



The Global Programme Responsible Land Policy (GPRLP)

Abbreviations

AFOR	Rural Land Agency (in Côte d'Ivoire)
CCFV	Local Land Conciliation Commissions (in Burkina Faso)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFP	Fit-For-Purpose
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite System
GPRLP	Global Programme Responsible Land Policy
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
LIP	Land Inventory Protocol
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRAI	Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investments
ProPFR	Promotion d'une Politique Foncière Responsable (French name of GPRLP)
RELAPU	Responsible Land Policy in Uganda
S2RAI	Support to Responsible Agricultural Investments
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (in Ethiopia)
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines of the Responsible Governance of Tenure of land, Fisheries and Forest in the context of National Food Security

Land Rights Matter

SECURE LAND TENURE IS A KEY FACTOR FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS AND A PREREQUISITE FOR THE ERADICATION OF HUNGER. For a large part of the world's population, livelihoods depend directly on access to land and its secure long-term use. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), between 713 and 757 million people have faced hunger in 2023. Furthermore, food insecurity affects women disproportionately.¹ In addition to more frequent extreme weather events, social conflicts and economic insecurities, growing inequality is an exacerbating factor of global hunger.² Globally, food insecurity is most prevalent in rural areas. Insecure tenure puts people at the risk of being evicted, displaced or losing access to the land or resources they depend on. Insecure tenure can be a cause for national and international migration flows and threatens the social cohesion of nations as well as entire regions.³

THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION LACKS FORMALIZED LAND RIGHTS. Just 30% of the global population has access to a land administration system that guarantees documented and officially recognized land rights.⁴ A striking number of landowners and land users only hold informal or traditionally granted rights – in Sub-Saharan Africa only 10% of land is formally documented.⁵ Land rights span from informal or customary rights as lease agreements to formal rights recognized and documented by the state, a situation characterized as a “Continuum of Land Rights” by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN).⁶ Worldwide, only 30 states have legislation that adequately recognizes those traditional land rights.⁷ Without adequate consideration, structures often overlap and cause insecurity over land and resources.

CONFLICTS AND DISPLACEMENT OCCUR DUE TO INSECURE LAND RIGHTS. Due to current demographic, economic and environmental dynamics, the increasing competition for the scarce resource land results in an increasing potential for land conflicts. This applies in particular to shared land without clear rules of use. Clashes over access to land happen wherever land use is not adequately regulated. Power relations between conflicting parties are a major factor that influences the outcomes of such disputes. For example, marginalized people are less likely to be able to solve land conflicts when faced with politically or economically more powerful actors. In addition, private medium and large-scale investments increasingly

exert pressure on the resource land and can contribute to the exacerbation of land conflicts and displacement.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IPLC) ARE ESPECIALLY DISADVANTAGED. Despite numerous pressures, indigenous peoples still live on more than half of the global land area.⁸ Yet, at national and global levels many policies and laws still impede the formal recognition of land to IPLC, despite their critical role in the conservation of ecosystems and sustainable use of natural resources. For the vast majority, land is not only a resource, but forms an important part of their identity. Communities often lack access to the institutional framework and cannot present their legitimate claims. Hence, indigenous communities are particularly affected by corruption and discrimination in the land sector.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNIZED. In more than half of all countries, laws and customs hinder women's ownership or access to land⁹, hampering women's empowerment. This concerns both traditional and formalized tenure. Although as many women as men work in agriculture, women hold less than 15% of land ownership worldwide.¹⁰ In 90 countries, traditional land administration systems favour their legal exclusion from access to land. In 35 countries, neither daughters nor widows can claim their rights in the same way as male relatives.¹¹

SECURE LAND RIGHTS SET INCENTIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Land rights foster development based on the primary sector, as holding land titles allows for long-term planning regarding resource management and economic activities. Secure land tenure rights for all are essential to reduce poverty and create sustainable development, because they underpin economic development, ecological sustainability and social inclusion. Secure land tenure rights enable people in rural and urban areas to invest in their livelihoods and homes. Farmers with secure tenure gain access to credits, are more likely to invest in activities like soil conservation to maintain or improve soil fertility or to engage in climate smart agricultural practices to strengthen their resilience against negative impacts of climate change. The dimension of collective land rights often concerns communal forest management and conservation as well as pasture areas as a common resource pool to secure livelihoods.

The Global Programme Responsible Land Policy (GPRLP)

THERE IS GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTORS TO ENGAGE. Given its relevance, fostering responsible land policy has become a major concern for the international community. Action by multiple stakeholders in the land sector is based on international policy frameworks like the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (PRAI), as well as the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Environmental considerations gain importance in the framework of the three Rio Conventions too (UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC). Land tenure security is anchored in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) since 2019 as a central prerequisite for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), while secure land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) are a key prerequisite for forest conservation as confirmed in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as for nature conservation according to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD). Due to policy changes there is a growing recognition of customary land rights globally.

THE GPRLP CONTRIBUTES TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY IMPROVING LAND TENURE SECURITY IN TARGET COUNTRIES. As part of the German Special Initiative “Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems” (formerly “One World – No hunger”, 2014 - 2022), it is implemented by GIZ in Benin (2016 - 2023), Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Laos (2017 - 2023), Madagascar, Peru (2015 - 2021), Niger, Paraguay (2017 -2018) and Uganda. Safe and fair land use and ownership rights contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the Agenda 2030: SDG1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), SDG2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture), SDG5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), SDG10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries) and SDG16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

IN EACH COUNTRY, A SET OF MULTIPLE ACTORS IS INVOLVED. Stakeholders include decision-makers and professionals from government institutions at national, regional and local level, civil society and the private sector. To anchor policies in the institutional framework, cooperation with national ministries is crucial. Special emphasis is placed on the inclusion of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in implementation processes and policy dialogue, in order to balance government and civil society priorities and issues. Multi-stakeholder dialogues are key to conflict resolution processes, and this in turn enhances the likelihood for responsible investments in land.

GPRLP AT A GLANCE

TARGET GROUP: The project improves the land ownership and land use rights of about 2,500,000 people in the partner countries. Particular attention is paid to the rights of women and marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples.



BUDGET: EUR 121 million (including EUR 16 million cofinanced by the EU)

OBJECTIVE: The project supports people in improving their livelihoods through secure and fair access to land and in developing long-term economic prospects in rural areas.

COUNTRIES: The project is currently implemented in

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Niger and Uganda (previously also in Benin, Laos, Peru and Paraguay).





The activities in the GPRLP fall into three interrelated areas of action:

1. **Improved institutional capacities and procedures for securing land use and land ownership rights of the rural population.** Capacities regarding the formalization of land rights are enhanced through institutional learning and the introduction of technological innovations.
2. **Support to Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in the participation of responsible land governance.** Civil society groups like farmer organisations and indigenous people's organisations are strengthened and supported in active participation in policy dialogues.
3. **Sensitization of agricultural investors for international and national guidelines and legislation.** Responsible investments in line with established legislation and international guidelines like the VGGT and PRAI are supported by measures of capacity building, awareness raising and dialogue facilitation of state actors, private sector, CSO and local land users.



Our Approach

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VIABLE LAND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS HAS BECOME A PRIORITY TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. A growing number of states recognize international guidelines and standards like the VGGT¹² and gradually incorporates them into national land policies. However, advanced land management systems require a high standard of technical and administrative capacity. Developing countries cannot easily replicate expensive and complex technological models. The practical implementation in states with weak governance capacities often requires context specific, holistic as well as cost efficient means to guarantee rapid and long-term solutions. To “fit”

not only purpose but also practicability, Fit-For-Purpose (FFP) approaches aim at providing effective processes by means of a “minimum viable product” in terms of accuracy and efforts.¹³ Outcomes need to be flexible enough to be incrementally improved under more favourable political and economic conditions. The implementation process includes capacity building, as cooperating institutions receive trainings and learn from practical implementation. The GPRLP pilots systematic approaches for a range of land registration procedures in each country module. Context specific opportunities and/or restraints require adaptations to suit specific settings of target countries, while at the same time maintaining seven core activities:



LANDSCAPES BASED ON TENURE SECURITY

6



SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF LANDSCAPES BASED ON TENURE SECURITY

DIGITALISATION OF LAND REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

4



INCORPORATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

7



SUPPORT TO ENHANCE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNAL LAND

5



Core Activities – Examples

AWARENESS RAISING OF PARTNER INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS:

In CAMEROON, the country module ProPFR (Promotion d'une Politique Foncière Responsable) aims to improve the documentation of individual and collective tenure and land use rights to forest, agricultural as well as pastureland. A major focus lies on awareness raising on responsible governance of land. The coexistence of legal and legitimate land rights regularly leads to conflict situations and increases the risk of land grabbing by national elites and large investors, especially to the disadvantage of indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups. Legal land rights are officially recorded e.g., in a cadaster or land register, while legitimate land rights refer to non-written, customary land rights, administered by local authorities. A recent political initiative launched in February 2024 is now intended to recognize customary land rights via an official "Certificate of possession of customary land". It is also valid to obtain loans or guarantees from financial institutions. ProPFR supports and assists the responsible partner ministry in implementing this initiative on a pilot basis, in close cooperation with local municipalities and representatives of traditional authorities. These activities encourage small-holder farmers to register their plots in the official government registers in order to obtain official land rights and to safeguard against land grabbing.



ESTABLISHMENT OF MECHANISMS TO MONITOR AND SOLVE LAND CONFLICTS:

In BURKINA FASO, 70% of the population lives in rural areas and relies on agriculture. However, very little of the agricultural land is officially registered or legally recognized. This leads to a growing number of land disputes, which can escalate into broader community conflicts, weakening social cohesion. To address this issue, the 2009 Land Law gave rural communes an important role in securing land rights. Under this law, land disputes in rural areas must first go through a conciliation process before any legal action can be taken. Ideally, these conflicts should be resolved at the village level, where they arise, rather than escalating to the communal level. However, while Local Land Conciliation Commissions (CCFV) are required by law, many villages either do not have them, or their members are unaware of their responsibilities. With ProPFR's support, 170 Village Land Conciliation Commissions have been established and made fully operational. These commissions now play a vital role in organizing, mediating, and resolving land conflicts locally. By involving local leaders and community members, these institutions help maintain social harmony and resolve disputes before they grow. In addition to conflict resolution, communes are working with local communities to prevent disputes by developing collective land use agreements. These agreements ensure that marginalized groups, such as internally displaced persons and cattle herders, are granted temporary land-use rights, promoting inclusivity and reducing the risk of conflict.



PARTICIPATORY LAND REGISTRATION AND TITLING:

In **UGANDA** a participatory approach to formalize land rights jointly with local land users and customary owners is applied. This process uses tablet computers augmented with Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) receivers. Cultural complexities and engrained gender disparities are addressed to include both women and men. RELAPU (Responsible Land Policy in Uganda) has introduced Land Inventory Protocols (LIPs) in a phased approach. The entire process is accompanied by conflict resolution measures to ensure that inventoried land is free of conflicts within families or between neighbours on land use and ownership or border disputes. Over time 28,800 households have obtained secure land rights for women (38% of total). Spatial and tenure information is made available to all parties and the local population. The empirical project implementation experiences contribute to the current Uganda National Land Policy review process.



the NGO Audace Institut Afrique. Model contracts for land use can be downloaded or filled in online nationwide without internet connection. The project has trained village youths in 33 villages in western Côte d'Ivoire, to lead the process and facilitate the use of *ContraTerre*, leading to over 2,000 issued contracts. The app has been handed over to the Rural Land Agency (AFOR) for integration into the new official national digital land tenure system.

SUPPORT TO ENHANCE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNAL LAND:

As an agro-pastoral Sahelian country, livestock farming is important for **NIGER**, employing over more than 87% of the population. Challenges include animal health, access to water sources, security due to the terrorism, and access to grazing areas. Conflicts between cattle herders and farmers particularly occur during the rainy season when the land is cultivated. Conflict resolution mechanisms include social agreements and local land use conventions, used to agree on rules for natural resource use and equitable access. ProPFR-Niger supports this process via awareness-raising sessions, training for communal and village land tenure committees, who in turn help to reach social agreements on livestock grazing areas, corridor demarcation and water access. Social agreements are important for mobile livestock farming and help to ensure social cohesion between various land users.

DIGITALISATION OF LAND REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

In **CÔTE D'IVOIRE**, the first government after decolonization encouraged migrants to expand agricultural areas, leading to deforestation in favour of cocoa farming and other cash crops, making the country the largest cocoa exporter globally. Yet, land tenure arrangements with migrants were mainly established orally, and nowadays these are increasingly called into question, leading to ethnic tensions. The government has initiated an ambitious national land tenure security program. Digitalisation of land registration is facilitated by the *ContraTerre* mobile application, developed by ProPFR and



SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF LANDSCAPES BASED ON TENURE SECURITY:

The MADAGASCAR country module ProPFR is working on the interface between secure tenure rights and Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR). Experience shows that both individual and collective tenure rights can have significant positive impacts on natural resources, as incentives increase their sustainable management. Based on already existing land use plans, where local stakeholders elaborated their vision of the future landscape, the project analyses the current tenure situation and supports land tenure security according to the provisions in the Malagasy land law, as well as gender inclusion approaches. Both individual and collective rights are considered in order to respect traditional uses of natural resources. A systematic land inventory enhances this process in an efficient way and helps to establish a comprehensive view of the area in terms of tenure. A catalogue combining different options of forest landscape restoration (like afforestation, agroforestry, natural forest management or mangrove rehabilitation) and the respective appropriate solutions for tenure security, supports decision making at local level for investments in sustainable landscapes. The project collaborates with other projects of German Cooperation like the Global Project for Soil Protection and Rehabilitation, which supports the same target groups in implementing restoration measures.



INCORPORATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR:

In ETHIOPIA, the aim is to create favourable conditions for responsible agricultural investments, aligned with national and international standards. Institutional challenges are overcome by providing technical and knowledge support, complying with social and environmental standards. Through public events, training sessions, and advisory services, government officials and private agricultural investors are trained to manage leased land. The S2RAI (Support to Responsible Agricultural Investments) initiative strengthens technical skills on advocacy for responsible investment in land. One key achievement has been the reduction of the commercial investment ceiling for more carefully reviewed national and international investors. The responsibility for land identification and transfer has also been shifted from the federal to the regional government level. S2RAI has built the capacity of over 2,400 experts, private sector players, and land users, while engaging more than 1,900 community members in 163 dialogue forums. These forums foster discussions on conflicts and livelihood issues. The project has contributed to a shift away from large-scale land leases towards smaller plots, promoting out-grower schemes and contract farming. By supporting the creation of investor associations and training members, S2RAI has laid the foundation for spreading knowledge on social and environmental standards.



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- 4 United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). 2016. "Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning: A Guide for Country Level Implementation." HS Number: HS/075/16E, Nairobi.
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Country portfolio

Over the course of its implementation, the GPRLP has been active in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Laos, Madagascar, Niger, Paraguay, Peru and Uganda. In each country, a context specific approach in line with the global GPRLP concept aims at improving the access to land as a core condition for combating poverty and hunger in rural areas for specific population groups, particularly women and socially marginalised groups.

Benin

TARGET GROUP: 42,800 households in rural areas, specifically women and socially marginalised groups (young people, pastoralists and migrants). The project reached more than 43,000 households after eight years of implementation.

REGION: Five local communities in the departments of Borgou and Alibori

DURATION: December 2015 to July 2023

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: National Agency for Domains and Land (ANDF) within the Ministry of Economy and Finance

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)



Burkina Faso

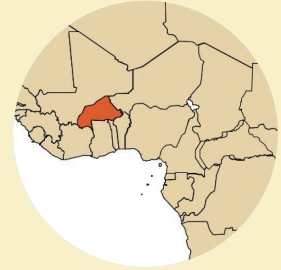
TARGET GROUP: 9,000 households in rural areas, specifically women and socially marginalised groups

REGION: Eight municipalities in the South-West, Hauts-Bassins and Central-East regions

DURATION: July 2020 to December 2025

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Cadastral services, municipalities, NGOs and consultancy firms

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: The General Directorate of Land and Organization of Rural Areas (DGFOMR) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MARA)



Niger

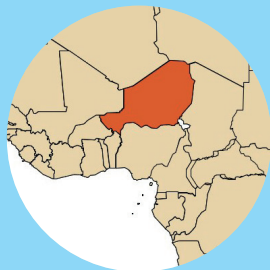
TARGET GROUP: 15,000 households in rural areas, particularly women, youth and cattle herders

REGION: Tillabéri, Tahoua and Agadez regions

DURATION: January 2023 to May 2026

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of Spatial Planning

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Economy and Finance



Paraguay

TARGET GROUP: 3,300 people from indigenous groups

REGION: 30 communities in Caazapá and Caaguazú

DURATION: March 2017 to June 2018

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Three NGOs, namely *Pastoral Indígena de Coronel Oviedo*, *Promoción Ecuéménica Social Oguazú* and *Pastoral de la Diócesis de Tavaí*

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: none



Peru

TARGET GROUP: State-recognised indigenous communities that have applied for land titles in their regions with about 5,700 households. The project reached more than 1,300 households after six years of implementation.

REGION: San Martín and Ucayali (Amazon region)

DURATION: November 2015 to October 2021

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Agricultural authorities within both regional governments, indigenous organisations, NGOs

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MINAGRI)



Laos

TARGET GROUP: 6,800 households in rural areas, specifically women and marginalized groups. The project reached more than 12,000 households after seven years of implementation.

REGION: Five rural areas in Sayaboury, Luang Namtha and Huaphan provinces

DURATION: October 2016 to October 2023

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), in particular the Land Administration Department

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Department of International Cooperation within the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)



Madagascar

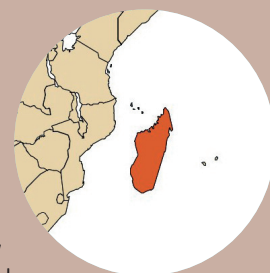
TARGET GROUP: 85,500 households in rural forest areas, specifically women and marginalized groups

REGION: Eight municipalities of the Boeny Region in the northwest and in DIANA Region in the north of Madagascar

DURATION: July 2017 to December 2025

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Ministries of Research, Environment, Agriculture and Interior, NGOs (e.g. Transparency International)

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of land use planning, housing and public works (MAHTP)



Cameroon

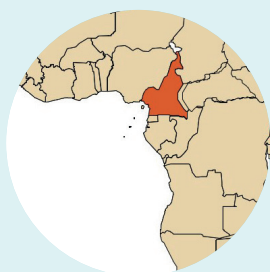
TARGET GROUP: 1,500 households in rural areas, particularly women, young people and marginalised groups (e.g., Mbororo pastoralists and internally displaced persons)

REGION: Centre region, municipalities of Nanga Eboko and Yoko

DURATION: January 2023 to May 2026

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: National ministries and agencies, traditional authorities, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), various NGOs and local networks

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure (MINDCAF)



Ethiopia

TARGET GROUP: 161,600 households in rural areas, specifically women and marginalized groups

REGION: Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia, SNNPR and Gambella regions

DURATION: JANUARY 2019 TO MAY 2026

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Regional Land Bureaus and environment authorities, CSOs, universities and partners from the private sector in all target regions

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)



Côte d'Ivoire

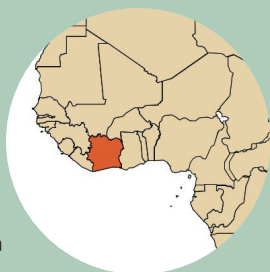
TARGET GROUP: 13,200 households in rural areas, particularly women, youth and marginalized communities

REGION: 33 municipalities in the south-west regions of San Pedro, Cavally and Nawa, and in the southern regions of Agnèby-Tiassa and Lôh-Djiboua

DURATION: July 2020 to December 2025

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Village authorities, expert surveyors, CSOs (e.g. Audace Institut Afrique), private sector (e.g. Hershey Company, Unilever, Barry Callebaut)

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of State, Agriculture, Rural Development and Vegetal Production (MEMINADERPV), Rural Land Agency (AFOR)



Uganda

TARGET GROUP: 114,500 households, smallholders from eleven districts, with a focus on marginalized groups and women

REGION: Eleven districts in Central, North-West, Northern and Eastern Uganda

DURATION: March 2016 to May 2026

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: NGOs, research institutions, private sector and other international organisations

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD)



Further reading

Governance of Tenure technical guides

FAO, 2013–2018

> <http://www.fao.org/tenure/resources/collections/governanceoftenuretechnicalguides/en>

Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

FAO, 2012

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Browse for more information on the land sector in the GIZ online information centre:

> <https://mia.giz.de/esearcha/browse.tt.html>

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