SMART SURVEYORS FOR LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT
CHALLENGES IN A NEW REALITY

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Protecting Customary Land Rights in Sierra Leone Open Tenure Spatial Mapping Technology
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Fit For Purpose (FFP) for Land And Water Management – The Relationship Of The Water And Land Tenure Nexus

**SOLA suite of applications consists of**

- SOLA REGISTRY
- SOLA SYSTEMATIC REGISTRATION
- SOLA STATE LAND

To support cadastre and property registration operations

- OPEN TENURE

To record customary tenure and field data collection
Open Tenure comparative solutions


- SOLA REGISTRY, SOLA SYSTEMATIC REGISTRATION and SOLA STATE LAND have no alternative
- OPEN TENURE has only one similar alternative, CADASTA, which is no longer Open Source
Use in countries
Country Profile

- Total population is 7,092,113
- 5 Regions (North, North-West, South and East, Western Area/ Freetown), 16 districts, 190 chiefdoms
- Land Mass of Sierra Leone is 71,740 km²
- Two separate land tenure system (Freehold/English law in Western Area/Freetown; Costmary regime in provinces)
- Over 95% of land in Sierra Leone falls under customary regime
- Less than 5% of land in Sierra Leone is administered under Freehold
Key Achievement

- In 2018, Financial support from Irish & German Government and Technical support from FAO, Government of Sierra Leone piloted a project to generally understand the dynamics involved in the clarification and protection of customary land rights.

- The project was piloted in 4 districts across the country using Open Tenure Mapping Technology:
  1) Bombali – Norther Region
  2) Port Loko - North West Region
  3) Bo – Southern Region
  4) Kenema – Eastern Region

- In 2019, the protection of customary land rights was scaled up in 16 communities under the UN Peace Building project.
Key Achievement

- Open Tenure mapping exercise in 2018:
  - 11,745.79 acres of family land across 4 chiefdoms
  - 60 land parcels under customary tenure in 12 villages

- Open Tenure mapping exercise in 2019:
  - 21,484 acres of family land across 4 chiefdoms
  - 111 families in 16 villages
Key Achievement

- **Resources & stakeholders Mobilization**
  - Less time involved; less expensive; promote dialogue involving tribal authorities; land users, land owners, youths and women

- **Capacity Building & Field data collection**

  **2018:**
  - Over 500 local actors capacity built in gender and land rights issues across the four districts
  - 120 youths trained as para-surveyors
  - Less 24 hours to train 10 youths per settlement to use android tablets
Key Achievement

- **Resources & stakeholders Mobilization**
  - Less time involved; less expensive; promote dialogue involving tribal authorities; land users, land owners, youths and women

- **Capacity Building & Field data collection**

  **2019:**
  - Over 500 local actors capacity built in gender and land rights issues across the four districts
  - 320 young para-surveyors (30% women, aged 18-35 years)
  - Less 24 hours to train 10 youths per settlement to use android tablets
Key Achievement

❑ Methodology for identifying & mapping of customary land rights established
   ✓ Legal empowerment of communities (90% successful) – Stage 1
   ✓ Governance strengthening initiatives, community by-laws development (90% successful) – Stage 2
   ✓ Boundary Harmonization and Mapping (90% Successful) – Stage 3
   ✓ Community validation of customary land parcel maps (90% successful) – Stage 4

❑ Enabling environment for the legal and institutional reforms required to improve the tenure governance system (SOLA/Open Tenure)
Key Achievement

- Cluster & Individual family land parcel thematic maps
  - Total of 12 family cluster maps produced & validated in 2018 (6 months)
  - Total 111 family cluster maps produced and validated in 2019 (12 months)
Key Achievement

❑ Informed the development of National Land Commission and Customary Land Rights Bills

❑ National Land Commission and Customary Land Rights Bills will be passed into law in July 2021

Challenges

❑ Limited resources to cover a chiefdom, a chiefdom is considered a complete administrative unit.

❑ Poor weather conditions and forest cover canopy in certain cases affected GPS signals of the android tablet.

❑ Difficult terrain pose serious challenges the recording and mapping process.

❑ Boundary misunderstanding also posed challenges to the process
Next Steps

- Scale up recording and mapping of customary land holdings to cover an entire chiefdom
- Introduce in the mapped chiefdom a secure system for loading/resister validated customary land claims
- Import validated customary land claims in SOLA Registry
- Establishment of the National Land Commission
- Implementation of the National Land Commission and Customary Land Rights Acts