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SUPPORTING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROVINCIAL CONSULTATIONS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS THE FINALIZATION OF A NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE AND GENDER SENSITIVE LAND POLICY

October 2024

SDGs:



Country: Zimbabwe

Project Code: TCP/ZIM/3803

FAO Contribution: USD 131 000

Duration: 7 January 2021–31 December 2023

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Implementing Partners

Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (MLAFWRD); Zimbabwe Land Commission.

Beneficiaries

Smallholder farmers, rural communities, women, and marginalized groups, commercial farmers, government institutions, and the general population.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

CPF Priority A: Strengthened Policy and Institutional Frameworks. Contribution to the Transition Stabilisation Programme and the National Development Strategy 1.



BACKGROUND

The land issue is pivotal to Zimbabwe's social and economic development, demanding a modern Comprehensive and Gender Sensitive National Land Policy. Zimbabwe's current land tenure system includes state-owned land and freehold titled land, alongside various leases, with recent significant changes in commercial land through A1 and A2 farm models. The outdated land policy fails to reflect these developments, hindering socioeconomic progress.

A new policy is essential to provide clarity, consistency, and certainty, promoting social cohesion, economic recovery, and food security. Responding to the Government of Zimbabwe's request, the FAO is supporting the preparation and finalization of this policy, emphasizing governance of tenure as a global priority. With this, the FAO's role involves facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations, developing capacity-building strategies, and ensuring an inclusive and participatory policy-making process, working in close collaboration with Zimbabwe's Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement, and the Zimbabwe Land Commission.

IMPACT

The project will improve land governance, aiding in hunger and poverty eradication. It will promote social cohesion, economic growth, and agricultural productivity through clear land tenure. By ensuring equitable access for women and marginalized groups, it fosters gender equality and empowerment. The project also builds stakeholder capacity, engages diverse groups inclusively, and strengthens government institutions, driving sustainable development and environmental protection.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project achieved significant milestones by developing a draft National and Gender Sensitive Land Policy Framework which aimed to enhance the governance of tenure of land and other natural resources in Zimbabwe. This initiative aligns with multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the broader Agenda 2030, emphasizing goals such as No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Gender Equality and Life on Land. Specific SDG targets addressed by the project include increasing access to financial services for small enterprises, ensuring equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services and land ownership by 2030, and undertaking reforms to provide women with equal rights to economic resources and control over land and property.

Moreover, the project aimed to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers by 2030, particularly focusing on women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists, and fishers. It also sought to achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 % of the population at a rate higher than the national average and to eradicate extreme poverty for all people by 2030.

The project outcomes focused on strengthening the capacities of land-related institutions and developing a comprehensive, gender-sensitive national land policy. Over five government institutions actively participated in the formulation of this policy, with oversight provided by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development. Key representatives from other relevant ministries, the Land Department at both national and provincial levels, the Zimbabwe Land Commission, the deeds/registrars office, traditional leadership, provincial ministers of state, the Environmental Management Agency, and the Forestry Commission were also involved.

The National Land Policy Framework proposed under the project is structured around four key pillars: land rights policy, land governance policy, land administration policy, and regulatory policy. These pillars aim to clarify land rights for various tenure categories, define governance functions and entities at different levels, specify integrated land management and development services, and harmonize legislation related to land rights, governance, and administration.

The project's support for the Government of Zimbabwe included facilitating comprehensive multi-stakeholder consultations through workshops and meetings across all ten provinces. These consultations provided platforms for citizens to voice their concerns about land and property rights issues, and professional bodies and associations of key interest groups also submitted written contributions. Before this project, Zimbabwe's land policy was outdated and did not consider the developments from the Land Reform Programme. Therefore, the formulation of a comprehensive and gender-sensitive national land policy was crucial to provide the necessary clarity, consistency, and certainty to promote social cohesion and socioeconomic development.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The project delivery was not on track with the planned work plan due to the political sensitivities associated with land issues in Zimbabwe. Consultations with stakeholders at the sub-national level were delayed because traditional leaders were unavailable on dates that were convenient for most members.

During the project's lifespan, the government issued a directive to suspend all land-related activities leading up to the national harmonized elections. As a result, the capacity development trainings outlined in the strategy were not conducted.

Despite these challenges, the project was implemented within the planned budget, achieving 85 percent expenditure. However, the government's directive meant that the capacity development trainings and the national validation summit, both of which had been budgeted for, were not conducted.



FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The government plans to establish clear mechanisms for enforcement, by providing training and resources to relevant institutions, and facilitating continuous stakeholder engagement to address emerging issues. Following the development of the Comprehensive and Gender Sensitive National Land Policy, the government, under the Structured Dialogue Platform for Debt Resolution and Arrears Clearance, established the Sector Working Group (SWG) on Land Tenure Reforms, Compensation for Former Farm Owners, and Resolution of Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreements (BIPPAs). The SWG is coordinated by the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC) with the participation of various government ministries such as Agriculture, Attorney-General's Office, Justice, Finance, Zimbabwe Land Commission, among others. The SWG has its technical work undertaken through Sub-Sector Working Groups (SSWG) on: (i) Land Tenure Reforms; (ii) Compensation of Former Farm Owners (FFOs); and (iii) Resolution of BIPPAs.

The SWG on Land Tenure Reforms, Compensation of FFOs, and Resolution of BIPPAs has a clearly outlined 2024 workplan. FAO is part of the sector working group. In addition, the government has set up technical review committees to: (i) review the 99-year lease; and (ii) review the legislation to support the review of the 99-year lease. The government is working on periodic reviews and updates of the policy based on feedback and changing socioeconomic conditions.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The land policy is a long-term agenda, envisioning the government adopting a long-term perspective to craft actionable plans for the short and medium term. The development of the National Land Policy Framework was based on a consultative process involving multiple stakeholders, including government commissions, ministries, departments, provincial ministers, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, academics, subject matter experts, and Zimbabwean consultants. The process was guided by the High-Level Oversight Panel of Permanent Secretaries, a Steering Committee comprising decision-makers from key ministries, and a Technical Working Group of senior government officials and consultants. This team collaborated closely with relevant government departments, ensuring broad agreement and readiness for effective policy implementation. Key ministries involved included those responsible for lands, local government, justice, finance, mining, women's affairs, environment, energy, ICT, information, and youth.

By focusing on capacity development, the project supports the final National Validation Summit, ensuring that all key stakeholders are equipped to implement the policy effectively.

2. Gender equality

By ensuring equitable access for women and marginalized groups, this initiative fosters gender equality and empowerment. Various women's groups actively participated in the provincial consultative meetings, including the Women's Associations in Land (NANGO), Women in Land, Kunzwana Women's Association, Zimbabwe Women's Bureau, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), and Women Farmers Land and Agriculture Trust (WFLA).

A country office gender specialist was among the hired thematic experts, ensuring that gender issues were integrated throughout the land policy development process. The selection of participants was gender-sensitive, ensuring that both men and women were involved in the formulation processes. Additionally, the Draft National Land Policy framework included provisions for gender-sensitive land tenure rights.

3. Environmental sustainability

The land policy integrates the land governance policy, which encompasses the societal power that collectively formulates policies, regulations, and institutional measures for securing land rights and ensuring effective land use. This includes policy-making, legislative and regulatory authority over land issues, environmental sustainability, executive authority determining land administration policy, and the judiciary providing substantive and procedural justice on land matters.

The project included a National Environmental expert who ensured that environmental and sustainability issues were integrated into the draft policy framework. The land use planning expert also considered environmental issues, which are reflected in the draft national and gender-sensitive land policy document.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Participation during the land policy consultative process was inclusive and non-discriminatory, ensuring active engagement from women, men, youth, and individuals from various religions, races, and regions. Their perspectives were thoroughly incorporated into the current draft of the national land policy framework document.

The provision of secure tenure land rights for the poor, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups in society has significantly contributed to the Right to Food Guidelines adopted by the FAO in 2004. This has been achieved through improved access to land and secure land rights, thereby enhancing the realization of the human right to food.

5. Technological sustainability

The use of virtual platforms during consultative meetings represented the application of new and flexible technology in land policy development, promoting technological sustainability. The participation of traditional authorities ensured the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in land governance and management, combined with regional and global best practices. The Government of Zimbabwe owns the National and Gender Sensitive Land Policy Framework and is expected to lead its implementation.

6. Economic sustainability

Supportive projects such as the European Union (EU)-United Nations Development Programme UNDP and the Dutch-funded Land at Scale projects were intended to harness additional resources for implementation in the land sector. However, these efforts have not yet been successful, as discussions are still ongoing. The National Land Policy Framework document is a key national and strategic resource available to the citizens of Zimbabwe. It addresses critical issues for Zimbabwe's development, particularly the extent to which land policy and governance can facilitate economic recovery, enhance food and nutrition security, and consequently lead to sustainable and inclusive development.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ *Analysis of the roles and responsibilities of the Zimbabwe Land Commission and the Department of Land Management and Administration in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water & Rural Development.*
- ❑ *Capacity needs assessment report: Towards achieving national consensus for land policy implementation.*
- ❑ **Chidoori, D. (FAOSFS).** The Herald - Breaking news. Retrieved from <https://www.herald.co.zw>.
- ❑ Draft Zimbabwe National land policy: Policy document.
- ❑ **FAO. X.** <https://twitter.com/PatriceTalla/status/1499377446197645315>.
- ❑ **FAO. X.** <https://twitter.com/faosfafrica/status/1095310657820463105?t=FoBGXzcAsgdemd1jZGOUyA&s=19>.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Improved governance of tenure of land and other natural resources contributing to the eradication of hunger and poverty		
Outcome	National Comprehensive and Gender Sensitive Land Policy and strengthened capacities of land related institutions		
	Indicator	Number of government institutions applying improved skills for collaboration and coordination on land policy issues.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	5	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	Over five government institutions actively participated and demonstrated improved collaboration and coordination skills in the formulation of the National Land Policy. This included core leadership from a high-level oversight panel led by the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (MLAFWRD). Key representatives from other relevant ministries, the Land Department (from national to provincial levels), the Zimbabwe Land Commission, the Deeds/Registrar Office, traditional leadership, Provincial Ministers of State, the Environmental Management Agency, and the Forestry Commission were also involved, among others.	
Output 1	Gender sensitive multi-stakeholder National and Sub national platforms for comprehensive land policy dialogue and formulation established and functional		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Percentage representation of key stakeholders (women and youth groups included) during land policy consultative meetings.	70 %	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	Notably, 100 % active participation of key stakeholders was achieved in the process, demonstrating total commitment to the national land policy formulation. The key stakeholders included the Minister responsible for land, other relevant ministries such as Youth and Gender, Mining, Environment, technical land officers (from national to provincial levels), Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, traditional leaders, representatives of women and youth groups, and development partners.		
Activity 1.1	Support National multi-stakeholder platforms		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 1.2	Support the High Level Task Force group meetings		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Support was provided to the High-level Task Force group, which is organizing high-level meetings, presentations, and facilitating these meetings in close collaboration with MLAFWRD. This support also included the review process of the first and second draft policies, as well as the consolidation of comments. This has been an ongoing process since 2021.	
Output 2	Capacities of relevant institutions and stakeholders improved to participate in the implementation of the comprehensive and gender sensitive land policy		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of government staff and key stakeholders trained.	20	No
Baseline	0		
Comments	This activity was not undertaken. The government indicated that it would carry out this task following the adoption of the Land Policy Framework.		
Activity 2.1	Capacity needs assessment (CNA)		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The Capacity Needs Assessment was conducted, and the report was produced and validated.	
Activity 2.2	Develop a strategy for developing capacity of stakeholders		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The Capacity Development Strategy was developed in the second quarter of the second year.	
Activity 2.3	Capacity development of key stakeholders and policy formulators and implementers		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	The trainings outlined in the Capacity Development Strategy were not conducted. This decision was based on guidance received from the government through the MLAFWRD. In 2023, the country held general elections; due to the political sensitivities regarding land issues, all project activities were put on hold as per the government directive.	

Output 3	A Comprehensive National and Gender Sensitive Land Policy developed		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of Consolidated Land Policy Experts' reports addressing Gender issues, legal, institutional and administrative issues and reforms on land tenure produced.	1	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	Two comprehensive land policy drafts were developed and submitted to the government for review. The reports included consolidated findings from land policy experts, addressing gender issues, legal, institutional, and administrative concerns, as well as reforms on land tenure. The first draft was submitted in March 2022, followed by the second draft in May 2022.		
Activity 3.1	Consolidation of findings		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	Findings from the nationwide consultative meetings were consolidated in March 2022, leading to the development of the first draft of the national land policy document.	
Activity 3.2	Draft National Land Policy developed		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The first draft of the National Land Policy was developed and submitted to the High-Level Task Force within the MLAFWRD in March 2022. This initial draft, also referred to as the zero draft, was presented to the High-Level Task Force, including the Minister and Deputy Minister.	
Activity 3.3	Second and other reviews of the draft policy		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The second review of the draft land policy document was completed upon its submission in May 2022, and comments were consolidated. The final review is still ongoing, and once the Ministry completes it, the Minister will advise on when and how to proceed with the validation processes.	
Activity 3.4	Final National Land Policy validation Summit		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	Following the guidance and recommendations from the government through the MLAFWRD, the Final National Land Policy Validation was not conducted. The government informed FAO that this process would be financed and coordinated by them. In 2023, the country held general elections; due to the political sensitivities surrounding land issues, all project activities were put on hold as per the government's directive.	
Activity 3.5	Submission of draft Policy document		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The final policy document was submitted to and accepted by the government. The official acceptance of the Land Policy Framework by the government was sent to FAO.	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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