

Article

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Special Issue

Feature Papers for the "Land Socio-Economic and Political Issues" Section: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals—2nd Edition

Edited by
Prof. Dr. Hossein Azadi



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Impact of Political Economy on Land Administration Reform

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Abstract

Population growth, urbanization and climate change are all factors that have made it increasingly difficult for governments to manage, allocate and permit the development and use of the finite land resource that is available in any society. Land administration plays a crucial role in supporting governments in these efforts. The World Bank and other donors have provided financial backing to help governments implement land administration reforms. While many of these reform projects focus on finance and technology, some succeed, while others fail to create lasting, meaningful change. The reasons for this usually do not relate to problems with finance or technology but are often due to political economy factors. Approaches to consider political economy are reviewed. The usefulness and viability of using political economy analysis in the design of land administration reform is confirmed in a policy Delphi survey. An innovative framework to systematically consider the use of political economy analysis in the design of land administration reform is developed and validated. This research addresses a significant gap, as there has been limited exploration of the political economy of land administration. The findings will be valuable for governments, development partners, and specialists involved in designing and implementing large-scale land administration reform initiatives.

Keywords: land administration; land administration reform; political economy; improved service delivery



Academic Editor: Hossein Azadi

Received: 3 August 2025

Revised: 5 September 2025

Accepted: 10 September 2025

Published: 15 September 2025

Citation: Burns, A.F.; Rajabifard, A.; Shojaei, D. Impact of Political Economy on Land Administration Reform. *Land* **2025**, *14*, 1888. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land14091888>

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1. Introduction

In 2021, land and real property accounted for approximately two-thirds of global net worth [1]. As a finite resource, land must be carefully managed to meet the needs of both current and future generations. However, it faces growing pressures from factors like population growth, urbanization, and climate change. Pressure on land results in a range of other difficulties including food insecurity, land degradation, and the marginalization of vulnerable groups in both urban and rural sectors. Governments formulate and implement policies to balance competing demands for land, addressing issues such as housing, food production, industry and economic development, resource extraction (both renewable and non-renewable), biodiversity, and protected areas, etc.

Governments create land administration systems to formally recognize and safeguard property rights. Land administration is defined as the ‘process of determining, recording and disseminating information about the ownership, value and use of land when implementing land management policies’ (UNECE [2] p. 108). Land administration encompasses systems for recording land and property rights, monitoring changes to those rights over time, valuing land and property, collecting property taxes, and guiding land use and development. These systems typically function within policy, legal, and institutional frameworks

that have developed over long periods. While the recognition and protection of property rights serve as a vital public good, in practice, some governments protect only the interests of elites, while others lack the capacity to safeguard rights due to inconsistent policies, weak legal frameworks, limited resources, or inadequate enforcement [3].

Governments in developing countries are increasingly pursuing major reforms in land administration procedures, processes, and systems to improve the delivery of land administration services across society. Major reform may be necessary to implement existing policy and legislative frameworks, and the reform may involve programs to systematically recognize property rights, but it may also seek to extend the geographic coverage and/or range and type of land administration services being provided to citizens by government.

Implementing large-scale land administration reform often requires substantial investment, and in many developing countries policymakers turn to expert advice and support to design and carry out these reforms. The World Bank has been, and remains, a leading financier of such initiatives. Other development partners have also played key roles, including the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which has funded major reforms in countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia.

This paper examines the design of large-scale land administration reforms financed with support from development partners. Such reforms generally target priority activities, though these priorities shift over time. A review of 42 World Bank projects implemented across Europe and Central Asia over the previous two decades to 2016 revealed three generations of reform initiatives: the first generation emphasized farm privatization, restitution, and regularization; the second generation expanded to land registration, valuation, taxation, and land administration at scale; and the emerging third generation has increasingly focused on land consolidation, land-use planning, and land-use monitoring [4]. In other regions there are differing priorities. Many countries in Africa have introduced concepts of eminent domain, land titling and cadastre but in most countries these formal systems only cover a small proportion of the country and in urban areas the regulatory frameworks often impose standards for legal procedures, building construction and land use that are unaffordable [5].

Development partners have traditionally emphasized financing technology and technical activities, guided by detailed analyses of economic benefits. In a World Bank publication Fritz, Levy [6] in a World Bank observed that:

“In the 1970s, donor agencies and other development practitioners sought to sidestep politics as much as possible and focus advice on technical questions and solutions, both because political incentives appeared so frequently incompatible with development in the public interest and because politics had become so deeply entangled with foreign policy considerations at the time”. ([6] p. 2)

A key consideration is political economy, which is defined by Weingast and Wittman [7] as the methodology of economics applied to the analysis of political behavior and institutions, with institutions defined as “both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)”. ([8] p. 97)

The lack of focus on political economy was noted in land sector reform by Barhate [9] who, in preparing an internal report to review the coordination of World Bank staff working in separate units on land sector reform in the urban and rural sectors, observed that:

“There is a need for a large-scale study specifically probing the political economy of land in developing countries. The literature review revealed that eventually the Bank will have to deal with the political economy concerns”. ([9] p. 42)

Specific examples of how political economy issues have impacted on land administration projects reviewed by World Bank [10] include:

- (a) In Ghana, ongoing competition for rents between the state and customary authorities.
- (b) In Indonesia, resistance to policy reform, reluctance within land agencies to undertake business process re-engineering, and unwillingness to share data.
- (c) In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, reluctance to improve tenure security for the poorest and a failure to encourage willingness to pay fees for registering subsequent land transactions.
- (d) In Thailand, political resistance to legislating for improved property valuation.

The research aims to develop, refine and validate a framework to identify and address political economy issues in the design of a major land administration reform in a developing country financed by a development partner while aligning with recent international frameworks and maximizing the benefits of new and emerging technologies.

The data for this research was collected through: (a) a literature review focused on land administration reform and political economy; (b) case studies of reforms in Ghana, Indonesia, and Tanzania, based on publicly available documents and existing literature; (c) interviews with key government and development partner officials involved in reform design and implementation in these countries; (d) a policy Delphi survey to evaluate the relevance and feasibility of applying political economy analysis (PEA) in land administration reform; and (e) stakeholder feedback on a preliminary framework to systematically consider PEA in the design of land sector reform.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review, which establishes the theoretical foundation for the research. Section 3 sets out the methodology for the case studies, key informant interviews, and policy Delphi survey. Section 4 summarizes findings from case studies and key informant interviews, and the results of the policy Delphi survey that tests the value of PEA in specifying land administration reform. Section 5 builds on this analysis to propose and validate a framework for systematically applying political economy analysis in reform design. Section 6 concludes by linking back to the research objectives and outlining directions for future study.

2. Literature Review and Theory

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken focusing on land administration reform and political economy. The following text sets out the theoretical basis for an investigation of the usefulness and viability of undertaking PEA investigations to support the design of land administration reform and the appropriateness of the framework to systematically apply PEA in the design of land sector reform.

2.1. Land Administration Is Implemented by Government but Definitions Have Changed

The term 'land administration' has evolved with differing foci or emphases. Dale and McLaughlin [11] in their seminal book 'Land Administration' define land administration as 'those public sector activities required to support the alienation, development, use, valuation, and transfer of land' (Dale and McLaughlin [11] p. 1). This definition clearly associates land administration as a public sector activity. The use of the word 'alienation' which, in many jurisdictions, refers to the allocation of private rights over land held by the state or the public and the word 'transfer' focuses the definition on private rights and the trading in these rights.

FAO in their glossary of terms define land administration in broader terms as being 'the set of systems and processes for making land tenure rules operational. It includes the administration of land rights, land use regulations, and land valuation and taxation. Land administration may be carried out by agencies of the formal state, or informally through

customary leaders (<https://www.fao.org/4/y4307e/y4307e09.htm>, accessed 28 July 2025). This definition highlights that land administration is composed of systems and processes. These systems and processes make land tenure rules operational. According to this definition, land administration may be carried out formally by the state or informally by customary leaders. The recognition that land administration can operate through both formal and informal systems underscores a central tension in discussions with government on land administration and land sector reform.

Government has the authority and should have the capacity to provide land administration services for society. In a society where land administration is being provided informally by customary leaders, a critical issue that should be addressed in proposing land administration reform is the formal recognition of these informal arrangements and how reform can be implemented in a manner that does not have adverse social impacts, particularly for vulnerable sectors of society. Government may or may not see this as an issue, but any development partner funding land administration reform will almost certainly raise the issue in discussing the reform. Where the institutions are predatory and there is little willingness by government to discuss changes in key policies such as land tenure policy it has been suggested that it may be best to build the strength of informal institutions [12] and non-government organizations so that they can help “...nudge the elite bargain in that direction, is the right approach” (Dercon [13] p. 325).

2.2. Land Administration Standards and Guidelines

There are no universal standards governing land administration policies, legislation, institutions, systems, or procedures. Instead, each jurisdiction develops its own complex framework, typically comprising a mix of policies, laws, and regulations that cover a range of topics including land tenure policy, land registration, contracts and contract enforcement, family and succession law, religious law, financial law and the use of property as collateral, property taxation, land use planning and development controls, biodiversity and environmental protection, management of public and state land, and the preservation of culturally or religiously significant sites, etc.

There are no universal standards for land administration systems, processes, or service delivery. While the principles of “best practice” in land administration have been outlined [14], a framework for evaluating land administration systems has been proposed [15], and ten guiding principles have been elaborated [16], these remain advisory rather than prescriptive. The Land Administration Domain Model (LADM) has been developed and adopted as an international standard, providing a conceptual data model for defining parties, rights, and spatial units. In addition, international geographic information standards have been applied to support the European Union’s INSPIRE directive.

The UN and other international organizations have developed a range of guidelines to help governments create equitable and sustainable systems for securing property rights. Key initiatives include:

- **Continuum of Rights**—Developed by UN-Habitat, this concept emphasizes that effective land administration systems must recognize and provide legal protection across the full spectrum of land tenure types, including formal, informal, and customary arrangements.
- **Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGTs)**—Endorsed in 2012 by the Committee on World Food Security and prepared by the FAO, the VGGTs promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries, and forests as a foundation for eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development, and protecting the environment.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—Adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, the 2030 Agenda sets out 17 SDGs as a global call to action. These goals aim to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, and drive economic growth while addressing climate change and safeguarding the planet’s natural resources.
- New Urban Agenda (NUA)—Adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito in October 2016 and later endorsed by the UN General Assembly, the NUA outlines a shared vision of inclusive, sustainable cities where everyone enjoys equal rights and access to opportunities.

While these instruments provide valuable tools and guidance on specific aspects of land administration, they stop short of establishing a comprehensive international standard.

2.3. Lessons from Land Administration Reform Experience

Recent land administration reform initiatives have been documented [4,10,17], with many projects focusing on land tenure regularization and the provision of services to maintain and update property rights registers. A review of this experience [18] highlights several common lessons. Land administration reform is a long-term, context-specific process that requires sustained capacity building. Success depends on developing an efficient and effective land administration system, making informed choices about appropriate technologies, and prioritizing social inclusion and public awareness.

2.4. Topics That Typically Should Be Considered in Designing Land Sector Reform

The agency providing land administration services plays a key role in preparing detailed proposals for land administration reform. The proposals prepared are typically structured under the existing policy and statutory legal frameworks and are largely confined to the use of existing procedures and processes, with limited consideration of alternative approaches and methodologies. This can seriously constrain the scope of the social, economic, and environmental impact of the proposed reform. Where government is discussing with a development partner the possibility of financial support for reform, the development partner will have a range of topics that will need to be addressed in developing the proposal for reform. These topics are based on prior experience and knowledge in the country, region and globally and the need to fully address any safeguard policies. Key references for these discussions are the global guidelines, particularly the VGGTs. Some of the topics likely to be covered are discussed below, drawing on information gathered in the literature review.

Land tenure policy. Governments in proposing major land administration reform typically start with the land tenure policy for the rights recorded in the formal land administration system. The procedures and systems to record these rights are based on policies on the evidence required to prove rights. In many countries, the land tenure policy for rights to be recorded in the formal system is very restrictive. Here consideration of the continuum of rights and discussion on what constitutes ‘legitimate rights’ under the VGGTs provides a framework for discussion between government and a development partner interested in supporting an investment in land administration reform.

In many countries governments cannot supply serviced land through the formal land administration system. Napier, Berrisford [5] in reviewing many urban land markets in Africa concluded “... that informal settlements occupy an important place in the urban land market and play a critical role in urban land access” (Napier, Berrisford [5] p. 51). If informal settlements are in areas proposed for land administration reform, there will usually be discussion on the policy for regularization of informal settlements.

Where land is held under customary tenure systems any major land administration reform project needs to consider the status of customary tenure under the current policy and legislative frameworks. Where a country has been colonized, colonial administration

is likely to have impacted on customary tenure systems. Berry [19] observes that “colonial regimes reshaped Africans’ relations to the land in at least three ways: through physical displacement, demarcation of territorial and social boundaries, and the invention or reinterpretation of rules governing land access, transfer, and use” (Berry [19] p. 643). On independence some countries have challenged the authority of the customary leaders with mixed success [20,21]. Three main approaches have been identified for harmonizing formal land administration systems with customary land tenure: (i) codifying local land rights, (ii) registering local land rights to grant them legal status, and (iii) applying the principle of subsidiarity within public administration authorities [22]. In Africa various strategies have been adopted to support customary tenure, including Land Boards in Botswana, Namibia and Uganda; registering customary rights in Mozambique, Tanzania and Francophone countries; and registering individual rights in Côte d’Ivoire and Niger [20].

Inconsistencies in policy/legislative/institutional frameworks. In many countries seeking to improve land administration systems there are serious inconsistencies and a lack of coherence in the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks. The roles and responsibilities of government agencies often overlap, both across agencies and within the agencies at the different levels of government. While a land agency may be nominated as the implementing authority for a proposed land administration reform project, this agency may not be able to implement the planned tasks without the cooperation of other agencies or other levels of government. In Tanzania the central Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development is only responsible for policy, guidance and support and land administration services are provided by staff in the President’s Office Regional Administration and Local Government [23]. In Indonesia land certificates can only be issued for non-forest land and this has created uncertainty in eligibility for certificates [24]. The inconsistencies and incoherence in the policy, legislative and institutional frameworks can create several problems including the fact that other agencies refuse to cooperate and provide the necessary staff and resources and/or do not provide necessary data and information.

Social feasibility. In some countries there are legal or cultural restrictions on land transactions. Landowners may also have little or no access to institutional finance and this reduces incentives for participation. This raises several questions. Where there are active informal land markets is there public awareness of the benefits of the formal system? Is the formal system efficient and affordable? These are all questions that should be addressed in considering land administration reform.

Assessing social feasibility is especially important in contexts with multiple formal and informal tenure systems or a continuum of rights. Durand-Lasserve, Durand-Lasserve [25] describe three coexisting land delivery systems in Bamako, Mali: a customary channel, a public channel issuing precarious individual titles, and a formal private channel granting property titles. These systems operate within an active informal market, where property owners often shift between customary and precarious titles, with a formal pathway available for upgrading from precarious to full property titles. Any land reform in Mali to strengthen or expand the formal land administration system would need to understand the current and future social feasibility of the reform.

Barry and Augustinus [26] note the importance of testing the assumptions on the social feasibility of systematic land titling and upgrading the tenure rights of informal settlers in a jurisdiction with a continuum of land rights. The literature documents various approaches and tools for investigating the rules and practices of informal land markets, including studies in Tanzania [27]; the development of a land market assessment tool [28] and its application in Indonesia [29] and Pakistan [30]; research across several African countries [5], in Mali [25]; and in Mexico [31].

Demand for services and financial sustainability. A major land administration reform intervention can require significant resources and funding, particularly if it involves a major systematic registration activity and a major investment in establishing offices and establishing ICT systems to record and maintain information on rights in land. The investment in first registration will be dissipated if the subsequent dealings in property rights are not registered. Across the world, there are numerous examples of efficient land administration systems that deliver affordable services valued by citizens. These systems often generate substantial revenue through user fees and charges, typically exceeding the government's costs of maintaining the system and delivering land administration services. But it is important that the potential demand for the services being offered by the proposed reform is assessed. There have been many efforts to establish local land administration capacity, particularly in Africa to support customary tenure, but there is often a high cost in creating local land administration capacity [32]. Will the systems developed to establish local land administration capacity be financially sustainable?

Opposition from customary and community leaders, staff, and vested interests. Community leaders and those interested in protecting the rights of customary landholders can marshal significant resistance to efforts by government to extend the formal land administration system into areas where land is traditionally held under customary tenure. There is no single "best" model for decentralizing land administration [33]. Similarly, "community-led land tenure reform" requires a clear definition of what constitutes "the community," which brings to the forefront long-standing debates over the balance of authority between civil and traditional local institutions in Africa.

Land administration reform can be resisted by those that benefit from the current system and procedures. This resistance to new procedures and processes can come from staff interfacing with the public as has been reported in Ghana [34] or from those supervising staff providing land administration services in Kenya [35,36]. Private service providers such as notaries or cadastral surveyors can be an important part of the system to deliver land administration services. These providers can become 'veto players' in attempting reform if they see their interests threatened.

2.5. Considering Political Economy in Designing Reform

There is growing recognition that development assistance "... is inescapably, inevitably highly political, and always has been" (Carothers and Gramont [37] p. 8). In response, donors have made concerted efforts to adopt more politically informed approaches when designing interventions, using methodologies such as Thinking and Working Politically (TWP), Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation, and Doing Development Differently [38,39]. In the context of land administration reform, studies have shown that approaches like TWP complement rather than replace existing methods. However, there is significant potential to apply political economy analysis (PEA) in the design of major land administration reforms [18].

Development partners have used PEA to design and implement development assistance and reform projects. PEA helps development partners understand the real power structures, incentives, and potential obstacles to governance reforms, making interventions more context-sensitive and effective. PEA looks beyond the roles and mandates of formal institutions to map the actual social and political power structures. This analysis identifies potential resistance to reforms and helps development partners align governance interventions to local realities [40,41]. Development partners can also foster governance improvements by supporting conditions that enable societies to demand accountability, transparency, and the rule of law from their governments, rather than simply imposing technical solutions [42].

The political economy context for the development partner can influence proposals for reform with development partners in countries that value or prioritize market efficiency can often bypass weak state structures while development partners in counties that do not prioritize market efficiency might focus on state-led service delivery. These choices affect governance by either strengthening state capacity or empowering alternative actors [41]. The political economy in the development partner can also create internal incentives to focus on financial and technical solutions rather than seek the innovative adaptable approaches that might arise from PEA investigations in the design and implementation of reform projects [43]. Hudson and Leftwich [44] outline three generations in the approaches adopted to investigate the political economy of development:

1. The first generation in the 1990s focused on 'governance' largely from a public sector management perspective.
2. The second generation brought in politics with an increased emphasis on historical, structural, institutional, and political factors.
3. The third generation combines elements from the first two generations and adopts assumptions, concepts, and methods from economics.

It is noted that the second generation has been criticized for producing results that are too broad and general to be useful and that the focus of the third generation on interests, incentives and institutions had reduced the focus on politics. The authors suggest that a deeper investigation is required that better explores the contested dynamics of political and development change by exploring both the interests and power of stakeholders and institutions or the formal and informal rules of the game. This process is called political economy analysis (PEA) [44].

A wide range of approaches and tools are used to support PEA, but they typically focus on three core questions [29]:

1. What is the problem?
2. Why does it occur?
3. How can it be addressed?

The PEA framework, shown in Figure 1 [6,45,46], frames the issue in a way that allows exploration of both long-term drivers and immediate factors [45]. Often, the issue under consideration is a specific challenge where previous technical analyses or interventions have not succeeded [6].

The next step is to examine the underlying drivers and factors that contribute to the problem or issue. This requires analysing the dynamic interactions among foundations, institutions, and actors [45,47]:

- Foundations or structural factors are slow to change and may include history, geography, resource endowments, demographic shifts, and prevailing social norms [6,45].
- Institutions, both formal and informal, shape and are shaped by power relations. They are expressed through laws, norms, social values, and expected patterns of behavior [8,44,45].
- Actors or stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations that influence formal institutions and determine the extent to which informal institutions align with or diverge from them. In PEA, these actors may be influential participants or marginalized groups excluded from decision-making [45].

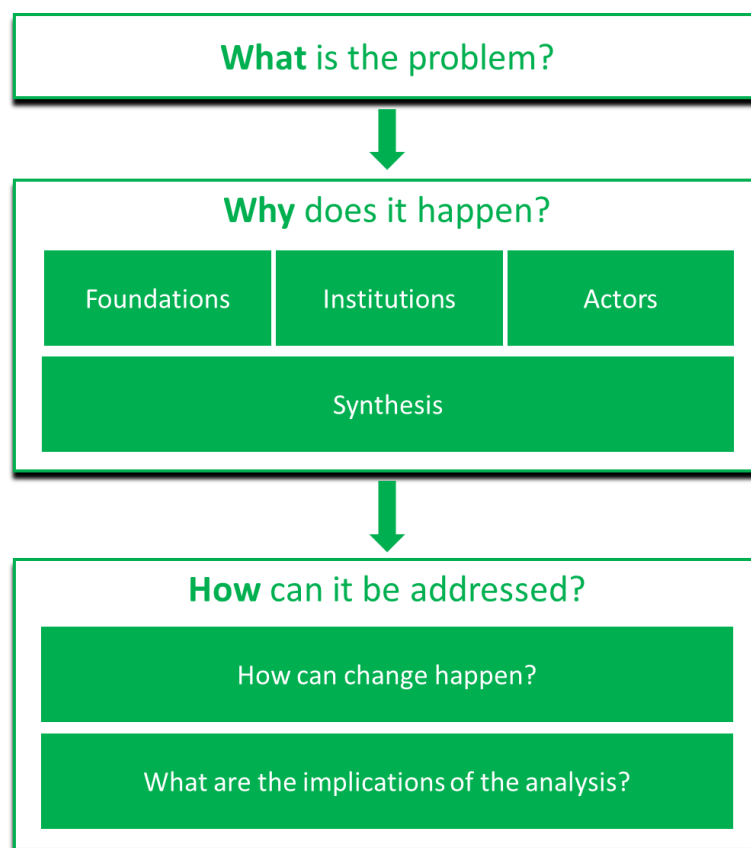


Figure 1. PEA Framework from [6].

PEA can be applied either as an In-Depth study or as a continuous activity supporting a specific intervention. An In-Depth PEA begins with a clearly defined overarching question or issue that warrants deeper analysis. This guiding question is structured to reveal the underlying issues [45]. An In-Depth PEA would be required to support the design of land sector reform, and this is likely to evolve into a continuous activity supporting the implementation of the intervention.

There are different tools and approaches for PEA. One approach is the Problem-Driven Iterative Approach (PDIA) [6,46,48,49]. The PDIA toolkit developed by the Center for International Development at Harvard University provides a series of tools that break down problems into root causes, identifies entry points, searches for possible solutions and provides a framework to plan activity and monitor, learn from experience and modify the ongoing PEA plan of activity [49]. Stakeholder Analysis features in many PEA approaches. Various methodologies have been applied to identify, distinguish, and categorize stakeholders, as well as to examine the relationships among them [50,51]. One approach categorizes stakeholders across 5 pillars: agency, system roles, power, alignment and readiness for transformation [52]. The term ‘political change space’ is used in some PEA methodologies to describe a conceptual space where political actors, citizens, groups can participate, contest, and negotiate for social or political change. Gaventa (2006) proposes a three-dimensional political change space, with the three dimensions being space (closed, invited or claimed/created), form (visible, hidden or invisible) and level of power (local, national, global) [53].

A solid PEA requires a rigorous design. A range of research methods can be used to collect the data and information required for a PEA, including desk reviews, field investigations, key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGDs), and, where appropriate, surveys and quantitative data analysis. Much of the data gathered for PEAs

is qualitative data and it can be important to triangulate emerging findings to check the data for any bias [45]. The analytical findings from the PEA set out a roadmap to identify potential entry points and strategies for engagement [6].

PEA has been proposed as a complementary approach to traditional technical and economic analyses of feasible interventions, as illustrated in Figure 2 from Fritz and Levy [6]. However, there is limited evidence that this approach is being applied in practice when designing land administration reform projects [47]. Fritz, Levy [6], in reviewing PEA experience in Mongolia, Ghana, and the Philippines, countries where there are serious land issues, set out PEA that was undertaken at the country level. In Mongolia, the World Bank Country Management Unit (CMU) commissioned interlinked PEAs in response to an unexpected decision by government to create a new social program funded by revenue generated by resource extraction. In Ghana country level PEA provided some guidance in the preparation of a Commercial Agriculture Project [6].

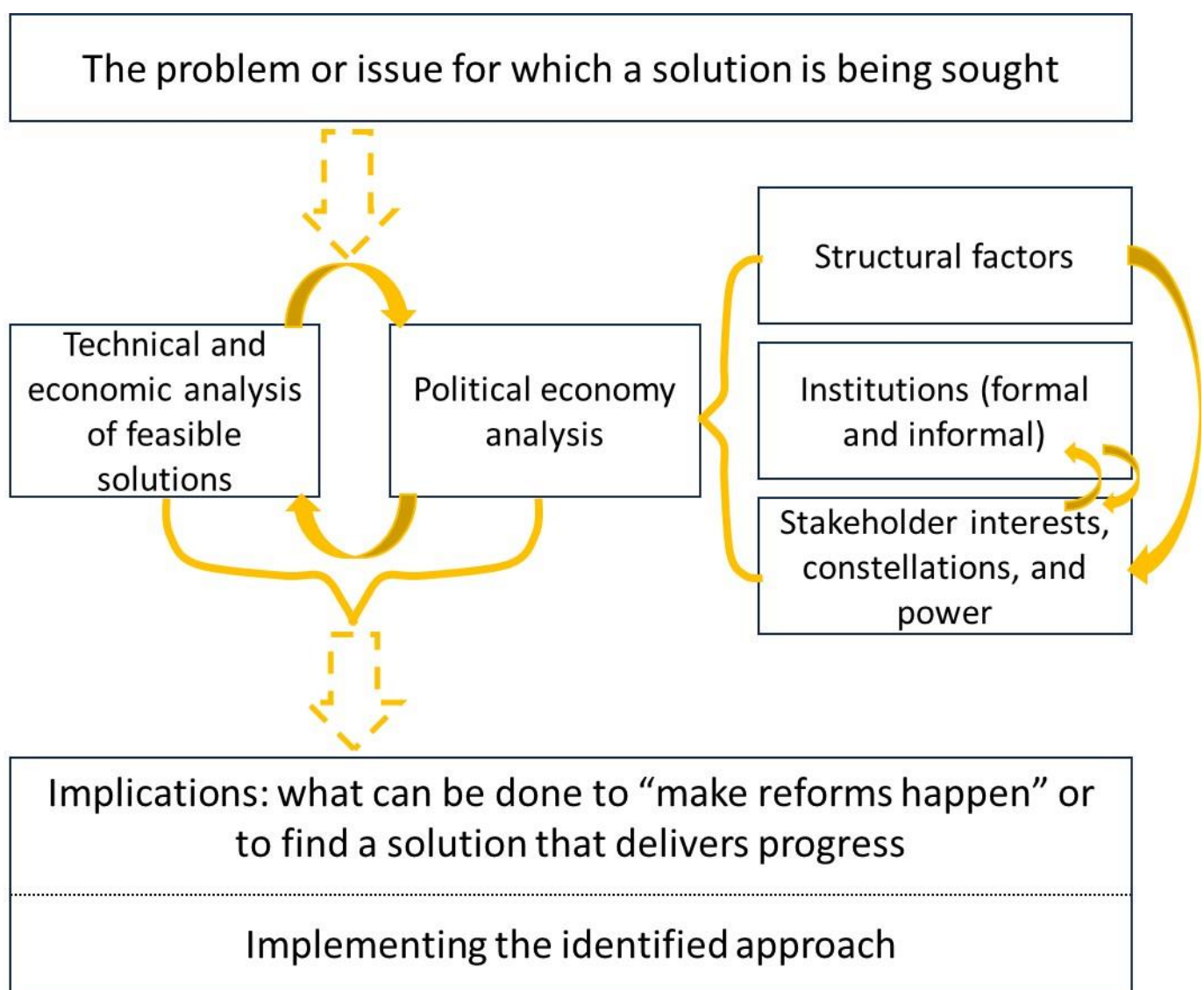


Figure 2. Problem driven PEA (from [6]).

2.6. PEA and Land Administration Reform

The reform design focuses on a set of interventions aligned with an agreed development objective, while also typically making assumptions about key issues such as:

- The potential benefits to citizens from the reform. These benefits might include tenure security, the capacity to access and utilize official land records to support investment and improved access to institutional credits secured against the property.
- The understanding of citizens of what is being expected of them in participating in the project, and
- The long-term expectation that citizens will keep their formal land registration documentation up to date.

In many cases, these assumptions remain untested during project design, which can result in weak public awareness, limited participation in the reform process, and reduced demand for land administration services [26]. For projects that include systematic registration, the quality of the registers will degrade over time if landowners do not apply to update the registration with changes in rights over time. PEA analysis could be structured to test the key assumptions for the expectations of citizens of reform, and this should result in changes in the design of the reform.

Land is a scarce and valuable resource, and any analysis of the political economy of land administration reform must consider issues such as corruption, rent-seeking, and patronage. Economic rents can emerge through land allocation processes, land use regulations, and other related regulatory frameworks. Patronage or clientelism can also facilitate land allocation and create tension between the formal and informal systems for land allocation and use [48]. A recent review of land administration systems in Africa identified evidence of corruption in land use planning and development approval (rents from conversion and re-zoning, abuse of power to promote development, acquisition of land for private parties, failure to pay fair compensation), formal land administration (fraud and production of fabricated certificates, illegal allocation of public land to private use) and customary land tenure (abuse of power by chiefs, conversion of land under customary tenure to private use) [54].

Elite capture of land resources has also been reported in the literature [13,55]. Rent-seeking may be evident in reviewing social feasibility, demand for services, financial sustainability and resistance from staff and service providers. Patronage may be evident in reviewing social feasibility and opposition from elite landowners and community leaders.

3. Methodology

This section provides an overview of the methodology used to gather data and information gathered from the case studies and the key informant interviews and the methodology used for the policy Delphi survey that was undertaken to confirm that PEA would be useful and viable in supporting the design of land administration reform.

3.1. Methodology for Case Studies

Three countries—Ghana, Indonesia, and Tanzania—have been selected for the case studies. There have been nine major land administration interventions in the three countries in the past two decades. These projects are summarized in the table in Appendix A and an assessment of the ability of governments in Ghana, Indonesia and Tanzania to protect property rights, using the model proposed by Cai, Murtazashvili [3] as a starting point, is set out in Appendix B. The information for the review is drawn from publicly available review documents and academic literature. The publicly available documents are predominantly various design and evaluation reports that are available on the World Bank web pages. These documents contain a significant amount of information, but the review concentrates on:

- the design of the interventions, and
- the political economy issues that have impacted on project outcomes and how these issues were assessed in the design of the interventions.

3.2. Methodology for Key Informant Interview

Key informant interviews were recorded with fourteen individuals involved in the design and implementation of the major reform projects in Ghana, Indonesia, and Tanzania, seven with current or former development partner officials and seven with current or former government officials. Summary reports were prepared from these confidential interviews, and these reports were shared with those interviewed with the opportunity to comment or correct the reports.

3.3. Methodology for Policy Delphi Survey

There are typically tight timeframes for the design of a reform project that are set by policy makers in government and the development partner [18]. The design of reform projects requires significant effort by governments seeking finance to align with development partner safeguard policies. Governments seeking World Bank finance must prepare and document strategies to comply with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework [56]. Conducting a PEA investigation to inform the design of reform entails additional effort and costs.

This raises two key questions when deciding whether to apply PEA in land administration reform design:

- (a) will PEA be useful in designing land administration reform?
- (b) Can PEA be successfully completed in the timeframes typically available for the design of reform?

This research addresses these two questions through a policy Delphi survey. The Delphi method was developed by RAND in the 1950s to predict the technological development of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union. The method is a forecasting process that makes predictions based on a panel of experts reaching consensus on key statements or questions after responding to a series of questionnaires. The Delphi methodology has the following key characteristics [57]:

1. Anonymous participation by the experts.
2. More than one round of questionnaires.
3. Feedback to experts after each iteration.
4. Statistical analysis to assess the opinion of the panel of experts.

The Delphi method takes several forms, including the traditional Delphi, the policy Delphi, the modified Delphi, and the online or e-Delphi approach [58,59]. The traditional Delphi approach focuses on the participants reaching consensus on key issues or parameters and reducing variance over a series of questionnaire rounds. The policy Delphi method is less focused on reaching consensus and seeks to explore differing opinions on a given topic or policy [59,60]. The policy Delphi method has been selected for this research. Blackham [61] used a policy Delphi survey to explore a range policy scenarios to help extend working lives in the UK.

The research focuses on major land administration reform projects designed by the World Bank and the individuals that design such projects. The questions for the policy Delphi survey were presented as scenarios for the possible adoption of PEA to support the design of land administration reform in specific contexts. The research goal was to assess the appropriateness and viability of considering political economy issues in the design of land administration reform, and to facilitate an expert discussion on the importance of considering and investigating political economy issues in the design of land administration reform.

The survey was undertaken with full anonymity using questionnaires set out and responses collected electronically using anonymized links in the Qualtrics XM software that was available from June 2024 to March 2025 through the University of Melbourne

(<https://q.surveys.unimelb.edu.au/homepage/ui>). The intention was to collect responses from at least twelve experts with heterogeneous backgrounds and experience. Bulger and Housner [62] suggest that the panel should have at least ten members and there is little benefit in increasing the size of the panel beyond 20–25 members. Two rounds of questionnaires were planned. There is no general standard for the measurement of consensus in a Delphi study, and it has been noted that both consensus and stability should be assessed when concluding a study [63].

The quantitative data analysis after each round was to include response rates, coefficient of variation, inter-quartile range (IQR), and the percentage of responses generally positive for the three questions asked with a 5-unit Likert scale in each scenario. Rayens and Hahn [64] recommend the IQR be used to assess consensus on policy Delphi studies, but this may be insufficient where $IQR = 1$ where the percentage generally positive might be used to assess consensus. It was proposed that stability be assessed using changes in coefficient of variation between rounds, one of the options proposed by von der Gracht [63]. With a 5-unit Likert scale an accepted test for consensus is an IQR of 1 or less with a IQR of greater than one indicating a lack of consensus. A coefficient of variation of 0.5 or less has been used as an indicator of reasonable internal agreement and a consistent decrease in the coefficient of variation between rounds has been used to indicate an increase in consensus. The process for the implementation of the methodology is set in the figure below (Figure 3).

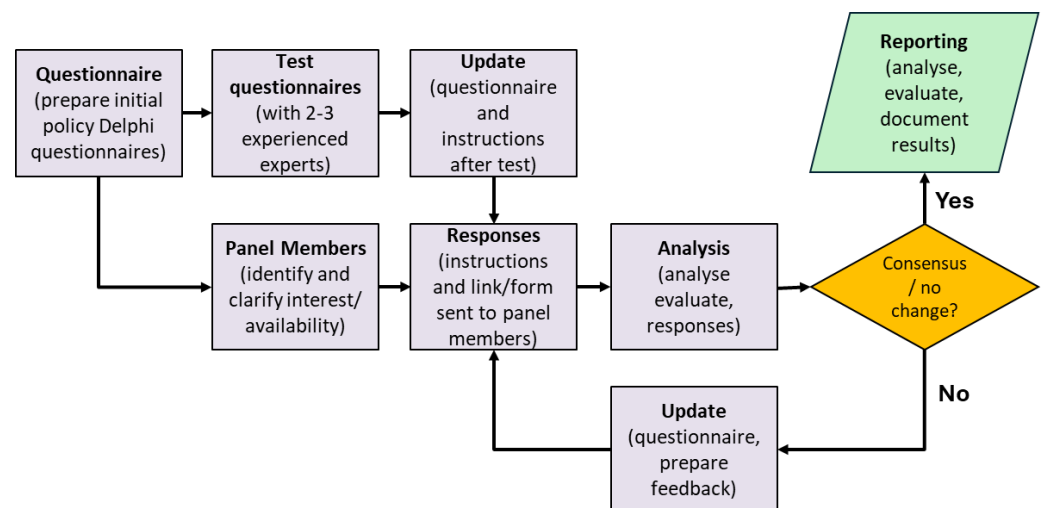


Figure 3. Process to implement the policy Delphi method.

4. Results—Case Studies—Key Informant Interviews—Policy Delphi Survey

This section provides an overview of the data and information gathered from the case studies and the key informant interviews and provides information on the policy Delphi survey that was undertaken to confirm that PEA would be useful and viable in supporting the design of land administration reform.

4.1. Results from the Case Studies

A paper has been prepared to document the information gathered and analysis of this information from the cases studies and key informant interviews. The Case Studies provide evidence of the relevance of some of the factors that are often overlooked in land administration reform. These include:

- Cumbersome, difficult to access land registration processes are noted in all three countries, as is limited public awareness of land policy and land law.

- There is also resistance from customary leaders in Ghana and the landed elite in Indonesia.
- Resistance from staff and professional service suppliers (cadastral surveyors in Ghana and Tanzania and notaries in Indonesia) is also apparent in the three countries.

These factors do not appear to have been a focus in the design of the reforms covered in the case studies. For example, there is not a lot of focus on business process reengineering.

4.2. Results from the Key Informant Interviews

The following key insights are drawn from the key informant interviews:

Ghana

- Reform should not be too ambitious; there should be strong capacity in the implementing agency and development partners supporting reform need to be aligned in reform objectives and activity.
- The project decision to work within the current policy and legal framework has been strongly criticized in the literature and in the independent evaluations of project outcomes but key informants felt that there was a strong argument that any effort to clarify the role of the state would not have succeeded.
- Successful land administration reform in Ghana needs to have a strong policy champion.

Indonesia

- Land administration reform in Indonesia requires a long-term engagement.
- The suggestion that a land administration reform project in a country like Indonesia needs to focus on policy reform rather than technical matters is not realistic. The investment in technical efforts has resulted in changes in policy and enabled the project and the land agency to take advantage of policy windows that have arisen.
- Changing deeply rooted business practices needs more than consultant reports and the input of external agencies.

Tanzania

- Good policy and laws and cost-effective, efficient procedures are important foundations for land administration reform but there needs to be a clear and effective mechanism to deliver the reform in the towns, districts, and villages.
- A champion at policy level is needed to support successful land administration reform in Tanzania.

4.3. Results from the Policy Delphi Survey

An initial questionnaire was prepared and discussed with three very qualified specialists with extensive experience in the design of large land administration reform projects (one currently working for the World Bank, one a former officer in FAO and the other with extensive experience working for bilateral development partners). Based on the feedback from these advisers, the number of scenarios was reduced to five. The research team prepared a list of forty-nine potential panel members. These potential invitees included nineteen individuals currently employed by the World Bank, including two from safeguards, six former World Bank employees, three current employees of bilateral development partners, four senior government officials, and seventeen others with a mix of consulting, development partner, and other employment histories.

On 10 October 2024, an invitation was sent by an individual independent of the research team to all forty-nine individuals. By late October positive replies were received from twenty individuals. These twenty individuals included 6 World Bank employees, one former World Bank employee, three employees of other development partners, three government employees and seven consultants. On 1 November 2024, an email was sent

to the twenty individuals with an anonymized link to the questionnaire. The survey was closed on 24 December 2024 with thirteen complete responses.

The data from the 13 complete responses to the first round was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed and feedback sent to the 20 participants who had agreed to participate (as the information was collected with anonymized links it was not possible to identify the 13 individuals who provided complete responses in round 1). The questionnaire was revised and on 24 February 2025 an anonymized link to the revised questionnaire was sent to the twenty participants. On 25 March 2025, the questionnaire was closed with fifteen complete responses, two more than the number of complete responses received in the round one questionnaire. The background information gathered indicated the following background for the fifteen participants in the second round:

- Eight of the participants had more than 20 years of experience, five had 10 to 20 years of experience and two had 5 to 10 years of experience.
- Thirteen individuals had been employed by government, eleven had been employed by development partners, nine had been employed as consultants and five had been employed by academic, civil society and other employers.
- Fifteen individuals had experience in policy roles, twelve had experience in management roles, fourteen had experience in technical roles, and five had experience in administrative roles.

The policy Delphi study was completed in 2 rounds as summarized in Table 1 with the panelists reaching consensus (see the analysis in Appendix C).

Table 1. Participation and timing of policy Delphi Survey Rounds.

Round	Participants	Response Rate	Period
1	13	65%	1 November to 24 December 2024
2	15	75%	24 February to 25 March 2025

The policy Delphi panelists agreed that PEA could be useful in designing land administration reform. The panelists also felt that PEA could be completed in the time that was typically available for the design of reform, although this level of confidence was less than that for the previous response. The panelists also were generally confident in responding to questions asked in all 5 scenarios.

However, the study was undertaken as a policy Delphi survey with the objective of exploring alternative approaches that were better or as good as PEA in addressing the problems set out in the scenarios. One panelist suggested for all 5 scenarios that power analysis and sensitivity analysis are alternatives to PEA but did not provide any further information and thus did not provide any different advice responding to the different investments, context and problem set out in the 5 different scenarios. This panelist also ranked all three responses in all 5 scenarios as ‘neither agree nor disagree’. Another panelist suggested hedonic pricing model and social mapping as an alternative approach to PEA in a response in one scenario.

The following text considers these three nominated alternative approaches:

- (a) Power analysis and sensitivity analysis. One panelist in the round 2 responses consistently noted that power analysis and sensitivity analysis were alternative approaches to PEA without providing any details or context. Power analysis is a term used by development and social change specialists to understand how power can reinforce or reduce poverty and marginalization and to identify how positive forms of power can be mobilized [65]. The advantages listed for power analysis include enhanced sensitivities and competencies in ways to empower marginalized people and

the identification of possible perverse consequences. The disadvantages of power analysis include a requirement for a certain level of understanding and ability to apply key concepts of structure and agency and the risk that the process may be applied in a superficial and limited manner [65]. Power analysis was established by SIDA [66] and has been used extensively by some international NGOs, particularly Oxfam (<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/313950>, accessed 28 July 2025). The available material on power analysis seems to be dated with very limited information found that documents the successful application of power analysis by government or development partners in designing reform. However, there is the possibility of using PEA and power analysis in complementary ways to make development cooperation more effective and transformative [65]. For these reasons power analysis is not seen at this stage as a replacement or alternative to PEA in the design of land administration reform at this stage, but the methodology is noted as one worth further research.

- (b) Hedonic pricing model and social mapping. One panelist suggested hedonic pricing model and social mapping as an alternative approach to PEA in a response to one scenario. The hedonic pricing model is an economic approach used to estimate the value of a good or service by breaking it down into its constituent characteristics. The price of a product is seen as the sum of the prices of its individual attributes. This model is widely used in real estate to assess how different factors like location, view, and proximity to amenities affect property prices. Social mapping involves categorizing spaces based on their social and use values. It is used to understand how different areas are perceived and utilized by communities. A hedonic pricing model and social mapping have been used to categorize urban green spaces in Stockholm [67]. It is unclear how the process might be used to address the problem of keeping property in the formal land administration system, the problem nominated in the scenario. At this stage it is left as a topic for further research.

5. Framework to Consider Political Economy in Reform Design

A PEA investigation to support the design of land administration reform is likely to be staged with an initial PEA Scoping that would start with the traditional technical activities to design a land administration reform project. The PEA Scoping would provide the basic information that would be used to define the topic for an In-Depth PEA that would support the project design and provide a framework for on-going monitoring and evaluation of the political economy for the reform. There are advantages in splitting the PEA into two stages. Starting with a PEA Scoping avoids a delay in starting the PEA, while gathering the information necessary to decide on the top-level question for the In-Depth PEA and avoiding the problems identified by some of the policy Delphi panelists of commissioning the In-Depth PEA before some key technical topics are investigated. These two stages in the PEA are set out in the framework in Figure 4 and are described below.

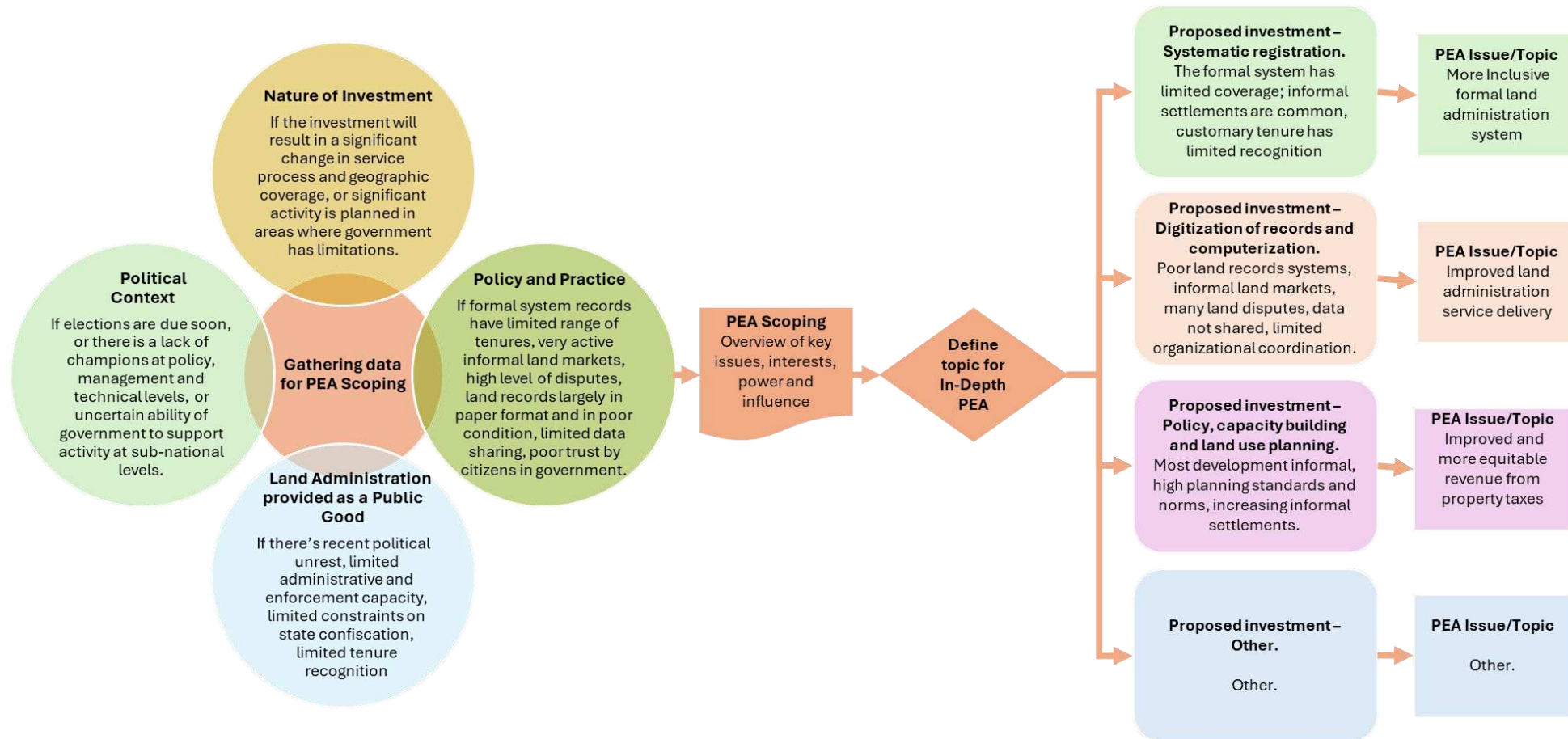


Figure 4. Framework to Systematically Consider Political Economy in the Design of Land Administration Reform.

5.1. PEA Scoping

The PEA Scoping should start with the traditional technical design activities and be completed before the design is completed so that an In-Depth PEA can be commissioned to provide PEA input into the reform design and to specify the ongoing PEA activity to support project implementation. The PEA Scoping should provide an overview of the key issues and the interests, power and influence of key stakeholders and insights into the way that reform can be blocked or how opportunities might encourage a move to more inclusive land governance. The framework has been structured to provide guidance in identifying key issues that might be investigated with PEA under the following four topics suggested by the literature review:

- The nature of the investment that is being funded under the project.
- The existing land administration policy and practices.
- The ability of the state to provide land administration services as a public good.
- The existing political context.

Nature of Investment. Further investigation seems appropriate if the proposed investment will result in significant changes in the land administration services being provided to citizens, or if there will be significant changes in the procedures being followed in providing land administration services, or if the geographic coverage of the land administration system is being significantly expanded through systematic registration and/or the establishment of new offices providing land administration services. There are no clear rules on what the term ‘significant’ means, but the technical design team should be gathering information on the number of properties currently registered in the formal land administration system, the number of offices and staff currently providing services, and the number of services or transactions registered each year and this can be compared to the likely numbers that will result from the proposed investment. If the reform will result in a significant change in procedures, such as is likely for a proposal to digitize paper records and computerize business processes, or for a proposal to convert from a deeds registration to a title registration system, then further investigation by a range of approaches including PEA seems clearly warranted. The issues that may be identified include land tenure policy limited in scope, poor participation in the formal land administration system, etc.

Policy and Practice. Further investigation seems warranted if the formal system is only registering a limited number of tenures and benefits a relatively small percentage of society. Discussions with lawyers and land brokers will indicate whether there are active informal land markets. Discussions with lawyers and court clerks will also indicate the relative frequency and nature of land disputes in the court system. Active informal land markets and high levels of land disputes in the court system often indicate problems with the formal land administration system. The services may be difficult to access, the processes difficult and expensive for users in terms of the direct financial cost of applying for services and the opportunity cost of devoting the time necessary to support the application, and the land records and systems available for staff may not support the provision of timely, efficient services. Records may be damaged, lost, or illegally edited, created, or destroyed. The land records also may not be available to other agencies due to a range of possible factors including the fact that most records and systems are in paper form and there are no policies for data sharing. All these issues would be typically picked up in the design of reform. What is often not investigated are the underlying causes of the problems or issues. These issues that could be investigated with PEA include land tenure policy, difficult and costly business processes, corruption, etc.

The Ability of the State to Provide Land Administration Services as a Public Good. Based on a review of the political economy literature, Cai, Murtazashvili, and Murtazashvili [3] propose that four political factors are required for a state to protect and

enforce property rights as a public good: political stability; administrative and enforcement capacity; political constraints on the state's ability to confiscate property; and inclusive political and economic institutions. A formulation is proposed to assess the status of these four political factors based on the World Bank Political Stability Index and key land governance indicators from the World Bank Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF) (see Tables A2 and A3 in Appendix B). The results may suggest using PEA to investigate land policy issues arising from land tenure policy, compulsory acquisition policies, etc.

Political Context. Successful land administration reform seems to require good political oversight, and this suggests that it is best to start a land administration reform project under a recently elected government rather than late in an election cycle. Reform also requires reform champions at policy, managerial and technical levels. There can also be a disconnect between the policies and laws put in place by central government and the implementation of these policies and laws and the provision of services at the local level. The issues that might arise include poor delivery of services at local levels, overlapping institutional mandates, etc.

5.2. *In-Depth PEA*

As the proposal for the land administration reform is clarified then an In-Depth PEA can be implemented with the political economy question framed to unpack the issues involved, including long-term drivers and short-term variables [45]. The information from the PEA Scoping will be a key reference in formulating the top-level political economy question. The problem may be a specific problem that is identified, or it can be a window of opportunity created by the investment or part of the investment for politically feasible approaches that could broaden engagement in inclusive land governance. The political economy question will depend on the context and the proposed investment. The framework sets out three investment and situational contexts and three PEA top-level statements that set out politically feasible approaches to broaden engagement in inclusive land governance.

A solid PEA requires a rigorous design. Various research methods can be used to prepare a PEA, including desk reviews, field investigations, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and possibly surveys and analysis of quantitative data. Much of the data gathered for PEAs is qualitative data and it can be important to triangulate emerging findings to check the data for any bias [45]. The analytical recommendations from the PEA provide a road map for potential entry points and ways to engage [6].

The specifications for the PEA study, in addition to defining clear objectives, should set out a comprehensive approach that includes stakeholder analysis, investigation and documentation of the historical context, and methodological rigor in the collection and analysis of data. It has been suggested that an in-depth PEA study can be completed in 2 weeks to several months, particularly if external support is required [45] but this could take significantly longer if the PEA study needs to be procured. The key skills required to complete a problem-driven PEA to support project design is the ability to apply key political economy concepts to project level issues and challenges and, depending on the nature of the project and issue, familiarity with focus groups and participatory approaches in gathering data and information [48]. There will be a cost in undertaking PEA, but the cost of a problem-driven PEA study is unlikely to be a significant additional cost to the overall design effort and associated tasks such as the preparation of systems and material to address safeguard policies.

The objective of the In-Depth PEA is to push for changes that will broaden engagement in inclusive land governance, changes that can be included in the reform design. The In-Depth PEA would also specify a plan of PEA activities that would be included in the reform design to support project implementation. The In-Depth PEA should detail the political

change space and include an influencing strategy that is built on the stakeholder analysis. This influencing strategy and the context for the political change space will be dynamic and changes in strategy will be necessary during project implementation. The project design should include mechanisms to measure the political change space. This strategy is likely to include monitoring of the political prioritization of the reform and how new events are affecting the context for land governance.

5.3. Validation of the Framework

An initial framework was presented in a side event arranged in the World Bank offices in Washington DC on Friday 9 May 2025, the last day of the 2025 World Bank Land Conference (<https://landportal.org/organization/world-bank-land-conference>, accessed 30 August 2025). The side event was scheduled as a 90-min event. The event was structured with: (a) an initial presentation on the political economy problems that arise in the design of large-scale land administration reform projects followed by an overview of PEA and its application in addressing these problems; (b) three presentations on the importance of PEA and its relevance to reform design by experienced PEA specialists; (c) a presentation of the proposed framework for the use of PEA in the design of land administration reform; and (d) a structured question and discussion session. The event had a total of 22 participants, 16 who physically attended the event in person and 6 individuals who participated virtually. Participants included World Bank staff, government officials, academics, and consultants involved in the design and implementation of land administration reform projects and other interested individuals.

The five key questions that were prepared in QR Codes to solicit feedback on the framework from the event participants were as follows:

1. You are designing a land administration reform in the country you are currently working in. Do you use PEA to support your design?
2. Are the four drivers described in the framework appropriate?
3. Is this a good framework to identify the key problems to investigate in the reform design?
4. The Framework proposes a register of the political economy issues and drawing information from the sources, filtering and prioritizing the main PEA issues. Is this a good approach?
5. What resources are needed to undertake PEA as part of the design process?

A set of Microsoft Forms (as available in Microsoft 365 version 2508 build 16.0.19127.20192) was set up to collect participant feedback on these five questions. The framework was considered appropriate by most participants with a few recommended changes which were subsequently used to update the framework. A key recommendation was that the framework needed to focus on potentially marginalized beneficiaries. This links possible PEA investigations to the routine discussions between policy makers and the design team on safeguard policies. PEA could support government in understanding the impact of the proposed reform on potentially marginalized beneficiaries and in the preparation of clear plans to implement the development partner safeguard policies.

The framework presented in the workshop included a register of political economy issues that was established and maintained by the design team. Most participants felt that the register was a useful approach, but concerns were raised about how it would be updated. The concept of preparing a register to record political issues prior to commissioning a PEA study has been replaced with a two-stage implementation to support project design.

There was a clear range in the views of the scope of the political economy analysis, with one participant seeing that an in-depth social science and ethnography study was required to examine the social implications of any reform on different levels in society and others expressing the need to complete the investigations in the time typically available for

the design of reform. One World Bank participant made it clear that the design had to be accommodated in a fixed schedule set by both government and the development partner. It was noted that in practice many World Bank projects are restructured and/or provided with additional financing and that the negotiations for the restructuring and additional financing provided a framework to address aspects that were not fully investigated in the initial reform design.

This diversity of perspectives reflects the differing aims of social researchers and development practitioners: researchers are generally focused on illustrating the complexity of social interactions and processes, while development practitioners aim to simplify this complexity to inform the design of reform initiatives [68,69].

6. Conclusions and Future Directions

This research examines major land administration reform in a developing country, funded by a development partner aiming to transform both land administration systems and the delivery of land services across society. These projects are developed by the government with close guidance from the development partner. The World Bank has historically been, and continues to be, a key financier of such initiatives. Other development partners, including the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), have also supported major reforms, notably in Rwanda and Ethiopia.

There is limited research on the political economy of land administration, and this study addresses that critical gap. Its findings will be relevant to governments and development partners considering investments in large-scale land administration reform, as well as to specialists involved in the design and implementation of such projects.

This research has produced a framework to systematically consider political economy in the design of land administration reform. The feasibility of using political economy analysis in the design of land administration reform was confirmed in a policy Delphi survey. The framework and associated tools have been presented in a workshop involving a broad spectrum of land administration reform specialists. This presentation validated the usefulness of the tool.

Two approaches or methodologies were identified in the second round of the policy Delphi study that warrant further investigation:

- (a) Power analysis and sensitivity analysis. The available material on power analysis seems to be dated with very limited information found that documents the successful application of power analysis by government or development partners in designing reform. However, there is the possibility of using PEA and power analysis in complementary ways to make development cooperation more effective and transformative. Power analysis is not seen at this stage as a replacement or alternative to PEA in the design of land administration reform at this stage, but the methodology is noted as one worth further research.
- (b) Hedonic pricing model and social mapping. It is unclear how the hedonic pricing model and social mapping might be used to address the problem of keeping property in the formal land administration system, the problem nominated in scenario 1, the problems listed in the other scenarios or more broadly how the process would be a better alternative to PEA in addressing political problems in designing land administration reform. At this stage it is left as a topic for further research.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.F.B.; methodology, A.F.B., A.R. and D.S.; validation, A.F.B.; formal analysis, A.F.B.; investigation, A.F.B.; writing—original draft preparation, A.F.B.; writing—review and editing, A.F.B. and D.S.; supervision, A.R. and D.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: Key data for the policy Delphi survey is included in the tables in Appendix C. Other data including the summaries of country experience from the key informant interviews are available from the authors.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

BAL	Basic Agrarian Law (Indonesia)
BPJN	National Land Agency (Indonesia)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMU	Country Management Unit (World Bank)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK, now FCDO)
DLP	Development Leadership Programme
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
FAO	Food and Agricultural Agency (UN)
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (UK)
FFPLA	Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration
FGD	Focus group discussions
FIG	International Federation of Surveyors
ICT	Information and communications technology
INSPIRE	Infrastructure for spatial information in Europe to support Community environmental policies, established under the INSPIRE Directive.
IQR	Inter-quartile range
KII	Key informant interviews
LAP	Land Administration Project
LGAF	Land governance assessment framework (World Bank)
LGI	Land governance indicator
LINK	Land International Network for Knowledge
LMA	Land Markey assessment
LTRS	Land Tenure and Records System (MCC)
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation (US)
NGO	Non-government organization
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PCM	Participatory community mapping
PDIA	Problem-driven iterative adaptation
PEA	Political economy analysis.
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TWP	Thinking and Working Politically
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
US	United States of America
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VGGTs	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (UN)
WGI	World Governance Indicator (World Bank)

Appendix A

Table A1. Major Land Administration Reform Projects, Ghana, Indonesia and Tanzania.

Country/Project	Duration	Cost	Objectives	Rating ¹
Ghana Land Administration Project (World Bank with CIDA providing US\$1.3 m, Germany US\$3.8 m, Nordic Development Fund US\$9.2 m, DFID US\$7.4 m) Implementation Completion Report Review: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/805541474634688190/pdf/000020051-20140625080330.pdf (accessed 28 July 2025)	2004–2011	US\$48.1 m	Develop a sustainable and well-functioning land administration system that is fair, efficient, cost-effective, decentralized, and that enhances tenure security.	MU
Ghana Land Administration Project 2 (World Bank US\$46.7 m, CIDA US\$2.5 m) IEG Implementation Complement Report Review: https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/460521609406326577/pdf/Ghana-GH-Land-Administration-2.pdf (accessed 28 July 2025)	2011–2018	US\$49.2 m	To support the Recipient's efforts to consolidate and strengthen land administration and management systems for efficient and transparent land service delivery.	MU
Indonesia Land Administration Project (World Bank US\$46.1 m, Australian Government US\$20 m and Government of Indonesia US\$14.6 m) Operations Evaluation Department Implementation Completion Review Report: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/867061474572889181/pdf/000020051-20140607153814.pdf (accessed 28 July 2025)	1995–2001	US\$80.7 m	To foster efficient and equitable land markets and alleviate social conflicts over land, through acceleration of land registration, and through improvement of the institutional framework for land administration needed to sustain the program.	S
Indonesia Land Management and Policy Development (World Bank) Implementation Performance Assessment Report: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/867061474572889181/pdf/000020051-20140607153814.pdf (Accessed 28 July 2025)	2004–2010	US\$87.62 m	Improve land tenure security and enhance efficiency, transparency and improve service delivery of land titling and registration.	US
Tanzania Private Sector Competitiveness Project (World Bank US\$137.6 m, Bank administered Trust Fund US\$15.7 m)	2006–2018	US\$153.3 m	To strengthen the business environment in Tanzania, including land administration reform, and improve access to financial services.	MS

Table A1. Cont.

Country/Project	Duration	Cost	Objectives	Rating ¹
Tanzania Land Tenure Support Program (DFID US\$6.2 m, SIDA US\$3.4 m and DANIDA US\$2.3 m, Government 0.3 m) IEG Implementation Completion Report Review: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/128441562964284969/pdf/Tanzania-TZ-Private-Sector-MSME-Competitiveness.pdf (Accessed 28 July 2025)	2016–2019	US\$12.2 m	To establish a road map for long term support to the land sector and contribute to implementing the revised Strategic Plan to implement the Land Laws (SPILL), while achieving concrete results during the three-year program period to make significant contributions to improving the transparency and efficiency of land administration and governance.	
Tanzania Feed the Future Land Tenure Assistance Activity (USAID US\$6.052 m) Data from the LTA final report—https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z2NF.pdf (accessed 2 December 2024)	2015–2021	US\$6.052 m	The objectives of the first phase were: (i) to assist villages in completing the land use planning process and delivering CCROs using MAST; (ii) build the capacity of village and district land governance institutions and individual villagers; (iii) raise awareness of MAST technology in government, civil society, academe, and the private sector in Tanzania.	

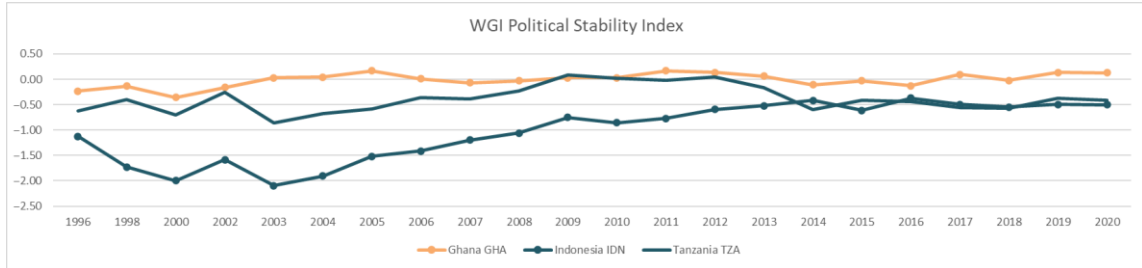
¹ For the World Bank projects: HS = highly satisfactory; S = satisfactory; MS = moderately satisfactory; MU = moderately unsatisfactory; US = unsatisfactory. Where available the Project Implementation Completion Report Review (PICRR) rating is used rather than the Project Implementation Completion Report (PICR) rating.

Appendix B

Table A2. Political features that are required for a state to protect and enforce property rights as a public good.

Political Feature as Specified by Cai et al. [3]	Key Issues/Problem	Proposed Modified Formulation
Political stability—the state has established authority over sufficient territory to be able to establish systems to protect property rights, this will encourage investment and production and there is political stability that enables the state to become a ‘stationary bandit’ to claim ongoing future income through fees and taxes	There is a lack of consensus on what the term “political stability” means and a number of different approaches to assess political stability, including: (a) the absence of violence; (b) government longevity/duration; (c) existence of a legitimate constitutional regime; (d) absence of structural change; and (e) a multifaceted societal attribute [70]	Adopt the political stability indicator used by the World Bank as one of the six indicators of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators , Accessed 28 July 2025). The World Bank time series political stability indicators are available on the theGlobalEconomy.com website— https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_political_stability/
Administrative and enforcement capacity—the state has the capacity to gather information on property rights and enforce these rights. Cai et al. (2020) [3] saw this evidenced by the ability to implement cadastral surveys and the availability of police and the military to enforce the rights.	The measures used to assess administration and enforcement capacity—cadastral surveying and availability of police and military—are overly simplistic. There is a lot of experience in the land sector in assessing administrative and enforcement capacity.	Adopt the following LGAF indicators/dimensions: • LGI 2/2 Individually held land in rural areas is formally registered. • LGI 2/3 Individually held land in urban areas is formally registered. • LGI 2/4 The number of illegal land sales is low. • LGI 18/2 The mapping or charting of registry records is complete. • LGI 25/1 Land disputes constitute a small proportion of cases in the formal legal system. • LGI 25/3 There are few long-standing land conflicts (> 5 years)
Political constraints on the state’s ability to confiscate property—separation of powers at the national level and effective transfer of authority to lower levels of government are seen as important constraints on the state’s ability to confiscate property without due process and fair compensation.	The attempt to link the political constraints to the state’s ability to confiscate property to a separation of powers lacks credibility. There are more direct measures of the effectiveness of political constraints on the expropriation of property in the land sector tools such as LGAF.	Adopt the following LGAF indicators/dimensions: • LGI 11/1 There is minimal transfer of expropriated land to private interests. • LGI 11/2 Expropriated land is transferred to destined use in a timely manner. • LGI 12/3 Expropriated landowners are compensated promptly. • LGI 12/4 There are independent and accessible avenues for appeal against expropriation.
The extent to which political and legal institutions are inclusive—covering the extent to which there is competition and autonomy between local governments and inclusion of non-government organizations in the political dialogue. This factor also includes an assessment of the accessibility and equity in the judicial system.	Linking competition and autonomy of local governments and the inclusion of NGOs in the political dialogue to the assessment of whether the political and legal institutions are inclusive is tenuous. There are more direct measures of inclusive institutions for the protection and enforcement of property rights in land sector tools such as LGAF.	Adopt the following LGAF indicators/dimensions: • LGI 1/1 Individual rural land tenure rights are legally recognized. • LGI 1/4 Urban land tenure rights are legally recognized. • LGI 18/7 Records in the registry are easily accessed. • LGI 24/2 Conflict resolution mechanisms are accessible to the public. • LGI 26/2 The responsibilities of Ministries and Agencies dealing with land do not overlap (horizontal overlap) • LGI 26/3 Administrative (vertical) overlap is avoided.

Table A3. Political Features to Assess Ability of Governments in Ghana, Indonesia, and Tanzania to Protect Property Rights.

Political Feature		Assessment		
Political stability (Data downloaded from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators , Accessed 28 July 2025)				
(Assessments from LGAF studies completed in 2/2012 in Ghana, 1/2015 in Indonesia (Kalimantan) and 1/2015 in Tanzania https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/land-governance-assessment-framework#2 , Accessed 28 July 2025)		Ghana	Indonesia	Tanzania
Administrative and enforcement capacity	• LGI 2/2 Individually held land in rural areas is formally registered.	D	D	B
	• LGI 2/3 Individually held land in urban areas is formally registered.	D	D	B
	• LGI 2/4 The number of illegal land sales is low.	D	D	C
	• LGI 18/2 The mapping or charting of registry records is complete.	D	D	D
	• LGI 25/1 Land disputes constitute a small proportion of cases in the formal legal system.	C	D	D
	• LGI 25/3 There are few long-standing land conflicts (>5 years)	D	D	D
Political constraints on the state’s ability to confiscate property	• LGI 11/1 There is minimal transfer of expropriated land to private interests.	A	D	A
	• LGI 11/2 Expropriated land is transferred to destined use in a timely manner.	D	C	A
	• LGI 12/3 Expropriated landowners are compensated promptly.	D	D	D
	• LGI 12/4 There are independent and accessible avenues for appeal against expropriation.	C	C	C
The extent to which political and legal institutions are inclusive	• LGI 1/1 Individual rural land tenure rights are legally recognized.	A	D	B
	• LGI 1/4 Urban land tenure rights are legally recognized.	B	D	D
	• LGI 18/7 Records in the registry are easily accessed.	A	B	A
	• LGI 24/2 Conflict resolution mechanisms are accessible to the public.	B	B	B
	• LGI 26/2 The responsibilities of Ministries and Agencies dealing with land do not overlap (horizontal overlap)	C	n/a	C
	• LGI 26/3 Administrative (vertical) overlap is avoided.	B	n/a	C

Appendix C Quantitative Data Analysis of Policy Delphi Data

The quantitative analysis of the round two responses for the five land administration reform scenarios is summarized in the table below. The mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation and IQR are calculated based on the response to a 5-unit Likert scale with 1 = ‘strongly agree’; 2 = ‘somewhat agree’; 3 = ‘neither agree nor disagree’; 4 = ‘somewhat disagree’; and 5 = ‘strongly disagree’. The positive response is the percentage of respondents that either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the question.

Table A4. Quantitative Analysis for Round 2.

Problem	Question	Response Rate	Coefficient of Variation	IQR	Positive Response
Scenario 1. Properties registered by systematic registration may not remain in the formal system.	PEA useful	75%	0.5	1.0	87%
	PEA can be completed in time	75%	0.5	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	75%	0.5	1.0	87%
Scenario 2. No clear plan to ensure that the investment will be sustainable financially.	PEA useful	75%	0.5	1.0	87%
	PEA can be completed in time	75%	0.4	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	75%	0.5	1.0	87%
Scenario 3. No clear plan to ensure that the investment will be sustainable technically.	PEA useful	75%	0.6	1.0	87%
	PEA can be completed in time	75%	0.4	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	75%	0.4	1.0	93%
Scenario 4. Other agencies may fail to provide the necessary support or resist reform.	PEA useful	75%	0.4	0.5	93%
	PEA can be completed in time	75%	0.5	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	75%	0.4	1.0	93%
Scenario 5. The land agency and/or staff and/or service providers are not prepared to consider changes in business processes.	PEA useful	75%	0.5	1.0	80%
	PEA can be completed in time	75%	0.4	1.0	80%
	Confident in response	75%	0.4	1.0	93%

The coefficient of variation, IQR and positive responses to the 3 questions asked in each of the 5 scenarios in both rounds are set out below in Table A5, noting that the problem statement for scenario 1 was amended in the second round. The IQR for round 2 is clearly better than that for round 1 with the IQR for all questions in all scenarios less than or equal to 1 and the positive response remains high. The coefficient of variation is also slightly improved overall in round 2 with all questions in all scenarios having a value of 0.5 or less, except for the first question in Scenario 3 which has a coefficient of variation of 0.6 in both rounds.

Table A5. Key statistics for rounds 1 and 2.

Scenarios/Questions		Round 1			Round 2		
		Coefficient of Variation	IQR	Positive Response	Coefficient of Variation	IQR	Positive Response
Scenario 1	PEA useful	0.6	1.0	85%	0.5	1.0	87%
	PEA can be completed in time	0.3	0.0	77%	0.5	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	0.4	1.0	92%	0.5	1.0	87%
Scenario 2	PEA useful	0.4	1.0	92%	0.5	1.0	87%
	PEA can be completed in time	0.5	2.0	69%	0.4	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	0.4	1.0	92%	0.5	1.0	87%
Scenario 3	PEA useful	0.6	1.0	77%	0.6	1.0	87%
	PEA can be completed in time	0.4	1.0	77%	0.4	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	0.5	1.0	85%	0.4	1.0	93%
Scenario 4	PEA useful	0.4	1.0	92%	0.4	0.5	93%
	PEA can be completed in time	0.4	1.0	54%	0.5	1.0	87%
	Confident in response	0.5	1.0	77%	0.4	1.0	93%
Scenario 5	PEA useful	0.6	2.0	69%	0.5	1.0	80%
	PEA can be completed in time	0.4	2.0	69%	0.4	1.0	80%
	Confident in response	0.5	1.0	85%	0.4	1.0	93%

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