



Chapter

Land Policy and Land Management

Introduction



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Land provides the basic livelihood for a large part of the world's population. These livelihoods, however, are increasingly coming under threat – from climate change and its impacts, desertification and flooding of coastal areas. In addition, worldwide population growth and changing dietary habits are generating the need for more land. There has long been competition for scarce arable land between food production and the widening cultivation of crops for feed and fuel production. By the time of the food price crisis of 2007/2008, investors had also begun to notice the high value of agricultural land and have acquired large areas of this land in developing countries by means of long-term lease or purchase agreements. Some 38 million hectares of large-scale land acquisitions or leases have been documented worldwide in recent years.

Land is not a reproducible commodity. At the same time land with the potential for ecologically sustainable and socially equitable development has been largely exhausted. Amidst mounting global competition for the best and most fertile land, those left standing empty-handed are usually the very people who have been using and cultivating the land for generations – indigenous groups and small farmers. Their tenure rights are often not entered in any land register, their land parcels not surveyed and recorded in any cadastre. Their rights are based on tradition and social relationships. In most cases, the land they use belongs to the state. When governments sell this land without asking those who live from it, conflict is bound to unfold.

This is why securing land rights is a core element of sustainable land management and sustainable land policy. Land registration based on geographic data (geodata) is the single most important instrument to this end. Land reform serves to provide the rural poor in particular with secure access to land and thus with opportunities for bettering their lives.

The intensifying competition for land lends new urgency to land-use planning, the goal of which is to harmonise the various land-use interests within a certain area, in order to ensure the sustainable use of land for the common good. Planning with foresight and ensuring stakeholder participation can prevent potential land-use conflicts well in advance. Modern land-use planning brings together the various stakeholders involved so they can jointly work out compromises acceptable to everyone. Land-use planning is also helpful in steering large-scale land acquisitions and leases in developing countries in ways



that prevent such acquisitions from adversely impacting on the local population and ensure that, where possible, they can benefit from them.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH advises and supports efforts by its partner countries to develop and implement national land policies and design corresponding legislation. This includes work to establish land administration authorities capable of managing, correctly and transparently, all aspects of land surveying and title registration as well as purchasing and leasing of land. Such administrative functions are particularly important to land-use planning and direct foreign investment in land. It is equally vital to integrate all participants, especially the traditional users of land and marginalised population groups such as indigenous groups and women, who generally have no formalised land-use rights. GIZ promotes and supports dialogue between people and governments with the aim of eliminating potential conflicts before they occur and finding solutions that discriminate against no one.

At international level GIZ has supported the negotiations to produce the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT). The guidelines emphasise the legal recognition of formal and informal land-use rights and

tenure of land of marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples, smallholders and women, for example by upholding traditional land rights and by recognising and registering local land-use rights. As part of its commitment to development, GIZ has made it its goal to provide substantial support for the implementation of the voluntary guidelines.

Sustainable land policy and land management most certainly require government support. Only with the staunch backing of political will can development cooperation successfully do its part towards achieving these goals.

For more detailed information about specific issues to do with land policy and land management, you can read through the individual Briefing Notes. Please contact the person named at the bottom of the Briefing Note if you have further questions.

Contact

Christian Graefen
E Christian.Graefen@giz.de
T +49 6196 79-1212
I www.giz.de

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Deutsche Gesellschaft für
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Registered Offices
Bonn und Eschborn

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65760 Eschborn
T +49 61 96 79-0
F +49 61 96 79-11 15
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

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