

# Systematic Registration of Communal Land

## Namibia

Project name	Support to Land Reform
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	All regions in Namibia
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR)
Duration	2003 - 2014

## Background

In Namibia communal land belongs to the state and is distributed by traditional leaders. The community and each of its members have the right to use it. With the adoption of the Communal Land Reform Act in 2002, Namibian small holders have the possibility to formalize their land rights for the first time.

The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) is tasked to implement the registration of communal land rights. In the beginning this process was quite slow and characterized by a lack of communication and awareness raising that created misunderstandings and misperceptions within the Namibian population.

## Our approach

For the project a multi-level approach is being used. On national level GIZ advisors provide legal and policy advice and assist to the overall strategic planning. Advisors on regional level support the implementation of the process of systematic registration of communal rights by providing technical back stopping, assisting in organizational development, and outreach programs.

To overcome the short-comings in manpower and capacity, GIZ piloted the hiring of temporary staff. In total the MLR hired up to 79 temporary staff members assisting in planning, management, monitoring and evaluation and public awareness programs of the communal land right registration.

At the beginning MLR staff mapped only parcels of people who applied for registration. This approach was cost intensive and slow, because the distances between villages are very big. In 2008 the European Union decided to finance aerial photos and several pilot projects examined if these photos could be used for the mapping and verification of land parcels and rights.

The use of Aerial Photos allows a systematic mapping and verification of entire villages. The traditional village headmen are present throughout the process and provide the ministry staff with their local knowledge of the area.



**Aerial Photo showing parcel boundaries**



*L. to r.: Registration team of MLR in Oshikoto region, verifying and mapping the communal land rights in corporation with the headmen and villagers; Registration team of MLR in discussion with a village headman and the local residents*

## Training

The project incorporates a mixture of capacity building measures. First of all, experts are integrated as lecturers in the Polytechnic of Namibia linking the capacity needs of the MLR to the formal education system.

All stakeholders receive adapted trainings, e.g. the traditional authorities are trained on the legal framework and the Communal Land Boards on effective dispute resolution and sound environmental decision making. New project staff of the ministry receives orientation training and on the job training.

Furthermore, senior staff is given the opportunity to participate in international conferences and workshops to promote networking and exposure to international developments.

Time Period	Land rights mapped per year	Certificates issued per year
2003-2008	3389	1389
2008-2009	8400	3500
2009-2010	12911	5000
2010-2011	12645	11282
2011-2012	38482	21044
2012-2013	75541	43503
<b>SUM</b>	<b>151,368</b>	<b>85,718</b>

## Achievements

A major achievement of the project is the fast tracking of the Communal Land Right Registration (CLRR) from a request-based registration to a more cost-efficient systematic approach. Land Right Holders can now apply at any stage of the process and if their village has been mapped, their land rights can be legally recognized in a comparable short time.

In addition, the use of Aerial Photos allows for an easier land dispute resolution in the field. The maps can assist the village headmen to resolve boundary conflicts between their villagers.

The below table shows how this input increased the speed of registration since 2010.

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