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Themes

Land Administration. Land is one of the most important factors of production, which its development contributes immensely to economic growth of a country. However, access to land for development has been a long-standing issue in PNG. Of the total land in PNG, customarily-owned land accounts for almost 97%, whereas State-owned land is only 3%. Most investors prefer State-owned land because it is often associated proper title and little transaction costs compared to customarily-owned land. Currently, State-owned land is almost exhausted and investors have shifted their attention to customarily-owned land. However, access to customary land with proper land title for development has been problematic, which militates against investment. If an effective strategy for accessing customary land is not put in place, potential investors might find it more difficult to do business in PNG, which could have adverse effects on the country's economy. The PSDRP through the National Land Development Program has contributed in developing systems and processes for accessing customary land with proper title such as the Voluntary Customary Land Registration (VCLR) system. However, administration of customary land has remained problematic. If the intention is to move PNG forward, it is necessary to improve the effectiveness of customary land administration system that results in a "win-win" situation for the landowners, the State and the investors. Research projects under this thematic area contribute to this. Some research questions that we attempt to provide answers to in this thematic area are:

- How can we promote accessibility to customary land with proper title for development that results in a "win-win" situation for landowners, investors and the State?
- How can we improve the effectiveness and efficiency in land administration?
- How can we improve the effectiveness in the storage of documents associated with land titles?
- What are the potential strategies that could be used for effective resolution of disputes associated with customary land?
- What are the potential strategies that could be used to promote smooth implementation of the VCLR system?

Land use planning. Though land use planning is necessary for the resolution of conflict of interests associated with uses of land, tenets associated with orderly development and regulation of land use in an efficient and ethical manner are lagging behind in urban areas of PNG. In order for us to have a smooth land use planning process, it must be orderly and efficient. Furthermore, all relevant stakeholders including the general public must be involved in the process. This has the potential of promoting smooth implementation of the plan. However, the country is lagging behind in mutually inclusive planning process and developments are poorly monitored. This contributes to the proliferation of unapproved developments and unordered developments in major cities of PNG. The projects under this thematic area contribute to orderly, efficient and mutually inclusive urban development planning processes. Some research questions that we attempt to answer in this thematic area include:

- What are the impediments that militate against orderly and efficient urban development planning and potential strategy that could be used to tackle the impediments?



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- How can we improve the effectiveness in monitoring and evaluation of developments in major cities of PNG?

Property development. Housing is one of the basic necessities for human, which accounts for the largest share of the consumer price index. However, providing housing that people can afford and at the same time be able to pay for other necessities is becoming challenging for the Government of PNG. Though data associated with dynamics of residential property prices is necessary for making informed decision by policy-makers and urban development managers, the data are not readily available in PNG. This implies that decisions associated release of land and provision of housing have not been on evidence-based. Furthermore, the roles of the public sector and private sector in the provision of housing is unclear. Several housing schemes have been implemented however they have not been able to address housing affordability problems in major cities of the country. In order to promote proper informed decision associated with accessibility to residential properties, it is necessary to access data on property prices; roles of the public sector and private sector in provision of housing must be streamlined; information associated with affordability of property prices must be generated. Research projects under this thematic area contribute to this. Some research questions that we attempt to answer in this thematic area include:

- What is the trend of house sales and rent prices in major cities of PNG over a period of time?
- What type of paradigm should be adopted in order to improve effectiveness in provision of housing in PNG?
- How can we address the housing affordability problems in major cities of PNG?
- What potential strategy should be used to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of housing schemes and which income groups should benefit from the schemes?
- How can we motivate private property developers to provide houses for sale and rent that are affordable for different income groups?
- How can private property developers that provide trunk infrastructure internalize the cost associated with the infrastructure?