



Increase the use of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure among CSOs and Grassroots Organizations

Philippines

The *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT) set out **internationally-accepted principles and standards** for responsible practices, providing a framework for governments, the private sector and civil society to use when developing policies and programmes for improving food security. FAO has been working in more than 58 countries, providing technical assistance for awareness raising, multi-stakeholder platforms, training and capacity development, and support to the assessment, formulation and implementation of national policies and laws.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are **key partners** in this effort. It has been recognized time and again that ensuring the same level of information and capability among

stakeholders leads to more meaningful participation in dialogue processes.

In this project (2015-2018), FAO has worked in 21 countries (see map below) through partnerships with national CSOs in carrying out awareness-raising and capacity development workshops to:

- Enhance civil society's **knowledge and understanding of the VGGT**;
- Increase **network and advocacy skills** to defend their tenure rights and **strengthen partnerships** for wider application of the VGGT at all levels;
- Build capacities for **effective participation in policy processes** related to tenure reform processes and national VGGT multi-stakeholder platforms.

The main product of this project has been the **capacity development manual** for CSOs, *Putting the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure into Practice: A Learning Guide for Civil Society* in partnership with FIAN International, which draws upon the *People's Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests*, developed by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty



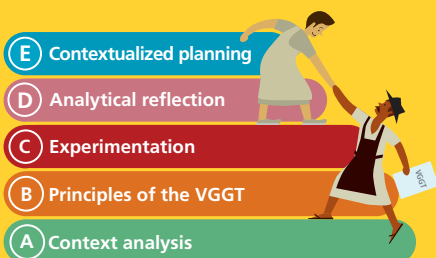
(IPC). In 2017, an adaptation of this Guide was developed to integrate the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*, the roll-out of which is currently in a pilot phase.

Local civil society partners played a key role in the successful implementation of the project. With their knowledge of the local context, the Learning Guide could be adapted to link the VGGT to on-going processes within the country.

As part of FAO's global VGGT implementation programme, this project identified specific opportunities for potential or ongoing processes of tenure reform, and/or specific CSO networks or multi-stakeholder processes where FAO input would be most effective.

LEARNING GUIDE

The Learning Guide uses **participatory and experiential learning, based on participants' active interaction and their direct experience on tenure**. The methodology follows a modular learning process of five main elements to gradually build the user's knowledge and capacities. This **modularity** allows for the guide to be adapted to the audience's needs, including knowledge level, CSO objectives, and specificities of the country tenure context.



ACTIVITIES AT COUNTRY LEVEL

AFRICA: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania. **ASIA & PACIFIC:** Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines.

EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA: Kyrgyzstan. **LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN:** Colombia, Guatemala.



Philippines

When it comes to principles of tenure rights, the Philippines has a fairly strongly policy framework in place as based on the country's constitution of 1987. However, despite the constitutional framework, achieving security of tenure for all, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, remains a challenge.

Tenure insecurity in the country is multi-faceted in nature. The increasing demand for investment in agribusiness combined with climate change and rapid urban growth are putting pressure on land and other natural resources. Multiple tenure systems, overlapping land classification and conflicting agency mandates contribute to tenure insecurity as well as a lack of transparency in transaction and land registration systems. Climate change is increasing the number of natural disasters and displacements, however country's policies do not have specific provisions protecting tenure rights of affected people as well as host communities in case of resettlement.

The challenges, however, are not limited to the land sector. In the fisheries sector, the Fishery Code of 1998 declares that achieving food security should be an overriding consideration in the utilization and management of the fishery resources. Municipal fisherfolk should not only have preferential use of municipal waters, but also preferential locations for their communities' settlement areas near to fishing grounds and docking areas (Code Section 21 and 108 respectively). However, the reality is that their access to fishing grounds is often hampered by tourism investments and typhoons damages.

Another sector of society affected by tenure insecurity are Indigenous Peoples (IPs), who are estimated around 12 – 15 million in the Philippines. Most IPs do not have formal recognition of their traditional lands, thus limiting their ability to freely conduct their livelihood activities. In 1997, the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) was approved, recognizing the rights of IPs over their ancestral domains and provided for a process of land titling through Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT). It provided also Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a compulsory process to lease licenses for the use of indigenous lands. However, ambiguity in the existing law and administration inefficiency hinder the recognition of IP's ownership rights.

Partnering with civil society

In May 2016, some questions had been raised with regard to protection of tenure rights in the country and the agenda of the newly elected government. For this reason, an effort was made to raise awareness and disseminate information on the VGGT among civil society and grassroots organizations to provide additional tools for protecting tenure rights, enhancing advocacy capacities and strengthen their position to effectively influence tenure-related national policies.

To further support this effort, FAO partnered with the **Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development** (ANGOC), a regional association of national and regional NGO networks, based in the Philippines. As a partner, ANGOC provided a great level of expertise on food security and participatory governance, and their extensive network of organizations working throughout the Philippines provided a great asset to FAO in the implementation of this project.

Activities in the country

ANGOC organized one national training of trainers (ToT) with 21 participants from CSOs, fishery, IPs and farmers organizations. During the project, the partner also established a collaboration with the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC). The NAPC was created by the government in 1998 to strengthen the collaboration between the government, the private sector and civil society constituencies (fisherfolks, farmers, women, children, urban poor, etc.) in the field of

© ***The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development*** (ANGOC) is a regional association of national and regional networks of non-government organizations (NGO) in Asia, actively engaged in food security, agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance and rural development. ANGOC member networks and partners work in 14 Asian countries with an effective reach of some 3,000 NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs).



social reform and poverty alleviation. In order to further collaboration and cross-sectoral links, 5 NAPC representatives attended the ToT and were successfully trained.

In support of these activities, several case studies were produced and analysed varying from commercialization of the foreshore, to post-disaster resettlement to IPs ancestral domain. In addition, during the ToT, activities to raise awareness on tenure governance in the context of natural disasters as well as on the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries* (VGSSF) were identified – which are currently implemented in collaboration with FAO.

In addition, a series of information, education and communication (IEC) material was produced as a complement to the Learning Guide and to further disseminate the VGGT. The briefers present the basic content of the VGGT and how they can be applied in

the context of Philippines, taking note of the major points raised during the ToT and highlighting the main sectorial concerns that the VGGT can address. These materials were made available and disseminated amongst communities in English and Filipino.

A promotional video was made documenting the ToT and is being used when explaining the VGGT during meetings with government agencies and grassroots organizations. Copies have been disseminated during policy dialogues and network meetings.

Links with other VGGT initiatives

The results of the project have shown positive impact in CSO participation in other VGGT projects and initiatives (both directly and indirectly connected), which were taking place in the country.

Starting in June 2013, ANGOC, GIZ-Philippines, National Convergence Initiative (NCI) and FAO Philippines Country Office co-organized the “Stakeholder Briefing on the Voluntary Guidelines and other Land Governance Mechanisms” to provide an overview of the VGGT. Conveying more than 100 representatives from Government, CSOs and development partners, the forum endorsed the need for further promoting the VGGT.

The need for awareness-raising of the VGGT was highlighted as a key activity, particularly for people’s organizations and social movements. As such, the ToT built upon the previous initiative and was instrumental to the implementation of the FAO project *Mainstreaming the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure* which aimed to contribute to the government’s capacity to strengthen land tenure governance consistent with the VGGT. After the ToT, ANGOC was able to organize an orientation seminar on the VGGT and VGSSF among national government agencies. For the CSO trainees, sessions were conducted in their respective organizations to disseminate the results of the training.

In support of CSOs, the government aims to mainstream the VGGT through proposed land laws and policies. The Land Management Bureau (LMB) acknowledges their initiatives in advocating for the passage of land related laws, especially the National Land Use Bill, which has long been pending in Congress. Due to its non-passage, the country lacks a national framework over the use of land resources. Therefore, the government commits itself to mainstreaming the VGGT in policy development and implementation for the social, economic and environmental development of the country.



ACTIVITIES

- ◎ **Collaboration established with the National Anti-Poverty Commission.**
- ◎ **1 national ToT in Tagaytay City.**
- ◎ **Analysis of case studies.**
- ◎ **Production and dissemination of information, education and communication (IEC) material in English and Filipino on the VGGT.**
- ◎ **Production of 1 video documenting the Training of Trainers.***



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Main areas of impact

In addition to the links with other VGGT initiatives, the concrete capacity development given through this project has positively impacted a number of areas within civil society’s tenure work at country level, in particular: building stronger CSO and cross-sector networks; finding cross-sectoral synergies; further disseminating information to grassroots level; and identifying links to key national policies.

Strengthening CSO networks

The VGGT have provided an additional opportunity for policy discussions with government agencies. The dissemination of the IEC materials contributed in building awareness and interest on the guidelines.

* <https://youtu.be/HQllxmfc55Q>

Philippines

During the ToT, a Technical Working Group (TWG) was established to follow up on the activities included in the action plans elaborated by the participants, to mobilize resources and to continue the advocacy and the implementation of the VGGT. Members of the TWG have served as resource persons to explain the VGGT in different network meetings while some of them are involved in the conduct of studies in pursuit of the VGGT implementation (i.e., link of tenure with climate change). In addition, this group has allowed for collaboration among different sectors to be fostered, thereby strengthening the efficiency of their advocacy work. A case in point is the campaign on the passage of the National Land Use Act. Using the lens of the VGGT in assessing the draft bill, the various principles strengthened the case for a multi-stakeholder, inter-sectoral approach to land use planning.

Links to national policies

Each of the three main sectorial groups created during the workshop, namely farmers, fisher communities and Indigenous People, developed the basis of an assessment tool aimed at evaluating policies and programs related to their respective sectors through the lens of the VGGT. The starting point would be an analysis of the government's new Economic Agenda and what would be the potential effects on tenure security, in particular that of smallholders.

Reaching grassroots levels

In order to further disseminate the VGGT at community level, IEC material was created in English and Filipino. The video of the ToT served also as a key support tool for those wishing to replicate the training at community level.

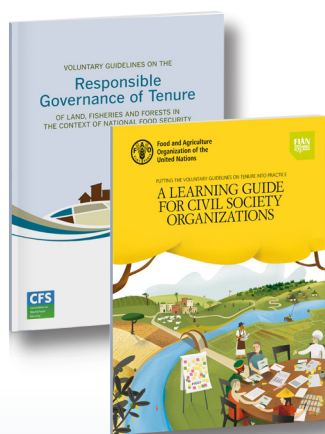
After the training, the VGGT were applied in the ongoing campaign:

1. Completion of land acquisition and distribution of the comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.
2. Approval of the Indigenous Communities' Conservation Areas (ICCA).
3. Approval of the National Land Use Act.

Specifically, CSO participants have used the VGGT as an enhanced advocacy instrument given that the Government of the Philippines endorsed the Guidelines. Various land-related bills (i.e., extension of the notice of coverage for the land acquisition and distribution, indigenous communities' conservation areas, national land use) were reviewed, subjecting them to VGGT principles. Henceforth, refinements were made to strengthen the proposed bills.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Strong **collaboration** with ANGOC as well as ability to capitalize on the involvement of NAPC to strengthen not only CSO networks but also cross-sector networks.
- ✓ Production of variety of **support learning material**, in addition to learning guide, available in English and Pilipino, allowed for further outreach.
- ✓ Importance of ensuring **further trainings and VGGT awareness raising**, also with other sectors including government officials, at all levels.



For more information on this project and FAO's work on the VGGT see:

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/increase-use-of-vgg-t-in-civil-society/en>
<http://www.fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/CSOMOB>

All information included in this leaflet is based on documentation produced through the project by FAO and implementing partners.

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