Challenge

In recent years Ethiopia has witnessed several disputes and intense conflicts in the struggle over land access and natural resources. The general assumption on negative effects of large-scale agricultural land acquisitions (LSALA) prevails. Additionally, population growth and the institutional vacuum exacerbate the challenge in land management.

The livelihoods of the population in the lowland regions of Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella depend almost solely on small-scale agricultural production. Land rights in the rural areas of these lowland regions are until now inadequately documented and secured.

Government agencies at all levels lack knowledge, structures and equipment to steer and monitor LSALAs sufficiently. Capacities in the regulation of agricultural investments and the management of conflicts between investors and communities are limited. Consequently, the rural population, and particularly women and marginalized groups, face land tenure insecurities. Land tenure security and sustainable commercial agricultural production in rural areas are the prerequisite to alleviate poverty and to fight hunger.

Approach

S2RAI II aims to ensure land access for the most vulnerable by operationalizing the knowledge on responsible land management (i.e. VGGT and RAI) created under S2RAI I. The government is supported in regulating agricultural investments and the private sector in producing sustainable activities.

Activities in Ethiopia

Improving Framework Conditions and Procedures: In capacity building and awareness raising activities, stakeholders of national and regional authorities in the two regions and the academia are sensitized on institutional framework conditions and procedures to enhance land tenure security for the rural population.

Strengthening the Civil Society: Fostering the sociopolitical debate and discussion on responsible land policy through educational campaigns, training measures and awareness raising amongst civil society actors.

Cooperation with the Private Sector: Advising and capacitating private investors in exchange fora, trainings and consultations on effective land management as a business case to mitigate the impacts of agricultural production and to deliver on environmental and social commitments.

Objectives

20,600 households are issued land use certificates (30% of the certificates for marginalized groups).

80% of the land conflicts in Benishangul-Gumuz are resolved through the participation of the civil society.

60% of the agricultural investments in Benishangul–Gumuz and 40% in Gambella incorporate social and environmental codes of practice in their operations.

Project Name Support to Responsible Agricultural Investment II (S2RAI II)
Regions Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella; to be upscaled to another region
Budget & Duration 1.725.000 EUR, 2019-2021
Commissioned by German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Special Initiative One World, No Hunger
Implementation Partners Rural Land Administration & Use Directorate, Ethiopian Agricultural Investment & Land Administration Agency, CSOs, universities and the private sector
Lead Executing Agency Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
Target Groups Smallholder farmers in Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella

Implemented by giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Learning from Experience

The S2RAI II project under the Global Program Responsible Land Policy is a continuation of the S2RAI I project implemented on behalf of the BMZ and with financial support from the European Union from March 2016 until June 2019 and thus capitalizes on previous lessons learned. Main achievements included a digital investment monitoring tool, the application of monitoring guidelines and contract templates, and the redefined ceiling for agricultural investments from 1 Mio ha to 1000ha for domestic and 3000ha for foreign investors. Through capacity building on various framework guidelines such as the VGGT and the RAI-principles and strengthened organizational development of land institutions, it was achieved that investments in agricultural land are according national and international standards. Investor-community dialogue fora supported by the project contributed to amicable land dispute resolutions.

S2RAI I harmonized its efforts with other development interventions, such as thematically relevant GIZ projects and other donor projects in the context of land tenure, land use planning, land allocation and certification.