

Land Governance III Project

One Landscape, Shared Responsibility & Lasting Solutions

Challenge

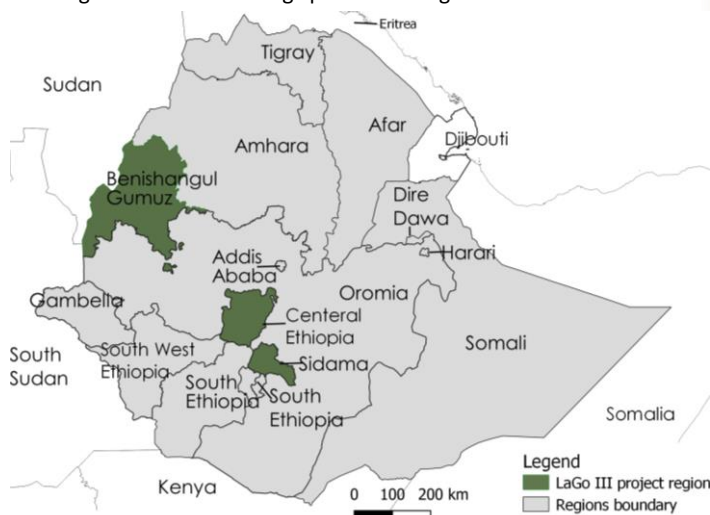
Ethiopia's 17 mil. smallholder farm households cultivates more than 95% of the total area and supply some 90% of the total agricultural production. Yet, they face growing pressure as farmland becomes increasingly fragmented due to population growth and limited land availability. With smaller, less productive plots, many struggle to maintain yields, threatening food security and livelihoods. Meanwhile, shrinking land access drives deforestation and cultivation of marginal lands, accelerating soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate vulnerability.

Against this backdrop, Ethiopia has set ambitious environmental, climate and economic goals, including doubling crop production by expanding cultivable land, restoring 15 million hectares through the Green Legacy Initiative, and protecting 30% of its territory to preserve biodiversity. These efforts aim to conserve natural resources, build climate resilience, and open up new income opportunities—such as through carbon trading and other emerging green markets.

Ethiopia's ambitious development and environmental goals place increasing and often competing demands on land. Absence of clear regulation, creates tension between agricultural expansion, conservation efforts, and economic development—intensifying pressure on already limited land resources. These challenges are further exacerbated by weak spatial planning, limited use of participatory land-use tools, and poor coordination between sectors. To effectively manage trade-offs, align priorities, and ensure community participation, a coherent institutional and regulatory framework is urgently needed to guide and coordinate land use across sectors.

Objective

Ethiopian land governance institutions and actors are strengthened in addressing spatial challenges.



Project name	Land Governance III (LaGo III)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project regions	Benishangul-Gumuz , Central Ethiopia, and Sidama
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Political partner	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
Budget & Duration	EUR 12 million, 01/2025-12/2027

Approach

In collaboration with different land administration institutions at all levels, LaGo III will follow the three approaches to reach its objective:



Support in Inclusive Land Reforms: Land governance reforms will be adopted to reflect the socio - ecological realities to improve land tenure security, enhance equitable access and ensure policy coherence.

Support in Modernizing Land Administration: Capacity and Digital Tools: Support the alignment of land administration services with government priorities to ensure transparent, equitable, and accessible service delivery while strengthening land tenure security.



Establishing Integrated & Participatory Land Governance System: Facilitate collaboration among government, the private sector, CSOs, and local communities to balance sectoral interests, and jointly implement practical land planning and management solutions.



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Outputs and Activities

Strengthening the legal framework for Gender Transformative Implementation of Land Governance Reform

- Advising land administration institutions on policy, law, and strategy development and providing technical guidance to shape effective land governance frameworks.
- Facilitating public participation in law development on federal and regional level.
- Creating awareness platforms (forums and legal clinics) to ensuring equal land rights and improving women's agency.
- Advancing gender-responsive land governance through the implementation of the Gender Action Plan via the Ministry of Agriculture's Gender Working Group.

Capacitating Land Administration Institution and Actors to implement land Governance Reforms

- Capacity-building at all levels of land administration to effectively implement governance reforms.
- Organizational and digital assessments to guide data-driven improvements in efficiency and transparency.
- Establishment of a land administration center to create a dedicated institution for ongoing training and skill development.
- Support innovation in land administration bureaus through digital solutions and decentralized services like backdrop offices, enhancing service delivery, efficiency, and trust among landholders.

Implementing Participatory Land Governance Approaches in Selected Critical Landscapes

- Establishing a multi – stakeholders' platform and action plan, to address practical land use challenges in critical landscape in a collaborative manner.
- Develop and apply participatory, practical land governance tools—such as land use planning and land consolidation—to reduce land fragmentation, improve sectoral coordination, minimize land-use conflicts, and ensure more equitable resource allocation.
- Advising the Ministry of Agriculture and key partners on integrating climate and biodiversity priorities into land management strategies and decision-making.

By Creating Space for Food Security:

Effective land governance balances agricultural productivity, environmental conservation, and equitable land use. Land policy instruments like land consolidation tackle land fragmentation, enhancing economies of scale and resource (land, labor, capital) use efficiency. At the same time, integrated land use planning supports the efficient allocation of land for agriculture, promoting sustainable and productive farming systems. Thereby, It allows agriculture to coexist and interact positively with other economic and environmental activities, benefiting both farmers and the environment.

By Creating Space for Climate Action:

Participatory land use planning, enables cross-sectoral coordination, designating areas for afforestation, reforestation, and soil conservation. This integrated approach helps mitigate land degradation, enhance carbon sequestration, and support climate action through benefit-sharing mechanisms like PES. A transparent tenure system is a precondition for smallholders to access carbon markets possibly generating alternative income.

By Creating Space for Biodiversity:

To manage spatial trade-offs, participatory land use planning helps balance biodiversity conservation with development goals. It enables the designation of buffer zones where farmers can sustainably use land near protected areas without harming ecosystems. This approach supports local livelihoods while contributing to Ethiopia's goal of conserving 30% of its land.

Addressing Spatial Trade – Off

Land Governance to address spatial trade off by clearing space for Food Security, Biodiversity Conservation, and Climate Action !!

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Photo

GIZ – Daniel Daeschle

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Text

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GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

As at

March, 2025

In cooperation with

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)