**ABSTRACT**

**Land Governance in Botswana**

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The purpose of the country scope study was to analyse the practice of land governance in Botswana. Botswana is a landlocked country measuring 582,000Km2 and bordered by four countries, namely Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Botswana got independence from the British Protectorate on 30th September 1966 and is ruled by a democratically elected State President. The three arms of government are Executive, Judiciary and legislature. The country’s main economic activity is Diamond mining contributing about 40% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is supplemented by tourism, then agriculture and taxes. The country’s population is concentrated in the fertile eastern parts of the country where there are some traces of rainfall. A population of about 2 million people resides on a land of 582,000Km2 which translates into a 3.4 persons per kilometre squared with a per capital income of US$8,259. Despite a lower density, Botswana still faces challenges of land due to the majority of the land being a desert. This report presents the key challenges that the land administration indicators are facing in Botswana as far as land governance is concerned.

The research approach that was used in coming up with these challenges was qualitative in nature through the use of document analysis and review, observations, and record searches. The type of the data that was used in this research report is qualitative in nature and was analysed using thematic and content analysis. The documents that were used included government reports, Acts and policy documents, and published articles.

The results revealed a number of key challenges across all land administration indicators that are adopted in land governance. Under the country profile and background, over population in urban centres was identified as the major challenge, followed by high rates of unemployment due to migration. The other challenge was poverty levels in rural areas and low skilled workforce by the youths.

The major challenges that were identified under institutional and legal framework were lack of synchronisation in policy documents and relevant Acts of Parliament in different ministries. On the other hand, the Deeds Registry only caters for common law land rights and does not register and keep land records for customary land rights and it is also not computerised yet. Disputes concerning land take time to be resolved in the land Tribunal and compensation for land is not adequate. Where re-allocations are to be done they also take time.

It was also noted that there are delays in allocating land to applicants on the waiting list even when land is available due to the manual procedures that are used to screen and vet applicants with other relevant stakeholders such as Botswana Housing Corporation (BHC). As a result of an increase in the population in the cities and towns, this has triggered a rampant shortage of land. The other concern that was noted which is a threat to homelessness is that of gentrification in low income areas and neighbouring villages. These are displaced by the middle income group by purchasing land parcels from the low income group. In as far as land management is concerned; the major challenges are a lack of well-coordinated system. This results into delays in allocation of land and corrupt acts where people start allocating to more than one applicant as was in the case of Mogoditshane.

Lack of a well-coordinated local property taxation system is another challenge which contributes to delayed production of valuation rolls due to non-computerisation of the rating valuation system. It was also noted that most of the valuation rolls in the country were outdated and with high defaults recorded. There is also not a well-coordinated system is the administration of other types of property taxes such as Property Transfer Tax (PTT) where there were a number of under declaration of the purchase price for the purpose of evading and avoiding the tax .

Major challenges concerning the management of public land were a lack of a cell computerised system together with disjointed roles amongst concerned parties. In wildlife management areas, it was also noted that a higher population of elephants is a threat to food security as it invades and attacks homesteads and crop fields. This leads to a low crop yield thus resulting in to higher levels of rural poverty. The other challenge which was noted was the over-reliance on natural resources for use in the development of the country infrastructure and buildings. River sand is mined in rivers without replenishing or considering recycling and reusing of other building materials. Sustainable development is also affected due to lack of green zones or belts in cities. Lastly, the fencing and grazing policies have not been that effective thus ending up losing animals and communal land to other competing uses such as private ranches.

Efforts to improve land information systems (LIS) in the 1990s were all directed to the Botswana Land Information Systems (BLIS) which did not yield much result. State Land Information Management System (SLIMS) and Tribal Land Information Management Systems (TLIMS) in 2002 -2008 were fruitless and in 2009 there came Land Administration Processes and Capacity Systems (LAPCAS). These could have been the panacea to the problems that the system is facing, however the process to implement them takes long and consequently not actualised. The land information is available but remains disjointed and inaccessible by the public.

The implications of these challenges are that if the system is not developed and implemented double allocations and corrupts acts will still continue which in the end affect productivity and service delivery of service providers. Loss of revenue from property tax as a result of not having a well – coordinated system in place. As a result of poor delivery of service, dissatisfied customers, low productivity and low economic output will be the order of the day. The recommendation is that well-coordinated framework that embraces e-governance is a recipe for good land governance by linking or integrating all units and sectors of the economy.

**Key Words:** Land governance; good land governance; land information systems; land management; valuation and taxation; management of public land; land administration; land administration indicators.