AN INNOVATIVE LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR REGISTERING TENURE RIGHTS OF THE URBAN POOR IN NAMIBIA

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the high rate of urbanization, Namibia has been struggling with pressing land tenure challenges such as providing security and services for recently urbanized families.

To address these challenges, the government conceived the Flexible Land Tenure System (FLTS) to cater for low-income groups in urban areas.

Overview of Onyika Settlement (© GIZ)

The FLT regulations, passed in 2018, support the establishment of a Computer-Based Flexible Land Tenure System (CB-FLTS) for managing the starter and land hold title registers.
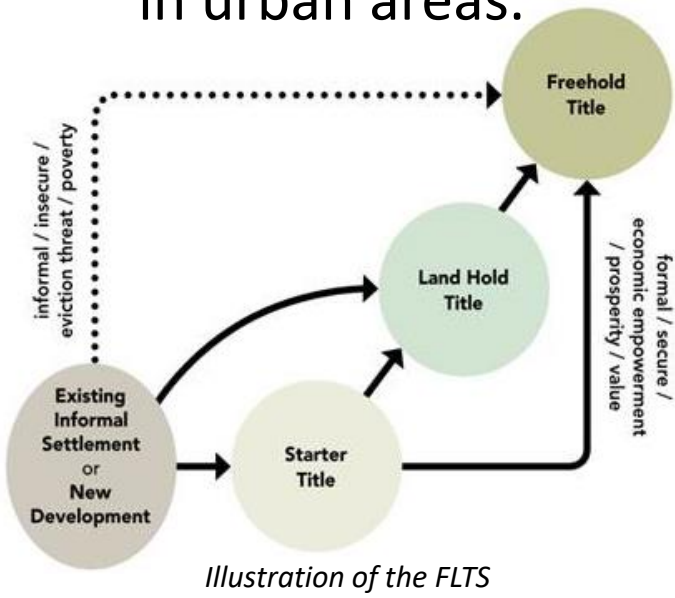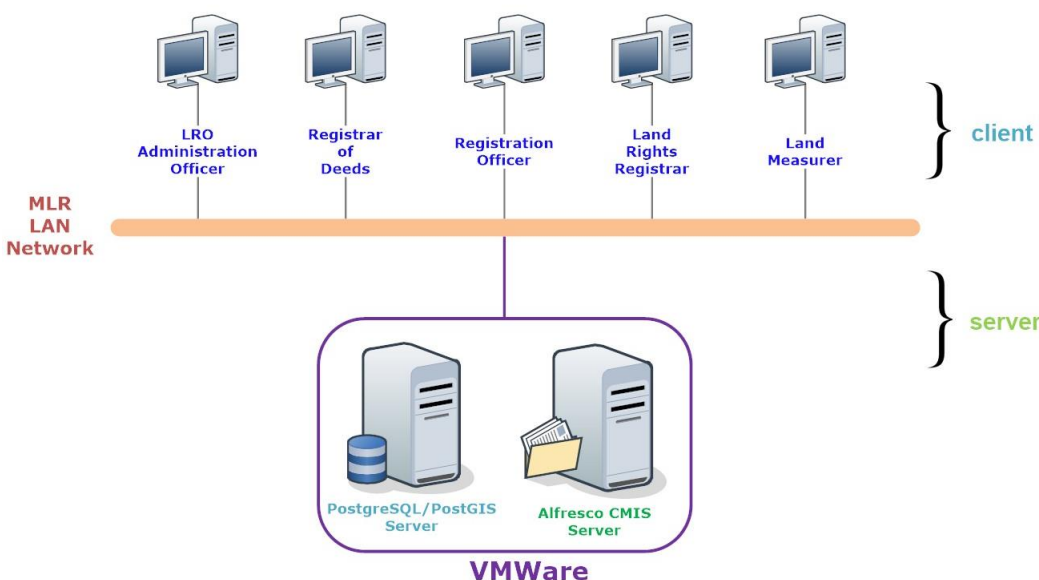

Illustration of the FLTS

MATERIALS | METHODS

The German development cooperation, through the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), has partnered with the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) to support the Ministry of Land Reform (MLR) in the development of the CB-FLTS and its operationalization within the Land Rights Office (LRO).

System architecture of the CB-FLTS

The CB-FLTS, which is based on GLTN's Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) tool, has been developed using a modular approach, with the current scope focusing on initial registration, issuance and archiving of land hold title rights for selected pilot schemes in the country.

A capacity assessment has also been undertaken to establish the current status and preparedness of the LRO, and other relevant departments, in rolling out the CB-FLTS.
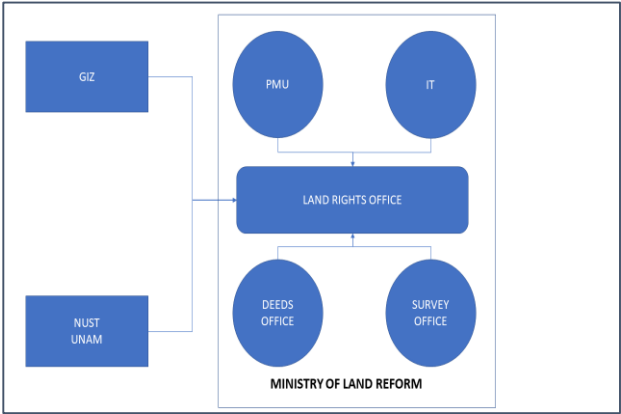

Capacity assessment framework

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESULTS

- Workflows for registering land hold title rights in the CB-FLTS have been developed through a consultative process and incorporated in the pre-release version of the system.
- The system has been tested and reviewed by officers in the Deeds, Surveying and ICT divisions to ensure that it complies with the operational requirements set out in the design specifications.
- The system has been designed to provide a single and intuitive interface for seamlessly managing textual, spatial and scanned document data.
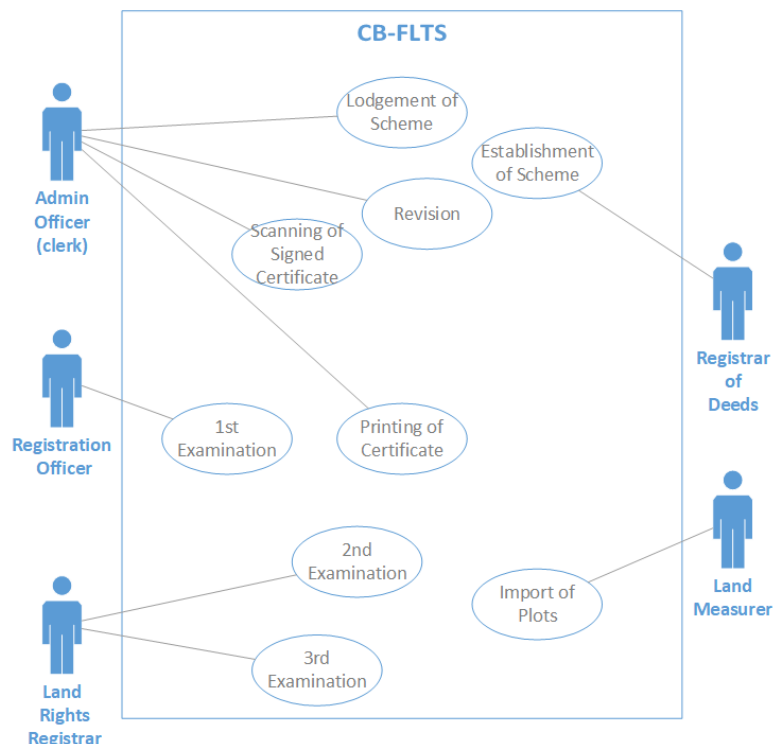
Roles of different officers in registering land hold title rights in the CB-FLTS
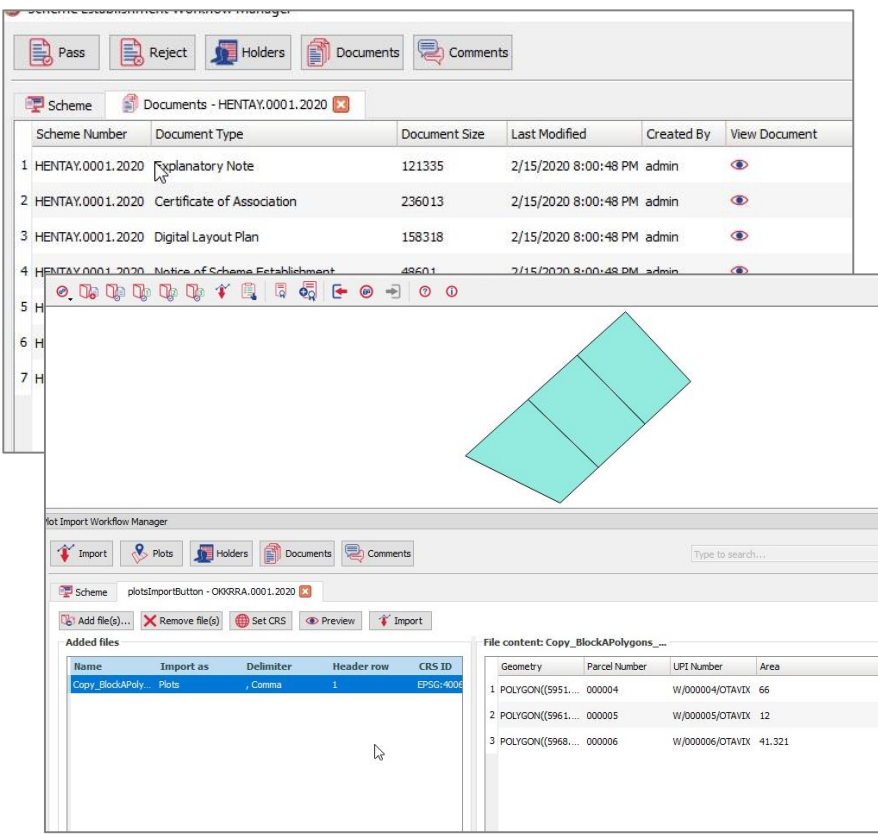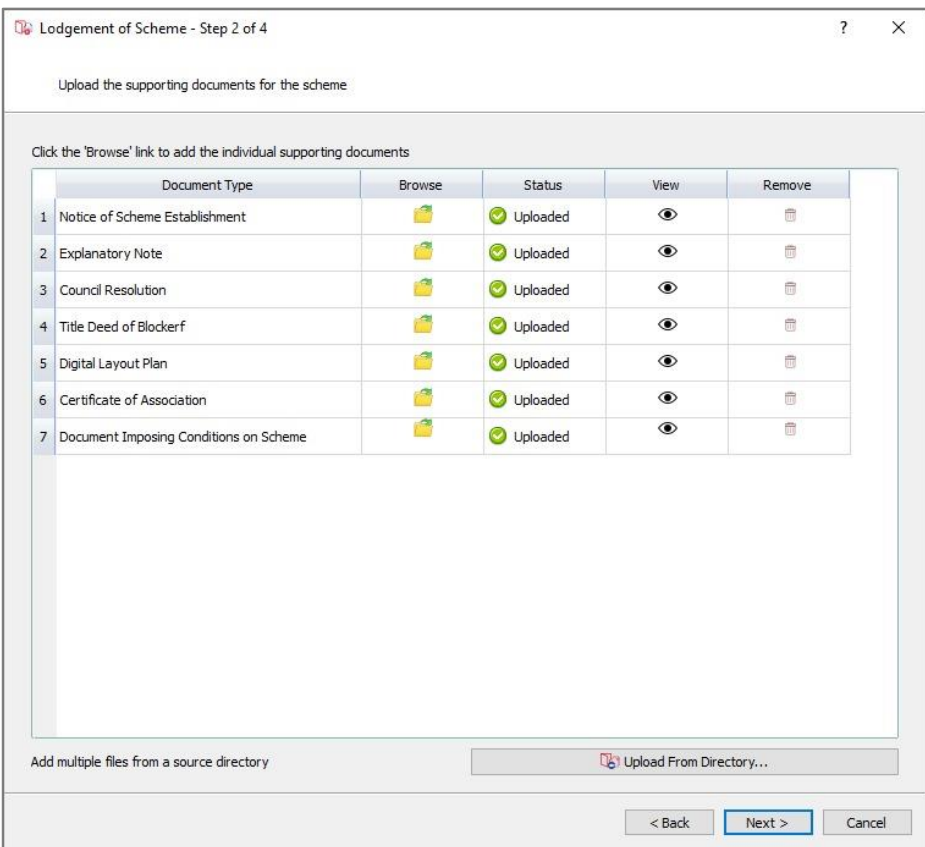
The CB-FLTS provides an intuitive interface for the different workflows

Detailed operational, system administration and end-user manuals have been developed to support the maintenance and use of the system.

The assessment of the LRO has provided key recommendations for inclusion in MLR's capacity development strategy. These include immediate and long-term strategic pathways for strengthening the operationalization of the CB-FLTS.

Individual Capacity
- More strategic sensitization/awareness creation/activities
- More engagement with technical officers especially in the pilot sites
- More hands-on support e.g. in-house consultants
- Capacity-building besides CB-FLTS e.g. basic computing skills for LRO
- Lobbying for proper appointment of skilled officers to LRO
- Inclusive development of workflows on FLTS – and capacity building of all concerned officers

Organizational Capacity
- Enhance partnerships on FLTS (bring University of Namibia and Namibia University of Science and Technology) onboard
- Facilitate more awareness on partners e.g. through the Land and urban conferences
- Continually provide support to the ICT (training, hardware / support)
- Consider more appropriate location (office) for the LRO
- Embrace open source software
- Consider additional staffing (e.g. surveyor for the examination process, in-house consultants for FLTS, training etc.)

CONCLUSIONS

- The use of the STDM tool has proved to be a sound choice as the basis of the CB-FLTS since it is built upon Free and Open Source Software and provides a framework that can be easily customized.
- Support of senior management at the MLR is key for the successful implementation of the CB-FLTS and overall provision of tenure security for informal settler families.
- Future roll-out of the CB-FLTS will need to be supported by a change management strategy that is specific, dynamic and inclusive (i.e. involving MLR, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, municipal authorities, communities in informal settlements, research and training institutions etc.).

Women involvement in community construction projects (© SDI)

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