



VITAL SPACES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNECE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE WORKING PARTY ON LAND ADMINISTRATION

Special issue on Real Estate and Land Management

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IUCN CENTRE EXTENSION: "PAS DE CINQ" - ENERGY, MATERIALITY, ECONOMY, USE, AND SPACE, BY HANSPETER OESTER



MR. HANSPETER OESTER IS AN ARCHITECT AND PARTNER AT AGPS ARCHITECTURE, AN AGENCY BASED IN ZURICH AND LOS ANGELES.

Being the world's largest environmental network, International Union for Conservation of Nature asked for a radically progressive building to be constructed within a tight budget. Three principles formed our strategy: Firstly, the conservation of natural resources, focusing on energy, water and construction materiality. Secondly, an economy of methods as a financial and philosophical principle. Thirdly, a highly collaborative design process to maximize the quality of the working space. Together, these principles led to the interplay of five points in a type of dance, or "pas de cinq", of energy, materiality, economy, utility, and space.

Highest local and global environmental standards (Minergie-P-Eco and LEED Platinum) had to be respected. Geothermal heating and cooling utilize the constant ground temperature 150 meters below. A rooftop power plant is comprised of photovoltaic panels, offering a CO₂ emission-free operation of the building. Rooftop rainwater is stored and employed for gray water use including landscape irrigation.

The economy of methods has generated a straightforward albeit generous architecture. Anything unnecessary has been eliminated. A key factor is that building components serve multiple purposes. Peripheral balconies and adjustable blinds prevent overheating in summer and allow passive solar-gain in winter whilst maximizing natural light. The balconies double as fire exits, eliminating the need for fire-rated corridors. Decentralized air boxes along the exterior walls bring in tempered fresh air. Ceiling panels with CO₂-sensors provide consolidated building services, including heating, cooling, acoustics, lighting, fire sprinklers, and air return. The sensors activate the building systems only when the space is in use, making the operations highly efficient, as the building is "breathing" in time with its users. The special concrete provides a high thermal value, and it expresses a language of intentional roughness. Working in collaboration with the Swiss concrete industry, pressure-resistant insulating concrete was developed, allowing supporting walls without additional insulating and protective layers. Various means were used to reduce the CO₂ content of standard concrete, including recycled concrete. Throughout the building, the lifecycle of materials, recycling, and use of local renewable materials were investigated.

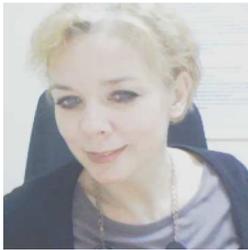
One enters IUCN through the gap between the old and new buildings in a spatial compression created by a cluster of adjacent activities –



lobby, visitor centre and cafeteria situated below the Think Tank, a convention centre hovering above. The original building is organized around a central atrium filled with an array of items and activities. This informal space was conceptually inserted into the headquarters extension but with a secondary interpretation. While the original building's exterior is largely closed, the new one is open, revealing the inner workings of the organization. Two large courtyards penetrate the simple box. One is bringing light and air down into the parking level. The second is an outdoor event space for communal activities. Offices are located along the outside walls, surrounded by the exterior balconies. Between the offices and courtyards a double height flexible working space filled with natural light promotes social interaction. The office walls are prefabricated and non-structural, easily reconfigured as needs change over time.

Formally linked to the folds of the roof is a play of structure subtly expressed on the exterior facade. Staggered steel columns which span only single floor together with structural balustrades acting as beams carry the gravity loads to the ground in an indirect, rhythmic path. Floating over the north-south folded rooftop sea of photovoltaic collectors is the Think Tank, the place where ideas are developed while looking toward the open views of Lake Geneva and the Alps beyond, a big view that can hopefully contribute to the making of big ideas.

STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MONGOLIA THROUGH THE LEGAL REGISTRATION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (REAL ESTATE) AND RECOGNITION OF OTHER PROPERTY RIGHTS, BY MARIANNA POSFAI AND YAIR BARANES



MS. MARIANNA POSFAI IS AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERT WITH MORE THAN 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCES ON LAND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT, CADASTER, PROPERTY REGISTRATION SYSTEMS AND PROJECTS.



MR. YAIR BARANES IS A SENIOR LEGAL ADVISOR ON PROPERTY REGISTRATION AND SECURED FINANCING, WITH 14 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE PROVIDING TARGETED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO PROGRAMMES WORLDWIDE.

Mongolia is a unique country in many ways. It is one of the few countries in the world, where half the citizens still live a nomadic



life. The country is sparsely populated with less than three million people living on 1.5 million km2. Half of the population lives in and around the cities, while the other half cares for their herds.

Mongolia is a country of open lands and most Mongolians believe their beautiful land is in communal ownership. The relatively unchanged nomadic lifestyle and seventy years of socialism, in which everything was owned by the state, resulted in a lack of concern for the recording of land titles.

In his famous book "The Mystery of Capital" Hernando de Soto explained that one of the main differentiators between developing and developed nations is the ability to create capital with property. In modern times no nation can have a strong market economy while most of its people are excluded from legal property rights. Without valid titles there is little chance to create a dynamic within the property market because owners cannot exercise their rights of legal sale and transfer or the use of the property as collateral.

Ten years ago, inspired by de Soto, the Mongolian government began a privatization programme to create capital with property and thereby boost the national economy and help to solve poverty issues. The privatization programme entitled Mongolian citizens to occupy, and gain ownership for free, of approximately 700 square meters of land. The actual size of the plot varied from area to area. Over the last 10 years, partly as a result of the privatization initiative, over six hundred thousand people migrated from rural areas, mostly to the Ulaanbaatar suburbs, and occupied land.

For Hernando de Soto's theory to work in practice we can rightly assume that the government has to have in place an effective infrastructure to manage land registration and the transfers of title. The Mongolian government has been slow to respond to the increased demand for registration. Citizens face many obstacles because the relevant institutions have failed to streamline the legal framework and property registration remains complicated. A lack of transparency has added to the difficulties and made resolution of disputes almost impossible for the average citizen.

Citizens are broadly aware of their rights to have land, but they are less aware of the importance of title, registration and legalization processes. Many do not attempt to gain legal title, and many give up during the process. This is hardly surprising. The current procedure comprises more than 40 steps involving three levels of government. The process is poorly managed, time consuming and expensive. The consequences are that the citizens occupy land without title and without concern for supporting infrastructure. The suburbs of Ulaanbaatar have become overcrowded and polluted. 80 per cent of the occupied land is not registered, and property transfers happen outside the legal framework. The lack of transparent property rights registration is severely constraining the access to personal and business finance.

To address the gap between their noble goal and effective implementation of the strategy, the government has now sought the assistance of donor organizations to solve the problem. The primary donor for property registration reform is the Millennium Challenge Account which supports the Property Registration Project. The objectives of this project are to help citizens obtain secure, long-term rights to the suburban and urban land they occupy, and to promote investments in home improvement, business activities and agricultural productivity. The project is being implemented by international consultancies.

The primary focus of the project is to resolve legislative and administrative issues relating to the operation of two separate registries dealing with immovable properties. The current duplication creates confusion, inefficiency, and clearly demonstrates

the need for legal reform. The second major challenge is to modernize the technical environment by establishing a web-based open registration system. The third challenge is to simplify the registration procedures and to make registrations offices more responsive, more efficient and much more client oriented.

The project aims to ensure that real estate will become a secure source of collateral, and significantly improve the land market. It is also envisaged that the project will bring benefits to urban planners, service providers and investors.

Given the currently problematic organization of legal rights for real estate, other types of properties could provide the necessary underlying security (collateral) for much needed credit. Access to development finance, which practically speaking does not exist in Mongolia, may soon appear. This will be facilitated if it is recognized in Mongolia that movable property owned by any citizen or business can also serve as collateral, thus increasing enormously the availability of affordable finance. So far the area of secured finance has not been on the agenda of the donor organization in any serious fashion. As rural development is now on the top of the agendas of the international donor organizations and the Mongolian government, it remains to be seen whether access to finance - the "oxygen" of economic development- will finally be given the attention it deserves.

With appropriate funding and high level support, the goals of property registration can be achieved. The benefits for the population will be significant if their properties, including their movables, can form the capital base envisaged 10 years ago.

DIADEM - EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON REAL ESTATE (IMMOVABLE PROPERTY) IN CONNECTION WITH REAL PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS, BY JAKOB HØJGAARD-GERAAE



Miljøministeriet
Kort & Matrikelstyrelsen

The Danish Enterprise and Construction Agency under the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs, together with other

agencies, is in the midst of developing a modern service to ensure that information useful for real estate (immovable property) transactions is disseminated in a safe, quick and inexpensive way. Denmark is well prepared for the task on the technical side but facing organisational challenges in implementing the project.



MR. JAKOB HØJGAARD-GERAAE IS WORKING AS PROJECT-MANAGER AT THE DANISH NATIONAL SURVEY AND CADASTRE.

Each year, approximately 100,000 real estate transactions are carried out in Denmark. All of them need information such as the official valuation of the real estate, soil contamination, and other information that could influence the value and usability of the real estate transacted.

Today the majority of information is collected in an analogue paper format by the municipalities. The municipalities are obliged to provide the information requested by citizens or real estate agents and a large resource is required to carry out the task, which involves digital and manual searches from different sources.



The project "DIADEM" (Digital Access to Information about real estate) is a way to streamline the gathering of information on real estate. The project is part of the Government's initiative "Better and cheaper real estate transactions" that started in 2005. It is also consistent with the Danish e-Government strategy. The Danish Enterprise and Construction Agency is heading the project, which involves the participation of agencies from different ministries.

The result of the project will be a service that will provide easy access – one-stop-shopping – to real estate information via an internet portal. The portal will be operated by all users through a web interface. The service will also provide system-to-system solutions. It is expected that the majority of requests will come through these solutions. Initially, there will be digital access to more than 50 different types of information/data on real estate. Access to the service requires digital signature and will cost approximately DKK 300 (€40). Information provided by the service will be the same for all types of users.

Data for DIADEM will be derived from a wide range of data providers. This will require streamlining of the data format to ensure secure recognition and dissemination of information. Experience, however, shows that technical challenges are not causing major setbacks. The Danish public administration is geared towards digital solutions.

However, organisational structures and the related division of responsibilities in the Danish public administration, and the different financing models appear to be major challenges for a project like DIADEM. The legislation covering payment for data and rights-related restrictions on data use or disclosure to third parties can also be a problem for government agencies in trying to reach agreements on the use of data. This constitutes a barrier for the dissemination of information/data.

The Danish public administration is well advanced in many Information Technology (IT) areas. The IT-projects that it has already implemented could serve as inspiration to other organisations. Much has been digitised in the last decade by individual authorities and with clear gains. With a well planned structure, many benefits could be reaped in digitisation of services across public authorities. Therefore, it is important to focus on the organisational structures and governance options in order to create successful solutions.

UNECE WORKSHOP ON CADASTRAL AND REAL ESTATE REGISTRATION SYSTEMS: ECONOMIC INFORMATION FOR REAL ESTATE MARKETS IN THE UNECE REGION

Comprehensive, accurate and detailed economic information about the real estate sector is a valuable tool for the economic choices of government authorities, private investors and consumers. This was one of the main messages of the workshop on "Cadastral and Real

Estate Registration Systems: Economic Information for Real Estate Markets in the UNECE region”, which was held in Rome on 5-6 May 2011.

Co-organized by the Agenzia del Territorio, Italy and the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration, the event brought together more than 100 participants representing government institutions, the private sector, academia and international organizations.

The main objective of the workshop was to analyze the potential of government and private initiatives to produce, manage and share economic knowledge on real estate based on different national experiences. In the subsequent discussions, speakers and participants agreed that the world economic crisis has provided new evidence that the real estate sector plays a significant role in underpinning the national economies of the UNECE region. In this regard, cadastral and real estate registration systems are playing a more and more essential role in the development of well functioning housing markets. Academic and professional experts and policymakers from the UNECE region shared their experiences and insights on opportunities for improving the sector's performance, and identified new challenges to be addressed in this area. Such challenges include property valuation and taxation, monitoring of real estate markets and land administration, e-land administration and 3D cadastre systems.

The participants of the workshop highlighted the following conclusions:

- A suitable legal, institutional and technical framework is a prerequisite for real estate market transparency;
- Accurate and detailed economic information about the real estate sector is a valuable tool for the economic choices of government authorities, private investors and consumers, as well as for professional training of experts;
- Land administration services should be effective and customer oriented, and institutions should be prepared for more registration requests;
- Multi-stakeholder involvement is fundamental for the good functioning of real estate markets.

In general, a holistic approach was recommended for the development of the real estate economy at national and international levels, and the principles and guidelines contained in the UNECE Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets were reaffirmed as relevant and efficient in order to stabilize the market and to help member States in the implementation of legislative and institutional reforms.

To download the publication Policy Framework for Sustainable Real Estate Markets: Principles and Guidance for the Development of a Country's Real Estate Sector, please access the following link: <http://unece.org/hlm/documents/Publications/policy.framework.e.pdf>

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OUTCOME OF THE 7TH SESSION OF UNECE'S WORKING PARTY ON LAND ADMINISTRATION

The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) held its seventh session in Geneva on 30 June and 1 July, 2011. During the meetings, Member States:

- Released the publication of a study on the challenges of fraud to land administration institution;
- Stressed the importance of the study on the challenges of fraud and agreed to continue to promote activities on this topic in its programme of work, including the organization of workshops, and approved the proposal from Sweden to organize a workshop in 2013 on the topic of identification rules for registration purposes;
- Approved the organization of a workshop offered by the delegation of The United Kingdom (October 2012), and suggested that the following topics to be discussed: 1) land and land use disputes and 2) the role of land management policies in promoting sustainable real estate market;
- Stressed the importance of the issue of informal settlements and security of land tenure, agreed to continue to promote activities on this topic in its programme of work, and approved the proposal from the delegation of Greece to organize a workshop on this topic.
- Approved the undertaking of a benchmarking study, and:
 - Approved the establishment of a taskforce for the study comprised of representatives from Croatia, Denmark, Germany and Ireland;
 - Accepted the offer of the delegation of Ireland to provide staff resources and to take the lead in conducting the study;
 - Approved distribution of the questionnaires to Governments in the UNECE region along with the provision of a set of 'example replies' to the questionnaires;
- Welcomed the proposal by the Republic of Moldova to undertake a country profile study, which would include a chapter on land administration;
- Welcomed the main findings of the evaluation of REM AG and the overview of the activities of WPLA;
- Reviewed and endorsed the new Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) and of the Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM).

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LAUNCHING OF THE STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES OF FRAUD TO LAND ADMINISTRATION INSTITUTIONS

Over recent decades, many countries in the UNECE region have successfully converted their land registration and real estate records from large collections of paper documents into computerized forms that could be accessed via the Internet.

Many land administration authorities provide their services through online systems. The use of electronic technology to store and process land registration data has become the norm in many countries throughout the UNECE region. The implementation of e-government instruments such as e-cadastres, e-registers and e-conveyancing ensures transparency and provides easy access to land information and real estate for the general public.

However, along with the opportunities brought by the introduction of these new systems, they also present a different set of challenges for fraud prevention. The introduction of online services and hence, the electronic availability of information on land and real estate (and related ownership) information can be regarded as a factor in the increase in registration fraud.

The Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) has discussed the issue of fraudulent use of electronic land-registration data and related incidents of identity theft and identified the need to have strategies in place to guard against the risk of fraud.

The Study on the Challenges of Fraud to Land Administration Institutions is based on the analysis of surveys on online access to land-registration information that were distributed among UNECE member States after the sixth session. The questionnaire aimed to collect information on current practices by authorities in the UNECE region to monitor, prevent and combat fraud in the area of land administration.

This publication presents the results and the conclusions drawn from the survey. It elaborates on the questionnaire's findings in three main areas: accessibility of systems, experience of fraud, and countermeasures. The study consolidates good practices in the detection and prevention of fraud in land registration systems in UNECE countries and, in particular, the protection of information against misuse by fraudsters.

The pooling of this information constitutes an important tool to aid in the understanding and prevention of registration fraud. The study emphasizes the need to create awareness in both the public and staff to create an anti-fraud culture.

Finally, this work will help many land administration authorities to identify and tackle vulnerabilities in their e-systems and contribute to the joint efforts of practitioners, law enforcement agencies and policymakers to protect information against misuse by fraudsters in the UNECE region.

The publication was launched as a bi-lingual booklet at the seventh session of the WPLA. The Working Party acknowledged the great value of this publication and expressed their special thanks to the representatives of Her Majesty's Land Registry of England and Wales (HMLR) for their great contribution as lead agency in the

preparation of this study and for their generous contribution to printing this study and making it available as a publication.

To download the Fraud Study, please access the following link: <http://live.unece.org/index.php?id=24802>

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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LAND ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNECE REGION

Finding harmonized standards to measure the quality and efficiency of existing public institutions regulating land and real estate is crucial for improving land administration in the UNECE region. A key management tool for assessing the quality of a country's land administration is the benchmarking of land administration and cadastral systems, as well as the use of performance indicators.

Benchmarking plays an important role in improving public sector performance. A number of studies and reports have been undertaken which define and compare various aspects of land registration and administration. These include the Multilingual Thesaurus on Land Tenure of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Glossary of Terms for the European Land Information Service (EULIS) as well as the UNECE Land Administration Guidelines and the UNECE Inventory of Land Administration Systems in Europe and North America.

Land registration, land administration and mapping services involve organizations from the public and the private sector in different national jurisdictions. Authorities often operate through partnerships with the private sector, outsourcing or providing direct access to consumers. Nevertheless, control and regulation of land administration falls within the sphere of the public sector and its operation is generally a public sector function within the UNECE region.

Benchmarking of systems could provide a framework for improvement and technological innovation amongst land administration institutions resulting in enhanced services for citizens.

During its seventh session in June 2011, the Working Party on Land Administration approved the idea of conducting a study to establish benchmarks for land administration systems in the UNECE region. The representatives of UNECE member States agreed that undertaking the study would contribute to evaluating economic performance, stimulating innovation, converging information and registration systems, and promoting universal standards of good land administration.

The purpose of the study, to be carried out in 2011-2012, is to undertake a qualitative analysis of land administration, land registration and mapping systems in UNECE countries.

The study will be based on member States' responses to two questionnaires containing (a) questions on qualitative aspects of land administration systems and (b) an updated version of the questions contained in the UNECE publication "Inventory of land administration systems in Europe and North America" (2005).



The study will be the first step in a process that could result in the harmonized measurement of benchmarks for land administration, land-registration and mapping systems among all UNECE member States, taking into account subregional and national institutional contexts.

UNECE EXPLORES THE POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

To achieve the goals of ensuring adequate choice of housing, improved energy efficiency and environmental soundness of dwellings, housing should be considered a priority for national development agendas. This was one of the important messages highlighted by the participants of the second meeting of the UNECE Working Group on a possible legally binding instrument on housing in the UNECE region, which was held in Geneva on 5 and 6 July 2011.

The Working Group was established by the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management to analyse the potential added value, as well as any advantages and drawbacks of a possible UNECE-wide legal instrument on affordable, healthy and ecological housing.

More than 35 experts representing 30 countries from the UNECE region participated in the second meeting of the Working Group. They exchanged views on those housing issues that could be of shared interest to all member States in the region, highlighted their countries' experience and needs in the area of affordable, healthy and ecological housing, and explored the potential added value of a possible UNECE Framework Convention that could provide guidance for the development of national housing strategies. Topics discussed included the feasibility, possible role and implications of a UNECE-wide instrument on housing, including its possible contribution to addressing policy challenges in the housing sector within the region. Discussions in the Working Group highlighted different economic realities in UNECE member countries and reflected varied views regarding both the housing priorities across the region and the scope of a possible Framework Convention.

Recommendations of the Working Group will be forwarded to the 72nd Session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management for its consideration.

For more information about the Working Group, its Terms of Reference and reports of its meetings, please visit the following web page: <http://www.unece.org/hlm/wgaheh/welcome.htm>

WHAT'S NEW:

AT THE SECRETARIAT:

OUR NEW STAFF



Silke Handley joined the Housing and Land Management Team of the TSLM Division at UNECE in May 2011. Silke is a specialist on land and housing issues related to countries with economies in transition of the UNECE region. She has extensive experience in this domain as an academic researcher and through her work for NGOs and UN agencies in the countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, where

she worked on such topics as land reform, land tenure, land disputes, traditional housing, as well as social housing in urban and rural settings. Moreover, she also devoted her attention to issues around migration flows and natural disasters. Silke speaks a number of languages including Russian, Tajik and Nepali. She recently moved to Geneva together with her family after several years living in the countries of Central Asia and Nepal.

OUR NEW INTERNS

Ida Jaarvik Hetland started her internship with the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit on July 4th and will stay for two months. Ida is assisting with activities for the Country Profiles of the Housing Sector and the preparation of upcoming workshops and the 72nd Session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management.



Ida is Norwegian but has most of her academic background from abroad. She did a BSc in finance in England and an MBA in Norway/South Africa. Currently, she is working on her second master's degree in international political development at New York University. Ida was previously an intern with Amnesty International where she coordinated a national project on the MDGs. Ida has done fieldwork in different countries, but after a longer stay in Guatemala she founded her own NGO there last year. Ida will return to the United States in September after finishing her internship with the UNECE.

Elena Evteeva comes from the Russian Federation and started her 5-month internship with the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit in May 2011. She is assisting with the activities for the Country Profile studies, upcoming workshops and has assisted in the preparations for the recently concluded 7th Session of the Working Party on Land Administration and the Second meeting of the Working Group on a Possible Legally Binding Instrument on Affordable, Healthy and Ecological Housing in the UNECE Region. She is also involved in the Sustainable Energy Division and Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division's inter-divisional cooperation activity on energy efficient housing.



and Sustainable Land Management Division's inter-divisional cooperation activity on energy efficient housing.

After completing her master's degree in International Economic Relations at Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Russia (MGIMO University Moscow, Russia), she worked at the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Russian Federation in the Financial Policy department. Elena's master dissertation "The Role of Credit Rating Agencies in the Financial Markets" is closely related to her responsibilities at the Ministry.

Elena speaks three languages: Russian, English and French. She has a Certificate in Sustainable Complex Development and Green Building awarded by Ernst&Young. As a second year PhD candidate, Elena studies energy policy and security. With this background, she is looking forward to starting her career in the energy sector and in an international organization environment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

UNECE WORKING PARTY ON LAND ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP "LAND ADMINISTRATION IN A NETWORKED SOCIETY" AMSTERDAM, 12-15 OCTOBER 2011

The Cadastre Land Registry and Mapping Agency of the Netherlands and the UNECE have the pleasure to announce the WPLA workshop "Land Administration in a Networked Society". The workshop will take place from 12-15 October 2011 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Spoken languages at the workshop will be English and Russian.

The main goal of the workshop will be to discuss the changes land registry and cadastre organizations face in a networked society and the consequences for land registry and cadastre organizations. The theme is divided into four subthemes.

1) Changing role and responsibilities of organizations involved in land administration

Land registry and cadastre organizations are facing changes in society. They are becoming increasingly partners in the information chain. What does that mean for the primary process and the role and attitude of society?

2) Land Administration as a cornerstone for implementing e-Government

E-government is a development well under way in many countries. Can we consider e-land administration as a building block for establishing e-government and what are the best practices in various countries?

3) 3D cadastre: a new information source for society

Most of real estate registrations and maps have long been 2D-oriented. In a more complex landscape of multi-story buildings, civil work infrastructures, sub-surface networks, utilities, is a 3D cadastre a must...? What other potential users of 3D cadastral information can be serviced?

4) Integrated solutions in land administration for improved decision making

Modern techniques allow for more integrated and creative information products. New developments like cloud-sourcing and location-based services enable smart services to support decision making by governmental bodies, industries and private citizens. What are the most promising applications?

For further information please refer to the website:
<http://www.wplaamsterdam.com/>

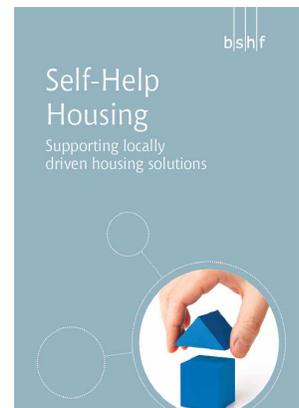
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SELF-HELP HOUSING - SUPPORTING LOCALLY DRIVEN HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Self-help housing involves local community groups bringing empty properties back into use. On top of providing an additional source of housing from empty properties, self-help housing can also create

work and training opportunities, build local communities and support neighbourhood regeneration.

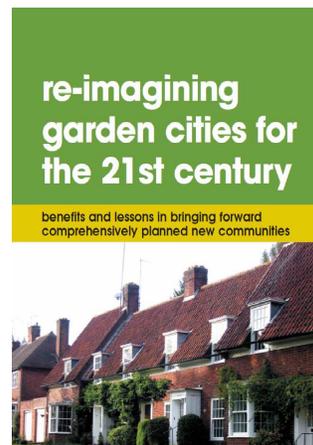
The foundation has just published a report that looks at how self-help housing could play a greater role in the United Kingdom. The report 'Self-Help Housing: Supporting locally driven housing solutions' is based on a Consultation that BSHP co-ordinated at St George's House, Windsor Castle, and research led by Professor David Mullins of the Third Sector Research Centre. The Consultation brought together representatives from groups undertaking self-help housing, academia, trade bodies, think tanks and government departments.



This report offers recommendations – for governments, charitable trusts, local authorities and others – which could help self-help housing to play a greater role. These recommendations come at a time when major changes in housing policy are being introduced, providing a real opportunity for them to be implemented.

For further information you may contact:
Ms. Stephanie Bamford
Trustee, Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF)

RE-IMAGINING GARDEN CITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY - BENEFITS AND LESSONS IN BRINGING FORWARD COMPREHENSIVELY PLANNED NEW COMMUNITIES



Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City pioneers have left Britain with an impressive legacy: from the world renowned Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities to the countless places inspired by them, both in the UK and abroad; everything from Garden Suburbs to the post-war New Towns programme. Today, we still face the primary challenges confronted by Howard and his followers: meeting our housing shortage, generating jobs and creating beautiful and inclusive places. Moreover, we are also

confronted by new challenges from globalized markets and the urgent need to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Although it has been more than 40 years since the last New Town was designated, the Town and Country Planning Association believe that new comprehensively planned sustainable communities have a powerful contribution to make to Britain's future. They deliver housing, but also create jobs. They provide the opportunity and the economies of scale to innovate and create truly high-quality places. New communities also offer a powerful prospect to put in place new governance structures that put people at the heart of developing new communities.

The report aims to bring together the pragmatic lessons of the Garden Cities and New Towns in taking forward new, large-scale communities. It seeks to examine these lessons in the context of the UK Government's planning reform agenda to give people greater power over the places in which they live, and in the context of the tough financial circumstances faced by both the public and private sectors.

It seeks to identify a way to move forward into a new era of building attractive, resilient and sustainable places. Where better to start this journey than to rediscover and re-imagine the high-quality, collaborative and pioneering spirit of the Garden Cities for the 21st century; exploring further public-private partnerships and new governance structures that connect people and planning.

For more information you may consult: [Town and Country Planning Association](#),

or contact:

Ms. Stephanie Bamford

Trustee, Building and Social Housing Foundation ([BSHF](#))

A NOTE ON THE COORDINATOR:



Inputs to this newsletter are coordinated by Ms. Chun-Lu Hsieh. You may contact her at chunlu.hsieh@unece.org

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