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Appraisal of the Efficiency of Alis in Sustainable Land Administration Policy in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Land an invaluable asset to mankind, is legally defined as the surface of the earth, all that is above it, and all that may be below. Only recently, the Abia State Government ventured into establishment of Abia Land Information system (ALIS) to help in facilitating the land administration process. The Land Deeds Registry of Abia State is the heart beat of land administration of the State and houses the ALIS project as at now. In this work, the synergy between ALIS and the other departments that are involved in land administration of Abia State is thoroughly examined. Finally, we considered recommendations on how to make ALIS more efficient in the Land Administration Policy of Abia State.

Keywords: ALIS-Abia Land Information System, Land Registration, Land Reform, Abia State, Computerization

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Study

Land Registration generally is described as a system by which matters concerning ownership, possession or other rights in land can be recorded (usually with a government agency or department) to provide evidence of title, facilitate transactions and to prevent unlawful disposal. The information recorded and the protection provided will vary by jurisdiction. The word land includes not only the soil, but everything attached to it, whether by the course of nature, as trees, herbage, and water or by the hand of man, as buildings and fences. Land is the solid material of the earth, whatever may be the ingredients of which it is composed, whether soil, rock or other substances (www.businessdictionary.com/definition/land.html, thelawdictionary.org/lamd).

In common law countries, particularly in jurisdiction in the common wealth of Nations, when replacing the deeds Registration System, titles Registrations are broadly classified into two basic types: The Torrens Title System and the English System, a modified version of the Torrens System.

Abia State was created on 27th August, 1991 out of Old Imo state with the capital at Umuahia. In 1991, the State included parts of present Ebonyi State, precisely Afikpo, Ohazara and Onitsha Uburu Local Government of Ebonyi State. A few years later Ebonyi State was created out of former Abia and Enugu States. With the creation of Abia State in 1991, there was a need to establish the Land Deeds Registry of Abia State (under Section 34 (1) of the Land Instruments Registration Law, Cap 72 Laws of Eastern Nigeria, which is still applicable in Abia State) and was signed into law on 2nd October 1991 by the first Military Administrator of Abia State Group Captain Franks O. Ajobena. It was cited as the Land Registration (Directions) notice 1991. This was domiciled in the Ministry of Lands and Survey of the State with the headquarters at Umuahia, the capital. This was followed by the appointment of Registrars of Deeds (Appointment) Order, 1991 which (till date) places the Director of Lands as the State's Chief Registrar of Deeds with a Principal Registrar of Deeds over the Land Deeds Registry (Unit).

Right from the days of British colonial Government, the Government found it necessary to maintain a Lands Deeds Registry in each of the Regions of the Country. This arrangement was an off shoot of the British Land Deeds Registry and the aim was to create a record base of all land transactions which shows who owns what and where. It also captured changes of ownership at anytime because such changes in ownership must be registered to update the records of the Land Deeds Registry. At that time the present Anambra, Enugu,

Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, Cross-river, Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Bayelsa State where under the Eastern Region with the Deeds Registry located at Enugu the Regional Capital. As the States were created, the records in the Land Deeds Registry were divided and transferred to the resultant States. Thus, in Abia State one will still find records of land transactions that are dated as early as the beginning of the 20th Century which has been transferred first from Enugu to Owerri, then from Owerri to Umuahia Capital of Abia State. At this time, most of the documents had been degraded due to handling and their storage had become more difficult and in fact some lost due to wear and tear.

As the world became more computerized many things, especially documentations were increasingly being computerized, and records that were, hitherto, being kept manually are now being captured electronically. Even in Great Britain, where the Land Deeds Registry started, it has now become computerized. Abia State is not left out. Faced with the difficulty of preserving data in the Land Deeds Registry, the State had no choice other than to join others by introducing a computerized system of documenting information relating to land. This, in a nut shell, is the origin of the establishment of the Abia Land Information System (ALIS) (MLS, 2007).

Another reason for establishment of Abia Land Information System is the challenge posed by the delay in processing of applications for Certificate of Occupancy, Mortgages, Registration of Power of Attorney and generally, registration of all other land instruments.

1.2. Aim and Objectives

This work is aimed at carrying out a review of the processes involved in the electronic registration of landed property in Abia state using Abia Land Information System (ALIS) as a case study. This work will also investigate the challenges in the present system and also offer plausible solutions. This aim was realized based on the following objectives:

- i. To examine the evolution of title registration in Abia State.
- ii. To carry out a study of the processes in ALIS.
- iii. To identify the problems presently faced in using the electronic system called Abia State Land Instrument Registration Process (ALIS).
- iv. To proffer measures to mitigate the identified problems.

1.3. Project Location

Project area is the Lands Department of Ministry of Lands and Survey, Umuahia.

ALIS is located within the land Deeds Registry of the Abia State Ministry of lands and Survey, Umuahia. The location is unique in that a great deal of the information in the Deeds Registry is of importance in the data that is captured in the ALIS project and most of its (ALIS) output were undertaken by the Registry, too. However, it must be pointed out here that this arrangement does not make ALIS a sub unit of the Lands Deeds Registry because of its unique role. ALIS stands alone receiving input from all the technical departments of the Ministry. The fact is also attested to by the posting of an Assistant Chief Lands officer (as Project officer) who reports to the Director of Lands as can be seen below in the organizational Structure.

1.4. The Role of Ministry of Lands and Survey

The Land Use Act of 1978 vested all land within a State on the Governor of the State. The Governor, holding such land on trust for the people allocates land to various individuals for Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial and Residential purposes (www.nigeria-law.org/Land%20Use%20Act.htm). The Ministry of Lands of each State of the Federation is the Governor's instrument for administration and management of land within the State. Here in Abia State, the Ministry is known and called Ministry of Lands and Survey. It is not surprising that these two Departments are brought together as a Ministry because they are twins that are inseparable. While the Survey Department determines the land that is available and where, the Lands Department decides on who keeps and occupies what.

Thus, the role of Ministry of Lands and Survey will involve the following:

- i. Determination of available land for the State through mapping and collection of Geospatial data.
- ii. Representation of such data in graphical form to enable it to be appreciated by all through preparation of charts, maps and survey plans.
- iii. In some cases, sub-dividing these lands in an approved pattern to ease its administration.
- iv. Documentation of the land resources in an orderly manner to ease its administration.
- v. Assisting the Governor of the State in his role of allocating land to various persons for various uses.
- vi. Keeping records of who has what land to avoid confusion and overlapping interests through the instrument of the Land Deeds Registry.
- vii. Ensuring that revenue accruable to Government is collected and paid into Government treasury
- viii. Ensuring that people are adequately compensated for unexhausted interests in the Land when their lands are compulsorily acquired for over-riding public interest.
- ix. Processing all request to Government for allocation of land, etc.

In fact, nearly everything that is done by Government has something to do with Ministry of Lands and Survey as everything happens somewhere. It is the Ministry that determines where everything happens or will happen.

2.1. Land Reform

In 2007 when President Umaru Musa Yar'adua made public the seven-point agenda which he was going to pursue during his tenure in order to ensure Nigeria's ability to develop as a modern economy and industrial nation by the year 2015. The seven-point agenda is as follows; Industrial Reform, Food security, Wealth Creation, Transport Sector, Land Reform, Security and Education.

In explaining the content of the Land Reform Yar'adua's administration had this to say "while hundreds of billions of dollars have been lost through unused Government-owned landed assets, changes in the land laws and the emergence of land reforms will optimize Nigeria's growth through the release of lands for commercialized farming and other large scale business by the private sector. The final result will ensure improvements and boost to the production and wealth creation initiatives."

A number of countries have at one time or the other embarked on Land Reform such as Peru in early 1970, Lithuania in 1920, Japan in 1946, Germany in 1947, Korea in 1948, Thailand in 1941, Egypt in 1956, Portugal in 1974, etc. (Pemberton, 2000).

One common objective of all these efforts by different nations has been to unlock the assets that land offers. Generally speaking, land is a fixed asset and can be used for so many things namely large scale agriculture, industries, real estate development, commercial activities etc. for land as a fixed asset to be useful, owners of land must have a title to it. Here in Nigeria, one can secure loan from a Commercial bank to fund a business venture if a land asset is provided as collateral. This can only be possible if the applicant for loan have a recognized legal title to the land in question by way of Assignment, Certificate of Occupancy, Customary Right of Occupancy, or Land Lease.

The process of obtaining a legal title to land in Nigeria is very difficult because it takes a lot of time and it is also very expensive. Most people (poor people) because of the cost of obtaining it, abandon it altogether and so remain poor and unable to raise funds with the use of their land assets despite there being in possession of large expanses of land (Paul, 2011).

It is because of this difficulty of securing title in Nigeria that propelled the Yar'adua's administration to include Land Reform in his Seven Point Agenda for the development of Nigeria (Ukajiofo and Andrus, 2007 and 2009)..

The Yar' Adua administration, in pursuance of its agenda of Land Reform set up a land Committee to prepare a blue print for its implementation (Gadzama, 2013). The Committee invited all the stakeholders to bring up memoranda for inclusion in the Committee's report. All the State Governments of the Country were invited to the forum and many made contributions. Following the work of the Committee some States of the Federation went back to their State to replicate the effort of the Federal Government in their respective States. This explains why ALIS was born in 2007.

2.2. Processes of Land Acquisition

There are two processes through which a person can acquire a land in Abia State. It is either by direct acquisition through the Native land owners or through allocation of land by Government. In either case, the end result that conveys title to the person is the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) to the person by Government.

When a person acquires land privately through the native land owner, there is usually a Power of Attorney granted to the person by the native land owner.

2.3. Procedure for Processing of C of O (For Privately Acquired Land)

i. The applicant is expected to submit the following documents on application for C of O:

- a. Copy of Registered Power of Attorney (PA)
- b. Current Tax Clearance Certificate (CTC)
- c. Genuine Survey Plan of the Land
- d. Passport Photographs of the Applicant
- e. Completed Application Form (LUD form)
- f. Payment of Assessed Application Fees.

ii. The Land Allocation Advisory Committee (LUAC) office opens a file with a distinctive no (e.g. LUAC/AB/4000/UM) for the applicant. This file will be used for all the processes required before the applicant will either fail or succeed.

iii. The LUAC office will call for inputs of other Departments (i.e. Survey and Town Planning Departments).

iv. When these two departments have given positive recommendations regarding the application, the file containing all the various inputs will now be presented to the LUAC for consideration and recommendation.

v. If the application is approved by LUAC, the file is now passed on to the Land's Department for preparation of appropriate recommendation letter to His Excellency the Governor of Abia State for his consent. Usually, the letter of recommendation to H.E is contained in the applicants file together with drafted Certificate of Occupancy for Governor's signature. In addition to the above, evidence of payment of all the statutory fees must be included in the file for the Governor's perusal before his approval.

vi. When the Certificate of Occupancy is signed by the Governor it will be fully registered in the Land Deeds Registry before the original copy is delivered to the applicant.

2.4. Procedure for Processing of C of O (Government Allocated Land)

i. Whenever there is land for allocation to members of the public, the Government advertises this in a National Daily stating the various categories of Land available and requirements for application by all interested persons.

ii. When all the applications are received, they are passed on to the LUAC for considerations. After its deliberations LUAC will make recommendation to the Governor for his approval.

iii. When Governor approves, the beneficiaries of Government Allocation are then communicated by issuance of Allocation papers. The Allocation papers will outline all the fees that are payable as evidence of acceptance of the offer usually within a specified period.

iv. When an allottee of Government land has paid all the statutory fees and submitted all other documents required it is now the duty of the Government to process the C of O for the land and deliver it to the allottee. The process will include preparation of the C of O by the Lands Department, Preparation of Survey Plan by the Survey Department And finally, the signing of the C of O by the Governor of the State.

2.5. Deeds Registration

This is a land registration system in common law jurisdiction.

2.5.1. What Is Registration of Deeds?

The Land Registry maintains a computerized land register for each property.

Particulars of deeds or other document affecting a property lodged for registration are entered into the land register of that property. On completion of registration, the land registers and imaged copies of the registered documents are open for public search subject to payment of the prescribed fees (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deeds_registration).

2.5.2. How Is the Registration of Document Related to Me as a Member of the Public?

If you enter into a property transaction, you would need to execute a deed or other document. That deed or document will normally be registered with the Land Registry.

2.5.3. What Are the Benefits of Registering a Document in the Land Registry to Me?

- i. Registration of a document under the present Deeds Registration System gives; It priority over unregistered documents and other documents registered after it but does not give the document any validity it does not have.
- ii. Through registration, your interest in the property is put on notice to any person who is interested in the property.
- iii. Any persons subsequently dealing with the property will be bound by the registered document.
- iv. Unregistered documents will lose priority and be void as against any subsequent bona fide purchaser or mortgagee for valuable consideration.
- v. For persons interested in a property, (for example, a purchaser or mortgagee), they can obtain information related to the property from the relevant land register. They can also check and verify all registered land documents affecting that property with the assistance from private legal practitioners before making their decision in dealing with the related property.

2.6. Method of Establishing Land Title in Nigeria

Five different methods are recognized for establishing ownership to land in Nigeria namely:

- a) A proof of ownership to land by traditional evidence, i.e., ancestral possession and inheritance
- b) Production of land title document that is duly authenticated.
- c) Numerous positive acts of ownership over a sufficient length of time to warrant the reasonable inference of ownership
- d) Acts of long undisturbed possession and enjoyment of land.
- e) Possession of adjacent land could raise the presumption of ownership of the land in question.

3.1. History of ALIS

Abia Land Information System (ALIS) traces its history to the employment of computers in everyday life. It is not the task of this critical analysis to go into the history of the use of computers but suffice it to say that ALIS was born out of the need to reap the benefits of using computers to ease work and encourage better, faster, more accurate and efficient administration of land in Abia State.

The issue of computerizing the Land Deeds Registry (LDR) took a positive dimension in April 2004 during the time of Barrister Mrs. Uchechi Evoh, the then Commissioner for Lands, Survey & Urban Planning. This "First Phase" was completed and commissioned on 1st December, 2005.

"Phase 11" of the computerization of the LDR was crowned as ALIS. Thus, the ALIS project was intended to be the most modern and up-to-date system of property documentation adopted globally as a prerequisite to the achievement of millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the areas of revenue generation as well as poverty alleviation. It was aimed at improving the data-base system of the LDR into a more robust system in order to serve people all over the world (MLS, 2007).

ALIS required that all previously documented properties be revalidated; all the old Title Deeds recalled and the owners replaced with new ones including new C of O which is a one – page document, digitalized with the survey plan of the property imprinted on it for security reasons. The operation of the LDR would be in tandem with those of other States of the Federation including that of the Federal Capital Territory with regard to the development of a standardized, unified technical strategy and data capture schemes.

On the whole, the project would strengthen the record management systems and processes of the Ministry in order to establish a professional, dependable, performance and result-oriented workforce that is better positioned to cope with the statutory demands and responsibilities of the ministry. The responsibilities of the Ministry include efficient land management and administration: a strategy that would result in enhanced institutional capacity, enhanced revenue generation and elimination of fraudulent land transaction within the State.

The then Executive Governor of the State, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu gave approval for its implementation; Nexton Business Services Limited, Lagos was the Consultant; Fidelity Bank Plc was the financiers while Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Planning, (on behalf of the Abia State Government), is the owner.

On 13th December, 2007 new, improved, digitalized and securitized Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) was launched by the Governor, Chief Theodore Ahamofe Orji and a batch of the new C of Os were issued to respective title holders who had fulfilled the obligations prescribed for revalidation.

The overriding interest is that the land Deeds Registry, the life wire as well as the image maker of the ministry of Lands, would coordinate the activities of the whole ministry through networking. The ALIS Project embodies a computer training package to the benefit of the staff of the Ministry. It was also to attract financial assistance from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and a technical aid from the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban development.

3.2. ALIS Organogram

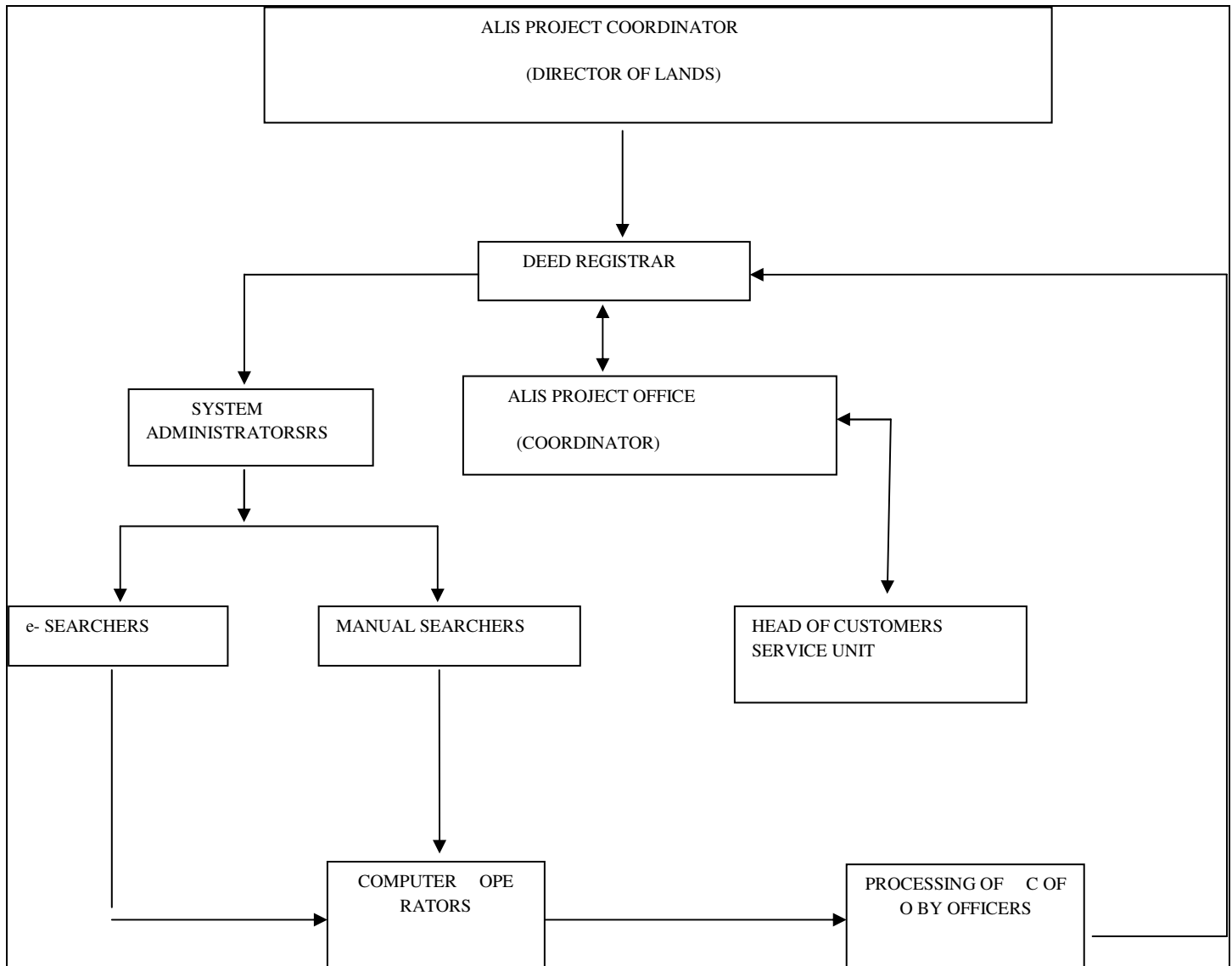


Figure 1: Organizational chart of ALIS

Source (Adebayo, 2014)

3.3. The Process of Re-Organisation of the Abia State Land Deeds Registry

The process of re-organizing the LDR gave rise to the birth of ALIS. This involved the employment of an external consultant to the project. In end, the company found to have offered the best solution (i.e. the solution best suited to the need of effective state land administration) was invited to commence the project. This firm was Nexton Business Services Limited. Their operations in the beginning included the physical sorting of files, facilitating the purchase and installation of necessary hardware, wiring of network, installation of software for scanning managing, retrieval, searching of documents and for the data-base and testing of the system. Next,

there was the need to create a better working environment to attract customers and lift staff morale. Offices were equipped with air conditioners and sometimes new office furniture.

The re-organization of staff and offices defined staff roles to be undertaken, which was required and what for. In line with the above we realized the importance of staff training which the consultants (Nextzon Business Services Limited) conducted.

Finally, public fora were held in the major cities of the State with relevant Stakeholders on the need for the ALIS programme, its benefits and cost implications.

3.4. Document Revalidation Processes

The revalidation programme of Abia State was primarily intended to capture all valid and duly processed land transactions especially Statutory Certificates of Occupancy in the first instance. Government embarked on this given the perception that some documents on landed properties were forgeries at best and involved the collusion of staff of the State's Ministry responsible for land administration. The revalidation process was, expectedly, divided into: Recertification and Automation. While recertification involved the return of old C of Os for new ones, the automation process was used to process new C of O.

3.5. Recertification

In recertification, an existing plot holder was required to submit his particulars as well as those of the property to which he laid claim. Using the Revalidation Form issued to the plot holder, his details (including names, address, and property location, among others) are captured. These were cross-checked with records in the system as well as input from the various departments. These departments were to confirm the inputs they had made in the issuance of the previous C of O being revalidated. When these confirmations were received, the information/transactions on the property were now ready to be captured and a file created electronically. The file created was issued a new number by the system based on whether the property was acquired by a "private" arrangement (PAL) or a Government Allocation (GAL). "GAL files" are for government allocation over land in layouts such as Mbaisii, IBB GRA, Ehimiri, Isieke, Isiama Ohafia New Town Layout, Old Town Layout, Aguiyi Ironsi, etc. Next, the system is fed with information about the applicant including identification, payments made, etc. to generate and print an Acknowledgement Letter. Then the Ground Rent payable is computed and a copy also printed. Thereafter the records are validated.

The Survey plan details are next captured in the Beacon Capture Interface and the plan itself scanned and fed into the data-base. Subsequently, a draft copy of the new C of O is printed and, if found correct, is validated. After this validation, a final copy is printed, forwarded to his Excellency, the Governor of the State for his signature after which the revalidated C of O is handed over to the holder.

All previous registration information was thus recaptured, confirmed and/or updated. The application (software programme) used for this was tagged "Recertification".

3.6. Automation

In processing, new C of Os, another application called "Automation" is employed. This involves capture of details of the plot holder and his interest for the very first time in the systems.

The process begins with the electronic file creation, and then the details of the plan are captured in the beacon capture interface. The electronic file is received and then the survey plan is scanned and fed into data-based. Thereafter a draft C of O and draft survey plan are printed and validated.

The file is then logged out to the relevant schedule for stamping and returned through a log movement in interface before it is ordered for detachment. The C of O is assigned for detachment to an officer who assigns a detachment for it and the file is subsequently detached. Details of the stamping done at the schedule are captured and the instrument checked for any errors. If found worthy, the C of O is checked and then registered. A registry Copy of the C of O is printed and then final copy printed. Thereafter the electronic file is dispatched. The printed C of O is sent to the Executive Governor who endorses the same and on its coming back is handed over to the applicant. Of importance is the fact that the registration particulars are computer-generated unlike in the "recertification process" where the registration details originally belonging to a property are used for the "new" C of O.

3.7. The Role of Coordinator(S)

For these processes, recertification and automation, various roles were assigned to various officers. To ensure that work is not held up by the absence of any one officer, each role had at least two officers attached to it. Only the project coordinator (Director of Lands) and Project Officer Coordinator (a Chief Lands Officer) had the ability to take over and run any of the processes from start to finish in the event of an emergency. Of course, such a situation has never arisen.

3.8. AIIIS Working System

The need to survey a parcel of land can never be over emphasized in this aspect; the applicant will have his/ her parcel of land surveyed by a registered Surveyor by which it is approved for Certificate of Occupancy C of O.

There will be a registered Power of Attorney (PA) between the Donor and the Donee in respect of the landed property.

The applicant will submit photocopy of the original Power of Attorney, current Tax Certificate, Passport Photography, Deposited Survey plan, completed LUD Form and these requirements will be documented by LUAC or Direct (ZONE) application.

The file opened will be issued a number which represent the file number and it is for easy assessment of the file. The Lands and Town Planning Departments will carry out an inspection; in order to ascertain the value of the property and to ensure that the purpose clause is compatible with the Land Use pattern of the area. There will be assessment of fees; to ascertain the statutory fees payable. If the inspections are in conformity with Government standard, the property will be recommended for Governor's approval for the grant of Certificate of Occupancy. The process is concluded by the ascent of the Governor's signature on all the copies of the Statutory Certificate of Occupancy so provided (original, counterpart and Registry Copies). There after the certificate of Occupancy is registered in the Land Deeds Registry before the original is delivered to the applicant.

During Computerization, the Registry unit will ensure the following:

- i. Confirm the interest of the applicant in the property (to check encumbrances)
- ii. Detach and registered Statutory Certificate of Occupancy manually
- iii. Create file, calculate Grand rate, validate record, scan and capture beacon readings (computerization).
- iv. Print draft Statutory Certificate of Occupancy, Survey plan and validate the draft.
- v. Print final Statutory Certificate of Occupancy and Survey Plan in Triplicate copies for Governor's signature and dispatch.

4. Challenges and Prospects

4.1. Challenges

The Abia State Land registry is still developing with only the first phase complete and in full use. While the writer has yet to study the workings of some others such as that of Lagos State, Kano state or FCT, this present state makes room for improvement as the next phase begins. State authorities are well aware of the significance of land registration issues; however, budget constraints mean that it was unlikely that all these problems can be solved in a hurry. Some of the challenges are as enumerated below:

4.1.1. Bureaucracy

Some officers feel that when a file takes a "reasonable" time before being approved, it must have been thoroughly screened and found to be in order. This breeds complacency, slothfulness and the disregard for speed in the discharge of their duty.

Information inputted into the documents from the programme is generated from the various schedules, departments and units of the Ministry and cannot be changed. Therefore, any errors, intentional or otherwise, may not be questioned/ detected until tested by litigation. In the same vein, any delay from these schedules / departments / units' means a corresponding delay in the workings of the ALIS programme.

4.1.2. Energy and Infrastructure

There is also the problem of infrastructural development in the areas of energy supply and sustainability, human / computer ratio and the development of internet facilities throughout the Ministry (in the first instance and the State later). Efforts should be geared towards improving the supply base of the country and there is the need to increase the production of the needed manpower in this area.

4.1.3. Security

This appears to be one of the major challenges that, in the opinion of this writer, may not have received the much-needed attention. One important challenge of the system is the problem of security of information and fraud. Again, the Ministry will soon open its website and business transactions presently done by physical visits to the Ministry will reduce as users of the internet can access information literally "at the click of a mouse". The challenge here is internet fraud as well as speed of capture and transfer of information online real-time. To this, only the system Administrators know and can use the passwords to send and access privileged information.

4.1.4. Funding

Funding is another major challenge for successful delivery of the e-government services in this area. However, this should not be a long-term problem as the system can be self-sustaining and fund generating in the long run. For the initial captain outlay the government could have adopted the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) system.

Further, physical infrastructure is both inadequate and inappropriately configured. It is interesting to note that the ALIS servers are housed in an office also used by two officers attached to the programme. The programme has no vehicles to undertake site visits too.

4.1.5. Legality

There is the challenge of lack of any framework or regime to back up the implementation of the project. To solve this problem the government should set the necessary legislative process in motion to bring about the much-needed legal framework for the project. The proposed legislation should vet and integrate the provision of the Evidence Act on the admissibility of computer generated evidence. In doing this, the input of various stakeholders and members of the public should be sought and aggregated into the proposed law. It is however important to look at the provisions of the constitution on the right to privacy and the provisions of the official secrets Act vis-à-vis e-government information in this regard.

4.2. Prospects

Despite the challenges earlier enumerated, ALIS has performed credibly well. The prospects of the programme are enormous and are as follows:

- i. Errors and discrepancies are identified and rectified at the earliest possible stage
- ii. Transactions happen much more quickly than in the paper world, so protecting the interests of landowners at an earlier stage
- iii. It is less cumbersome and more secured
- iv. The programme is spaced saving, innovative and adventurous as well as providing employment opportunities/ specialization.

4.3. Future Expectation

In the longer term, there are still tasks that need to be completed and the LDR eventually envisages an operation and service provision that will include:

- a) Complete computerization of the documents at the Land Deeds Registry.
- b) Computerization of all registers kept at the Land Deeds Registry.
- c) Archiving of land documents and Survey maps into a searchable and interlinked data-base.
- d) Production of digital base maps to provide accurate and up to date land information in conjunction with the Survey Department of the Ministry.
- e) Establishment of the Ministry's website to Address "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)" on-line to assist users of the Registry.
- f) Continuous training of staff as the need arises, in modern techniques and applications
- g) Increase in revenue generation.

4.4. Merits of the Abia Land Information Systems (ALIS)

ALIS began the scanning and capture of data in June, 2005. The system allows the Deeds Registry to control the production, storage, revision management and distribution of electronic documents, thereby yielding greater efficiencies in the ability to re-use information and control the flow of documents within the State. Scanning of documents is a continuous process as new documents are scanned, processed and filed on a daily basis. The use of ALIS has gradually improved efficiency and increased productivity in various aspects of services offered at the Deeds Registry leading to transformation including the following:

- a. Ease of accessibility of documents archived onto a data-base by users.
- b. Virtual elimination of manual search of documents and replacement by online searching capability of documents less time consuming. This also makes for easier monitoring and control.
- c. De-centralization of information so that it is now easier to keep track of or recall information.
- d. Improved transparency in all land dealings with due process and accountability.
- e. Reduction in waiting times for obtaining information on land matters.
- f. Improved managerial efficiency and better administrative effectiveness leading to noticeable improvement in the work ethic of the Registry.
- g. An ethos of staff training has been developed and computer training is undertaken regularly.

5. Recommendation and Conclusion

5.1. Recommendation

In making the following recommendation, the constraints of funding on the State Government are noted.

- i. There is need to get rid of or reduce bureaucratic drudgery in the delivery of services to compete (not just into partnership) with the organized private sector.
- ii. The programme of this nature needs the following: -
 - a) Project Vehicles
 - b) Better Accommodation
 - c) Regular power supply
 - d) Internet connectivity
 - e) Procurement of plotter
 - f) Launch/ management of website
- iii. For the unique nature of these programme, these programme should be units on their own (probably domiciled under the LDR) assisting all necessary technical units. This will allow for proper accountability of each section.
- iv. It is very necessary to continually educate people on the advantage and benefit of technology at all levels.
- v. There is the challenge of lack of any legal framework or regime to back up the implementation of the project. To solve this problem government should set the necessary legislative process in motion to bring about the much-needed legal backing.
- vi. The only thing constant in the GIS world is change. New techniques programme and equipment comes into play daily. There is need to keep abreast of the broken-down equipment and procurement of modern hardware and software for the programme.
- vii. At all times, the ministry must ensure that adequate security and fire Alarm System are in place and functional.

- viii. There should be responsible use of facilities by everyone involved in the running of programmes such as ALIS. The user shall not divulge passwords, PINS, private keys or similar elements to anyone.

5.2. Conclusion

The need for computerization of the land registration processes has become imperative, especially, given the diverse and varying volumes of transactions that are carried out daily in Abia State, as well as the need for efficient and effective delivery of the product (services) to clients and general populace. Land administration, therefore, is a major key to effective development of the nation and good governance.

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