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Driving Change in Land Governance in Ethiopia, Uganda, Senegal and Tunisia

Insights from the SLGA Country Components

*Strengthening Advisory Capacities
for Land Governance in Africa (SLGA)*

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Context

Weak land governance and insecure land rights remain major challenges across Africa, hindering development and stability.

To address these issues, the African Union (AU) established the African Land Policy Centre (ALPC) to improve land policies across the continent and support initiatives like the AU Agenda on Land.

However, many countries face barriers such as insufficient administrative structures, gaps in academic programmes, and inadequate applied research.

Approach

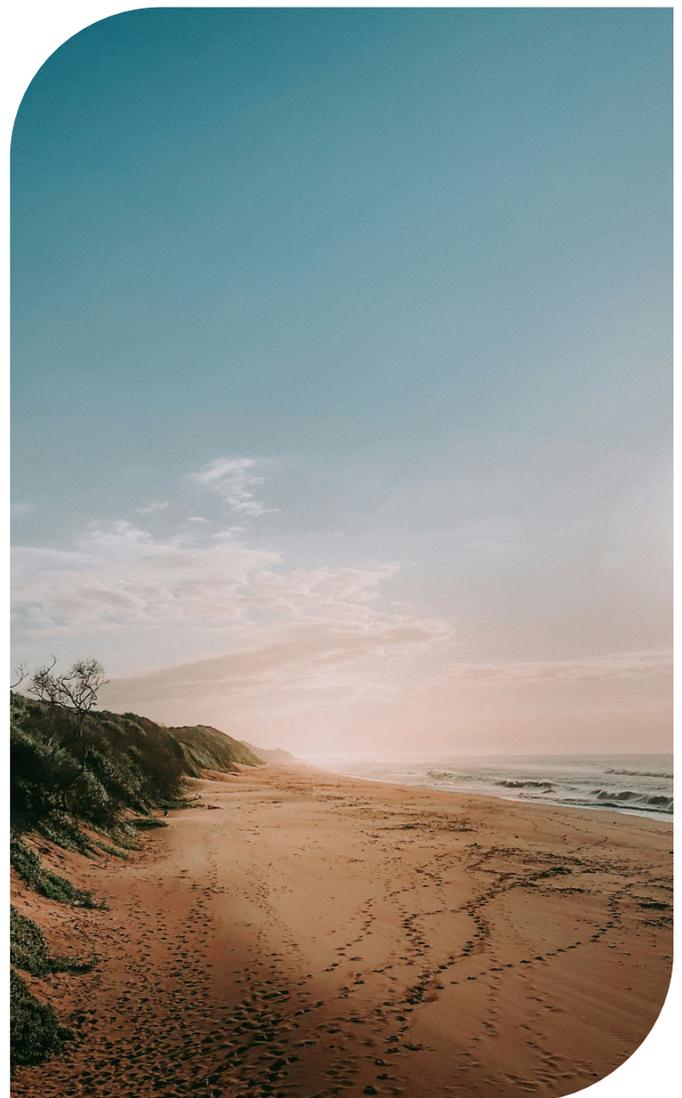
Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as part of the Special Initiative on Agricultural and Food Systems Transformation (SI AGER), the project collaborates with the ALPC to advance the AU Agenda on Land through three measures:

- Supporting the Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA), which connects over 70 African universities through six regional centres, a technical hub, and a continent-wide secretariat, focused on land management and policy
- Providing scientific guidance to NELGA partner organisations for land policy processes, improving access to data, and enhancing land policy monitoring
- Promoting education and training in land governance and policy through scholarships and research programmes in partnership with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

A lack of reliable data for monitoring and evaluation further slows progress. Despite growing political will, implementing effective land policies remains difficult.

Objective

African institutions and professionals implement improved land policies that protect the rights of marginalised groups, including smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and women.



Strengthening Land Governance at Country Level



The SLGA Country Components

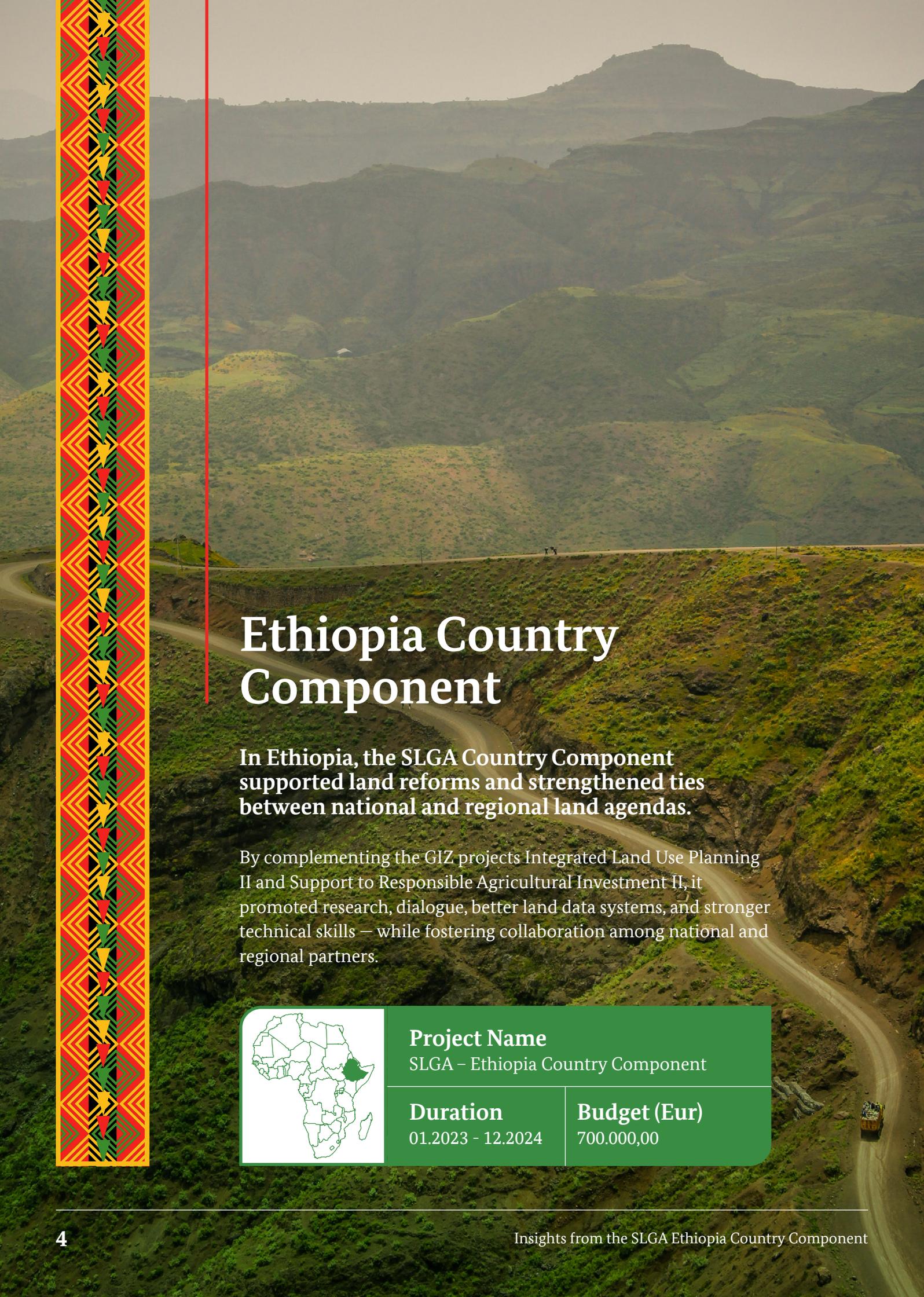
The Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Governance in Africa (SLGA) programme, launched in 2014, aims to build the human and institutional capacities needed for equitable and sustainable land governance across Africa.

While NELGA and regional initiatives have strengthened research, education, and policy dialogue at the continental level, SLGA has also invested directly in country-level interventions to address specific national and regional land governance challenges.

Through its Country Components in Ethiopia, Uganda, Senegal, and Tunisia, SLGA complemented bilateral GIZ projects and worked with national governments, institutions, and partners to deliver targeted support.

These components focused on generating evidence to inform policy, improving land data systems, enhancing technical capacities, fostering peer learning, and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue.

These interventions underscored the importance of aligning with national priorities, fostering local ownership, and translating regional expertise into a tangible, country-level impact.



Ethiopia Country Component

In Ethiopia, the SLGA Country Component supported land reforms and strengthened ties between national and regional land agendas.

By complementing the GIZ projects Integrated Land Use Planning II and Support to Responsible Agricultural Investment II, it promoted research, dialogue, better land data systems, and stronger technical skills – while fostering collaboration among national and regional partners.



Project Name

SLGA – Ethiopia Country Component

Duration

01.2023 - 12.2024

Budget (Eur)

700.000,00

Key Highlights



✔ **Research for Better Policies**

SLGA supported research on key land issues in Ethiopia, such as rural and urban land management, land use planning, climate change, and gender. This work was conducted by NELGA members and produced two research reports and nine policy briefs, which informed national consultations and regional discussions. Eight of these policy briefs are now available on the NELGA website for wider learning.

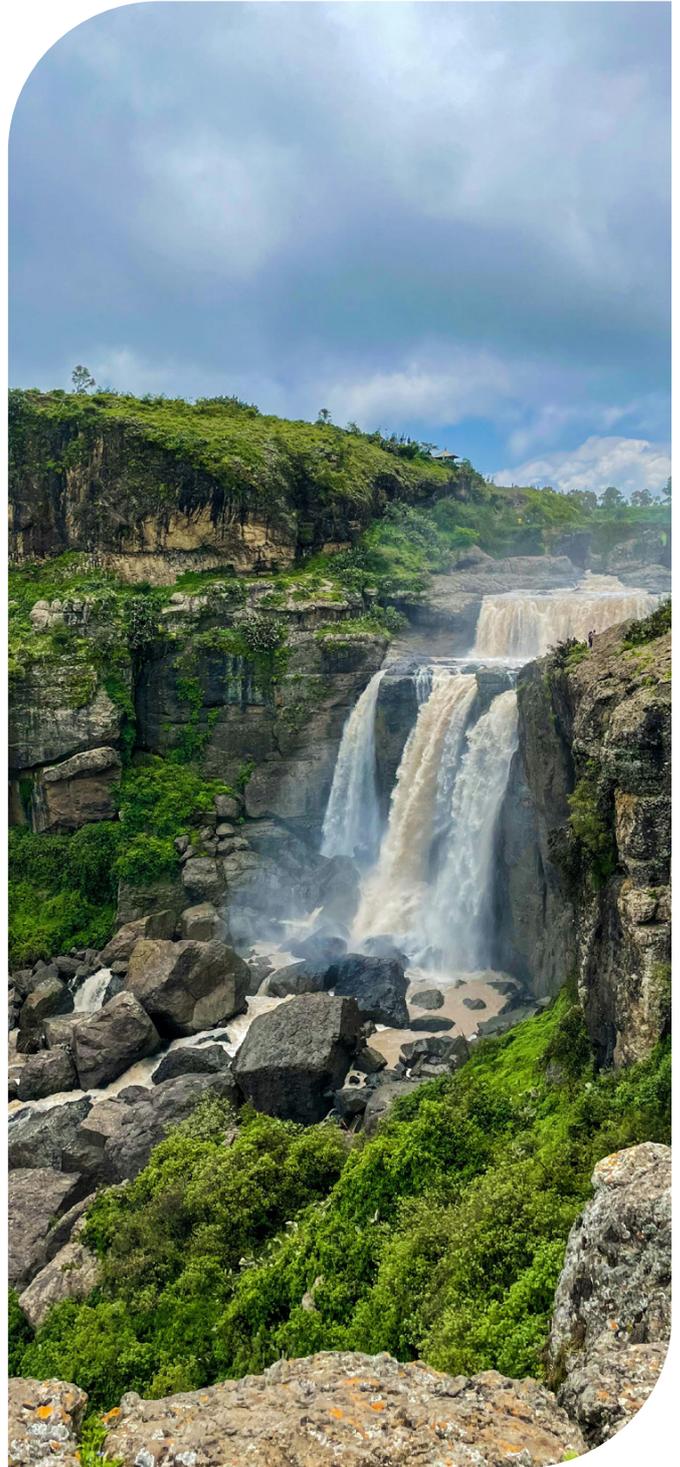
✔ **Fostering Dialogue**

Evidence from research was used to organize policy dialogues and consultations with over 190 participants from federal and regional

institutions (including NELGA members), and intergovernmental authority on development. Topics included improving institutional arrangements for land governance, spatial planning, and addressing fragmented policies.

✔ **Regional Learning Exchange**

SLGA facilitated peer-to-peer learning visits between Ethiopia and Uganda, where about 20 land experts shared knowledge, best practices, and developed an action plan to improve land governance in both countries. The learning exchange was facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).



✔ **Improving Land Data**

The programme helped develop three national standards (land use standards, digital orthophoto standards, geodetic standards) and a data framework to improve land use planning and land registration. It also supported piloting the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, improving access to geospatial data through the Ethiopian Space Science and Geospatial Institute.

✔ **Building Skills and Capacity**

SLGA trained 88 land experts from government, civil society, and academia on topics such as responsible land governance, land consolidation, leadership, project management, and curriculum harmonization. NELGA members provided training on some topics.



Uganda Country Component

In Uganda, the SLGA Country Component worked alongside the Responsible Land Policy in Uganda (RELAPU) Project to advance national land policy reforms, improve service delivery, and build sustainable technical capacity.

The programme supported research, stakeholder dialogue, and better land data systems – aligning efforts with national priorities and fostering collaboration among key ministries, local governments, and development partners. By addressing complex tenure challenges and building institutional resilience, the component has contributed to more inclusive and effective land governance.



Project Name

SLGA – Uganda Country Component

Duration

01.2023 – 04.2025

Budget (Eur)

700.000,00

Key Highlights



✔ **Research for Policy Reform**

SLGA supported policy-oriented research into Uganda’s long-standing land tenure issues, focusing on the overlapping and conflicting rights under Mailo and native freehold systems that have fueled disputes for decades. The findings highlighted the need for a more equitable and balanced approach to protect the rights of both tenants and landowners, while promoting development. The research produced a comprehensive report and a policy brief, both of which shaped evidence-based discussions during the National Land Policy review process. This research also raised awareness of the importance of addressing these systemic tenure conflicts for economic growth and social stability.

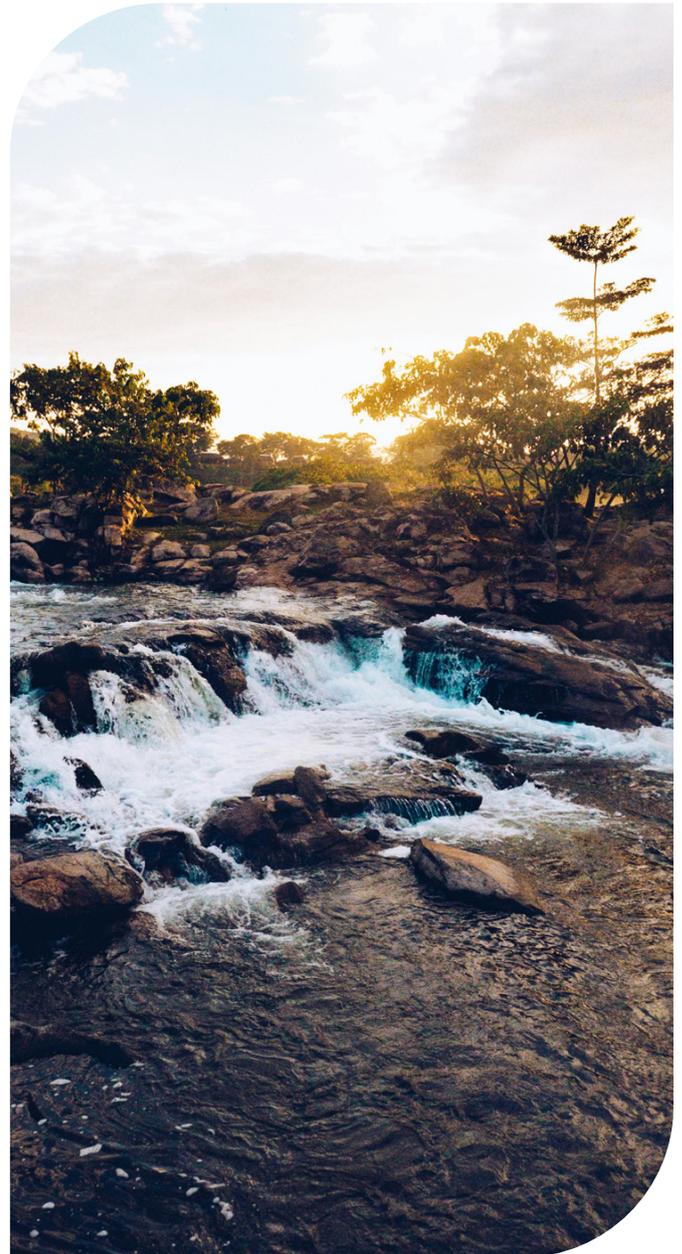
✔ **Supporting Policy Review**

SLGA played a critical role in facilitating Uganda’s review of its 2013 National Land Policy. The component supported the government to map gaps in implementation by analyzing research findings, court cases, and field data. It also helped draft an issue paper to guide consultations, and convened stakeholders from ministries, civil society, academia, and

communities. The draft policy was enriched through seven regional public consultations and a legal review, ensuring diverse voices and perspectives were reflected. The final draft has been validated through a national-level consultation and now awaits endorsement by the responsible government body, representing a significant milestone in modernizing Uganda’s land governance framework.

✔ **Building Sustainable Capacity**

To ensure long-term impact, SLGA introduced a Capacity Development Strategy that strengthened knowledge and skills at all levels of government – from national to village. This included creating a core group of 25 certified Master Trainers who serve as Trainers of Trainers (TOTs) at national and district levels – NELGA members assisted in training Masters Trainers. They have cascaded training down through county and sub-county officials to village-level actors, building a robust pipeline of local expertise. This approach has increased the number of trained practitioners across Uganda’s land sector and has been upscaled by other partners, creating a sustainable model for future capacity development.



✔ Improving Land Services

SLGA helped improve delivery of key land services, such as registration, record updating, and dispute resolution, by fostering cooperation between ministries and local governments. Inter-ministerial dialogues clarified institutional roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms, while also identifying ways to mobilize sustainable funding for critical services. These efforts have contributed to reducing bottlenecks in service provision and strengthening trust among stakeholders by making land services more accessible and responsive to citizens' needs.

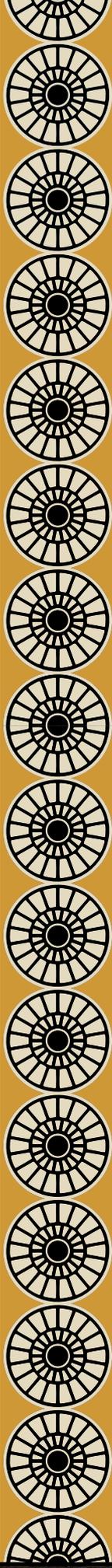
✔ Enhancing Land Data Systems

Reliable land data is essential for informed decision-making. SLGA supported the development and integration of a new software module into Uganda's National Land Information System. This enhancement enables better management and sharing of registered land records and geospatial data across institutions. Improved access to accurate data not only increases transparency and efficiency in land administration but also empowers policymakers, practitioners, and communities to make informed decisions about land use, planning, and development.



Tokora 6km →

THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT,
NAKAPIPIRIT
PO BOX 11, NAKOTO



Senegal Country Component

In Senegal, the SLGA Country Component worked with the GIZ project Support for the Improvement of Land Management in Senegal (Seen-Suuf) to strengthen land governance through evidence-based research, capacity building, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and knowledge-sharing networks.

The programme aimed to equip institutions and professionals with the tools and partnerships needed to address challenges at the intersection of land, climate, and livelihoods – while opening up opportunities for youth and supporting inclusive policy processes.



Project Name

SLGA – Senegal Country Component

Duration

01.2023 - 11.2024

Budget (Eur)

600.000,00

Key Highlights



✔ Research for Opportunity and Resilience

SLGA supported research to assess the potential for self-employment in the land sector, uncovering promising business and entrepreneurship opportunities for young graduates. The findings encouraged government and universities to integrate entrepreneurship courses into graduate programs to create jobs and spur innovation. In addition, SLGA contributed to refining research methods and validating two critical studies by the Centre de Suivi Ecologique, which explored links between land tenure, climate change, food security, and water management. By bringing stakeholders into the process, the studies generated stronger, more actionable evidence.

✔ Building Skills for Better Governance

SLGA invested in developing the skills of key land governance actors. Two national webinars trained stakeholders on managing pastoral lands and broader land governance principles. A total of 34 national mediators

and coordinators from the house of justice were trained in land management and conflict resolution, strengthening their ability to resolve disputes and support communities fairly. Meanwhile, 150 students at the National School of Statistics and Economic Analysis completed training on land law and administration. To institutionalise learning, SLGA also supported the development of a new curriculum on land tenure management at the Senegal Judiciary Training Centre, ensuring future magistrates are well-versed in land governance.

✔ Creating a Community of Practice

To foster continuous learning and peer exchange, SLGA helped establish Senegal's first Community of Practitioners in Land Management (COPRAF). This network connects over 40 practitioners from 20 institutions to share best practices, success stories, and lessons learned through regular webinars and other platforms. The community has become a vibrant space for dialogue and innovation in the land sector.



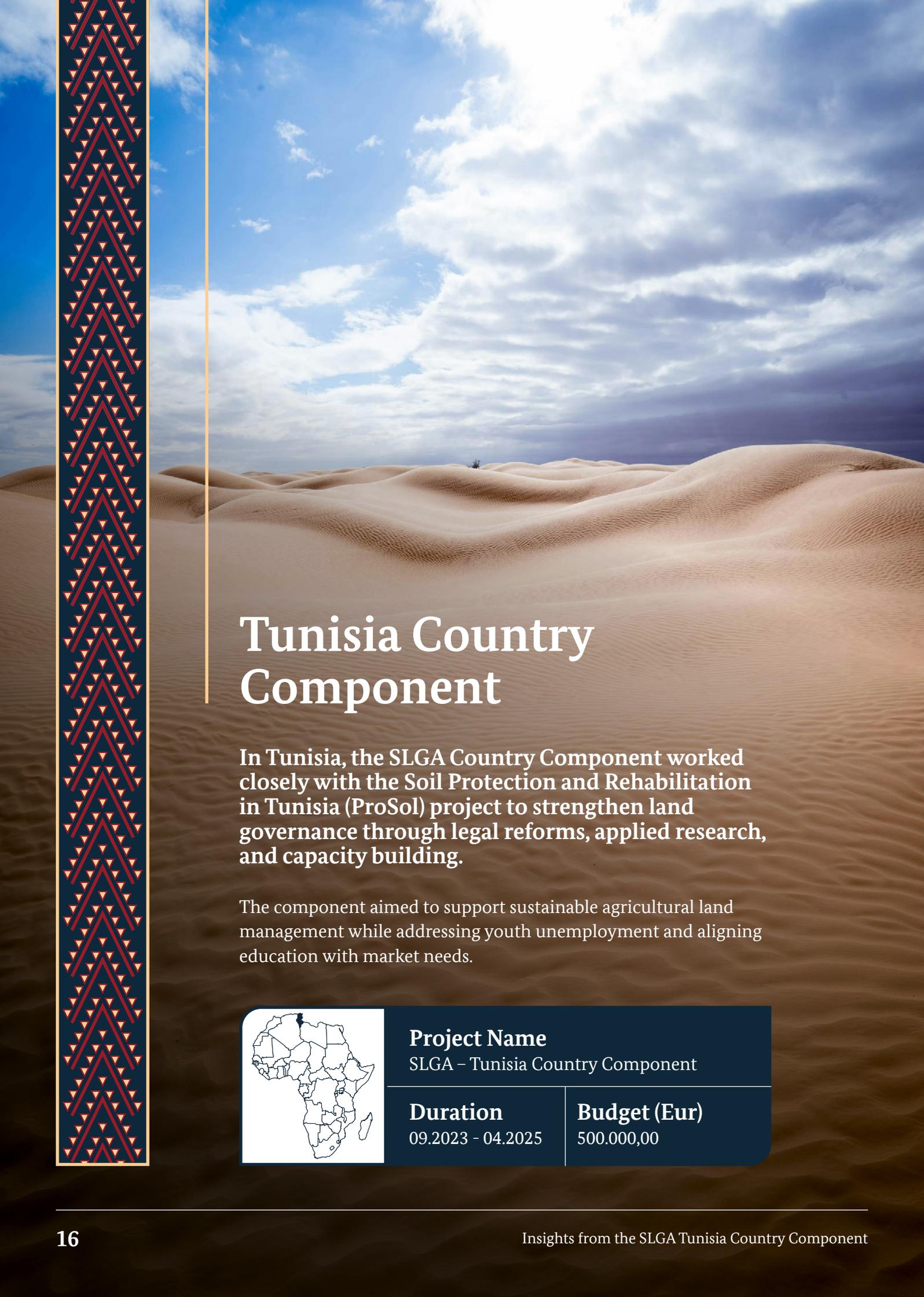
✔ Promoting Dialogue on Land and SDGs

SLGA supported the organization of a high-level multi-stakeholder panel on land-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators (1.4.2 and 5.a). Bringing together ministries, civil society, academia, donors, and development partners, the panel highlighted the critical links between secure land rights, gender equality, and sustainable development – and created a platform to track progress through shared indicators.

✔ Strengthening Partnerships

To improve collaboration on data, research, and training, SLGA formalized partnerships through a framework agreement with three key national institutions: the National Agency for Statistics and Demography, the Centre de Suivi Ecologique, and the Centre de Formation Judiciaire. These partnerships are driving forward knowledge-sharing and institutional coordination for more effective land governance in Senegal.





Tunisia Country Component

In Tunisia, the SLGA Country Component worked closely with the Soil Protection and Rehabilitation in Tunisia (ProSol) project to strengthen land governance through legal reforms, applied research, and capacity building.

The component aimed to support sustainable agricultural land management while addressing youth unemployment and aligning education with market needs.



Project Name

SLGA – Tunisia Country Component

Duration

09.2023 - 04.2025

Budget (Eur)

500.000,00

Key Highlights

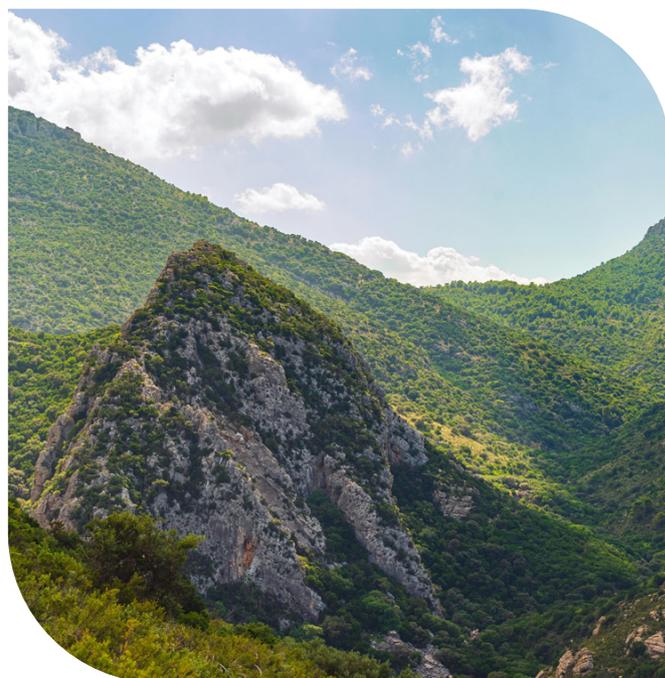


✔ Research to Guide Policy and Strategy

SLGA supported studies on important topics including the employability of young graduates in the land sector, impacts of land consolidation on soil and water quality, and the development of frameworks to monitor natural resources such as soil, water, and biodiversity. The findings from these studies helped shape Tunisia’s new agricultural land strategy by providing evidence on how land consolidation affects resource sustainability. Research on youth employment revealed a high unemployment rate due to gaps between education and job market demands. As a result, recommendations were made for the government to align curricula with industry needs, promote entrepreneurship, and strengthen partnerships with the private sector to improve graduate employability.

✔ Supporting Legal Reform

The country component contributed to a strategic study that identified critical gaps in Tunisia’s legal framework for agricultural land development. NELGA experts from Tunisia analyzed how land consolidation influences water and soil conservation. These insights informed the formulation of the “Agricultural Land Agency Strategy 2050,” which outlines necessary legal reforms to address agricultural land tenure security, land fragmentation, expropriation processes, property rights, food security, and environmental protection. The strategy also includes a clear roadmap, short-term action plan, and a monitoring system to ensure effective implementation. Special attention was given to tracking how water and soil conservation efforts improve land productivity and sustainability.



✔ **Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management**

To ensure lasting impact, SLGA launched a certified training program aimed at continuous human capital development in Tunisia’s agricultural sector. The program enhanced the skills and knowledge of decision-makers, focusing on sustainable food security and climate change resilience. Fourteen comprehensive training modules – covering

technical expertise as well as leadership and management skills – were integrated into the e-learning platform of the Tunisian National School of Administration. This digital approach allows for broad scalability and ensures that the training can be sustained over time. Thirty senior officials have already benefitted from this program, including a strong representation of women, reflecting the program’s commitment to inclusivity.



Lessons Learned

Implementing land governance reforms across diverse African contexts brought valuable lessons for SLGA and its partners.

These experiences highlight what worked best to achieve meaningful impact, from aligning efforts with partners to ensuring sustainability and strong collaboration. Here are the key insights that shaped SLGA's success on the ground:

✔ Adopting Regional Frameworks to Local Needs

Lessons, learning and insights from SLGA have facilitated the integration of regional agendas, frameworks, and approaches into bilateral projects and national policies. In doing so, the country components promoted cross-learning between continental, regional and national land governance actors.

✔ Enhanced Collaboration with NELGA has Greater Impact

SLGA country components promoted collaboration between NELGA and policy implementing agencies, fostering use of empirical evidence and research-based insights in policy development, addressing capacity gaps and advancing land reform processes.

✔ Stronger Together: Partnerships Make the Difference

Collaboration was the backbone of achievement. SLGA's close cooperation with GIZ bilateral projects and local partners sparked synergy, combined resources, and reinforced local leadership. This partnership spirit fostered a supportive environment where challenges were tackled jointly, ensuring solutions were both practical and sustainable.

✔ Demand Sparks Drive and Ownership

When partners expressed strong demand for improvement, it ignited motivation and accountability. This energy translated into high engagement, dedication, and faster progress. Interventions that respond directly to partner needs naturally stay relevant and impactful over time.

✔ Planning for Impact Beyond Project Timelines

Sustainability isn't accidental — it's intentional. SLGA's success stories show that embedding strategies to ensure uptake and continued use of outputs is essential. From policy reforms in Uganda and Tunisia, to the innovative "Training of Trainers" model, to cutting-edge spatial data infrastructure in Ethiopia, carefully planned legacy ensures these benefits last well beyond project closeout.





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