

Promoting Responsible Governance of Investments in Land in Uganda (RGIL)

The Challenge

Most rural households in Uganda do not possess legal documents that prove their land rights. This poses high risks when it comes to land tenure security and threatens the livelihoods of the rural population, especially women and marginalised groups. Lack of legal security contributes to high vulnerability to land evictions, hinders smallholder investment and has strong negative impacts on food and nutrition security.

Land investors can take advantage of legal uncertainties and high corruption levels in the land sector and acquire land without recognition of existing land rights. As a result, smallholders are often confronted with a shortage of resources (land, water) contributing to migration or displacement. In absence of safeguarding measures, commercial land investments can lead to loss of access to land, conflicts and forced evictions, thereby restricting and preventing inclusive and sustainable development pathways.

With respect to land-based investments, the main challenges are:

- Capacities of government officials on land laws are weak and support structures are often not in place
- Land rights are often not documented in rural areas, resulting in a lack of transparency. Hence legally correct and fair land acquisition remains difficult
- The Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) has a mandate to accompany foreign investors only, whereas most investors in Uganda are domestic ones
- Transparency on land investments at district level is low, making it difficult for district commercial officers to monitor and support. Land investors are often operating without control and support
- Dialogue processes, both at national and local level are needed, to bring stakeholders together to improve land policies on investments.

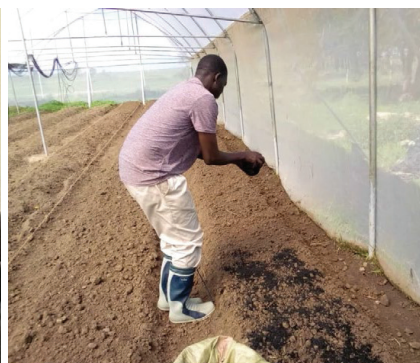
Goal and Expected Outputs

The RGIL project is part of the GIZ Global Program “Responsible Land Policy” and is implemented in Uganda through the country project “Responsible Land Policy in Uganda” (RELAPU). Both are part of the Special Initiative “One World, No Hunger” of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). RGIL is co-funded by the European Union and the German Government.

RELAPU has worked with private domestic agriculture investors since 2017 with the intention to raise their awareness about responsible land policies along internationally agreed guidelines such as the international Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and the National Land Policy (NLP). RGIL builds on these experiences and scales them up.

In pursuit of the project’s goal to foster investments in land that are productive, contribute to sustainable land management and respect the rights and needs of the local population, including vulnerable groups and women, the following outputs are expected:

1. The capacities of government authorities to administer and guide investments in land in accordance with established legislation and recognised principles such as the VGGT and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) are strengthened.
2. The capacities of domestic investors to comply with internationally recognised principles for responsible investments in land are strengthened.
3. The capacities of local land users, especially smallholders and vulnerable groups to defend their legitimate rights to land and to advocate for their needs in land investments processes, are strengthened.



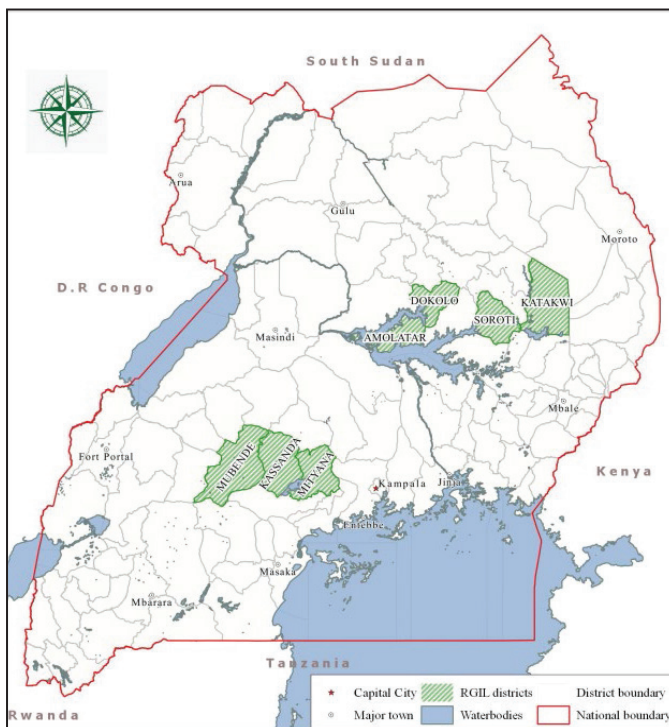
L-R: investor talking at a multi stakeholder meeting, commercial farmer at work, mapping of land parcels with the community. Photo: © GIZ

Our Approach

To improve the land rights' situation the proposed actions' strategic approach aims at:

- Strengthen capacities at national and local level to improve the alignment of domestic investors to national laws and international guidelines
- Develop methods to verify compliance of investment projects in agriculture and forestry with environmental regulations, social standards and other safeguards
- Support decentralized structures e.g. at district level to raise awareness and to better identify investment sites and no-go areas for investments
- Organise national and regional multi-stakeholder events to exchange on lessons learned, best practices and challenges
- Promote participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of responsible land policies

- Cooperate with selected domestic investors to align to national laws and international guidelines to develop jointly improvement plans for the investors to implement
- Sensitize investors regarding the importance of secured land rights of surrounding communities
- Support smallholders, especially those in the vicinity of the investors, to secure their land tenure rights
- Promote and strengthen the inclusion of women and marginalized groups
- Establish local grievance mechanisms.



Project Name	Promoting Responsible Governance of Investments in Land (RGIL)
Commissioned by	European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Districts of Soroti, Katakwi, Mubende, Kassanda, Mityana, Dokolo and Amolatar and others
Lead executing agency	German Cooperation for International Development (GIZ)
Political Partner	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
Duration	01.11.2019 – 31.07.2023

The Benefits

The main beneficiary of the action is the local population in Uganda and in particular rural smallholder farmers.

This includes women and marginalized groups and those who are, regarding their access to land, particularly discriminated, disadvantaged and affected by corruption. A focus will be set on women land-rights as they play an important role in assuring the food security at household level but are often disadvantaged in their access to land.

Private sector investors and the Government of Uganda will likewise benefit from the capacity building measures as the implementation of responsible practices is a means to increase revenue and expand inclusive business models.



L-R: farmer plowing the soil, local investor gardening, parcel mapping in Mityana district. Photo: © GIZ

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