



Network of Excellence
on Land Governance
in Africa



The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) is a partnership of leading African universities and research institutions with proven leadership in **education, training and research** on land governance. Currently NELGA has more than **70 partner institutions in over 40 countries** and is organised in **6 regional and 1 technical Nodes** supported by a Secretariat.

Context

Weak land governance and insecure land rights are still major development challenges for Africa.

The African Land Policy Centre (ALPC), formerly the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), has been tasked with spearheading the implementation of the African Union's Agenda on Land, which aims to improve land policy at a regional level.

While a growing number of countries demonstrate the political will to achieve these initiatives, their implementation



at the national level remains in the early stages. Many countries lack the human and institutional capacity needed to carry out sustainable land policies. One of the main reasons for this shortfall is the insufficient quality of academic programmes at African universities and institutions of higher learning.

NELGA

To strengthen human and institutional capacities for the implementation of the AU agenda on land, ALPC has established NELGA in cooperation with Germany, World Bank and other partners.

NELGA is a partnership of leading African universities and research institutions with proven leadership in education, training and research on land governance. Currently NELGA has more than 70 partner institutions across Africa.

NELGA Objectives



Enhancing **training opportunities** and curricula on land governance in Africa.



Promoting **demand driven research** on land policy issues.



Connecting scholars and researchers across Africa through academic networks.



Creating **data and information** for monitoring and evaluation of land policy reforms.



What has been achieved

Curricula and Scholarships

- ✓ **Curricula Development and Review:** 29 land governance programmes in 23 countries, including areas like land administration, urban, and regional planning.
- ✓ **Toolkit** for Curricula Development on Land Governance in Africa.
- ✓ **Scholarships:** Over 160 scholarships awarded, with 70 PhDs and 48 MScs through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and an additional 47 from other sources.



Research and Impact on Policy Level

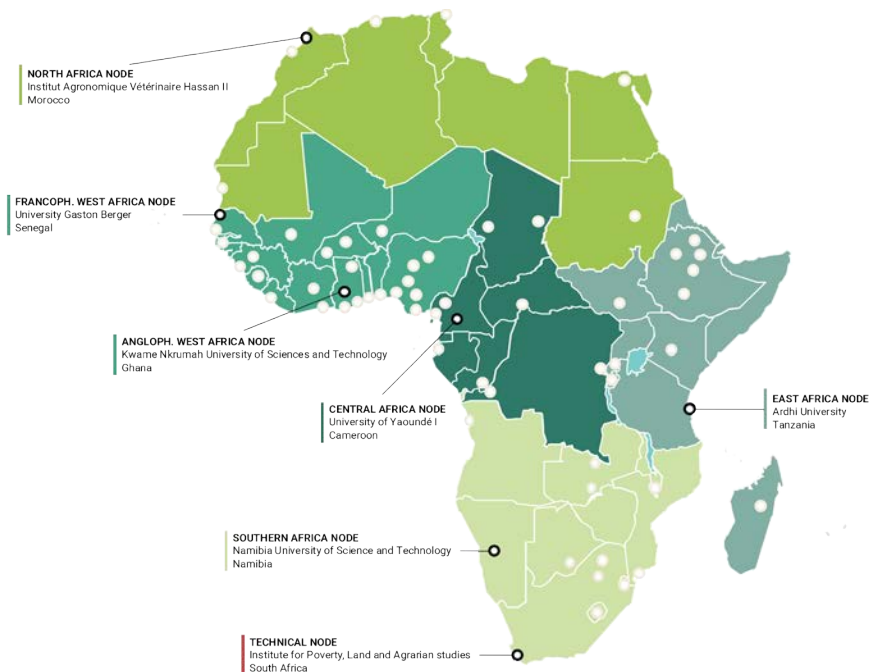
- ✓ **Research Projects:** 89 projects conducted across 43 countries.
- ✓ **Policy Impact:** NELGA experts have a significant impact on policies across Africa. The successful development of five National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) has been supported by NELGA experts as well as completion of land policies in Zambia, Ghana, Namibia, Senegal, South Sudan and Tchad. Additionally, NELGA has contributed to publishing 11 Land Governance Assessment Frameworks (LGAFs) in cooperation with the World Bank.

Training for Land Professionals

- ✓ **Accredited course on the Political Economy of Land Governance in Africa:** More than 300 land professionals, of which 45% are women, across 39 Africa countries trained so far, on topics such as tenure insecurity, land rights, and gender and land governance.
- ✓ **MOOC on Land Conflict Management** launched to equip learners with tools to tackle land conflicts effectively.

NELGA in the African Regions

To enhance NELGA coordination across various regions, a lead university has been designated for each AU region, referred to as “Regional Nodes,” to collectively implement and coordinate NELGA activities alongside other NELGA institutions.



Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) for Southern Africa



Ardhi University in Tanzania for East Africa



Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana for Anglophone West Africa



University Gaston Berger in Senegal for Francophone West Africa



Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (IAV) in Morocco for North Africa



University Yaoundé I in Cameroon for Central Africa



In addition, the Institute of Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape was selected to be Technical Node.



Functions of regional NELGA Nodes



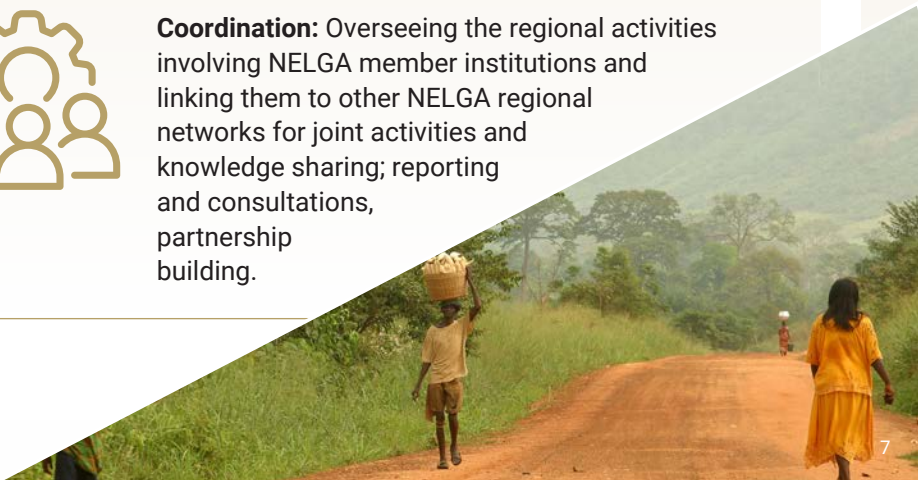
Management: The Nodes act as the Secretariat to the regional NELGA network by hosting NELGA regional staff; reporting on project activities; managing knowledge generation and dissemination platforms.



Facilitation: Initiating NELGA activities in the region; training for NELGA students; implementation of the NELGA scholarship programme; advocating and facilitating delivery of trainings for scholars and policy makers in the region; and work with the RegRECs and other regional/national stakeholders to generate data.



Coordination: Overseeing the regional activities involving NELGA member institutions and linking them to other NELGA regional networks for joint activities and knowledge sharing; reporting and consultations, partnership building.



NELGA Scholarships

Fatima-Ezzarah's Success Story

From NELGA Scholarship to Leading and Inspiring:



Fatima-Ezzarah's journey is a testament to the power of opportunity and determination. Growing up in a family that valued education, despite their limited resources, she excelled academically, earning a place at Morocco's Hassan II Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine. But it was the NELGA scholarship, awarded

through DAAD, that became a turning point in her life. At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic created barriers for many, the scholarship ensured she had the resources to complete her senior thesis. It covered essential materials, fieldwork, and even her daily needs, lifting a burden that could have derailed her ambitions.

More than just financial support, NELGA connected Fatima-Ezzarah to a global community, giving her the platform to present her work and join discussions on Africa's challenges. Her project was recognised as the best master's project dedicated to digital technology for Africa's urban environment, a proud achievement that broadened her perspective and introduced her to global networks.

Today, as the manager of her own surveying company in Morocco and a part-time PhD student, Fatima-Ezzarah pays it forward by mentoring other young women, encouraging them to believe in their potential. Her story is one of resilience, opportunity, and the enduring impact of NELGA's support, which helped turn her dreams into reality.



Fatima-Ezzahra Mohtich

**“ It was the ultimate
opportunity to discuss
Africa’s challenges and how
to address them ”**

*– Fatima-Ezzarah Mohtich,
NELGA Scholarship holder at IAV.*

NELGA Scholarships

Anthony's Success Story

After completing my undergraduate studies in Human Settlement Planning, receiving the DAAD In-country scholarship through NELGA was a game-changer. It allowed me to research sustainable land use planning using geospatial technology, which led to a master's degree and a position at GIZ.

The NELGA Programme provided valuable training in research methods, data collection, and science communication. I also attended a summer school in Germany, which enhanced my skills in geospatial technology.

With these skills, I published a paper on corruption in land governance, advocating for geospatial technology as a solution. Two more publications are forthcoming from my M.Phil. studies. Now, as a Technical Advisor with GIZ on the REACH Project, I apply what I learned to promote sustainable agricultural growth in rural Ghana.

The NELGA scholarship was key to my professional development and success.





Anthony

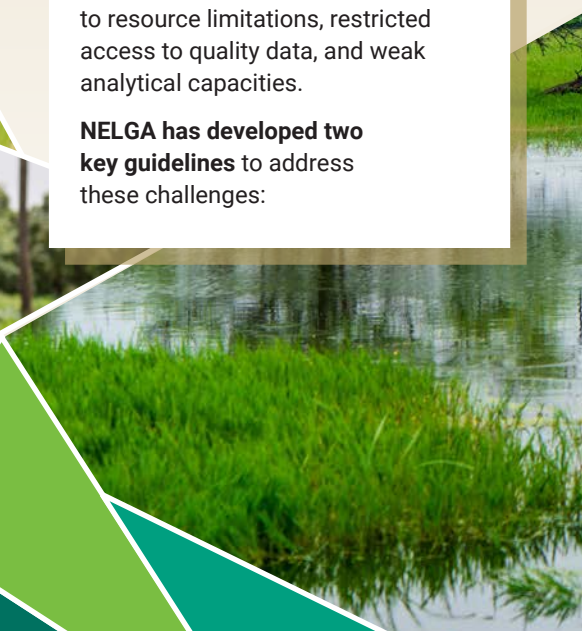
**“ Working with GIZ
allows me to give back to
the organisation by using
the skills and techniques
I learned through the
GIZ-assisted scholarship
programme. ”**

NELGA Curricula and Program Review

Experts have noted that **land-related academic curricula in Africa** often lack the ability to address the continent's unique land governance challenges.

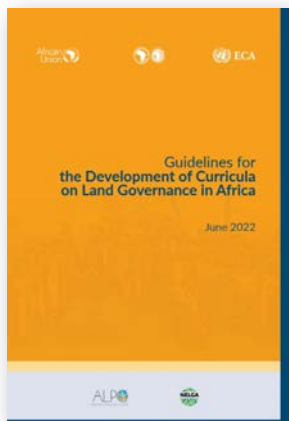
While these curricula tend to focus on technical aspects, they frequently overlook key social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental dimensions essential to land governance. **Issues such as land tenure, political economy, and the cultural ties** of indigenous populations to land are rarely explored, despite being critical for understanding land governance in Africa. Additionally, research often fails to meet Africa's needs due to resource limitations, restricted access to quality data, and weak analytical capacities.

NELGA has developed two key guidelines to address these challenges:



Guidelines for the Development of Curricula on Land Governance in Africa

These guidelines aim to reshape land-related education by integrating crucial **social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental dimensions** that are often missing.



Issues such as land tenure systems, political economy related to land, and the ties between indigenous populations and land governance are given more attention. The guidelines are aligned with the **African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges**, which calls for building the necessary human, financial, and technical capacities to support effective land policy development and implementation across the continent.

Toolkit Supporting the Implementation of the Guidelines on the Development of Curricula on Land Governance in Africa

Building on the foundation laid by the curriculum development guidelines, NELGA has also introduced a **“Toolkit Supporting the Implementation of the Guidelines on the Development of Curricula on Land Governance in Africa.”** This toolkit provides practical support for institutions seeking to implement the revised curricula, offering resources for effective integration of the guidelines into academic programs. It focuses on ensuring that universities and training centers can adopt the necessary tools to address land governance challenges comprehensively. Through the toolkit, institutions receive both **technical and financial support**, enabling them to enrich their curricula and better equip students and professionals with the skills needed for sustainable land management in Africa.



NELGA Research



NELGA plays a pivotal role in advancing land governance research across Africa. Partnering with the World Bank, NELGA conducts **comprehensive Land Governance Assessments (LGAF)** in eleven countries, focusing on legal frameworks, land use planning, and dispute resolution. It has also carried out a regional scoping study in Southern Africa, identifying key land governance challenges in the region. Additionally, NELGA has contributed to the review of **National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIP)** for eight African Union member states, integrating land governance into national investment strategies.

The African Journal on Land Policy & Geospatial Sciences (AJLP & GS), established by NELGA, promotes research and innovation in land governance and geospatial sciences, aiming to disseminate scientific knowledge across Africa and globally.



NELGA encourages its member universities to engage in applied research by fostering dialogue with policy makers and other stakeholders. The NELGA research fellowship further supports young researchers in contributing to practical knowledge creation in the field. **NELGA also published Scholarship Program Research Compendium.** This compendium stands as a testament to the dedication, innovation, and impactful research conducted by NELGA scholars. As an initiative committed to nurturing talent and advancing knowledge in the field of land-themed professions, NELGA takes pride in the achievements of its scholars and the transformative impact of their research endeavors.



Get Involved with NELGA

Partner with Us: Collaborate on enhancing curricula, research, and policy initiatives.

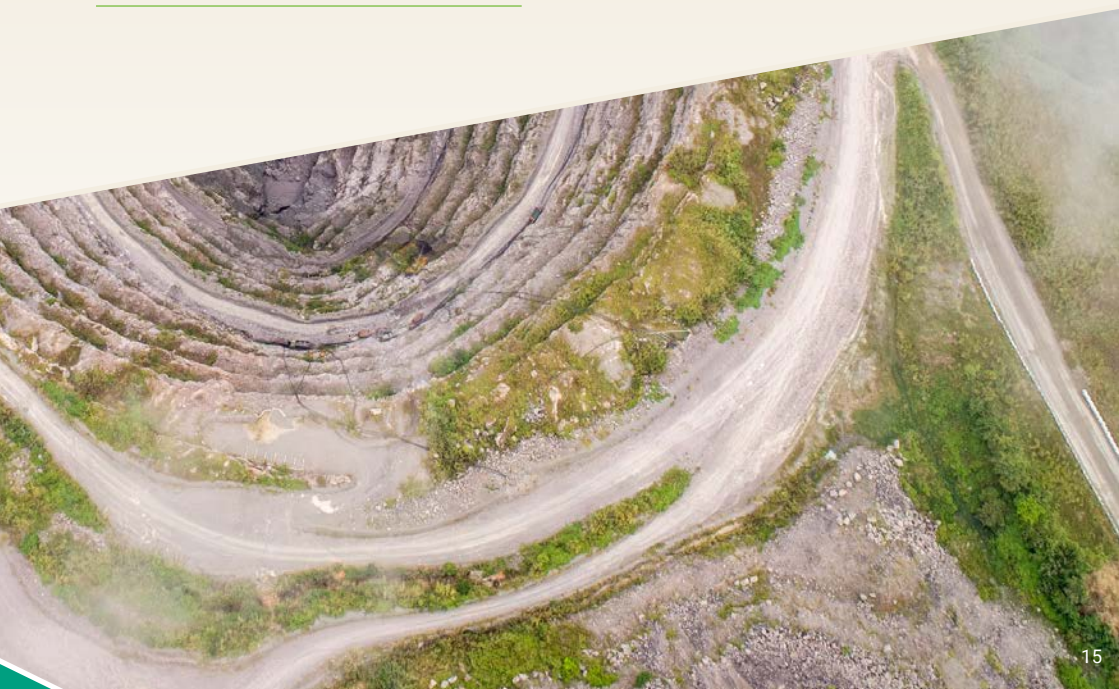
Engage Regionally: Connect with our regional Nodes across Africa.

Support Scholarships: Contribute to or apply for NELGA scholarships.

Join Our Network: Stay updated and connect through our website and social media.

Contact Us

Website: nelga.uneca.org





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