



Proceedings of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forum on Responsible Governance of Investment in Land



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Proceedings of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forum on Responsible Governance of Investment in Land



Organized by

Ministry of Agriculture, Bureau of Agriculture & Natural Resources Development
of the Gambella Peoples National Regional State and
the Responsible Governance of Investment in Land Project



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| VGGT | Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests |
| UNECA | UN Economic Commission for Africa |
| TC | Technical Committee |
| SLMP | Sustainable Land Management Program |
| RLAUD | Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate |
| RGIL | Responsible Governance of Investment in Land |
| REILA | Responsible |
| RAI | Responsible Agricultural Investment |
| PLC | Private Limited Company |
| PDC | Peace and Development Centre |
| OLAUB | Oromia Land Administration and Use Bureau |
| OBN | Oromia Broadcast News |
| MSD | Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue |
| MoA | Ministry of Agriculture |
| IA | Investment Agency |
| GLAD | Green Love Appreciative Development |
| GIZ | German Agency for Technical Cooperation |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| EU | European Union |
| EIC | Ethiopia Investment Commission |
| EFCCB | Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bureau |
| ECCCD | Environment and Climate Change Coordination Directorate |
| EBC | Ethiopia Broadcast Corporation |
| EABC | Ethiopian Agricultural Business Corporation |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organisations |
| CFS | UN Committee on World Food Security |
| CBE | Commercial Bank of Ethiopia |
| BoWCYA | Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs |
| BoLSA | Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs |
| BoFED | Bureau of Finance and Economic Development |
| BoANRD | Gambella Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources |
| BDU | Bahir Dar University |
| AU | African Union |
| AISD | Agricultural Investment Support Directorate |

1 Introduction

This proceeding documents the process and outcome of the first Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) Forum on Responsible Governance of Investment in Land (RGIL) aimed at ensuring investment in land in Ethiopia are productive, contribute to sustainable land management and respects the rights and needs of local populations in particular vulnerable groups and women. The forum was attended by 86 key individuals drawn from the federal MoA and Ethiopia Investment Commission, regional bureaus, zone and woreda offices of administration and agriculture, agricultural investors, academia, research institutions, local communities, civil society organizations, development partners, international consultants, and the media. Participants came also from Amhara and Oromia regions to exchange experience (See List of participants). The forum took place from 26 to 27 October 2021 at the Gambella Regional Government

meeting hall.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is implementing Responsible Governance of Investment in Land (RGIL) project in cooperation with the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH). Through the support of the project, the capacities of key stakeholders including governmental staffs, investors as well as civil society and community representatives will be strengthened. The project is co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ).



Group photo of the Multi Stakeholder Dialogue Forum on RGIL



2 Forum objectives

The overall objective of the MSD forum was to bring relevant stakeholders together to enable them to exchange information, establish mutual trust, create cooperation on land governance and support each other on common goals and economic development aspirations.

The specific objectives of MSD forum were to:

- Develop a clear understanding of responsible governance of investments in land
- Increase specific knowledge on selected topics
- Facilitate open experience exchange between actor groups
- Draw lessons and good practices for sharing among actor groups and participants
- Identify challenges and opportunities for influencing actions at the operational, institutional and policy, and legal level

The Forum discussed among others the status of RGIL at national and global levels; key international frameworks and best practices on responsible governance of investment in land, human rights frameworks on investment in land, social and environmental safeguards, and frameworks for investors and

tenure due diligence. The forum also shares practical experiences of actors and players of agricultural investment in land in Ethiopia. A technical field visit to one agricultural investment farm in Gambella Zuria woreda took place.

To increase public awareness about the MSD forum, street banners, backdrop banners, were placed at the main square of Gambella city and on the gate and entrance of the meeting hall. Roll up banners, with different messages on responsible land governance, were placed at the entrance of the meeting hall and in the meeting hall.

To comply with COVID 19 protocol, face masks, sanitisers, and information leaflets, and knowledge products were given upon registration with other branded visibility materials (like pen, notebook, brochures, badges and document folders)

3 Participation

In total 86 key people attended the forum. These were the following:

- Federal level: MoA three concerned directorates: Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate (RLAUD), Environment and Climate Change Coordination Directorate (ECCCD), and Agricultural Investment Support Directorate (AISD); Ethiopian Agricultural Business Corporation (EABC) and Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC)
- Regional government bodies
- Nuer, Agua, Majang Zones Administrator and head of agriculture
- Investment board representatives from Nuer, Agua, and Majang woredas
- Local community representatives from Nuer, Agua, and Majang woredas
- Investors' Association and Investors
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): Peace and Development Center, Green Love Appreciative Development (GLAD)
- Land sector projects: RGIL (GIZ and NIRAS-IP Consult), USAID project, REILA project, RLLP-WB
- Others: Amhara Bureau of Land, Oromia Bureau of Land and Institute of Land Administration at Bahir Dar University, Development Bank of Gambella, the media



Proceedings of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) Forum on Responsible Governance of Investment in Land: the Case of Gambella

4 Opening Session



Mr Bitew Dak, Economic Advisor to the President of the Gambella Peoples Regional State

The opening session of the MSD Forum is addressed by an official opening speech, welcoming remarks and messages from the MoA, and two keynote addresses. Mr Ajack Ochalla, Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development of the Gambella Peoples Regional Government gave welcoming remarks. Mr Bitew Dak, Economic Advisor to the President of the Gambella Peoples Regional State officially opened the forum while Mr Alemayehu Gebresilassie delivered a message representing the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. Keynote addresses focusing on international perspectives of agricultural investments were delivered by Dr Babette Wehrmann and Dr Darryl Vhugen virtually. These are summarized below:

4.1 Official opening speech by Mr Bitew Dak, Economic Advisor to the President of the Gambella Peoples Regional State

Mr Bitew Dak, Economic Advisor to the President of the Gambella Peoples Regional State gave an official opening speech representing the Regional

Government. In his speech, he iterated that Gambella is blessed with abundant natural resources and large size of agricultural land that has a high potential for agricultural investments in land. If properly managed that may feed all of Ethiopia.

He recalled the bad experiences of corruption and irresponsible governance and misuse of agricultural investment in the region in the past decade. He assured this irresponsible misuse of land will not be repeated in the region. This kind of forum enhances collaboration among various actor groups. He expressed the regional government of Gambella's commitment to addressing the challenges the region is facing concerning the governance of agricultural investments. Finally, he wished all participants to have fruitful deliberations and declared the MSD forum officially open.



Mr Ajack Ochalla, Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development of the Gambella Peoples Regional Government

4.2 Welcoming remarks by Mr Ajack Ochalla, Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development of the Gambella Peoples Regional Government

Mr Ajack Ochalla, Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development of the Gambella Peoples Regional Government, welcomed participants of the MSD forum. In his welcoming remarks, he highlighted the expected outcome of the MSD Forum. He emphasized the expected outcome of the MSD is “a resolution that allows the government, investors and local communities to operate harmoniously in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State and contribute to the economic development of the Gambella Region in particular and Ethiopia in general.” Mr Ajack highlighted also the following challenges:

- There was no in-depth/ enough environmental and social impact assessment was done in the identification and delineation of investment in land.
- There was no clear manual on identification, delineation, and transfer of land for large scale agricultural investment in the region
- Lack of motivated human resources in identification and delineation of lands based on environmental and social impact assessment studies.

4.3 Introductory remarks by Mr Alemayehu Gebresilassie, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr Alemayehu Gebresilassie, Director of Agricultural Investment Support Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture delivered a statement at the opening session on behalf of the State Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, who could not address the MSD forum at the last minute due to other pressing commitment. He underlined the importance of bringing together relevant actors in investment in land and facilitating an exchanging of information, knowledge, and best practices among each other openly. He said “this MSD Forum supports establishing mutual trust among the government, investors, and local communities. Ultimately it creates cooperation on land governance and supports each other on common goals and economic development aspirations of Ethiopia.”



Mr Alemayehu Gebresilassie, Director of Agricultural Investment Support Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture

4.4 Keynote addresses

After the official opening, two keynote speeches were delivered by senior international experts virtually. Before the virtual presentation of the two senior experts, representing the NIRAS-IP Consult based in Germany, Mr Lorenz Jenni introduced the role of NIRAS-IP Consult in supporting the RGIL Project in three countries (Ethiopia, Uganda, and Laos). He also introduced the profiles and expertise of the two virtual speakers, Dr Babette Wehrmann and Darryl Vhugen, who couldn't attend the forum in person due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions.



Mr Lorenz Jenni, representing the NIRAS-IP Consult

4.4.1 Status of Responsible Governance of Investment in Land (International perspective), by Dr. Babette Wehrmann, NIRAS-IP consult

Dr Babette Wehrmann's Presentation noted that large-scale land-based investments by international and national investors are found in all continents globally. The major challenge in large-scale farming is the issue of land grabbing through irresponsible governance. This negatively affects the local environment, violates local communities' human rights and land rights. That's why there is a need for these investments to be done responsibly.

Her presentation also noted responses of the international community towards land-grabbing. These include awareness-raising by CSOs and the media; negotiation and adoption of international principles and guidelines, regional principles and guidelines; inclusion of the issue into private sector standards, and introduction of national due diligence acts.

The United Nations (UN) issued a guiding principle on business and human rights in 2011. This international law takes on a new dimension. Until then, the human rights framework only addressed state governments. Now, in addition to the duty of the state to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, the responsibility of business enterprises to respect human rights has been established. This duty of the state and responsibility of business enterprises also applies to land rights (VGGT, CFS/FAO 2012): States should recognize and respect legitimate tenure rights, safeguard them against threats and infringements and promote and facilitate their enjoyment; Non-state actors including business enterprises have a responsibility to

respect human rights and legitimate tenure rights.

Responsible Governance of Investment in Land goes beyond the respect of human rights and tenure rights. Non-binding UN 10 principles encourage businesses and firms worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and to report on their implementation. The CFS-RAI principles (CFS/FAO 2014) 10 non-binding principles cover social, economic, environmental, cultural, health, and governance issues.

The African Union (AU) also responded to the land grabbing challenge at the continental scale. The AU developed guiding principles and codes against land grabbing and irresponsible governance of investment in land. In 2014 the African Union in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa published guiding principles on large-scale land-based investments in Africa. In 2016 the draft Pan-African investment code was also published by the African Union and the UNECA.

At national levels countries also developed legal frameworks to address the issue of land-grabbing. The Vigilance Act by France and Supply Chain Due Diligence Act by Germany are good examples in this regard. In addition to these various private sector-oriented institutions developed standards and frameworks. For instance, analytical framework for land-based investments in agriculture by New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.

Finally, she concludes with the following three points on the status of RGIL at an International scale. These are: Responsible investment in land is incorporated in international law, particularly in international soft

law; RGIL is also partly included in standards by private sector initiatives used for identifying and managing risks, reporting and certification; and Governments in Europe are beginning to legally require corporate social responsibility from their companies and their suppliers, which includes respect for human rights.

4.4.2 VGGT AND CFS-RAI: Key international instruments for land governance and responsible investment, by Dr Darryl Vhugen, NIRAS-IP Consult

NIRAS-IP Consults Land Tenure Consultant, Dr Darryl Vhugen has delivered a virtual keynote message on key international instruments for land governance and responsible investment. These two key international instruments are VGGT and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI).

VGGT was developed and unanimously endorsed by the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in May 2012. The primary objective is to improve the governance of the tenure of land, fisheries, and forests. It is a soft law instrument without the force of law primarily for governments but some provisions are aimed at investors. It sets forth basic requirements for responsible governance of tenure, including recognizing, respecting, and safeguarding legitimate tenure rights and the people who hold them; inclusive consultation and participation for indigenous peoples; gender equity and lack of discrimination. It also guides conflict resolving mechanisms and prevents disputes and provides access to justice.

How does VGGT support responsible investment? Businesses should act with due diligence to avoid infringing upon human rights and legitimate tenure rights. It is contributing to minimum standards for responsible land-based investment. It helps to inform

international best practices as well. The guideline encourages investors to care about land tenure because weak land rights create significant financial, legal, operational, and reputational risks.

The other instrument is the CFS-RAI principles. CFS-RAI was approved by the CFS in 2014. It is voluntary and non-binding. Its primary objective is to promote responsible investment in agriculture and food systems.

It was for the first time that governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, UN agencies, development banks, foundations, research institutions, and academia all agreed on. This indicates that CFS-RAI is broader than VGGT which is limited to tenure. CFS-RAI covers all types of investment in agriculture and food.

The CFS-RAI has 10 principles. VGGT is explicitly incorporated into CFS-RAI (Principle 5). The Overarching values for implementation are consistent both to emphasize support for smallholders, it stresses the essential role of governments and is the result of a multi-stakeholder and consensus-driven approach. CFS-RAI is also voluntary based and non-binding.

Both VGGT and CFS-RAI inform internationally accepted best practices, such as No harm to food security and nutrition; respect for labour rights, fair wages, poverty eradication; the importance of fostering gender equality, and empowering women and youth. It also informs respect for rights to land, water, forests, and fisheries.

The higher officials give media briefings for journalists during the coffee break. The event has got wider media coverage in Ethiopia. The media house that covered the event includes Ethiopian Television, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Ethiopian News Agency.





5 Thematic Presentations

Thematic presentations were given on five topics by resource persons:

- Agricultural investment achievements, challenges & future actions in Ethiopia
- Frameworks for Investors, Tenure Due Diligence – Principles and Practice
- Gambella Agricultural Investment experience
- Opportunities and challenges in Agricultural Investment in Ethiopia
- Investors Association's experiences, challenges, opportunities, and plan

The presentations are summarised below:

5.1 Agricultural investment achievements, challenges & future actions in Ethiopia by Mr Alemayehu G.Silasie, Director of AISD, MoA

Overview of the Status of Responsible Governance of Investment in Land in Ethiopia is presented by Mr Alemayehu Gebresilassie, Director of Agricultural Investment Support Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture. The presentation in general discusses agricultural investment in Ethiopia. Specifically, the presentation discusses on its achievements, challenges, opportunities and future actions. The sector is an opportunity for creating employment for the majority of people as agriculture is the main economy of the country. It also serves as a source of foreign exchange earnings in Ethiopia. Ethiopia hasn't utilized the maximum potential that agricultural investment should provide.

The total arable land in Ethiopia is about 74.3 million hectares and total cultivated area is about 15 million hectares of land. That means, only 20% is cultivated. Among the cultivated land crops such as teff, maize, sorghum, and wheat take the highest share of the total production and area coverage. The achievements of agricultural investment vary from time to time. For example, during the production year of 2020, Ethiopia plans to cultivate 1,981,326 hectares of land and it has cultivated only 899,497 hectares of land which is only 45 per cent of the planned.

Agriculture Investment Achievements as compared with the annual plans of the past five years and the achievements registered vary each year. But, one thing is common; the achievement is below 50 per cent. For instance, the Ethiopian government planned

to produce 4,683,525 tons of cereals (maize, wheat, and rice), oil crops (sesame and sunflower), and pulses (soya beans, mung bean) from the large-scale agricultural investment and produced only 1,795,788 tons average in annually. A total of 2,158,487 hectares of land is transferred to investors in all regions of Ethiopia. But developed only 970,425 hectares of land during the 2021 production year. When one compares the amount of land transferred and the developed land, below fifty per cent is developed.

What are the major challenges in the agricultural investment sector in Ethiopia? The Ministry of Agriculture representative in his presentation highlighted the major challenges that the agricultural investment sector is facing. These include lack of access to infrastructures such as road, electricity, irrigation facilities and the like; lack of access to inputs such as improved crop varieties, fertilizers and agrochemicals; Minimal access to credit and insurance; submission of non-viable technical proposals by the investors; inefficient administration of transferred lands.

What is the way forward and future plan? The government of Ethiopia has developed a ten-year perspective plan to unlock the maximum potential of agricultural investment in Ethiopia. Agriculture is one of the top priority areas in the ten-year development plan (2021-2030) of Ethiopia. The plan estimates that the agriculture sector to grow 6.2 per cent per annum over the next ten years. To realize the plans into action, the government of Ethiopia seeks to strengthen on developing a huge amount of unutilized arable land and modernizing production systems. The ten-year agricultural development plan (2021-2030) aspires 4.2 million hectares of land to be developed. Among these, 169 million quintals of produce are expected from the private sector at the end of plan year i.e. 2030. To this effect, the ministry has developed a 10 years land development strategy.

In conclusion, the MoA representative expressed the ministry's commitment to enhancing Agriculture Investment by creating effective collaborations with relevant stakeholders. The ministry ensures that agricultural investment activities are undertaken properly and it is also working on a strategy on how to promote large-scale agricultural investment in Ethiopia.

5.2 Frameworks for Investors, Tenure Due Diligence – Principles and Practice by Dr Zerfu Hailu, NIRAS-IP, RGIL project country coordinator

Dr Zerfu Hailu, the country coordinator for RGIL, presented Frameworks for Investors, Tenure Due Diligence – Principles and Practice. The presentation noted that arable land is a finite natural resource with significantly high economic importance. Studies indicate that, In Ethiopia, Arable land per capita is about 0.15 hectares. Land is susceptible to stress and pressure, including climate phenomena such as heavy rainfall and winds which may destroy arable land, overgrazing, salinization, and inappropriate cultivation.

Dr Zerfu emphasized that Gambella should take care of their finite resource, land, through responsible land governance and land administration. The presentation defines land administration. Land administration is a process of determining, analyzing, recording, and disseminating information about land ownership, value, and use of land when implementing land management policies. This implies that land administration institutions that determine and record land information are dominantly service providers to those who need the information. Information receivers need reliable information.

He also highlights land governance concerns. These include: policies/rules, processes and structures/institutions through which decisions are made about the use of and control over land; how the decisions are implemented and enforced; the way competing

interests in land are managed. Fundamentally, land governance is about power and the political economy of the land.

The importance of due diligence is also another content of the presentation. Due diligence is a process or effort to collect and analyze information before making a decision or conducting a transaction so a party is not held legally liable for any loss or damage. Practising due diligence means gathering the necessary facts to arrive at a wise and informed decision.

Dr. Zerfu, based his presentation on the report named Analytical framework for Land-Based Investments in African Agriculture, produced by the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. Accordingly, he categorised the Due Diligence principles in 5 perspectives. 1) Food Security, Human Rights, Environmental Sustainability and local capacity Building, 2) Tenure Rights, 3) Participation, Consultation and Negotiations, 4) Transparency and corruption, and 5) Grievance Mechanisms.

How do investors understand, identify and recognize rights? The first step is to identify and recognize all legitimate land rights holders. And then, consult with experts regarding national and local laws and regulations; check with government officials and review land records; consult with communities; check the historical process of land acquisition; develop independent Environmental, Social Impact Assessment; be sensitive to vulnerable groups, and focus on women's land rights.



Mr Alemayehu Gebresilassie, Director of Agricultural Investment Support Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture



Dr Zerfu Hailu, NIRAS-IP, RGIL project country coordinator

The due diligence advises if there are existing conflicts over the land and seeks to resolve the conflicts. Otherwise, the investment will not be successful. If resolving existing conflicts is not possible, it is better to cancel the investment project.

The need for assessing potential impacts on tenure rights, both direct and indirect, is also discussed. The assessment seeks to consider: how the land will be acquired; impact on legitimate local land rights; possible impacts on women, youth, or other vulnerable groups such as pastoralists; check there are involuntarily displaced people, and monitor land tenure conflicts or violence in the area. The presentation suggests that if the impacts on legitimate local land rights cannot be mitigated, it is advised not to proceed with the project.

However, there are mitigation measures. For example, exploring alternative investment models that do not result in the large-scale transfer of land rights and ensuring prompt, fair, and adequate compensation wherever land tenure is affected. Usage of different land acquisition structures and minimizing the amount of land required are also mitigation measures. As much as possible avoiding the displacement of people is important. With all these mitigation efforts, if negative impacts are not avoided, it is better to withdraw from the project.

The presentation emphasises the critical role of participation and consultation of relevant actor groups, negotiations, and conflict resolution mechanisms before the agricultural investment are implemented. Transparency and a zero-tolerance policy for corruption must be established. The investment should not harm local food security but aim to improve it. If the project exacerbates local or national food insecurity, stop the project.

What is the practice in managing investment in land in Ethiopia during the last 5-10 years? There has been a very frequent institutional integration and disintegration in the agricultural investment arena. The Investors Support Case Team was established under the Agricultural Extension Directorate of the MoA, in November 2007. The team was promoted to a directorate level in January 2009 as AISD. The Ethiopian Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency (EAILAA) was established in March 2013. The federal government decided to merge the Ethiopian Horticulture Development Agency (EHDA) and Ethiopian Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency (EAILAA) and established Ethiopian Horticulture and Agricultural Investment Authority (EHAIA) in January 2017. The EHAIA was dissolved in October 2018, AISD is established back with the duty of technical support. Such unstable institutional arrangement af-

fects negatively implementation of good land governance.

Recently, NIRAS-IP Consult as part of the RGIL Project, has made a capacity need assessment on the capacity needs of the government, local communities, and investors in the Amhara and Gambella Regions. The findings of the assessment include:

- Investors involved in agricultural development have limited knowledge and experience in the agricultural business. The investors' knowledge in the area of farm management, knowledge of agronomic practices, and knowledge of labour management is extremely low.
- On the other hand, the government didn't provide extension support to the investors on agronomy practice and farm management.
- Support to large-scale farm management, crop protection, machinery management, and farm labour management is found non-existence.
- Though the practice is not any more exercise, most of the agricultural investment land had been identified, delineated, and transferred by the federal level agency/authority. Especially, if the size of the requested investment area of land is more than 5,000 ha, licenses were given by a federal-level investment institution.
- As reported, the involvement and participation of the woreda authorities on investment land identification, delineation, and transfers were very limited.
- This approach has marginalized local communities and woreda authorities from genuine participation.
- There were more than 200 licensed Agricultural investors in Gambella Zuria Woreda. However, currently, there are only 56 licensed agricultural investors that are operating in the woreda.
- In terms of the area developed, it is about one-third, (about 33%) of the area allocated used by the investors.
- According to the information, at the regional level – regional office of investment, about 15% of the allocated land has been developed and entered into production.
- It is a general trend in all the woredas visited in the Gambella region. There is a need for more serious selection criteria for the selection of potential investors. Due Diligence practice is essential.
- A strong M&E system needs to be in place. It is recommended that there has to be a systematic and periodic M&E activity to evaluate the performance of investors.
- As the potential of the Gambella region is high for agricultural investment, an investment office is required at the woreda level and recommended.



- Investors involved in agricultural development have limited knowledge and experiences in the agricultural business to practice Due Diligence.
- Serious environmental damage happened in the areas of the woredas where a large tract of land was allocated for agricultural investment.
- Areas that had been used for hunting, honey harvesting, and medicinal plants collection were destroyed and the local community lost very important economic non-timber forest products.
- In Gambella Zuria woreda, small lakes and swampy areas dried up, and important wild animals are lost. The small lakes were harbouring big wild animals like a hippopotamus and plenty of fish. The fish resource was a source of protein supply for the rural community.
- The loss of water resources and water scarcity created is another environmental damage.
- Investors incorporate in their project proposal different types of benefit packages to the local communities, such as office building/innovation, school building, medical service provisions, etc. But not realized.
- Woreda authorities and local communities strongly believe that many of the investors came to the area without a true interest in investment. For example, in Gambella Zuria woreda, the justification given was that more than 72% of the investors in Gambella Zuria woreda, 53% in Abobo woreda, and 66% in Itang woreda left the business due to different reasons.
- Many of them took a loan from the Ethiopian Development Bank and invested the money in other economic sectors outside the woreda and even outside the region.
- The assessment indicated that women's, youth's, and children's affairs institutions are not a member of the investment board at all levels of the administrative structure where investment boards have been established. The assessment team strongly believes that this has to be corrected. Hence, women, youth, and children affairs institutions have to be included in all investment boards and the RGIL project should support strong advocacy work to realize their inclusion.
- Based on agricultural investment PLC entered a contractual agreement on 10,000 ha and is currently working only on 3,700 ha. The investor was requested to pay tax on a 10,000 ha basis and paid for some years. This situation has created conflict on the level of tax payment.
- The original virgin natural forest is lost with its huge biodiversity resources. Species used as wild cabbage are not anymore in the cleared landscape. The local community used to collect edible root crops in the virgin natural forest. Furthermore, the community lost wild fruits that they used to collect from the virgin natural forest.
- In Itang woreda of the Gambella region, it was reported in the discussion that there were different types of conflicts that emerged between the local communities and the investors. Areas that had been used for firewood collection by the local communities had been allocated to agricultural investment. Local communities were denied firewood collection and chased away by the guards of the investment land. Another type of conflict was the competition on the water resources in the investment area. The farm disposed of harmful chemicals nearby the farm where livestock graze and browse. Some animals died due to the harmful chemicals and became case of conflict. There are also other forms of conflicts between the local community and the different farms such as boundary conflicts.

The presentation of Dr Zerfu concluded by highlighting the MoA's target plan for the year 2020-2030, to expand the medium-large scale agricultural investment from 986,492 ha to 4.2 million ha and in terms of production to increase from 85 million quintals to 169 million quintals requires properly functioning of the four functions of land administration and land management; namely 1) tenure security, 2) valuation and taxation, 3) land use, and 4) land development. To be successful in the four functions, appropriate land policies/laws, land information/spatial data, and institutional framework are the three pillars to be considered utmost. Is Gambella ready to uptake this? In his final remark, Dr Zerfu stressed and requested the forum participants to discuss on the three pillars and come up with appropriate recommendation that will help to enhance responsible governance of investment in land in Gambella in particular and in Ethiopia in general. The three pillars are the bases to enable the land sector to contribute to all exclusive sustainable development of the country.



Mr Kueth Lul Chagor, Deputy Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resource

5.3 Gambella Agricultural Investment experience, by Mr Kueth Lul Chagor, Deputy Bureau Head, BoANRD

Mr Kueth Lul Chagor, Deputy Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resource presented the current status of Agricultural investment in the Gambella region, including major achievements, and challenges that agricultural investment is facing. He also highlighted the next steps and way forward.

Kueth noted that the government of Ethiopia is working hard to develop the country's economy by formulating agricultural-led economic policies and strategies. Agriculture is the basis of Ethiopia's economy. There is a huge amount of agricultural land in the Gambella region. Agricultural investment has been modernized and private investors have been able to increase production and productivity, but not to the expected level.

Regarding the current status of agricultural investment in Gambella Kueth noted that 623 investors engaged in the agricultural investment between the years 2009 to 2021. Among these 12 are foreign investors, 30 investors are from Gambella. 630,518 hectares of rural land are transferred for investment to these investors.

What are the major achievements of agricultural investment in Gambella? The agricultural investment in Gambella created job opportunities on 4,776 permanent bases and more than 50,000 are employed temporarily. Among the 623 agricultural investors,

200 had loans from banks: 188 investors from Development Bank of Ethiopia and 12 investors from Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

For the last two years, a total of 454,261 hectares of land was transferred to investors in Gambella among the transferred land only 18 per cent is developed. After the decision making power is back to the regional government of Gambella, various stakeholders have various roles and responsibilities in the region. For example, the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development is working on investment land ownership identification. They prepare land ownership certificates. The bureau also prepares rules and regulations in managing investment land in the region.

As of today, the regional investment Agency also gives investment licenses, renews, suspends, and cancels licenses if the investor did not qualify the expected results. It also avails permission for investors to import tax-free machinery. Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Bureau conducts an environmental and social impact assessment of large-scale agricultural investments. Local authorities at the woreda level sign land transfer agreements with the investors. The local district is mandated to monitor the performance of investors in their Woredas.

Kueth's presentation highlighted the following key challenges in the agricultural sector:

- Lack of well-organized and functional land resources database to avail land for new entrants to the sector;

- Overlapping of land ownership certificates; transferred land to the investors are not fully developed;
- Failure to create favourable conditions for investors in the areas where agricultural investment is being carried out;
- Low production and productivity of investors engaged in large-scale agricultural investment;
- Large-scale agricultural investment developers do not consider the environmental and social impacts seriously;
- Failure of large-scale agricultural investors to fulfil their social responsibilities properly;
- Lack of logistical services by creating reliable market linkages for large-scale agricultural projects;
- Lack of a strong monitoring and support system to ensure the effectiveness of large-scale agricultural investment projects;
- Before some years, large scale agricultural investment in the region has been administered at the federal level. More than 5,000 hectares of land were transferred to investors directly without the involvement of the regional government. This creates an overlap of ownership licenses. The documentations at the Federal levels are not shared with the region;
- Lack of strong and well-established coordination among actors and players, donor government institutions (between the three actor groups);
- Agricultural investment is not creating enough jobs for the local community. Besides, it failed to transfer modern technology to the local community in the agricultural sector;
- Due to lack of a strong monitoring, support framework, and poor coordination of stakeholders at all levels created wastage of land and land resources. Besides, irresponsible governance of land in the region caused depletion of environmental and natural resources of the region;

What are the ways forward? The representative of BoANRD aspired the following remedies to the existing challenges in the sector:

- Prepare fully developed land information before transferred to large-scale agricultural investment.
- Avail land for agricultural investment based on environmental and social impact assessment, and update the existing ones.
- Create a conducive environment for large-scale agricultural investment in the region.
- Provision of support to enhance the productivity of large-scale agricultural through coordinated support to investors that engaged in large-scale agricultural investment.
- Support agricultural investment to follow climate-smart and environment-friendly approaches.
- Follow up agricultural investments to fulfil their

social responsibilities properly.

- Establish reliable market linkages and provide logistical services.
- Set up a strong monitoring and support system to ensure efficiency by overcoming bottlenecks and challenges of irresponsible governance in large-scale agricultural investment.
- Amend and prepare rules and regulations about rural land administration and use.
- Establish a permanent joint consultation forum at all levels (federal, regional, zonal, woreda and kebele).
- Establish a follow-up and monitoring system in which effective investors are identified and encouraged, and those that are not on the right track to be identified, supported, and corrected.
- Strengthen the coordination of stakeholders at all levels.
- Establish strong technical support to large scale agricultural investment at all levels (regional, zonal, and woreda).
- Establish a legal framework whereby Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Document for all agricultural investment projects are mandatory and prerequisite.

5.4 Opportunities and challenges in Agricultural Investment in Ethiopia by Mr Tassew Negewo, Director, Investment Projects Facilitation & Aftercare Directorate, Ethiopian Investment Commission

The afternoon session focused on opportunities and challenges in Agricultural Investment in Ethiopia. Tassew Negewo, senior expert at the Ethiopian Investment Commission presented the existing abundant natural resources, human capital, and major exports of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has 1,140,331 sq. km (435,186 sq. miles) of land among these 74 million hectares is arable land. Ethiopia is also blessed with livestock. Its livestock is the first in Africa and among the top ten globally. Its womb has got plenty of underground water and abundant mineral resources.

Concerning human resources, Ethiopia has a young and productive population that accounts for 60 per cent of the population skilled, semi-skilled, and non-skilled. The country has shown rapid development of Universities. The education policy focused on engineering and TVET fields to boost the manufacturing Global leader in production.



Mr Tassew Negewo, Director, Investment Projects Facilitation & Aftercare Directorate, Ethiopian Investment Commission

Ethiopia's major exports include coffee, oilseeds, gold, pulses, horticulture, live animals, textile and apparel, and leather and leather products. Ethiopia has competitive advantages for successful agricultural investments. Ethiopia has a suitable climate for annual and perennial crop production. High quantity of arable land available with high public investments in roads, electricity, and water by the government (with~ USD 70 billion allocated for 5 years). There is also a high rural population that can be labour force with competitive labour.

Ethiopia is graphically well-positioned to serve several export markets in the Horn of Africa placed at crossroads between Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Ethiopia's membership in Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) provides access to 23 members countries. This is a great opportunity for market and market linkages. The government of Ethiopia avails investment incentives for those who have engaged themselves in large-scale agricultural investment. Custom Duty Exemption is one of the incentives. Investors can import Capital Goods (Machines & equipment); Construction materials; Vehicles Custom Duty Exemption; Pick up, Delivery Van and Truck.

Profit tax exemption is the other incentive package for agricultural investors. The following agricultural sub-sectors are granted 2 to 9 years' income tax holiday: crop production, floriculture, fruits and vegetables; forestry; animal production; and mixed farming (crop and animal).

The Ethiopia Investment Commission faces the following challenges in Agricultural Investment. These are: long bureaucracy on land transfer process; poor infrastructure; lack of adequate loan facility /Forex; security; power supply; weak coordination among the stakeholders are the major challenges in agricultural investments sector.

Tasew's presentation highlighted that the Ethiopian Investment Commission is working to overcome the Challenges. Some of these include: providing intensive and proactive investment aftercare services; expansion of existing investment and re-investment; investor development that means linking with the local producers and creating a value chain. The commission also plans to strengthen stakeholders' engagement platforms such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) working group ,Technical Committee (TC) bi-weekly meetings and regional investment offices and stakeholders' engagement every quarter (Problem resolving mechanisms).

5.5 Gambella Development Investors Multi-purpose Association experience, challenges, opportunities, and plan by Mr Okwam Ojwato, Chairperson of the Association

Representing the investors in Gambella, Mr Okwam Ojwato Okok Board Chairperson of the Gambella Development Investors Multipurpose Cooperative shared the Association's experiences, challenges, opportunities, and plan. The chairperson introduced overviews and the values of the Association. The Cooperative was established in April 2019 in Gambella city, by eighty-two founding members.

Since its inception, the cooperative has undertaken various developmental actions that have benefited its members, the community, and the country at large through farming, agro-processing, education, health care services, entertainment, and other economic and social service sectors.

The Board chair expressed its commitment to boosting production and productivity through modern farming practices and management. The Association aspires to establish small, medium, and large industries in the region; to promote saving culture; to provide financial loans for its founding members. As well as to create a conducive environment for market stabilization and value chain with the exporters and to create linkages with other pioneer cooperatives operating in other parts of Ethiopia and abroad.

Okwom testified that the Association is supporting local communities and the region through direct support, job creation, and foreign currency revenue. For instance, the Association has provided maize grain and educational materials to the local communities at various woredas and kebeles. It also ploughs land for vulnerable communities. Increased availability

of food grain in the domestic market as a result of agricultural investment area is another achievement mentioned by the Association.

What are the major challenges agricultural investors experiencing in the region? The board chair of the Association states the following challenges.

- Lack of access to loans due to previous bad experiences of irresponsible agricultural investors.
- Lack of infrastructures like roads, Electricity, and network limited the investment activities in the region.
- Lack of active participation of the local community throughout the overall investment activities in the region affects the actual production.
- The consideration of regional production as a lower grade by the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), fragile working moral of the producers in the region.
- Security irregularity – affected the labour recruitment in the region. Farm investments near Refugees Camps are highly vulnerable to different threats such as unnecessary movement to farm areas, etc.



Mr Okwam Ojwato, Chairperson of the Gambella Development Investors Multi-purpose Association

- Demanding too much Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) (police is requesting three days for 2 hours, DAs).
 - When crop product is being loaded and packed to Addis Ababa policemen and trade experts ask for a too-high payment.
 - Too many road checkpoints (now the President send out a circular to tax at every checkpoint)
 - There are several checkpoints during the transportation of grains and farm investors are being asked to pay unnecessary tax at each checkpoint.
 - Avoiding Contract farming – Many Farm investors are benefiting from Contract farming agreements. Hence, if the suspension continues it will bring big yield and quality loss in the farm investment.
 - Lack of products from the Agricultural Research Center in the region.
 - Lack of Agrochemicals such as herbicides, fungicides, and pesticides.
 - Lack of Seed production, Seed multiplication, Seed Varieties.
 - Lack agro-input machinery Like Tractor, harvesters, Sprayers.
 - Customs duties and other taxes levied on imported tractors and farm machinery spare parts.
 - Lack of market linkage.
 - Unable to get adequate Financial Support.
 - Lack of experience sharing platforms among better-performing investors within the Gambella region and with other regions and abroad.
 - Lack of compensation by the regional Government. When the investment land is required for other purposes there is no compensation for the investor.
 - Gambella agriculture outputs are challenged by complex production constraints of abiotic and biotic factors.
- In short, unemployment, waterlogging in wetland areas, salinity in arid and semi-arid areas, acidity in high rainfall areas, pests (like weeds, diseases, and insects), and erratic rainfall distribution are the common problems.
 - Lack of changing the current fragmented agricultural activities into unified mechanized farming systems as a strategic developmental plan.

The presentation of the Investors' Association has also appreciated the existing opportunities in the Gambella region for investors. These include:

- Increased product and productivity, due to increased arable land.
- Increased awareness and experience on how to produce different crops Eg. Mung bean increased its yield from 7 up to 10 quintals per hectare.
- Wider Employment opportunities.
- Thousands of labourers are benefiting from farm investment projects. It is also giving relief for permanent skilled workers and professionals.
- Supplying grain at an affordable price to local communities and supporting the regional economy.
- The region is benefiting from tax revenue income, land rent, and others.
- Increase in direct exporters- currently, the number of pulse and oilseed producers who export their crops is dramatically increasing in the region.
- Contract farming -The Farm investment in the region is highly benefiting from the contract farming agreement this year. Such farm investments would not have been continuing their existence without contract farming. E.g. 23 farm investors made a contract farming agreement with Lanchihun business Private Limited Company (PLC) to supply their green mung bean in 2013/2014.





6 Questions and Discussions

During the plenary discussion session, participants raised various questions or concerns that require due attention by MSD forum participants and other relevant stakeholders for ensuring/supporting RGIL at all levels.

6.1 Questions

- The refugee camp in the Gambella region hosts about 400,000 immigrants. Does this affect the operation of agricultural investment in the Gambella region?
- Is supporting the mechanization of large-scale agricultural investment by the government is cost-effective? Why not investors support by themselves? After all, they are investors.
- There are cases of land grabbing in Gambella due to irresponsible governance. How can the land be retrieved back to the region's land bank?
- The government of Ethiopia has planned to transfer 4.2 million hectares of land for investment. How far are we prepared to accommodate the governments' 10 years' development plan?
- Local community representatives testify that the support they are getting support from the investors in their localities.
- How is the communication of the investor and local looks like? We used to have our farm before it is given to investors (a concern raised by a local community representative).
- Where are the missing stakeholders, especially decision-making bodies? Why these decision-makers are not involved in this forum. Who decides on these challenges?
- Why there is no central land management system in Ethiopia. Is it not possible? Who studied the allocated land to the investors at the Federal level? Who does that study?
- Investors are not meeting their social responsibility. How do we manage? For example, some investors don't prepare separate dormitories for daily labourers, both men and women sleep in one room.
- Modern farming and new technologies are not transferred to the local communities
- The government is not providing enough support to large-scale investment. However, investors have to inform and plan and work closely with government service providers.
- The major gap is that investors are not working closely work with the government. Productivity information is not actual. For example, there is a disparity between export information and product information.
- Monitoring and evaluation are for free. No payment was requested by the government.
- How did land certification support the local community?
- Investors after taking the land and getting a loan, the investors disappear.
- The land is ours; we also miss the benefits from the investment. What Development Bank is doing?
- Karaturi does not operate effectively and does not fulfil its social responsibility. Is MoA/government aware of this? Is it legally acceptable? Does the land have to be given back to the community if it is not well used to the benefit of all?
- What is the new system developed to avert the previous challenges in Gambella? What new mechanism was set by the Federal and regional governments?

6.2 Reflection, clarification, and inputs given on questions raised

- Representatives of the Gambella Region noted that the region is peaceful in general. But there are some conflicts here and there. The region's security is trying to address those issues.
- Land shortage can be addressed by contract farming. It is practised in the Amhara region at Bahir Dar. This experience can be taken as a lesson for other regions. This practice will support the local communities in technology transfer and livelihood development. The issue of contract farming has to be incentivized. Regions should craft a legal framework for contract farming.
- Government enterprises should support investors to enhance their productive capacities of the investors. These can be done through availing inputs such as improved seeds, agricultural mechanization machinery, chemicals, meteorological information, and technical advice by agricultural development agents.
- For the government to provide the necessary support to the large-scale agricultural investors there should be a communication platform so that investors ask about their needs and the government to support them.
- Contract farming in Ethiopia is culturally already there. For the sake of potential conflict resolutions, the government of Ethiopia is developing legal instruments. The legislation process is in the pipeline.
- Ethiopia is dependent on rain-fed agriculture. However, the ten years' development plan intends to use irrigation at various river basins and watersheds. For example, the Wabishebelle river, Awash river, and Omo river basins have huge irrigation potential.
- Overlapping of land ownership is observed due to land transfer mandates of the Federal and Regional offices. The data at the Federal and Regional offices are not synchronized. Now the role of land transfer is the full mandate of the regional government. It was stopped in 2018.
- Public enterprises also need land to carry out their roles and responsibilities in the Gambella region. For example, the Agricultural Business Enterprise and Agricultural Research Centers. 5000 hectares of land is in the process of transferring to Agricultural Business Enterprise for its Gambella branch. A supporting letter is already issued.
- Gambella region noted that Itang Woreda where the refugee camp is situated has seen practical problems. Refugees loot the produce of the investor in the area. But, currently the issue is resolved.
- Trans-boundary conflict and intra-clan conflict were observed. Despite this challenge, there are investors who should be encouraged for keeping on working. The practical example is an investor at Dima and Akula district.
- The Gambella region encourages investors to invest in Gambella. They avail supporting letters so that investors access duty-free privileges for agricultural investment,
- Development Agents in the Oromia region started providing technical support for both smallholders and large-scale farmers. In Oromia, support is given to both smallholders and large scale. There is no difference. Inputs are given with equal opportunity.
- The national guideline for assessing the performance of investors is under preparation. It guides how to incentivize investors.
- Challenges by investors include poor farming management; lack of proper working plan and lack of commitment; absence of proper social and environmental impact assessment, lack of willingness to pay back loans.





7 Technical field visit

During the 2nd day of the forum, the forum participant visited Ato Fikre Gebremichael's farm at Mender 7 village of Abobo woreda. The field visit is designed for the forum participants to physically experience what has been presented and discussed the previous day. When visitors arrive at camp the agricultural investor welcomed and briefed the visitors on how he operates and shared his practical experiences. Fikre is currently producing Masho (Mung beans), Maize, and cotton. He has received 800 hectares of land from the Regional Government of Gambella. Out of 800 hectares of land transferred to him he has developed 700 hectares. Some agricultural inputs were not easily accessible in Gambella, as a result, the investor tried to even import seeds from the Sudan.

What are the practical challenges this agricultural investor is facing? He stressed practical challenges investors face:

- Shortage of machinery and spare parts for tractors
- Access to certified and improved seeds
- Access to chemicals, insecticide and pesticides
- No site plan, (office, garage, store, chemical store, etc)
- Farm blocking is not practised
- No technical support from the government and M&E
- Rain dependent farming
- No crop insurance
- Access diesel oil for the tractors
- Sense of insecurity on land tenure right
- Local conflict and grievance

Discussion

After his oral presentation, the stage is opened for

discussions. The following reflection questions were raised and discussed.

- What have you done about technology transfer (improved seed and farming practice) and meeting your social responsibilities?
- Job opportunities for local communities including youth and women created. For example, local communities are employed in harvesting cotton, masho, and maize. They are paid as per the amount of product harvested, flexibly. A student may harvest in the afternoon after school.
- We (investors) have introduced new technology like Masho seed to the local community. Currently, the local communities have started planting Masho in their household farms. This is a success for us.
- Why do you go to Sudan to get a certified variety of seeds and chemicals, why not in Gambella?
- Is there a separate dormitory for female and male daily labourers? Do you use the expertise of professionals in storing, usage, and expulsions of chemicals on your farm?

Some of the responses include:

- Investors should satisfy the local needs of the communities before exporting to other places.
- The Government of Ethiopia noted that the agricultural investment sector lacks adequate support from the government side. The Ministry of Agriculture has started assigning DA's to support agricultural investors.
- Some of the issues raised by the investor can be easily availed by the government. Hence, investors should ask for services from the government offices.

- Government should avail incentives for better performing investors.
- Advocacy and public awareness-raising on practices of agricultural land are important.
- Experience sharing on certified seed development between other regions is possible. For Benishangul region has introduced recently a special seed variety called Asosa 16.
- From top to grassroots level administrative authorities both at Federal and Regional levels should support and encourage local investors.
- Organize similar forums and dialogue in the future will be very important.
- Act and resolve identified challenges from this MSD Forum – Follow-up is needed.
- Agricultural Business Corporation a public institution provides services that include: Seed; fertilizer and insecticide; agricultural machinery; land clearing and farming machine. The office has 24 branches. Recently the corporation requested to open a branch office in Gambella to which the Gambella region responded positively and made available 5000 hectares land in Nuer and Mezenger zones.





8 Way forward

Four key issues emerged based on the opportunities and challenges presented, questions raised, and the lessons obtained from farm visit for (a) an in-depth analysis of problems/challenges, (b) identification of key challenges/problems, (c) identification of actions to be taken to overcome the challenges, and (d) link identified actions with responsibility. The key issues selected for discussion in smaller working groups were the following:

- Land policy, legal framework, and land use and international principles
- Agricultural investment data generation, dissemination, and management
- Human and institutional capacity issues
- Actors harmonization and support to investors and local community

Participants were divided into four issue-specific working groups based on interest. Each group has its group facilitator and rapporteur. Each group has finally presented their outputs to the plenary (in table form), structured into problems/challenges, actions to be taken, and responsible body to take the actions.

8.1 Working Group 1: Status of land policies, legal frameworks, land use issues, and international principles for RGIL

Concerning legal frameworks in the area of responsible governance of land major problems identified include the following:

- The Constitution regarding land policy is vague for example on common ownership
- Absence of national land-use policy. There is no classification of land use types
- Absence of comprehensive land administration policy based on modern land Administration Approach

- Inconsistency of land, Investment, and Environmental policies and laws
- Weakness on dynamically updating land laws
- Land administration and use proclamation are not detailed through regulation and directives
- Exclusion of local land users other than farmers and pastoralists
- Inconsistency of Ethiopia's land and investment policies with international standards
- Absence of agricultural marketing and input supply policy
- International standards are not considering contextual land investment policies
- Transferring public ownership into government ownership
- Weak policy integration among research, extension services, and investments
- Poorly integrated monitoring and evaluation policy
- Absence of private and public linkage framework (no tripartite and community development agreements)
- Encroachment of communal land rights

After the team has discussed and identified the aforementioned issues the team has come up with the following recommendations.

- The Government of Ethiopia and the public to revise the constitution regarding land policy.
- Council of Ministers and Plan Commission to approve national land-use policy and develop enacting land use legislation.
- MoA to adopt comprehensive land administration policy based on modern land Administration approach.
- Council of Ministers to approve the delayed revised proclamation 456/2005 and MoA to develop enacting the regulation.

- MoA and Ministry of trade and agricultural business corporation to develop agricultural marketing and input supply policy.
- MoA to revise encroachment of communal land rights.
- The Gambella BoANRD has to develop regulation urgently for the new land administration and use proclamation.
- Federal and regional investment institutions to establish strong linkages among research, extension and education services, and investments.
- Lack of database on how much land is given to the investors, how much is used-developed, which crops cultivated and harvested, how much produced, how much earned, for how many persons create jobs, ...)
- Lack of documentation and data on conflicts because of large scale farming (for future use).
- Lack of population data, youth data that will tell the number of jobs created by the agricultural investments.

8.2 Working group 2: Data and information generation/management of investment lands

Concerning spatial and textual data and information generation/management of investment land the group has identified the following problems:

- Land certificates (data) are not accurately prepared and there is no backup system (unavailability of a database system).
- Very limited resources capacity in generation and documentation of feasibility study, ESIA, land capability and suitability assessment data, and documents.
- No clear boundaries of mandate among the region, zone, woreda, kebele offices – Responsibilities are not clearly defined.
- No clear document on investor right and responsibility of the land she/he is using – Very poor data management system.
- community mandate for the investment land and investors activities is not clear – Very poor legal system.
- Experts high turnover – Lose of information and knowledge from the land sector.
- MoA and the Gambella Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development have to establish information documentation and information sharing platform, so that all relevant stakeholders read each other work and follow up the progress made in the area of investment in land.
- Developed Platforms at federal level, such as the National Rural Land Administration Information System (NRLAIS) and Commercial Agriculture Management Information System (CAMIS) have to be urgently installed in Gambella BoANRD with appropriate human and material resources in order to enhance spatial and textual data management of the land sector of the region
- Government authorities at the Federal, Regional, and Woreda levels clearly define the job description and build the capacities of experts who are dealing in land preparation/identification, delineations, and transfer of land to agricultural investment.

After the team has identified the aforementioned issues the team has come up with the following recommendations





8.3 Working group 3: Human and institutional capacity concerning RGIL

After the team has discussed thoroughly on human and institutional capacity concerns, it identified the following challenges/bottlenecks:

- Very frequent institutional integration and disintegration that affected negatively the implementation of good land governance.
- Very limited number of human resources and lack of proper professional/educational background in handling investment in land. The problem is observed in regional investment office and bureau of agriculture.
- Poor office setup, office equipment, and furniture in offices handling investment in land. The office set-up is not motivating existing experts to work in their capacity.
- Lack of coordination among primary stakeholders at all levels and through the entire process of the investment.
- Lengthy bureaucracy, frequent meetings, and allocating limited budget to handle the land-related issues.

After the team has discussed and identified the aforementioned problems/challenges, the team has come up with the following recommendations:

- The Gambella BoANRD has to make a serious review of its human capacity and institutional arrangement to come up with affordable and Fit for Purpose land administration and land use system. Similar review activity has to be made by the regional investment agency.
- BoANRD, Investment Agency (IA), CSB, MoA to revise the workflow and working structure to accommodate the huge task expected in managing the finite resource, land

- Both the BoANRD and regional investment agency should develop manpower development strategy (TVET, BSc, MSc and PhD).
- BoANRD, IA, CSB to recruit highly skilled professionals and develop the capacity of the existing human capital through short term training.
- Relevant government authorities should equip offices handling land issues with the basic standard office equipment, internet facilities, and furniture/ - the Gambella regional government has to take this responsibility.

8.4 Working group 4: Actors' harmonization and support to investors and local communities

Concerning the actors' harmonization and support to investors and local communities, the group discussed, identified and categorized major problems across three key actor groups (government, investor, and local community).

Government related challenges

- Inability/inefficiency of key stakeholders to provide coordinated support to investors
- Inadequate facilitation on input supply to investors
- Lack of infrastructure (road, water, electricity)
- Request/demanding for tax payments at different tax collection points
- Inadequate supply of credit for investors
- Failure to facilitate the payment of loans by monitoring the investors' activities – Lack of follow-up system
- Lack of communication and information exchange system between the government, the investors, and the community
- Failure to provide environmentally friendly technology to the investors



- Focus on export and industrial crops (sesame, masho, cotton), which are not supporting/contributing to food supply system of the local community
- The Regional Investment Agency and the BoANRD have limited capacity in facilitating interests of the investors and solving investors' challenging problems

After the team has discussed and identified the aforementioned problems/challenges, the team has come up with the following recommendations

- MoA, the Gambella BoANRD and IA have to establish a system of continuous monitoring and support to large scale agricultural investors.
- Largescale agricultural investment extension system has to be created to support investors on technical, managerial and financial issues.
- MoA, Investment Board and other relevant stakeholders have to create a regular discussion forum on performance of agricultural investment for improvements (2x a year).
- MoA, BoANRD, Woreda Agriculture Offices, Agricultural Business Corporation to identify needs of investors and facilitate required inputs supplies.
- Financial institutions have to provide and implement research-based loan provision.
- Agricultural research centres have to avail environmental friendly technology for investors.
- Federal Roads Authority, Ethiopian Electricity Service provider, Telecommunication Authority have to identify basic infrastructure problems and work in a coordinated manner.
- Regional Revenues institutions have to avoid duplicated taxing on investors.
- Development Bank, Financial and Lending In-

- stitutions should conduct continuous monitoring support to solve Investors' financial challenges.
- Agricultural investment land identification, delineation, and transfer has to take into considerations land use plans and interests of the local community.

Investors related challenges/problems

- Start operation without consultation to local community, without in-depth environment and social impact assessment and other requirements – without due diligence process
- Land acquisition and start business without a clear business plan
- Failure of the investors to develop the land and produce products as per the contract signed
- Investors' relationship with the local community is weak
- Inability to manage the farm by trained and professional experts. They are not managing the farm with blocking system and appropriate road network to facilitate application of agro-chemicals
- Investors' failure to report in time to the concerned government institutions and sometime lack of established reporting lines/system
- Failure of the investors to respect and implement promises made to local communities and local development that are included in the contract agreement
- Some investors leave/disappear from their investment area without paying salary for their farm workers
- There are so called investors farming with traditional farming practices

After the team has discussed and identified the aforementioned problems/challenges, the team has come up with the following recommendations:

- Investors have to submit an agro-business plan based on comprehensive study before starting operation
- Investors have to strengthen their relationship with the local community, identify the needs of the community and act accordingly
- Investors have to develop the transferred land according to the contract agreement
- Investors have to understand and respect the culture and traditions of the local community and act accordingly
- Investors have to hire professional experts for the different farm activities to be productive and to make profitable investment
- Investors have to communicate and report periodically to responsible institutions about their annual plan and performance in order to get technical and managerial support
- The investors must be faithful to their words and encouraged to provide promised supports as agreed
- Investors have to be able to identify pertinent local problems of the local community and solve them as capacity allows. Such actions create co-

hesiveness with local communities

Local communities related challenges/problems

- In the Gambella region, farm level working culture is very undeveloped. Most young people work in traditional gold mining and fishing and have no skill in farming. Due to this reasons investors are forced to bring farm workers from other regions.
- Local communities are not well aware about potential job opportunities created/available in the investment areas.

After the team has discussed and identified the aforementioned problems/challenges, the team has come up with the following recommendations

- CSOs to work in awareness-raising and outreach activities at the local community level so that both parties collaborate and support each other.
- CBO to organize and facilitate periodical consultative forums in cluster-based approach with investors and communities.
- Government has to provide/conduct adult education to the local community.





9 Conclusions and closing session

9.1 Conclusions

The multi-stakeholder dialogue forum has created a good understanding among primary actors and other stakeholders about international and national best practices, legal frameworks, principles and instruments for responsible governance of investment in land. Moreover, it served as a first platform that brought different actors (government, CSOs, private sector, local community) and from different levels (federal, regional, zone, woreda, and kebele) to a dialogue on RGIL. The participants expressed the need for such a forum regularly. Federal and regional experiences including achievement, challenges and future actions are shared.

The participants noted that they are the key actors for both problems encountered and for taking the appropriate actions (recommendations) to improve land governance. Therefore, each participant or organization represented has roles to play and responsibilities to fulfil before they expect from others. Accountability towards RGIL should prevail by all actors.

The MoA at the federal level and the BoANRD of the Gambella Region should oversee the implementation of the recommendations put forward by different working groups (see section 8).

A bank is a key stakeholder in RGIL. Due to previous bad experiences in Gambella concerning loan effectiveness and embezzlement by a few investors, wrong attitude and mistrust towards all investors made by the Ethiopian Development Bank should be corrected. The bank's services should be supported by evidence. Genuine investors should not be denied bank services. On other hand, the investors should not see the loans as a grant, fulfil the due diligence process before making decision to start agricultural investment.

9.2 Closing remarks

Mr. Ajack Ochalla, Head of the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development of the Gambella Peoples Regional Government, appreciated the stakeholders, investors, and local communities who have attended the event. A vote of thanks was also given to the GIZ, the European Union, and NIRAS-IP Consult for availing their human resources and financial support for the organization of the MSD forum.

He called upon all stakeholders to work closely to realize the recommendations of the MSD into action. Wishing a safe journey back to their respective destinations and he officially closed the Forum.



List of participants at the MSD forum on Responsible governance in land

| | Name | Sex | Organization | Position |
|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Tut Lew | M | Zone Agriculture NRM | Head |
| 2. | Ephrem Tadesse | M | World Bank | Project Manager |
| 3. | Alehegn Degaw | M | USAID | LALIP |
| 4. | Meeraph Habtewold | F | SLMP | Land information specialist |
| 5. | Tat Pal | M | Security (Gambella Region) | Head |
| 6. | Samuel Oboya | M | Property | Reporter |
| 7. | Nurye Jemal | M | Press Secretary | Reporter |
| 8. | Desta Gedaye | M | Press | Director |
| 9. | Yeabsra Midulelel | F | PDC | Project Officer |
| 10. | Azalech Ayalew | F | Oromia LAUB | Expert |
| 11. | Berhe Gidey | M | OBN | Cameraman |
| 12. | Aynalem Yigzaw | M | NIRAS-IP Consult | Eap.Bui |
| 13. | Hailu Wudineh | M | NIRAS-IP Consult | Communication expert |
| 14. | Lorenz Jenni | M | NIRAS-IP Consult | Team Leader |
| 15. | Zerfu Hailu | M | NIRAS-IP Consult | Coordinator |
| 16. | Abera Aba | M | MOP | Director |
| 17. | Alemtsehay G/s | M | MoA | Director |
| 18. | Beza Dejene | M | MoA | Team Leader |
| 19. | Gedion Negash | M | MoA | PR Expert |
| 20. | Getu Dame | M | MoA | ECCD Expert |
| 21. | Temesgen Desalegn | M | MoA | Expert |
| 22. | Yodit Erodella | F | MoA | Camera-woman |
| 23. | Zereay Kassahun | M | MoA | Agronomist |
| 24. | Dagim Bishaw | M | MM | Reporter |
| 25. | Benjari Tnwil | M | Media | Cameraman |
| 26. | Geldwit Targ | M | Mang Zone Agriculture | Head |
| 27. | Nicolas Jewell | M | KEILAIL | Team Ceadfre / CTA |
| 28. | Obang Gilo | M | Itang Special | Admin head |
| 29. | Othow Bach | M | Itang special | Kebele representative |
| 30. | Oumed Ali | M | House of Speaker | Technician |
| 31. | Gnigalo Omid | M | GMMA | Cameraman |
| 32. | Mekonnen Bekru | M | GLAD | Program Manager |
| 33. | Abera Wondesen | M | GIZ | Advisor |
| 34. | Bezuaem Bekele | M | GIZ | Advisor |
| 35. | Esrael Asfaw | M | GIZ | N. Project Coordinator |
| 36. | Gezahegn Hailu | M | GIZ | Admin and finance |
| 37. | Kidist Yihun | F | GIZ | Cashier and Admin |
| 38. | Lisa Koehl | F | GIZ | DA |
| 39. | Mesai Mitiku | M | GIZ | Communication |
| 40. | Okwom Ojuwato | M | GDIMC | Board Chairperson |
| 41. | Apew Ojulu | F | Gambella Zuria | Local community |
| 42. | Gogo Ayer | M | Gambella Zuria | Farmer representation |
| 43. | Obang Oboli | M | Gambella Zuria | Head of Agriculture |
| 44. | Obang Owar | M | Gambella Zuria | Admin head |
| 45. | Yirga Taming | M | Gambella Press Secretariat | Cameraman |
| 46. | Bittow Dak | M | Gambella President Off | Advisor |

| | Name | Sex | Organization | Position |
|-----|-------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 47. | Yeshalem Kinfe | M | Gambella Investors' Association | Auditor |
| 48. | Lou Obup | M | Gambella Investment Agency | Director |
| 49. | Ermias Mengistu | M | Gambella CBE | Operation Manager |
| 50. | Ojulu Olock | M | Gambella Agr Research Center | Deputy Head |
| 51. | Kwot Cham | M | Gambella & Oromia CCA | coordinator |
| 52. | Nigus Bera | M | Gambella Inv Association | Member |
| 53. | Rebca Gnaboth | F | Gambella | Culture & Tourism |
| 54. | Meseret Matewos | F | Forest and Environment | Head office |
| 55. | Fikre G/medhin | M | Fikre Farm | Manager owner |
| 56. | Bahiru Gurmessa | M | Ethiopia News Agency | Cameraman |
| 57. | Mulugeta Damtie | M | Ethiopia News Agency | Journalist |
| 58. | Tassew Negemo | M | Ethiopia Invest Commission | Director |
| 59. | Thachaor Biel | M | Env Forest and CC Bureau | Director |
| 60. | Kassahun Diriba | M | EBC | Cameraman |
| 61. | Miftah Abdulkadir | M | EBC | Reporter |
| 62. | Feleke Gezahegn | M | EABC | Deputy CEO |
| 63. | Okello Obang | M | Bureau of Tourism & Industry | Vice Head |
| 64. | Kirimis Lero | F | BoWCYA | Head office |
| 65. | Olong Gachaor | F | BoLSA | Head |
| 66. | Ojulu Lual | M | BoFED | Deputy head |
| 67. | Abera Mirolseru | M | BoANRD | Expert |
| 68. | Ajaek Ochalla | M | BoANRD | Head |
| 69. | Aliga Okello | M | BoANRD | Director |
| 70. | Kuelt (U) | M | BoANRD | Deputy |
| 71. | Ojulu Ojulu | M | BoANRD | Public Relation Head |
| 72. | Ojulu Okech | M | BoANRD | Land use expert |
| 73. | Okugn Kwot | M | BoANRD | Director |
| 74. | Pegna Omed | M | BoANRD | LAU Expert |
| 75. | Alehegn Wenede | M | Bahir Dar University | Assistant Prof |
| 76. | Belachew Yirsaw | M | Bahir Dar University | Dean |
| 77. | Tigabu Belay | M | Amhara BoLAU | Director |
| 78. | Bol Gogn | M | Agriculture Office | Head |
| 79. | Nyabel Paytut | F | Agriculture Office | Head |
| 80. | Obang Okoth | M | Agriculture | Head |
| 81. | Ochodo Omad | M | Abobo | Farmer |
| 82. | Omed Ottuiu | M | Abobo | Administrator |
| 83. | Oteyo Otaw | F | Abobo | Farmer |
| 84. | Obang Okoth | M | | Zone |
| 85. | Tamene H.Giorgis | M | TAM Consult | Consultant |
| 86. | Christian Mesmer | M | GIZ | RGIL/S2RAI Project Manager |

Agenda of the MSD Forum

| When | What | Who |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Day 1, October 26, 2021 | |
| 07:30 – 09:30 | Objective and agenda of the day (Moderator) Welcome notes by Mr. Ajack Ochalla ¹ Opening speech (Guest of honour) Introductory remarks (MoA) Keynote remarks Status of RGIL (international perspective) (Dr Babette Wehrmann ²) Key international frameworks – VGGT, CFS-RAI (Dr Darryl Vhugen ³) | Moderator GIZ-RGIL NIRAS-IP |
| 09:30 – 10:00 | Coffee break / Group photo/Press release | |
| 10:00 – 12:30 | Thematic Plenary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview Agricultural investment in the 10 years perspective plan (Ato Alemayehu G/Silasie, MoA) • Tenure due diligence – Theory and practice (Dr Zerfu Hailu)⁴ • Gambella – Agricultural Investment experience (Ato Kueth Lul Chagor, Gambella BoANRD) General reflection/discussion | Moderator GIZ-RGIL NIRAS-IP |
| 12:30 – 03:00 | Lunch break | |
| 03:00 – 04:30 | Experience stemming from practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Investment commission – Ethiopian investment experience, challenges and opportunities (Ato Tassew Negewo⁵) • Agricultural Investment Support Directorate (Ato Alemayehu G/Sillasie, ¹ Director, AISD, MoA) • Gambella investors' association – Experience – experiences, challenges and opportunities (Ato Okwam Ojwato, Chairperson) | Moderator GIZ-RGIL NIRAS-IP |
| 04:30 – 05:00 | Coffee break | |
| 05:00 – 05:30 | General reflection/discussion | Moderator |
| | Day 2, October 27, 2021 | |
| 07:30 – 12:30 | Field Program – visit on Agricultural investment farm | |
| 12:30 – 03 :00 | Lunch Break | |
| 03:00 – 04:30 | Group work session on why facilitate Agricultural Investment in the Gambella Region | |
| 04:30 – 05 :00 | Coffee break | |
| 05:00 -06:30 | Presentation of group work results and discussion Closing Remarks | Moderator GIZ-RGIL NIRAS-IP |

¹ Head of the regional bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources-Gambella National Regional State

² International consultant at NIRAS-IP Consult

³ International consultant at NIRAS-IP Consult

⁴ NIRAS-IP, RGIL project country coordinator

⁵ Director, Investment Projects Facilitation & Aftercare Directorate, Ethiopian Investment Commission





Press Release Ref. 001/RGIL/21

For immediate use

Gambella hosts the first Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) on responsible governance of investment in land

26 October 2021, Gambella: The Ethiopian government representatives, agricultural investors and local community representatives gather together in Gambella to weave together solutions to governance challenges on agricultural investment in land. The Ministry of Agriculture, Gambella Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Responsible Governance of Investment in Land Project organize a two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue forum on responsible governance of investment in land. The first multi-stakeholder dialogue forum aims at ensuring investment in land in Ethiopia is productive, contribute to sustainable land management, and respect the rights and needs of local populations in particularly vulnerable groups and women. The forum runs from 26 to 27 October 2021 in Gambella city.

Director of Agricultural Investment Support Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Alemayehu Gebresilassie, in his opening statement underlines the importance of bringing together relevant actors in investment in land together and exchange information openly. The State Minister says “this MSD Forum supports to establish mutual trust among the government, investors and local communities (actor groups). Ultimately this creates mutual trust and cooperation on land governance and support each other on common goals and economic development aspirations of Ethiopia.”

Mr. Ajack Ochalla, Head of Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources Development of the Gambella Peoples Regional Government, in his welcoming statement also highlights the expected outcome of the Forum. He emphasizes the expected outcome of the MSD is “a resolve that allows the government, investors and local communities to operate harmoniously in the Gambella Peoples National Regional State and contribute to the economic development of the Gambella Region in particular and Ethiopia in general.”

The Forum discusses among others the status of Responsible Governance of Investment in Land at national and global levels; Key international frameworks on responsible governance of



investment in land, human rights frameworks on investment in land; social and environmental safeguards; frameworks for investors and tenure due diligence. The forum also shares practical experiences of actors and players of agricultural investment in land in Ethiopia. A technical field visit to one of the agricultural investment farms in Gambella is also scheduled in the MSD.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is implementing Responsible Governance of Investment in Land (RGIL) project in cooperation with the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH). Through the support of the project, the capacities of key stakeholders including governmental staffs, investors as well as civil society and community representatives will be strengthened. The project is co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ).

For more information

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