



## Land administration for housing production: An approach for assessment



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### ABSTRACT

The integration of land administration processes and the collaboration of land agencies are considered essential for the effective delivery of developable land for housing production. The research upon which this paper is based investigates the interrelationship across land administration functions and between different levels of government in the management and delivery of land for housing production. It focuses on land management policies, land administration processes, and spatial data infrastructure, as they are related to housing production. The study starts from the premise that inadequate integration across land administration functions and between different levels of government impedes land delivery for housing production. Against this background, an assessment framework is proposed as a tool to assess the levels of integration. The parameters for the development of the framework are based on the extensive literature of past and present initiatives which focused on enhancing inter-agency collaboration. It is also supported by interviews with land agencies in the case study areas – Australia and Nigeria – to aggregate the common themes as observed in the literature. The assessment framework was evaluated through selected government departments and agencies. With this approach, the assessment framework develops into the land administration integration assessment matrix. The key consideration of the matrix is to assess the depth of inter-agency relationship ranging from information sharing to consultation, coordination of activities, joint management, partnership arrangement and formal merger of organisations.

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### Introduction

Many factors contribute to the adequate production of housing. Among these are the three fundamental factors of production: land, labour and capital. Closely related to these are technological availability, or manufactured capital: this affects the type of labour used and the level of capital outlay (Agunbiade et al., 2013a). Also of importance is the method for making developable land available: several studies have underscored the importance of land management in the delivery of developable land (Augustinus, 2009; Barker, 2004, 2006; Cheshire, 2009; Cox, 2011; Eicher, 2008; Goodman et al., 2010a; Grimes, 2007; Kelly et al., 2011; Mabogunje, 2009; Mildner, 2009). One of the main propositions of this paper is that adequate and affordable housing can only be produced when strategies are put in place to support appropriate delivery of developable land. In many country contexts, putting such strategies in place is particularly challenging in the face of the unwilling

cooperative attitudes of different departments and agencies involved in land provision.

Against this background, this paper explores components of land management: land management *policies*, land administration *processes* and spatial *data* infrastructures. The objective is to determine how these three components are integrated among agencies. It is important to consider the three elements as interrelated chain of events. In this regard, a chain is as strong as its weakest link. The primary aim is to develop a framework that will assist in the identification of weak links.

Henceforth, the framework is referred to as the *Integration Assessment Framework*. The theoretical underpinnings are derived from Agunbiade et al's (2013) approach for understanding the interaction of land administration and housing production, or The Integration Assessment Framework. This earlier framework provides a platform to assess the interaction of land administration processes and the collaboration of agencies in the management of land for housing production. The primary goal is to provide an objective evaluation of the collaborative efforts across land administration functions and between different levels of government. This helps to clarify integration objectives, identify current arrangements, and define future opportunities for improved integration. It

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is also to assist, as a framework, in determining the current level of integration and identifying specific areas for improvement.

Past efforts at promoting integration are mostly conceptual as revealed in the works of: Mooney and Grant (1997), Groot and McLaughlin (2000), Steudler (2004), and Grus et al. (2007). Others are found to concentrate on one component of land administration as exemplified by the works of: Kalantari (2008), Bennett (2007), and Rajabifard (2007). There exists relatively few works focusing on how the three components are integrated (Agunbiade, 2012).

This paper first presents the broad conceptual issues relating to collaboration and then gives a description of the case study areas. This leads to a discussion of the research methods. The focus then moves to results: the development of the inter-agency integration assessment framework. Specifically, this involves: identification and description of broad integration aspects; identification and classification of significant parameters; and the corresponding description of measurement variables through the aggregation of themes from the synthesis of different approaches. The concluding sections focuses on the refinement of parameters, which later culminates into the development of integration assessment matrix.

### Conceptual and theoretical issues

Integration is conceived here as an act or instance of interactively harmonising land administration functions and processes. Collaboration is considered as the willingness of agencies to *constructively explore* differences in their functions and processes. The thesis is that if collaboration is enhanced across land administration functions, and between different levels of government, it has the potential to promote efficiency among agencies and reduce time and cost for land delivery. This overview draws on different perspectives drawn from available literature (Brown and Keast, 2003; Davis, 1995; Geddes, 2000; O'Flynn, 2009; Pollitt, 2003) that relates to inter-agency integration and collaboration.

At a conceptual level, it is important to distinguish the meaning of *cooperation* and *coordination* from *collaboration*. Mulford and Rogers (1982) observed that *cooperation* is generally seen as less formal, involving less resources and less threatening as the organisational goals are not compromised. Conversely, *coordination* requires more formal rules, joint goals, commitment to resources and as a result it is considered to pose a threat to autonomy. However, collaboration between organisations is seen as an extension and/or the inclusion of both cooperation and coordination. Gray (1989, p. 5) describes collaboration as: *'the process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions beyond their own limited vision of what is possible'*. In this regard, collaboration is considered a powerful strategy or tool for delivering efficient and effective land governance for housing production.

Essentially there are two perspectives from the previous studies on collaboration (Cumbers et al., 2003; Dredge, 2006; Hoatson and Egan, 2001; Linden, 2002; Mahjabeen et al., 2008) (Reddel, 2004). On the one hand are those in support of collaboration as being a panacea for delivering efficient and effective governance. On the other hand are the opposing views that collaboration does not have the capacity to solve most policy problems. However, there appears sufficient reason to align with the presupposition that collaboration has capacity to facilitate better processes and thus deliver better results. First, it is assumed that collaboration can improve the policy process regarding land management and generate better outcomes. Second, collaboration can overcome problems with the silo structure of land administration functions. Third, it can aid the decision makers in developing solutions to policy problems consistent with the views of Entwistle and Martin (2005), Linden (2002), Jackson (2003), and Shergold (2008). This is, however, set within

the perspective that collaboration should not be viewed as a linear interaction. It should provide a learning process.

Collaboration is central to contemporary theories on land administration and land management. For example, Enemark et al. (2005) 'land management paradigm' advocates the use of land administration as a means of achieving sustainable development by moving beyond discrete administrative functions of mapping, cadastral surveying, and land registration (Williamson et al., 2010) to a more collaborative approach. The paradigm suggests the adoption of collaboration strategies for the development of integrated land administration. From this perspective, land tenure, value, use and development are essential functions of land administration and should be well integrated.

Based on the above theory and paradigm, the main interest now is to enable assessment of the interactions within and between these land administration functions, in order to mediate effective production of housing. From this viewpoint, the traditional but narrow focus of land administration centring on cadastral activities in relation to land tenure and land information management is found not to be adequate and thus not consistent with the modern realities of land management (Agunbiade, 2012).

### The research approach and methods

To develop an integration assessment framework for analysing the level of integration across land administration and between different levels of government; a three-stage research method was developed. The design was based on the concept of triangulation (Bryman, 2004). This allows the articulation of issues and concept from a number of independent but interrelated perspectives. Overall, the study was qualitative in nature and involved comparison of existing viewpoints, empirical issues and theories. The fundamental principles of these perspectives provided the bases for developing context for the development of the assessment framework.

The first step was the use of land administration paradigm to provide theoretical structure for the subsequent assessment framework. This provided basis for the identification of the integration areas and guided the structuring and the development of the integration assessment parameters.

The second step involved contextualising different viewpoints offered through existing knowledge, in parallel with the structured interviews to generate parameters for the assessments framework. In this regard, the integration assessment framework is structured in the context of understanding the identification of efficient and effective interactions and areas where there are challenges. The intention being to develop parameters for assessment as well as indicators to measure levels of integration.

Case studies were selected to reflect federated systems of government that operate at different levels (federal or national, states or territories and local or counties). The case study approach was used to establish sufficient grounds and provided context for the development of the assessment of the parameters for the integration. Case studies were selected from both developing and developing contexts, Australia and Nigeria, to differentiate across different levels of government, jurisdictions, and socio-economic contexts.

A sample of 28 local councils was selected from a universe of eighty-one local councils in Victoria, a state of Australia. The selection was purposely limited only to all the local governments in Metropolitan Melbourne. Of these, 26 out of 28 local councils in Melbourne responded to the pre-survey letters and provided contact details as requested. These also included 12 State and 5 Federal departments and units that provided useful responses.

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