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DRONES FOR LAND CLARIFICATION AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Modernising land governance in the
Democratic Republic of the Congo

FINAL

Project overview

What is the problem?

Without formalised land and property rights, poor rural communities in the outskirts of Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), face risks of tenure insecurity, conflict, and land grabbing as the megacity of nearly 15 million people expands.

Where does it occur?

Kasangulu, a small city 35 km from Kinshasa, DRC

Who does it affect?

Primarily poor farmers in vulnerable communities

What are the causes?

The absence of land data needed to produce official title documents, combined with outdated land management tools and the lack of spaces for dialogue between local land stakeholders – especially between the land authority and the communities – are aggravating the constant threat of land grabbing and land conflicts for poor farmers who lack formal land titles for their properties.

This further weakens the situation for women, often with large families, who are the main breadwinners.

Approach

The IRDAC SARL project introduces these major innovations:

1. *The establishment of a space for participatory multi-stakeholder dialogue.* This has enabled various stakeholders concerned by land issues in Kasangulu (communities, concessionaires, customary and traditional leaders, and the land authority) to respond to land governance challenges and to propose joint solutions to the authorities.
2. *The integration of new geographic information technologies including civilian drones, GIS and webmapping tools into DRC's land management system.* This has helped modernise the system and formalise land and property rights by facilitating the granting of formal land titles to vulnerable communities represented by *Réseau des Associations de Développement de Kasangulu – RADEKAS* [Network of Development Associations of Kasangulu]. To achieve this, IRDAC SARL helped the land administration digitise the land registry. This required prior technical training of young people from RADEKAS member households and land agents.
3. *Knowledge sharing on the benefits of land titles in inclusive development.* Women received guidance and support on the potential for using their secure land titles to obtain microcredit to launch future income-generating activities for their households, with the objective of tackling poverty.

Achievements

- **Creation of a complete land registry plan of four target districts** (Ngambi, Luzamba, Manoka and Mvula Nene), covering 622,000 ha.
- **Extraction of 4,824 plots from the drone's aerial (orthomosaic) images:** 3,883 in the target districts and 941 in neighbouring districts.
- **Measurement and demarcation of a 98-plot sample** of RADEKAS members' land on the land registry plan.
- **Implementation of the customised app, Irdac CAD_CollectApp**, a smart filter that extracts individual, personalised land data from the land registry database that can then be provided to land registry services for use in allocating official land titles.
- **Training on data collection using drones and topographical surveys** for 8 young men and 6 women from RADEKAS households, 5 Kasangulu district land registry agents, a Congolese National Police officer, 9 IRDAC trainees and 2 coordinators.
- **Establishment of a space for participatory multi-stakeholder dialogue** to occur.
- **Sharing women's stories about the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on precarious household livelihoods** to raise awareness on the need to empower women through facilitating secure land tenure, enabling access to microcredit and building resiliency.
- **Presentation of project results** during a provincial closing session in Kasangulu and during meetings with property and land authorities, the national police, National Commission for Land Reform, Ministry of Housing and Town Planning, and Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture, Fishing and Farming. The project received positive feedback from the Secretary-General for Land Affairs.

Testimonies

"The multi-stakeholder dialogue enabled me to meet and exchange views for the very first time with the Registrar of Real Estate Titles (CTI), the No. 1 land service in the Registration Division of Kasangulu." *Madiampamba, President of the customary chiefs of the Kasangulu territory*

"The drones facilitate the real-time collection and rapid updating of land data, compared with traditional methods." *Boniface Makando Ngu, Director of Land Affairs*

Lessons learned

- The IRDAC SARL Kasangulu pilot project demonstrates that **combining the tools of participatory dialogue between land tenure stakeholders with the use of innovative digital technologies can facilitate the process of securing informal land rights.**
- **The digitisation of the land registry is a first step for helping residents to secure their property and informal land rights and for preventing possible conflicts.**
- **Building capacity in land administration and modernising services are also crucial for helping people secure property rights.** Land registry services are essential for documenting claims, archiving records, and granting titles needed to secure land rights for vulnerable communities and to help reduce the issue of land grabbing.
- **A secure land title alone is not enough to tackle poverty.** Empowering women, as the main breadwinners and defenders of household food security, with additional mechanisms for improving livelihoods is a sustainable strategy for enhancing the value of acquired land ownership for the benefit of the family economy.
- **Plan to capitalise on experience:** Presenting the positive results of the pilot project is not enough. An advocacy, monitoring and evaluation strategy will be needed pending the effective integration of the project's achievements into national land management instruments.



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