

Effective Land Governance: Experiences from Selected Nations Implementing a Two-tier Local Government

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Abstract—Effective land governance provides a critical foundation for building inclusive societies and achieving sustainable development, particularly in countries undergoing institutional and administrative transformation. This article examines the theoretical foundations of effective land governance and clarifies the roles of key actors, including the State, competent land management authorities, and land users. Drawing on a comparative analytical framework, this paper examines land governance models in selected countries operating two-tier local government systems—Japan, Germany, France, and Vietnam—across key domains including land valuation, land allocation, regulatory enforcement, and land information systems. The findings indicate that, irrespective of differences in ownership regimes and administrative traditions, effective land governance is contingent upon transparent legal frameworks, decentralized administrative competencies, and the strategic application of digital technologies. Based on these insights, the article proposes policy recommendations for developing countries, emphasizing digital transformation, data integration, and strengthened state regulation as key drivers of effective land governance and sustainable socio-economic development.

Keywords—Land Governance, Land Administration, Two-tier Local Government, Decentralization, Land Information Systems, Policy Recommendations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Land is a resource of particular importance, serving not only as a primary means of production in agriculture, forestry, and many other economic sectors, but also as the living space for human beings and natural ecosystems. Land resources are finite, non-renewable, and essential to a nation's sustainable development; therefore, they require strict and effective state governance to prevent waste and inefficiency. Accordingly, land governance refers to the set of procedures, policies, processes, and institutional arrangements promulgated by the State to manage land, land-related assets, and other natural resources, as well as to regulate decisions concerning access to land, land rights, land use, and land development [1]. Globally, land governance is implemented across multiple institutional levels in accordance with domestic land laws [2]. Nevertheless, effective land governance requires the State to establish legal rules and standards in conjunction with practical scientific and technical activities, such as cadastral surveys, land measurement, and boundary management [3].

In the context of multilateral international integration and the acceleration of digital transformation, countries operating a two-tier local government system have adopted diverse land governance policies to ensure effectiveness and compliance with the fundamental principles of domestic law. Consequently, the land governance policies and practices of different countries offer valuable theoretical and practical reference points.

II. OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE LAND GOVERNANCE

Land governance refers to the totality of rules, processes, and institutions through which the State and competent authorities make decisions to regulate access to land, land use, the establishment and protection of land rights, and the direction of land resource development. The scope of this concept is not confined to administrative land management by the State; rather, it encompasses the entire decision-making process as well as the methods by which such decisions are implemented and enforced [1]. When the State or competent authorities need to adjust the allocation of powers and land-related regulations, such as land acquisition, changes in land-use planning, or adjustments to land-use purposes, these processes must be conducted through lawful, transparent mechanisms with the participation of relevant stakeholders. In other words, land governance is an overarching concept that describes how competent actors negotiate, implement, and enforce interventions related to land. Accordingly, land governance exhibits two defining characteristics of public governance. First, the governance framework is grounded in both formal institutions (laws and regulations) and informal institutions (customs, traditions, religious norms, and social practices). Second, the governance actors include not only state authorities but also non-state actors. All countries are therefore required to develop land governance policies that are compatible with their socio-economic conditions, historical contexts, and political institutions, with a view to balancing the interests of the State, the market, and land users. Differences in historical trajectories, legal traditions, and forms of state organization across countries lead to divergent

approaches to the recognition and regulation of land-related rights, obligations, and rules. Consequently, effective land governance constitutes a key prerequisite for achieving sustainable development in any society [1].

Based on this general understanding of land governance, effective land governance may be defined as the process by which the State and competent authorities plan, organize, manage, and control land-use activities within the national territory in pursuit of sustainable development objectives. An effective land governance system contributes to the establishment of a stable and transparent land market, enhances the efficiency of land use, reduces land-related disputes, and improves equitable access to land for different categories of land users. From a theoretical perspective, effective land governance is closely associated with the comprehensive and balanced performance of four fundamental land management functions: land tenure, land value, land use, and land development [3]. These four functions do not operate in isolation but are interdependent and mutually reinforcing in the management and exploitation of land resources in each country.

In the contemporary context, effective land governance is no longer merely a technical requirement of land resource management but has become an objective necessity. Increasing pressures on land arising from global economic transformations, rapid urbanization, and population growth have generated an urgent need to clearly define, protect, and equitably allocate land-related rights and interests. In addition, the escalating impacts of climate change, particularly in vulnerable regions, require land governance systems to integrate land-use planning, land information, and geospatial tools to enhance prevention, mitigation, and adaptation to environmental risks. At the same time, the implementation of global programs on environmental protection and ecosystem service provision can only be effective when land rights at the local level are recognized and secured, thereby providing a foundation for resource allocation and incentivizing land users to participate actively in the sustainable protection and development of land resources [5].

Importantly, effective land governance is also closely linked to the clear delineation of powers and responsibilities among different levels of government and stakeholders, ensuring that land-related decisions are adopted and implemented in a lawful, timely, and context-appropriate manner. The central government plays a leading role in establishing the institutional framework and formulating strategies for effective land governance, including defining intervention objectives, implementation modalities, and identifying stakeholders whose interests are affected. Although they are not the primary policymakers, local governments and private actors can exert significant influence on the implementation of land policies and legislation, thereby shaping the operational mechanisms and practical effectiveness of land governance [6].

From the perspective of public governance, the specific procedures, policies, and institutional arrangements across different sectors require state authorities to regulate and establish rules and governance mechanisms with the

participation of multiple social actors, to regulate human behavior (activities) in various spheres of social life. Arising from the inherent immobility of land and its organic linkage with administrative–territorial factors, effective land governance entails certain frameworks and requirements for the system of competent state authorities in this field. From the perspective of land governance, UN-GGIM refer 09 Pathways of the Framework for Effective Land Governance, including Governance, Institutions and Accountability; Policy and Legal; Financial; Data; Innovation; Standards; Partnerships; Capacity and Education; Advocacy and Awareness. It also means effective land governance policies must comply with the following specific requirements:

Transparency: Effective land governance necessitates the establishment of a transparent and accountable institutional framework, characterized by clearly delineated responsibilities and coordinated functions among competent state authorities responsible for land administration. Depending on the national context, the land governance architecture should clearly designate a lead authority and adopt coherent policy instruments to ensure transparency and strengthen accountability mechanisms. Land-related stakeholders, including landowners, land users, and private sector actors, should be meaningfully engaged in oversight processes and granted timely access to land-related information and state land governance practices.

Feasibility: Feasibility constitutes a fundamental requirement for the substantive implementation of land governance, particularly with respect to land finance and land information systems. Adequate and sustainable financial resources must be secured to maintain and operate land data management systems, as well as to support the administrative instruments necessary for effective state intervention. Investment in land governance should follow a clearly defined, transparent, and phased roadmap. Moreover, land governance frameworks should be integrated with economic regulatory instruments—such as land taxation, land valuation mechanisms, and real estate markets—to ensure a stable, sustainable, and transparent financial foundation. Concurrently, land management must be grounded in accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive data, necessitating the development of an interoperable land information infrastructure and effective data sharing among relevant public authorities.

Modernity: In the context of rapid technological advancement, effective land governance requires the continuous optimization of institutional mechanisms and administrative procedures through the strategic adoption of modern technologies. The integration of digital technologies, geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing, and artificial intelligence across the entire land governance cycle enhances administrative efficiency, improves decision-making quality, and strengthens regulatory capacity.

Integration: To ensure the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of land governance systems, states should actively align domestic frameworks with international and national standards governing data, processes, and institutional systems. Such alignment not only enhances cross-country

comparability and competitiveness but also facilitates international cooperation, knowledge exchange, and the dissemination of best practices in land governance.

III. ROLES OF GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Land governance is of fundamental importance to all countries worldwide, regardless of whether they adopt a regime of private land ownership, state ownership, public (collective) ownership, a pluralistic system of land ownership, or manage land through two-tier or three-tier local government models. Given its central and multidimensional role, effective land governance is closely associated with the roles, responsibilities, and levels of participation of governance actors, including the State, competent land management authorities, and land users.

A. Role of the State

First, the State establishes and unifies the land ownership regime as a basis for regulating actors involved in land-use relations. Throughout the historical development of all nations, forms of land ownership and their inherent characteristics have exerted a profound influence on resource allocation and economic efficiency [7]. Depending on their political systems and historical trajectories, countries have adopted different land ownership models, under which ownership rights over land are allocated to various actors for management and control [8]. Despite the diversity of land ownership models, each model encompasses three fundamental dimensions: the subject that establishes ownership, the bundle of rights that may be conferred, and the purposes for which such rights are established [9].

At present, two principal approaches to land ownership can be identified globally: pluralistic ownership systems and unitary ownership systems (involving a single form of ownership), including private ownership, state ownership, and communal ownership. Under private land ownership regimes, ownership is fundamentally vested in certain individuals or organizations with socio-economic power, who do not represent society as a whole in establishing rights over land [10]. For example, in the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries, land is traditionally regarded as belonging to the Crown, and individuals' rights to land are established through tenure arrangements derived from the Crown. Section 1 of the Law of Property Act 1925 recognizes private ownership of land, subject to the fulfillment of annual financial obligations such as land-related fees and taxes. While private actors are vested with rights over land, these rights are not absolute, as state authorities may exercise compulsory acquisition powers in pursuit of public purposes.

By contrast, state ownership of land is found in only a limited number of countries, including China, Mongolia, and North Korea. Article 10 of the Constitution of China, Article 8 of the Land Administration Law, and Article 47 of the Property Law collectively recognize that the State owns all land within the national territory and is the sole owner of urban land, while rural and suburban land is owned by collectives or "people's communes". Accordingly, individuals, organizations, and entities in China are prohibited from

illegally encroaching upon, trading in, or transferring ownership rights over land. In Vietnam, based on the constitutional principle that "all power belongs to the people," the people are recognized as the owners of particularly important means of production, including land. The regime of public ownership of land, with the State acting as the representative owner, was first enshrined in the 1980 Constitution of Vietnam and has been consistently reaffirmed through the 2013 Constitution. Under this model, the State ensures that all citizens are entitled to establish land-use rights as one of the three core components of ownership—namely, possession, use, and disposition. This constitutes a form of "derivative ownership," which combines elements of private law (protection of the lawful rights and interests of land users) with strong public law regulation (land governance) [11]. From the authors' perspective, Vietnam has clearly recognized that public ownership of land does not imply a governance model in which a single actor—the State—simultaneously owns, manages, and uses land, as suggested by some earlier viewpoints. Given the inherent complexity of land-use relations, Vietnam's land ownership regime is characterized by the distribution of land-use rights to specific managing and using entities. The State, acting as the representative owner, determines the categories and subjects entitled to land-use rights, thereby safeguarding the interests of the people and society as a whole. Consequently, Vietnam has developed a public land ownership regime characterized by multiple levels and forms of land use, with clearly defined rights and obligations prescribed by law.

Currently, most countries operating two-tier local government systems adopt pluralistic land ownership regimes in land governance, including the United States, France, Germany, and Japan. In Japan, landowners include individuals, social organizations, and the State, with individuals holding more than half of the total land area [12]. The Japanese government formally recognized private ownership of land following the enactment of the Land Tax Reform in 1872, a principle reaffirmed in Article 207 of the Japanese Civil Code [13]. Land transactions are conducted through market mechanisms but remain subject to state regulation. Similarly, France adopts a dual land ownership regime comprising private and state ownership. Most land in France is considered privately owned, as recognized under urban planning instruments such as the Territorial Coherence Schemes (SCoT) and local land-use plans, which affirm citizens' ownership rights over land. However, as in other countries, all levels of government in France may compulsorily acquire land for public utility purposes, but not for private use.

Second, the State establishes the legal and institutional framework for effective land governance. The emergence of formal and informal institutions in land governance reflects two complementary approaches: *de jure* and *de facto*. In countries with modern legal systems, legislation is generally comprehensive and regulates most aspects of social life, including land relations. Accordingly, land-use policies, legal implementation mechanisms, and land administration processes are structured across multiple institutional layers

[2]. In such contexts, land governance is expressed through structured legal rules and norms that are created, maintained, adjusted, and enforced with accountability [14]. Land management activities are grounded in scientific and technical practices, such as cadastral surveys, land measurement, and boundary administration [3]. These rules apply to all actors involved in land-related relations, including governments, market participants, households, economic organizations, and even local tribes operating within formal or informal territorial frameworks [15]. Thus, the effectiveness of land governance largely depends on the enactment and enforcement of land-related legal regulations. In certain African and South American countries, where religious doctrines, belief systems, and state-enacted legal norms are not clearly differentiated, informal institutions are often employed to regulate land governance relations [16]. In Vietnam, the State establishes the legal framework for land management primarily through its developmental function, including land-use planning, the formulation of land-use plans, and the development of policies and legislation aimed at the equitable distribution of land-derived benefits to meet national development needs. Vietnam has prioritized institutional reform and the creation of a supportive legal environment by enacting formal legal instruments—particularly land laws—thereby consolidating the State’s central role in land governance. At the same time, to preserve cultural traditions and positive customary practices, Vietnam’s legal system does not entirely exclude the role of informal institutions such as customs and religious norms.

B. Role of Land Management Authorities

In the context of accelerated economic development, increased specialization, and productivity gains driven by the expansion of markets based on impersonal transactions, there is an urgent need for a public apparatus capable of defining, regulating, and enforcing property rights to reduce transaction costs, particularly with respect to fundamental social assets such as land [17]. “Mainstream land agencies,” including governmental land management authorities, cadastral offices, and land registration agencies, constitute one of the core actors within the land governance system, alongside land users [18].

First, land management authorities are responsible for implementing land governance institutions and policies formulated at the central level. Serving as the institutional backbone of the land governance system, these authorities translate state orientations and policies into effective and implementable actions. For example, in China, pursuant to the 2014 Land Administration Law, the central government integrates land-related policy objectives into its Five-Year Plans, with a focus on ensuring food security, expanding agricultural land area, and improving land quality. On this basis, provincial land management authorities, in coordination with local governments, are tasked with implementing central guidelines [6]. In Vietnam, from an administrative perspective, land management authorities and local governments function as an “extended arm” of the central government, transmitting central directives to the local level to ensure uniformity and effectiveness in the enforcement of land

law nationwide. From a democratic perspective, local land management authorities represent the most direct manifestation of “on-the-spot” people’s power, operating through representative institutions elected by the people and directly accountable to them. Characterized by a “dual subordination” mechanism, these authorities are subject both to unified sectoral leadership and direction from the central government and to territorial management by same-level local governments. This organizational structure ensures the continuity of state power from the central to the local level. As a result, land laws and land governance policy orientations in Vietnam are transformed into concrete management actions that are adapted to local conditions while preserving the unity and centralized nature of land governance activities.

Second, land management authorities directly administer land-related activities at the local level, thereby ensuring the effectiveness of land governance. This constitutes a prerequisite for guaranteeing that the lawful rights and interests of land users are realized through regular and continuous management activities at the grassroots level. Accordingly, activities such as land allocation and land leasing, land registration, cadastral record management, inspection and supervision of land use, as well as the resolution of land disputes, are directly carried out by local land management authorities. Within two-tier local government systems, exemplified by Vietnam, the decentralization of direct land management powers to grassroots-level authorities is a necessary condition for translating land policies into social practice and for narrowing the persistent gap between legal norms and their enforcement. In this regard, provincial-level People’s Committees in Vietnam serve as the principal “focal point” responsible for land management activities within their respective localities, including monitoring land-use progress and efficiency across the province and directing and supervising commune-level People’s Committees in the implementation of land-use planning and plans. Meanwhile, commune-level People’s Committees function as a direct “bridge” between the State and citizens, performing tasks such as organizing the formulation, adjustment, and public disclosure of commune-level land-use plans; participating in compulsory land acquisition enforcement; and managing agricultural and forestry land allocated to local authorities [19].

C. Role of Land Users

First, safeguarding the legal status of land users constitutes a legal mechanism that comprehensively and fundamentally enhances the effectiveness of land governance. In any state, the legal status of land users is clearly defined in law, thereby reflecting distinctive political–legal principles, conceptions of property, ownership rights, and models of land tenure. Among countries with two-tier local government structures, the legal characterization of land users is marked by particular features that are directly shaped by the common law tradition, as in the United States, or the civil law tradition, as in Germany [20]. In the United States, private land ownership is regarded as a fundamental civil right that is inviolable, sacred, and absolute [21]. Nevertheless, through a form of “social contract,”

individuals relinquish a portion of their ownership rights, thereby giving rise to state land ownership or regulatory authority over land [10]. In Germany, ownership of a parcel of land may be shared by multiple entities, including private individuals and the State [22]. Article 14(3) and Article 15 of the 1949 Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany recognize and protect private land ownership (or limited real rights over land), while allowing the State, under certain constitutional circumstances, to “socialize” land. By contrast, Vietnamese land law bears the enduring imprint of Marxist–Leninist doctrines concerning land ownership [23]. Ensuring the effective operation of land-related legal relations in the market necessarily requires the formal recognition of the legal status of land users. Land law must acknowledge the legal status of subjects who perform rights and obligations within land law relations, thereby ensuring their ability to access, hold, use, and exploit land to the fullest extent of the powers, profit-generating capacity, and functions conferred by law.

Second, land users play the role of the “ultimate subjects” of state power, participating in effective land governance through the exercise of fundamental civic rights relating to land. Throughout the evolution of land law, the status of land users has been increasingly emphasized and expanded, enabling them to engage more deeply, openly, and substantively in land governance processes. In Vietnam, this development constitutes a concrete manifestation of the principle of the socialist rule of law. Although countries may conceptualize the rule of law with varying breadth and depth, it remains the most fundamental legal component of liberal political philosophy and a defining element of a democratic state that serves society [24]. Accordingly, land users are guaranteed equal democratic rights and autonomy in land governance matters, including access to land and the right to request land allocation or land leasing from the State in accordance with statutory grounds and procedures, as well as access to public land-related services. They are also entitled to monitor and assess the exercise of state power through legally guaranteed access to land information; to supervise and provide feedback on state actions through complaint and denunciation mechanisms concerning land disputes, administrative decisions, and enforcement outcomes that infringe upon their lawful rights and interests [35]. The principle of the socialist rule of law is affirmed insofar as land users are empowered to “restrict the arbitrary exercise of power by binding it to well-crafted and clearly articulated laws” [36]. Moreover, Vietnamese law guarantees land users access to dispute resolution and remedial mechanisms, enabling them to seek redress for land-related violations through mediation or judicial proceedings before competent courts.

IV. EXPERIENCES FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES

At present, in countries around the world that apply a two-tier local government model, effective land governance is most clearly manifested through the delegation of authority from central government to local authorities and the clear delineation of powers among these local-level institutions. In addition, effective land governance is also reflected in the

structure and performance of national land and real estate management systems. Depending on the specific conditions of each country, systems for real estate registration and management may be established in various forms. However, the most effective approach is one that is based on publicly accessible, digitized databases operated through the Internet.

A. Japan

In Japan, the construction and digitization of the real estate registration system were carried out from 1988 to 2008, resulting in the incorporation of approximately 270 million real estate records into the system. Pursuant to the Real Estate Registration Act (Act No. 123 of 2004), the real estate registration system is centrally managed at the national level. The system operates through 50 branches and 420 registration offices located within local administrative authorities to manage registrations by jurisdiction. Japan has established a total of six data centers, which have been designed, developed, and deployed across six regions of the country. The real estate registration system performs multiple functions, including the management of ownership rights and other registrable rights and interests in real estate. In addition to ownership, the system records and manages other proprietary rights, such as mortgage rights and loan-related security interests arising from the mortgaging of land and housing. To regulate land prices in the market, as early as 1969, Article 2 of Act No. 49 (the Land Price Publication Act) assigned duties and powers to the Land Appraisal Committee, requiring two or more professional real estate appraisers in each locality to conduct valuations of standard land parcels. In particular, the Committee is tasked with determining a reasonable price per unit area of standard land and publicly disclosing the results to the general public through the national land database system. In addition, Japan ensures broad public access to land registry information, enabling individuals to identify the specific owners of real estate, both past and present. Local governments have also applied remote sensing technologies integrated with artificial intelligence, based on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), to digitize land surveys and data collection processes, thereby supporting the completion of cadastral maps and the development of comprehensive land information systems.

B. German

In Germany, in the context of digital transformation, controlling land price speculation and stabilizing real estate prices through comprehensive control of land-related data is a top priority for local authorities. The statutory land valuation system in Germany is entirely based on the determination of transparent market value (Verkehrswert) [27]. In order to achieve this objective in the digital era, Germany does not allow land prices to be left to market forces alone; instead, it exercises full control through systematic management of the data components that constitute market land values. Pursuant to the Real Estate Valuation Ordinance (Immobilienwertermittlungsverordnung – ImmoWertV), these key data include: data on the location of the land subject to valuation; data on the valuation reference period; market simulations (such as expected sale prices under normal

business conditions); valuation-relevant conditions (including legal status, physical condition, any other relevant circumstances, and locational attributes); and objectification clauses addressing extraordinary circumstances affecting the land, such as natural disasters or local flooding [28]. Concerning institutional authority, Article 192 of the Federal Building Code (Baugesetzbuch – BauGB) requires each municipality in Germany—whether a city under a three-tier administrative model or a district under a two-tier model—to establish a Gutachterausschuss für Wertermittlung (Expert Committee for Property Valuation). Each committee consists of a chairperson and members drawn from various professional backgrounds, including civil engineers, architects, real estate brokers, surveyors, bank managers, and agricultural experts, typically comprising between 10 and 20 specialists depending on the size of the district or city. From an administrative perspective, the Gutachterausschuss operates under the organizational and administrative supervision of the district authority (Landkreis) or an independent city (kreisfreie Stadt). To support its operations, each committee maintains an executive office (Geschäftsstelle), which is usually located within the local Cadastral and Survey Office (Vermessungs- und Katasteramt). One of the core statutory tasks of these expert committees, as stipulated in Article 193(5) BauGB, is the determination and provision of standard land values (Bodenrichtwerte) and other data necessary for valuation (sonstige zur Wertermittlung erforderliche Daten – szWeD). In response to the demands of the digital revolution, land valuation committees are not only responsible for collecting market information and data but also for operating land value information systems, publishing standard land values for undeveloped land and other relevant data, and preparing valuation reports for government agencies, private enterprises, and individuals upon request. A distinctive feature of Germany's land valuation system, compared to those of other countries, lies in the comprehensiveness and localization of its land value data systems: each locality maintains its own land value information system, tailored to local conditions and continuously updated. Regarding the operation of information systems and data collection, Article 195 BauGB requires that all contracts relating to the purchase or exchange of land parcels be registered with the executive office (Geschäftsstelle) of the valuation committee responsible for the area in which the land is located. Furthermore, under Article 873 of the German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch – BGB), only transactions registered in the land register (Grundbuch) by a notary have legal validity. Accordingly, notaries are legally obliged to transmit a copy of each notarized contract to the relevant land valuation committee. As a result, participants in the land market are unable or face significant difficulty to conceal transaction details from the land valuation authorities.

C. France

France is a typical example of a country that organizes its administrative system under a two-tier model, consisting of regions (Régions) and departments (Départements). At the regional level, authorities are responsible for overarching

development policies and land-use planning, while the departmental level delivers administrative services closer to citizens [29]. To ensure effective land governance and to fully leverage the advantages of the two-tier local government model, France has adopted an “inter-municipal cooperation” model that links different local administrative units [30]. Under this model, based on the respective strengths and expertise of officials in each municipality, local governments provide mutual support across various sectors in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, thereby avoiding an excessive concentration of responsibilities on municipalities with stronger institutional capacity. In the field of land governance, this model has proven particularly effective, as it enables different levels of government to establish regional coordination mechanisms, share land-related data and information, and jointly collect cadastral data. France has also developed comprehensive land information systems and applied digital technologies in land governance, achieving a number of notable results.

D. Viet Nam

Vietnam has operated a two-tier local government model since 1 July 2025, officially abolishing the intermediate level of local government after fifty years. Under this model, the system of state governance is organized into two levels: provinces and centrally governed cities (hereinafter collectively referred to as the provincial level), and communes, wards, and special administrative units under the provincial level (hereinafter collectively referred to as the communal level). Accordingly, the People's Council is the local organ of state power, representing the will, aspirations, and the people's right to mastery, and deciding on important local matters, including those related to land governance. Based on the principle of decentralization, the People's Committee serves as the key executive body in land governance activities at the local level across all tiers. Strengthening the executive authority of the head of the governance ensures coherence and rationality in management across different levels, saves time, budgetary resources, and administrative effort, and safeguards the legitimate rights and interests of the people. In the context of digital transformation, Vietnam has completed the development of the national land database, digitized administrative procedures, and actively applied science and technology to enhance the effectiveness of land governance. Specifically, Vietnam has promulgated several important legal instruments that establish a foundation for digital transformation in land governance, including the Law on Digital Transformation 2025, the Land Law 2024, and Decree No. 101/2024/ND-CP. According to Article 163(1) of the 2024 Land Law, No. 31/2024/QH15, the national land information system is developed in accordance with the principles of centralization, uniformity, synchronization, and multi-purpose utilization. On that basis, the Vietnamese Government is currently studying and developing digital platforms and artificial intelligence (AI) applications to analyze large-scale data sources (Big Data) and to develop an open data system (Open Data) with interoperability among different levels of government, thereby supporting modern and

sustainable land governance [31]. The process of completing and accelerating the digitization of administrative procedures, including the transition from in-person procedures to fully online public services, is also being actively implemented.

V. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTRIES

First, developing countries should strengthen the governmental role in directly regulating certain market components as a means of addressing structural imperfections in domestic land markets, especially through digitally enabled governance arrangements. One of the key components in building an effective land governance model lies in establishing and standardizing the legal framework for land information systems, including: (i) the development and standardization of land databases; (ii) the design and implementation of application software for land information systems; (iii) the deployment of data centers, transmission infrastructure, and end-user equipment; (iv) human resource training; and (v) system operation and maintenance. Within this process, two core issues warrant particular attention: ensuring transparency and public accessibility of land information systems—especially for citizens seeking to verify land prices and legal status for land-related transactions—and safeguarding data security and cybersecurity to facilitate interoperability and data sharing among state authorities.

Second, land information systems should be developed and enhanced through integration with data from multiple sectors, such as investment, taxation, and social security, to establish a multi-purpose data system that supports the development of e-government. In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, solutions for implementing land information systems should encompass: (i) a comprehensive framework for data updating, access, and utilization at different levels; (ii) the capacity to manage large volumes of heterogeneous data within a unified database; (iii) the adoption of advanced technologies that comply with international industry standards, are widely applied globally, and are suitable to national conditions, particularly in land administration; (iv) robust data security and safety mechanisms; and (v) an open and flexible architecture that enables users to develop customized applications tailored to specific needs.

Finally, enhancing land management data systems constitutes a prerequisite for strengthening the role of the real estate market in the broader economic structure. A central set of measures entails refining land governance frameworks toward the coordinated exploitation and sharing of land management data, enabling timely processing, analytical capacity, and information dissemination for land administration purposes. In the long term, this approach facilitates the development of integrated datasets on land-use planning and land-use plans, thereby contributing to sustainable socio-economic development.

VI. CONCLUSION

Effective land governance is a key objective pursued by states worldwide. It is not only a solution for administrative reform, institutional improvement, and the reduction of cumbersome procedures, but also a clear manifestation of political

determination in countries operating a two-tier local government model. Effective land governance contributes to strengthening decentralization and enhancing local autonomy, while simultaneously improving the effectiveness of public governance at the local level. Experience from countries implementing a two-tier local government system indicates that ensuring effective land governance requires a clear legal framework and well-designed mechanisms for inter-level coordination. At the same time, the establishment of robust inter-level inspection and supervision mechanisms, genuine fiscal autonomy, and the promotion of digital transformation are decisive factors for the success of the governance model and for the effectiveness of land governance practices.

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