



# NINE PATHWAYS TO TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

**EVA-MARIA UNGER, ROHAN BENNETT AND KEES DE ZEEUW** EXPLAIN WHY THE UN'S ADOPTION OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION IS SO IMPORTANT

An important and significant milestone for land administration globally arrived when the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) welcomed and adopted the Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA) at its 10th session this year. This is a momentous accomplishment for land administration, land administration professionals and, most importantly, the many people experiencing land tenure insecurity globally.

For land administration professionals who may not have been directly involved in FELA's preparation and development, it might appear to be just another UN document. But this underplays the opportunities and status a fully endorsed UN framework offers.

FELA makes explicit the connection between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the domain of land administration. It harmoniously combines important previously developed and agreed global policies, frameworks, approaches and tools that relate to the land sector, including: the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; the New Urban Agenda; and UN-Habitat's Continuum of Land Rights.

## Why FELA?

FELA brings together the body of knowledge, agreed concepts, approaches and tools specific to the land sector, to advocate, help to understand and communicate the importance of the 2030 Agenda. The core of FELA is the integrated nature of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and its 5Ps: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The 5Ps demand effective land administration, realised through integrated geospatial information, for land policies, tenure, value, use and development.

Leaving no one behind is the underpinning principle of the 2030 Agenda – and FELA. Research from the Prindex initiative has shown that there are many countries where almost 50% of people believe it is very likely that they could lose the right to use their property (or part of it) in the next five years. Perhaps more concerning is that in some countries, more than 60% of people say they have no formal or informal documents to demonstrate their right to their property.

To create sustainable and inclusive societies, this gap needs to be addressed. Furthermore, the gap emphasises the urgent need to accelerate the efforts to document, record and recognise people-to-land relationships, in all forms.

Another key rationale for FELA is to transform our world through collaboration and partnership. In this regard, it is developed for all countries, both developing and developed, all jurisdictions and all stakeholders, and strives to achieve a solid global partnership by bringing and building together knowledge, skills, capacity and experiences, stimulating creativity and innovation.

## How does FELA work?

FELA puts member states in the driving seat when it comes to establishing, strengthening, co-ordinating and monitoring their land administration systems nationally or sub-nationally. It directly aligns with the overarching Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) and implements the IGIF for the land sector.

FELA is a strategic and high-level framework that should enable the professional domain to communicate its need at all levels. It starts with a detailed description of the background, and the work already done by the professional community and describes the linking nature to the IGIF. Underneath the mission and vision of FELA comes the definition of effective land administration – which is a key change

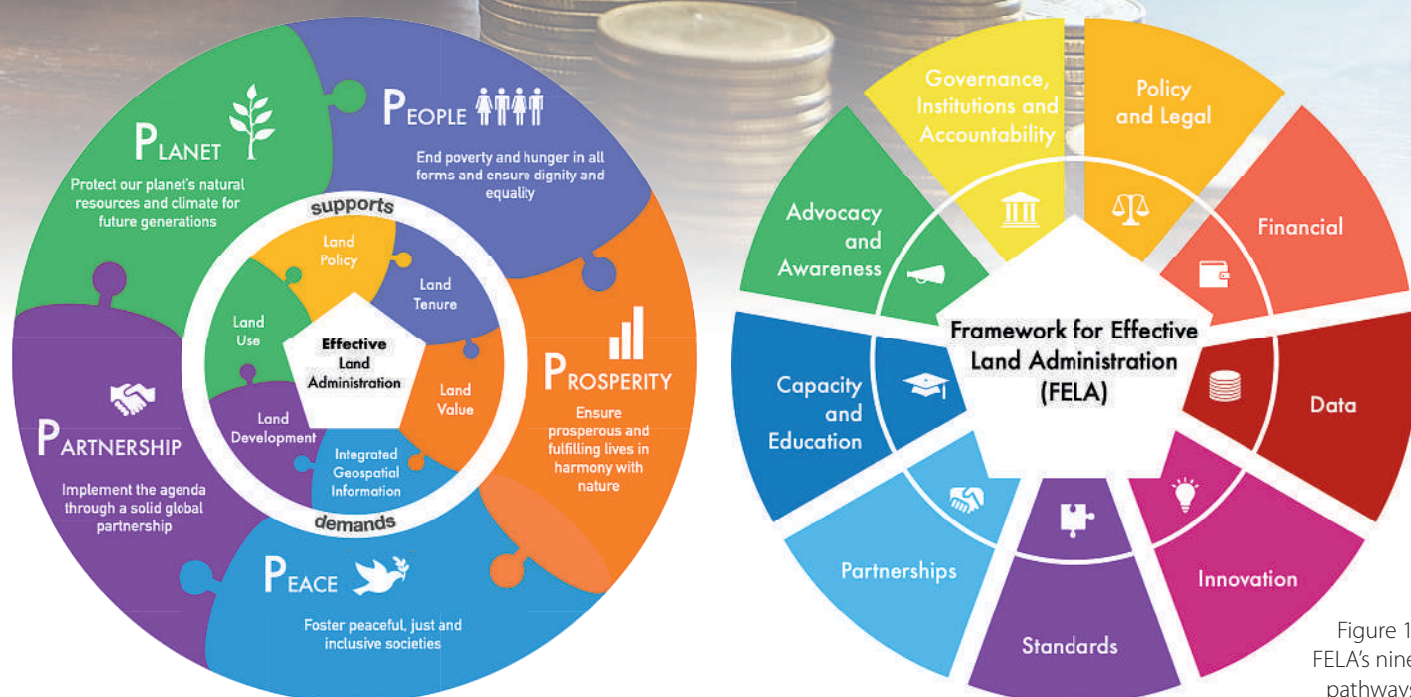


Figure 1. FELA's nine pathways

in the land administration domain. The definition sets an aspirational target for what effective land administration should be and, with the goals and requirements, defines how we can get there.

This is followed by a detailed description of FELA's nine strategic pathways (see Figure 1), which provides the compass for actually implementing FELA. Each of the pathways can be considered by itself or with others. Nevertheless, implementation will vary from country to country, based on national priorities and context. The pathways can even be incrementally updated over time, as new knowledge and innovation enters the land administration domain.

**More work to be done**

The process to create FELA was rigorous and involved many rounds of consultations and consensus building. In August 2018, UN-

GGIM encouraged Expert Group on Land Administration and Management (EG LAM) to formulate an overarching policy guidance that could be referenced by all member states. Member states from all regions, together with the global stakeholder community, participated in this process, and EG LAM received almost 600 individual comments and contributions to the initial FELA drafts. More than 50% were fully accepted and the changes incorporated into the final draft, while another 45% were considered and harmonised with other refinements.

This high level of involvement and the inclusive process reveals that the global land administration community is serious and ready for engagement and consensus-building efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and to leave no one behind.

But adoption of FELA by the UN is just the starting point. Communication,

education and awareness campaigns are needed in the sector. FELA needs to be translated into languages other than English. This work is under way.

Meanwhile, UN-GGIM and EG LAM remain committed to continuing the work towards a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable land administration. But to achieve this, support is needed from all actors: global organisations, internationally recognised donor agencies, development partners, peak professional bodies, academia, NGOs and CSOs and related networks – and most of all, land administration practitioners and professionals.

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