

## MINISTRY PAPER NO: -

### LAND ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT – UPDATE ON LAMP’S EXPANSION, LAND TITLES & ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VRS NETWORK

#### OVERVIEW

The Land Policy and Administration Directorate exercises responsibility for the development, monitoring and implementation of the portfolio policies, programmes and legislation relating to land administration and management, spatial data management and land titling and registration. The Directorate therefore continued to work towards achieving the Government’s mission to empower Jamaicans by providing them with security of tenure, with the major focus of Directorate being to improve systems and processes to realize this objective.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/2009

##### Land Administration and Management Programme

The land registration component of the formerly IDB/GOJ funded Land Administration and Management Project has been extended as a wholly GOJ funded Capital A Project for an additional 5 years with an expansion from the pilot area of St. Catherine to the parishes of St. Thomas, Clarendon, St. Elizabeth, and parts of Manchester and St. James (where land tenure work is being undertaken under the National Irrigation Development Project).

Under the Land Registration component of LAMP, some 29,804 parcels of land in St. Catherine were mapped for regularization (first registration) and clarification (updating). The approval rate for first registration applications lodged by LAMP averages at about 89%, as against the national average of approximately 20%.

During the 2008/2009 financial year, LAMP continued its work which started as a pilot in St. Catherine to increase applications to register for the parcels surveyed. Of the 29,804 parcels surveyed at no cost to beneficiaries in St. Catherine, there are 21,291 parcels for which persons have expressed no interest in the programme. Tenure regularization/clarification work began in Clarendon and the other declared areas and the Project Management Unit began worked with the National Irrigation Commission (NIC) to increase the number of landowners with registered titles in farming communities where irrigation water is being made available. (See Table below).

PARTICULARS	FY 2008/2009	Target 2009/2010
<b>Total Number of Files Opened</b>	1727	1820
St. Catherine	1081	1200
St. Thomas	422	250
Clarendon	93	200
St. Elizabeth	73	120
Manchester	59	50
<b>Total Number of Parcels Requiring First Registration</b>	1063	
<b>Total Number of Parcels Requiring Clarification</b>	664	
<b>Total Number of Titles Issued (Completed)</b>	1609	1500

## National Land Agency



The National Land Agency's primary focus was on improving systems, processes and service delivery to reduce turnaround times, and enhancing customer service to contribute towards the Government's land titling initiatives. Emphasis was also placed on completing the titling and registration of several GOJ Land Settlement schemes in which the beneficiaries have been waiting for a long time to get their titles.

In this regard, several new services were introduced by the Agency, which also embarked on a public education program.

- Public Education and Awareness Activities

One of the principal factors contributing to the low levels of land registration island wide is the lack of appreciation of a large sector of the population of the value of registered land titles and the importance of estate planning. With this in mind, the National Land Agency embarked on a public education drive across the island to sensitize persons about the importance of having a registered title and the steps involved in getting their land registered. Persons were also educated on the importance of making Wills and planning estates. The ultimate objective was to ensure that Jamaicans have security of tenure by increasing the number of registered landowners. It also sought to address other land-related matters, such as titling issues for land settlement lots, leasing and divestment of government lands, as well as land valuation matters in relation to property tax.

Some 19 Land Titling Road Shows were held with close to 3,000 persons in attendance. The NLA Road Show commenced in March 2008. The Agency has realized a significant increase to its call centre, which can be attributed to this initiative.

In addition to the Road Shows, a radio drama series was produced and aired on national radio.

- Express Desk

The Express Desk at the Land Titles Division, which processes transactions within 48 hours, was expanded to deal not only with Notations of Death and Marriage; Change of Name Applications; Discharges of Mortgage; Registration of Single Transfers and single Mortgages; to include two additional transactions. These two additional transactions are Single Lost Titles Applications (without plans) and Single Section 79 Applications (i.e. old, damaged, worn titles) without plans. The latter two transactions are now processed within five days, which is an improvement of the previous turnaround time of 20 days.

The Express Desk service is offered at no additional cost to the customer. The new service has been a huge success with the Agency's customers and numerous commendations and letters of appreciation have been received.

- eLandJamaica Phase 2

In keeping with the public sector modernization initiative to make government services more user-friendly and accessible to end-users, the Agency launched an upgraded version of eLandJamaica (eLandJamaica phase 2) in 2008. The upgraded eLandJamaica site allows persons to do searches online and pay with a credit card. Previously, access was limited to manual subscribers, whereby a person had to complete an application form and drop it off at the nearest NLA office and pay over the counter. Subscribers also have the convenience of being able to add funds and top up their accounts online.

- GOJ Land Settlement Schemes

Some 465 certificates of title were issued for land settlement schemes against the 400 targeted. In addition, 622 land settlement lots were surveyed against a target of 600.

- Operational Improvements

- The number of titles issued by the Land Titles Division increased by 40%. The number of titles issued for 2008/9 was 8,780 compared with 6,269 for 2007/8.
- The Agency has made significant strides in reducing the turnaround time for endorsements on existing Titles. There has been a reduction in turnaround time since the inception of the Agency from 40 days to a current average of seven days excluding matters lodged at the Express Desk.
- The number of plans pre-checked by the Surveys and Mapping Division increased by 20%. The number of plans checked for 2008/9 was 15,202 when compared with 12,666 plans for 2007/2008. Prior to the Agency being formed, it took, on average, 26 weeks to pre-check a survey plan, which is prepared by a Commissioned Land Surveyor. The average turnaround time now stands at 40 days.

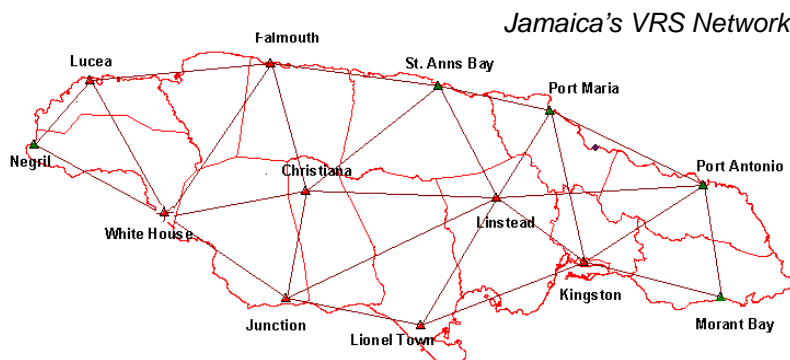
### Spatial Data Management Division

The Spatial Data Management Division is responsible for coordinating the development, implementation, maintenance and management of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) for Jamaica. To assist with the overall titling process, the Division, in collaboration with the National Land Agency, is spearheading the establishment of a National Global Positioning System (GPS) Virtual Reference System (VRS) Network referred to as gFIX.net. This is being established at a cost of US\$451,890, with partners such as the National Water Commission and LAMP contributing to the financing of the network.



The network is a configuration of 13 high precision GPS base stations, as shown in the diagram below. The GPS/VRS network, the largest of only two in the Wider Caribbean will facilitate the collection of positioning data (X, Y and Z coordinates). It is expected to revolutionize the surveying and construction sectors, lower the cost of positioning, enabling increased accuracies with enhanced performance and reliability, in addition to improved productivity. A reduction in the cost and time it takes to do cadastral surveys and the checking of subdivision plans to support the title registration process will ultimately lead to an improved land titling process and a reduction in the processing time for development approvals.

The Ministry will be inviting users to access and test the services, in real time and post processing modes at not cost for the first few months of the network's operation. The network will be commissioned by the end May 2009.



## PROJECTIONS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2009/2010

The various Land Titling Initiatives will continue for 2009/2010.

LAMP activities will continue to be expanded, with the intention to broaden the benefits afforded under the Special Provisions Act to the rest of the island. Under the Act, there is a provision for the waiver of all transfer tax and stamp duty as they relate to applications to register land. Registration fees are also substantially reduced. Exemption is also granted for the payment of Court fees in probate and administration of deceased estates. The unit is aiming to register a further 1500 titles during the financial year outside of the work being done with the NIC in the NIDP areas.

With respect to institutional capacity, the Office of the Prime Minister will be collaborating with Cuba to contract 5 land surveyors to assist with survey work at the Surveys and Mapping Division. Three of the surveyors will be contracted by the end of the first quarter to the financial year.

The NLA will continue its focus on improving customer service and business process improvements. In this regard, the Agency will be introducing the following new products and services and undertaking the following activities:

- **New Security Paper for Certificates of Title** – the paper used to prepare the Certificates of Title will be changed. The new Certificate will have enhanced security features.
- **Online Forms at the Land Titles Division** – work will commence on the e-forms which will allow customers to submit documents electronically for processing which will significantly reduce the turnaround times for processing of transactions.
- **Mail Boxes** – this is a new initiative to be introduced at the Land Titles Division which will enable customers to pick up completed documents from Mail Boxes at their convenience.
- **Expanded Regional Offices** – the Agency will be offering expanded services at its Central Regional Office to include transactions from the Land Titles and Surveys and Mapping Divisions. The Agency will also re-open its expanded full-service Western Regional Office which is presently under construction.

**Crown Land Inventory** – the Agency will commence a project of inventorising Crown lands. The duration of the project is 3 ½ years.