TACKLING LAND CORRUPTION WITH OPEN DATA

REMOTE OBSERVATION

RESEARCH

FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

CROWD SOURCED

CITIZEN GENERATED

OPEN DATA

Open Data is data that can be freely used, shared and built-on by anyone, anywhere, for any purpose. Open Data is widely considered to be an effective response to land corruption by increasing transparency, supporting innovation and increasing civic engagement. Advocates of open data believe in its potential for empowering citizens to gain more insight on government spendings and land-related decisions; giving civil society greater power to hold governments accountable for their actions.

CHALLENGES

In many countries, land registration remains incomplete and the digitisation of land records is even more so. Certain types of tenure are particularly under-represented within digital systems, either because of how digitisation has taken place or because certain types of land (e.g. customary land) have not historically been recorded by governments. This provides a significant challenge to Open Data systems; however, information from alternative sources (e.g. communities, geo-spatial) does exist and ought to be incorporated into the ecosystem.

Other key challenges to Open Data include historical, political and social contexts (e.g. gender biases); ethical concerns (e.g. data sovereignty); and safety issues (data secrecy vs openness).

REQUIREMENTS FOR OPEN DATA

- Integrate diverse data sources
- Take account of historical biases
- Avoid corruption in data collection
- Capacity-building in data access and use, at all levels
- Code of conduct and ethics

DATA SILOS

Tackling land corruption is severely impaired by the lack of transparency surrounding land ownership data around the world, characterised by patchy and often overlapping record-keeping and inadequate data management processes. Land ownership data is consistently ranked lowest on both the Global Open Data Index and the Open Data Barometer, and each year the dataset is highlighted as the least likely to be open.

OPENING DATA

Land information is increasingly created, stored and shared as data and new technologies are being developed to capture, monitor and analyse this valuable information. These initiatives are helping to open-up access to, and use of, datasets that can help achieve land tenure security for all, at a speed and scale that would otherwise not have been possible.

The G20 officially recognised the importance of Open Data in the fight against corruption, in 2014, highlighting its potential for shining a light on the activities, decisions, and expenditure of governments around the world. Furthermore, the G20 see Open Data as providing a mechanism for increasing accountability by allowing citizens and states to monitor the flow and use of public money within and across borders.

EXTRACTIVES

LAND DATA

CUSTOMARY LEADERS

RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY

POWER PRODUCERS

CADASTRES

GOVERNMENTS

LAND CORRUPTION is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain while carrying out the functions of land administration and management.

Hidden deals between private investors and local authorities, citizens forced to pay bribes for basic land services, the sexual extortion of women for access to land, unaccountable urban planning, and customary laws that deny women and minorities land rights are all forms of land corruption.

The land sector is frequently identified as being among the few sectors where citizens are most likely to pay bribes for access to basic services. Around the world, one in five people have paid a bribe to access land services, according to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer, and in Sub-Saharan Africa every second citizen accessing land services reports having been affected by corruption.

The impacts of land corruption include insecure tenure, barriers to socio-economic development, food insecurity, increased risk of conflict, and threats to traditional cultures and customary practices. For nation-states, the continued presence of land corruption exacts a toll on national economies and impedes the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Contributing factors:

- lack of transparency
- lack of accountability
- low participation by civil society
- weak governance
- poor law enforcement