SECURE ACCESS TO LAND AND RESOURCES

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Land is a vital resource in the social, cultural and economic activities of a country. It is a major driver in reducing poverty, conflicts and food insecurity, and has a key role in improving poor people's sense of security and their capacity to improve their immediate living conditions and livelihood opportunities.

Most of the world's poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture or natural resources for their livelihoods. Rural poverty is strongly associated with weak access to land, either in the form of landlessness or because of insecure and contested land rights. Rural poverty also has a clear gender dimension, and women and girls are more likely to suffer the consequences of poverty. In countries where the prevailing land laws (and culture) mean only those people with formal land rights can access, enjoy and manage the land, poor rural people have to struggle with persistent poverty.

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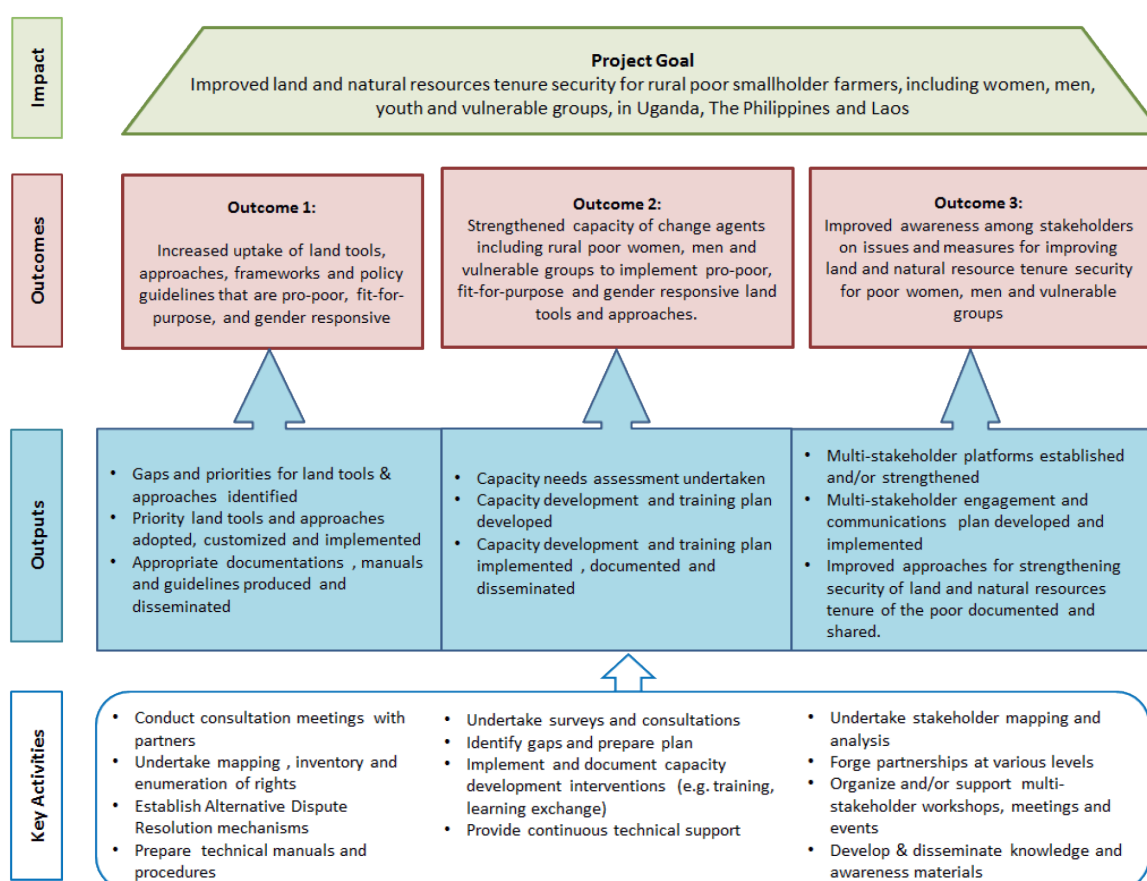
PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR) project aims to address these issues under the initiative of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), as facilitated by UN-Habitat. The Project focuses on three selected countries: Uganda, Philippines and Laos. Its goal is to improve land and natural resources tenure security for rural smallholder farmers, most of whom are poor women, men and vulnerable people. This goal will be achieved through the following three main outcomes:

❑ Outcome 1: Increased uptake of land tools, approaches, frameworks and policy guidelines that are pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender responsive;

❑ Outcome 2: Strengthened capacity of change agents and rural poor women, men and vulnerable groups to implement pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender-responsive land tools and approaches; and

❑ Outcome 3: Improved awareness among stakeholders on issues and measures for improving land and natural resource tenure security for poor women, men and vulnerable groups.

Through its expected outcomes and activities, the three-year project supports the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT). It contributes to efforts by the German Government through its Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development to improve food security, and it specifically helps to achieve the objectives of the Ministry's "One World-No Hunger" initiative.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The "Theory of Change", outlined in the graphic below, illustrates how the project goal will be achieved through the flow of key outcomes, outputs and activities. There is growing evidence that this change model facilitates the necessary thinking, processes and partnerships that improve the conditions of vulnerable groups. The change model creates a positive impact on land and natural resources tenure security and food security, which in turn contributes to a world with no hunger. In addition to its goal of improving the tenure security of rural poor smallholder farmers, the project also strengthens

Impact

Project Goal
Improved land and natural resources tenure security for rural poor smallholder farmers, including women, men, youth and vulnerable groups, in Uganda, The Philippines and Laos

Outcomes

Outcome 1:
Increased uptake of land tools, approaches, frameworks and policy guidelines that are pro-poor, fit-for-purpose, and gender responsive

Outcome 2:
Strengthened capacity of change agents including rural poor women, men and vulnerable groups to implement pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender responsive land tools and approaches.

Outcome 3:
Improved awareness among stakeholders on issues and measures for improving land and natural resource tenure security for poor women, men and vulnerable groups

Outputs

- Gaps and priorities for land tools & approaches identified
- Priority land tools and approaches adopted, customized and implemented
- Appropriate documentations, manuals and guidelines produced and disseminated

- Capacity needs assessment undertaken
- Capacity development and training plan developed
- Capacity development and training plan implemented, documented and disseminated

- Multi-stakeholder platforms established and/or strengthened
- Multi-stakeholder engagement and communications plan developed and implemented
- Improved approaches for strengthening security of land and natural resources tenure of the poor documented and shared.

Key Activities

- Conduct consultation meetings with partners
- Undertake mapping, inventory and enumeration of rights
- Establish Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms
- Prepare technical manuals and procedures

- Undertake surveys and consultations
- Identify gaps and prepare plan
- Implement and document capacity development interventions (e.g. training, learning exchange)
- Provide continuous technical support

- Undertake stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Forge partnerships at various levels
- Organize and/or support multi-stakeholder workshops, meetings and events
- Develop & disseminate knowledge and awareness materials

Theory of Change

capacity, partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms to influence planning, policy decisions and sustainability.

TARGET COUNTRIES

Tenure insecurity, land conflicts, lack of access to land and natural resources, and weak land administration systems are among the common issues faced by Uganda, Philippines and Lao PDR. The project's focus is to improve tenure security for poor rural smallholder farmers in the context of customary land (Uganda), Indigenous Peoples rights (Philippines) and communal lands (Lao PDR).

In **Uganda**, 84 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and relies on agriculture and forestry as the main sources of livelihood generation. Only 20 per cent of the land is known to be formally titled, with the remaining falling under customary tenure, often without any form of formal recordation. Despite this, Uganda has already put in place the required policy and legislation necessary to address these issues through its National Land Policy. For example, the policy equates customary land tenure to other forms of tenure. The government has established a comprehensive land information system throughout the country and Uganda promotes the systematic land demarcation and surveying approach across all territories to increase the cadastral coverage and decentralization of key land services.

In the **Philippines**, where there is over a 100 million people, land plays a major role in the generation of livelihoods as more than half of the population lives in rural areas. Although, there are several progressive asset reform laws in place for poor people and marginalized groups, such as the distribution and provision of land, land is still a highly contested resource. Additionally, government authorities are still considered to be the prime actors in land sector reform, despite being highly

Children carrying water for their family garden in Samoui District, Salavan Province, Laos
Photo @ Village Focus International

fragmented. While there are also different foreign-assisted projects across the land sector in the Philippines, these projects are not substantial enough to drive systemic changes and repair the fragmentation of institutions governing land.

In the **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, agriculture plays a major role in the economy. In 2010, the sector contributed to an estimated 25.5 percent of GDP and absorbed an estimated 75 percent of the total workforce. Around 80 percent of the rural population practice subsistence farming (FAO, 2018). Despite government's efforts and support from the international community, most people do not have tenure security, and access to land and related resources is not documented or registered. In recent years, demand for and competition over land and resources have increased, which exacerbates the situation. There are several key institutions mandated to implement similar land governance functions in the country that make planning, decision-making and coordination efforts more difficult.

STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

The Project will be implemented for a period of three (3) years on a phased basis approach. Key activities have been implemented in the Philippines and Lao PDR while implementation has commenced in Uganda. For the three (3) countries, key implementation partners have been identified and agreements have been finalized.

Similar key interventions are being implemented (or will be implemented) in the three countries, including land tools implementation for improving tenure security improvement, capacity development initiatives, strengthening partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms for policy discussions and dialogues and awareness building.

Continuous technical support to all project sites will be provided. Also, key interventions will be closely monitored including emerging outcomes and lessons learnt.

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