

## **NATIONAL LAND OBSERVATORY IN BURKINA FASO**

### **Consolidating its Role as a Leading Advisor to GoBF on Land Governance**



Photo Credit: Issoufou Ganou / NLO

#### **Participants at the NLO-Sponsored Land Information Workshop, November 2015**

#### **Telling Our Story**

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In November 2015 the NLO co-sponsored a workshop to explore the status and performance of land information collections and systems in Burkina Faso. The workshop was intended to build on a NLO-sponsored study of the land information systems that are maintained by central government agencies and local governments. The study detailed the many challenges and current low level of reliability as well as lack of completeness that characterizes the various archives and collections of land information held by GoBF and local governments. Among the recommendations adopted at the conclusion of the workshop was for the GoBF to develop a pilot activity to design and test improved strategies for collection and storing information in three contexts: a rural commune, an urban commune and an arrondissement of one of the two major population centers of the country—Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. While the NLO's co-sponsor of the workshop, the Activity to Reinforce Local Governance (PRGLA), was nominated to lead development of the component targeting an urban commune, the NLO was designated as the lead facilitator of the component to pilot development of a land information system (SIF) in a rural commune.

Since the November 2015 workshop, the NLO has participated in or led several activities to advance development of the pilot. These activities include establishment of a pilot steering committee, development of a 15-step general pilot implementation plan, two follow-up technical and planning workshops, acquisition of material, and equipment and training of GoBF cadaster agents.

Its role as facilitator in the GoBF initiative to develop and implement a SIF pilot activity reinforces the institutional security of the NLO. The duties assigned to the NLO are not limited to facilitation of the specific component of the pilot that is to be implemented in a rural commune, but also require the NLO to serve as a collaborator and advisor to the government on a broad range of practical issues related to design and development of the overall SIF pilot. Moreover, the NLO serves as a communications link across GoBF agencies: while the primary GoBF agencies involved in the SIF pilot are the General

Direction of Taxes (DGI), the Ministry of Urbanism and the Ministry in charge of computerizing and modernizing government record-keeping and information storage, the NLO is also working to keep other key GoBF actors such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Decentralization fully informed of SIF proposals, plans and progress. In short, in the course of application of the 15-step plan to design, prepare and implement the pilot activity, collaboration between the NLO and a broad range of GoBF agencies has become routine.

The timing of this GoBF pilot initiative dovetails with successful conclusion of the Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (MAST) pilot activity in Tanzania. As a result of NLO efforts to keep GoBF agencies informed and to raise awareness of the MAST option, the GoBF agrees that MAST is a promising technology, and that its adaptation for application in the rural zones of Burkina Faso context is likely to yield positive results. From the perspective of the NLO, the double-objective is to improve reliability and transparency of (as well as its own access to) land property rights information in Burkina Faso, while at the same time consolidating its role as a key actor and a reliable partner of the GoBF and other stakeholders in the domain of land governance.