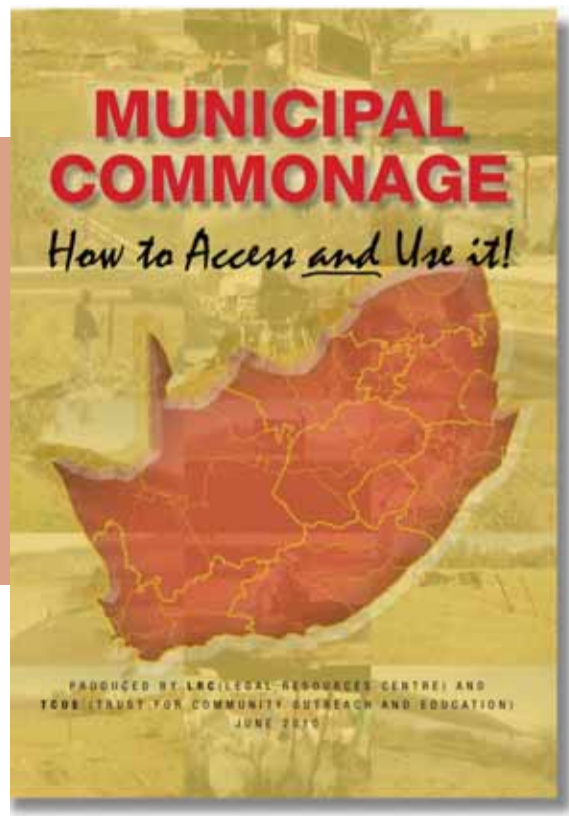


The Legal Resources Centre (LRC), in conjunction with the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), has produced a booklet on municipal commonages. As not much has been written on the subject in South Africa, it aims to educate the public on what municipal commonages are, their history and how to go about acquiring municipal commonage through state funds.

The booklet provides a guide on how to use municipal commonages to the benefit of the community and how to protect them against 'rampant sale'. It discusses the different types of commonages, gives a brief history and sets out the challenges relating to their access and maintenance. It further outlines the places where new and existing commonage land can be found.

Other issues discussed in the booklet are the constitutional developmental obligations of municipalities with respect to municipal commonages, the legal and policy framework in the context of national land reform and rural development programmes, and the important municipal laws regulating commonage land. It also describes the approach of the Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs with regard to supporting the commonage programme and catalogues the problems and the lessons learned from the recent past about access to and the use and maintenance of municipal commonages. It concludes by suggesting a list of demands that



small-scale and subsistence farmers and landless people should put to their municipalities with respect to municipal commonages.

The booklet is a useful, user-friendly and accessible guide for anyone wishing to gain insight into municipal commonages.

The booklet is available at the Cape Town offices of the Legal Resources Centre and the Trust for Community Outreach and Education. Alternatively, users are invited to download the booklet at no cost from the websites of the TCOE ([www.tcoe.org.za](http://www.tcoe.org.za)) and the LRC ([www.lrc.org.za/booklets/1243-municipal-commonage](http://www.lrc.org.za/booklets/1243-municipal-commonage)).

## Update

On 30 July 2010 the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs tabled the much-anticipated Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Bill in Parliament. The Bill, which broadly seeks to professionalise municipalities and address the prevailing ambiguity in respect of party office bearers holding positions in municipal administrations, was approved by the Cabinet in May 2010. By calling for a separation between political office and the institutional role of municipalities, this legislation, it is hoped, will curtail the undue influence of political officials and parties over the administrative function of municipalities. This



is an important step towards introducing fairness and impartiality into the institutional space of municipalities.

Members of the public and all interested stakeholders should closely follow the public participation processes facilitated by Parliament on this Bill in order to facilitate open debate and discussion about it.

You may access the submission of the Good Governance Learning Network on the Bill at [www.ggin.org.za](http://www.ggin.org.za).