

## Responsible Land Policy in Benin



### Starting point

Benin has nearly 13 million inhabitants (growing 2.8% yearly) and a population density of 108 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. A large part of the population – around 70% – earn their living from agriculture which accounts for one third of Benin's Gross Domestic Product. Unfortunately, lack of knowledge of the land law hinders urgently needed investment in rural areas.

Less than 2% of the farmed land is protected by land titles. And of those titles less than 1% are owned by women. The informal land use system is largely unable to cope with the growing pressure on agricultural land. Disputes between local smallholders and nomadic or settled pastoralists are widespread.

### Challenges & Project Focus

The challenges in Benin include the substantial disadvantage of women and marginalised groups, undocumented land transactions and land rights as well as a lack of knowledge of the law. At the same time, opportunities exist: the land law of 2017 (fostering customary ownership rights), a proactive land policy and existing decentralized land services provide a basis for increasing land tenure security.

The project uses these opportunities to improve the situation. It supports the formalisation of customary traditional rights and contributes to strengthening the institutional framework to improve the chances of a fair and responsible land policy. Thereby, the project aims to combat hunger and poverty in Benin.

### Fields of action in Benin

- **Improvement of local governance:** Improve the institutional framework and processes for securing land use and ownership rights in the department of Borgou.
- **Mobilisation of civil society:** Increase the involvement of civil society in formulating and implementing a responsible land policy.

- **Mobilisation of private agricultural investors:** Raising their awareness of implementation of a responsible land policy as part of the G7 New Alliance initiative.

#### Our objective:

Access to secured land, as a core condition for combating poverty and hunger in rural areas, is improved for specific population groups in the departments of Borgou and Alibori, particularly women and socio-economically marginalised groups.

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## Budget and duration

EUR 9.2 million; 2016 - 2023

## Lead executing agency and implementing partners

Benin's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP) / National Agency for Domains and Land (ANDF) within the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)

## Commissioned by

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

## Sustainable development



Pastoralist with herd of cattle on a road

## Examples from the field

Benin passed legislation in 2017 to align its national land administration with international guidelines. The project supports the implementation by building both individual and institutional capacity. A core process is the recording of village residents land rights through either the rural land registry (*Plan Foncier Rural, PFR*) or through certificates of customary ownership (*Attestation de Detention Coutumière, ADC*). This is being achieved in cooperation with the National Agency for Domains and Land, as well as with local mayors, who are responsible for validating and signing the ADCs. After 7 years of implementation, the project succeeded in securing land rights for over 44,000 households (vs. only 2,800 in 2016). Land rights were registered, mapped and formalised, while the project helped to facilitate the issuing of official documents. Today, in 2023, 15% of the documents are issued to female headed households (vs. 1% in 2016). More than 17,000 parcel plans (equalling a total of 245,000 ha) have been demarcated, registered and digitalized. The project also seeks agricultural investments to comply with international guidelines. In this regard, the project and its partners created a National Charter. The Charter is based on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (VGGT) and serves as a guideline for sensitization and commitment of all stakeholders. Beside the two Ministries (MAEP - MEF), the project cooperates closely with non-state actors such as NGOs and local authorities (e.g. Association of the Communes of Borgou: ADECOB). Active synergies are developed with other German cooperation projects. Accompanying field research (with the World Bank) is carried out with a survey on the impact of the process in Borgou. Socio-economic studies are also conducted in close cooperation with the State University of Parakou (with articles published in international scientific journals).



Land demarcation in Borgou

More information on <https://www.giz.de/responsiblelandpolicy> and [Land Portal](#)

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