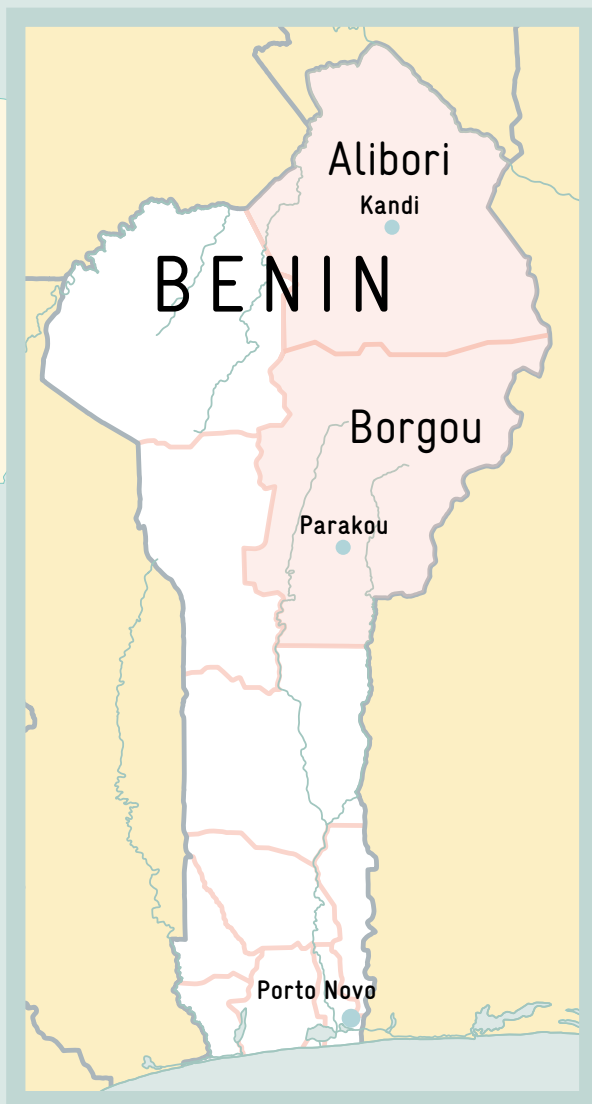


Strengthening tenure security in the Borgou, Benin

Selected findings of an impact evaluation
Policy note

STRENGTHENING TENURE SECURITY IN THE BORGOU, BENIN SELECTED FINDINGS OF AN IMPACT EVALUATION POLICY NOTE



TARGET GROUP

The rural population in Borgou and Alibori (43,500 households), specifically women and socially marginalised groups (young people, pastoralists and migrants).

REGION

The project was implemented in the departments of Borgou and Alibori.

DURATION

July 2016 to July 2023

BUDGET

EUR 9 million

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

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

LEAD EXECUTING AGENCY

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP, Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche).

1. Introduction

Increasing investment by smallholders in agriculture and livestock is essential for improving food security, income and resilience to climate change, but can be constrained by tenure insecurity. To help overcome the barriers faced in improving land tenure security, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) launched the Global Project on Responsible Land Policy (GPRLP), which is testing interventions, evaluating impact and drawing lessons for scaling. This Global Project is funded by BMZ under the “One World, no Hunger” special initiative which includes Benin as one of the selected countries. The program “*Promotion d’une Politique Foncière Responsable*” (Promotion of responsible land policy, ProPFR), implemented from 2016 to 2023, piloted a range of interventions to improve land tenure security in northern Benin¹, with an emphasis on securing rights of the most vulnerable groups. ProPFR strengthened local land management and conflict mediation institutions via the *Section Villageoise de Gestion Foncière* (village land council, SVGF) and piloted several types of tenure documents:

the *Plans Fonciers Ruraux* (rural land plans, PFR), the *Attestation de Détention Coutumière* (Certificate of Customary Possession, ADC), land lease agreements, and agreements for using pastoral lands. Furthermore, ProPFR also engaged in national policy dialogue.

The initial focus of ProPFR was to pilot the implementation of the amended approach to the PFRs as introduced by the 2013 *Code Foncier et Domanial* (land code, CFD)² and use these also as a basis for land lease agreements. To evaluate the impact of the PFR intervention, GIZ set up a partnership with the World Bank’s Development Economics Research Group. The World Bank collaborated with the *Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie* (INStAD) for data collection and the *Center for Evaluation and Development* (C4ED) for survey design and analysis. This policy note summarizes the conclusions of the impact evaluation for the PFR intervention.³ The baseline and endline data, methodology and reports are available on the World Bank’s [microdata website](#).

2. The Plan Foncier Rural

In the 1980s, the first outline emerged of a community based, participatory approach to identifying and demarcating local land rights to increase tenure security for sustainable management of agricultural land and commonly used village lands. In Benin, the first version of this PFR was piloted in 1993 and led to the 2007 Rural Land Act, which provided the regulatory framework for the village level PFR, a cadastral map that could be used for issuance of a “*Certificat Foncier Rural*” (CFR). However, the 2007 Rural Land Act was replaced by the 2013 CFD, which abolished the CFR and introduced the Titre Foncier. The ProPFR program decided that these legal and institutional changes

27 PFRs
DEVELOPED IN
THE BORGOU

alongside the introduction of innovations including participatory cartography and digital data collection merited a new PFR pilot. ProPFR developed 27 PFRs in the Borgou department. The intervention began with a community-wide participatory process to identify and map rights and culminated in formal field boundary demarcation by surveyors at either the individual or collective level (e.g., for a family, clan or the village), followed by public validation of the village-level cadastral map. During the process conflicts were recorded and resolved prior to demarcation. The inclusion of a parcel on the PFR cadastral map could be used by the land holders to apply for title.

¹ ProPFR started in the Borgou department and expanded later on also to the Alibori department.

² The 2013 “*Code Foncier et Domanial*” (CFD - Loi No 2013-01) introduced a single and unified land ownership certificate, the “*Titre Foncier*” (TF) to be issued by a newly created agency (“*Agence Nationale du Domaine et du Foncier*”, ANDF). The 2013 CFD also introduced the “*Attestation de Détention Coutumière*” (ADC). An amendment of the CFD in 2017 enabled issuance of the ADC by local governments (instead of ANDF) and the possibility for ADC holders to apply to ANDF for a Titre Foncier.

³ Following the 2017 amendment of the CFD which made ADC more accessible for land holders, ProPFR decided in 2018 to invest more in ADC issuance. As baseline data had already been collected, it was no longer possible to also include the impact of ADC in the evaluation.

3. Impact evaluation methodology



The impact evaluation design and evaluation questions are derived from the theory of change developed at baseline.⁴ In summary, the hypothesis is that perceived land tenure security as a result of the PFR intervention will reduce land related disputes and stimulate investment in agriculture, which over time will improve production, income, and food security. To distinguish effects of the PFR land registration from other changes, data collection was carried out in “treatment” villages - where the PFR was implemented – and in “control” villages with similar characteristics but without any land registration supported by the project (neither PFR nor ADC). For analysis, the difference-in-difference approach is used in conjunction with matching techniques. Baseline data⁵ were collected in March 2018, a few months before ProPFR started with implementing the PFRs,

which was completed in 2021, after which endline data were collected in March 2022. Baseline data covered 2,968 households from 53 villages, while endline covered 2,608 households across 52 villages.⁶ Interviews were conducted with household representatives to collect data on household members, their employment and sources of income, possession of durable goods, housing conditions, tenure and use of all agricultural and non-agricultural plots, land transfers (inheritance, gifts, rental, sales, and land losses), perceptions of tenure security, crop maintenance, input use, yields, use of credit, and food security. Women and young men were interviewed also separately to collect data on their individual farming activities, land use and land ownership.

⁴ See <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3850/related-materials> and www.landportal.org/library/resources/landtenure-systems-borgou-benin

⁵ Barton, N., C. Sadania and T. Varejkova (2019). Baseline report impact evaluation of the Plan Foncier Rural in Benin. Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED). Mannheim.

⁶ One village was dropped from the sample, since no PFR could be implemented despite originally being selected. Among the remaining villages there was an attrition rate of 10%.

4. Findings

A summary of the key findings is provided below, with more details in the full report.⁷ At endline no formal land titles have been issued on the basis of the completed PFRs, contrary to what was expected when the program was designed. This means that only the public registration and demarcation of land form the basis of the treatment for which we seek to measure impacts. It should also be noted that administrative data show that land was often

demarcated in the name of the clan or family, and not at the household level, which is our unit of analysis, and PFR effects may thus not have been noticed at the level of the individual household (the survey respondents). Endline data were collected 2-3 years after completion of the boundary demarcation⁸, which is too short to find impact on agricultural production, income and food security⁹ and which were indeed not found.

4.1 PERCEPTIONS OF TENURE SECURITY

At baseline perceptions of tenure security were already high, with only 13% of respondent stating that it is rather likely or very likely that they will lose rights within the next 5 years over a parcel they were using at the time.¹⁰ We find no strong evidence of overall improvements in perceived tenure security due to the implementation of a PFR, though subgroup analysis shows weak evidence that poorer households do respond more positively to the PFR intervention and perceive their rights are more secure.

4.2 LAND MARKETS

At baseline, land market activity was low and no changes were found at endline. Also, no increase was found in issuance of formal rental contracts.

4.3 LAND RELATED DISPUTES

A priori, it was not clear whether we should expect an increase in reported conflicts, due to disagreements over boundaries during the PFR process, or whether the PFR would help to reduce conflicts. Our results indicate that there is a decrease of 46% in self-reported¹¹ new conflicts since baseline, as well as a reduction in unresolved conflicts, though this latter result is only significant for men, “autochtones” (non-migrants), and poor households. The studies also find that SVGF are now also consulted for conflict mediation, although other channels remain more important, particularly the village chief.

4.4 INVESTMENT IN LAND MANAGEMENT

In spite of the apparent lack of impact on perceptions of tenure security, we nonetheless find that households in PFR villages are more likely to invest in measures to improve soil and water conservation (18 percentage points higher and an increase of 42% in days of labor input per parcel, but no change in the average amount spent on soil and water conservation investments). This was particularly true of parcels

managed by migrants “allochtones”¹², who also increased spending on these measures. We also find evidence that this impact was stronger where villages were a priority village for a complementary program implemented by the GIZ focusing on soil rehabilitation (ProSOL), particularly for tree planting.

4.5 EFFECTS ON SUB-GROUPS

Throughout our evaluation, we also consider whether the PFR may impact various groups differently. We performed subgroup analysis by gender and origin of the household head (or parcel manager when considering parcel level outcomes), as well as an indicator for wealth status of the household. Overall, migrant “allochtones” perceive that they are more at risk of losing part of their land parcel or when leaving it fallow. This subgroup is also 12 percentage points less likely to have participated in PFR demarcation, but those that did participate were more likely to invest in land use management (see above).

Among other marginalized groups, we find that females appear to have lost some independence in the management of land when a parcel is demarcated as part of the PFR. At baseline few parcels were managed by women, with 8% having any female manager and 5% managed solely by women. At endline, the proportion of parcels managed solely by women decreases by one percentage point (a 22% fall), while the proportion with any female manager does not change, which suggest that parcels that used to be managed solely by females, are now co-managed alongside males. This may be a reaction to the formal recording of land rights, with male household members seeking to affirm their control of land. Another concern for more marginal groups is that access to parcels for gathering of fruits, leaves, firewood and possibly grazing is more restricted following PFR demarcation (23% more respondents stated that only household members can take resources from the parcel).

⁷ Barton, N., C. Sadania and T. Varejkova (2023) Endline report - Impact evaluation of the PFR Benin. Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED). Mannheim.

⁸ Completed in May 2020 for all villages.

⁹ Lisher, J. W. (2019). Guidelines for impact evaluation of land tenure and governance interventions: Developed through a joint initiative of GLTN and IFAD. United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-Habitat

¹⁰ Defined as no risk of losing rights over a parcel in the next 5 years, no risk of losing part of a parcel in the next 5 years, and no risk of losing a parcel if left fallow.

¹¹ However, the number of reported conflicts at endline is less than the number recorded by ProPFR for the same villages.

¹² Defined as not born in the department of Borgou.

5. Conclusions



The short-term findings of the impact evaluation confirm the positive results of other evaluations of PFR type village-based interventions on reducing conflict and more investment in sustainable land use.¹³ These effects result from a combination of community-level affirmation of rights and formal demarcation of boundaries, published on an official map. In our case, this effect was strengthened by the synergy with projects specializing in soil and water conservation. However, the high costs of the PFR approach – mainly due to the official requirements of high precision surveying and the costs of validation by the *Institut Géographique National* is discouraging more investment in this approach.

Currently, no new PFRs are being implemented in Benin. In ProPFR, emphasis shifted therefore to on-demand ADC registration. However, many countries in Africa are successfully implementing village-wide, low-cost demarcation and registration of land use rights that requires considerably less resources and time. Particularly for the less densely populated northern parts of the country where land and property values are much lower, enabling low-cost community level approaches to clarify boundaries and rights over land will contribute to sustainable land management and help to reduce conflicts, which is important for Benin given the growing risks of fragility and threats of climate change.

¹³ Fabbri, M. (2021). Property rights and prosocial behavior: Evidence from a land tenure reform implemented as randomized control-trial. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 188, 552-566.; Goldstein, M., Hougbedji, K., Kondylis, F., O'Sullivan, M., & Selod, H. (2018). Formalization without certification? Experimental evidence on property rights and investment. *Journal of Development Economics*, 132, 57-74.; Lavigne Delville, P. (2020). Les „Plans Fonciers Ruraux“ au Bénin (1992-2015). La carrière d'un instrument „pilote“ au sein de politiques non stabilisées. *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, 27, 61-86.; Wren-Lewis, L., Becerra-Valbuena, L., & Hougbedji, K. (2020). Formalizing land rights can reduce forest loss: Experimental evidence from Benin. *Science Advances*, 6(26).

Imprint

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

Published by:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
Global Project Responsible Land Policy
Friedrich Ebert Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 44 60-17 66
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de/en

Responsible:
Klaus Ackermann

Bonn, November 2023

Authors:
Nick Barton (C4ED)

Design and layout:
Barbara Sopart, www.studio-sopart.de, Köln

Photo credits:
© GIZ ProPFR

URL links:
Responsibility for the content of external websites linked in this publication always lies with their respective publishers. GIZ expressly dissociates itself from such content.

Maps:
The maps printed here are intended only for information purposes and in no way constitute recognition under international law of boundaries and territories. GIZ accepts no responsibility for these maps being entirely up to date, correct or complete. All liability for any damage, direct or indirect, resulting from their use is excluded.

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.