Socio-Economic Land Data Inventory and Improvement Strategy in Botswana

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Abstract

The objective of this policy note is to inform the government of Botswana, especially the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services, mandated to oversee land administration and management in the country, that Botswana lacks comprehensive datasets on socio-economic aspects of land and land-related issues to effectively inform land policy decisions in the country. Socioeconomic surveys conducted by Statistics Botswana are not focused on land matters. Survey questionnaires that are used to collect data lacked many thematic and targeted questions on socio-economic aspects of land and land-

related matters. Even those few questions asked were focused more on type and tenure of housing units and land ownership in the agricultural sector at the expense of non – agricultural sectors of the economy. The available socio-economic data on land were largely administrative, incomplete and not readily retrieval by users. The databases were not updated timely or the data were presented in non-consistent formats. Users find it difficult to use the data from different local and central authorities owing to such data inconsistencies. The land administration and management sector lacks a complete, well-coordinated, integrated, centralized and digitized (electronic) land data management system at the moment. Many key stakeholders and majority of their personnel lacked adequate knowledge and skills in identifying measureable socio-economic indicators in land-related matters they deal with in their workplaces. Botswana needs to adopt a three-prolong strategy to (1) improve coordination and management of production and dissemination of socio-economic statistics on land, (2) strengthen human resource development and management capacity to generate, manage, analyze and disseminate socio-economic statistics and information on land and (3) strengthen socio-economic statistical development institutions, processes and tools used to collect data among local and government authorities and other key stakeholders on land. This strategy requires existence of socio-economic land data production and quality improvement policy in the country. There is need for the MLWS in collaboration with Statistics Botswana to train key stakeholders in land-related matters to produce and manage quality socio-economic data in the workplace to inform land policy decisions in the country. Relevant academic programmes may be developed in tertiary education institutions to impart knowledge and skills on socio-economic land data management, use and land policy formulation and analysis.

Introduction

Botswana is a semi-arid, sparsely populated multi-party democratic country in the interior of Southern Africa. It has a population of 2,024,904 and surface area of 582,000 km2. The country is a former British protectorate that got its independence on 30 September 1966. It is now an upper middle - income country whose economy is heavily reliant on diamonds and beef exports. Land is an important and scarce resource in Botswana. The government of Botswana created the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services (MLWS) in 2016. The mandate of the MLWS in regard to matters of land in the country is to ensure proper land administration and management to facilitate socio-economic development.

The main objective of the ISELDA project is to understand existing socio-economic data on land in Africa and identify areas of cross-matching of different data sets that can enrich analysis of land issues in order to raise understanding and inform policy making. The specific objectives were (1) to provide an inventory of socio-economic household and firm surveys in Botswana, the levels of data access by interested

researchers, and the methodology used for doing so, (2) to document the evidence provided by land-related questions that were included in past surveys and indicate how data from these can be consolidated or integrated for better access by policy makers and by researchers, (3) to identify ways in which instruments for planned routine land data collection by statistical offices can be enhanced to collect data that will be more relevant for decision making; and (4) to identify how specific projects that aim to integrate land into investment plans can use available data for cost-benefit analysis and complement efforts at routine data collection.

Methodology

Stakeholder consultations and sensitization visits on the African Union Development Agency/New Partnership for African Development (AUDA_NEPAD) Botswana Land Governance Project ran from September 23 – 27, 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana, led by Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) representative, Leonard Sweta, who arrived in the country on Sunday, September 22, 2019. AUDA_NEPAD representative, Rudo Makunike, arrived on Monday, September 23, 2019. The Team (AUDA_NEPAD, RCMRD, and AERC (represented by Davis Marumo)) started joint Stakeholder visits on Monday, September 23, 2019 and continued such visits until Friday, September 27, 2019. Rudo Makunike provided an overview of the AUDA_NEPAD-Botswana Land Governance Project in these meetings. The RCMRD was responsible for collating geospatial data while AERC collated socio-economic data on land. Land data improvement strategy involved active participation of key stakeholders in land issues in the country. Consultations with public and non-state actors identified the vision and strategic objectives for the land administration and management sector. Several socio-economic land data issues, proposed strategies and actions to address them and the responsible actor or agency were identified, discussed and agreed upon.

Findings of the study

Statistics Botswana is the only organization that collects and publishes official statistics in the country. It has vast experience in conducting socio-economic surveys at the national level. There are several central and local government organizations that collect administrative data on land matters in Botswana. The Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services is the main overseer of land administration and management in the country. Largely, the Department of Lands allocates state land in urban areas for residential and commercial / industrial purposes while the Land Boards allocate tribal land for all purposes in the villages.

Botswana has not undertaken a comprehensive survey on socio-economic aspects of land and land-related issues. Socioeconomic surveys conducted by Statistics Botswana were not focused on land matters. Survey questionnaires that were used

to collect data lacked many thematic and targeted questions on socio-economic aspects of land. Even those few questions asked were focused more on type and tenure of housing units and land ownership in the agricultural sector at the expense of non-agricultural sectors of the economy.

However, the country is at an advanced stage of having a coordinated, integrated, centralized and digitized (electronic) land data management system through the LAPCAS and LIS initiatives. Botswana has accepted that there is need for a one-stop centralized and digitized land data and information help desk in the country. This initiative is believed to have far-reaching positive impact on users' access to land data and information and promote socio-economic development. The country has basic ICT infrastructure and needs to be assisted technically and financially to establish a one-stop centralized and digitized land data and information help desk in the country. Botswana is willing and has been working towards having a centralized and digitized land data and information management system through the LAPCAS and LIS initiatives prior to the launch of the AUDA-NEPAD land governance programme. Botswana has setup countrywide information and communication infrastructure; good internet connectivity and speed, networked server systems, working bandwidth, some computer hardware and software in place.

It was evident in the key stakeholder consultations and sensitization workshop that many organizations and majority of their personnel lacked adequate knowledge and skills in identifying measureable socio-economic indicators in land and land-related matters they deal with in their workplaces. Thus, the administrative data collected in the workplace was not fully analyzed and utilized to inform land policy decisions in the country. The available socio-economic data on land were largely administrative, incomplete and not readily retrieval by users. The databases were not updated timely or the data were presented in non-consistent and largely paper formats. Users find it difficult to use the data from different local and central authorities owing to such data inconsistencies.

Conclusions and policy implications

Conclusions

Botswana experiences a lack of comprehensive datasets on socio-economic aspects of land and land-related issues. The available socio-economic databases on land revealed inadequacies in terms of key data quality attributes such as consistency, reliability, accuracy, completeness, timeliness, auditability, orderliness, and uniqueness. The land administration and management sector lacks a complete, well-coordinated, integrated, centralized and digitized (electronic) land data management system at the moment. The country needs to adopt a three-prolong strategy to (1) improve coordination and management of production and dissemination of socio-economic

statistics on land, (2) strengthen human resource development and management capacity to generate, manage, analyze and disseminate socio-economic statistics and information on land and (3) strengthen socio-economic statistical development institutions, processes and tools used to collect data among local and government authorities and other key stakeholders on land.

Policy implications

The lack of comprehensive socio-economic data on land and land-related matters and the identified inadequacies in the land data quality attributes suggest the need for relevant socio-economic land data production and quality improvement policy in the country. The policy will improve socio-economic land data production, management, its use, its influence on land policy decisions and overall impact on socio-economic development of the country. There is need to establish a one-stop centralized and digitalized socio-economic land data and information help desk in the country. This facility will enhance access to and increase use of such data by all interested parties to promote research, dialogue, informed land policy decisions and appropriate investment in socio-economic development of the country.

The country needs to undertake comprehensive surveys on socio-economic aspects of land and land-related issues. Statistics Botswana needs to expand the scope of its socio-economic surveys to include appropriate thematic and targeted questions on socio-economic aspects of land for both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the economy. This organization also needs to strengthen its collaboration with all key stakeholders (especially the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitary Services) in land and land-related matters to make full use of the administrative data generated in the workplace. A data-sharing mechanism could be established at Statistics Botswana where liaison officers from the various key stakeholders could submit their administrative data on key land and land-related variables in their respective organizations to Statistics Botswana. The MLWS needs to forge ahead and commit to moving away from paper-based record management systems to a modern coordinated, integrated, centralized and digitized (electronic) land data management system through the LAPCAS and LIS initiatives.

There is need for the MLWS in collaboration with Statistics Botswana to embark on accelerated and intensive training of key stakeholders in land-related matters to equip them with adequate knowledge and skills in identifying measurable socio-economic indicators in such matters to enable effective planning and collection of administrative data in the workplace to inform land policy decisions in the country. The MLWS may also, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology, make a policy decision to introduce appropriate learning programmes in tertiary institutions to generate a pool of qualified and competent personnel in socio-economic land data management, use and land policy formulation and analysis.

Mission

To strengthen local capacity for conducting independent,
rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa.

The mission rests on two basic premises: that development is more likely to occur where there is sustained sound management of the economy, and that such management is more likely to happen where there is an active, well-informed group of locally based professional economists to conduct policy-relevant research.

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