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# Managing Government Property Assets.(Book review).

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[International Journal of Strategic Property Management](#) 11.3 (Sept 2007): p191(2). (573 words)

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## Full Text :

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MANAGING GOVERNMENT PROPERTY ASSETS Olga Kaganova and James McKellar (eds), The Urban Institute Press, Washington, D. C., 2006, 438 pp. ISBN 0 87766 730 6

The key objective of this book is to establish a framework for more intensive debate and discussion on the topic of managing government property assets from an international perspective. Well aware that an underlying collection of potentially transferable approaches and practices that might be applicable in countries that are just beginning to wrestle with the problem of devising a coherent management strategy for their real property assets does not exist so far, this book is aimed at presenting the current state of knowledge concerning government real property asset management, in both mature and emerging economics, to achieve strategic public policy objectives. The book is not a comprehensive compendium of best practices or asset management approaches across nations, but is selective based on the availability of information, authors and resources. It however seeks to suggest a framework upon which practitioners and scholars in this field will be prompted by diversified practices and asset management approaches in the world to follow the authors' lead and expand.

The book comprises contributions from 16 authors, mostly from the USA and Canada, and the others are from France, Germany, New Zealand and Switzerland. The contributors cover several aspects of current research and practices. Therefore, the book addresses both practitioners and scientists. The book is divided into three parts: Part 1 consists of the first six chapters of the book and is dedicated to deriving lessons on managing the property assets of central governments from the experience of four countries, including advanced reformers Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, and France, which is at the initial stage of asset management reform. Part 2, comprising the next six chapters, present managing the property assets of local government from several, and quite different, viewpoints. The three chapters of Part 3 deal with issues of special interest, including information systems for public property asset management, forms of separating property ownership and management through two different mechanisms, and a new generation of public-private partnerships.

The final chapter summarises the editors' perspectives on key issues arising from the various chapters and examines the scope of further research and analysis that may shed more understanding on asset management in the public realm. Altogether, 16 chapters offer review and analysis of international experiences of managing government property assets.

Though the book covers three parts for management of public property from 16 contributors in several countries, it is generally strong in argumentation and well structured. The only exception is Chapter 11, in which the heading style is different from those in other chapters. Chapter 11 could rather be merged into Chapter 12. Each chapter, which could start with a simple heading, ends with references that are mostly up to date, but could consist of more comprehensive and research literature. The book could better serve readers if it presents the property asset management practices of both central and local governments in any among the seven selective countries. The only major criticism can be made on the balance of theory and practice in some chapters, especially while introducing the practices of a unique country, which could rather provide much academic discussion in theory.

Nevertheless, apart from some minor remarks, this monumental treatise is a very valuable read for everyone interested in understanding the current international perspectives of managing government property assets.

Chunlu LIU

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**Named Works:** Managing Government Property Assets (Book) Book reviews  
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