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WORKSHOP ON CUSTOMERS-COOPERATION SERVICES

Report prepared by the delegation of Austria in cooperation with the secretariat

Introduction

1. The workshop on customers-cooperation services took place in Vienna from 12 to 13 September 2002. The Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying (BEV) and the Federal Ministry of Justice of Austria organized the workshop.
2. Representatives of the following countries participated: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom.
3. Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, EuroGeographics and the ECE secretariat also took part in the workshop.
4. Mr. H. KÖNIG (BEV) opened the workshop and welcomed the participants.

5. Mr. W. FELLNER (Ministry of Justice) made an introductory statement. He reported on Austria's system of data organization and land registration and its modernization. The modernization was intended to make land registration more understandable to the system's many users. The modernization would move the system towards a wider application; accuracy; electronic data collection; electronic exchange of data between different databases and users.
6. Mr. G. VINOGRADOV (ECE secretariat) reported on the ECE land administration activities. He stressed that a land administration system was part of the national administration and needed to apply good governance practices to meet the requirements of its stakeholders.
7. Mr. B. KJELLSON, Chairman of the ECE Working Party on Land Administration, reported on its recent activities. He stressed the importance of public/private cooperation in land administration matters, as well as cooperation between different international organizations.
8. Mr. A. HOCHWARTNER, President of BEV, welcomed the participants and made a keynote presentation on the activities of his organization and on international cooperation in land administration. He defined the ECE Working Party on Land Administration as an important international forum for discussions on land administration issues. He underlined the need to improve communication through a better definition of common aims and terminology. With reference to a proposal to establish new activities on cadastre development in Europe, he indicated that, even though the cadastre was an important part of the spatial data infrastructure, sectoral fragmentation would not help achieve the overall goal of providing users and partners with comprehensive land-related information. At present, all European countries were examining their arrangements for the promotion and cooperation between the administration and the business sector, especially concerning the application of new technologies. Cooperation was in fact more advisable than competition and rivalry. The challenge now was to promote education and training with respect to future cooperation on land administration in Europe.
9. The following themes and topics were discussed:

Theme I: COOPERATION

Group A: Public-Public Partnership

Chairperson: Ms. B. LIPEJ (Slovenia); Moderator: Mr. A. KOKKONEN (Finland)

Group B: Public-Private Partnership

Chairperson: Mr. A. OVERCHUK (Russian Federation); Moderator: Mr. H. AUER (Austria)

Group C: Alliances and Supranational Partners

Chairperson: Mr. P. VAN DER MOLEN (Netherlands);
Moderator: Mr. J. MIRON PEREZ (Spain)

Theme II: CUSTOMERS AND SERVICES

Group A: Customers Demand and Feedback

Chairperson: Mr. P. CREUZER (Germany); Moderator: Mr. G. MUGGENHUBER (Austria)

Group B: Political Awareness

Chairperson: Mr. J. MANTHORPE (United Kingdom); Moderator: Ms. C. POTSIU (Greece)

Group C: Data Policy for Land Administration

Chairperson: Mr. R. MANSBERGER (Austria); Moderator: Mr. J. VALIS (Slovakia)

MAIN ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

Theme I: COOPERATION

10. Since January 2000, Switzerland has had its Centre for the Coordination of Geographic Information (GI) and Geographic Information System (GIS) to establish a national spatial data infrastructure. The Centre, which is an independent body under the Federal Office of Topography, is responsible for cooperation with several administrative bodies working in land administration. In Switzerland, the public and private sectors have their own tasks within the cadastre surveying system. The public sector is responsible for: legislation, standardization, supervision, coordination and verification. The private sector is engaged in production, maintenance, customer services and innovation.

11. In the Netherlands, the Cadastre and Land Registry Service, a department in the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Spatial Planning, was reorganized in 1994 into an independent Cadastre and Land Registry Agency. There is also a National Users Council, a platform for regular meetings between the Executive Board of the Agency and umbrella organizations of notaries, real estate agencies, municipalities, banks, etc. According to the law, governmental bodies have to use information from the Agency when implementing government policies and tasks, such as land taxation, spatial planning, land consolidation or environmental protection.

12. The Ordnance Survey was created as an organization in 1791 to be the national mapping agency for Britain and Ireland. In 1922, the organization was split into three separate organizations with responsibilities for Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland respectively. Each organization has developed separately over the past 80 years, and the result is that each organization now has different data specifications, data models and data products. In the late 1999 the three organizations met to identify common areas that would benefit from closer collaboration. At the initial stage the aim was to harmonize databases. The work was carried out in four areas: terminology; database comparison; product comparison; and identifiers. At the second stage, the three organizations agreed to work towards the creation of a common theme structure and feature codes; the creation of harmonized output formats; and the adoption of a common feature identification scheme. The lessons learned from this cooperation, which could be useful in the European international context, are:

- (a) A political initiative is a useful impetus to make things happen in government organizations;
- (b) Individual, organizational and national identities must be recognized and respected;
- (c) It is important to focus on harmonization, not on standardization;
- (d) There must be a clear customer benefit coming out from the alliance;

(e) Terminology needs careful handling and glossaries could help to have a common understanding so that all parties can feel ownership;

(f) Customer needs and requirements must be taken into account.

13. Land administration strongly relates to areas of responsibility of many ministries and government organizations: land valuation for taxation; environmental protection; agriculture; forestry; urban and housing development. Public agencies are able to combine data from different sources, share spatial information, develop a spatial information market policy for cost recovery, improve cooperation with potential users and the private sector, develop the e-market and the value-added services. Good coordination of public bodies and both vertical and horizontal flow of information are needed. The main reasons for the lack of strong cooperation and coordination are common in every country:

(a) Existence of different short-term priorities of each ministry and organization;

(b) Cultural and mentality issues;

(c) Copyright and financial issues;

(d) Technical issues (lack of information technology, lack of national spatial data infrastructure);

(e) Lack of legal responsibilities for coordination;

(f) Lack of specialized knowledge and experience;

(g) Rivalry and competition between different ministries and organizations preventing a land administration system from working effectively.

14. The results of this lack of coordination are:

(a) Much overlapping in land administration activities;

(b) Failure of many ambitious land administration projects;

(c) Additional costs and implementation time;

(d) Low effectiveness of public organizations;

(e) Deficiency of the land market;

(f) Inconveniences for customers and confusion.

15. It is recommended that institutional issues, such as the formal establishment of a land administration coordination board with representatives of the relevant ministries, agencies and users to examine the needs for information and to coordinate spatial information and projects, should be addressed.

16. Public-private partnership is viewed by many as an instrument to deal with the State's budget problems and economic development issues. In this context public-private partnership is defined as a transmission of State tasks to the private sector. However, the nature of public-private partnership should be carefully analysed and investigated. A distinction should be made between tasks that are suitable for the private sector and those that cannot be transferred to private persons and companies.

17. Planning and administrative decisions on land use and real property have to be restricted to the State or municipal authorities. In land management all people have to be treated equally; this is an important task of the authorities and a sign of "good governance". Land management

without State control over key issues of landownership and land use is a recipe for corruption.

18. A legal framework should be established for the coordination, the definition of operating rules, the responsibilities and issues such as copyright and pricing of data and services shared both between public-public and between public-private sector.

19. Important land administration projects, which need coordination, should always have realistic objectives and grow incrementally through political, administrative and market needs.

20. In recent years the Internet has created a new and rapidly changing environment for land administration. More and more national land administration organizations are involved in international activities. Increasing costs and a more competitive environment have brought about a need for more global thinking.

21. Increasingly the European market is becoming more integrated. So far property transactions have remained a national concern. On the other hand, the lack of a single mortgage market has been raised on several occasions. To speed up the integration the National Land Survey of Sweden has initiated a project for providing users with a single point of access to land information across borders.

22. The present experience indicates that for a supranational partnership to be successful there should be a genuine interest in joining. Partnership must be designed to become a true win-win situation, and there must be a shared vision of what is to be achieved. One very positive result of such cooperation is the knowledge gained from working with partners. The gain in skills and competence for the staff involved, and for the organization, is a definitive bonus. It may be that various land administration activities will become increasingly international.

Theme II: CUSTOMERS AND SERVICES

Customer demand and feedback

23. The main goal of the association of national mapping agencies (EuroGeographics) is to achieve inter-operability of reference and other geographic information within ten years. The aim is to contribute to the development and implementation of INSPIRE (Europe's spatial data infrastructure) and help unlock the value of geographic information in Europe to the benefit of good governance, private business and the citizen. Achieving greater inter-operability at the data level requires inter-operability at the organizational level. There are a number of organizations working within and across Europe representing different interests and specializations and EuroGeographics aims at strengthening its relationships with them.

24. The organization of the State Land Cadastre and Register of Lithuania is based on a clear legal framework aimed at good customer services, quality data delivery, a simple access to data, data distribution via different media and the need for one service point for the customer (one-stop-shop principle). The integration of public registers is a long-term strategy in Lithuania. The main aims of service improvement are: to reduce service delivery time, to simplify procedures,

to increase efficiency by making use of instruments such as benchmarking and vocational training, and to develop an accepted range of products.

25. In the Netherlands, the Cadastre and Public Registers Agency, being responsible for the registers on real estate, mortgages and cadastre, is looking for a clear customer and market orientation. Its front office includes a marketing and customer service department. Data distribution for business customers is done mainly online, whereas citizens are served through the municipalities. The outcome of three customer satisfaction surveys (audits; monitoring of delivery and processing times; and of the evaluation of market campaigns) is used to make services even more efficient. Integrated service delivery and the one-stop-shop principle are keys for success. Market research has proved to be crucial not only in assessing present and future customer expectations but also in setting the right priorities for investment in product range, distribution, services and communication.

26. The Agenzia del Territorio in Italy is responsible for topographic and cadastral surveys and records, land title registration and valuation for taxation purposes. Substantial efforts have been made to improve its information technology environment and its service efficiency. The Agency is currently carrying out three relevant projects: (a) to create an integrated database between the cadastral and public registers' databases to help the user obtain complete information about a property (cadastral data, legal rights, mortgages, real estate valuation), with a single operation; (b) to define one single real estate code for the reorganization of the real estate taxation system; (c) to create a system for computerized access and interchange of information with different organizations and operators. Closer collaboration between all public bodies is required and quality management should improve and guarantee data quality.

27. The National Land Survey of Finland puts an emphasis on integrated service delivery, integrated data sets (e.g. link of cadastre data with topographic and demographic data) and Web-based services. Value-added products could be provided by the private sector.

28. These four case studies on consumer demand and feedback show that different institutions in different countries are tackling very similar issues in their way to improve customer orientation and service efficiency. The discussion revealed that:

(a) The customer focus of land administration organizations is very important today to be able to meet customers needs. This includes the introduction of the one-stop-shop principle and the proactive marketing of all land administration products, taking into account the cost-benefit ratio, i.e. the value of products to customers. Customer values should be transferred into determinants for success;

(b) Fast and easy access to information can be provided via Web-based services;

(c) Today, it is necessary to provide high-quality data to meet customer expectations (quality control and management);

(d) Depending on customer demand, the delivery of integrated data sets becomes increasingly important to enable customers to cope with the increasing complexity of spatial planning tasks. Thus, clear State policies and strategies need to be set up for further integration of land administration data sets;

(e) Information technology is a key factor for success;

(f) Collaboration with the private sector is a reasonable instrument for reaching all market segments. Appropriate business models should be developed;

(g) Close collaboration of all the parties involved (bridging the professions) is another key factor for successful land administration and related products and customer services;

(h) The current development of e-government and e-commerce strategies is both a challenge and a huge opportunity for land administration services. Well-advanced land administration systems form part of this development and support it.

Political awareness

29. The participants recognized that success in developing customer-focused land administration services depended greatly on the policy priorities and the administrative and financial support of governments in individual member States. All governments were seeking to create social stability and economic success for their countries. Yet there was a continuing need for governments to be persuaded of the social and the economic importance of reliable and enduring systems of land administration as a foundation for achieving these ambitions.

30. The workshop identified the following four key areas:

(a) It is essential that officials and specialists, both from within a country but also from international and donor agencies, should actively advise and explain to national ministers and policy makers why an effective, accessible and well-functioning land administration is important. The economic and social well-being in countries with mature or fast developing land administration systems provides practical examples of what is possible;

(b) It is important that public awareness is raised so that the citizen can understand the benefits to the individual and to the community from accessible systems of land administration. Clear promotional and advisory literature could play a useful part in achieving these aims;

(c) There is a need for all those involved in developing systems to understand the realities in individual member States particularly where there is a potential for conflict, social resistance to change and resources are scarce;

(d) Expectations have been raised for faster, less expensive and more reliable services. Most political parties now set the continued improvement of public services as a priority in order to secure electoral support. For citizens, the standing of a national government will be substantially reflected in its success in providing good public services.

31. The workshop concluded that:

(a) The benefits of good land administration services to customers must be continually reaffirmed and explained both to the public who depend on the services and to the successive governments administering the public agencies concerned. The promotion of the UNECE Land Administration Guidelines and the ECE policy statement on "Social and Economic Benefits of Good Land Administration", as an instrument for raising political and customer awareness, should continue;

(b) The delivery of quality land administration services provides the heads of public

agencies with a strong argument for securing the necessary resources from the government. At the same time agencies need to seek continued improvement in management performance;

(c) Governments should recognize that building effective and enduring land administration systems requires long-term investment and continuing support. The building of a guaranteed land register of land rights and the creation and maintenance of national mapping and systems of land valuation must be recognized as a real investment from which the return, both social and financial, will be considerable. Such an investment will lead to confident land and mortgage markets based on secure tenure, inward and internal investment and increasing taxation revenue generated by transactions, so enabling public services to improve even further;

(d) Countries should prepare a business and marketing plan to develop the partnership between government, land administration agencies, private partners and the public.

32. Those concerned with the management of land administration agencies need to maintain a high level of political awareness to ensure that they can maximize their contribution to their countries' well-being. It is important to recognize country-specific realities.

Data policy for land administration

33. E-government can be successful only if it is properly designed and accepted by citizens, companies and administrations. In Austria, the e-government strategy has been developed in cooperation with all relevant institutional players at national, regional and local levels, including the private sector.

34. The Austrian approach to e-government relies on a set of fundamental principles ensuring a consistent deployment of information and communication technology in public administration:

- Dual approach: citizens can choose between electronic services or paper-based transactions;
- Encourage citizens to use electronic services at their will;
- Standardized processes and concepts guaranteeing security and privacy; open standards and freely available interface specifications;
- Transparency of administrative processes;
- Future-oriented management with a view to allowing the integration of new developments;
- One-stop-shop concept;
- Multi-channel access to public online services; technologically neutral design to allow citizens the choice of their preferential technology.

35. Since the end of 2001, the Ministry of Public Administration together with the Ministry of the Interior has been developing a prototype of a complete electronic transaction with the use of a "citizen's card" and a secure electronic signature. The concept is based on the following assumptions:

- Modular design; electronic transactions can be seen as a set of basic components with clearly defined interfaces, functions and responsibilities;
- System architecture;

- Electronic signature;
- Standardization (and according to legal requirements various security levels are foreseen).

36. The Cyber-DOC (a central electronic archive of the Austrian notaries) was set up in Austria and all deeds signed by any Austrian notary were stored within this database. It is considered that in the future all maps and documents in the cadastre and land registry should be processed electronically.

37. In Austria, a variety of geographical data (geodata) have been collected over the years. They are provided to users from federal offices or enterprises and can be obtained in many ways: original GIS geodata, online information services, or in the form of different types of map products. A lack of coordination of the Austrian data market led to inefficiency and high costs. In the autumn of 2001, the "Geodatapolicy" working group was established to develop a concept for Austrian geodata policy to increase efficiency and consumer satisfaction.

38. In France, the existing cadastral and land registration system will be made more customer-oriented by the system of "Professional Cadastral Data Server" that provides the user with a faster access and more convenient search procedures to land administration data through the Internet.

39. It was concluded that:

- (a) The term "e-government" and "e-citizen" are not clearly defined. Their meaning differs from profession to profession and from country to country. The Working Party on Land Administration should try to find a common definition for its purposes;
- (b) The "e-government" and "e-citizen" concepts require a legislative background;
- (c) "E-government" requires a well-extended network of e-media all over the country;
- (d) The security and privacy of personal data must be guaranteed within an electronic land administration system;
- (e) Information about the stored data sets should be available in an appropriate format and easy access to these data should be provided to all customers.
- (f) The policy on the content, quality and availability of public spatial data sets (geodata policy) must be developed on a national and on a European level.