

Responsible land policy in Uganda



Context

With an average of 174 inhabitants per km², population density in Uganda is very high by comparison with other African countries. The population is growing by more than 3% a year, and the land is increasingly being fragmented as a result of inheritances, with the result that land ownership is being split up and competition between different user groups is on the rise. This situation is exacerbated both by the presence in Uganda of more than a million refugees from neighbouring countries (as at February 2017) and by large-scale land

investment by national and international investors. Against this backdrop of growing competition for dwindling land resources, fair and secure land rights are increasingly important. Uganda has created a favourable framework for reform of land law through a progressive constitution and land policy. The global project is working with local institutions to advance the granting of use and ownership certificates for smallholders in particular and to facilitate progress towards appropriate economic growth and food security.

Activities in Uganda

The project is active in three fields of activity:

- Activities in field of activity 1 are improving the institutional framework and processes for ensuring land rights. This involves a systematic inventory of land to form the basis for applications for land ownership or use certificates.
- As part of field of activity 2, civil society is strengthened with regard to responsible land policy to enable it to play a key part in providing information for the population and conducting dialogue with the Government and the private sector. The aim is also that civil society cooperates with the project as an implementing partner.

- The aim of field of activity 3 is to raise agricultural investors' awareness of responsible land policy. The project is providing advisory services to familiarise investors with relevant international standards, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT).

Our objective

Access to land as a core condition for combating poverty and hunger in rural areas is improved for specific population groups in Central and North-East Uganda, particularly women and socially marginalised groups.



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Region

Central Uganda (Mubende and Mityana districts) and North-East Uganda (Katakwi and Soroti districts)

Term

May 2016 to October 2021 (North-East Uganda)
January 2017 to June 2020 (Central Uganda)

Budget

EUR 10.8 million, of which EUR 4 million is co-financed by the European Union

Implementing partners

A range of non-governmental organisations, research institutions (e.g. Makerere University and the World Bank Research Group), the private sector and other international organisations and GIZ projects

Lead executing agency

Ugandan Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development

Target group

Smallholders from four districts (two in Central Uganda and two in North-East Uganda)



An example from the field

Fewer than 10% of all plots of land in Uganda are formally registered. Rural populations are particularly likely to lack the documentation to protect their land rights. For this reason, traditional land ownership rights can often be established only with testimony from neighbours, village elders or clan representatives. Issuing land titles or land certificates is a lengthy and costly process and, for most of the rural population, simply prohibitive. The Responsible Land Policy in Uganda project is working in this area to ensure systematic documentation of the land rights of those living in rural areas. The first stage of the project involves informing the target population on its rights and its scope for protecting its land rights in the long term. One particular aspect is strengthening the rights of women: land rights are often passed down exclusively to male descendants. The second stage is to establish systematic land inventories at village level, surveying individual plots of land digitally and collecting the necessary information concerning owners. The resulting land inventory protocols (LIPs) include all necessary information on neighbours, clans and parcels of land.



Photo: Compiling a land registry plan in Uganda

The documented testimonies of neighbours and clans in particular play a decisive role in avoiding future land conflicts. The LIPs are an adapted and pragmatic minimum standard for securing land rights: the systematic approach markedly reduces the work and costs involved. The LIPs also function as security when holders apply for small loans. LIPs therefore not only improve the land rights situation of those involved but also facilitate their access to credit to enable them to invest in their land. This gives entire families a better future.

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