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SUSTAINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF TENURE OF LANDS, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY (VGGT) AT NATIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL IN SIERRA LEONE

January 2019

SDGs:



Countries:

Sierra Leone

Project Codes:

TCP/SIL/3602

FAO Contribution:

USD 249 000

Duration:

2 March 2017 – 31 October 2018

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BACKGROUND

In Sierra Leone, the implementation of the globally agreed Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Lands, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) began in February 2014 under the German-funded project “Support for Country-Level Implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests” (referred to as VGGT Project Phase I), which ended on 31 July 2016. Phase I led to the creation of a comprehensive institutional framework requiring regular and ongoing meetings among key stakeholders from both government and civil society organizations.

The present project was designed to leverage the benefits of the implementation of the VGGT and to sustain the implementation of the key emerging activities, localizing the implementation of the VGGT at the district level. This project provided the opportunity to incorporate lessons learned during VGGT Project Phase I and incorporate other stakeholders who had not been fully engaged during the first phase – in particular the private sector, members of parliament, local authorities etc. – in VGGT implementation. The importance of continuing to implement key and high-level activities ensured further political buy-in and the application of VGGT principles, not least through the implementation of the newly approved National Land Policy (NLP).

The overall aim of the project was to sustain the implementation of the VGGT in Sierra Leone. This was to be achieved through three main outputs:

- A multistakeholder platform that continues to promote, implement and mainstream the VGGT.
- Stakeholders in Parliament and at district level sensitized on the VGGT and on the implementation of the NLP.
- Support for the implementation of the newly approved key natural resources-related sector policies (the NLP and the Fisheries Policy).



Implementing Partner

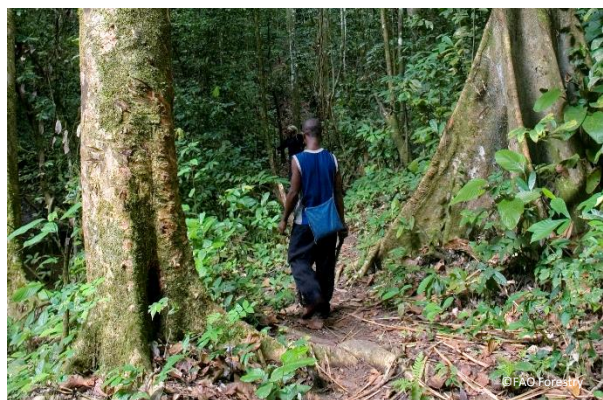
Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment.

Beneficiaries

The groups most vulnerable to losing their tenure rights, in particular ethnic minorities, women, orphan children, the illiterate, the disabled and the elderly. Other beneficiaries include government institutions involved in the implementation of the VGGT in Sierra Leone, civil society organizations, the private sector and academia.

Country Programming Framework (CPF)

The Current CPF has four main priority areas. The project aimed to contribute to the achievement of Priority 2, “Promoting sustainable use and management of natural resources”. More specifically, it is aligned with Output 2.2, “Establishment of adequate governance structure and monitoring mechanisms for sustainable management and responsible investment in natural resources supported”.



IMPACT

The impact was improved governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests, contributing to the eradication of hunger and poverty, to sustainable development and to the sustainable use of the environment. More specifically, the project to contribute to (i) extensive public awareness and comprehensive stakeholder participation in ensuring governance of tenure, (ii) stronger coordination in policy implementation that supports the implementation of agriculture activities for food security, (iii) improved agriculture and food availability in Sierra Leone through improved governance of tenure and (iv) building capacity on policy content and use.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

A number of achievements were recorded under each project output.

Output 1: A multistakeholder platform that continues to promote, implement and mainstream the VGGT is established.

Since 2014, five Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) workshops have been held, reaching over 700 stakeholders. These range from government officials and parliamentarians to civil society, academia, the private sector, traditional authorities, religious leaders, landholding families, the media and development partners involved in VGGT and NLP implementation in Sierra Leone. Participants from each of the MSP workshops developed a communiqué that was endorsed by the Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF) to outline a set of recommendations for improving governance of tenure of land, forests and fisheries.

Activity 1.1

A system was developed to track progress in the implementation of the recommendations presented in a communiqué of the 2017 MSP workshop.

Activity 1.2

Two quarterly meetings of the IMTF on VGGT were held, involving the five ministers representing the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment (MLHE), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ)/Attorney General (AG). During the project, six technical working groups and meetings of the Steering Committee were jointly held at the MLHE.

The regular meetings of these committees enhanced collaboration and coordination of the different stakeholders in the relevant sectors. The IMTF, which is chaired by the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, extended the invitation to other ministers to join the Task Force, namely the ministers for Mines and Mineral Resources, Water Resources and Gender and Social Welfare. They also nominated staff members to participate in the different committee meetings.

Activity 1.3

A Monitoring and Evaluation System was developed for the implementation of the VGGT in Sierra Leone. The system helped in tracking progress on the implementation. The MSP was broadened to ensure inclusiveness and participation of the different sectors, including the community members rarely included in decision-making processes on the issues that directly affect them.

Output 2: Stakeholders in Parliament and at district level sensitized on the VGGT and implementation of the NLP.

A number of activities were conducted under this output. These are outlined below.

Activity 2.1

Sixteen districts were sensitized on VGGT and NLP. The initial target was 14 districts but the formation of new districts saw Karene and Falaba districts added to the target list. Over 100 stakeholders participated in each of the district sensitization workshops. Participants included paramount chiefs, regent chiefs, female leaders, local authorities, religious leaders, local unit commanders, landowning families, selected civil society organizations and youth representatives.

Activity 2.2

VGGT and NLP sensitization meetings and workshops were conducted with the relevant parliamentary committees. The role of parliamentarians in promoting responsible governance of tenure for land, forestry and fisheries is crucial for the country to attain national food security. In order to sustain the implementation of the VGGT and the NLP in Sierra Leone, training was conducted for parliamentarians on the oversight committees on land, forests and fisheries. The objective of the trainings was to raise awareness among members of Parliament on the VGGT and provisions of the 2017 NLP, in order to lay the foundations for an informed discussion in Parliament on the proposed legislative reforms on the land, forestry and fisheries sectors.

Two workshops were organized – the first workshop targeting 12 participants including chairpersons, their deputies and respective clerks on the parliamentary oversight committee for lands, fisheries and agriculture and forestry, and the second targeting 53 out of 65 parliamentarians.

Discussing the proposed laws with knowledge of the VGGT will lead to greater understanding of the links between the legal framework in the natural resources sector and the VGGT as an important element for shaping a well-functioning legal framework for the responsible governance of tenure, with a particular focus on the more vulnerable members of society, such as women and girls.

Activity 2.3

Private sector dialogue took place for VGGT and NLP sensitization and VGGT compliance. This activity was aimed at increasing the knowledge of private sector representatives on the VGGT and the NLP. Training for key private investors was organized on VGGT and the new Agri-business Investment Approval Process (AIAP), which has been developed in line with the VGGT. The training brought together 35 participants, including development partners and key private agribusiness investors such as Miro Forestry, Lizard Earth Sierra Tropical, Mount Lion and Genesis, as well as the Commercial Agricultural Product Producers' Association (CAPP).

Output 3: Support for the implementation of the newly approved key natural resources-related sector policies (the NLP and the Fisheries Policy).

A number of activities were conducted under this output. These are outlined below.

Activity 3.1

The NLP, together with the NLP Implementation Plan/Framework, were printed and distributed. Through the present project, over 1 000 copies of the full version and 1 700 copies of the abridged version of the NLP were printed and widely disseminated throughout the 16 districts of Sierra Leone. An additional 600 copies of the NLP Implementation Action Plan were printed and handed over to the MLHE. The initial target was to print and distribute 400 copies of each.

Activity 3.2

Legal research was undertaken into the customary rights and rights holders and how these could be brought into the legislation, while being adjusted in line with the constitution and land policy.

Summary of the key achievements against the set targets under TCP/SIL/3602

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS ON VGGT_ TCP 3602					
	Indicators	Unit	Cummulative Performance		
			Target	Actual	% Achievement
Outcome Number of institutions implementing policies that are aligned with the principles of the VGGT.	Institutions implementing policies that are aligned with the principles of the VGGT.	No.	2	4	200
Output 1 A multi-stakeholder platform that continues to promote, implement and mainstream the VGGT	VGGT committee meetings held on a timely basis	No.	4	6	150
	Tracking system developed for the implementation of the recommendation/communique of the multi stakeholder platform workshop on the VGGT	No.	1	1	100
	Cordination meetings held on VGGT Inter-Ministerial Task Force (IMTF) and Steering Committee (SC)	No.	3	1	33
	Joint monitoring and supervision missions held on the implementation of the VGGT	No.	1	1	100
Output 2 Stakeholders in parliament and at the district level sensitized on the VGGT and implementation of the National Land Policy	Districts and parliamentary committees that are being sensitized on the VGGT/NLP	No.	4	4	100
	VGGT and NLP sensitization workshops delivered by the end of the project	No.	14	16	114
	District level stakeholders with increased knowledge of the VGGT and NLP	No.	14	16	114
	Number of Training for members of Parliament in relevant committees to increase their knowledge on the VGGT and the	No.	4	3	75
	Private sector representatives with increased knowledge on the VGGT and the NLP	No.	5	1	20
Output 3 Support the implementation of (newly approved) key natural resources related sector policies (the National Land Policy and the Fisheries Policy)	Research and evidence supporting implementation of the policies conducted and validated by stakeholders	No.	4	3	75
	Number of copies of the NLP and NPIP printed and distributed	No.	800	1,000	125
	Discussion paper on customary rights and rights holders developed	No.	3	2	65
	Number of stocktaking paper draft on regional experiences	No.	4	1	25
	Legal issues and options paper prepared	No.	2	1	50
	Number of fisheries policy implementation plan developed	No.	1	1	100

Activity 3.3

A stocktaking paper was drafted on regional experiences (Liberia, Kenya, Botswana and Mozambique, among others) and, specifically, how customary rights are recognized and protected.

Activity 3.4

Drawing on the discussion and background papers, a legal Issues and Options paper was prepared on the types of provisions needed to provide legal recognition, protection and registration of land tenure rights for communities, groups and individuals, in ways that conform with human rights, the VGGT, the new Constitution and the NLP.

Activity 3.5

The project supported the implementation of the Fisheries Policy by developing an implementation plan for the Policy and undertaking a policy coherence assessment. A comprehensive study was also conducted, assessing the effectiveness of fisheries Community Management Associations (CMAs) in the protection of Territorial Use Rights (TUR) and the coastal areas.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

The project had an initial life span of one year, from March 2017 to March 2018. However, due to a number of bottlenecks, a number of outstanding activities required additional time for implementation. The process of hiring consultants took longer than anticipated, due to difficulties in finding consultants with both the required technical expertise and a working familiarity with the already established VGGT institutional framework. The initial project manager recruited for the project eventually departed, creating a vacuum until a new manager could be recruited. The project was further delayed by the 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections, which saw the temporary suspension of a number of activities. Following the successful elections, a set of new ministers, parliamentarians and district leaders needed first to be oriented and brought up to speed with the project objectives and VGGT principles in order to ensure political support and government ownership. VGGT and NLP sensitization also needed to be extended to two new districts (Karene and Falaba) that were not among the originally scheduled 14 target districts. Despite these bottlenecks, all of the activities set out in the work plan were implemented and the three project outputs achieved. During the implementation, most of the targets set out in the results framework were exceeded.

The major risk associated with the project was the absence of political will and government commitment, especially in light of the political changes in the ministries and district-level local government. This risk was identified during the project design as being likely to have a negative impact upon the implementation of some key activities of the project. In order to minimize this risk, the project team provided regular updates and briefings to all members of the parliamentary oversight committee for land, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Briefings for all new ministers involved in the IMTF were expeditiously conducted in order to bring them up to speed with the project and to sustain political will.



FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

Capacity-building is an incremental process. The implementation of the NLP requires continued strengthening of capacities of all stakeholders from government, district councils and civil society on responsible land governance. It would be important for the Government to scale up innovative fit-for-purpose land administration approaches, such as the use of Open Tenure/Solutions for Open Land Administration (SOLA) mapping technologies, in order to increase cadastral coverage and protect the customary land rights of all people, in particular rural women.

SUSTAINABILITY

The strong partnership between civil society, the Government, academia and the private sector, at both national and district levels, created a sense of ownership with a view to enhancing the sustainability of the project's outcomes beyond its implementation period. The replication of the VGGT institutional framework by the MLHE in the implementation of the NLP is an indication of the Government's continued ownership. The emerging partnerships between the private sector, civil society and the Government to implement responsible agricultural investments in line with the VGGT principles will enhance sustainability in the country. For example, the successful collaboration between the civil society organization Solidaridad and the private investor Natural Habitat in Zimmi demonstrated the practical implementation of the VGGT principles in large-scale land-based investments in Sierra Leone.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Assessment of the effectiveness of fisheries Community Management Associations (CMAs) in protection of Territorial Use Rights (TUR) and the coastal areas. S. Sallieu. March 2018. 80 pp.
- ❑ Evolving Customary Land Law and Practices in Sierra Leone. E. Saffa Abdulai. April 2018. 44 pp.
- ❑ Issues and Options Report on Customary Land Law Practices in Sierra Leone. E. Saffa Abdulai. April 2018. 17 pp.
- ❑ Statutory recognition of customary land rights: Lessons for Sierra Leone. T. Mebratu-Tsegaye. May 2018. 53 pp.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	<p>Improved governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests, contributing to the eradication of hunger and poverty, to sustainable development and to the sustainable use of the environment.</p> <p>Food security and household income of people improved through the sustainable use of natural resources.</p>							
Outcome	Sustained implementation of the VGGT in Sierra Leone							
	Indicator	Number of institutions implementing policies that are aligned with the principles of the VGGT.						
	Baseline	0						
	End Target	Policies from at least two natural resource-related institutions, aligned with the VGGT, are being implemented.						
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	<p>Achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive National Land Policy aligned to VGGT principles was developed, endorsed by cabinet and launched by the former President Ernest Bai Koroma in 2017. • The Fisheries Policy and the new Fisheries Act were aligned with the VGGT principles. • A new AIAP for Sierra Leone was developed in line with the VGGT. • Development of the Forestry Act was initiated. <p>Continued strengthening of institutional capacity is needed to implement the new land, fisheries and forestry policies in line with the VGGT principles.</p> <p>There is also a need for increased sensitization and awareness-raising on issues and measures for promoting responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forestry at both national and local levels.</p>						
Output 1	A multistakeholder platform that continues to promote, implement and mainstream the VGGT is established							
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="352 1408 812 1458">Indicators</th> <th data-bbox="815 1408 1249 1458">Target</th> <th data-bbox="1252 1408 1422 1458">Achieved</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="352 1462 812 1760">Number of VGGT committee meetings held on a timely basis</td> <td data-bbox="815 1462 1249 1760"> <p>Quarterly IMTF and Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Monthly Technical Working Group meetings with additional participation of the Office of the Administration General and the Ministry of Mineral Resources.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1252 1462 1422 1760">Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Indicators	Target	Achieved	Number of VGGT committee meetings held on a timely basis	<p>Quarterly IMTF and Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Monthly Technical Working Group meetings with additional participation of the Office of the Administration General and the Ministry of Mineral Resources.</p>	Yes	
Indicators	Target	Achieved						
Number of VGGT committee meetings held on a timely basis	<p>Quarterly IMTF and Steering Committee meetings.</p> <p>Monthly Technical Working Group meetings with additional participation of the Office of the Administration General and the Ministry of Mineral Resources.</p>	Yes						
Baseline	0							
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One IMTF meeting held due to changes in government. • Six joint Technical Working Group and Steering Committee meetings held. The target was to hold monthly meetings but, due to the general election in the country, certain activities and meetings were suspended. • Invitations to join the IMTF were sent to other line Ministries, including the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources and Ministry of Water, among others. • A fifth MSP workshop, attracting over 180 participants, was successfully organized. 							

Activity 1.1	Develop a tracking system for the implementation of the recommendations/ communiqué of the 2016/2017 MSP workshop		
	Achieved	Yes	
Comments	A tracking system was developed for the implementation of the recommendation/ communiqué of the fifth MSP workshop on the VGGT. Efforts should be made to ensure that the tracking system is regularly updated with the progress made in implementation of the recommendations/ communiqué of the fifth MSP workshop on the VGGT.		
Activity 1.2	Hold quarterly meetings of the VGGT IMTF and Steering Committee and monthly meetings of the VGGT Technical Working Group		
	Achieved	Partially	
Comments	The target was to hold three IMTF, three Steering Committee and 10 Technical Working Group meetings but, due to the general election, a number of activities were suspended. As a result, one IMTF meeting and six joint meetings of the Steering Committee and Technical Working Group were successfully held. There is a need for increased government commitment to integrate the implementation of VGGT activities within ministries' budgets.		
Output 2	Stakeholders in Parliament and at district level sensitized on the VGGT and implementation of the NLP		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of districts and parliamentary committees that are being sensitized on the VGGT and NLP. Number of VGGT and NLP sensitization workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 districts, four parliamentary committees, 14 workshops, five private sector investment. 16 districts sensitized. All four parliamentary committees for land, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, comprising 60 parliamentarians, trained. More than seven private investors trained on VGGT and new AIAP. A total of 20 VGGT training and sensitization workshops were conducted throughout the 16 districts of Sierra Leone. 	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	The achievements exceeded the initial target. Two additional new districts (Karene and Falaba) were created. VGGT and NLP sensitization should be increased at chiefdom level to target local communities and landowners, thereby enhancing nationwide ownership and acceptance.		

Activity 2.1	Undertake VGGT and NLP sensitization meetings and workshops in all 14 districts of Sierra Leone		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 14 districts, including two additional new districts, were sensitized on the VGGT and NLP. More than 2 000 stakeholders across the entire country have increased knowledge of the VGGT and NLP. <p>There is a need to popularize the VGGT and NLP in the four main local languages of Sierra Leone, namely Mende, Temne, Limba and Krio.</p>	
Activity 2.2	Undertake VGGT and NLP sensitization meetings and workshop with the relevant parliamentary committees		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Over 60 parliamentarians from the four oversight committees on land, agriculture, fisheries and forestry have increased knowledge on VGGT and NLP.</p> <p>The establishment of the proposed Parliamentary Action Group (PAG) on VGGT should be supported. The PAG aims to reach out to other relevant committees of Parliament.</p>	
Activity 2.3	Undertake private sector dialogue for VGGT compliance		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than seven key private sector investors were sensitized on the VGGT and NLP. 35 participants (the majority from the private sector) trained on responsible agricultural investment. A number of dialogues organized on the new AIAP in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Investments and Export Promotions Agency and the MAF. Technical Working Group on Responsible Land-Based Investment established. The Group meets every month. <p>As follow up, the new AIAP should be tested with a select number of private investors.</p>	
Output 3	Support for the implementation of the newly approved key natural resources-related sector policies (the NLP and the Fisheries Policy)		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Research and evidence supporting implementation of the policies conducted and validated by stakeholders	Four research studies and issue papers (three on land and one on fisheries) conducted and validated	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	<p>The following research studies were conducted and validated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolving Customary Land Law and Practices in Sierra Leone. Issues and Options Report on Customary Land Law Practices in Sierra Leone. Statutory recognition of customary land rights: Lessons for Sierra Leone. Assessment of the effectiveness of fisheries Community Management Associations (CMAs) in protection of Territorial Use Rights (TUR) and the coastal areas. 		

Activity 3.1	Print and distribute the NLP and the NLP Implementation Plan/Framework	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>The initial target was to print and distribute 400 copies of the full version of the NLP, 400 copies of the NLP Implementation Plan and 400 copies of the abridged version. In the end, the project printed and distributed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 000 copies of the NLP full version. • 1 700 copies of the abridged version of the NLP. • 600 copies of the NLP Implementation Plan. <p>The abridged version should be printed and distributed in local languages.</p>
Activity 3.2	Undertake legal research on customary rights and rights holders and how they could be brought into the legislation while being adjusted in line with the Constitution and NLP	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A legal study on evolving customary land law and practices in Sierra Leone was conducted
Activity 3.3	Draft a stocktaking paper on regional experiences (Liberia, Kenya, Botswana, Mozambique and others) on how customary rights are recognized and protected there	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A stocktaking paper on statutory recognition of customary land rights with regional experiences from other countries was developed
Activity 3.4	Prepare a legal Issues and Options paper on the types of provisions needed to provide legal recognition, protection and registration of land tenure rights for communities, groups and individuals, in ways that are in conformity with human rights, the VGGT, the new Constitution and the NLP	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	An Issues and Options paper on Customary Land Law Practices was developed
Activity 3.5	Support the implementation of the Fisheries Policy by developing an implementation plan for the policy and undertaking a policy coherence assessment	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A comprehensive study assessing the effectiveness of fisheries CMAs in protection of TURs and the coastal areas was conducted

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