

Responsible Land Policy in Madagascar



Context

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world and has about 24 million inhabitants. 65 % of the population are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture and forestry, most of them working in subsistence agriculture (rice, maize and manioc). 70 % of the land is used for agriculture, including a high proportion of pastures, and only about 15 % of the land is still covered by forest. Deforestation and degradation of forest landscapes are some of the country's biggest environmental problems. Consequently, livelihoods and agricultural productivity in rural areas are increasingly

endangered. As part of the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), Madagascar has committed itself to restoring 4 million hectares of forest landscapes by 2030. This commitment is offset by a lack of clearly defined and formalised rights for land use and ownership, which inhibits the willingness to invest into forest restoration. Such an investment without a secured, long-term use perspective involves a high risk. Women and marginalised groups find it particularly difficult to assert their land use rights, as they generally know little about legal regulations and procedures and are thus unable to claim their rights.

Activities in Madagascar

The country module is active in three fields of activity:

- Activities in field 1 are improving the institutional framework and the processes for securing rights of use or ownership of land for the rural population in the Boeny region.
- Field of activity 2 ensures that the securing of land use and ownership rights for the local population is part of pilot measures to restore forest landscapes.

- In the third field of activity, the project aims to increase the involvement of the civil society, which is a main implementing partner, in formulating and implementing a responsible land policy concerning forest resources.

Our objective

Access to land as a core condition for combating poverty and hunger in rural areas has improved for specific population groups in the Boeny Region in Madagascar, particularly for women and socially marginalised groups.



Region

8 municipalities in the Boeny region in Northwest Madagascar

Term

July 2017 to June 2023

Budget

EUR 8.34 million

Implementing partners

A range of non-governmental organisations (e.g. Transparency International), research institutions, the ministries of environment, agriculture and the Interior of Madagascar

Lead executing agency

Ministry of Land Use Planning, Housing and Public Works of Madagascar (Ministère de l'aménagement du territoire, de l'habitat et des travaux publics - MAHTP)

Target group

90,000 people in approx. 20,000 families in the selected municipalities of the Boeny Region



An example from the field

From a formal point of view, the legal situation in Madagascar since the land reform in 2005 presents a solid basis for smallholder farmers to formally register their land and obtain a land use certificate for it. The decentralised system provides for a competent authority (*Guichet Foncier*) in each municipality to issue these certificates. Reality shows, however, that in many places the issuance of land certificates is de facto impossible, as *Guichet Fonciers* were only opened in 535 of Madagascar's 1693 municipalities yet. Oftentimes, the *Guichet Foncier* is understaffed or not functional due to a lack of infrastructure. Moreover, the process of applying for the certificate and of proving land use is currently complicated and, in addition, costly in many of the municipalities.

The ProPFR project (*Promotion d'une Politique Foncière Responsable* – Promotion of a Responsible Land Policy) is therefore committed to improving and simplifying the procedure for obtaining a land certificate. In order to achieve this goal, a Land Inventory Protocol (LIP) procedure will be introduced, which allows the rural population in the pilot communities to participate in a systematic land inventory.



Photo: Example of a land certificate

The civil society and the decentralised structures responsible for land law are jointly developing an efficient and transparent procedure for inventorying the parcels and are being accompanied in the process.

As a result, land inventory protocols are to be issued, which already bundle various information required for the application for a land use certificate. By doing so, multiple field surveys are to be avoided and the latest technology is to be used to make precise land surveys possible.

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