

OYO GOES DIGITAL –

New Online Property Search Launched

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Oyo State Lands Registry Goes Online

Land Use and Management is one of the matters that affects all citizens of a state and is also an important factor in the economic development of a state. In a move aimed at modernising administrative processes and improving the convenience of citizens, the Oyo State government on 15th July 2024, inaugurated the Oyo State Online Property Title Search portal. This development comes a few years after the launch of the online Certificate of Occupancy Registration Portal. This initiative, housed at the Ministry of Lands, represents a significant step towards simplifying the process for citizens to access necessary information about their properties without the need to physically visit the lands registry.



Yewande Ojo
Senior Counsel



Olatomide Orisajo
Associate

With the launch of the Oyo State Online Property Title Search, these hurdles are set to diminish significantly. The online platform offers a range of features designed to facilitate seamless navigation and access to information. Users can input specific property details to retrieve comprehensive data on ownership records, encumbrances, and other relevant documentation. Real-time updates ensure that the information available is current and accurate, promoting confidence in property transactions.

Procedure For Conducting Online Search



The steps for conducting the search online are itemised below;

- Visit the Oyo State Government Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development website <https://lands.oyostate.gov.ng>.
- From the **"Services"** menu, click on the **"Property Search"** button.
- On the Property Title Search page, click on the **"Search Now"** button.
- Perform your property Title Search with any of the available search parameters;
 - a. The current owner's name.
 - b. The previous owner's name.
 - c. The volume of publication details.
 - d. The property file number.
 - e. The property registration number (C of O unique number).
 - f. The survey plan details (The reference beacon number).
- Log in to the Oyo State Government Lands Account to continue the search (kindly ensure to enter the correct captcha value). If you do not have an account, click on the **"Register"** link to follow the registration process to register an account.
- While searching with the **"Current Owner"** details, the **"Current Owner Full Name"** signifies the name of the corporate entities, while the **"Current Owner First Name"** and **"Current Owner Last Name"** signify the names of individuals.
- Select the search result of interest to get comprehensive information of a particular property and then click on **"Proceed to payment calculation"**.
- Select the checkbox for the relevant information or items of interest for the intended search or select all available options. The total payment due for the chosen options will be calculated, then click on **"Proceed to payment"**.
- Enter your details to generate your printable personalised Property Title Search Report. Ensure to provide a correct and working email address as a copy of the report will be sent to the provided email address. Click on the **"Proceed to payment"**.
- Choose your preferred mode of payment and make payment. Your personalised Property Title Search report will be available for download and an electronic copy is also sent to the provided email address.

Challenges of a Digitalised Registry

Many states are beginning to move towards digitalizing their land registry. An example is Lagos State which launched its Lagos State Land Administration Portal sometime in 2022, for the process of perfection of title, as an alternative to traditional in-person visits to the land registry. However, it has been observed that these online platforms (Lagos and Oyo) are often plagued with challenges that frustrate user experience and sometimes lead to resorting to manual applications, thereby defeating the essence of online applications. For example, with the Oyo State Online Certificate of Occupancy application process, applicants are usually still expected to present hardcopy documents at the Land Registry for review, and sometimes follow-up on files, despite the online application process.

In Lagos state, user experience is often hampered by sluggish system speeds, which significantly extend the time required for a seemingly simple search. Furthermore, data accuracy and consistency, and inaccurate or incomplete information necessitate additional verification efforts, further hindering efficiency. Technical glitches add another layer of complexity. System errors and downtime can render the platform inaccessible at crucial moments, leaving users frustrated and unable to access critical data. Furthermore, depending on the nature of land transaction, perfection processes are often multi-layered and may require physical verification of a series of documents. All these are challenges that the online land registry faces which may affect user experience.

Conclusion

Although not without its challenges, the introduction of the Oyo State Property Title Search portal represents a significant improvement for patrons of the Land Registry, who previously had to take a trip to the land registry to carry out property title searches, which is often plagued by long queues and potential delays.

To maximise its impact, consideration should be given to expanding the platform to include applications for certified true copies (CTC) of title documents, obtaining the consent of the Governor for perfection of title. This would further simplify the process for property owners and reduce the need for in-person visits to government offices.

If well monitored and maintained, the success of Oyo State's online land portal could serve as a model for improvement in other Nigerian states seeking to optimise their digital land registry services. This shift towards user-friendly online systems will ultimately benefit all stakeholders – government agencies, property owners, and potential investors – by promoting transparency and streamlining real estate transactions.