Survey Department

Survey Department is responsible for surveying, mapping and cadastral activities in Zambia. The Department consists of five branches namely: Cadastral, Mapping and Surveying. Survey Department has Regional Officers in all the provinces of Zambia.

Land Survey Act Cap 188 of the Laws of Zambia provides for surveys, diagrams and plans preparations. The Act also provides for the protection of survey beacons and other survey markers through the Survey Control Board. The Board is responsible for the registration and licensing of land surveyors and exercises primary control over land surveyors.

Land Survey Act establishes the Surveyor General as a public officer and a land surveyor to supervise and control the use and charting of land for the purpose of registration.

Procedure for Cadastral Surveys for Certificate of Title

The primary purpose of the cadastral survey is to determine for cadastral survey survey parcel its location and the extent of its boundaries and area, and to indicate its separate identity graphically on a map, and physically on the ground.

The cadastral survey procedure starts with a request from a member of the public. A site or layout plan is prepared by a mining authority and it's endorsed by the Council with direction over the land being planned. Once the site plan has been endorsed by the Council, eight copies are sent to the Commissioner of Lands for checks on the availability of the property. On receipt of the site plan, the Surveyor-General further scrutinizes the site plan and if found correct, the parcel of land is numbered and a regional survey office is instructed to survey it upon payment of necessary fees.

If the headquarters or regional office cannot conduct the survey, the Surveyor-General authorizes the applicant to engage a private licensed land surveyor to execute the survey. A list of registered surveyors authorized to conduct surveys is available at the Ministry of Lands Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

The regional survey office or the private registered surveyor will carry out the cadastral survey, which involves field measurements, office computations and preparation approved survey diagrams and plans. Once the survey is completed, it is lodged with the Surveyor-General’s office for examination purposes. Examination entails a comprehensive recalculation or checking of all field abstracts, computations, and draft plans.

The examiner corrects minor errors, and major errors or omissions are referred back to the surveyor for field corrections. If found to be correct, the survey is approved by government surveyor and general plans, and survey diagrams are framed and approved by the Surveyor-General's Office. Approval, the survey records become the property of the Government and are available for public reference at a fee, which is subject to review from time to time.

The approved diagrams are then released to the client or to the Commissioner of Lands, who will use the diagram to prepare a lease agreement for the applicant.

Mapping Services

The Office of the Surveyor-General publishes mapping products in paper and digital form that the public can purchase. Such products include printed maps and gazette, aerial photographs, and satellite imageries available through map

sale outlets at the headquarters and the Provincial Offices.

The public can access mapping products that are not published by making an order or formal request to the Surveyor-General. These products include photographic and satellite remote-sensing products and customized project maps in various scales. A statutory schedule containing fees and charges is available from the Ministry of Lands Natural Resources and Environmental Protection headquarters.

Survey Services

The major role of survey services concerns the maintenance and advancement of National Surveying Control Network. The Survey Control Network, technically called the National Geodetic Network, is the basis for execution of cadastral and other surveys, including production of topographic and thematic maps.

By statute, all cadastral surveys are tied to the National Geodetic Control Network. The public's attention is drawn to Section 15 of the Land Survey Regulations, which states that “all surveys are to be based on trigonometric stations or reference marks wherever practical, and shall be on such a system or projection as the Surveyor-General may direct.”

It is a requirement that where survey control exists, the land surveyor, either government or private, is urged to start survey work from control points, and avoid assuming arbitrary datum's (starting points) as this can lead to encroachments, because the surveyor is not guided by the control points.

Cadastral Services

This branch is responsible for cadastral surveys and maintenance of survey records, compilation of property index maps, examination and processing of survey records. The branch now has regional offices in all the ten provinces.