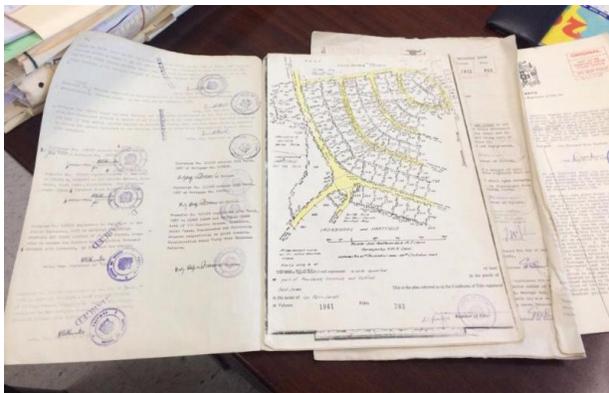![Innovations for Successful Societies logo]

Property Rights & Land Administration

Effective land administration supports a wide range of positive development outcomes. Well-managed property registers and cadastres help secure property rights, increase maintenance and investment, minimize opportunities for corruption, and promote conservation, while innovations in tenure systems hold promise for protecting some of the most marginalized citizens. A new ISS series profiles recent experiences in improving land administration. This newsletter features two cases that became models for other countries: Jamaica and Ontario, Canada.

Implementing Reforms from the Ground Up: Jamaica's National Land Agency

In spring 2001, Jamaica merged four separate departments into a single agency for land administration and charged the agency's new CEO, Elizabeth Stair, with speeding up services and reducing fraud. Working with a team of committed deputies, Stair implemented new procedures and technologies to make registering land easier for the average citizen. The National Land Agency significantly reduced registration processing times and won acclaim for its customer service as well as its innovative use of technology.

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Before the establishment of Jamaica's National Land Agency, land transactions were processed on paper. (See left) Digitized workflows greatly reduced processing times. (See right) Photos by Maya Gainer.

Breaking New Ground in Ontario: Electronic Land

Registration

In 1987, Ontario's land registration system was overwhelmed. Budget constraints and a surge in property sales strained the Canadian province's paper-based operation. After struggling to computerize its land records during the previous seven years, civil servants at the provincial Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations formed a groundbreaking public-private partnership to convert millions of property records--both from paper to digital and, in some cases, from deeds system to titles--and created one of the world's first electronic land registration systems.

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Forest-Friendly Palm Oil Production: Certifying Small-Scale Farmers in Indonesia

Over the last 20 years, the unchecked spread of palm oil plantations has devastated tropical rainforests in Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia. While some large producers have shifted toward more-sustainable practices, small-scale farmers, who account for about 40 percent of Indonesia's palm oil output, have mostly continued with business-as-usual. In 2011, global environmental group WWF piloted a new program designed to help smallholders adopt sustainable cultivation techniques. In 2013, all 349 farms in the pilot group met certification standards set by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, a global organization of producers, retailers, financial institutions, and environmental groups. This case study analyzes the challenges in organizing and working with small-scale growers and the significant hurdles to shifting the industry as a whole towards forest-friendly production

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Small-scale palm oil producers selling their fruit in Aceh, north Sumatra, Indonesia. Photo by Evan Bowen-Jones/Alamy Stock Photo.

ISS Featured Interview

In a 2010 interview with ISS, **Rajeev Chawla** details how the Indian state of Karnatka digitized its rural land records system. During that transition process, Chawla served as special secretary of Bhoomi, the government's expansive and successful e-governance project. He describes the successes and challenges the state government faced in training

staff to undertake the digitization process and in creating a statewide technological infrastructure to accommodate it. These efforts helped reduce corruption, increased oversight, and expanded citizen access to electronic governance.

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