

Summary Report
Thematic Meeting #2:
Enablers for integrating land tenure into land degradation neutrality
21st August 2020

The “**Thematic Meeting #2**”, was held online via zoom on 21st August, where 28 participants from eight countries, subject matter experts, and CSO representatives contributed to the discussions that were focused on defining and identifying the key enablers; and the evidence from the country case studies.

Definition of enablers

The definition of the enabler was presented and agreed minor suggestion, the revised definition is: “Enablers are the contributing factors and approaches to allow the integration of VGGT principles in the implementation of the convention of UNCCD.”

Identifying the enablers

The discussion and inputs were focused on the following issues

- I. *Identifying the missing enablers*
- II. *Identifying enablers that are critically important and are required to be fully addressed*
- III. *Enablers that are easy or very challenging*

Key comments from the discussion and messages in the chatroom are as summarized below:

Identifying the missing enablers

- The identified enablers are broad and going forward it is important that the technical aspect under each of the enabler further defined and elaborated particularly on the aspect of “who and what”.
- It is considered important to have a meaningful engagement of all the relevant key stakeholders as government, academia, CSOs, local authorities and the private sector. Academia has an important role in data availability and monitoring; in capacity development; in science-based informed decision making at the policy level. Likewise, CSOs have an important role to play in implementing LDN measures and advocacy for upholding the integration of land tenure in LDN implementation. It is important to facilitate the communication and close cooperation of all the relevant stakeholders, including at the local levels. Therefore, above points should be mentioned in the enablers at appropriate places.
- The technical guide should benefit from and make linkages/ references to the other relevant technical guide for e.g. on land-use planning to tenure considerations, on the role of actors as academia, civil society, LDN scientific conceptual framework, etc.

Identifying enablers that are critically important and are required to be fully addressed

The following set of enablers were identified as critically important

- The political will and commitment is the most critical enabler. Besides political commitment it is important to have a layer of champions that are consistent to pursue the agenda of integration of land tenure and LDN at higher levels and push the factors that are hindering the inter-ministerial processes or the political commitment. For example, in the case of change in the government, the role of technical people and civil society becomes critical to get issues of back to speed and push the government.

- To have platforms that allows monitoring of the actual implementation of legislation and where the results are communicated on regular basis to the citizens/ concerned multi-stakeholders, including academia.
- To have the government carry out a process of sensitization and capacity building of national and sub-national actors with a view to achieving a common understanding on the scope of land governance and on integrated land management, to avoid their continued deploying efforts separately or in isolation.
- To build human capacity particularly at the local level that is directly involved in LDN implementation.

Identifying enablers that are very challenging

- Putting in practice an holistic and integrated approach is a major challenge. To achieve effective integration of the VGGTs in LDN and UNCCD at national level, it is still important that stakeholders understand the links between land and ecosystems, land and natural resources, land and water, and specially, to understand how the government is taking into account or reflecting these links in public policies and plans.
- Conflict resolution mechanism is one of the most challenging enabler and the consent of local communities and beneficiaries becomes critical especially in the operations concerning private lands, for example in Tunisia, where land consolidation process entail people to leave inherited agricultural land.
- Produce a supportive and harmonized policy and legal framework

More details and the list of enablers which are in ongoing discussion is provided in **Annex 1**.

Country case studies

The key points that came out during the discussion and from the messages received in the chatroom on other potential examples and other countries that can demonstrate workable solutions for the identified enablers are summarised below.

- **Consultations with accredited NGO to UNCCD** will be undertaken by CARI next week that will bring more examples and case studies to feed in the preparation of the technical guide.
- **Highlight on the intersection of VGGT and LDN in the national case studies:** The evidence from countries are broadly supportive on VGGT and LDN implementation, however, wherever possible, it will be good to highlight its relevance and intersection with land degradation and specifically LDN implementation as well as on the technical approaches as monitoring.
- **Other potential case study evidences as identified by participants are as below:**
 - *Policy and legal frameworks*
 - **Bosnia:** Examples on supporting policies when government is in transitionary phase. There are good participatory approaches- at local level, municipality and local level, however, implementation of it poses a major challenge. The research and science based evidences are not adequately disseminated for informed decision making.
 - *Integrating holistic approach*
 - **Niger:** There are important lessons for land tenure security for pastoralist and on more integrated holistic approach, for e.g. through the initiative called “Nigerian people feeding Niger” in which the environmental and agricultural aspects are included in the framework.

- *Well-being, food security and livelihoods*
 - **Moldova:** Development, implementation and dissemination of livelihood improvement in pilot projects have good examples.
- *Enhance capacities*
 - **Moldova:** Increase in institutional level or staff capacities through development of guidance documents and training.
 - **Mongolia:** Herder communities in Mongolia are enabled to develop their natural resource management plans and make rangeland use agreements with local government.
- *Developing feedback loop*
 - **Mongolia:** For the first time a large number of herders could contribute to the draft pastureland law under implementation of VGGT.
- *Conflict resolution mechanism*
 - **Colombia:** Through a normative framework a land restitution program is being implemented for peasants who were dispossessed and displaced by conflict.
- *Gender sensitive issues*
 - **Mongolia:** The forest user group leaders after attending the training on gender and land started developing a gender disaggregated information in the data system.

Roadmap for the upcoming meetings

With regard to the multi-stakeholder consultation for the preparation of the technical guide following meetings have been held so far

- i. Start-up meeting on 17th June on the occasion of desertification and drought day;
- ii. Second meeting on 10th July was held on for case studies and feedback on the case studies; and
- iii. Third meeting on 21st August focused on enablers.

Going forward additional thematic meetings are foreseen with more focused discussion and inputs on other important aspect of the technical guide. Below is the proposed outline for the upcoming meetings with dates to be confirmed, keeping in mind the timeline for the UNCCD CRIC¹ and COP 15

- **Thematic Meeting #3:** Focusing on defining, identifying and country evidence on the both the barriers and benefits for integrating land tenure security in land degradation
- **Thematic Meeting #4:** Stocktaking on previous meeting/ discussion and outcomes
- **Thematic Meeting #5:** Consolidation and key messages

Attachment:

- FAO Presentation on Enablers

Reading material:

- IPCC report on climate change and Land in LAC
<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ipcc-s-special-report-climate-change-and-land-what-s-it-latin-america>
- Allen et al. (2020): Delivering an enabling environment and multiple benefits for land degradation neutrality: Stakeholder perceptions and progress

¹ The nineteenth session of the UNCCD Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention CRIC19 will take place at the World Conference Centre Bonn, Germany from 10 to 12 February 2021

Annex 1:

Enablers: Ongoing discussion

The suggested list of enablers with elaboration under each of the identified factors and approaches are presented below which are prepared on the basis of inputs received on “preparatory note” and discussions during the consultation.

Policy and legal frameworks

- **Supportive policy and legislation:**
 - Supportive land governance policy frameworks and legislation, including policy implementation at all government levels in an integrated manner tenure security (VGGT principles) and land degradation (e.g. NAP, National land policies, LDN implementation).
 - Incorporating VGGT principles in the mandates of government functions or institutions
- **Strong political will and commitment:**
 - To link land governance to natural resource management, land degradation and desertification, climate change and mitigation, land conflicts in an inclusive manner by coordination for all sectors: environment, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, food security, biodiversity etc.
 - Strengthening change agents/ champions at country level for policy implementation
- **Harmonizing legal pluralism:** to recognize legitimate tenure rights, including customary rights, consistent with the national legal framework

Participatory approach

- **Decentralized and participatory decision making:** engaging grassroots level actors and communities at all phases of the design and implementation of land degradation neutrality programmes and initiatives
- **Multi-actor, multi-sector approach:** by establishing or strengthening multi-stakeholder dialogue through local, regional, national platforms to increase horizontal and vertical coordination
- **Inclusive participation:** including indigenous peoples, other communities with customary tenure system, youth, women vulnerable and marginalized advocacy organizations, representatives from local communities (peasants, farmers, herders and their organizations), local authorities (e.g.: traditional chiefs, indigenous leaders)

Well-being, food security and livelihoods

- **Improved well-being, food security and livelihoods:** implementation of land degradation neutrality programmes and initiatives should focus to enhance social and economic sustainable development; create employment; diversify livelihoods and thus ensure food security
- **Gender sensitive measures:** Continued attention for the inclusion of gender equality dimensions in target setting programmes, land use planning and the design of any other interventions related to addressing desertification/land degradation and drought

Holistic and integrated approach

- **Integrated land use/spatial planning:** Strengthening tenure rights during the spatial planning/ land use planning processes at all levels
- **Linking land and water governance:** recognizing the links between secure access to land and to water, and addressing the related governance issues
- **Mainstreaming VGGT principles** in the implementation of land degradation neutrality policies, programmes and initiatives that are addressing desertification/land degradation and drought

Data availability, transparency, monitoring and reporting

- **Strengthen data availability and capacities:** promote, facilitate generation of data and its interoperability for e.g. through e-governance, digital database by including youth and local communities

- *Increased data access and knowledge sharing* that lead to increase transparency, information sector and coherence of different sectors involved in land governance and land degradation assessments
- *Co-ordinated monitoring mechanism* for land tenure and land degradation at national, regional or local scales by linking responsible land governance and degradation monitoring mechanism
- *Development of innovative approaches* in supporting land administration (e.g., technology, digitization, land use planning and surveying, etc.)
- *Transparency*: Enhancing dissemination of policies and legislation and monitoring of actual implementation by communication of the results to citizen. To share information with the public for e.g. on areas as public and private investments
- *Integrating land governance in LDN monitoring/ UNCCD reporting*: integration of existing globally agreed SDG indicators relevant to land governance into other relevant processes as UNCCD reporting

Conflict resolution and safeguards

- *Conflict resolution mechanisms*:
 - Provide effective, timely and affordable access to justice and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms
 - Develop alternative conflict resolution mechanism as appropriate within their national context
- *Safeguards*:
 - Ensuring legitimate tenure rights against threats and infringement when implementing policies and investments aiming at land degradation neutrality.
 - Promoting responsible investment and regulating land markets

Enhance capacities

- *Capacity development* on the importance of land tenure security to achieve LDN
 - Capacity development at all levels including local level on the integrating governance of tenure to achieve LDN adapted to the needs of each group of stakeholders
 - Generating and sharing knowledge on good practices that incorporate holistic approach on VGGT integration to LDN implementation to feed national agendas and processes on LDN by involving relevant actors
 - Strengthen strategic partnerships to facilitate exchanges and sharing of best practices on VGGT integration to LDN implementation, also between countries
- *Developing the feedback loops* between national, regional and local levels to ensure feeding that national policy/ law/ regulations/ programmes and projects are fed with local challenges/ needs/ aspirations

Note:

Keeping in mind the important roles played by the various stakeholders (government, academia, CSOs, local authorities and the private sector) across a wide range of enablers; the identification of the actions of each actor with each of the enabler will be done at a later stage of the technical guide preparation.