



NELGA GOOD PRACTICES:

Regional Scoping Study
on Land Governance:
Experience sharing from
NELGA Southern Africa

The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) is a partnership of leading African universities and research institutions with proven leadership in education, training and research on land governance. Currently NELGA has more than **70 partner institutions** in over 40 countries and is organized in 6 regional and 1 technical nodes supported by a Secretariat.



Background

The NELGA Node in Southern Africa embarked on a regional scoping study in 2018.

The study covered a description and assessment of land governance in the Southern African region.

The study covered eight countries, namely: Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, Eswatini and Botswana.

The study stems from the NELGA initiative of promoting demand-driven research on policy issues and

connecting scholars and researchers across Africa through academic networks.

The objectives of the scoping study on land governance are as follows:

- 📍 The project facilitates networking between the NELGA partners within the region
- 📍 The project encourages research and education within the land governance area
- 📍 The project provides a baseline study of land governance within the region and thereby facilitates further research cooperation and innovation towards meeting the key land governance challenges faced within the countries and region as a whole.



Regional workshop held on 26-28 June 2018, in Windhoek, Namibia

Implementation

Fifteen (15) universities and research institutions from eight countries in Southern Africa were involved in the study. To perform the studies, each country formed a team of academics from one or more research institution and appointed a team leader. These teams worked under the guidance of the project management team from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). A workshop was held in June 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia to discuss and adopt a project design and template to be used for providing the country reports.

The template developed for description and assessment of the land governance issues is based on the land governance assessment framework (World Bank, 2012) and was adapted to the Southern Africa region. This template enables in-depth understanding of the legal, institutional and managerial issues within the country as well as further comparisons between the countries for identification of best practices and improvements. Based on the structured description each country identified the key land governance challenges for presentation and discussion. This in turn can facilitate further research projects at country level or between countries for improving the land governance concept within the region as a whole.

Other consultations with the study teams followed, including a status workshop on the regional scoping study on land governance in October 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia. The objectives of the workshop were to i) obtain formal updates on the progress made by individual country study teams, ii) to provide further

input into the country scoping studies, iii) to review the timeline, and iv) and to jointly determine the way forward.

A Regional Land Governance Symposium was held in September 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia. The symposium provided a platform to present and discuss the country scoping studies. The main objectives of the symposium were: a) to identify and discuss land governance challenges and policy implications in Southern Africa, and b) to identify opportunities for future research and improvement to land governance in the region.

In October 2020, the Node organized an online workshop attended by the study teams and other NELGA partners. The purpose of this workshop was





Status workshop held 29-30 October 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia.

to present, discuss, and adopt the final draft of the Research and Capacity Development Strategy for Land Governance Innovation in Southern Africa. The strategy serves as a basis for future research and capacity-building in land governance innovation with the Southern Africa region.



Symposium held on 3-4 September 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia

The main outputs which were produced at the end of the study were: Eight country reports, one synthesis



Symposium held on 3-4 September 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia

report, and the Research and Capacity Development Strategy for Land Governance Innovation in Southern Africa.



Symposium held on 3-4 September 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia

The NELGA synthesis report on land governance in Southern Africa is based on assessments of the national land governance issues in the region. It was launched on 10 December 2021 via an online Zoom session as a side event at the Land Governance and Societal Development Conference held by the Department of Land and Spatial Sciences (DLSS) at NUST, which was organised in partnership with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, Shandong.



Results and lessons learnt

The study was a great success, its objectives were achieved and intended outputs were produced, such as the country reports, synthesis report, and research strategy, as indicated above.

There are a few lessons to be learnt from this exercise and among these are: establishing partnerships based on trust, encouraging partners to take ownership, providing incentives to partners, and establishing project-based community of practice.

Why is this a good practice?

- ✓ This study is unique in Southern Africa
- ✓ It promotes collaborative research between partner institutions
- ✓ It improves networking between partner institutions
- ✓ The study helps with the prioritisation of demand-driven research
- ✓ Lessons and experiences can be shared among partners, both during and after the study
- ✓ This study can be replicated by the other regional blocks in Africa.

Conclusions and recommendations

- ✎ The study is crucial as it highlights key land governance issues and challenges in Africa.
- ✎ Similar studies should be conducted in the regions of Africa with the aim of consolidating one scoping study for the continent.

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This study lays the groundwork for specific research to be undertaken

– Dr James Chakwizira (NELGA partner University of Venda)

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Lessons and good practices can be learnt from this study – Prof Mutjinde Katjiua (Former coordinator – NELGA Southern Africa/NUST)

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