



Securing Land Rights at the Ground Level

Factsheet

VNG International's approach to land rights & land governance

Land Governance: Enabling Local Authorities to Secure Rights and Foster Development

Land governance is vital for secure land ownership, which in turn supports – amongst others - food security by encouraging investment and economic activity. This certainty of ownership aids in reducing conflicts and enabling fair dispute resolution. This legal clarity also allows local governments to collect taxes effectively, providing a stable revenue source. Stable land rights promote sustainable development, attract investments, and foster economic growth, all of which contribute to stronger communities and improved governance.

Local governments play a crucial role in land governance, with responsibilities varying by country, level of decentralization, and legal system. They oversee land use planning, regulate transactions, issue titles, allocate land, and collect taxes. Additionally, they manage environmental practices, resolve disputes, protect vulnerable groups, develop infrastructure, and implement national policies.

In countries such as Benin, Burundi, Togo, Malawi, D.R. Congo, South Sudan, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone, VNG International helps improve land governance at different levels by providing technical support to local governments in areas like administration, regulation, development, and conflict resolution.

About VNG International

VNG International is the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG). Rooted in the Netherlands' rich tradition of local governance, we invest in empowering local governments worldwide to build better futures for all. Established in 2001, we focus on practical and innovative solutions that enhance the capacity and resilience of local governments.

VNG International designs and manages large, complex projects across a variety of sectors, collaborating with a diverse range of donors, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, World Bank, and USAID. We take pride in our ISO-9001 certified quality management system, which underpins our commitment to high standards and client satisfaction. Our success is driven by our ability to combine local expertise with international knowledge, enabling us to implement solutions that are both practical and effective.

Together with local governments and their citizens, we are creating resilient, thriving communities that are equipped to face the future. At VNG International, we are not just building projects, we are building better futures for all.



Our approach to land governance

VNG International helps local governments enhance land governance by building capacity through training, knowledge exchanges, and technical assistance. We support land reform and policy development to improve transparency and accountability, resolve land disputes, promote environmental protection, and strengthen connections between national, regional, and local levels. Additionally, we encourage the use of technology in land governance and assist institutions in building knowledge.

This is being done through:

- **Collaborative Partnerships:** Working closely with national and local governments to ensure alignment with national priorities and strategies.
- **Supporting Land Reform and Regulatory Frameworks:** Assisting governments in operationalizing new land laws, such as Land and Property Codes and digital land registers.
- **Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:** Offering capacity-building programs to local authorities, surveyors, and notaries to improve land administration practices and trainings in land management, digital tools, conflict resolution, leadership, and change management.
- **Promoting Inclusive Land Governance:** Ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as women and marginalized communities, in land access and governance.
- **Developing Innovative Land Management Methodologies:** Piloting new methodologies for land tenure registration, mapping, and managing land rights, focusing on cost-effective and accessible solutions.
- **Conflict Prevention and Resolution:** Strengthening mechanisms for resolving land conflicts (through alternative dispute resolution methods) and promoting peaceful coexistence in areas affected by land scarcity and population growth.
- **Promoting Public Participation and Community Engagement:** Encouraging citizen participation in land management decisions through community consultations and local governance mechanisms.
- **Data-Driven Land Management:** Supporting the development and expansion of digital land registries, improving data management, and creating comprehensive land databases for better decision-making, land administration efficiency and tax purposes.
- **Sustainability and Long-term Impact:** Aligning activities with national development plans and supporting scalable, replicable models to expand project impacts across regions.

Examples of projects

Land Reform to accelerate Agricultural Productivity

Where
Togo
When
2022-2026

The Land Reform to Accelerate Agricultural Productivity (LRAP) project in Togo, led by VNG International in collaboration with Cadasta Foundation, Kadaster International, and WiLDAF-Togo, aims to support the Togolese government in operationalizing the Land and Property Code. Funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and implemented by OMCA-Togo, the project focuses on improving land tenure security to stimulate investment in the agricultural sector. Spanning from September 2022 to February 2026, the project combines technical assistance, regulatory reforms, and innovative methodologies to address rural land rights challenges. It is designed to promote cost-effective, inclusive, and accessible land management practices, ensuring equitable access to land for communities while fostering agricultural productivity.

The project encompasses several key activities, including supporting the Togolese government in developing a robust regulatory framework for the Land and Property Code and piloting methodologies to secure customary land rights. These methodologies include mapping and registering land rights, managing land information, streamlining registration procedures, and resolving land conflicts. Additional initiatives involve establishing advisory committees, preparing citizen-friendly guides, and organizing study tours to neighbouring countries and the Netherlands. By strengthening legal, institutional, and procedural frameworks, LRAP aims to build consensus among stakeholders, ensure the sustainability of reforms, and provide the tools necessary for long-term agricultural development and land governance in Togo.

Projet de Préparation de la Mise à l'Échelle du Cadastre national (PPMEC)

Where

Benin

When

2023-2026

The PPMEC project in Benin, implemented by VNG International in collaboration with Kadaster International and MDF, aims to secure land tenure across the country and promote private investment through the national scaling-up of a digital land register. Funded by the Netherlands Embassy in Benin and spanning from July 2023 to June 2026, the PPMEC focuses on strengthening the capacity of the Beninese Agence Nationale du Domaine et du Foncier (ANDF) to manage and expand the e-cadastral system (eFB), ensuring its sustainability while addressing the diverse needs of Benin's population, including vulnerable groups.

The project focuses on improving the roles of local governments, notaries, and surveyors in updating cadastral data and making sure the needs of local communities match the services provided by the central government. The activities include helping ANDF test data updates in important areas, supporting decisions at the national level about legal and institutional frameworks for expanding land registration, and ensuring civil society is involved to represent vulnerable groups. By creating a complete land registry and strengthening the land management system, the project aims to provide long-term solutions for land security, improve data management, and ensure that land registration policies are inclusive, helping Benin's socio-economic development.



Beira Land Administration Capacity Development Project

Where

Mozambique

When

2017-2025

The Beira Land Administration (BLAS) Capacity Development Project was implemented by VNG International in Mozambique, with a primary focus on improving the municipal organization of Beira (CMB). Spanning from March 2017 to August 2018, the project aimed to strengthen the municipality's technical and organizational capacity to manage land administration effectively. Funded by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), the project sought to align with the broader goals of the Beira Master Plan. Key stakeholders included local government officials, technical experts, and VNG International staff, with support from external consultants.

The project emphasized enhancing land planning and management systems by focusing on technical interventions, strategy and control, organizational processes, planning, and personnel development. Specific activities included indexing and digitalizing the municipal cadastre, developing a sustainable land administration information system, and institutionalizing improved procedures. This involved capacity-building measures such as training in leadership, change management, and communication strategies, as well as conducting baseline analyses, process redesigns, and study visits to the Netherlands. The outcomes aimed to increase data accessibility, improve citizen engagement, and establish sustainable practices in land administration, ensuring long-term municipal efficiency and resilience.

Amahoro@Scale - Integrated approach towards improved tenure security and land governance

Where
Burundi
When
2021-2026

The “Amahoro@Scale” project works to improve land security and governance in Burundi, a country facing acute land scarcity, rapid population growth, and weak government structures. The project is funded by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and will run from December 2021 to June 2026. It is carried out by VNG International, in cooperation with ZOA International, ACO-Burundi, and MiPAREC. The project is located in the Nyanza Lac commune in Makamba Province and aims to expand its impact across the country. Gender equality is an important focus, and the project aims to create a fair and sustainable system for land governance.

The main activities include testing Land Tenure Registration in Nyanza Lac, resolving land-related conflicts using alternative dispute resolution methods, and improving cooperation between local and international stakeholders. The project also aims to strengthen local land services, create financially sustainable models for land service provision, and develop a plan to expand these efforts across the country. VNG International plays an important role in training local authorities, promoting inclusive governance, and making sure land-related services are delivered effectively. These efforts will help improve land governance and support long-term social and economic development in Burundi.



A sample of VNG International’s key products on land governance:

- Toolkit for inclusive and integrated land governance, including examples on community engagement with a particular emphasis on women, youth, refugees and people living with disabilities, women’s land rights, effective intergovernmental collaboration and VNG International’s approach to formalise user rights (FR, 2025)
- Methodological guide to VNG International’s participatory cartography in land governance (FR, 2018)
- Methodological guide to set-up and build the capacity of land governance instances at village and municipal level (FR, 2018)
- Training Manual on Conflict Resolution by the competent institutions at village, local and municipal level (FR, 2018)
- Publication on Women and Land in Bénin (2019)



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“Woman and Land in Benin” here



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september 2025