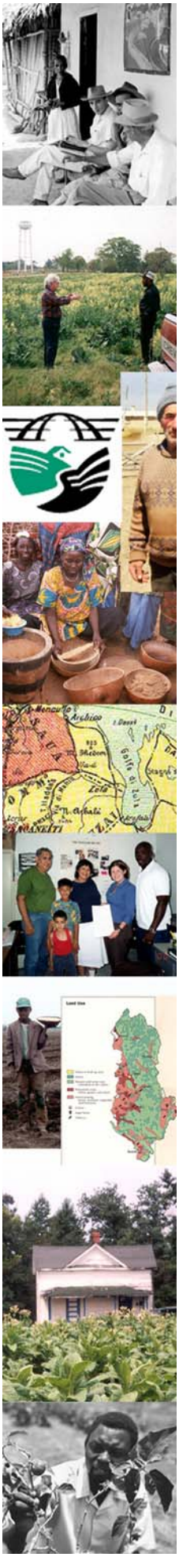

This work was funded with the generous support of the American people through the Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement No.EPP-A-00-06-00014-00 for implementation of the TransLinks project. The contents of this report are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States government.

Land Tenure Center

COSTS OF TITLING AND REGISTRATION PROJECTS

Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel

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Provided by the **Land Tenure Center.** Comments encouraged:
Land Tenure Center, Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies,
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706 USA
kdbrown@wisc.edu; tel: +608-262-8029; fax: +608-262-0014
http://www.ies.wisc.edu/ltc

23 Oct 2009

Costs of Titling and Registration Projects

Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel

Neo-liberal economic theory is based on the foundation of private property and the market. Private property is the only to make sure that property ends up in the hands of the most efficient producers. And, a property system based on private and individual property rights makes the transactions of property and land (the land market) efficient. With this in mind, donor agencies since the 1980s have promoted and funded the creation of private property land markets in developing countries.

One of the principal mechanisms utilized to create "efficient and dynamic land markets" in Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe is the titling and registration of land and property. (The few attempts to title land in Africa have not been very successful.) Many donor agencies have been involved in funding (mostly loans) systematic titling and/or registration projects. These include the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, USAID, Kadastre, and SwedeSurvey, among others.

There is little systematic information about titling and registration projects beyond the number of titles issued and registered. What most can agree on is that often the time needed to actually achieve the coverage indicated in the project proposal is much longer and more expensive than the amount budgeted. Both of these factors depend on the context in which the titling project is undertaken (e.g., type of land records in existence, quality of records, trained personnel, infrastructure in rural areas), the approach (whether title registration or deed registration, and the political will of central and local authorities.

With regard to costs, the different tasks involved in titling and registration about which one would want cost information are: parcel delineation, mapping, titling, and registration. Unfortunately, available costs data are often in terms of the project budget, not in terms of titling and registration activities. Nonetheless, there have been efforts to tease out the costs of titling and registration. Much of the effort has been driven by new and emerging technology in titling and registration, and the desire to determine whether the investment in new technology improves quality and decreases costs in the long run.

The best comparison of costs was done in the early 2000s by groups of titling experts who systematized cost information for several titling projects in their region of expertise (Burns et al. 2006). Their cost estimates included pre-fieldwork tasks (such as geodetic control and base mapping) as well as post-fieldwork tasks (such as conflict resolution and registration of title in registry). A synthesis report was then done to distill the lessons from these results. We were able to find other attempts to estimate titling costs, with one the earliest done by Grenville Barnes in the late 1980s. The table below contains the results from these different attempts.

Titling & Registration Costs	
Country	**Cost per parcel (US$)**
Armenia (1990s-2000s)	13.35
Kyrgyzstan (1990s-2000s)	10.55
Moldova (1990s-2000s)	46.41
Indonesia (1990s-2000s)	16.30
Thailand (1990s-2000s)	24.21
El Salvador (1990s-2000s)	29.74
Peru (urban) (1990s-2000s)	12.68
Peru (rural) (1990s-2000s)	55.69
Source: Burns et al. 2006	
Ecuador (2000s)	100.19[a]
Source: Barthel 2007	
Peru (urban)	32.73[b]
Cambodia (2000s)	7.00[c]
Sri Lanka (2000s)	32.00[c]
Source: World Bank 2007	
Honduras (1980s)	130[d]
St. Lucia (1980s)	214[d]
Source: Barnes 1990	
[a]This cost includes only cartography, cadastral sweep, & development of SIGland; does not include adjudication & titling.	
[b]Registration only of previously titled parcels.	
[c]Not clear what activities, in addition to titling, these costs cover such as mapping and registration.	
[d]Costs include parcel delineation, mapping, and titling.	

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