Land Governance Toolkit

Practical land governance solutions for cross-sectoral application

Overview

Technical approaches in land governance

Multi-stakeholder platforms

Capacity and curricula development

Cadastre systems

Legal advice

Sector coordination

Land consolidation

Resettlement planning and compensation

Cross-cutting sectors

Introduction

Why land matters

This toolkit distils over ten years of GIZ's practical experience in land governance into strategies and tools that benefit a wide range of development sectors and objectives, including agriculture, climate, environment, social development, digital transformation and economic growth. Participatory and transparent land governance creates the foundation for food security, livelihoods, sustainable development and climate resilience. By applying tested practices and principles – such as strengthening tenure security, transparency and participation – projects across sectors can become more inclusive, sustainable and effective.

Yet in many parts of the world, land rights remain unclear or contested: 70 per cent of the world's population lacks registered tenure, and in Africa only 10 per cent of farmland is documented. Customary systems often provide access to land but lack legal recognition, leaving millions of people, especially women, indigenous peoples, local communities and other marginalised groups, at risk of displacement.

Land governance helps to address these challenges by
→ recognising and safeguarding tenure rights,
→ providing access to justice and legal remedies,
→ preventing disputes and conflicts, and
→ promoting gender equality, human dignity, non-discrimination, equity, participation, transparency and accountability in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGTs).

What the toolkit offers

The toolkit guides the development of fair, inclusive and sustainable land governance by bundling tested approaches into five thematic areas, each with practical tools that can be adapted and combined to fit different contexts. It provides
→ step-by-step guidance,
→ decision-making aids for selecting suitable approaches,
→ cross-sectoral links so that land governance can be integrated into broader programmes, and
→ a structured, user-friendly format for both experts and non-specialists.

Who can use the toolkit?

The toolkit supports not only land-focused projects but also initiatives in agriculture, climate, energy, urban development and other sectors. Its purpose is to make land governance knowledge transferable, offering practical solutions that strengthen development outcomes.

The primary users are project developers and implementing organisations in land governance and related sectors. It is also a valuable resource for government agencies, land officials, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector entities involved in agricultural investment or land-based projects, as well as for paralegals, legal aid providers and community leaders who support local communities in defending and claiming their land rights.

Introduction

How GIZ supports better land governance

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH works with its partner countries to strengthen land governance and secure tenure rights. It aims to reduce poverty, promote gender equality, resolve conflicts and ensure that investment in land benefits local communities.
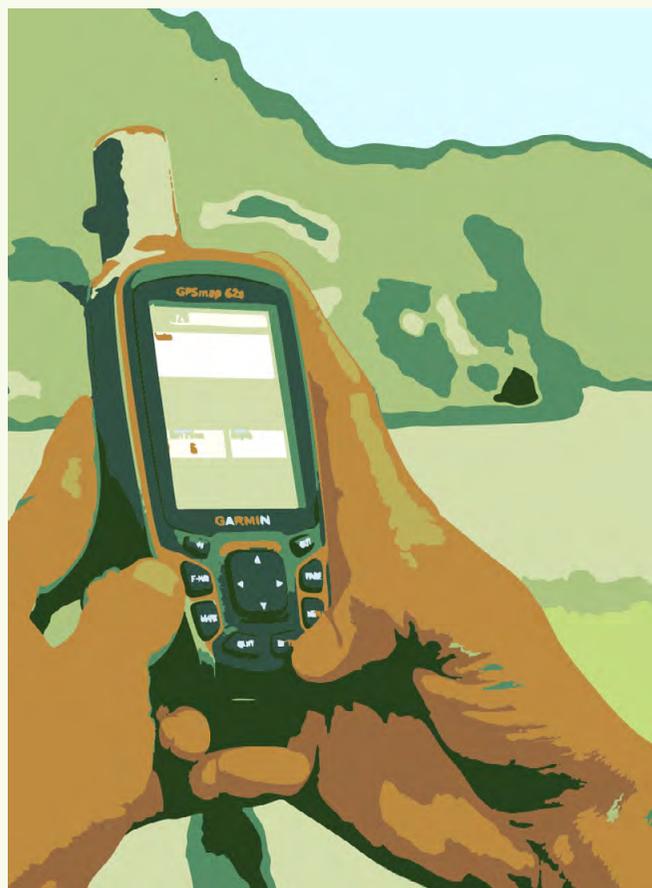
Key areas of GIZ's work include

→ **Fair access to land**
Supporting smallholder farmers, indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups in securing land rights and managing land disputes to safeguard livelihoods and food security

→ **Policy advice and civic empowerment**
Helping partners to develop fair legal frameworks and land administration systems while empowering citizens to participate in land-related decision-making

→ **Women's rights and gender equality**
Promoting gender-responsive land policies and ensuring that women's land rights are recognised and protected

→ **Investment and responsible land use**
Supporting frameworks that attract investment while safeguarding the rights of local communities and promoting sustainable and productive land use

→ **Digitalisation and open data**
Promoting digital tools like geo-information systems and open data platforms to increase transparency, improve land management, monitor investment and make land documentation more accessible

Responsible land policy for sustainable development

As part of the BMZ Special Initiative "Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems", GIZ's Global Programme Responsible Land Policy (GPRLP) strengthened secure and equitable land tenure in partner countries from 2015 to 2025. Its aim was to create favourable conditions for sustainable development, food security and social justice.

The programme worked in three areas:

1. Securing land rights for rural communities through improved registration and documentation
2. Developing responsible land policies with civil society to ensure fairness and transparency
3. Promoting socially and environmentally responsible agricultural investment

Implemented in ten countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, GPRLP built on national policies, partnered with governments, civil society and the private sector, and delivered rapid, practical results.

Ten years of experience are now bundled in this toolkit – a collection of proven strategies, learnings and methods for inclusive land governance and beyond. Designed for GIZ projects and partners, it supports fair, transparent and sustainable land governance while offering valuable solutions for a wide range of development sectors.

How to use the toolkit

This toolkit may look extensive at first glance - but don't worry: It is designed as a modular reference guide for flexible use.

There's no need to read it from start to finish - each thematic section stands on its own and can be consulted independently.

Think of it as a tour guide - it leads you through the most relevant themes, approaches and tools for land governance.

Structure

→ The toolkit is organised into **thematic sections** (also known as technical approaches), each focusing on a key intervention area in land governance.

→ Each section provides an overview of the theme, explains the available tools and points to practical resources.

→ You can adapt and combine tools depending on your specific context, project stage and stakeholder group.

Ways to use the toolkit

The toolkit supports

→ Individual use – e.g. for self-study, legal aid or project preparation.

→ Group use – e.g. in workshops, training sessions or peer-to-peer learning formats.

→ Institutional use – e.g. for project design and implementation, consulting, technical assistance, policy dialogue, monitoring and evaluation.
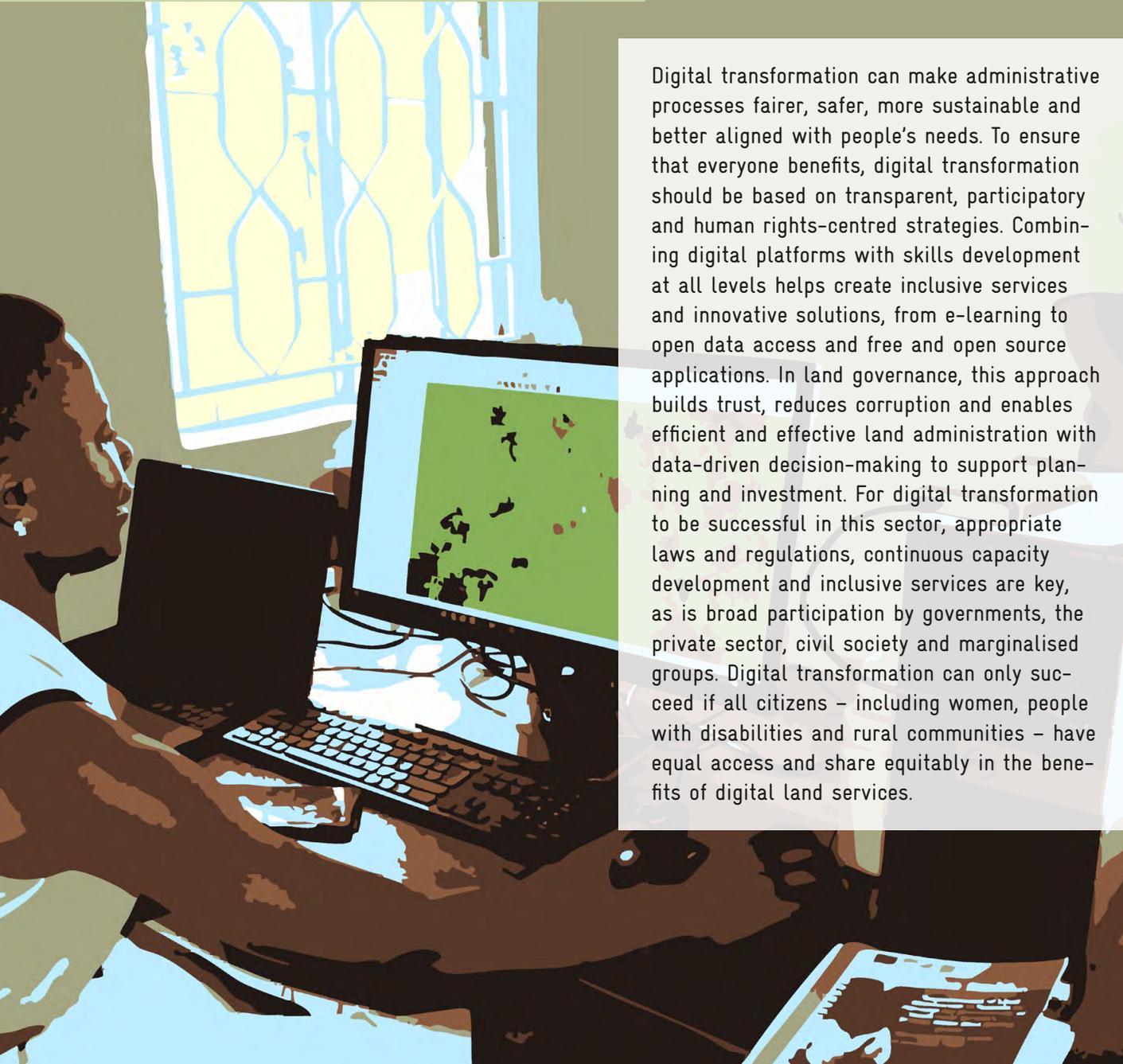
Where to start

→ Technical approach: You can look through the following overview of technical approaches and select the one that interests you.

→ Cross-cutting sectors: Alternatively, you can look at the cross-cutting sectors, find your relevant one and access the specific tools proposed for this theme.
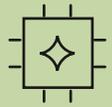
Digital transformation

Digital transformation can make administrative processes fairer, safer, more sustainable and better aligned with people's needs. To ensure that everyone benefits, digital transformation should be based on transparent, participatory and human rights-centred strategies. Combining digital platforms with skills development at all levels helps create inclusive services and innovative solutions, from e-learning to open data access and free and open source applications. In land governance, this approach builds trust, reduces corruption and enables efficient and effective land administration with data-driven decision-making to support planning and investment. For digital transformation to be successful in this sector, appropriate laws and regulations, continuous capacity development and inclusive services are key, as is broad participation by governments, the private sector, civil society and marginalised groups. Digital transformation can only succeed if all citizens – including women, people with disabilities and rural communities – have equal access and share equitably in the benefits of digital land services.

Link to relevant tools in the kit

Democracy and the rule of law

Link to relevant tools in the kit

Documentation of (customary) land rights, social accountability mechanisms and participatory processes in the land sector help to increase transparency and secure property and usage rights. This strengthens the rule of law, promotes democratic participation, reduces risks of corruption and fosters citizens' trust in state institutions and democratic principles. Responsible land governance creates opportunities for participation in decision-making on land use and management, including for marginalised groups. Based on recognition of civil society as a relevant stakeholder for the land sector, inclusive policy-making can enhance responsiveness to the public's needs. Land governance is well-placed to stimulate structured social dialogue at a higher level, in order to support the alignment of cultural norms with government regulations and thus promote consensus on core (democratic) values. For stakeholders concerned with broader administrative reforms in support of efficient public service delivery, land administration provides tangible examples of how a human rights-centred approach can link in with decentralisation of services, public planning and financial management processes that benefit communities.

Peace and security

Inclusive land governance helps prevent and resolve conflicts by clearly defining rights and restrictions. It creates mechanisms for fair conflict resolution and mediation or, at best, draws on alternative conflict resolution mechanisms existing at the local level, thereby promoting social cohesion across communities and diverse stakeholder groups. Various examples show how host communities' documented land rights can facilitate regulated access to land for productive use by refugees or internally displaced persons, e.g. via land leases, thus increasing their self-reliance. In (violent) internal or cross-border conflicts, responsible land governance clarifies conflicting land claims that are driven by ethnic, religious or sociocultural interests. Transparent land registers can also be used in post-conflict settings to promote long-term conflict transformation and reconciliation, based on recognition of the land (use) rights of displaced persons, for example.

Link to relevant tools in the kit

Agriculture and food

Secure land rights are a basis for responsible investment in agriculture and sustainable production. They enable predictable cultivation and management strategies, facilitate access to credit and support services, and thus contribute to food security, diversification of crops and rural development.

Strong tenure security also encourages soil health and halts desertification by incentivising sustainable land management practices or agroforestry. It also provides an incentive to invest in technologies for intensification and processing, improving productivity and value addition. Secure land rights support traceability of value chains and boost export potential so that agricultural outputs can meet market and quality standards. By providing a foundation for long-term land leases – either for households or for individuals – tenure security encourages shifts from seasonal crops to perennials and more sustainable cultivation patterns. Finally, it helps unlock agricultural finance, particularly for women and young people, who are often cash-poor but can invest in agricultural intensification when tenure is secured.

Link to relevant tools in the kit

Climate and environmental protection

Link to relevant tools in the kit

With secure land rights, smallholder farmers are more likely to adopt farming practices which strengthen their resilience and adaptation to climate change (e.g. improved seeds, installation of irrigation systems).

Land governance can also protect ecosystems such as forests and water resources, thereby mitigating land degradation and deforestation and providing a basis for sustainable agriculture and forestry. Efficient land administration supports climate action and promotes the responsible use of natural resources.
Secure and well-managed land rights help unlock climate finance and enhance mitigation potential through communal land management. They also provide an incentive to invest in technologies for climate change adaptation. As climate change progresses, questions about future land use changes and the transformation of agroecological zones must be addressed through an approach that integrates physical and spatial planning and agricultural extension services.

Social development

Inclusive land governance empowers women, young people and marginalised groups, thus contributing to gender equality and the protection of minority rights. Within the broader context of feminist development policies, it supports the transformation of gender norms within society by enabling women to access, control and benefit from land and resources. Secure land rights provide opportunities for youth employment, e.g. through land leases or agriculture, thus strengthening economic participation and promoting sustainable livelihoods. In contexts of extreme vulnerability, development efforts can move from emergency response or food aid toward post-emergency, development-oriented transformation, fostering long-term social and economic resilience by embedding interventions in responsible land governance. Minority communities are often highly vulnerable to land use changes; examples are pastoral societies impacted by land use regulations in contexts of drought, or indigenous communities that are subject to forest use agreements.

Link to relevant tools in the kit

Sustainable infrastructure

Link to relevant tools in the kit
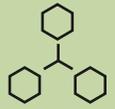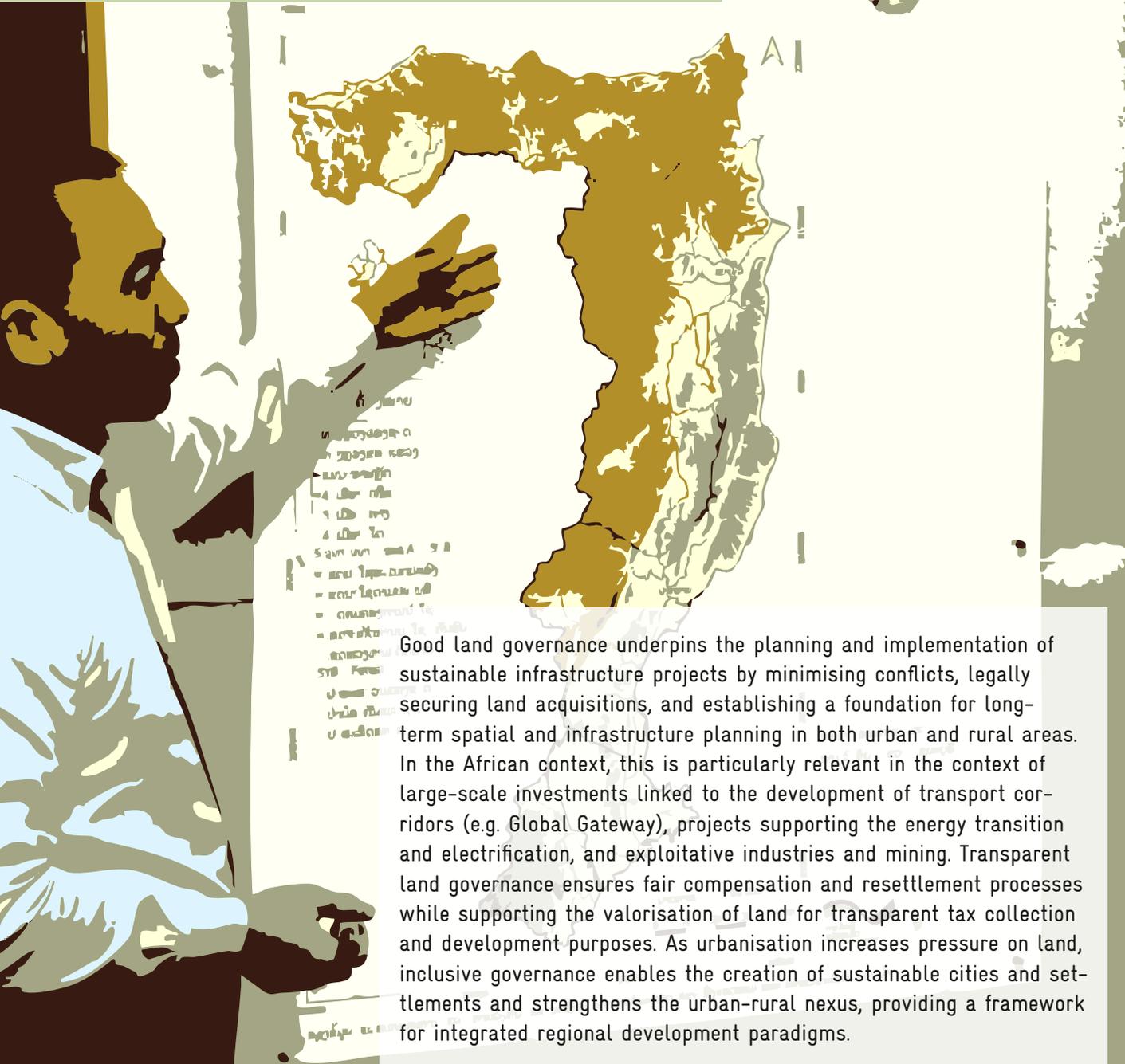
Good land governance underpins the planning and implementation of sustainable infrastructure projects by minimising conflicts, legally securing land acquisitions, and establishing a foundation for long-term spatial and infrastructure planning in both urban and rural areas. In the African context, this is particularly relevant in the context of large-scale investments linked to the development of transport corridors (e.g. Global Gateway), projects supporting the energy transition and electrification, and exploitative industries and mining. Transparent land governance ensures fair compensation and resettlement processes while supporting the valorisation of land for transparent tax collection and development purposes. As urbanisation increases pressure on land, inclusive governance enables the creation of sustainable cities and settlements and strengthens the urban-rural nexus, providing a framework for integrated regional development paradigms.

Economy and employment

Link to relevant tools in the kit

The Responsible Governance of Investments in Land (RGIL) approach supports economies and employment by fostering secure, productive and legally sound land use that enables sustainable business and agriculture. It ensures that international and domestic investments alike respect the rights and needs of local communities – particularly women and marginalised groups – and contribute to sustainable land management and agricultural productivity. Based on the principles of responsible agricultural investment and dialogues on equitable land use, multi-stakeholder groups contribute to compliance with social and environmental standards, which have been increasingly demanded by importing markets and companies in recent years. Examples are the sustainability legislation introduced in Germany and the EU, and corporate standards adopted at the individual company level (corporate social responsibility). By boosting confidence and providing legal certainty, the RGIL approach creates a solid foundation for businesses, agriculture and industry by enabling access to land as a capital asset, promoting formal markets and financial services, and fostering employment and economic growth. At the same time, it functions as a risk management strategy for investors and projects, supports physical planning for investment zones, and integrates land as a key factor in holistic business planning, thereby creating opportunities for youth employment and inclusive economic participation.

Land administration
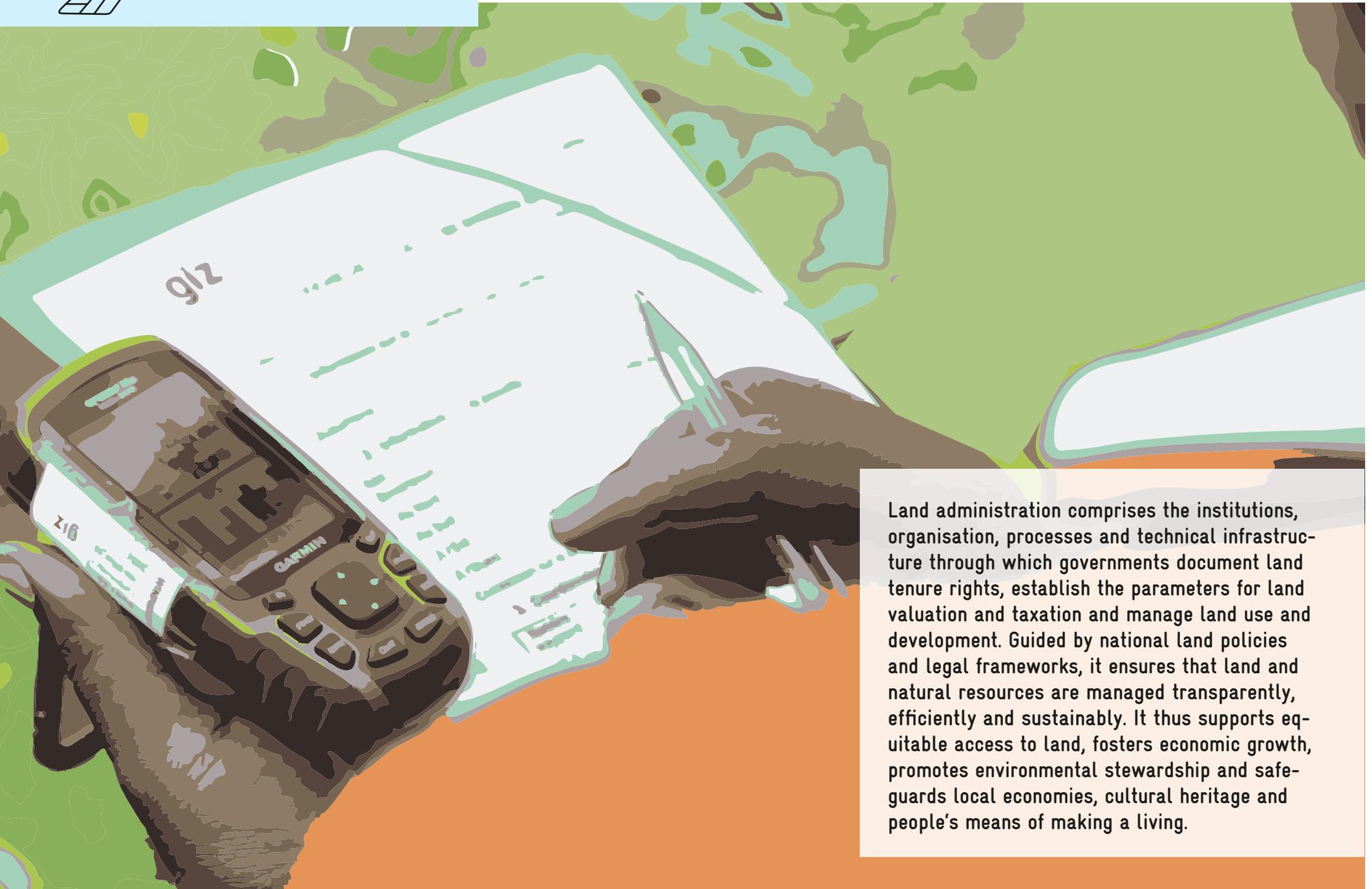
Land administration comprises the institutions, organisation, processes and technical infrastructure through which governments document land tenure rights, establish the parameters for land valuation and taxation and manage land use and development. Guided by national land policies and legal frameworks, it ensures that land and natural resources are managed transparently, efficiently and sustainably. It thus supports equitable access to land, fosters economic growth, promotes environmental stewardship and safeguards local economies, cultural heritage and people's means of making a living.

Land administration

The land administration approach consists of three separate tools:

1. **Systematic land registration** is used to map and legally record individual and communal tenure rights and issue certificates or titles, while subsequent land registration captures land transactions and related rights, such as changes of ownership or subdivisions or mergers of one or several land parcels.
2. Although such processes can be performed using analogue tools, **digitalisation** has the great advantage of improving data access and quality, administrative efficiency and institutional capacity for effective land governance.
3. **Sustainable finance for land administration**, especially self-financing, keeps land administration systems transparent, efficient and reliable beyond external funding.

Further information

Case study
GIZ (2025)
Bringing Land Services Closer to Ethiopian Farmers

Evidence
Land Portal Foundation (2025)
Sustainable Financing for Effective Land Administration

## Impact and performance indicators

- Percentage of households with legally recognised land rights (disaggregated by gender, age and vulnerability status) increases.

- Size, number or percentage of land parcels systematically mapped and registered is scaled up.

- Public revenue generated from land or property tax increases.

- Efficiency of land administration service provision (cost-benefit ratio, days to process land transactions, number of land transactions processed per month or year) increases.

- Increase in land-based investment or credit access using land as collateral

- Growth in agricultural productivity or land-based income

- Decline in deforestation rates in areas with secure tenure; expansion of sustainably managed land areas

- Efficient land administration supports countries' progress towards land degradation neutrality.

Proposed tools

Tool 1   Systematic land registration

Systematic land registration entails identifying, mapping and registering individual and communal land parcels across a geographical area, typically a village, municipality, district or urban settlement. This involves a process of legally recognising and documenting land rights according to statutory law, usually in a local, regional or national land register. It follows the fit-for-purpose principle by applying low-cost and low-tech methods depending on the level of accuracy required. Land certificates or titles are issued as formal proof of ownership or legal entitlement to occupy, use and exclude others from land. The allocated rights may be freehold, leasehold, usufruct or other forms of ownership, but restrictions may also be imposed, such as servitudes, passage rights, mortgages and environmental restrictions. Systematic procedures bundle plots and are often used for initial registration for efficiency gains, unlike sporadic land registration, which involves the surveying of individual plots. Systematic land registration contributes to tenure security, produces transparent information for land administration and land use planning, and creates a favourable environment for investment in land.
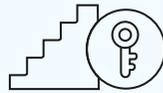
Key implementation steps

1. Conducting awareness-raising campaigns in line with the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) principles before the identification of parcels, often with a baseline study mapping tenure, conflicts, and monitoring needs
2. Designating the adjudication area and mobilising communities to prepare for parcel demarcation, provision of documentary evidence and publicly displaying of notices of claims
3. Collaborating with land use specialists, local authorities and communities to prepare land use maps, identifying areas prohibited for registration such as protected areas or areas reserved for communal use
4. Identifying and agreeing on parcel boundaries with stakeholders and marking them using GNSS, topographic tools, drones, or satellite imagery
5. Gathering digital data on parcels, land use and claimants, and collecting supporting documents such as purchase agreements and tax receipts to support ownership or user claims
6. Displaying village parcel maps and claimant lists for verification, allowing for corrections and dispute submissions and resolving conflicts
7. Cross-checking and validating parcel maps against physical planning and zoning regulations, using land use maps or existing plans for legal and spatial consistency
8. Approving validated claims, entering them in the official cadastre or, where applicable, customary systems and formalising rights
9. Issuing and distributing land certificates or titles to landowners, applying the fees prescribed in relevant laws and regulations

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture and food security

It helps secure land rights and, thus promotes investment and access to credit. Spatial data provides key information for land improvement projects.

Biodiversity

It supports the designation of protected areas and buffer zones and promotes sustainable land use management.

Climate change and land degradation

It supports land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation by clarifying tenure ahead of carbon projects, ecosystem restoration and measures to achieve land degradation neutrality.

Energy transition

It ensures that land rights are recognised in renewable energy projects, reducing conflicts and promoting community benefits. It also provides the basis for compensation payments if land development adversely affects tenure rights.

Tool 1   Systematic land registration

Key actors

National, regional and local authorities | Implementing partners | Community members

Roles and responsibilities

National, regional and local authorities	Implementing partners	Community members
• Provide accurate info • engage communities in mapping and dispute resolution • refer disputes • maintain registries	• Plan and coordinate • ensure legal framework • provide technical expertise • enforce regulations • manage data systems	• Participate in awareness, consultation, mapping • provide land info • assist in verification and dispute resolution • include women and vulnerable groups

Specific skills, training or resources needed

National, regional and local authorities	Implementing partners	Community members
• Training in land administration • legal obligations • dispute resolution • community engagement	• GIS/cadastral skills • knowledge of land laws • policies • registration procedures	• Basic land rights knowledge • conflict resolution • visual/translated materials • facilitator support

Benefits

National, regional and local authorities	Implementing partners	Community members
• Legally recognised tenure, • improved land governance, • long-term land investment	• Efficient land management • transparent taxation • accurate spatial data • resource/statistics availability	• Secure land rights • better access to credit/services • reduced conflicts • stronger governance, empowerment • improved resource management

Success factors

✓ Official registration strengthens tenure security, providing a record of ownership and user rights, facilitating transparent, legally recognised transactions and reducing the risk of disputes

✓ Active involvement of political leaders and peer-to-peer outreach such as neighbour-to-neighbour mobilisation, ensuring participation and efficient mapping

✓ Legal frameworks can promote equity – for example, by mandating joint titling for women and men or subsidising registration fees – whereas complex procedures risk excluding women or marginalised groups

Limitations

× Logistical barriers to participation by communities, requiring longer preparation phases to ensure that they can provide data and be present during parcel mapping

× Overlap of customary and statutory rights, as registration alone cannot resolve underlying disputes and, if poorly designed, may override or marginalise customary systems

Tool 1   Systematic land registration

Costs

→ high, depending on the land holding, area size, number of parcels, type of land government capacities, level of digitalisation

Resources

→ **Staff:** coordination, land use and GIS specialists, surveyors, administrative/data entry staff, community engagement staff, communication officers, local facilitators, staff or trained locals for alternative dispute resolution
→ **Equipment:** computers, field mobile devices, surveying equipment (mainly GNSS), survey-grade UAVs/drones, satellite imagery data, robust and customisable open source software for GIS and data collection
→ **Logistics:** transport (cars, motorbikes), field allowances, meeting venues, communication tools

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** medium-term, ranging from several months to over a year depending on legal, technical and institutional readiness
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, requiring a minimum fixed period for on-site parcel identification, surveying, data collection and public display

Further resources

Implementation manuals

GIZ (2025): Manuel de mise en œuvre. Inventaire parcellaire systématique stratifié appliqué (IPSS) aux opérations de certification foncière massive (OCFM)

GIZ (2023): Access to Agricultural Land and Improvement of Income and Employment Prospects for Youth in Uganda. Implementation Manual.

Ministerio de Agricultura y Riego Perú (2018): Manual de Diagnóstico. Físico Legal del Proceso de Formalización de Predios Rurales

Practical resources

GIZ (2022): Guide des utilisateurs. Délimitation des parcelles avec QField et édition certificat foncier avec FIPLOF

GIZ (2021): Geographic Information System. Technicians Training Manual. Improvement of Land Governance in Uganda (ILGU)

GIZ (2021): Guide méthodologique de réalisation de la cartographie participative au Bénin

GIZ (2025): Towards Tenure Security and Cooperation: How the GPRLP and S2RAI Transform Land Governance in Ethiopia

GIZ (2023): Benin: Participatory Village Mapping in Northern Benin

Evidence

GIZ (2025): Technique de l'enregistrement foncier au Burkina Faso. Solutions adaptées à l'objectif pour l'enregistrement des terres.

GIZ (2018): Land Surveying with Modern Technologies (Hardware & Software). Briefing Paper.

GIZ (2017): Systematic Land Registration (SLR). Briefing Paper

GIZ (2015): Systematic Land Registration in Rural Areas of Lao PDR. Concept Document for Countrywide Application

Tool 1   Systematic land registration

Link to relevant tools in the kit

Tool 2   Digitalisation of land registration and information systems

Digitalisation is a key lever for effective land governance, providing tools for transparent, efficient and participatory land administration. IT solutions, such as geographic information systems (GIS), enhance the documentation of land rights, streamline data management within the public administration and simplify access to and sharing of land information. Modern methods for data capturing such as drone-based aerial and high-resolution satellite imagery and AI-based feature extraction help to precisely geo-reference and define parcel boundaries and other objects relating to the parcels. Trained land officers lead participatory processes to verify rights, check whether there are any restrictions on the land and digitally record them in official registers. These approaches strengthen institutional capacities, improve data quality and foster transparency and trust among stakeholders, creating a robust basis for secure land tenure, reliable valuation, land use and natural resource planning and the development of transparent and sustainable land markets.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture

Access to land data facilitates monitoring of agricultural yields and increases transparency in relation to subsidies, investment decision-making and market linkages. The tool supports traceability of value chains to the parcel in the context of sustainability regulations (Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive - CRD-DD, Regulation on Deforestation-free products - EUDR)

Environmental management and conservation

It supports sustainable land use planning, zoning of sensitive areas and protection of natural resources.

Rural development, urban planning and infrastructure development

By providing accurate land information, it supports infrastructure planning and resource management tailored to local needs.
Land registries managed through digital land information systems (LIS) support the planning of housing, transport and other public infrastructure while ensuring compliance with building regulations.

Social welfare and poverty reduction

Digital tenure records and land information can be made available to allow marginalised groups to access land-based benefits, social programmes and microfinance.

Governance and public administration

It strengthens transparency, accountability and participatory decision-making, supports efficient service provision, regulatory compliance and conflict resolution and contributes to public financial management systems.

Tool 2   Digitalisation of land registration and information systems

Key actors

| Government institutions and ministries	Technical experts, surveyors and GIS specialists	Land owners and community members	Development partners or supporting organisations
Roles and responsibilities			
• Set land policies, legal frameworks, technical standards; provide data access; ensure governance and compliance.	• Maintain digital land records, support data integration and digitalisation, deploy geospatial technologies.	• Provide information on ownership and land use; validate digitised records.	• Provide technical assistance, capacity-building, funding, guidance on best practices, digitalisation, and participatory approaches.
Specific skills, training or resources needed			
• Knowledge of land laws, planning, digital transformation, GIS, cybersecurity, institutional resources.	• IT and data standards training, surveying/remote sensing equipment, software, servers.	• Basic understanding of land rights, digital registration tools, access to geoportals, crowd-sourced mapping.	• Training in GIS and data tools, access to land information.
Benefits			
• Better policy implementation, transparency, lower costs, standardised data, faster access for citizens, evidence-based decisions.	• Faster, accurate fieldwork; reduced manual errors; interdisciplinary opportunities; professional employment.	• Better land documentation, reduced "overlap disputes", easier access to records and e-services.	• Strengthened partnerships, improved project outcomes, alignment with global goals, enhanced accountability through open data.

Success factors

√ A focus on digitalisation at every stage in the land documentation process: from application and issuance to subsequent transactions with digital templates, signatures, etc.

√ Determining which functionalities and level of quality are needed, not what is technically possible (fit for purpose)

√ Reviewing land administration frameworks, cross-checking anticipated digitalisation gains in all steps against existing technical guidelines and data standards

√ Joint, interoperable solutions, adaptable to differing data accuracy requirements with high level of coordination to avoid conflicting protocols

√ Supportive land policies and legal frameworks to recognise digital land records and electronic transactions

√ Accurate audit of existing analogue land information and defined needs for digitisation

√ Clear institutional mandates to avoid overlaps and mistrust between land agencies (cadastre, land registry and planning departments), maintaining institutional independence

√ Adequate funding for development, roll-out and long-term maintenance

√ Interinstitutional agreements on data and interoperability standards and data exchange

Tool 2   Digitalisation of land registration and information systems
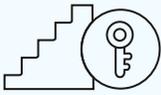
Key implementation steps

1. Reviewing legal framework and institutional and data policies to enable digital land administration with clear roles, secure data and interoperable systems
2. Auditing existing land records to identify gaps or outdated data and identify necessary areas for digitisation, correction or new data collection
3. Establishing data standards, digitalising and indexing paper records, and georeferencing cadastral maps for vector conversion where needed
4. Selecting or developing an interoperable GIS platform integrating registry, cadastre and spatial data for parcels, ensuring secure storage and backup, and adding needed functionalities for efficient data management
5. Linking registry and ownership data with georeferenced cadastral information, validating accuracy using field or aerial surveys/imagery data, and implementing quality control
6. Training staff, legal professionals and local leaders in using the LIS, developing accessible system modules, and raising community awareness on using the digital platform
7. Launching pilot projects to test the LIS, refining workflows and policies, fixing technical issues, and gradually scaling up with full legacy data migration
8. Providing citizens and businesses with accessible digital portals and e-services for land records,

transactions and payments, ensuring affordability for vulnerable groups
9. Maintaining up-to-date land records through integrated digital workflows involving all stakeholders, while ensuring cybersecurity, data back-up and regular system upgrades
10. Monitoring system usage, processing times and errors, gathering user feedback and continuously enhancing performance while adapting to new technologies

Limitations

- × Inadequate legal frameworks that do not fully support digital recording of land data and electronic transactions and hinder interoperability among authorities involved
- × Conflicting mandates and lack of cooperation among authorities
- × High initial costs and requirements for IT infrastructure, equipment and capacity-building

Open source software vs. licensed software

Free and open source software (FOSS) for GIS, database and mapping tools are recommended for flexibility, though licensed software may be used if programming skills are limited, required functions are met and costs are covered in the long run.

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** medium to high, depending on the complexity of IT infrastructure, amount of analogue land information to be digitised and vectorised, and training needs
→ **Full implementation and integration:** medium to high, depending on the scale of digital registration and ongoing capacity-building
→ **Maintenance and updates:** low to high, depending on the frequency of data updates, system upgrades, local staff capacities and the need to involve other stakeholders

Resources

→ **Staff:** IT and geomatics specialists, GIS operators, surveyors, database administrators and entry clerks, trainers, legal advisors
→ **Equipment:** computers, tablets or mobile devices, GNSS devices for georeferencing, database, GIS and georeferencing software (FOSS or licensed), servers/cloud storage, internet connection, training materials, documentation tools
→ **Logistics:** office, community meeting and training facilities, transport to field sites

Tool 2 Digitalisation of land registration and information systems

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term, integrated into early project activities to establish systems, train staff and initiate community engagement
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, conducted regularly throughout the project life-cycle and beyond, ensuring data quality, user-centred design, data migration and registration

Further resources

Case study

GIZ (2021): Laos: Scaling up the LaoLandReg – A Comprehensive, Electronic Cadastre Management System

Evidence

GIZ (2025): Technique de l'enregistrement foncier au Burkina Faso. Solutions adaptées à l'objectif pour l'enregistrement des terres

GIZ (2023): A Sustainable Rural Land Administration System (RLAS) Through Providing Accessible and Affordable Land Administration Services

GIZ (2018): LaoLandReg – Digital Cadaster Database Management System

GIZ (2017): Digital Cadastre Data-base Management System. Briefing Paper

GIZ (2015): Systematic Land Registration in Rural Areas of Lao PDR. Concept Document for Countrywide Application

Link with other tools in the kit

Tool 3   Sustainable finance for land administration

Sustainable finance is essential for building and maintaining transparent, efficient and accessible land administration systems that can function beyond short-term projects or external funding. A long-term financing strategy ensures that land administration remains reliable and responsive to the needs of citizens, communities and markets. However, this requires a predictable flow of resources through a balanced mix of public funding for structural costs and revenues from land services for operational costs. Contributory models offer an effective approach by reinvesting revenues from services such as registration and valuation directly back into the system to cover operational costs, expanding service delivery and strengthening institutional legitimacy.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture

It enhances land service provision and mandated structures, alongside interventions such as access to finance, introduction of sustainable farming, and agri-business promotion as an incentive and risk management strategy. It ensures continuous funding for maintaining accurate and updated information on issues such as land tenure and use and crop production, helping farmers secure tenure and access credit or subsidies to boost productivity.

Urban planning

It provides predictable resources for updating cadastral data, providing citizen services and planning infrastructure.

Environment and climate action

It finances long-term land use planning and monitoring to protect ecosystems and implement climate adaptation measures.

Economic development

It generates stable revenue streams to modernise land markets, attract investment and create high-quality local-level jobs and business opportunities for the private sector in land-related services.

Social inclusion and governance

It promotes social accountability and anti-corruption activities linked to land.
It supports locally accessible and affordable land services, reducing inequalities and empowering marginalised groups.

Public financial management and governance

It builds reliable valuation and transparent taxation frameworks that increase local government revenues for reinvestment in public services.
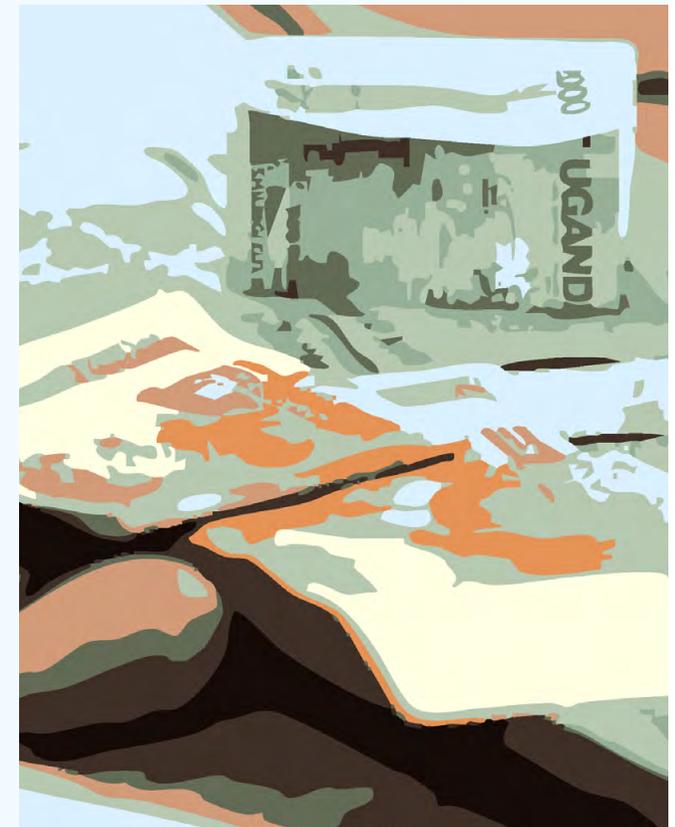
Tool 3   Sustainable finance for land administration

Key actors

Government, (local) land authorities	Private sector	Communities and land users	Development partners and civil society organisations
Roles and responsibilities			
• Legal and policy frameworks, fee standards, revenue collection, compliance oversight, reinvestment planning, service delivery.	• Provide technical infrastructure, staff capacity, registration, valuation and land use planning	• Provide land information and right claims, participate in registration/valuation, pay service fees and property tax	• Donors: training, studies, financing strategies; CSOs: accountability, monitoring, paralegal support, anti-corruption
Specific skills, training or resources needed			
• Public finance management, valuation and taxation, Public Private Partnership management, accountability, e-governance, open data	• Data security, gender and inclusion awareness, ethical standards, citizen-centred service.	• Understand fees/taxes, report transactions, use digital platforms, access grievance redress.	• Capacity on taxation and reinvestment, compliance monitoring, documentation of bribery, financial accountability
Benefits			
• Higher revenues, better services, public trust, sustainable financing, credibility	• New business opportunities, stable jobs, innovation, resilient services	• Affordable, transparent services, secure rights, lower costs, improved local access to land services	• Donors: sustainable outcomes, scaling, global best practices; CSOs: open data, grievance platforms, accountability

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** medium, depending on the complexity of establishing revenue streams, conducting assessments, designing fee structures, and building awareness

→ **Full implementation and integration:** medium, shaped by the "land administration" infrastructure, formalised revenue collection, and institutional oversight.

Resources

→ **Staff:** Financial managers, land officers, auditors, land administration experts

→ **Equipment:** Office equipment, financial tracking tools, accounting software, property taxation system, communication, training resources

→ **Logistics:** Office facilities, transport, communication materials

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term to medium-term, integrated into early project phases to design fee structures, train staff, raise awareness

→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, implement self-financing, reinvest, monitor costs, ensure oversight, adjust policies

Tool 3   Sustainable finance for land administration
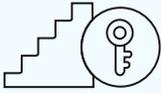
Key implementation steps

1. Documenting the costs of land registration; differentiating operational vs. structural costs; reviewing necessary vs. optional elements
2. Conducting an assessment with the final beneficiaries of land services to identify willingness to contribute to land services
3. Assessing revenue streams, costs, fee structures; ensuring legal/policy framework and political buy-in
4. Identifying inefficiencies and revenue potential, exploring options for service charges while ensuring government commitment
5. Designing equitable, transparent and affordable fees
6. Establishing policies to standardise revenue collection, ensuring public acceptance and buy-in by demonstrating clear incentives and benefits
7. Building public sector staff capacities in financial management, revenue collection and digital operations
8. Collecting and reinvesting revenues in cadastre, digital platforms, local services, staff and capacity-building
9. Auditing fees regularly to confirm proper use and reinvestment.

Success factors

√ Fee models promote social cohesion and inclusiveness
√ Contributory models complemented with accountability mechanisms, which prevent misuse of funds, enhance transparency and monitor or reinforce service delivery
√ Training, equipment and digital workflows adapted to local contexts to reduce operational costs
√ Decentralised management
√ Predictable revenue generation and reinvestment
√ Strong governance and legal frameworks

Limitations

× Legal and policy gaps causing conflicting regulations and weak interinstitutional cooperation.
× Risk of exclusion if fees are unaffordable for marginalised groups

Tool 3   Sustainable finance for land administration

Further resources

Implementation manual

GIZ (2025): Uganda: Self-financing Model for Customary Land Registration

Practical resources

Land Portal Foundation (2025): Exploring Sustainable Financing of Land Registration and Land Governance. Insights from Global Experiences

World Bank Land Conference (2025): Sustainable Financing for Land Administration

World Bank Land Conference (2024): Sustainable Financing for Land Administration

Case study

GIZ (2025): A Self-financing Model in Customary Land Registration in Uganda

Evidence

GIZ (2024): Self-financing Model for the Scaling of Customary Land Services in Uganda. Policy Paper

Link with other tools in the kit

Spatial and land use planning

The purpose of this approach is to establish community-based rules for the governance of land and natural resources. Participatory land use planning (PLUP) supports community-based resource management, while local land use conventions and social agreements regulate access to and control over these resources. The approach is relevant in contexts of overlapping and competing resource tenure within local communities and landscapes. Land and resource conflicts can be triggered by factors such as structural injustices, migration, conflicts and changing resource use patterns due to climate change, biodiversity loss and land-based investment. Rooted in local knowledge, the approach is used to strengthen social cohesion and inclusion, tenure security, and landscape management and rehabilitation.

Spatial and land use planning

Impact and performance indicators

- Number of established and functioning village/municipal/subcounty land committees or governance bodies

- Number of local land use conventions, social agreements and landscape management plans adopted, enforced and implemented through participatory and inclusive processes

- Increase in perceived tenure security and social cohesion as reported by land holders, land users, community members, and representatives of vulnerable groups

- Reduction in land-related disputes

- Increased investment in land improvements and agricultural productivity

- Sensitive ecosystems (forest, wetlands, grazing land, water sources, etc.) are increasingly managed under land use plans

Proposed tools

Further information

CIFOR (2024): Understanding and Addressing Tenure in Forest Landscape Restoration in Africa's Community Lands. Toolbox

FAO (2020): Strengthening Civic Spaces in Spatial Planning Processes. Governance of Tenure Technical Guide 12

FAO (2016): Governing Tenure Rights to Commons. Governance of Tenure Technical Guide 8

FAO (2016): Improving Governance of Pastoral Land, Governance of Tenure Technical Guide 6

Tool 4   Participatory land use planning

Participatory land use planning strengthens the sustainable management and rehabilitation of landscapes. It includes extensive community consultations and participatory mapping. The aim is to map the various resource uses and establish a shared multisectoral vision of the current status of specific landscapes and future priorities. The process results in practical, user-friendly and simplified land use maps that clearly delineate zones for various activities such as afforestation areas. The maps are complemented by action plans. The process leverages local knowledge, resources and capacities to guide effective and context-specific interventions.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture
It enables the adoption of agricultural practices which contribute to the rehabilitation of landscapes and the planning of land-based agricultural investment.

Pastoralism
It facilitates the identification and delineation of grazing land and pastoral routes, reducing conflicts with farmers.

Forestry
It guarantees the sustainable management and rehabilitation of forests and regulates the use of resources.

Water governance
It supports the management and conservation of water resources at the landscape level.

Key actors

Local communities, land committees and customary authorities	Municipal authorities, technical agencies and CSOs

Roles and responsibilities

• Development and implementation of conventions • Application of participatory processes • (Gender) inclusiveness	• Prompt advice and technical assistance • Guarantee of compliance with national regulations • Implementation support • Funding

Specific skills, training or resources needed

|	
• Participatory mapping • Landscape management • Community engagement, dispute resolution and group management skills • Transparency and anti-corruption	• Cross-sectoral knowledge • Participatory mapping and GIS • Understanding of local contexts • Facilitation skills

Benefits

• Sustainable landscape management • Protection of biodiversity and climate resilience • Tenure security • Social cohesion	• Devolution of landscape management to local levels • Legitimacy and relevance • Cost-effectiveness

Tool 4   Participatory land use planning
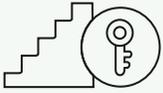
Key implementation steps

1. Engaging with land committees, local authorities, technical agencies, CSOs and representatives of vulnerable groups
2. Co-delineating landscapes, analysing resource management challenges from an environmental, socio-cultural, economic and institutional perspective
3. Co-defining processes for participatory land use planning, identifying roles, responsibilities and contributions and guaranteeing local and external funding
4. Training the actors involved
5. Preparing and printing baseline maps of selected landscapes, including information on natural features, land use, land tenure and topography and conducting field verifications
6. Organising community consultation meetings to refine landscape maps, identifying agricultural and pastoral land, pastoral routes, forests, water resources, infrastructure, roads, habitat, services, etc.
   Discussing the use and status of land areas
   Co-delineating geographical zones for landscape management and rehabilitation actions
   Co-defining interrelated objectives, activities, regulations and stakeholder roles
   Updating maps and action plans
7. Organising specific meetings for women, migrants, pastoralists, young people and other vulnerable groups

8. Identifying parcels and corresponding land owners and users affected by management and rehabilitation
   Securing their tenure through local land use conventions, social agreements or land registration
   Analysing the impact of landscape management on their livelihoods
   Making alternative land and resources available and compensating losses
   Referring disputes to local dispute resolution committees and local authorities
9. Consulting local authorities (i.e. municipal council) and decentralised technical agencies responsible for agriculture, forestry and water to ensure technical coherence and compliance with national and regional regulations
10. Finalising maps and action plans
11. Validation of maps and plans by community assemblies, approval by local councils and signing of by-laws
    Quality control by technical agencies
    Enforcement by regional authorities
12. Setting up governance structures, implementation processes and monitoring mechanisms
13. Raising public awareness of the maps, plans and stakeholders' roles (e.g. through local radio, posters and village meetings)
14. Training land committees and local actors on specific aspects of landscape management (e.g. tree planting)
15. Facilitating basic landscape management practices led by community members
16. Periodically revising maps and plans

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** low to medium, depending on the scope of consultations, level of sophistication of technological solutions and the need for compensation or alternative activities
→ **Full implementation and integration:** low to medium, depending on the scale of landscape management practices

Resources

→ **Staff:** facilitation teams, GIS experts, land use planning experts
→ **Equipment:** computers/tablets/mobile phones, GIS software, internet connection, awareness-raising and training material, printed maps, posters, tools and materials for landscape management works
→ **Logistics:** meeting and training facilities, transport to field locations

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term (6–12 months)
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, covering the period of the convention's validity

Tool 4   Participatory land use planning

Success factors

- √ PLUP reflecting a range of land uses and changes over time, to guarantee that all resource users (e.g. migrating communities in pastoral contexts) are considered
- √ Recognition of existing community efforts in landscape management to strengthen ownership and commitment
- √ Mobilisation of local facilitation teams and experts to support engagement by community members and to ensure the use of culturally appropriate language, practices and technologies
- √ Implementation of action plans relying on community engagement, monitoring and enforcement

Limitations

- ✕ Risk of abuse of power and land grabbing by local actors
- ✕ Risk of processes becoming too technocratic or bureaucratic

Further resources

Implementation manuals

GIZ (2023): Preparation for Sustainable Forest Resource Management on Communal Land at Lake Chamo Watershed. Implementation Manual

GIZ (2023): Plans d'aménagement simplifiés et conventions locales sur la tenure de l'eau à Madagascar. Manuel de mise en œuvre

Practical resources

GIZ (2021): Guide méthodologique de réalisation de la cartographie participative au Bénin

GIZ (2020): Cartographie participative des terroirs des villages au Bénin

Case studies

GIZ (2024): Approche pilote de sécurisation foncière des espaces forestiers. Madagascar

GIZ (2023): Benin: Participatory Village Mapping

Evidence

GIZ (2025): PALoSS: Plan d'aménagement local simple et sécurisé

GIZ (2023): Drone Use in Land Use Planning. Reflections on Advantages and Limitations from the GIZ Land Program Laos. Briefing Paper

GIZ (2023): Plans d'aménagement simplifiés et conventions locales à Madagascar.

GIZ (2017): Area Physical Framework. Briefing Paper

GIZ (2017): Landscape Management. Briefing Paper

Tool 4   Participatory land use planning

Link with other tools in the kit

Tool 5   Local land use conventions and social agreements

Local land use conventions and social agreements establish community-specific rules for access, control and management of land and natural resources. The aim is to enhance resource governance, management and conservation, guarantee access to resources, improve tenure security and social cohesion, and reduce conflicts.

The conventions and agreements are based on local knowledge and respond to context-specific challenges and needs, enabling access to land to be provided to pastoralists and migrants, for example. The conventions and agreements are steered by existing or newly established land committees in consultation with local communities, customary and statutory authorities and technical divisions of the land agencies.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture
It enables women, young people and other vulnerable groups to access agricultural land and supports land management by farmers, as well as community-based conflict prevention.

Pastoralism
It guarantees pastoralists' access to land, secures pastoral routes and establishes sustainable management practices.

Forestry
It facilitates the sustainable management of forests and guarantees that forest-dependent communities have access to resources.

Water governance
It establishes commonly agreed rules on access to and management of water resources, with a focus on both quantity and quality.

Forestry
It supports tracking and enforcement of compliance in forest-based investment.

Post-conflict settings
It enables internally displaced people and migrants to negotiate access to land and natural resources.

Key actors

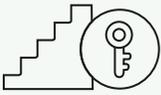| Local communities, land committees and customary authorities	Municipal authorities, technical agencies and CSOs
Roles and responsibilities	
• Development and implementation of local land use conventions • Implementation of participatory processes • (Gender) inclusiveness	• Prompt advice • Guarantee of compliance with national regulations • Implementation support • Funding
Specific skills, training or resources needed	
• Community engagement, dispute resolution and group management skills • Governance of natural resources • Transparency and anti-corruption • Organisational management	• Cross-sectoral knowledge • Understanding of local contexts • Facilitation skills
Benefits	
• Jointly agreed rules • Tenure security • Social cohesion • Sustainable land management	• Devolution of land governance to local levels • Legitimacy and relevance • Cost-effectiveness

Tool 5   Local land use conventions and social agreements

Key implementation steps

1. Engaging with local communities, village or municipal land committees, local authorities, technical agencies, CSOs and representatives of vulnerable groups
2. Co-delineating geographical areas and parcels covered by a local land use convention.
   Analysing its tenure challenges and the political, institutional, social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions of resource governance.
   Identifying tenure rights holders
3. Co-defining processes for the development and implementation of local conventions, defining roles, responsibilities and contributions, and guaranteeing local and external funding
4. Training the actors involved
5. Organising community consultation meetings to develop local land use conventions and mechanisms to enforce them
   Defining visions, objectives, restrictions, obligations, sanctions, incentives and roles
6. Organising specific meetings for women, migrants, pastoralists, young people and other vulnerable groups to foster their inclusion
7. Conducting negotiations with legitimate land owners, seeking their acceptance
   Securing their tenure and establishing contracts between land owners and resource users
8. Consulting local authorities (i.e. municipal council) and decentralised technical agencies to ensure compliance with national and regional regulations
9. Validation of local land use conventions by stakeholders and community assemblies, approval by local councils and signing of by-laws, quality control by technical agencies and regional authorities, and enforcement by regional authorities
10. Setting up governance structures, implementation processes, financial sanctioning and monitoring mechanisms
    Provision of training for land committee members
11. Raising awareness of the content of land use conventions (i.e. through local radio, posters and village meetings)
12. Monitoring compliance and enforcing sanctions
13. Referring disputes to local dispute resolution committees and authorities
14. Periodically revising the content of the conventions

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** low
→ **Full implementation and integration:** low to medium, depending on the scope of consultations and parties involved

Resources

→ **Staff:** Facilitation teams, technical experts with skills in participatory rural appraisal
→ **Equipment:** tablets, computers, internet connection, awareness-raising and training material, printed copies of local land use conventions, posters
→ **Logistics:** meeting and training facilities, transport to field locations

Timescale

→ **Initial set-u:** short-term (6–12 months)
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, covering the period of the convention validity

Tool 5   Local land use conventions and social agreements

Success factors

✓ Inclusive, locally-led and participatory approaches to guarantee legitimacy, relevance and implementation

✓ Engagement with municipal authorities and technical agencies to improve the conventions' compliance with regulations and to build institutional support for their implementation

✓ Contributions by community members, either monetary or in kind (e.g. material or labour for fencing), ensuring ownership while the integration of local land use conventions in municipal budgets secures long-term funding

✓ Clear governance rules and enhanced management skills to curb risks of corruption and abuse of power by land committees

Limitations

✕ Lack of credibility if restrictions, obligations and sanctions are not sufficiently enforced by land committees due to a lack of authority

Further resources

Implementation manuals

GIZ (2023): Modèle de gestion agropastorale nexus "Gah Kêssê"

GIZ (2023): Plans d'aménagement simplifiés et conventions locales sur la tenure de l'eau à Madagascar. Manuel de mise en œuvre

Practical resources

GIZ (2024): Boite à Images sur la Loi 034/2009 charte foncière locale, instrument juridique de sécurisation foncière, de gestion des ressources naturelles et de cohésion sociale

GIZ (2023): Charte foncière locale inter-villageoise (Burkina Faso)

GIZ (2022): Guide méthodologique pour la mise en place et la sécurisation foncière

GIZ (2010): L'accès aux espaces pastoraux et leur sécurisation (Niger)

Evidence

GIZ (2025): Politique Foncière Responsable au Burkina Faso: volet pastoralisme

GIZ (2023): Plans d'aménagement simplifiés et conventions locales à Madagascar. Des approches communautaires et paysagères pour œuvrer sur la tenure de l'eau

Link with other tools in the kit

Dispute resolution

Dispute resolution methods, processes and mechanisms are used to address land-based conflicts, disputes and disagreements. These may concern access, control and use of land and natural resources, but also issues such as overlapping claims, boundary disagreements between neighbours or communities, inheritance, land transactions, land grabs and forced evictions.

Dispute resolution includes both statutory and customary practices such as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms aligned with local traditions and norms. Inclusive, equitable, peaceful and context-sensitive tools are used to achieve non-judicial agreements, acknowledging and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of all parties involved. The processes engage a variety of actors, including the disputing parties, witnesses, mediators or arbitrators, and traditional and state authorities. Special attention is given to women, young people and other vulnerable groups to empower them, increase their representation and address their needs.

Dispute resolution

Impact and performance indicators

- Land-related conflicts are reduced, as measured by the percentage of disputes resolved out of the total number of registered land disputes.

- As a result of the reduction of disputed areas, investment in land improvements and agricultural productivity has increased.

- Access to dispute resolution mechanisms is improved, especially for women, young people and other vulnerable groups.

- Statutory dispute resolution bodies apply rule-of-law principles.

- Trust in dispute resolution processes has increased, as shown by growing satisfaction among users and communities.

Proposed tools

Further information

Practical Resources

GIZ (2017): Understanding, Preventing and Solving Land Conflicts – A Practical Guide and Toolbox

GIZ (2020): Catalogue des conflits fonciers

GIZ (2023): How to Understand and Address Land Conflicts: A Guide for Communities

UN (2012): Land and Conflict: Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflicts

Evidence

World Bank (2018): Land & Conflict – Thematic Guidance Note 03: Protecting and Strengthening the Land Tenure of Vulnerable Groups

GIZ (2022): Étude sur l'acceptance des instances de règlement judiciaire des conflits fonciers dans les régions du Sud-Ouest et des Hauts-Bassins du Burkina Faso

Tool 6   Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) aims to resolve disputes using traditional, customary and religious practices that are widely recognised and trusted by local communities. It can effectively address disputes relating to access, control and management of land, including disputes over boundaries, inheritance and transfer of rights. Common methods of ADR include mediation, arbitration, negotiation and conciliation. ADR offers fast, cost-effective and context-sensitive solutions, particularly in settings where judicial processes may be slow, inaccessible or culturally distant. It helps to foster community trust and improve access to justice, especially for vulnerable groups.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture and food security
It resolves land and resource disputes to ensure fair access and use of land between farmers or between farmers and herders.

Corporate sustainability and due diligence
It helps enforce accountability and fair practices.

Biodiversity, climate change, energy transition and forests
It facilitates community engagement, manages competing claims and mediates conflicts over natural resource use.

Gender and youth
It promotes inclusive participation and addresses gender and age-based disparities.

Post-conflict settings
It rebuilds trust and resolves legacy land disputes.

Key actors

Customary authorities, land committees, conflict resolution teams   **Public authorities, technical administration, CSOs and (para)legal advisors**

| Roles and responsibilities	
• Coordination between conflicting parties • Mediation • Resolution • Monitoring of outcomes	• Awareness-raising • Capacity development • Prompt advice • Facilitation • Enforcement of agreements (authorities)

Specific skills, training or resources needed	
• Mediation skills • Culturally appropriate practices • Application of ADR methods	• Understanding of ADR methods • Legal knowledge • M&E

Benefits	
• Social cohesion • Tenure security • Sustainable landscape management	• Low-cost and locally legitimate dispute resolution

Tool 6 — Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
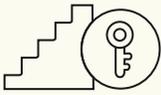
Key implementation steps

1. Assessing the dispute, with a focus on conflicting parties, tenure rights, gender, age, vulnerabilities
2. Establishing community-based dispute resolution committees (or referral to existing land dispute resolution bodies) and defining clear roles and responsibilities
3. Choosing a locally adapted and culturally appropriate ADR mechanism, e.g. facilitation/moderation, process guidance, (re)conciliation, mediation or arbitration
4. Developing checklists and templates to standardise procedures and agreements, and establishing protocols for documenting disputes, outcomes and decisions with authorities
5. Training local dispute resolution committees, mediators and ADR facilitators on legal and administrative frameworks and ADR methods
6. Raising awareness, with a focus on types, causes and consequences of conflicts, on conducting conflict analysis, on preventing and dealing with conflicts, and on the benefits of ADR
7. Facilitating dispute resolution processes in coordination with local authorities
8. Following up on the documentation and enforcement of resolution outcomes
9. Engaging in land conflict monitoring, ensuring data protection and defining clear referral pathways for cases not resolved at the community level

Success factors

√ Awareness of legal and administrative frameworks and coordination with authorities, setting the scene for mechanisms to be aligned with existing laws
√ Coordination with authorities, strengthening institutional embedding;
√ Alignment of resolution outcomes with statutory law, strengthening their enforcement
√ Culturally appropriate ADR mechanisms in line with local customs, using local languages, enhancing community ownership, accessibility, participation, inclusivity and sustainability of resolution outcomes

Limitations

× Power imbalances between parties, also within customary systems, distorting negotiations, compromising fair outcomes and perpetuating existing inequalities
× Resolution outcomes more likely to endure when emerging from solutions proposed by the conflicting parties, rather than from imposed settlements

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** low, when based on locally and culturally adapted practices
→ **Full implementation and integration:** low, when conducted by local entities and overseen by local authorities

Resources

→ **Staff:** conflict resolution/ADR experts and trainers, legal advisors, gender and inclusion specialists, local facilitators and mediators
→ **Equipment:** basic office and workshop equipment, communication tools and training materials
→ **Logistics:** transport, meeting facilities and per diems

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term, when based on existing practices
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, when ADR processes are sustained throughout a project cycle and beyond
The timescale for resolution of a dispute is generally shorter than for formal court processes, ranging from a few weeks to several months.

Tool 6 | Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Further resources

Implementation manuals

GIZ (2020): Règlement alternatif des conflits fonciers ruraux

GIZ (2019): Land Conflict Resolution Approach by RE-LAPU

UN-Habitat (2013): Guide to Land Mediation (Congo)

Practical resources

GIZ (2023): ADR/Mediation – A Focus on Customary Land Tenure in Teso, Lango, Acholi and Karamoja

GIZ (2023): How to Understand and Address Land Conflicts: A Guide for Communities

GIZ (2020): Opérationnalisation d'un tribunal de conciliation pour le règlement des conflits fonciers ruraux

GIZ (2010): Procédure de gestion des conflits fonciers ruraux

Link with other tools in the kit

Tool 7   Multi-stakeholder dialogues

Multi-stakeholder dialogues (MSDs) are structured and inclusive processes that bring together actors with varying interests, rights and responsibilities. The objective is to engage in collaborative decision-making, particularly in contexts where land-related tensions or disputes arise. In land governance, MSDs serve as institutional mechanisms for consultation, negotiation, dispute resolution and joint planning. Consequently, they promote transparency, trust, accountability and equity. They are effective in fostering a shared understanding across sectors and aligning local realities with national laws and international standards such as the VGGTs, RAI and FPIC principles.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture and food security

It facilitates cooperation and promotes dialogue between local communities, the private sector and public authorities to resolve land disputes and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Corporate sustainability and due diligence

It enables investors to conduct transparent dialogues with communities, regulators and policy-makers to ensure responsible investment.

Climate change

It supports inclusive and participatory decision-making on mitigation and adaptation strategies that consider vulnerable groups and all resource users.

Pastoralism

It resolves disputes about grazing land and pastoral routes through culturally sensitive engagement with herders, farmers, resource users and authorities.

Forestry

It mediates conflicts over conservation efforts and resource access and supports community land rights in forest management.

Key actors

Public and customary authorities, investors, affected land users

CSOs, community representatives including vulnerable groups, local cooperatives, (para)legals

| Roles and responsibilities	
• Organisation and hosting of MSDs • Participation in MSDs • Monitoring of resolution outcomes • Follow-up on outcomes	• Capacity-building for local stakeholders • Facilitation of MSD preparation, conduct and follow-up • Technical inputs during MSDs

Specific skills, training or resources needed	
• Stakeholder coordination • Presentation, negotiation and mediation skills • Financial resources	• Stakeholder coordination • Facilitation skills • Technical knowledge

Benefits	
• Common understanding of issues • Jointly agreed actions • Collaborative decision-making • Social cohesion • Reduced disputes	• Transparency and compliance • Respect for international standards

Tool 7   Multi-stakeholder dialogues
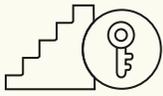
Key implementation steps

1. Defining the scope, objectives and issues, stake-holders, expected outcomes and follow-up mechanisms
2. Conducting targeted pre-meetings to engage and on-board key actors, plan dialogue agenda and logistics and co-create ground rules and terms of reference
3. Preparing and conducting regular, inclusive and structured meetings with clear expectations, using trusted mediators and participatory methods to manage tensions and foster understanding
4. Ensuring structured documentation of discussions and agreements for traceability and accountability
5. Following up on the dialogue outcomes with the parties, clarifying responsibilities and expectations and agreeing actions and timelines
6. Continuous monitoring and tracking of inclusion, dispute resolution, behavioural change and effectiveness of the dialogue
7. Evaluating outcomes periodically to refine the process and enhance impact

Success factors

✓ Clear objectives, agreed ground rules and inclusive, participatory and transparent approaches, building trust between actors and the dialogue process
✓ Participatory monitoring, accountability and compliance mechanisms, enhancing the implementation of agreed action
✓ Collaborative steering, institutional buy-in, Memorandums of Understanding, financial commitments and guarantees
✓ Sustainability of MSDs, which can be achieved, for instance, as part of individual investment plans or sector development strategies

Limitations

× Power asymmetries influencing whose voice is heard and who shapes outcomes: affected land users are often in a structurally weaker position, which moderation needs to account for

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** low, requiring technical and logistical meeting arrangements
→ **Implementation and integration:** low to medium, depending on the frequency of meetings

Resources

→ **Staff:** coordinator and support officers, facilitator/moderator, translator/interpreter, note-taker, record-keeper
→ **Equipment:** tablets/phones, computers, internet access, training materials, flipcharts, markers, posters, projector, handouts, registration sheets, and interpretation
→ **Logistics:** office space, meeting and training facilities, transport

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term
→ **Full implementation and integration:** medium to long-term, requiring sustained engagement over weeks or months to build trust, ensure inclusive participation and reach consensus among diverse stakeholders

Tool 7   Multi-stakeholder dialogues

Further resources

Implementation manuals

GIZ (2024): Community-Investor-Government Fora (CIGF) Implementation Manual

GIZ (2022): Achieving Responsible Land-Based Investments: A Manual for Communities

GIZ (2022): Promoting, Facilitating and Regulating Responsible Land-Based Investment: A Manual for Governments

Case studies

GIZ (2023): Good Practice – Community-Investor-Government Fora (CIGF) – A Regular Exchange Platform for Communities, Investors and Government Representatives

GIZ (2023): Promoting Responsible Agricultural Investments in Lao PDR through "Investor Dialogue Fora"

GIZ (2021): Proceedings of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forum on Responsible Governance of Investment in Land. Responsible Agricultural Investment: A Pathway to Inclusive Sustainable Development. Ethiopia

Evidence

GIZ (2017): Quality Management Dialogues with Investors

Link with other tools in the kit

Land monitoring

Land monitoring includes systems for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at various stages of digitalisation. Its indicators are based on international standards, national legislation and context-specific social, environmental and governance criteria. It enables participatory data collection, engaging local communities and using collaborative web-based solutions. Analysed and anonymised data is made available through reports, maps and online platforms, informing evidence-based decision-making and enhancing transparency, accountability and compliance in land governance.

Land monitoring

Impact and performance indicators

· Institutions systematically monitor changes in land tenure, apply models and undertake remedial action when necessary.

· M&E processes are more user-friendly, inclusive, context-specific and participatory.

· Access to real-time land-based data is improved.

· Transparency and accountability of land governance processes are enhanced.

Proposed tools

Further information

Several global initiatives show how to make land data publicly available. Many countries also have land observatories.

Global Land Alliance
Prindex
Tracking global perceptions of land and property rights

Land Matrix Initiative
Land Matrix
Promoting transparency and accountability in land acquisitions

LandMark
LandMark
Supporting global indigenous and community land rights

Land Portal Foundation
Land Portal
Making land information available to the general public

Tool 8 Land conflict monitoring

Land conflict monitoring is a systematic and technology-enabled process to identify, document, analyse and report disputes and conflicts over access, use, control and management of land and natural resources. It supports effective land governance by providing transparent and evidence-based information for decision-making. This information is useful for defusing tensions, guiding project planning and implementation, monitoring negative impacts and enabling remedial measures.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture
It facilitates monitoring and prevention of conflicts between farmers over agricultural land.

Corporate sustainability and due diligence
It supports the design and implementation of responsible, accountable and fair practices and direct investment in conflict-free zones.

Energy transition
It contributes to monitoring and prevention of conflicts linked to investment in land-based energy systems.

Forestry
It facilitates monitoring and prevention of conflicts between forest users.

Gender equity
It supports the collection of gender-aggregated land data.

Post-conflict settings
It helps track the evolution of land-based conflicts.

Key actors

Public authorities (national, regional and local), investors

Civil society, traditional authorities, community groups and village conflict resolution teams (ADR structures)

Roles and responsibilities

|	
• Data collection and updating • Action-oriented analysis • Informed decision-making • Permit-granting	• Conflict alerts • Engaging with conflicting parties • Dispute resolution

Specific skills, training or resources needed

• Web-based tools and databases • Data collection systems • Protection and conservation protocols • Alert mechanisms	• Understanding of M&E processes • Dispute resolution skills

Benefits

• Dispute and conflict forecasting • Conflict-sensitive project planning • Better monitoring of project impacts • Implementation of remedial measures	• Transparency of data on conflicts and their resolution in real time and over time

Tool 8   Land conflict monitoring
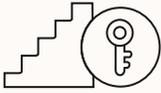
Key implementation steps

Key steps in land conflict monitoring include:

1. Engaging with stakeholders involved in M&E and defining their roles and responsibilities
2. Defining indicators and data to be collected:
   - conflict location, conflicting parties, conflict type (e.g. boundary dispute, farmer-herder conflict), legality and legitimacy of claims, risk level (low-medium-high), urgency (low-medium-high), resolution status (not resolved, in progress, resolved), actors responsible for dispute resolution, etc.
   - data disaggregated by sex, age or other traits, ensuring that monitoring is sensitive to vulnerabilities
3. Definition of rules on data access, collection, management and privacy
4. Setting up user-friendly and locally adapted M&E tools and workflows to support multiple users, including templates, databases and archives/servers/cloud
5. Stakeholder training
6. Regular data collection built into annual plans and budgets
7. Processing and management of data and alerts
8. Informing dispute resolution teams for follow-up
9. Data analysis for informed decision-making and remedial action
10. Reporting: data presentations and conflict maps

Success factors

✓ Effective steering structures and Memorandums of Understanding to ensure long-term sustainability
✓ Land conflict monitoring processes linking in with existing M&E systems, building on available knowledge and technology, enhancing completeness of datasets and reducing costs
✓ Coordination with authorities and dispute resolution teams as an essential prerequisite for inclusive solutions and for institutionalising monitoring over time
✓ Translation of complex data into actionable insights needed for informed decision-making

Limitations

✕ Data protection (security and privacy) as a core concern: ringfenced access to non-anonymised data to avoid misuse
✕ Challenges associated with formulating clear, context-appropriate and socially sensitive indicators to enable consistent application across diverse locations

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** low to medium, depending on the level of sophistication of technological solutions
→ **Full implementation and integration:** low, when linked to regular project activities

Resources

→ **Staff:** IT/M&E experts, field and office staff
→ **Equipment:** tablets/mobile phones, computers, software for databases (open source or licensed), archives/servers/cloud services, internet connection, training material, reports, maps
→ **Logistics:** office space, transport to field locations, training facilities

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term, when integrated into regular project activities
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, quarterly throughout a project lifecycle and beyond.
Frequency ensures that conflicts do not become entrenched.

Tool 8   Land conflict monitoring

Further resources

Case study

GIZ (2021): Peru: Classification of Conflicts in the Community Titling Process

Evidence

GIZ (2017): **Conflict Monitoring in the GIZ Land Program**
Briefing Paper – Conflict Monitoring in the GIZ Land Program – Laos_EN

GIZ (2017): **Land Issues and Conflicts Hotspots Identification and Analysis (LICHIA)**
Briefing Paper – Land Issues & Conflicts Hotspots Identification & Analysis (LICHIA) – Laos_EN

Link with other tools in the kit

Tool 9   Land-based investment monitoring

Investment monitoring tracks the compliance of land-based investment with international standards, national legislation and policies, existing land use plans, and local norms. Its purpose is to check whether companies are complying with social, environmental and governance standards, respecting tenure rights and establishing sustainable community relations. The monitoring process is collaborative and based on engagement and continuous dialogue with local authorities, investors and communities. It thus enhances transparency, accountability and coordination, promoting responsible investment in land.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture
It supports tracking and enforcement of compliance in agricultural investment.

Corporate sustainability and due diligence
It assists in designing and implementing socially and environmentally responsible strategies and actions that respect tenure rights.

Climate change
It facilitates tracking and enforcement of compliance in land-based climate action on agricultural, forest or pastoral land.

Energy transition
It facilitates tracking and enforcement of compliance in land-based energy investment.

Forestry
It supports tracking and enforcement of compliance in forest-based investment.

Pastoralism
It ensures tracking and enforcement of compliance in investment impacting pastoral land.

Key actors

Ministries, investment agencies, public authorities (national, regional, local)   Investors, CSOs

### Roles and responsibilities

See key steps below	• Collecting data • Issuing alerts • Engaging in multi-stakeholder dialogues

### Specific skills, training or resources needed

• Web-based tools and databases • Data collection systems • Protection and conservation protocols • Technical assessment skills • Negotiation skills	• Awareness of rights and responsibilities relating to investment • Understanding of M&E processes

Benefits

• Agreements on responsible practices and standards • Transparency of investment processes • Mechanisms to hold investors accountable	• Stakeholder dialogue • Support for responsible investment • Accountability on investment agreements • Access to recourse mechanisms
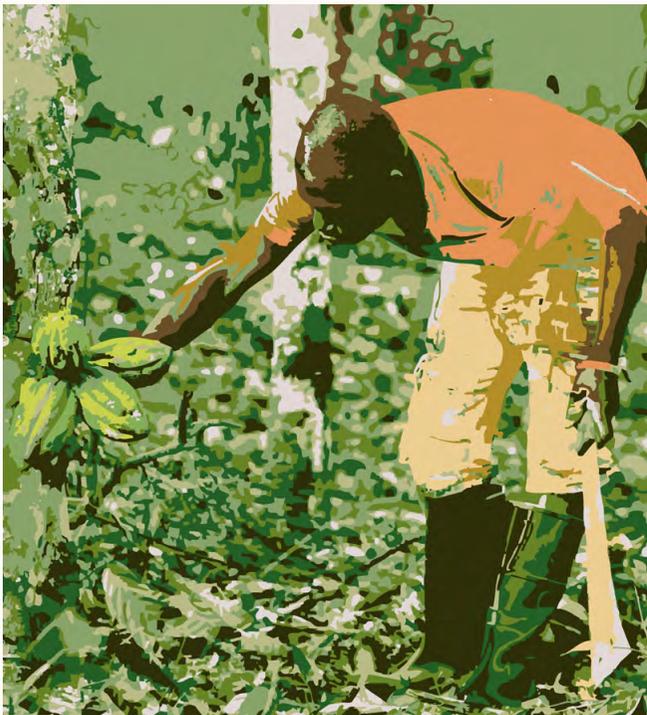
Tool 9   Land-based investment monitoring
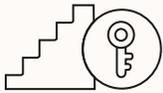
Key implementation steps

Key steps in land conflict monitoring include:

1. Identifying agencies with an investor monitoring remit and strengthening their overall understanding and capacities
2. Defining social, environmental and governance standards and checklists with reference to international standards and national legislation and policies
3. Establishing indicators for M&E, weighting them according to importance, with satisfactory/neutral/unsatisfactory compliance ratings
Indicators should align with national or sector development plans
4. Setting up user-friendly and locally adapted M&E tools, including templates, applications, databases and archives/servers/cloud, with investors and civil society organisations to support multiple users
5. Training for stakeholders involved in M&E
6. Data collection from investor self-reporting, community surveys, community reporting and alerts
7. Keeping records of the monitoring process as documentary evidence
8. Entering inputs against set indicators and community agreements using mobile or computer applications
9. Assessing performance and identifying areas of non-compliance
10. Following up with investors on agreed commitments and non-compliance and linking with investor support programmes
11. Linking M&E databases with land information systems (LIS), land observatories, grievance mechanisms and other reporting lines
12. Reporting: presentations, platforms and maps

Success factors

✓ Monitoring in collaboration with technical staff who can assess the suitability of practices, advise on alternatives and offer access to support programmes (e.g. agricultural extension services)
✓ Gradual increase in the level of sophistication of the M&E system (i.e. LIS), enabling solution-oriented monitoring and wider tracking of the investment environment, including land availability
✓ Data protection to be ensured at all times

Limitations

✗ Power imbalances and corrupt or irresponsible practices distorting information collection, rendering data unreliable
✗ Challenges when enforcing compliance. Complementary incentive mechanisms that reward improvement and compliance (e.g. through tax reductions, restricted market access, premium prices) can support private sector buy-in in the long term

Costs

→ **Initial set-up**: low to medium, depending on the level of sophistication of technological solutions and the scope of the M&E tool
→ **Full implementation and integration**: low, when linked to regular project and investment activities with established cooperation mechanisms between authorities, investors and communities

Resources

→ **Staff**: IT/M&E experts, field and office staff
→ **Equipment**: checklists, tablets, computers, apps and databases, archives/cloud services, internet connection, training material, reports, maps
→ **Logistics**: office space, transport to field locations, training and meeting facilities

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up**: medium-term
→ **Full implementation and integration**: long-term, ongoing process throughout investment cycle, with reduced intensity per investor over time

Tool 9   Land-based investment monitoring

Further resources

Implementation manuals

GIZ (2022): Incorporating Responsible Land-Based Investment Principles into Investor Policies and Practices: A Manual for Investors

GIZ (2022): Promoting, Facilitating and Regulating Responsible Land-based Investment: A Manual for Governments

Practical resources

FAO (2015): Safeguarding Land Tenure Rights in the Context of Agricultural Investment

CFS (2014): Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems

GIZ (2022): The Investment Compliance Tool & Practical Guidebook 2.0: A Practical Monitoring Tool to Measure Performance on Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems

Ethiopian Horticulture and Agricultural Investment Authority and GIZ (2017): Social and Environmental Code of Practice (SECoP) for Responsible Commercial Agriculture in Ethiopia

FAO (2016): Responsible Governance of Tenure: A Technical Guide for Investors

Case studies

GIZ (2023): Uganda: Investment Compliance Monitoring Tool – Monitoring Compliance with Local and Internationally Established Standards for Responsible Investments in Land

GIZ (2022): Commercial Agricultural Management Information System (CAMIS) – A Digital Information System for Fair and Transparent Investments in Land

GIZ (2021): Laos: Investment Project Monitoring
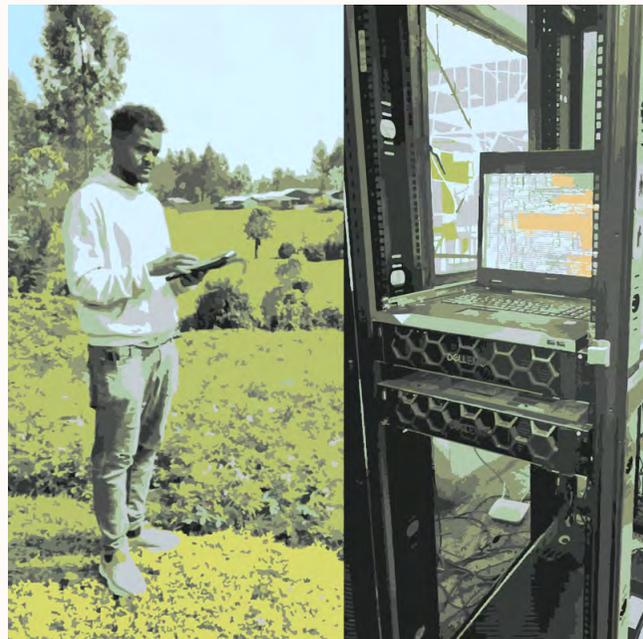
Link with other tools in the kit

Awareness and capacity on tenure rights

This approach is used to enhance communities' knowledge of their legitimate tenure rights and build their capacities to effectively claim, exercise and benefit from these rights. The aim is to foster their self-determination and self-governance.

This can be achieved by recognising communities and especially women as legitimate actors and tenure right holders and supporting their meaningful participation in decision-making and development opportunities. First, women, indigenous people and other marginalised groups must be made aware of their rights, be enabled to express consent and understand the legal implications and realise the potential environmental and social impacts of project implementation. Second, they must be empowered to participate in decision-making and be provided with access to services and development opportunities. Third, the intention is to overcome structural inequalities that disadvantage different communities. The approach thus helps to strengthen community land rights which play a part in contributing to food security.

Awareness and capacity on tenure rights

Impact and performance indicators

· Communities have strengthened their capacities and awareness of rights, including free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

· Women and other marginalised groups participate in decision-making on land and development issues.

· Women are recognised as legitimate tenure right holders or co-holders and are developing land-based activities.

· Land-related conflicts and disputes are reduced.

Proposed tools

Further information

Practical resources

FAO (2013): Governing Land for Women and Men. A Technical Guide to Support the Achievement of Responsible Gender-equitable Governance of Land Tenure

FAO (2012): Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT)

IFAD (2025): Designing Gender Transformative Approaches in the Context of Women's Land and Resource Rights. How to Do Note

Tool 10   Gender action plan

A gender action plan (GAP) is a strategic tool to promote equity and foster joint household decision-making by addressing gender norms in land governance and beyond. It is a practical mainstreaming mechanism to ensure that projects are designed and implemented in a gender-responsive and -inclusive manner. Based on a gender analysis, it outlines specific activities such as training, awareness campaigns or policy dialogues, defining clear responsibilities and indicators. Its aim is to reflect and transform power relations which maintain and produce gender inequality and to secure women's land rights, ensuring that women, men and different marginalised identities benefit equally from development outcomes.

The tool is useful for people working in

Agriculture and food security

It strengthens women's land and asset rights, boosting productivity, market access and household nutrition.

Energy transition

Gender-equitable ownership and participation accelerate fair benefit-sharing in energy projects.

Climate change adaptation and natural resource governance

Inclusive tenure and decision-making improve environmental stewardship and climate resilience.

Post-conflict settings

Women's involvement in dispute resolution fosters more durable and inclusive peace agreements.

Gender assessment

A gender assessment analyses how women, men and marginalised groups access, use and benefit from land and resources. It highlights inequalities in tenure, participation and decision-making, while identifying opportunities for reform. By mapping change pathways and applying gender-sensitive indicators, it guides culturally sensitive interventions that address real barriers and strengthen community acceptance.

Key actors

| **Institutional actors (public authorities, CSOs, investors)**	**Community actors (community leaders, change agents, community members)**
Roles and responsibilities	
• Policy integration of gender-inclusive practices • Implementation and monitoring of gender action plan • Awareness campaigns • Advocacy for women's land rights	• Conducting awareness-raising sessions • Encouraging inclusive decision-making • Participating in awareness-raising, training and consultations
Specific skills, training or resources needed	
• Gender analysis • Project management and gender mainstreaming • Facilitation and advocacy • Legal knowledge	• Access to information • Facilitation and negotiation skills • Knowledge of rights and understanding of FPIC
Benefits	
• Inclusive policies • Compliance • Improved land governance administration and management outcomes • Capacity-building	• Secured land rights • Stronger voice in governance • Enhanced livelihoods • Empowerment and social inclusion

Tool 10   Gender action plan
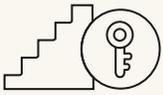
Key implementation steps

Key steps in introducing a gender action plan include:

1. Conducting a gender assessment, collecting sex-disaggregated baseline data, and assessing how women, men and marginalised groups access, use and control land, including their needs and barriers.
2. Involving women in project planning to embed gender-sensitive programming, considering women's workload and customary practices.
3. Defining clear, realistic and appropriate targets and priorities based on sex-disaggregated baseline data from the gender analysis
4. Establishing gender-sensitive indicators to track progress and developing awareness and capacity-building activities for stakeholders
5. Assigning roles and responsibilities to executing agencies, public authorities and civil society to ensure their accountability for gender outcomes
6. Integrating gender measures into project design and implementation
7. Monitoring and evaluating results and gender-related targets regularly, ensuring that women and marginalised groups benefit equally from policy and governance reforms

Success factors

✓ Embedding gender objectives with clear targets and monitoring to ensure accountability and integrate gender-transformative approaches (GTAs).
✓ Capacity development addressing barriers at all levels through targeted training, guided by the Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform (RBET) paradigm.
✓ Strengthening women's networks and CSOs, with media outreach.
✓ Awareness-raising to empower women, engage men as allies, and shift norms.
✓ Youth-focused activities to build social capital for future interventions.
✓ Inclusive dispute resolution bodies with culturally appropriate mechanisms.

Limitations

× Superficial gender integration without real commitment or resources

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** Moderate for assessments, awareness, coordination; higher for capacity-building

Resources

→ **Staff:** gender specialists, community facilitators, trainers.
→ **Equipment:** tablets/laptops for data, AV equipment, office supplies, phones and internet
→ **Logistics:** Field transport, venues, accommodation/per diems, materials and communication

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** Initial set-up: short-term
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term, accounting for sufficient time for thorough gender-sensitive assessments, community consultations, awareness-raising, ongoing support for dispute resolution bodies and long-term stakeholder engagement.

Tool 10   Gender action plan

Further resources

Case study

GIZ (2025): Advancing Women's Access to Land in Rural Ethiopia

GIZ (2025): Consolidated Good Practice to Strengthen Women's Land Rights

GIZ (2021): Peru: Digital Empowerment of Indigenous Women in two Amazonian Regions

Practical resources

GIZ (2025): Heirs to the Same Grace. Women's Land Rights from the Perspective of Ethiopian Christianity. A Guide Theology and Tradition

GIZ (2023): Gender Transformative Land Acquisition : A Guide for Communities and Investors

GIZ (2022): Boîte à outils sur le genre et le foncier rural. Côte d'Ivoire

GIZ (2022): Women of the Land. Video of the GIZ project "Support to Responsible Agricultural Investments (S2RAI)", Ethiopia

Evidence

GIZ (2025): Factsheet: More land rights for women

GIZ (2022): Accès sécurisé des femmes aux terres rurales dans les régions du Sud-Ouest et des Hauts-Bassins du Burkina Faso

GIZ (2022): Securing Women Land Rights – Transforming Power Relations

GIZ (2017): Gender Strategy of the GIZ Land Program. Laos. Briefing Paper

Link with other tools in the kit

Tool 11   Community engagement

Awareness-raising campaigns in land governance are vital to promote community engagement, ensuring that all stakeholders and tenure right holders are recognised and can participate in decisions affecting their lives. Guided by the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and do-no-harm, such campaigns safeguard the tenure rights of local communities while respecting their self-determination, governance systems and cultural integrity. By fostering dialogue, transparency and trust, awareness efforts promote social justice and inclusive participation, leaving no one behind throughout project implementation.

The tool is useful for people working in

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

It ensures that water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives respect community rights and include all stakeholders in planning and decision-making.

Education

It promotes inclusive educational programmes that ensure equal access for marginalised groups.

Energy transition

It contributes to monitoring and prevention of conflicts linked to investment in land-based energy systems.

Food Security

It supports nutrition campaigns that align with local land use and food systems, benefiting vulnerable populations.

Community organisations (e.g. REDD+ schemes)

It strengthens community-led governance and awareness, enabling equitable participation in land- and resource-related programmes.

Agriculture and rural development

Inclusive community engagement prevents land and resource conflicts, ensuring that campaigns to promote food security and rural livelihoods are grounded in local practices.

Natural resource management and environmental protection

It strengthens campaigns for biodiversity and forest protection by demonstrating how co-management and Indigenous knowledge safeguard ecosystems.

Infrastructure and urban development

Awareness-raising supports participatory and rights-based planning that prevents displacement and ensures that infrastructure benefits everyone, including marginalised groups.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Campaigns can leverage FPIC-based approaches to push for adaptation strategies that are locally relevant, socially just and empower those most affected.

Key actors

| Institutional and organisational actors (public authorities, CSOs)	Community actors (community leaders, change agents, Indigenous peoples, marginalised groups)
Roles and responsibilities	
• Campaign design • Message development • Facilitation • Community outreach • Monitoring	• Participating in campaigns and capacity-building • Supporting dialogue
Specific skills, training or resources needed	
• Communication • Gender and conflict sensitivity • Facilitation and advocacy • M&E • Legal knowledge • Understanding of FPIC	• Knowledge of land rights • Understanding of FPIC and do-no-harm principles • Negotiation and facilitation skills • Access to information
Benefits	
• Increased transparency and trust-building • Inclusive governance • Improved project outcomes • Social legitimacy	• Recognition of tenure rights • Strengthened participation • (Legal) empowerment • Social inclusion and voice in decision-making

Tool 11   Community engagement
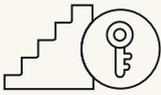
Key implementation steps

Key steps in community engagement and awareness-raising include:

1. Identifying key actors and audiences such as women, youth, Indigenous peoples and marginalised groups, while mapping institutions and decision-making structures to target awareness efforts effectively
2. Defining messages and communication channels, based on recipients and intended outcomes of awareness-raising campaign
3. Training change agents like local leaders or facilitators to carry awareness messages, advocate for inclusion and build trust in processes
4. Designing communication materials to share information on land rights, FPIC principles and development plans in simple, culturally appropriate formats
5. Building community capacity through awareness sessions and workshops that strengthen knowledge of rights, negotiation skills and engagement with government and investors, while ensuring meaningful participation of women, Indigenous peoples and marginalised groups
6. Promoting awareness of local decision-making processes and strengthening bodies to become more inclusive, transparent and consensus-based
7. Embedding awareness in accountability mechanisms by informing communities of grievance mechanisms, complaint procedures and conflict resolution
8. Maintaining open communication through ongoing campaigns, feedback loops and transparent reporting to adapt strategies and sustain community trust

Success factors

√ Awareness-raising as a first step in mitigation and resolution of conflicts caused by low levels of understanding of formal land governance procedures
√ Trust-building and transparency about processes and aim, i.e. to prevent conflicts
√ Engaging and training respected community figures while working with grassroots groups to institutionalise this social capital and ensure the continuity of awareness-raising efforts
√ Holding mandated authorities responsible for promoting land rights awareness and making use of existing channels such as radio or television slots allocated to political leaders
√ Designing awareness-raising methods that consider cost and scalability; for example, broadcasting simple messages widely, while delivering complex content through more direct – and potentially costlier – interactions.

√ For simple messages, linking land awareness content to existing related campaigns to maximise cost-effective outreach and impact
√ Providing safe spaces for marginalised groups and gender-sensitive facilitation in compliance with rights and standards

Limitations

× Risk of overlooking invisible or socially excluded individuals, dominance of elite or powerful voices and potential pressure on communities from external actors
× Risks of awareness-raising campaigns being exploited for other causes (e.g. in the context of upcoming elections)
× Slow implementation of FPIC and awareness-raising, causing logistical constraints and preventing stakeholders from attending events
× Cultural norms conflicting with inclusivity and gender transformation goals

Tool 11   Community engagement

Costs

→ **Initial set-up:** medium
→ **Full implementation and integration:** medium

Resources

→ **Staff:** facilitators, legal experts, community mobilisers, translators, monitoring staff and, to increase effectiveness in the design stage, behavioural change and communication experts
→ **Equipment:** presentation material, audiovisual tools, communication devices
→ **Logistics:** transport to remote areas, facilities, interpretation services, accommodation for field teams

Timescale

→ **Initial set-up:** short-term
→ **Full implementation and integration:** long-term

Costs and time depend on geographical spread, accessibility and the level of trust-building needed. However, successful implementation generally requires sustained engagement over several months or years to ensure inclusion, consensus and conflict prevention.

Further resources

Practical resources

GIZ (2024): Boite à images. L'accès sécurisé des couches vulnérables à la terre

GIZ (2023): Respecting Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in Acquisition of Land for Investments in Uganda. Factsheet

GIZ (2021): Guide du sensibilisateur. Manuel de formation des sensibilisateurs sur le foncier

GIZ (2019): Training Manual for Land Governance Practitioners in Teso (Uganda)

Case studies

GIZ (2023): Benin: Participatory Village Mapping in Northern Benin

GIZ (2023): Participatory Land Use Planning in Lao PDR. How it Contributes to Sustainable Rural Development. A Case Study on the Positive Impacts of Participatory Land Use Planning and Participatory Agricultural Land Management (PLUP/PALM) in Houaphan and Sayabuli Province

Link with other tools in the kit

On behalf of

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development