration effort in the management of geoinformation would depend to a large extent on the availability of a long-term strategic vision and high level political support; the importance of a lead agency; a focus on key priorities; and the importance of a business process focus. The study recommends that core processes involved in land management should be targeted for improvement. Land management services should also be decentralised to the local level. The country's ICT Policy should include provisions for data exchange, standardisation and general management of geoinformation. The Survey Department is proposed as the lead agency in the effort to improve the management of geoinformation. A comprehensive training policy aimed at ensuring that all categories of staff members are exposed to modern trend of information handling is also proposed.

Key words: Geoinformation, geoinformation management, GIS, LIS, ICT, institutional cooperation, inter-organizational collaboration, Ghana.