

GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Project Information

Project Title

Addressing tenure governance and gender equality in land rights to strengthen LDN initiatives

Region	GEF Project ID
Global	11501
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Global	MSP
Kyrgyz Republic	
Sri Lanka	
South Sudan	
Paraguay	
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency Project ID
FAO	749458
Project Executing Entity(s)	Project Executing Type
Landesa	CSO
TMG Research gGmbH	CSO
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources (Kyrgyzstan) INDERT (Paraguay) MADES (Paraguay) Ministry of Environment and Forestry (South Sudan) Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (South Sudan) Ministry of Environment (Sri Lanka)	Government
International Land Coalition ILC	CSO
FAO	GEF Agency
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
Land Degradation	1/20/2025
Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	36
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
2,000,000.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)
190,000.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
2,190,000.00	3,275,000.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)

50,000.00	4,500.00
Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)	
2,244,500.00	

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No

Project Sector (CCM Only)

AFOLU

Taxonomy

Land Degradation Neutrality, Land Degradation, Focal Areas, Sustainable Development Goals, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Participation, Type of Engagement, Stakeholders, Behavior change, Communications, Public Campaigns, Awareness Raising, Beneficiaries, Non-Governmental Organization, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Women groups, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Participation and leadership, Gender results areas, Access and control over natural resources, Indicators to measure change, Learning, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Capacity Development, South-South, Knowledge Exchange, Peer-to-Peer, North-South, Conference

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

This project seeks to develop capacities to strengthen tenure security and gender equality in tenure governance for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). **The initiative addresses critical challenges in sustainable land management, emphasizing equitable access to land resources for marginalized groups, especially women, as a pathway to achieve LDN objectives.** The holistic and integrated focus of this project, allows project activities to address some of the invisible barriers to LDN—tenure and women’s access to tenure— which remains a nascent area of work in many countries.

The project is aligned with the GEF LD Focal Area strategy and will help to create an enabling environment to support LDN target implementation in pilot countries, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka, by strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders to implement LDN principles, good practices and support policy decisions that enable countries to meet international commitments under the UNCCD. The project is transformative in that it will leverage global expertise to develop novel methodologies/tools and approaches that can be adapted to diverse national contexts for improved tenure governance for LDN. The tools will be piloted through this initiative in four very different contexts and the learning will be shared to be adapted and replicated in other countries. The project eventually aspires to deliver a flexible and simple methodology (component1) for future LDN initiatives to effectively address tenure and gender equality to land related

challenges. The project embraces a multi partners approach at global and national levels as a way to broaden its outcomes and impact.

Under **Outcome 1**, the project will design and roll out a **combined assessment tool and capacity development package** tailored to the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus. This will empower policymakers, decision-makers, and practitioners with evidence-based methodologies to assess and address tenure governance challenges while integrating gender-sensitive approaches into LDN investments.

Under **Outcome 2**, the project focuses on equipping land actors with skills and knowledge to integrate tenure security and women's access to land, into national LDN strategies. This includes building capacity through national-level interventions, multi-stakeholder dialogues, application of tools/methodologies developed under Outcome 1, and participatory processes, fostering inclusive governance at both local and national levels.

Outcome 3 promotes **South-South and Triangular Cooperation** to scale successful approaches to tenure governance and gender equality through knowledge-sharing. Lessons learned and evidence-based knowledge products will be developed and shared through global platforms, strengthening peer learning and collaboration among participating countries, with the goal of inspiring other countries to engage into addressing the LDN-gender-tenure nexus.

The project aims to deliver long-term benefits by improving the governance of land tenure, addressing gender disparities, and fostering sustainable land management, ultimately contributing to achieving LDN and advancing global commitments to land restoration and equity.

Project Description Overview

Project Objective

To develop capacities to strengthen responsible, inclusive, and gender-equitable tenure governance in LDN initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka

Project Components

Component 1: Inclusive, integrated and informed decision-making

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
150,000.00	343,875.00
Outcome:	

1.1 LDN policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners widely use a combined assessment tool and capacity development package on the LDN tenure-gender equality nexus

Output:

1.1.1. A co-designed combined assessment tool for the LDN- tenure-gender equality nexus at national and local levels developed

1.1.2. A co – designed capacity development package to assess and plan interventions across the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus developed

Component 2: National-level evidence-based implementation

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,134,000.00	1,873,300.00

Outcome:

2.1 Land actors in 4 pilot countries are equipped to integrate tenure security and women's access to land in LDN initiatives

Output:

2.1.1 Country and local-level assessments of the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus conducted

2.1.2 Inclusive gender-responsive multistakeholder dialogues conducted

2.1.3 Tailor-made national level capacity development interventions rolled out

Component 3: Knowledge Management and Learning

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
516,182.00	563,598.00

Outcome:

3.1 South-South and Triangular Cooperation and exchange of lessons learnt is enhanced, lessons and knowledge are captured, developed, and shared for scaling of tenure governance and gender equality in access to land in LDN investments

Output:

3.1.1 Global spaces for knowledge management, peer learning, and triangular cooperation between participating countries and partners are used

3.1.2 Evidence-based knowledge products generated and multiple events organized on the integration of governance of tenure and gender equality into LDN initiatives

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
58,000.00	196,500.00

Outcome:

Project progress, gender and other results are monitored and evaluated for timely delivery and lessons

Output:

A project monitoring and evaluation plan is developed and delivered

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Inclusive, integrated and informed decision-making	150,000.00	343,875.00
Component 2: National-level evidence-based implementation	1,134,000.00	1,873,300.00
Component 3: Knowledge Management and Learning	516,182.00	563,598.00
M&E	58,000.00	196,500.00
Subtotal	1,858,182.00	2,977,273.00
Project Management Cost	141,818.00	297,727.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	2,000,000.00	3,275,000.00

Please provide Justification

N/A

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

1.1 Land Degradation- The Challenge

Land degradation is a pressing global challenge which affects food security, climate change, and biodiversity loss. Most assessments show that between 20-40% of the global land area is degraded or degrading to varying degrees.^{[1]¹} Over 60 % of human-induced degradation is estimated to occur on agricultural land and nearly 30% occurs in areas covered with trees and forests^{[2]²}, already affecting more than three billion people, mostly poor rural communities, small-scale farmers, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other at-risk groups.^{[3]³} According to 2022 figures, approximately 34% of agriculture and pasture lands worldwide were degraded, affecting 3.2 billion people negatively and increasing the vulnerability of people who directly depend on land-based goods and services for their basic needs and livelihoods.^{[4]⁴}

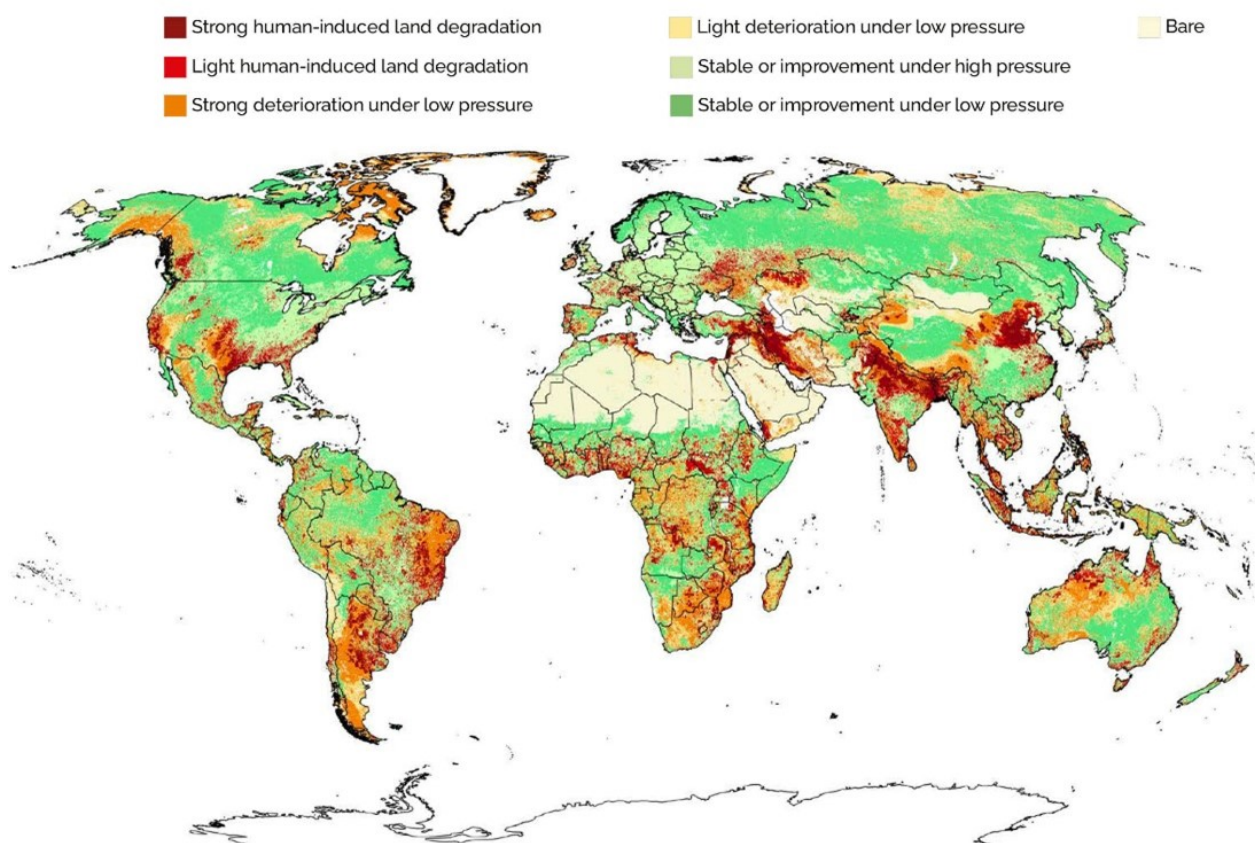


Figure Land degradation classes based on the severity of human-induced pressures and deteriorating trends, 2015 Source: FAO

Communities and households that are directly affected by degraded land are more prone to experience decreased agricultural productivity and water scarcity, loss of livelihoods, poverty, and food insecurity. They are also more vulnerable to disasters and extreme weather events, e.g., droughts, floods, storms, or fires. Local communities, women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples - directly depending on the land for their well-being and livelihoods - are particularly affected by the effects of land degradation. These groups often depend on customary land rights for their livelihoods, and their land use practices support biodiversity, healthier soils, forests, and water supplies. They are central actors for equitable and sustainable development.

Land inequality has been increasing and per capita availability of farmland has been decreasing^{[5]⁵}, with the richest 10% of rural populations capturing 60% and the bottom 50% of rural populations capturing a mere 3% of land value.^{[6]⁶} The worsening state of land inequality causes conflict and further jeopardizes access to land, land rights security, decision-making capacity regarding land, and, subsequently, the living conditions of those who live and depend on the land.

Global Response to Land Degradation and Considerations of Land Tenure

The global community has rallied around the need to address issues related to land degradation, in particular the drivers that contribute to it, or which prevent Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). At the COP 14 held in 2019, parties identified **land tenure**, among others, as one of the areas to work on to combat further land degradation and adopted the decision 26 recognizes *“that responsible land governance is a fundamental component of sustainable land management and is important to addressing desertification/land degradation and drought”* and further encourages the parties *“to follow the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security principles”*.

The inclusion of land tenure considerations by countries at the UNCCD COP was motivated **by the recognition that secure land tenure is vital for sustainable land management and restoration efforts**. Secure tenure ensures that communities have a recognized and safeguarded stake in the land, which motivates them to invest in long-term sustainable practices and prevents land degradation caused by overexploitation, unsustainable agriculture, or resource conflicts.^{[7]⁷}

At COP15, countries emphasized the need for secure land tenure, particularly for marginalized groups like women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs). Secure tenure reduces vulnerability, allows for individual agency, enhances community engagement, and facilitates the adoption of sustainable land management (SLM) practices. It also promotes gender equality by empowering women to access

resources and make decisions about land use, a key component in achieving LDN targets, and can promote greater social cohesion and rights. The UNCCD and FAO developed further guidance to integrate tenure security into LDN implementation aligned with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT)^[8] and have supported parties in raising awareness and engaging into national multi stakeholders dialogue.

While Parties have supported including land tenure (in the COP), and while international fora recognize the need to integrate land tenure, and in particular strengthening women's tenure rights, to achieve LDN, **there remains substantial capacity, technical and political gaps within countries to address the persisting challenges in securing land tenure.**

Responding to the Gaps in Addressing LDN by Including Gender and Tenure Considerations

As a result, **this project has been designed to support countries towards achieving their LDN objectives, with a specialized lens toward tenure, and in particular the inclusion and improvement of women's access to and tenure security, as a means to combat land degradation.** The project will support assessments, multi-stakeholder dialogues and capacity building and action at the national level in four pilot countries—Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka, with the potential for upscaling and global uptake: please see Section 2 for details on how this will be achieved. **The core underpinning of the project is that supporting LDN through investment in land tenure security and improved gender access to land is both strategic and impactful,** particularly for the following reasons (the project justification is provided in greater detail in Section 1.2):

- ***Secure land tenure is essential to sustainable land management (SLM)***- When individuals and communities hold secure rights to their land, they are more able to invest in long-term restoration efforts, such as agroforestry, soil conservation, sustainable agricultural practices, and are able to maintain efforts and investment to sustain these, as it contributes to their own livelihoods, communities and well-being. This sense of custodianship can reduce degradation risks and improve the land's productivity and resilience, making it more likely to support food production, water management/retention, and biodiversity to contribute to LDN. This, of course, is in tandem with the appropriate capacity building and knowledge-sharing on the benefits of sustainable land management on people's futures.
- ***Women play a critical role in agriculture and stewardship and their access to land is often limited by legal, cultural, and economic barriers.*** By improving gender access to land, through improved policies and projects, women can participate more fully in land-related decisions and benefit from land-based resources. In developing countries, women make up 45% of the agricultural labour force, ranging from 20% in Latin America to up to 60% in parts of Africa and Asia.^[9] Small farmers, largely women, produce 80% of the food in Africa on just 15% of the agricultural land, and control 80% of the seeds produced and exchanged on small farms. With greater to access to land and agricultural assets, there could be a result of an increase in agricultural production and a reduction food insecurity. This is because women reinvest up to 90% of their earnings back into their households – an investment in nutrition, food, healthcare, school, and income-generating activities

for their family, which helps to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty,^{[10]¹⁰}

 and strengthens community resilience against environmental challenges, while contributing to other indirect socioeconomic impacts.

- ***Secure land rights, and gender equity in land access, create economic stability and encourage sustainable livelihoods, which directly support food security.*** When land users are secure in their ability to access, use, and invest in their land, their vision is likely to be more long-term, with greater incentive for sustainable agricultural practices that increase crop yields and ensure a stable food supply. This not only benefits local economies but also builds resilience against climate-induced food crises. It also moves past the short-term thinking of extracting natural resources for short-term gain. In northern Ethiopia, for example, increased tenure security led to more investments by farmers in land, and productivity increased by 40%.^{[11]¹¹} Appropriate livelihood and food production strategies along with tenure, can support and incentivize sustainable land management strategies.
- ***Investing in tenure security and equitable land access supports climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, water conservation and sustainable land management efforts-*** Secure land tenure enables communities to engage in adaptive land management practices, such as water conservation, crop diversification, and reforestation, all of which are essential to mitigating climate risks. Gender-inclusive approaches enhance these efforts by ensuring that women, who are often highly vulnerable to climate impacts, have the resources and rights needed to participate fully in climate resilience measures.
- ***Investments in land tenure result in economic and social returns on investment-*** Current data on land tenure and land-based investments demonstrates that investments in land tenure have resulted in clear economic, environmental and social returns on investment.^{[12]¹²} Data also showcases the enormous cost of inaction and how-land based investments can be jeopardised if land tenure insecurity is not addressed from the outset. When the cost of inaction in tenure security is coupled with the increasing impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and anthropogenic challenges, the impacts can be detrimental, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable communities reliant on land for their basic needs in livelihoods. For governments and donors, actions to improve tenure security represent a relevant investment: in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, for example, the benefit to the economy of a single land registration has been found to be over USD 16 in revenue for each dollar invested.^{[13]¹³} Investing in actions to safeguard or improve land tenure security can also offer attractive returns on investment for the private sector^{[14]¹⁴} and has been identified as one of the best investments to enable countries to deliver on the SDGs. The multiple benefits of action on tenure security translate into a reduction of government spending on food security, poverty alleviation and other SDGs.^{[15]¹⁵}

The Challenges of Land Tenure

Land tenure is defined as “*the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land,*” which includes other natural resources such as water and

trees.^[16]¹⁶ Tenure systems includes the formal and informal rules, organizations and processes that determine the rights, responsibilities and duties concerning land for an array of tenure rights such as access, use, management, exclusion or alienation. Land tenure systems determine who can use what resources for how long, and under what conditions^[17]¹⁷. These have an immediate effect on land restoration, defined as the capacity to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation.

Tenure has a complex relationship with land use and may be positive or negative depending on the tenure system used. As defined in the VGGT, the following principles of responsible governance of tenure can help to improve tenure systems through an holistic approach and by balancing diverging interests among various stakeholders. However, challenges in land tenure governance remain in many countries. These stem from:

- inadequate recognition of legitimate tenure rights;
- difficulties in safeguarding these rights;
- obstacles in delivering them through land administration, impeding access to justice and exacerbating conflict and corruption;
- weak enforcement of global principles, coupled with fragile institutions and mounting land pressure

This hampers responsible land management, which could otherwise deliver essential ecosystem services, employment opportunities, increased incomes, and food security.

In South Sudan for instance, one of the pilot countries in this project, the greenbelt ecological zone is a food basket supporting a population of approximately 11.3 million. According to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index, South Sudan was ranked among the five most affected countries in the world in 2017^[18]¹⁸. Climate change has increased the natural risks related to floods, droughts, and land degradation; and it is now the fundamental driver of livelihood insecurity and conflict. Control, access and use of land^[19]¹⁹ and natural resources are historically the causes and drivers of intra- and inter-communal conflict in South Sudan^[20]²⁰. Migration and competition over land, water and dwindling resources tend to lead to increased intra/inter-communal conflicts, human-wildlife conflicts and rangeland deforestation and land degradation with a disproportionate effect on women and girls land rights that have been already affected by food insecurity, displacement and the impacts of natural hazards and climatic shocks. Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have escalated over the years. Further, some 2.4 million people remain

internally displaced due to conflict, flooding, and migration pressures from conflict in Sudan.^{[21]²¹} (For examples from all the pilot countries please refer to Section 1.3).

An IPCC special report highlights how land tenure insecurity hampers behaviors that support sustainable rural development and resilience to shocks, including adoption of improved farming practices and long-term livelihood investments.^{[22]²²} For example, country analysis covering the period from 2000 – 2014 confirms that 50 % of the deforestation in Peru occurs in forest areas where the tenure regimes are unclear; this involves approximately 20 million hectares.^{[23]²³} Similarly, deforestation in public forests in the Brazilian Amazon are likely linked to a regulatory environment that has encouraged land speculation in areas where there is no clear land tenure. This pattern suggests that the lack of governance has become an increasingly important factor driving deforestation. In contrast, Indigenous Territories and Protected Natural Areas had the lowest emissions, demonstrating their effectiveness in preventing deforestation and maintaining carbon stocks.^{[24]²⁴}

It is widely accepted therefore that **land degradation drivers** – whether poor land-use management, overextraction of natural resources or unpredictable climate patterns – are intensified by insecure land tenure, unsustainable farming systems, non-calibrated policies, and persistent social and gender inequalities. In South Sudan for instance, drivers include the expansion of subsistence farming agriculture; monocrop plantations; logging, charcoal making and fuel wood collection; overgrazing; fires; mineral exploration; urbanization; waste disposal; water over-abstraction and role of the military in soil contamination. The underlying drivers such as population pressure, water resource challenges (drought/floods) causing internal displacement, poverty and unemployment; land rights insecurity; political instability; lack of alternative sources of livelihood; lack of environmental health awareness as well as corruption and unclear institutional roles, continue to undermine improved land management and will be addressed through project implementation.

Tenure insecurity – a major driver of gender inequality

The UNCCD’s Science Policy Interface warns that in “most developing countries, land degradation impacts men and women differently, mainly due to unequal access to land, water, credit, extension services and technology,” underscoring the need to address the persistent gender inequalities. Land degradation impacts women and men differently due to variations in their roles, responsibilities, access to resources, and decision-making power. These differences are influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors and can exacerbate gender inequalities. Some of the differentiated impacts include:

- **Food Insecurity**- Women, particularly in rural areas, rely on land for subsistence farming. Degraded land results in lower crop yields, directly threatening their ability to feed their families.

- **Limited access to resources**- Women frequently lack secure land tenure and control over resources, limiting their ability to adapt to land degradation by adopting sustainable practices or accessing financing.
- **Health and safety risks**- Land degradation often leads to scarcity of clean water and increased exposure to environmental hazards, which disproportionately affects women due to their caregiving roles.
- **Increased labour and workload**- Women are often responsible for household tasks such as fetching water, gathering firewood, and growing food. Land degradation reduces the availability of these resources, forcing women to travel longer distances and spend more time fulfilling their duties.
- **Economic marginalization**- With degraded land and limited alternative income sources, women in affected areas may experience greater poverty and reduced economic opportunities.

Land tenure is significant driver of gender inequality due to social, cultural, and legal factors that disproportionately disadvantage women. These factors reinforce systemic barriers that limit women's access to, control over, and benefits from land resources, directly impacting their socioeconomic opportunities and livelihoods. **Unequal legal and policy frameworks; restricted access to land; limited participation in land governance; economic disempowerment; displacement; limited economic opportunities and poverty all act as ways in which tenure can be a driver for gender inequality.** These aspects must thus be addressed to ensure that tenure is a driver for gender equality.

The UNCCD has linked tenure security to social inclusivity, especially for women and marginalized communities, in the framework of LDN and sustainable land governance. Encouraging fair dispute resolution and equitable access to land rights is seen as vital for both environmental sustainability and community well-being. Reports and studies by UNCCD have also demonstrated that countries with strong tenure frameworks and resource rights experience more effective land restoration and conservation efforts.

Furthermore, **women's land tenure insecurity has been shown to disincentivize investments in sustainable land management**^{[25]²⁵}, negatively impacting on soil organic carbon, an indicator of LDN. A recent analysis of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 5.a.1. demonstrates that in 40 out of 46 countries reporting men have greater ownership or secured tenure rights over agriculture land than reporting women.^{[26]²⁶} These gendered barriers can have adverse effects on the capacity of women to invest in the land they use. The analysis of Indicator 5.a.2^{[27]²⁷} shows that half of the countries reporting indicate weak legal protections for women's land rights.

A related body of research by the IPCC^{[28]²⁸} provides important insights into the potential for **rural women's land tenure security to enhance climate-resilient and sustainable land use and investment decisions and access to related extension services and climate finance.** Research also indicates that improving women's land tenure security is linked to land productivity,^{[29]²⁹} an LDN indicator.

Furthermore, addressing governance of tenure and gender equality in land rights in relation to LDN initiatives supports inclusivity, given that safeguarding legitimate tenure rights enables social sustainability and women's broad empowerment.[\[30\]](#)³⁰

Indigenous women tend to have close relationship to their land, and play a key role in families, communities, and nations as the primary food providers. However, indigenous women often face an intersection of additional challenges due to their identities. They are often highly dependent on land resources for their livelihoods, welfare and cultural identity.[\[31\]](#)³¹ As a marginalized social group, Indigenous Peoples are particularly at risk[\[32\]](#)³², as cash income is often derived directly from natural resources found on their community lands, such as non-timber forest products. When land is lost or degraded, indigenous women's lives and sustenance can be negatively affected, and the burden exacerbated for supporting subsistence for families. Psychologically as well as socially, Indigenous women face high pressures, and their dignity and status in society could be threatened without access to land resources.[\[33\]](#)³³ In many indigenous contexts, the solution to securing their land rights is not necessarily the promotion of individual land rights—different alternatives and arrangements desired by and advantageous to indigenous women, must be considered. For any tenure arrangement to be successful it has to be responsive to the needs and values expressed by its membership, and must be locally relevant and not undermine collective values.

Similarly, pastoral women undergo particular challenges that the project will be cognizant of. Migration trends, food and physical insecurity, land degradation, shortages of water and ecosystems' degradation are reshaping the pastoral societies, impacting gender and generational relationships.[\[34\]](#)³⁴ Rangelands are under numerous threats and in this context, while women may benefit from more decision-making power, socio-political and economic responsibilities, they are becoming increasingly excluded from access to productive assets due to the intensified competition for resources.[\[35\]](#)³⁵

1.2 Justification of the Project

Tenure security is seen as primary enabler of land restoration and sustainable management and is often an essential first step towards achieving LDN, as secure tenure provides a great incentive for sustainable land use and management and can provide the assurance needed to stimulate large-scale investments in LDN and restoration. Addressing governance of tenure, and particularly women's access to tenure given the influential role women play in restoration activities, can also support achieving multiple environmental benefits such as halting biodiversity loss, adopting climate-adaptive land management, scaling up ecosystem restoration, and implementing other nature-based solutions to combat desertification and drought.

Without addressing the issue of tenure, there is the risk that countries' projects and policies aimed at improving land degradation, will not succeed, and/or will lack engagement from those using the lands.

This is further reinforced by a recent evaluation of the GEF Drylands portfolio, which highlights that conflict resolution and land tenure matters have not been adequately addressed in drylands investments, and this has led to consequences for both achieving and maintaining expected results; less than a third of GEF drylands projects have addressed tenure governance in their design and theories of change, highlighting a capacity gap that this project aims to address.

Thus, this project addresses the important gap of clear and strengthened land tenure, which if unaddressed becomes a considerable barrier to achieving LDN for countries. By integrating gender as a core element of addressing land tenure within LDN, the project seeks to progress on women's empowerment and equality; and ensure that women are active participants in land management processes from the onset, rather than an issue to address retroactively. **By supporting work at the policy level, the project will address the systemic and practical challenges of securing tenure and women's access to tenure, for LDN in the long run.** It will also allow direct capacity building and exchange with decision-makers and practitioners to facilitate action.

The strategy of how this project will be implemented has been crafted to support the project rationale: It is evident that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable when it comes to strengthening land tenure/women's rights to tenure as a means for LDN. There are varied tenure arrangements, cultural factors, historical legacies, political set-ups when it comes to tenure—therefore **the project seeks to create mechanisms/tools and methodologies—on strengthening land tenure for LDN—that are universally accessible, but which will be piloted in four different countries to exemplify how they can be applied to national contexts.** By piloting in diverse national contexts, the project seeks to upscale universally relevant results and provide practical, evidence-based approaches to decision-makers and practitioners for concrete execution in other countries. This bridge between the national and the upscaled international context is vital if one wants to yield global environmental benefits, while providing countries with realistic and applicable tools to concretely make policy changes for LDN, according to their national contexts.

This gap at the international level is noted by a report entitled *“Gender and land degradation neutrality: A cross-country analysis to support more equitable practices,”* [\[36\]](#)³⁶ which demonstrates that LDN projects under the UNCCD framework in 34 countries would benefit from “merging project gender plans with existing gender schemes at both local and global levels.” A lack of reliable information and cost-effective methods for collecting and analyzing data (including sex-disaggregated data) hampers the development of policies to address that challenge, and the project aims to bridge much of this knowledge gap.

The project will thus support countries to strengthen responsible and inclusive land governance to contribute to an enabling environment for LDN which provides multiple environmental and social

benefits. At the core of responsible and equitable governance is a recognition of legitimate land rights, in particular for women Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).

The **environmental problems** the project will help address, include:

- **Land degradation and soil erosion:** Unsustainable farming practices, deforestation, and overgrazing contributes to soil erosion and loss of fertile land in the pilot countries and around the world. For instance, in Paraguay from 2002 to 2023, 34% of primary humid forest was lost.^{[37]³⁷} Secure land tenure encourages land users to adopt sustainable practices, as they have a long-term interest in maintaining land productivity.
- **Biodiversity loss and Deforestation:** Deforestation for agriculture or logging depletes forests, affecting carbon sequestration and wildlife habitats. Improved land tenure helps recognize women, community and indigenous rights, which are often more effective in conserving forests. By formalizing these rights, the project seeks to contribute to reduced illegal deforestation and promote reforestation efforts.
- **Water shortages:** Degraded lands and poor land use increases runoff, reduce water infiltration, and exacerbate water scarcity. Land tenure security incentivizes sustainable land and water management practices, such as terracing and rainwater harvesting, to enhance water retention and restore ecosystems. ^{[38]³⁸}
- **Desertification:** Arid and semi-arid regions face desertification due to overexploitation of land and climate change impacts. By improving tenure security, communities are empowered to implement land restoration strategies, such as restoring vegetation cover and reducing overgrazing, to build resilience against desertification.
- **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change:** Land degradation and deforestation contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. For instance, in Paraguay from 2001 to 2023, there was a 29% decrease in tree cover resulting in 1.84 Gt of CO₂ emissions. Recognized tenure rights provides a basis for communities to participate in reforestation, carbon capture, restoration or carbon credit programs.

The project also addresses the capacity gaps that exist for countries in strengthening their tenure arrangements as part of the LDN strategy. In international fora, countries have expressed this capacity gap. (For instance, through a joint initiative by the UNCCD and FAO, five countries—Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Senegal, and Sri Lanka—were selected in 2023 to receive targeted support for national consultations on integrating tenure within the framework of LDN and land restoration projects. These efforts – limited in scope to an average of six months- were focused on an inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue with a robust preparation phase.^{[39]³⁹} One of these countries (Sri Lanka) is a pilot in this project, and will be able to benefit from the consolidated support of capacity building and multistakeholder collaboration building). In addition to the five countries selected by the UNCCD-FAO Joint initiative for LDN support, over 30 countries^{[40]⁴⁰} have requested support in the tenure-restoration nexus—these countries will also benefit from the

development of tools and methodologies that will be piloted and tested by the proposed project and can be upscaled and applied in other countries.

This project also provides an opportunity for unique collaborations and leveraging of knowledge and data. The project will be executed by a combination of CSOs and national ministries (see Section 2.5 on Institutional Arrangements), which allow for global engagement.

1.3 Without the GEF Investment – The Baseline

As the project will be piloted in four countries, it is necessary to elaborate on the baseline contexts in each country:

Kyrgyzstan

Land resources in Kyrgyzstan play an important role in the country's economy, however, in recent decades, the country has faced serious land degradation problems, which significantly affect agricultural productivity and ecosystem sustainability. This is compounded by negative climate impacts--due to its topography and poor infrastructure, the Kyrgyz Republic is highly vulnerable to climate change. Since 2010, the scale and frequency of climate-related natural disasters, such as abnormal heatwaves, floods, and droughts, have increased by 150 %. According to forecasts, by 2090, the temperature will rise by more than 5°C, and water resources will sharply decrease due to the melting of glaciers.

There has been great focus on agriculture in the long-term National Strategy of the Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040. Currently, of agricultural lands, 12% is cropland, and 86%, is natural pasture. A significant portion of cropland and pastures is subject to varying degrees of erosion, which leads to food production challenges. Some of the drivers identified include:

- Excessive land use for intensive agricultural production leading to soil degradation, erosion, and a reduction in fertility
- The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, as well as the use of small plots for agricultural purposes, leads to the deterioration of land quality, especially in areas with limited water resources and high irrigation rates.
- Insufficient and often improper use of fertilizers reduces the fertility of the soil and contributes to the growth of plant diseases and pest reproduction.
- Poverty- many farmers are poor, lack resources, technology and sustainable inputs.
- Difficult climate conditions due and difficulties in accessing more remote and intensive summer pastures during harsh winters means that many animals graze nearby to settlements year-round.

As a result, the pressure on the autumn-spring near-settlement pastures has increased, leading to intensified degradation of these pastures.

- Improper irrigation and insufficient protection of water resources often lead to water wastage, leading to salinization and a decline in soil quality.
- Deforestation, and the use of forest resources without considering ecosystem sustainability negatively impact terrestrial ecosystems. Forest vegetation plays a key role in preventing erosion and maintaining ecosystem balance.
- Information on land degradation is not conducted systematically, resulting in challenges in monitoring and tracking changes over time, which could potentially inform policy decisions aimed at combating land degradation effectively.
- Increased tourism
- Lack of local training programs on how to support sustainable land management and LDN.

In terms of land tenure, the Land Code, which was issued in 1999, has been amended 56 times. These annual amendments reflect the intensity of land use processes and policymaking, and the ability to adapt and change by the government. The Land Code can be characterized as flexible legislation supporting private property rights but, at the same time, endangering food security, environmental capacity and resilience, which is compounded further by emerging climate change challenges.

Kyrgyzstan became one of the first countries to introduce the concept of private land ownership and led the redistribution of agricultural land in the Post-Soviet context. Land shares were distributed among 2.6 million people (about half of whom were women). Three-quarters of the land (except pastures) was allocated among individuals as land shares, while the rest was transferred to the State Fund for Agricultural Lands, 'managed by local authorities and used for expanding settlements, experimental farms for seed selection and production, or for sale via auctions and leasing to agricultural producers.'

Women born before 1995 received land shares consolidated into a single plot and documented under one ownership certificate, listing all family members as co-owners of the land. **In practice, however, most women report limited access to and control over their land shares.** Decisions regarding the use of the land plot are typically made by the heads of households, who are predominantly men, on behalf of the family. It is important to note that women's positions vary depending on their role within the family — whether they are the mother and wife of the household head, a daughter, or a *kelin* (daughter-in-law). Additional information on this is provided in Annex K- Gender Analysis.

Gender stereotypes limit women's involvement in land tenure and governance. Women are often excluded from decision-making processes, and cultural practices prevent them from inheriting or owning land (Women have less time and fewer opportunities to engage in land tenure issues due to their reproductive roles, including caring for their families, raising children, and managing household responsibilities. There are also gender stereotypes in society suggesting that women are incapable of managing land, as well as cultural restrictions, such as the lack of practice in women inheriting property, including land.

Stakeholders have limited awareness of LDN and the importance of sustainable land governance. Capacity-building efforts and educational campaigns are necessary to engage communities, particularly women, in land governance processes related to LDN.

Barriers to tenure governance for women include key challenges: such as high unemployment and poverty rates among women, insufficient social benefits and financial support for women farmers, and limited access to legal knowledge and assistance. There is a need for legal consultations specifically tailored to women to help overcome these obstacles.

The management of land resources is distributed among multiple agencies, leading to overlapping responsibilities and a lack of cohesive strategy. This fragmentation hampers effective policy implementation and enforcement.^{[41]⁴¹} Although laws exist to regulate land use and tenure, inconsistencies and gaps within the legal framework create confusion. Additionally, inadequate enforcement mechanisms result in the persistence of unsustainable practices. Limited technical expertise and insufficient resources within institutions impede the development and execution of effective land management strategies. This shortfall affects the ability to monitor land degradation and enforce land tenure regulations.^{[42]⁴²} A lack of reliable, up-to-date data on land use and degradation hinders informed decision-making. The absence of comprehensive land inventories and monitoring systems makes it challenging to assess the extent of degradation and plan appropriate interventions.

Without the project, the lack of data, and overlapping/inconsistent actions among land actors will continue.

Paraguay

Land degradation and periodic droughts are increasing in Paraguay, as a result of the interaction of inadequate land use, poor farming practices, and production systems. Paraguay's Western Region or Paraguayan Chaco comprises extremely fragile ecosystems due to the climatic and edaphic conditions that define it, aggravated in recent decades by human intervention. The Paraguayan Chaco covers an area of approximately 260,000 km², where the introduction and increasing use of agricultural products and technology have allowed the massive and extensive exploitation of natural resources. This has involved massive deforestation, tillage and soil preparation, introduction and extensive implantation of pastures and associated forage crops, cattle, extensive burning, and damming of water courses, which have led to incipient processes of superficial salinization, occurrence of salts in lagoons and dams, incidence of anthills, desalination plants, increased evapotranspiration due to lack of effective coverage, eventual floods, and prolonged droughts, among others. The Chaco territory is predominantly under agricultural use, with little government regulation, limited actions aimed to mitigate impacts, and without the possibility of preventing associated or specific processes correlated to this extensive region.^{[43]⁴³}

Paraguay is considered to be the Latin American country with the greatest inequality in land distribution. Deficiencies in the implementation of agrarian reform in the country have generated numerous conflicts, violence, forced evictions and the criminalization of the peasant and indigenous struggle for land.

Technically, Paraguay's 1992 Constitution guarantees private property in accordance with the law and taking into account its economic and social function in order to make private property accessible to all (Art. 109). The Constitution also includes the objective of eliminating large estates, taking into account the suitability of the land, the needs of the rural population and of agricultural, forestry and industrial activities, and the sustainable use of natural resources and ecological balance (Art. 116). To this end, it proposes the adoption of equitable systems of land distribution, ownership and tenure; the organization of credit and technical, educational and sanitary assistance; the creation of agricultural cooperatives and similar associations; and the promotion of production, industrialization and rationalization of the market for the integral development of agriculture (Art. 114).

However, the objectives of the Constitution have not materialized. In the baseline, there is extreme inequality of land tenancy in Paraguay—83.4% of agricultural land area corresponds to 2.5% of farms, which means that 2.5% of farmers own the 83.4% of farming land. This large inequality is a fundamental challenge in the context of the country. The country has faced a history of evictions, conflicts over land ownership, occupations.

There are no policies or laws that link land tenure, LDN and gender issues in Paraguay. Various strategies are under development however, that include gender considerations (see Annex K- Gender Analysis).

According to the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, [\[44\]⁴⁴](#) deforestation is occurring against a backdrop of territorial inequality and land granted illegally to persons not covered by the agrarian reform. These lands, known as “ill-gotten lands”, cover around 20% of the territory of the country. These are, in large part, the best cropland, which causes territorial conflicts and exclusion. In addition, the productive use of these lands is often associated with deforestation and an increase in intensive farming.

Monoculture is a major contributor to land degradation--the expansion of soya cultivation in Paraguay has been accompanied by an excessive use of pesticides. According to the National Plant and Seed Quality and Health Service, herbicide imports grew by 500%, pesticides by 300% and insecticides by almost 1,400% between 2009 and 2013. In 2016 alone, Paraguay imported 78,000 tons of pesticides which have lasting impact on soils to this day.

Women face significant challenges (greater analysis is provided in Annex K), with regards to soil degradation, leasing issues, lack of capital and of productive and commercial capacities related to agriculture. Due to land challenges, peasant women often lease land through non-formal contracts with agribusiness companies, who develop monocultures on neighboring mechanized farms. Agribusiness companies tend to gradually expand influence in territories that, which after several years, become devoid of peasant crops due to soil degradation and constant contamination, and because of the lack peasant families' capital to challenge larger industries. In many cases agribusiness companies manage to buy or occupy small peasant lands with little bureaucratic approval or oversight. Women are particularly vulnerable without the economic or social clout to challenge this.

Women also lack water, access to inputs, credit, technologies and marketing, which limits their production and sustainable practices on land. They are often vulnerable to failed public registrations, double titling and fraudulent sale of public lands. Land subdivision by urbanization adds to their tenure insecurity. The inequality in the distribution of land in Paraguay has been aggravated by complex and bureaucratic procedures required to obtain title to land, which often benefits men more than women. The lack of a comprehensive land register has led to the overlapping of titles to property and this creates the conditions for multiple claims on the same parcel of land. This can lead to forced evictions of marginalized communities. The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food noted that one of the ways to remedy these challenges is to implement the VGGT Technical Guide.

On an institutional level, the National Institute of Rural and Land Development (INDERT) has identified the following priority needs to combat land degradation:

- Greater public budget to buy land that has already been through the legislative process and has been allocated to the public agrarian sector but cannot be used because of lack of payments, as the public budget of INDERT has been reduced systematically over the last 12 years.
- Greater need for alignment/coherence with Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), Ministry of Social Development (MDS), Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES) for coordination of actions, budgets and strategies on territorial interventions, by sharing action plans and developing communication and project management tools that allow improved planning.
- Development of institutional capacities on land tenure, gender and LDN for 100% of public officials of INDERT in Asunción.
- Institutional agreements, communication needed with the judicial institutions, especially on issues of land conflicts prevention, land evictions, and land cadaster (there is currently a new law project that is being debated on Congress about the creation of a new cadaster registry, called RUN).

The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES), to improve work on LDN in collaboration with women, is focusing on the priority needs identified in the draft National Gender Equality Plan. The identified needs to improve women's tenure with an LDN lens includes:

- **Technical training and institutional awareness:** Strengthen the capacities of institutions to implement gender equality and women's empowerment policies, especially in access to land and resources. Training is essential to ensure female participation and leadership in LDN initiatives, as well as to effectively manage land with a gender perspective
- **Field equipment and technology:** Provide advanced technologies, especially in information and communication, to empower women in the context of LDN. This facilitates equitable access to tools for sustainable land management.
- **Institutional Collaboration:** Increasing inter-institutional collaboration to apply the gender perspective at all levels is essential. The joint work between MADES, the Ministry of Women and other organizations facilitates coherent implementation and strengthens the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of gender objectives in the fight against desertification.

- **Political and financial support:** Have continued political support to establish and sustain gender equality programs within the LDN framework. This also implies the mobilization of financial resources that facilitate the equitable participation of women in LDN projects, promoting their economic empowerment and reducing extreme poverty among them.

A significant issue in the baseline is that the capacity of both INDERT and MADES are highly limited. This is due to a small budget and reluctance on part of the political class to strengthen tenure rights as much of the political class is linked to large estate owners.

Without the project, a lack of coordination among institutions will remain, allowing land degradation to continue. Tenure challenges that women face, in particular, and small producers face, more generally, will remain without monitoring and assessment.

South Sudan

South Sudan is facing intense land degradation and desertification, with arid and semi-arid areas in the Southeast of South Sudan becoming desert-like. Similarly, pockets of tropical rainforest along the country's borders with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are being lost at an alarming rate. Mount Dongotono's vegetation is expected to disappear if deforestation continues at its current rate. [\[45\]⁴⁵](#)

The LDN Target Setting Programme for South Sudan provides comprehensive information about drivers of land degradation. The primary drivers consist of direct and indirect factors. Some of the direct factors include: the expansion of subsistence farming agriculture; forest and other plantations; logging, charcoal making and fuelwood collection; overgrazing; fires; mineral exploration; urbanization; waste disposal; water over-abstraction and role of the military. The indirect factors include pressures on natural resources, poverty and unemployment; land rights insecurity; political instability and internal displacement; lack of alternative sources of livelihood; lack of environmental health awareness as well as corruption and unclear institutional roles.

Land degradation and desertification threatens the wellbeing of many people in South Sudan, raising the risks of migration and communal conflicts. Loss of biodiversity and climate change further exacerbate the situation and is expected to affect the suitability of vast areas for food production and human settlement.

Land Tenure system in South Sudan

South Sudan has been involved in the land reform process through the development of the National Land Policy (NLP) since 2006 and other relevant legislative regulations (Land Act 2009 and Local Government Act 2009 etc.). Land issues have been given priority in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011 (as amended), the Revised South Sudan National Development Strategy (SSNDS) 2021-2024 and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ACSS) that provides concrete measures to address land reform gaps in CHAP IV, 4.8.2^[46]⁴⁶ of the Agreement.

The land tenure system in South Sudan consists of public land, community land; and private land. Community land include all lands traditionally and historically held or used by local communities or their members. They are defined, held, managed and protected by law. The constitution recognizes traditional authority, its institutions and courts application of customary laws including on land matters specifying roles and system of governance in (article 47). **Implicitly, the customary law of South Sudan grants the right for women to use own or transact land. However customary laws are not codified, they are applied orally.**

Customary tenure arrangements provide relatively high levels of tenure security as accorded by the constitution, and it exhibits high level of rural tenure security for the majority of the people of South Sudan, with or without formal documentation to land. In customary tenure arrangements, land is typically assigned to families and their descendants in perpetuity. In these arrangements identity plays critical role in defining one's land rights rather than formal land titling. People belonging to a certain tribe have a right to access land within that tribes' territory, and women access land through their relationship with a male member in the family of birth or in the family of marriage.

Securing women's rights to land in the law

The principal legal and policy constraints South Sudanese women face in owning and controlling land are well captured in the gender assessment of the land sector report conducted in 2020. The assessment identified barriers to the land rights of women characterized by:

- insufficient understanding of the legal plurality governing women's land rights;
- inappropriate mechanisms for the implementation of legislation,
- limited awareness of women's rights which impedes implementation of women's accorded statutory rights;
- exclusion or underrepresentation of women in land related institutions; and
- inadequate access to justice for women due to inefficient land dispute resolution mechanisms.

The report further identified key issues impeding the realization of the rights of women to land ownership with analysis on the land related legal policy and frameworks that gives the citizens of South Sudan power to access and own land irrespective of their gender. [\[47\]⁴⁷](#)

Sri Lanka

Land Degradation and Land Tenure Issues in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka faces significant challenges related to land degradation and land tenure. The country's natural resources are under increasing pressure due to various anthropogenic activities. As a result of population growth, the per capita availability of land resources has decreased from 1.8 hectares (ha) in 1990 to 0.30 ha in 2024. Leaving out forests, water and barren lands, the actual average area of land available per capita is remarkably less than that of the calculation. It is suggested that scarcity of land is growing rapidly, and the country cannot allocate land for other economic uses without decreasing the forest cover which has already dropped around 29 %, unless a rational policy is devised to improve the efficiency of existing land uses.

During the last few decades natural disasters have been increasing because of improper land uses. Human settlement and cultivation of annual crops on steeply sloping lands have resulted in rapid soil erosion, landslides and the silting of rivers, waterways and reservoirs, thereby reducing their capacity and causing floods. The productivity of fertile lands has been reduced due to improper land use. According to the available statistics **nearly 44% of agricultural lands have been subject to land degradation.**

There is also a significant imbalance between the ownership and tenure patterns of land. There are many fragmented agricultural lands, small in size and generally unproductive. Similarly, there is a large extent of agricultural land in plantations areas, a significant proportion of which is underutilized.

82.25% of the land is owned by the State reflecting a centralized control. Presently there is an acute shortage of land for the people of the country and there is no systematic program to provide land for the landless. Land prices are high that makes low-income communities unable to purchase lands forcing them to encroach state forestland and other state lands such as river/stream bank, road / railway tracts and reservoir reservations.

Land Degradation Drivers

Land degradation in Sri Lanka is a critical issue, primarily driven by deforestation, soil erosion, and unsustainable land use practices. Historically, Sri Lanka was covered with dense forests, but forest cover has drastically reduced from about 70% in the early 20th century to approximately 29% today. The consequences are severe, impacting biodiversity, water resources, and agricultural productivity. Approximately 34% of the land area is either declining in productivity or under stress. This degradation not only threatens the

environment but also exacerbates poverty and food insecurity, particularly in rural areas where livelihoods are closely tied to land resources.

Land degradation is driven by several factors, including:

- **Deforestation:** The conversion of forests to other land uses, such as agriculture and infrastructure development, has significantly reduced forest cover.
- **Encroachment:** Unauthorized occupation and use of land, often for agriculture or settlement and construction, creates irreparable damage (such as landslides) to the land in many cases.
- **Soil Erosion:** Poor land management practices (mainly agriculture) leading to the loss of topsoil, which is crucial for agriculture.
- **Unfavorable Land Tenancy Conditions:** Issues related to land ownership and tenure that discourage sustainable land use.
- **Poverty and Subsistence Farming:** Economic pressures that force communities to overexploit land resources for immediate survival. Investment in protection and conservation is relatively low in a farm environment where basic needs are met as well as poverty alleviation is a priority.
- **Weak Institutional Framework:** Lack of effective policies and enforcement mechanisms to manage land resources sustainably.
- **Poor enforcement of Land Use Planning:** The absence of integrated land use planning leads to uncoordinated and unsustainable land development, exacerbating land degradation by causing deforestation, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity.

Land Tenure Issues

Land tenure in Sri Lanka is complex and multifaceted, involving a mix of state, private, and customary land ownership. The tenure system is characterized by a lack of clear titles and overlapping claims, which complicates land management and development efforts. **State land**, which constitutes a significant portion of the country's land area, is often subject to encroachment and informal settlements. These de facto private tenure arrangements lack legal recognition, leading to tenure insecurity for many occupants. Additionally, the process of obtaining clear land titles is often bureaucratic and slow, further complicating land ownership issues. **Customary tenure systems**, particularly in rural and indigenous communities, add another layer of complexity. **These systems are not always formally recognized by the state, leading to conflicts and challenges** in integrating traditional land management practices with national policies. About 18% of the land in the country is privately owned.^{[48]⁴⁸} During history, the land ownership pattern has changed mainly encompassing private ownership and state ownership under different tenured arrangements. The British colonial regime has shaped the present land use and land ownership. However, there is not a single legal authority managing these private lands. Instead, several land laws are still in effect.

Women's Access to Land

In Sri Lanka, laws and practices (excluding recent changes by the Land Development Ordinance) often discriminate against women's inheritance, ownership, and control of land. The "Women, Business and the Law 2021" report by the World Bank highlights that Sri Lanka scores 65.5 on the index, lower than several neighboring countries, due to fewer rights for women to own and inherit land. Land ownership serves as a safety net, but lack of it limits women's access to agricultural assets and government resources.

The colonial-era Land Development Ordinance in Sri Lanka prioritizes male heirs over female heirs in inheritance, allowing male relatives to eject women from land they cultivated. For further analysis on challenges faced by women in relation to tenure, please refer to the Gender Analysis in Annex K.

Without the GEF Project Investment

Without this project focusing on tenure and improved access to tenure for women for LDN, the following circumstances could remain:

- ***Land degradation worsens as short-term, extractive, agricultural, livestock-related, development practices dominate over sustainable land use*** as without secure tenure, land users may hesitate to invest in long-term restoration practices such as soil conservation, agroforestry, or reforestation. The fear of losing access or tenure rights discourages efforts to improve land productivity and health.
- ***Ignoring women's access to tenure can prevent other socioeconomic benefits and reduce the effectiveness of women's empowerment plans and policies-*** Women play key roles in maintaining soil fertility, biodiversity, and in food production. The benefits of these activities travel from family to community and without women's engagement and tenure security, many of these will negatively affect communities.
- ***Tenure insecurity perpetuates poverty by limiting land users' ability to secure loans, access government subsidies, or participate in restoration programs-*** Marginalized groups, particularly women, face compounded risks of poverty when denied access to productive land. Degraded land combined with entrenched poverty creates a cycle that undermines restoration efforts and the resilience of affected communities. Conditions of poverty and subsistence create added pressures on natural resources which people may extract for immediate sustenance.
- ***Insecure land tenure can lead to disputes over land use and ownership, diverting resources and planning from restoration to conflict management-*** Land conflicts destabilize communities, can disrupt restoration activities, create unclear conditions on which stakeholders are responsible for which aspects of land restoration and can exacerbate degradation. This makes it challenging to galvanize stakeholders and communities to collaborate in participatory ways toward LDN objectives.
- ***Loss of biodiversity and ecosystems due to a lack of inclusive land governance-*** Critical ecosystems managed by women and Indigenous groups may be exploited unsustainably, without inclusive land governance, resulting in biodiversity loss and reduced ecosystem resilience.

- **Weakened resilience to climate change-** Tenure insecurity undermines adaptive capacity, as landholders are less likely to adopt adaptive practices without guaranteed land access. Women, often at the forefront of household resilience strategies, face barriers to contributing to adaptation efforts, without secure access to land.

Another major issue that would remain in this baseline is that while policymakers in the pilot countries may express interest in improving land tenure and women's access to tenure to improve LDN, as is evidenced by the number of countries that have sought support under the UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative, they may remain without the clear tools, methodologies and approaches in order to move forward on what is a fairly complex issue. The advantage of this project is that it galvanizes international and national expertise, fosters tailor made solutions through mechanisms that are scalable and allows a more pointed and responsive approach to national contexts.

1.4 Investments in the Baseline

There are current investments in the baseline that seek to address the issues of land tenure and LDN. The project will build on these, leverage expertise, seek synergies, and address the gaps that remain, through its piloting and knowledge-sharing approach.

To date, 131 countries have engaged in setting voluntary LDN targets.^[49]⁴⁹ The LDN-Target Setting Programme (TSP) supports Parties in implementing and periodically reviewing and monitoring progress and to continue to promote synergies and knowledge-sharing. Since the launch of this Programme in 2016, 106 countries have already defined and validated a set of LDN targets and associated measures to advance their goals towards achieving LDN by 2030. This creates a more harmonized global understanding and commitment on LDN, which sets the context in which this project will be implemented.

LDN Target Setting Program (TSP) 2.0: This initiative, a second phase of the TSP, initiated in 2023, is currently active in 18 countries, refines LDN targets through tools like spatial mapping and inclusive land-use planning. It emphasizes improving governance frameworks to align restoration efforts with local and national needs, supporting policies that secure land tenure and enable sustainable practices.^[50]⁵⁰ As none of the countries selected as pilots are part of the 18 countries under LDN Setting, the project can serve as a networking tool to leverage considerations from the TSP into activities. The TSP 2.0 seeks to further refine LDN targets to increase policy coherence with other LDN-relevant commitments, such as those under the UNFCCC, Bonn Challenge and the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. This proposed project will ensure complementary with the TSP 2.0 programme, contributing from a tenure security angle to strengthen national enabling environments for LDN target setting and related implementation efforts. The project will also seek cost efficiencies with this Programme both in terms of the rolling out of national processes (i.e., stakeholder consultation meetings) and related capacity building/training activities that may be conducted at national, regional and/or global levels.

UNCCD-FAO Initiative on Tenure: This program emphasizes integrating tenure security into land restoration strategies. It promotes the recognition of legitimate land rights, such as indigenous or community-based tenure systems, to reduce conflicts and encourage sustainable land management. These initiatives also

ensure gender inclusion by enabling joint ownership and addressing discriminatory inheritance practices.[\[51\]](#)⁵¹

In 2022, the FAO and UNCCD produced a **Technical Guide on integrating the VGGT into LDN** for policy and decision makers to demonstrate pathways by which the recognition, documentation, and enforcement of legitimate land rights can contribute to the achievement of regenerative agriculture, sustainable land management, and other land restoration commitments. While the primary objective of LDN projects and programmes is to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation, inclusive land governance and secure tenure are often critical to their success.

In 2023, the **UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative on Tenure**, mentioned in the previous section, conducted a series of regional awareness raising webinars to contextualise these pathways to diverse stakeholders. The Technical Guide suggests universal pathways through the reformulation of legal, policy, and administrative frameworks as well as the establishment of multistakeholder platforms and dispute resolution mechanisms. It also outlines context-specific pathways, mechanisms, and processes, including integrated land use planning, land consolidation, and other land administration tools.

In 2024, the UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative held national consultations in one of the countries where the project will be piloted (Sri Lanka). Integrating the principles and practices of the VGGT into LDN and other land restoration initiatives could help leverage new donors, partnerships, and synergies that did not exist or were only marginally explored during the initial roll-out. Working within country-specific land policies and action plans could help deliver substantial gains in efficiency and effectiveness through joint resource mobilisation, capacity development, and other factors that contribute to greater tenure security for their citizens. The methodology designed to support countries to conduct the consultation process and its outputs have informed this project and how it will be implemented in these two countries, and beyond, to render findings scalable.

The Joint Initiative has also gathered several key international partners on land tenure to share information, approaches, organize joint events (such as regional awareness raising webinars) and has issued a call for application by countries to get support to national consultation on the integration of tenure into LDN initiatives.

FAO has also partnered with UNCCD to launch the “Her Land” campaign on the UN Desertification and Drought Day (17 June 2023) during a high-level event at the UN Headquarters. The project will support a stronger evidence base with regard to the link between women’s land tenure security and LDN, such as by monitoring the link between LDN indicators and actions. This evidence base will serve to strengthen the ‘business case’ for investing in women’s land tenure security. These gender equality elements underpin the rationale for this project where targeted support will be provided to countries, and the project will enable translating the scientific guidance of the SPI as well as relevant COP decisions into project and operational level guidance. Addressing these inequalities and more effectively engaging women to increase opportunities to benefit and contribute, has the transformative potential to address the complex drivers of

pressures on environmental resources and improving long-term environmental sustainability *globally, nationally, and locally*.

In addition, FAO is custodian agency for the **SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2** that focus on gender equality in relation to tenure rights and has a baseline of countries having reported on these two indicators. The project will establish synergies with the support provided to country to reporting on these two indicators and integrate the results (methodology, data) of these two SDG indicators in the outcomes of the project.

Tenure Rights for Restoration Project- TMG Research through the support of German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation, GIZ and the Robert Bosch Stiftung, is working with local CSO partners and governments of Benin, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Uganda and Niger to advance the implementation of the UNCCD Land Tenure Decision 26/ COP.14. [\[52\]](#)⁵² The partnership involves analyses of the impact of activities to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) on legitimate land tenure rights and to devise ways to secure legitimate tenure rights and achieve LDN. Further, the work includes specific work on analysing the enabling environment of National Focal Points to advance the implementation of the UNCCD Land Tenure Decision. Since 2023, TMG, together with the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the three Secretariats of the Conventions in hosting the Women's Land Rights Initiative that aims to advance women's land rights across all three Rio Conventions. Given that TMG is an international partner supporting the implementation of this project, the expertise and lessons learned will be applied within the scope of this project.

GEF LDN Projects: There are also considerable GEF LDN projects which seek to integrate tenure issues into broader land degradation efforts. For example, in the Senegal River Basin, multistakeholder platforms focus on participatory dialogues to establish a basin-wide land charter that addresses tenure and promotes sustainable land management. This approach showcases the importance of tenure security in advancing regenerative practices and resolving resource conflicts. This project, particularly through its engagement of international partners engaged with some of these processes within countries, will seek to upscale these approaches and support the governments of Kazakhstan, Paraguay, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka in implementing them. Best practices engaged by other countries will be disseminated through engagement of international partners and experts.

In Kyrgyzstan

The GEF-supported Integrated Community-based Management of High Value Mountain Ecosystems in Southern Kyrgyzstan for Multiple Benefits (USD 2.6 million), implemented by UNDP provides a baseline of stakeholders and land degradation issues in this vulnerable zone, to be considered in this project.

An Adaptation Fund Proposal was developed to enhance climate resilience through improved pasture management, afforestation, and support for small rural entrepreneurs. The project plans to develop 23 pasture management plans, afforest 2,500 hectares of native forests, and support 2,800 small rural entrepreneurs, benefiting approximately 15,000 household members.

Green Budget Tagging Initiative: Launched in 2024, by the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic in collaboration with the World Bank, this initiative introduces the Green Budget Tagging Guidelines. The guidelines provide a framework for tracking and classifying budget expenditures related to environmental

activities. This effort underscores Kyrgyzstan's commitment to integrating climate and environmental considerations into the national budget process. The proposed project will be integrated into this environmental expenditure mapping for greater accountability and alignment.

In Paraguay

In Paraguay, MADES is presently working on the validation of National Land Degradation Map, with the assistance of FAO through the Paraguay + Verde Project (2022-2026).

A Green Climate Fund/UNDP project for 50 million has been developed to support Paraguay's REDD+ results. This project has prioritized LDN with a gender approach. One of the big successes of the project was the creation of the National Commission to Fight Desertification and Drought. It aims to work on long-term public policies.

FAO provided technical support for the Interinstitutional Working Group to Fight Desertification and Drought (Mesa de Trabajo Interinstitucional de Lucha contra la Desertificación y la Sequía) chaired by MADES and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG); it is made up of 26 public institutions, from the productive sector, academia and civil society organizations and discusses issues related to land and drought. This platform has had positive results in pushing forward strategies to reduce land degradation, such as the National Map of Land Degradation. The platform includes gender within his work, and land tenure on a more secondary level. The platform has been working on a National Strategy of LDN, which is currently being debated with the private sector.

Several gender assessments have been carried out through various institutions in Paraguay. These include a time-use survey in 2016, agricultural census of 2022^[53], as well statistics by INE which update gender aspects of domestic surveys every year. There has not been a consolidated or comprehensive assessment on gender at a national level, as much of the social analysis has been done through civil organisations, with a sectoral scope.

In South Sudan

Land has been given priority in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (TCSS) 2011 (as amended), the Revised South Sudan National Development Strategy (SSNDS) 2021-2024 and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ACSS) provides concrete measures to address land reform gaps.

This project will benefit from and is built on lessons learnt from the ongoing support from the Government of Sweden implemented in 2023 and 2024 through which FAO South Sudan (FAOSS) supported improving

resilient livelihoods to promote food and nutrition security of vulnerable communities, especially women-headed households in Torit, Wau, Aweil, and Malakal Counties. The project supported access to diversified agriculture production and post-harvest handling inputs and technologies increased, access to information, skills and inputs for nutrition and climate sensitive agricultural production improved, women's economic empowerment promoted through nutrition-sensitive value chains and income-generating enterprises and; capacity to manage natural resource-related conflicts at community-level strengthened through dialogues based on FAO VGGT.^[54]⁵⁴ The project held participatory dialogues which create an effective baseline to leverage for communication and participation channels to be used in this project.

With FAO technical support, the MLHUD is planning to conduct Tenure Baseline Studies in South Sudan (TBS-SS) at states level. The Tenure Baseline Study in South Sudan, as part of the land reform process, is a process to strengthen the emerging dynamics in the various sectors of tenure. These dynamics present an opportunity to advance a rights-based agenda for rural communities and households in the land and forestry sectors.

The study will be able to inform the implementation of national land policy, land restoration initiatives programs and support decision-making in ongoing processes such as:

- The process of existing and new land and forestry, fisheries regulations for community in the agricultural sector.
- The implementation of the National Land Policy based on community's needs.
- Harmonize the zoning process and land use planning with the realities on the ground;
- Land reform to create a more equitable legal framework and to facilitate peace process and economic development of the South Sudan.
- Implementation of the South Sudan Women Land Rights Agenda.

For South Sudan, this project will reinforce the decisions taken by the Parties of the UNCCD by integrating the principles and practices contained in the VGGT into the design and implementation of LDN and other land restoration initiatives.^[55]⁵⁵ LDN and other land restoration initiatives are broadly defined as programmes, projects, or other organized and deliberate actions to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation at all scales.^[56]⁵⁶

In May 2024, the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development with support from FAO concluded a legal assessment process towards SDG Indicator 5a2 which assessed the extent to which South Sudan's land and property related legal frameworks including customary law guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and or control. Findings of the SDG 5a2 legal assessment in South Sudan unveiled strengths and

weaknesses of the country's legal and policy frameworks with regards to women rights to land as stipulated in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan 2011 (as amended), the Land Act 2009 and the Local Government Act 2009, the child Act 2008, the National Gender Policy 2013 and the South Sudan women Land Rights Agenda 2021-2030 (a working programmatic document).

In Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka was one of the five countries selected to receive support from the **UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative on Tenure**, for organizing a multi-stakeholder dialogue event at the national level, to better understand the root causes of land degradation related to land tenure and pave the way for better inclusion of tenure governance in national LDN initiatives. A national consultation was held as a product of this initiative with the following objectives that are aligned to this project:

- To establish multi stakeholder platform to explore the ways and means to strengthen tenure rights and land governance
- To achieve LDN and land restoration initiatives through tenure security.
- To formulate and implement a national strategy and action plan to strengthen tenure security.
- To create awareness on key stakeholder agencies, vulnerable groups and civil society and private sector with regard insecure land tenure right will lead land degradation

In some ways, this work has allowed some of the preliminary conversations to take place in the country, so that the work can be leveraged by the proposed project. 10 key findings from the baseline revealed priorities to improve work in tenure and LDN.^{[57]⁵⁷} These findings can help inform the tools/methodologies to be applied, and the proposed project provides an opportunity to advance the work relative to gender which was limited.

The **Bim Saviya Programme** in Sri Lanka seeks to provide title deeds, and reformed land title registration. Critics question the programme's reliance on the Torrens Law, with is a South Australian roots, and especially its inability to handle various ownership scenarios and shared rights under personal laws, such as multiple ownership scenarios. People also critique that this system disregards indigenous laws preceding colonial occupation, and requires government expenditure of a large sum of money to assist the relevant department throughout the process. Although some of them have benefited from the programme's clarity, others have faced issues due to its strict requirements for issuing titles, particularly for the state owned land which raised concerns about the potential privatization. Improving the efficiency of the Bimsaviya program was identified as essential for improving land tenure security and fostering economic development.

GEF-funded Partnerships and Innovative Financing to Mainstream Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Management in the Wet Climatic Zone of Sri Lanka: Launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and UNDP, this project aims to conserve globally significant biodiversity by promoting sustainable land management practices in tea and rubber plantations. As there will be project overlap,

synergies and collaborations will be sought, particularly to pilot of some of the initiatives of this project into project sites.

Knuckles Conservation Project, officially titled 'Strengthening Climate Resilience of Subsistence Farmers and Agricultural Communities in the Knuckles Mountain Range,' is a collaborative initiative financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented by the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) for USD 48 million.

1.5 Lessons Learned

Given the role of the FAO as a key partner and facilitator on issues related to land tenure, gender and LDN, there are several lessons learned from the institution's experience that inform the development of this project. In addition to the experiences through the UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative on Tenure, the following projects, and their terminal evaluations have yielded key insights into the development of this initiative.

- AVACLIM: Agroecology, ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods while mitigating climate change and restoring land in dryland regions. This project was completed in 2023 and yields several key insights that will be applied in the project design:
 - Developing and testing multi-criteria tools needs time, and multi-actor teams need to build on the existing baseline. [\[58\]⁵⁸](#) From the onset, the project will work with international partners who have the experience in aggregating tools and methodologies that can be adapted to the gender-tenure-LDN nexus. The project will not be inventing a new tool, but will be aggregating relevant existing tools to build on global knowledge. It will also support countries in the implementation of said tools/methodologies to encourage learning-by doing and their appropriation to address capacity needs. The creation time of a tool will thus be avoided, and instead existing best practices and approaches will be assessed relative to countries' individual needs.
 - The project needs to put in place an institutional arrangement that leverages the strengths, capacity of each partner to avoid project delays and confusion. [\[59\]⁵⁹](#) The number of countries being addressed by the project is limited in scope. The administration process has been streamlined during the PPG phase so that there are no project delays. Instead of waiting till inception, there is a clear identification of which partner will be responsible for executing which output and what administrative arrangements will be required to facilitate this.
 - "The time and effort needed to build solid partnerships among stakeholders with different approaches and work modalities should not be overlooked. Better results were achieved where the AVACLIM evaluation tool was applied by a mix of expertise stemming from the scientific community and the NGOs. However, it took time to build a common vision of the tool, develop a joint approach and harmonize different work modalities. It is worth considering these aspects before going into the field. This includes mapping different competences and the added value of each actor, as well as properly clarifying roles." National consultants were retained by this project to kickstart the relationship building and leverage the existing actors and stakeholder circles that

already exist. International partners that have experience in working in different countries and have the know-how and experience in international coalitions, networks related to LDN, tenure and gender, have been invited to support project implementation to leverage this expertise for smoother engagement of partners.

- **UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative on Tenure** The Joint Initiative has already commenced its work on establishing national consultations on tenure, gender and LDN. The key lessons learned from this are:
 - In 2022, the UNCCD Parties highlighted the need for more political will and capacity development to effectively integrate land tenure considerations into national plans, legal frameworks, strategies, and action programmes. They requested the UNCCD secretariat and partners to further develop specific guidance and exchange lessons learned, through national consultations in selected countries across regions, to assist Parties on the ways and means to improve tenure security in LDN planning and implementation-- the UNCCD and FAO established an initiative to raise awareness and contextualize the technical guide for application in national and local circumstances.^{[60]⁶⁰} This project further builds on this need by supporting tailored capacity development programming on the LDN-gender-tenure nexus.
 - In Sri Lanka, the UNCCD-FAO Joint Initiative made specific recommendations including: (i) strengthen institutional integration and coordination in resolving land tenure issues; (ii) raise awareness among district and divisional secretary level officers on land tenure issues; and (iii) implement cooperative land management models, which include all relevant local stakeholders, to ensure sustainable land and water use practices that focus on productivity improvements to enhance food security and economic stability, while avoiding further deforestation and land degradation.^{[61]⁶¹} These findings will inform the capacity development programme developed by the project.

In **Sri Lanka, Experiences of Landscape Restoration Project in Dry Zone of Sri Lanka -Funded by the GEF/UNEP**, provides several lessons learned. In implementing project activities several issues related to land tenure have been identified:

- Land management faces significant challenges due to the lack of clear land ownership and tenure details.
- Forest areas have not been correctly mapped and gazetted, leading to illegal encroachments on forest land. This situation exacerbates the already increasing human-elephant conflict. Additionally, many farmers possess incomplete ownership documents that are not recognized, further complicating land governance and management efforts.
- In some cases, farmers are not allowed to access their (former) paddy lands due to ownership issues with the Forest Department.
- Prevailing incentive rates are not sufficient to involve conservation/restoration activities.
- Some land users have no legal documents.

- No actions taken against long term land encroachers.
- Lands cultivated without permits or deeds represent low productivity and are deemed unhealthy.
- Impacts of climate change on LD has not been well understood in many implementations in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka and suggested considering this aspect.

These challenges are the kinds that have to be part of the project-tailored approach to ensure that they are being addressed.

1.6 Barriers

With the current project, and through collaboration with international and national partners, existing barriers will address what the UNCCD and the LDN community consider as key challenges in the land-tenure-gender nexus.

Barrier 1: Limited information, knowledge and capacities affect countries in integrating tenure in relevant LDN initiatives.

The successful implementation of the LDN concept builds upon a strong enabling environment that would be based on pillars consisting of (i) comprehensive tenure assessments in line with the VGGT (ii) providing tools for responsible land governance, (iii) ensuring informed and meaningful stakeholders involvement and (iv) enhancing land tenure policies. The successful implementation of the LDN concept and related actions is also driven by a clear understanding of the root causes and drivers that contribute to land degradation, notably tenure insecurity and unlocking the roles of women and men, gender balanced representation perspective and expertise and an enabling environment that allow a transformative change. Given the novelty of the LDN concept and of the integration of tenure, there is a need for addressing capacity gaps in this regard.

This barrier will be addressed by activities under component 1 and 2, as the project proposes to make available detailed guidance and capacity development materials to enable informed decision-making based on a solid analysis of underlying tenure challenges at country level and how to effectively address them by LDN policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners. This barrier will also be addressed through a learning-by-doing approach to ensure that policymakers and practitioners are part of building the solutions, and integrating them into their own areas of work. Multi-stakeholder platforms will be leveraged to disseminate information on what is required for successful LDN implementation, and for stakeholders to identify what roles they can play in supporting this work.

Barrier 2: Weak inter-institutional and vertical coordination on planning frameworks for effective governance regarding mainstreaming secure and gender-equal tenure for LDN achievement

Across countries, capacity is often still lacking both at the institutional (central and local Government) and grassroots level (local communities, Indigenous People's organizations, NGOs, cooperatives, farmer unions) to mainstream and implement LDN initiatives that address complex tenure implications. National and local planning systems lack LDN criteria, and collaboration across sectors is still limited and/or not effective, often ignoring precious local and traditional knowledge. The existing institutional and legal frameworks do not address tenure, gender and land degradation across sectors neither do they consider its effects on food security and the maintenance of ecosystem services. There is the added challenge that with a multisectoral issue like LDN, tenure and gender, there may be unclear ownership of where to house these issues and how to address them holistically. In some countries, the environmental aspect of land degradation may be removed from tenure and ownership, and gender may be housed in a different place altogether. LDN, being a complex approach, requires that stakeholders engage in an integrated, multilevel and cross-sectoral technical and political process.

This barrier will be addressed by interventions under component 2 and 3, as the project proposes to tap into the power of multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) that bring together civil society including Indigenous People's organizations, government actors, academia and relevant members of the private sector to collectively disentangle and solve challenges and break down sectoral silos. Furthermore, the project's linkages with global and regional technical platforms related to land governance will enable the dissemination of governance approaches based on international good practice. It will also provide an opportunity for mainstreaming how tenure can contribute to LDN in sector-relevant ways. In South Sudan, for instance, alignment of Land Actors is critical to integrate efforts addressing land governance issues and challenges to land degradation neutrality. Similarly, in Paraguay, the lack of coherence among ministries and other land actors remains a challenge.

Barrier 3: Persisting gender inequalities hamper effective LDN initiatives

While most countries have legal frameworks in place to recognize claims to land, both at individual and community level, enforcement remains weak. In general terms, gender equality in land rights only exists when 1) women and men can acquire rights that are equally secure; 2) women and men can equally enjoy and exercise their land rights; and 3) women's and men's land rights are equally protected when they are threatened. Despite their significant contribution to farm-based livelihoods and to sustaining the environment, women are often particularly disadvantaged due to unequal socio-cultural values in determining the ownership of land and other productive resources. Removing these structural barriers will unlock both environmental and socio-economic welfare benefits.

This barrier will be systematically addressed in all components (ranging from comprehensive assessments, capacity development materials and knowledge products) as the project proposes to uphold the Convention's clear gender equality principles and also unlock women's effectiveness as agents of change in the implementation of the Convention to enhance the achievement of LDN targets through their effective participation and empowerment.

These barriers also encompass the challenges experienced in the pilot countries. In South Sudan for instance, the baseline assessment reveals that land sector improvements require structural changes

that may not be sustainable unless integrated within development visions nationally driven and systemically implemented. Land reforms become unsustainable when land programs do not respond to locally owned-demand, capacity is not in place to sustain activities in the long term, interventions are not national priorities, and activities are ad-hoc and not framed within the existing legal and policy framework. While improved performance on the national land policy in terms of formulation and implementation, is required for South Sudan to deliver on coordination among the land use institutions and ministries of Housing, Lands and Public Utilities in the 10 states and 3 administrative areas and the local government structures dealing with land allocation. This project will provide an institutional framework for coordination mechanism required in the processes entailing the development and implementation of National Land Policy across sectors and at all levels of governance strengthening the link building on other tools supporting achievement of gender equitable governance of land tenure

1.7 Key Stakeholders in the project

There are two levels of stakeholders in this project to promote successful implementation at the national level, and then also scale up knowledge, expertise at the international level.

At the **global scale**, international partners are key for (i) supporting the development of tools, methodologies and approaches to be implemented in countries; (ii) accompaniment of national decision-makers and practitioners in designing and implementing country-specific approaches; (iii) upscaling knowledge, sharing expertise with the broader international community for uptake and sharing of lessons. Given the limited budget of the project, its responsiveness to countries' objectives under the UNCCD, the project will be focusing on organizations with expertise, and existing mechanisms that seek to address land degradation, or tenure and women's rights to tenure, and can support policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners through their expertise, networks, resources and programmes. The key international partners engaging this project include:

- **UNCCD**- The UNCCD Secretariat has been a leader in addressing the links between land and tenure through its programs and policy frameworks, and facilitating Parties' engagement on these issues. The UNCCD Secretariat has developed – with FAO and other partner support - guidance to support its member countries. Some of the key areas in which it has expertise that will be leveraged for this project include:
 - *Convening stakeholders and knowledge-sharing*- The UNCCD Secretariat has facilitated raising awareness workshops and knowledge exchanges.
 - *Focus on gender and vulnerable groups*- The UNCCD Gender Action plan centralizes gender equality at the core of its mandate as a vital catalyst of environmental progress and as a means to promote gender positive policies and governance, community awareness raising and advocacy, and documenting progress by capturing and championing transformative action.^[62]⁶² The UNCCD Secretariat has partnered with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) in 2020 to advance gender-responsive SLM. When available, this data will be made available to the project.^[63]⁶³ The Secretariat also collaborates with UN Women and has developed

key publications such as A Manual for Gender Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes.[\[64\]](#)⁶⁴

- **Landesa**- Landesa partners with governments and civil society to develop pro-poor and gender-sensitive laws, policies, and programs that strengthen land rights for people experiencing extreme poverty. This non-profit is dedicated to securing land rights for the world's marginalized populations, and promotes enhancing land tenure security and promoting women's rights globally. Through its Center for Women's Land Rights, Landesa focuses on empowering women by ensuring they have secure access to land, recognizing that such access is pivotal for economic development, improved family nutrition, and increased educational opportunities for children. Landesa leads on two key campaigns relevant to this project: *Stand for Her Land Campaign*, which is a global advocacy movement that seeks to strengthen women's land rights by addressing the gap between customary and institutional laws. The campaign collaborates with policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to ensure women's land rights are recognized and enforced. The *Security for Girls Through Land Project (Girls Project)* aims to provide girls with critical economic assets, such as land, to reduce their vulnerability to poverty, gender-based violence, early marriage, and trafficking. By equipping girls with land rights, the project fosters better futures for them and their communities.
- **International Land Coalition (ILC)**- ILC is the largest land coalition in the world which collaborates with local communities, CSOs and governments on issues related to land rights. It serves as a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organizations working together to put people at the heart of land governance. ILC connects over 300 land-focused organizations and provides technical and financial support to the setting up of National Engagement Strategies' multi-stakeholder platforms and promotes linkages with regional and global policy processes, campaigns. It also provides cross-country learning and capacity through a Global Community of Practice and offers opportunities to members of the platform to increase their visibility and participation in regional and global fora. ILC supports learning by fostering cross-regional exchange, documenting good practices from country experiences, and investing in innovation for dissemination and upscaling. ILC's strategy 2030 is premised on the power of the Coalition led by members that are people's organizations, to accelerate and upscale recognition of the land rights of women, family farmers, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, forest dwellers, fisher folk, afro-descendants and local communities. ILC will focus is primarily on linkages between the coalition's own land rights agenda and climate change, ecosystem restoration, biodiversity loss and land degradation / desertification.
- **TMG**- is a not-for-profit, transdisciplinary research organization guided by the overall mission of fostering inclusive processes for driving transformative socio-economic change within planetary boundaries. TMG's work involves analyzing structural barriers that hinder land users from enjoying their legitimate rights. With their partners, TMG explores context-specific solutions and innovations to overcome these barriers. Globally, through broad research and policy networks, TMG actively engages in identifying policy spaces and agenda setting to ensure that these ideas can be taken up and integrated into formal decision making and implementation. A core focus of this work is the integration of land tenure in the implementation of the three Rio Conventions, with dedicated capacity development of national focal points. TMG also works with governments, human rights institutions, and civil society networks nationally to support the implementation of progressive national policies, also by building on progress made in global policy processes. At the local level

TMG creates space and strengthen community-based organizations and sub-national governance institutions to co-develop social innovations for land tenure security.

- **FAO-** The FAO has been a leader in land tenure/LDN space. It led the development, adoption by the Committee on World Food Security, and implementation of the VGGT, the sole globally negotiated and endorsed framework that provides principles and standards for improving tenure governance. The VGGT emphasizes equitable access to land, fisheries, and forests while addressing gender inequalities. FAO supports countries in integrating VGGT principles into policies, laws, organizational frameworks and practices. The FAO is also the custodian of SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2. and collects, analyzes, and compiles data related to these indicators from member countries to track global progress toward achieving the associated targets. FAO has also contributed significantly to the discourse and action on women's access to tenure. FAO's work on gender focuses on addressing structural barriers to women's land tenure security, including discriminatory laws, cultural norms, and limited participation in decision-making. FAO develops tools, conducts capacity-building programs, and provides technical assistance to promote women's land rights. For instance, FAO supports gender-responsive assessments, policy briefs, and country-specific case studies linking tenure security with sustainable land management. It also convenes various global actors and national level stakeholders through participatory approaches, ensuring women, marginalized groups, and local communities are included in land-related decision-making processes. With regards to LDN, FAO supports around 80 countries worldwide to address Land degradation Neutrality either to set their national LDN targets, to implement projects and programs and to enhance capacity to monitor and report on LDN. This support offers a unique capacity of in – depth understanding of the LDN drivers and the creation of tested and validated methodology to map Land Degradation and address it at various scales through Integrated Land Use Planning, Policies coherence, documenting of good practices (i.e. Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands – LADA, Decision Support System on Sustainable Land Management, Framework for Ecosystem Restoration – FERM). FAO throughout the decades has also established key partnerships supporting addressing LDN such as with WOCAT (FAO is a consortium Member).

In addition to the support provided by these international partners, the implementation of country level activities will be conducted in collaboration with relevant government entities as well as national CSOs, ensuring wide engagement and participation in policy dialogues and exchanges trickling down to the local/community levels, allowing for transformative and innovative approaches through raising awareness, capacity development, exchange of best practices and leadership, including through the Training-of-Trainers approach.

At the **national scale**, countries have conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify the key actors to be engaged with the project. In order to maintain the tailor-made approach and to be sensitive to the unique requirements of each context, the stakeholder mapping plan is unique, and has been developed with national partners. Please see Section 2.3 for details on the national stakeholders to be engaged in the project.

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[40] FAO/UNCCD. 2024. Securing Tenure to Restore Land and Safeguard Livelihoods. Available online at: https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2024-04/UNCCD-FAO_Synergy%20Brief_May%202024.pdf

[41] USAID. Land Tenure and Property Rights Assessment for Kyrgyzstan. Available online: https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/USAID_Land_Tenure_LTPR_Assessment_for_Kyrgyzstan.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[42] Ibid.

[43] UNEP. Paraguay- Land Values and Trends. Available online at: <https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/>

[44] 2023. [Orellana, Marcos](#). [UN. Human Rights Council](#). Visit to Paraguay: report of the Special Rapporteur on the Implications for Human Rights of the Environmentally Sound Management and Disposal of Hazardous Substances and Wastes, Marcos Orellana. A/HRC/54/25/Add.3. Geneva: UN Available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4017975?ln=es&v=pdf>

[45] NBSAP, 2015

[46] 4.8.2.1.1. Development of national land policy and review the Land Act, consensus over land tenure, use, management and land grabbing, other mal practices involving land, carrying out necessary reforms, undertake mapping, and to maximize economic utilization of land in South Sudan; 4.8.2.1.2. Establishment of an independent registry of Lands at all levels of government for issuance of title deeds; 4.8.2.1.3. Empowerment of the Land Commissions at different levels of Government to develop and interpretation of legislation regarding land issues and to reflect customary laws and practices, local heritage and institutional trends; 4.8.2.1.4. Land mediation

[47] IGAD. 2023.The IGAD Regional Land Monitoring Report Available online at: <https://igad.int/download/the-igad-regional-land-monitoring-report/?wpdmdl>

[48] Report of Land Commission

[49] GEF. 2024. Land Degradation Neutrality Knowledge Management and Learning Initiative. Available online at: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024-06/GEF_LandDegradation_LearningReport_2024_06_v2.pdf

[50] <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/new-horizons-land-restoration-18-nations-spearhead-next-phase-ldn-tsp>

[51] Available online at: https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2024-04/UNCCD-FAO_Synergy%20Brief_May%202024.pdf

[52] Global Landscapes Forum. White Paper Available online at: https://www.globallandscapesforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/TMG-White-paper1_Tenure_Rights_for_Restoration_and_Land_Degradation_Neutrality.pdf

[53] Available at <https://portal.gis.mag.gov.py/arcgis/apps/sites/#/geoportal/>

[54] https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/landright/docs/Technical_Guide.pdf#:~:text=FAO%E2%80%99s%20Governing%20land%20for%20women%20and%20men%20%E2%80%93,to%20achieving%20gender-equitable%20land%20tenure%20governance%20%28FAO%2C%202011a%29.² <https://igad.int/download/womens-land-rights-agenda-for-south-sudan/>

[55] UNCCD. 2022. Decision 19/COP15 and decision 27/COP15. <https://www.unccd.int/cop15/official-documents>

[56] UNCCD and FAO. 2022. Technical Guide. <https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/technical-guide-integration-voluntaryguidelines-responsible-governance>

[57] A validation workshop was held in October 2024. The 10 recommendations that came from this process to improve land tenure for LDN include: Promote GIS technology in resolving land tenure issues and land degradation; Strengthening of institutional integration and coordination in resolving land tenure issues and Land degradation; District and Divisional secretary level awareness on LDN and land Tenure issues; Promote efficiency of Bimsaviya program; Develop LDN Guideline for the country of Sri Lanka; Introduce cooperative land management (Model); Productivity improvement instead of land area expansion; Enhance Data Sharing and Accessibility through Supportive Platforms; Increased Political will and Awareness; integrated land use planning at the divisional secretary level

[58] FAO. 2024. Terminal evaluation of the project “AVACLIM: agroecology, ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods while mitigating climate change and restoring land in dryland regions”. Project Evaluation Series, 11/2024. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9759en>

[59] FAO. 2024. Terminal evaluation of the project “AVACLIM: agroecology, ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods while mitigating climate change and restoring land in dryland regions”. Project Evaluation Series, 11/2024. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9759en>

[60] FAO. 2024. UNCCD-FAO Initiative on Land Tenure. Available online at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/31525e64-cf90-42e8-85d1-21d46f7825e1/content>

[61] Ibid.

[62] UNCCD. Gender. Available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/gender/overview>

[63] UNCCD. 2024. UNCCD Stakeholders worldwide invited to share in new insights on gender-responsive SLM. Available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/unccd-stakeholders-worldwide-invited-share-new-insights-gender-responsive-slm>

[64] UN Women. A Manual for Gender Responsive Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes Available online at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2019/Manual-for-gender-responsive-land-degradation-neutrality-transformative-projects-en.pdf>

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

2.1 Theory of Change

The **theory of change addresses the basic problem** that unsustainable land use and weak land tenure systems, especially for women, undermine efforts to achieve LDN. Limited access to secure land rights reduces incentives for sustainable land practices and management and contributes to land degradation. Countries need tangible capacity building support to draw on global expertise to enhance their tenure regimes for achievement of LDN goals. The project seeks to improve land governance through gender-sensitive, inclusive, and integrated decision-making while addressing tenure security and promoting women's access to land. The change occurs by providing tools, building capacity, facilitating inclusive implementation, and enhancing knowledge-sharing within countries, by addressing the barriers identified.

To achieve the **project objective**--to develop capacities to strengthen responsible tenure governance in LDN initiatives--effective **causal pathways** are foreseen to address critical barriers that prevent integrating tenure security and gender equality to land in the design of LDN initiatives and interventions. To this end, the project will work to co-develop with partners and countries an innovative set of approaches (combined assessment tool and capacity development package) accessible by all concerned stakeholders to demonstrate the transformative potential of its application in-country and to scale up and out the achievement of the project through strengthened leadership, peer-to-peer exchanges and South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

The main **assumptions** are:

- Integrating tenure into LDN initiatives will support inclusivity, sustainability and efficiency of LDN projects and programming
- There are numerous tools and methodologies available and orientation is needed to identify/pilot the most relevant for assessing the LDN-gender-tenure nexus in national contexts
- Piloting tools and methodologies in national contexts will generate lessons learned and best practices to be adapted and shared in other countries
- Piloting practices in four different countries will yield the know-how to support individual countries to transition to improved gender-responsive tenure arrangements for LDN and will provide opportunities for lessons learnt
- That capacity building, and evidence-based personalized national approaches can support and strengthen the political will for gender responsive land tenure for LDN
- Stakeholders, including local communities and governments, are willing to participate in sustainable land management and governance reforms

- Sufficient financial and technical baseline capacity is present to absorb resources invested by the project

There are three causal pathways in this project reflected by the components:

- **Causal Pathway 1:** Development and validation of an innovative approach for informed decision-making composed of a combined assessment tool and capacity development package to formulate and implement LDN initiatives that include governance of tenure and gender equality in land rights dimensions.
- **Causal Pathway 2:** Application and learning-by-doing in national contexts in Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka. Under this pathway, LDN initiatives based on comprehensive assessments that tackle undermining tenure issues and gender unequal tenure rights to land, will be formulated for countries and implemented with accompaniment as needed.
- **Causal Pathway 3:** Knowledge Management and upscaling of best practices for global environmental benefits.

Global Environmental Benefits: The project is aligned with the GEF LD Focal Area strategy, and specifically Goal 1, aligning GEF support to promote UNCCD's LDN concept through an appropriate mix of investments. This project will support an enabling environment for LDN target implementation (Objective 2 of the GEF7 Land Focal Area) by strengthening the capacity of a wide range of stakeholders to implement LDN principles, established safeguards, and good practices and supporting policy decisions that enable countries to meet international commitments under the UNCCD. The project will allow stakeholders to promote LDN principles at multiple levels: in local land use planning; to address national obstacles to LDN attainment; to promote responsible governance and gender equality for land tenure; and to align private and public investments with LDN principles.

Progress towards LDN targets through enhanced gender-responsive tenure security will also make efforts at restoring and protecting soil biodiversity, habitat rehabilitation, and ecosystem health more sustainable.

Land tenure security can lead to improved adaptation outcomes in a range of areas. Secure land rights, including through customary systems, can incentivize farmers to adopt long-term agroecology practices, e.g., planting trees in mixed cropland/forest systems. Inclusive and responsible tenure policy for forests has the ability to reduce ecological vulnerability, as secure rights to land and forest resources can facilitate efforts to stabilize shifting cultivation and promote more sustainable resource use if appropriate technical and market support are available. Similarly, protection of forests, reforestation, agroforestry can contribute to carbon sequestration initiatives.

The socio-economic co-benefits of advancing LDN through the project include reducing rural poverty and promoting food and water security as well as gender equality and women's empowerment, resulting in improved social welfare outcomes. Please see 5.2 for more information in socio-economic benefits anticipated by the project.

Gender Transformative approaches: This project aims to be gender transformative and is guided by the lessons learnt and products from FAO/IFAD/WFP's Joint Programme on Gender Transformative Approaches (closed in December 2024), which notes that the social dimensions of agency, power relations and social

institutions should be considered for effective programming.^{[1]⁶⁵}

These three elements will thus be integrated into project initiatives. By addressing gender in the context of LDN, and then rendering it more applicable by examining gender relationship to tenure, the project seeks to actively examine, challenge and transform the causes of gender inequality in the context of LDN, and address the gender barriers that perpetuate gender inequality in the context of LDN. The project will commit to the following:

- *Analyze and reflect on gender norms and power structures*- the project addresses the status quo by incorporating women's access to tenure as a key part of supporting LDN. Having a project focused on this element, with the development and piloting of nationally-usable tools and methodologies will challenge the business-as-usual approach to LDN, which in some contexts may be gender-blind. Making gender and tenure central to LDN allows the entry point to address gender barriers, gender insensitive policy-making, and inclusion of women stakeholders who may otherwise be left out of SLM initiatives and policy-making. The project will support pilot countries with capacity building to analyze, reflect and possibly act upon the gender norms that govern tenure and are link to land degradation. Please see activities under Output 2.1.3.
- *Promote women's agency and leadership*- This will be achieved through identifying champions in each pilot country to advance women's right and the importance of women's agency. Further, women's agency enhancement will be supported within and through capacity building initiatives, leadership opportunities, multi-stakeholder collaborations with women organizations, knowledge-sharing fora.
- *Address structural barriers*- The project is designed to address the challenges that exist in addressing the gender-tenure-LDN nexus, and will thus note and explore discriminatory laws, policies and institutional barriers that limit women's tenure security for LDN, and develop tools, methodologies and approaches to address these in a culturally-relevant and sensitive manner. Assessments conducted under Output 2.1.1 and subsequent collective analysis in output 2.1.2. will deepen the understanding of the intersectional challenges that women face relative to tenure and LDN.
- *Apply participatory and inclusive measures*- the project has from the PPG stage and will throughout the project, include marginalized voices, and include men in addition to women to ensure the socialisation and mainstreaming of the gender equality principles, and will ensure that these stakeholders are part of the implementation of project activities. Effective communication throughout the life of a project will be a priority: given how technical the project is, there will be a focus on ensuring the upstreaming of voices so that the project is not only theoretical in nature but is implementable with local impact and local interests at heart.
- *Measure gender impact*- The project includes SMART indicators which will seek to measure changes in gender norms and women's empowerment. In addition, all case studies, lessons learned and communication tools will include reporting on gender impact to improve gender monitoring and data available. Results from the project will be shared with countries beyond the pilot ones for sharing of lessons learned and wider impact, if replicated.

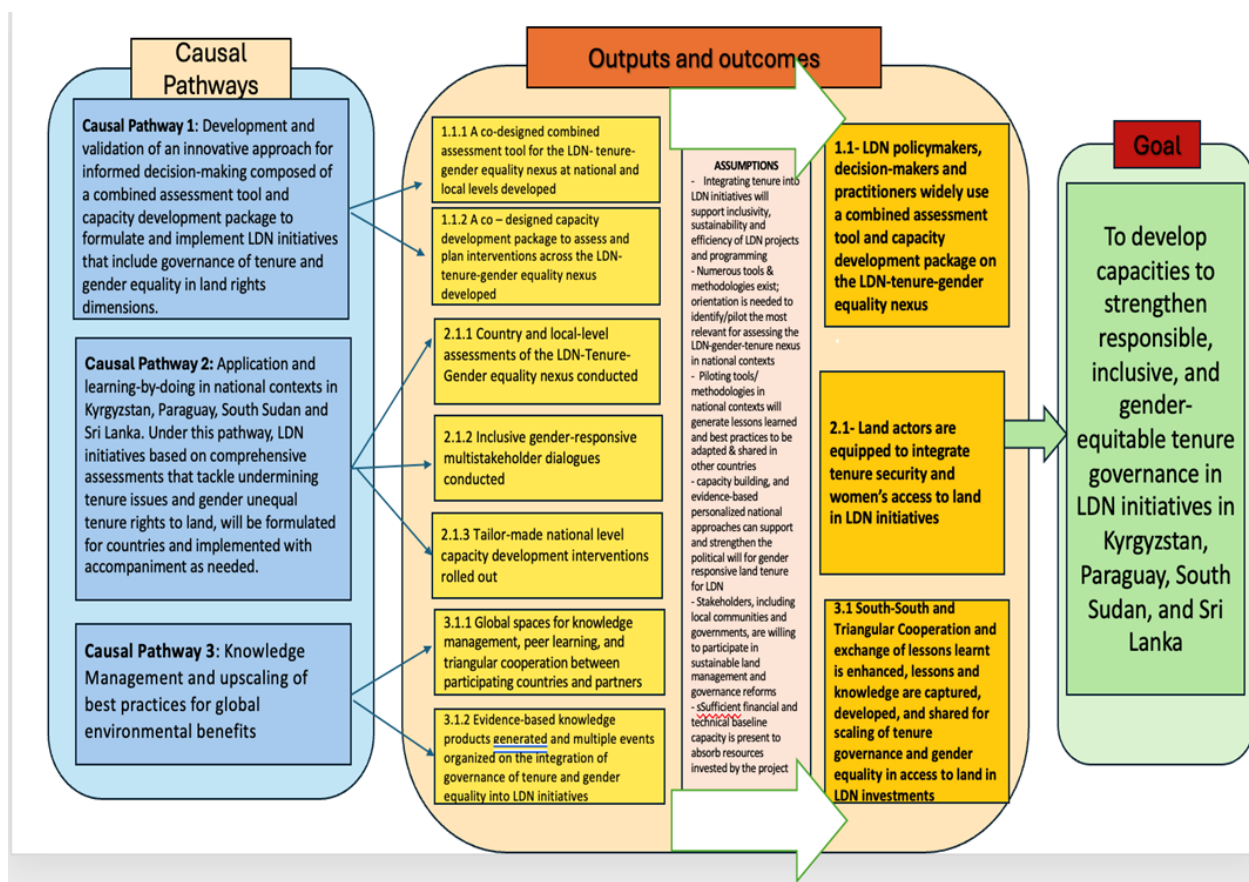
By addressing gender within the scope of LDN and tenure security, the project will support understanding the many interrelations and intersectionality that exist between secure access to natural resources,

sustainability , livelihood and empowerment dimensions. The project's specific gender transformative interventions include:

- *Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogues:* these mechanisms will be used to promote equitable gender relations, highlight impact of gender inequalities and barriers to LDN achievement, and identify roles that various sectors can play in alleviating the challenges that exist for women with regard to the gender-LDN-tenure nexus
- *Economic empowerment:* while the project is too short (3 years) and is focused on developing approaches and providing capacity building for land actors, to provide direct economic empowerment activities, these considerations will be forefront in the development of methodologies and tools for practitioners. As Section 1 highlights, women's economic activities can contribute greatly to sustainable land management. Including relevant policy recommendations in this regard will be key to supporting women's economic empowerment and supporting gender transformation. Capacity development interventions identified under Output 2.1.3 also seek to support financial resources/mechanisms available to women to advance work on SLM, which in turn will provide opportunities to strengthen agency.
- *Policy advocacy-* The project will support the development of strategic policy recommendations to improve upon the gender-tenure-LDN nexus. These will be formulated through inclusive and meaningful multi-stakeholder platforms enhanced by the capacity building program and the provision of agreeable, trustable data.
- *Gender education is folded into capacity-building measures for land actors:* In order to render the gender education transformative, capacity building measures will bring to question attitudes, existing gender norms and power dynamics, and raising questions regarding gender inequalities with regards to LDN and tenure.

[1] FAO, IFAD, WFP & CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform. 2023. *Guidelines for measuring gender transformative change in the context of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture*. Rome, FAO, IFAD, WFP and CGIAR. Available online at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/08dccbe0-4bf0-4bc5-bd96-94410b2eafc2>

Fig. 1. Theory of Change



2.2 Description of Project Components

The project is structured on three inter-connected components that seek to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation while promoting gender equality in land tenure, and reducing tenure insecurity (also referred to as the LDN-gender-tenure nexus in this document). As highlighted in Section 1, the project addresses the integrated nature of these aspects to achieve greater results, and to create positive impacts on gender and tenure security which will, in the long term, serve to reinforce the adoption of sustainable land management practices in a more coherent manner thereby contributing to national LDN goals. The overall **objective of the project is: To develop capacities to strengthen responsible, inclusive, and gender-equitable tenure governance in LDN initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka.**

While each component will require the engagement of several stakeholders both at the national and international levels in order to streamline the implementation, Component 1 and 3 will be executed by international partners, Landesa and TMG respectively, while component 2 will be implemented by national governments, with backstopping and helpdesk support from ILC. See Section 2.5 on Institutional Arrangements for this breakdown.

Component 1- Inclusive, integrated and informed decision-making

This Component will equip policymakers and decision-makers with tangible tools and methodologies to help them target specific land tenure issues, including gendered limitations to land tenure, which act as barriers to LDN. There are already numerous existing tools and methodologies that exist and address different facets of the LDN-gender-tenure-nexus, not necessarily holistically—**this component will aggregate and refine available knowledge into usable tools/methodologies to guide land actors to effectively assess their LDN-gender-tenure needs.** Modular assessments will be conducted within the pilot countries to understand what key gaps/barriers exist on the LDN-gender-tenure nexus, as well as on the capacity building needs. The process of conducting these assessments will be inclusive, participatory and will engage multi-stakeholder dialogues so that the diverse needs of land actors are reflected within the assessments, and the aggregated tools/methodologies will be applied to conduct said assessments.

The tools and methodologies aggregated and refined under this Component will universally support countries wishing to advance on the LDN-gender-tenure nexus, and will be piloted in Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka through initiatives under Component 2. The crux of Component 1 is to aggregate existing tools and methodologies for the global commons that can leverage the nine pathways presented in the FAO and UNCCD Technical Guide on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the UNCCD LDN (henceforth Technical Guide), launched at the UNCCD COP 15 (See section 1.1).^[1] The nine pathways are presented in the Technical Guide as means to be adapted to different countries, in order to integrate VGGT principles in initiatives to combat desertification, land degradation and drought and to achieve LDN; the tools and methodologies aggregated under this component will build on these for enhanced coherence, support the implementation of international mechanisms and processes, and to allow countries to advance towards their international commitments.

Component 1 will thus focus on the aggregation and refinement of appropriate tools and methodologies based on evidence-based approaches and assessments for the global commons to address tenure, gender and land degradation, while Component 2 will support the implementation of capacity building in pilot countries to respond to the needs identifying by the assessments. While tools and methodologies will be piloted in four countries, the aim is to refine products under Component 1 that are flexible to be adapted to various contexts and countries. Each participating country will receive a suite of implementable tools and methodologies relative to their national circumstances relating to LDN, inclusive of gender in fostering improved land tenure governance. The lessons learned and findings from piloting will ultimately be upscaled through global spaces and fora under Component 3. The components are thus all interrelated and reinforce a chain of resource development; piloting and application; and sharing lessons learned, best practices and use to the global community, with a sound basis in capacity development and multi-stakeholder engagement.

Component 1 will be executed by Landesa with support from other international partners on specific outputs, as the project is a collaborative exercise among global expertise on LDN-gender-tenure. Please refer to the workplan in Annex G which refers to which partners will be leading on which output.

There is one anticipated Outcome under Component 1:

Outcome 1.1- LDN policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners widely use a combined assessment tool and capacity development package on the LDN-tenure-gender equality^{[2]⁶⁶} nexus

The focus of this outcome is to develop an innovative approach that will support policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners, through capacity building programmes, methodologies and tools to implement LDN initiatives that include governance of tenure and gender equality in land rights dimensions. The VGGT will serve as a benchmark for the aggregation of tools/methodologies, given that it has been negotiated and adopted by countries. This will also support the adherence to COP decisions (COP 14 decision 26; COP 15 decision 27), which “encourage the parties to integrate VGGT into UNCCD implementation and LDN achievement.”

In Paraguay, for instance, although the VGGT has been socialized among key stakeholders, it has not been incorporated into public policies such as agrarian reform, or into tenure projects. This is partly because government human resources change partially every 5 years resulting in lost capacity. In Paraguay, to observe meaningful inclusion of VGGT into policies, it would be necessary to build capacities on the VGGT in at least three public institutions (INDERT, MADES and Ministerio de la Mujer) and to socialize the VGGT on a local level in INDERT.

In order to develop tailored tools and methodologies, the following information will be required. Some of this exists in disparate forms in the baseline within the countries, others will have to be collected in the earlier phases of the project implementation:

- *A legal tenure assessment*- This will require assessing the existing legal framework governing land tenure rights (private, public or common lands) and assess to what extent legitimate tenure rights are recognized. This will also require consideration of laws and policies that are currently under development, but not yet formally passed or adopted. Several tools to do so have already been developed for arable and forest tenure and they will be reviewed and adapted to advise decision makers according to their needs. The legal tenure assessment is incomplete in Paraguay, for instance, because of the remaining conflicts, and in some cases, because of an incomplete land cadaster on a national scale. However, public lands contain effective assessments (INDERT/SIRT, and the agricultural census^{[3]⁶⁷} of 2022).
- *Understanding land tenure rights categories*- Different types of tenure rights (such as ownership, communal, lease, seasonal access, customary) can coexist and overlap and have to be considered to ensure that the various tenure arrangements are understood, recognized and safeguarded with a focus on how gender and land degradation play into this. Who can use what resources for how long and under what conditions, will be the question driving this assessment and this baseline information is needed to assess if the legal framework recognizes legitimate tenure rights.
- *Reviewing tenure and gender security indicators to monitor results and impacts and in particular ensuring adherence to the human rights-based approach (HRBA)*- Specific indicators used to measure gender and land

tenure security, such as the duration of rights, transferability, clarity of boundaries, and recognition of rights by the state and community for women and men will be considered as part of tool/methodology. When available, SDG indicators 1.4.2., 5.a.1 and 5.a.2 data will be integrated into the tool to capture data relevant to women's access to and secure tenure rights to land. This has been done in South Sudan for example, and responsiveness to SDG indicators will inform capacity development programming.

- *Stakeholder mapping*- the PPG has conducted a baseline stakeholder mapping exercise to identify the key land actors and stakeholders, and in particular women, will engage in the implementation of this project and be impacted by it. It will be deepened during implementation by conducting a mapping exercise to statutory and customary authorities and all the land user groups (such as, Private Sector, Local Communities, Women, Migrants, Indigenous Peoples, Youth) playing a role in the tenure arrangements.
- *Examine current baseline, correlation studies and other relevant tools and methodologies published*- There are a plethora of studies that have already been conducted on how land tenure security impact land use practices, decrease degradation and support restoration and how to address the nexus against the 9 pathways presented in the FAO – UNCCD technical guide. They will be reviewed to ensure building on the existing approaches available, and to offer to decision makers a tool that aggregate and orient them in their multidimensional assessments geared towards generating actions through consensus and inclusive dialogue mechanism.
- *Biophysical Assessment*- which examines the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation, will be necessary to understand the root causes of the degradation and their linkages to tenure insecurity and gender inequalities. In Paraguay, a national land degradation map has already been developed through assistance of FAO and the Paraguay+Verde project; MADES is in the process of validating the map.[\[4\]](#)⁶⁸

Assessing the aforementioned preliminary assessments on biophysical conditions, land tenure and gender, according to the UNCCD Technical Guide, is essential to inform the design and planning phase of LDN initiatives, and to identify the drivers of land degradation and the specifics of the existing land tenure and gender dynamics.[\[5\]](#)⁶⁹ This process will also help identify remaining gaps. In South Sudan, for instance, there is scarcity of sex disaggregated data which may limit measuring differential impact of LD on men and women. This process will be inclusive with consultation and participation, particularly of the most vulnerable, to establish trust and transparency.

The following outputs are anticipated under Outcome 1.1:

- 1.1.1. A co-designed combined assessment tool for the LDN- tenure-gender equality nexus at national and local levels developed

1.1.2. A co – designed capacity development package to assess and plan interventions across the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus developed

Output 1.1.1- A co-designed combined assessment tool for the LDN- tenure-gender equality nexus at national and local levels developed

Under Output 1.1.1, the project will develop a combined assessment tool, based on the FAO and UNCCD Technical Guide, launched at the UNCCD COP 15.^{[6]⁷⁰} This guide offers a multi-pathway, flexible approach to support policy, decision-makers and relevant stakeholders in shaping a tailor-made response to commonly encountered land tenure issues. The methodologies/tools aggregated under this project will help focus on tenure responsive and integrated land use planning. Participatory governance and tenure security are key elements to be embedded in the design, implementation, and outcomes of land restoration interventions.^{[7]⁷¹} Many land restoration activities require flexible governance that can accommodate new knowledge types and skillsets as well as the values, relationships, and engagement of multiple actors, which will be a strong focus of the project. These aspects will be incorporated in nationally relevant ways in the tool and methodologies aggregated/refined by the project.

The activities under this output will serve to formulate an assessment tool that integrates VGGT principles and the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus into national and local LDN initiatives. It will be responsive to national circumstances and be produced in collaboration with and validated by key land actors, including LDN policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners. The **activities** that will achieve Output 1.1.1 include:

- Mapping existing tools and methodologies that could support implementation of the 9 pathways and highlight flexible models and best practices
- Identification/development of a co-designed combined modular assessment tool for the LDN- tenure-gender equality nexus that could be applied at national levels
- Establishing multi-stakeholder working group structures to collaborate on the development, assessment and review of the tools/methodologies.
- Establishing feedback mechanisms and dialogues through which users can report on the tool's effectiveness and suggest improvements. This can also be linked with activities under Component 3 to share experiences across countries and contribute to greater upscaling.

Output 1.1.2 A co – designed capacity development package to assess and plan interventions across the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus developed

In order to render the project sustainable and practical, it has to address the specific capacity gaps of pilot countries and be flexible enough to be adapted elsewhere. In particular, support has to be tailored to address the unique barriers and circumstances and convert the modular assessment from the previous output into a *blended institutional learning programme* that provides a continuous learning opportunity over a period of three to six months co-facilitated by FAO's eLearning Academy, and to build stakeholder capacity. This output will address the capacity needs identified in the previous output, through the implementation a set of training

modules targeted for country and local level use on the assessment guidance is designed and developed for national / local level roll-out.

In South Sudan for instance, there are capacity gaps in the land administration system. There is the need to improve the land registration system, land information system, and the process of preparation and implementation of land use plans and zoning at subnational levels (state and county Payam to Boma). All of these processes require the integration of LDN elements. Currently many of the land restoration programmes targeting farmers lock women out from participating in innovations, due to culture and traditions.

This capacity development programme will support key land actors to upgrade their skills, map their capacity needs and develop a learning plan to fulfill these.

The key activities under this output include:

- Conducting an online workshop for participants to interact, via a collaborative learning platforms (through partnerships of the E-Learning Academy of the FAO and international partners), to learn the concepts and fundamentals, and initiate a participatory analysis of the national or local context. In the online component, there is support from a tutor to guide participants' learning experience. Participants are encouraged to use social learning, through interactive e-learning lessons and online discussion forums, to interact and complete participatory assignments.
- Conduct face-to-face workshops designed on the results of the online activities, with the overall objective of enabling participants to apply the competencies acquired in the online workshop, and to jointly develop realistic action plans at national or regional level.
- Promoting capacity building on VGGT Principles and LDN-Tenure and Gender nexus- One of the preliminary aspects of developing such a tool is to ensure that the VGGT principles are well socialized, understood and endorsed among key stakeholders as there remains uneven understanding among these within countries.
- Carry out a mentoring phase to complete the blended learning programme. In the mentoring period, in which learners are encouraged to apply newly acquired skills and share the challenges, doubts, and issues that they are facing at country level, with the other geographically dispersed participants. This is known as peer-to-peer support, and the tutor provides mentoring, guidance, and advice. In this phase, therefore, participants receive support for implementation of the action plans designed in the face-to-face workshop and maintain collaboration and dialogue with other participants. During this period of three to six months, the capacity of key stakeholders will be enhanced to support active engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogues, generating transformative change. Furthermore, it is hoped that increased capacities will also deliver integrated actions, which can be supported by this project (limited) or parallel financing from project partners.

Component 2- National-level evidence-based implementation

The capacity gaps identified under the assessments conducted in Component 1 from the tools and methodologies, will be supported under Component 2, in Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan, and Sri Lanka Component. The tools, methodologies and approaches aggregated under Component 1, will be implemented by land actors under Component 2, with as-needed assistance from ILC to provide expertise, guidance, training on use and best practices to address the capacity gaps identified.

There is one Outcome foreseen under **Component 2: Outcome 2.1- Land actors are equipped to integrate tenure security and women's access to land in LDN initiatives**

Under this outcome, the capacities of country land actors will be enhanced to integrate tenure security and women's access to land in LDN initiatives/target setting, based on detailed inventory and multi-factor assessments available for selected national and/or sub-national levels. Initiatives under Outcome 2.1 will require collaborations among land actors within the countries, to determine a common vision on land governance; establish multi-stakeholder platforms; support buy-in for integrated approaches to LDN which take into account gender and land tenure; take part in capacity building initiatives; and identify plans to sustain and advance LDN work beyond project duration.

There are three outputs anticipated under Outcome 2.1:

- Output 2.1.1 Country and local-level assessments of the LDN-Tenure-Gender equality nexus conducted
- Output 2.1.2 Inclusive gender-responsive multistakeholder dialogues conducted
- Output 2.1.3 Tailor-made national level capacity development interventions rolled out

Output 2.1.1 Country and local-level assessments of the LDN-Tenure-Gender equality nexus conducted

A core part of addressing land, tenure, and gender challenges, is to understand the capacity gaps that exist in the baseline more concretely. This will require assessments on (i) LDN -gender-tenure nexus in each pilot country, and on (ii) the capacity needed to better address gaps and barriers. **This needs assessment will inform the learning modules planned for Output 1.1.2, and the assessments of global tools/methodologies under Output 1.1.1.**

The following activities will be undertaken under Output 2.1.1 to identify the baseline and capacity needs for successful development of responsive tools and methodologies, as well as learning modules to enhance the integration of gender and land tenure consideration in sustainable land management strategies. For South Sudan, for instance, this is of particular relevance as the existing policy frameworks for land administration and land use management, operate in uncoordinated manner. Land users and land managers do not coordinate or communicate effectively. This happens at all levels of governance (state, county, Payam and Boma which is the lowest administration unit under traditional authorities). Therefore, a tailor-made response can help the country bridge this gap.

These will be targeted on identifying gaps relative to the LDN-gender-tenure nexus and on the capacities to:

- Review land tenure assessments examining the tenure arrangements (who can use what resources for how long and under what conditions) under the formal/statutory legal framework and under customary tenure in the area of intervention. The assessment will identify the tenure systems (public or private or common lands) present in the area of intervention. The assessment will take into account all types of arrangements or legitimate tenure rights including those that are seasonal or periodic (such as grazing) and integrate a mapping of the statutory and customary authorities that play a role in the

tenure arrangements.^{[8]⁷²}

These will be supported by biophysical assessments, to examine the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation, links with tenure and to support the planning phase of any LDN initiative and to contribute to the identification of relevant action pathways.

- Conduct a gender assessment examining the differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements and examine the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. The gender assessment will be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are identified and targeted efforts are made for addressing them through gender-responsive approaches. These will be integrated into land tenure and degradation analyses to highlight the gaps relative to the nexus.
- Conduct a capacity needs assessment of land actors to identify the skills gaps and requirements required to successfully implement the project, and to identify bottlenecks in supporting LDN objectives that are inclusive of gender and tenure considerations.

Output 2.1.2 Inclusive gender-responsive multistakeholder dialogues conducted

Under this output, the project will reinforce existing VGGT multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) where they exist, as well as LDN working groups, to gather civil society, government, academia and the private sector to implement common visions on land governance, with improved tenure security for women. This allows the project to build on existing models which have yielded demonstrable results in other countries, and apply international standards and best practices to achieve results in the national contexts of Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka. The MSPs, where they exist, play a crucial role in building trust and effectively promoting the implementation of the VGGT and serve as a space for diverse to engage.

In Paraguay, while the MSP does not exist, there is the Inter-institutional Working Group to Fight Desertification and Drought, chaired by MADES and MAG and made up of 26 public institutions, academia and civil society. In South Sudan, the National Land policy Technical Task Force is a multistakeholder platform composed of land-related institutions and women's land rights technical working groups, which will be mobilized. There is also a Natural Resources Working Group and the UNCCD Working Group. Their representatives can form a compounded group for LDN whose role will promote national land monitoring initiatives. Including LDN across all sectors and the State Ministries of Housing, Land and Public Utilities in the 10 states and 3 Administrative Areas is crucial, for greater mainstreaming of this project. While there are several working groups in South Sudan that are made up of land-related institutions, they need support to move from the policy development stage to the policy implementation. The newly established Land Reform Coordination unit in the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development anticipate consolidating the role of the diverse technical working groups and building synergies through linking policies with Land Tenure, VGGT, LDN and gender nexus and at all levels of governance—this project is thus being implemented in a timely manner to support this.

The following activities will be carried out through MSPs or MSP-like platforms:

- *Convene different stakeholders in an inclusive space*- MSPs serve as forums for engaging various actors, including governments, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, indigenous groups, and local communities. The open atmosphere in an MSP promotes relationships based on trust, mutual respect and communication, which issues such as tenure and gender equality require, which will be replicated in the countries.
- *Intersectoral Coordination*-LDN-related issues require the engagement of several sectors, and MSPs enable different sectors to work together. This multi-stakeholder platform will support discussion among actors who may have different perspectives and approaches and provide spaces to bridge gaps, and identify areas of complementarity and synergy. In South Sudan, for instance, there are intersectoral mechanisms that exist such as the National Land Policy Task Force, or the Housing Land and Property Area of Responsibilities Technical Working Group led by the Norwegian Refugee Council. However, without capacity in the Land Reforms Unit, it is difficult to leverage these effectively. In Paraguay, INDERT and MADES will focus on including and synergizing their actions with institutional entities such as the Interior, Public Ministry, Education, and Health. The strategy will ensure that it is not only the units specialized in gender from these ministries that are included, but also more broadly to mainstream gender more cross-sectorally.
- *Dissemination of information/ raising awareness*- MSPs serve to increase awareness of the VGGT principles and guidelines among stakeholders, particularly to create a bridge between local, regional and national levels. This platform will leverage the information gleaned through activities under Component 1 and mainstream them within the various communities of stakeholders.
- *Capacity building mechanisms*- MSPs can deliver capacity building, particularly with women and indigenous communities, to understand their rights under the VGGT and how they can engage in governance processes. The platform will serve as a learning space for members to increase knowledge, learn new tools and share experiences on how to improve governance of tenure, particularly based on the findings and data from Component 1.
- *Facilitation and promotion of policy and legal reforms* – MSPs support wide-ranging consensus and foster policy and legal frameworks producing lasting outcomes at all levels, encouraging continuity, and coherence among different sectors. This platform will serve to develop and review policy recommendations, based on findings, tools and discussion, and create mechanisms for monitoring of achievement of said recommendations.
- *Promoting buy-in for responsible governance of tenure* – MSPs involve stakeholders from government agencies, CSOs and local communities which increases the likelihood of approval of initiatives, as well as reinforcement from other stakeholders and sectors. This platform will be leveraged for identifying roles and responsibilities in the governance of tenure and gender inclusion in LDN activities.
- *Improved governance of tenure* – The project will create a space for national stakeholders to develop mechanisms and indicators for monitoring of land tenure processes.

Overall these multi-stakeholder platforms will seek to establish and/or enhance tenure and gender equality in land rights and promote trust and confidence building, while supporting VGGT adherence.

Output 2.1.3. Tailor-made national level capacity development interventions rolled out

Under this output, the capacity gaps and assessment needs identified under previous outputs, will be addressed through a comprehensive delivery of tailored national approaches. The activities outlined are thus more general, as the design of these context-specific capacity development interventions will be based on the assessments to be conducted to help design a holistic capacity development intervention. It is foreseen that under this project the following activities will be carried out:

- Government representatives, women's organizations, grassroots organizations, youth representatives and Indigenous Peoples and local community (IPLCs) representatives' capacity development processes will be launched in partnership with country partners allowing for specific approaches, ensuring delivery in local languages or with translation.
- Specific policy recommendations inclusive of LDN-gender-tenure will be produced. Depending on the individual circumstances in countries, LDN-related actions, with timelines and indicators could be established. Clear, measurable objectives will be designed for LDN e.g. improving understanding of gender and land tenure rights for SLM or strengthening policy formulation skills, or building capacity for conflict resolution in land disputes.
- Capacity development will focus on empowering stakeholders to understand and apply the VGGT principles effectively, ensuring that land governance is gender equitable, transparent, and sustainable.
- Capacity development activities will be customized and training modules will have a segmented approach in focusing on groups and their relevant roles in land governance
- Content for capacity development will be adapted to local cultural norms and practices, with understanding of national and customary laws and practices.
- Gender champions will be identified to promote the inclusion of gender in LDN-related initiatives
- Face-to-Face, E-learning, Peer-learning, and the training the trainer mentorship activities will be conducted depending on the needs and types of training deemed necessary.
- Networking will be supported through knowledge-sharing mechanisms of VGGT practitioners, along with gender experts who can continue sharing best practices, challenges, and innovations beyond the initial training.
- The capacity of land governance institutions will be strengthened through responsive trainings, to capture and share lessons learned from LDN and gender/tenure security projects. This will depend on the findings from the assessments. This includes, for South Sudan for instance, institutional capacity in gender responsive planning and budgeting in the land sector policy processes.
- Support countries to develop a sustainability plan which would incorporate a financing plan and identify potential partners to support work beyond the project duration.

In addition to the aforementioned activities which will be conducted in all four countries, the following specific capacity building activities have already been identified as needing to be prioritized during project implementation—others will be determined through the analyses conducted under Component 1:

- In Kyrgyzstan, capacity building support will be provided on strengthening financial mechanisms for women farmers choosing to pursue SLM activities, and adapting existing financial tools to account for more effective loans, subsidies and grants, and fostering a supportive policy environment which can generate women-friendly financial resources for SLM.
- In Kyrgyzstan, capacity development support will be provided on strengthening the enabling environment for women-led agribusiness and economic activities, with improved access to land. Support is also needed on gender transformational aspects such as shifting perceptions and social norms of women in agriculture, from “helpers” to women as business owners, landowners, decision-makers and key stakeholders in land management.

- In Paraguay, capacity building support will be provided to generate key statistics on women's access to land, on the role of women and men in relation to land degradation in gender differentiated ways such as hours spent on SLM activities; loss of land resources and impact; and relationship to productivity. This core data will then be fed into policy development, but without the adequate data, the notion of gender-tenure- and LDN remains unclear.
- In South Sudan capacity building support will be provided to the new Land Reform Unit being developed under MLHUD, to monitor and implement gender-tenure-LDN activities and to develop manuals/guides on enhancing coordination mechanisms on land governance at the county and state level, and to ensure effective coordination between both levels for greater cohesion and decentralization.
- In South Sudan capacity building will be provided on establishing gender-sensitive participatory land use planning and capacity development tools.
- In South Sudan, a capacity building programme will be developed to support CSO participation, including women's organizations, in monitoring land reforms through social accountability frameworks.
- In Sri Lanka, capacity development support will be provided for gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation on gender-tenure-LDN to be able to measure how the country is progressing on indicators.
- In Sri Lanka, capacity building support will be provided on gender-sensitive financing for LDN and gender budgeting and gender budget tracking on gender-tenure-LDN initiatives.
- In Sri Lanka, capacity building support will be provided on addressing sociocultural barriers in addressing gender-tenure-LDN and for strengthening gender-sensitive policy governance.

Component 3- Knowledge Management and Learning

As noted in Section 1.1, gender and land tenure considerations are often not holistically considered within LDN. Greater access to knowledge, learning, best practices, and peer experiences would benefit policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners to implement activities, and to maintain ongoing networks of support and advancement for LDN.

The purpose of this component is also to leverage the global spaces and portals that exist, to be used by land actors in pilot countries, for advancement on the land-gender-tenure nexus. These include those organized by the UNCCD, the FAO, the *Stand for Her Land* Campaign (Landesa), Global Land Observatory (FAO- ILC- CIRAD), the Initiative for Women Land Rights Under the 3 Rio Conventions (TMG), Land Degradation and Tenure page of the Land Portal. This Component will be executed by TMG, but support from international partners will be facilitated to achieve anticipated results.

There is one outcome planned under Component 3:

Outcome 3.1 South-South and Triangular Cooperation and exchange of lessons learnt is enhanced, lessons and knowledge are captured, developed, and shared for scaling of tenure governance and gender equality in access to land in LDN investments

There are numerous global initiatives advancing gender and land tenure considerations within LDN, and various expertise of different thinktanks, international partners and research entities that have not been sufficiently harnessed for policy changes within Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka. As such interventions under this outcome will foster an environment where lessons learned and knowledge are effectively captured, developed, and shared across countries, and upscaled. This cooperation enables countries to learn from each other's experiences and innovations, particularly those facing similar challenges in land management and gender equality, and avoid duplication of interventions underway.

By supporting South-South and Triangular Cooperation through international events, and online exchanges/webinars, the project will improve the flow of knowledge, scaling up effective strategies for tenure governance and gender equality in LDN investments and initiatives, ultimately leading to more equitable and sustainable land management outcomes across the Global South.

Moreover, the results of the pilots within the selected countries will be used to inform the global commons and share experience to other countries that may be interested in implementing the tools and methodologies implemented under Component 1.

There are two outputs foreseen under Outcome 3.1:

- Output 3.1.1 Global spaces for knowledge management, peer learning, and triangular cooperation between participating countries and partners
- Output 3.1.2 Evidence-based knowledge products generated and multiple events organized on the integration of governance of tenure and gender equality into LDN initiatives

Output 3.1.1 Global spaces for knowledge management, peer learning, and triangular cooperation between participating countries and partners

Initiatives under this output will seek to capitalize the use and resources of existing collaborative spaces on responsible governance of tenure and gender equality in land rights, to support greater knowledge exchange to enhance national level LDN activities.

By building upon existing projects and well-established partnerships, the project will minimize the need for duplicating efforts and costs for the development of monitoring and decision support tools needed to assess and inform land degradation.^[1] This project will valorize existing platforms and tools, and socialize their uses and benefits, while populating global data banks. For large-scale capacity building events, the project will seek direct synergies and cost saving opportunities with regional and or global capacity training workshops that may be delivered by UNCCD or partners.

The project will take advantage of FAO's wide networks to connect with land actors in related fields (such as WeCAN, Forest Landscape Restoration, Ecological Restoration, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and other areas) that do not currently link with UNCCD and LDN target setting. Furthermore, the project will also inform FAO's Gender-Lex, a crosscutting thematic database of FAOLEX, providing free access to national and international legal and policy instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The project outputs are expected to align with and bolster the efforts of the Global Land Observatory. Led by FAO, the International Land Coalition, and CIRAD, the Observatory focuses on elements which will be complementary to this project, such as:

- An open-access database and monitoring platform to document land tenure and governance trends, track progress towards SDGs and VGGTs.
- A comprehensive platform offering indicators, methodologies, and tools for broad-based land tenure and governance monitoring.
- The State of Land Tenure and Governance (SLTG) report, a periodic flagship publication documenting evolutions and progress in land tenure and governance.

Analysis and policy guidance documents on land-related topics, including country-specific analyses on SDG progress under FAO custodianship. Relevant learning materials and case studies will feed into the Women's Land Rights (WLR) Platform, a unique and powerful web-based resource that provides an inclusive space for women across the world to share and document their experiences and perspectives around land rights – amplifying voices, increasing visibility, building strategic cohesion, and advancing collaboration between WLR stakeholders. It is designed to elevate grassroots women's voices to a regional and a global stage. The Platform provides the opportunity and venue to use storytelling as an impactful tool for advocacy and movement building, while also mapping organizations across the world who are working in various sectors that intersect the WLR movement.

In addition, project results will feed into the Land Collaborative, a global knowledge and south-south knowledge and learning exchange platform and Community of Practice (CoP) aiming to promote transformational partnership in the land sector; and works in partnership with the public and private sectors and civil society to mobilize knowledge, leadership and capacity in the South, from local to global levels. TBC is building a Global Community of Practice that connects land governance change makers, stimulates innovation and equips multi-stakeholder practitioners working on land governance with the tools, capacities and right processes they need to deliver real system change in land governance. By facilitating their interactions, land governance practitioners, supporters, promoters, funders and change makers are learning from good practices and evidenced-based solutions coming out of the ILC network and beyond.^[2]

The project will also explore partnerships with UN Women's Joint Programmes on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE) which seeks to improve women's access to land and resources in the context of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management; the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), facilitated by UN-Habitat which seeks to improve land governance through gender responsive tools; the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) which supports large-scale forest and landscape restoration initiatives that align with LDN goals, and the Committee on World Food security (CFS).

The specific activities to be carried out by Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka with partnership from TMG under this project will include:

- Identify and document successful projects and interventions that promote tenure security and gender equality within LDN investments.
- Capture lessons learned and challenges faced in implementing tenure and gender initiatives.
- Provide data on academic and policy research that focuses on gender-sensitive land tenure within the LDN framework. Provide data to comparative case studies to highlight differences and commonalities across countries and regions.
- Support South-South exchanges where experts from one country or region support capacity building in gender-sensitive tenure governance within the LDN framework.
- Identify roles and responsibilities in populating shared data repositories that compile best practices, tools, training materials, and reports on land tenure, gender equality, and LDN projects
- Provide lessons learned on gender monitoring approaches and results achieved in each pilot country

Output 3.1.2 Evidence-based knowledge products generated and multiple events organized on the integration of governance of tenure and gender equality into LDN initiatives

The project will contribute to bridging the knowledge gaps across the gender-tenure-LDN nexus and will capture lessons learned, across various topics and ecosystems, to be disseminated through the project-wide partnership network. The objective of this output is to develop studies, policy briefs, best practices and lessons learned, and support the development of learning events to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and promote upscaling of best practices in the gender, land tenure, LDN context.

The project will develop a communication plan for outreach, awareness raising, and dissemination of outputs/results/lessons aims to maximize the project's impact at global, regional, and national levels. Firstly, the project will leverage existing initiatives and processes like the *Stand for Her Land* campaign and the UNCCD COP to amplify its message and engage with key stakeholders. By participating in these events and platforms, the project can share its findings, best practices, and lessons learned with a wider audience.

At the global level, the project will utilize platforms such as the Global Land Observatory to foster dialogue, exchange knowledge, and promote collaboration. These platforms provide opportunities to showcase the project's achievements, highlight success stories, and facilitate peer learning among stakeholders from different regions. At the regional level, umbrella organizations linked to land administration and tenure will be involved under Component 3 for joint advocacy and knowledge sharing. These are included but not limited to Redparques, Red Iberoamericana de Catastro y Registro, Permanente Committee on Cadastre in Ibero-America (CPCI)), Landnet, REAF – Land Committee for Agriculture Farming, Red de Mujeres Rurales de América Latina y El Caribe.

To ensure accessibility and relevance, the project will develop products in various formats and languages tailored to different audiences. This may include policy briefs, technical reports, infographics, videos, and interactive online tools. By diversifying the format and language of its outputs, the project can effectively reach policymakers, practitioners, researchers, civil society organizations, and local communities.

There will also be national-level activities to ensure that global lessons learned and best practices are disseminated to appropriate stakeholders. In South Sudan for instance, the Land Reforms Coordination Unit will be used to disseminate this information. This unit has been established by the Ministry of lands Housing and Urban Development to coordinate preparation of a land policy implementation strategic plan through a participatory and representative process that involves all key stakeholders at the national, state and local government levels as well as development partners in collaborative efforts through engagement with technical and financial partners for capacity building and resources mobilization on land rights education, awareness creation and knowledge generation.

The following activities will support the fulfillment of this output:

- Development of a targeted communications plan
- Develop practical toolkits and guidelines for policymakers, practitioners, and communities based on the lessons learned. Ensure toolkits address gender disparities, offering solutions for promoting women's access to land in LDN projects
- Provide access to national-level practitioners, decision-makers and policymakers to global fora, databanks, experts and international partners
- Empower local leaders, particularly women, to share their knowledge and experiences across borders through storytelling, participatory learning sessions, and cross-country exchanges. Women's organizations and land-rights movements will be key players in such exchanges.
- Use digital platforms to host webinars and virtual discussions that facilitate knowledge exchange across countries and regions. Webinars can focus on sharing success stories, challenges, and lessons learned from integrating tenure and gender into LDN projects.
- Where relevant, e.g. Paraguay, use established regional mechanisms to share experiences, data and approaches for regional uptake
- Document gender results and monitoring in all reporting, including the PIRs and Terminal Evaluation

[1] WOCAT remains the UNCCD recommended platform for documenting sustainable land management practices and has a vast global network of partners, while the GEO-LDN Initiative responds to a call made by the UNCCD to bring data providers and data users together and support global efforts to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation globally. Data generated by these platforms could be leveraged or referred to by pilot countries.

[2] ILC. Land Collaborative. Available online at: <https://www.landcoalition.org/en/the-solutions/national-land-coalitions/land-collaborative/>

2.3 Stakeholder engagement

At the global level, there are several tiers of engagement:

UN Agencies: UNCCD Secretariat and FAO will offer technical expertise, knowledge sharing and capacity building. Their engagement will specifically support global commitments to LDN, sustainable development, and gender equity, while monitoring and accompanying the achievements in the pilot countries. The UNCCD and the COPs will provide networking spaces through which lessons learned can be shared with global audiences. Under the UNCCD FAO initiative on tenure, the findings and approaches from the project will be leveraged to formulate follow up capacity building opportunities. The UNCCD has a number of tools that can support national governments in its efforts to report, upscale and share the lessons learnt from this project through LDN Target-Setting; LDN Fund; Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS); Drought Toolbox; Gender Action Plan (GAP) Tool; and Global Land Outlook. The project will also consult with the GEF Gender Partnership for cohesion with other agencies.

FAO, as the custodian of the SDG 5.a.2 goal, will provide analysis and policy guidance documents on land-related topics, including country-specific analyses on SDG progress. It will also formulate, organize and disseminate e-learning lessons and online discussion forums, to interact and support implementation. Other specific FAO approaches through which support for the project will be sought includes:

- *Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*: FAO has experience in providing principles and best practices for land tenure governance, emphasizing transparency, equity, and sustainability. This helps guide policy reform, legal frameworks, and capacity building for land tenure improvement in LDN projects which will be leveraged in the pilot countries.
- *UNCCD – FAO initiative on tenure for land restoration*
- *Land Tenure e-learnings and technical guides and toolkit for land administration*: FAO has developed a collection of resources and training materials to help countries improve land tenure governance, which will be leveraged for this project.
- *Collect Earth & System for Earth Observation, Data Access, Processing, LDN monitoring and reporting*: This could support countries to improve LDN monitoring, land-use planning, and reporting on land degradation.
- FAO provides technical training on land management, tenure governance, and agroecology, as well as e-learnings on SLM and on SDG indicator 5.a.2
- FAO promotes gender-sensitive approaches to land tenure governance, ensuring that women have secure land rights and are included in decision-making processes. FAO's Gender-Lex, a crosscutting thematic database of FAOLEX, is another tool that will be leveraged to support gender assessments.
- **Global Land Observatory**- The project will utilize platforms such as FAO's Global Land Observatory foster dialogue, exchange knowledge, and promote collaboration. This provides opportunities to showcase the project's achievements, highlight success stories, and facilitate peer learning among stakeholders from different regions.

NGOs, International Coalitions and Research Institutes:

- Project results will feed into the Land Collaborative a global knowledge and south-south knowledge and learning exchange platform and Community of Practice (CoP) aiming to promote transformational partnership in the land sector; and works in partnership with the public and private sectors and civil society to mobilize knowledge, leadership and capacity in the South, from local to global levels.
- Relevant learning materials and case studies will feed into the Women's Land Rights (WLR) Platform, a unique and powerful web-based resource that provides an inclusive space for women across the world to share and document their experiences and perspectives around land rights – amplifying voices, increasing visibility, building strategic cohesion, and advancing collaboration between WLR stakeholders. It is designed to elevate grassroots women's voices to a regional and a global stage. The Platform provides the opportunity and venue to use storytelling as an impactful tool for advocacy and movement building, while also mapping organizations across the world who are working in various sectors that intersect the WLR movement.
- The project is not intended to work primarily with Indigenous Peoples' Groups, but in the event this were to happen, and the project intervenes on or around Indigenous People's lands, or collects or uses Indigenous knowledge and learning, FAO's FESM foresees the use of FPIC. The project will ensure informed and meaningful participation of Indigenous People representatives in its activities.

National Stakeholders

As the project will be implemented in four contexts, it is necessary to highlight the national-level stakeholders that will engage with the project. Each country has mapped their unique stakeholder engagement plan below, which is why they differ slightly, according to the discussions held in the countries during the PPG.

Kyrgyzstan

Table 3- Kyrgyzstan Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Mandate	Contribution to the Project
Government Agency		
State Agency for Land Resources Management (SALRM)	Oversee land use, land registration, and land reforms.	Provide data on land ownership and tenure; facilitate participatory engagement, support policy recommendations; implement policies improving tenure security.
Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Industry	Develop policies for sustainable land use and agricultural development.	Integrate sustainable land management practices into agricultural policies and promote women's land access for farming.
Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic Department of Tourism	Manages tourism policies	Participates in multistakeholder consultations; takes into account LDN considerations in tourism policy

Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology, and Technical Supervision	Educate rural populations on the concept of sustainable development and the empowerment of women, with a focus on access to natural resources and climate change	Participates in multistakeholder consultations; support sustainability initiatives
Ministry of Justice	Legal oversight of property and land ownership laws.	Participate in multistakeholder discussion on legislative aspects to promoting gender equality in land ownership and tenure.
Local NGOs and Civil Society		
Kyrgyz Association of Forest and Land Users	Promote equitable and sustainable forest and land use practices.	Advocate for marginalized groups, including women, and provide training on sustainable land use and management as needed
Women's Forum 'Kurak'	Empower women and promote gender equality.	Support communications/workshops on women's land rights and access.
Rural Development Fund	Develop programs that teach women, including internal migrants, new agricultural practices and ways to adapt traditional knowledge to changing environmental conditions. Protect and promote the preservation and transmission of women's traditional knowledge in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.	Advocate for marginalized groups, including women, and provide training on sustainable land use and management as needed, participate in multi-stakeholder consultations.
CAMP Alatau Public Foundation	Offer guidance on soil conservation practices, including erosion control, proper irrigation techniques, and crop rotation strategies, taking into account gender differences in resource access and the role of women in agriculture.	Advocate for marginalized groups, including women, and provide training on sustainable land use and management as needed participate in multi-stakeholder consultations.
Women's Agricultural Federation	Develop accessible and user-friendly methodologies and tools for women to assess land tenure and natural resource management. These tools should include step-by-step instructions, visual materials, and mobile apps for digital data collection requiring minimal equipment.	
Pasture Users' Committees	Develop online calculators for recording the capacity of the environment and compensation for degraded lands. These tools can help monitor environmental health, track the impact of land degradation, and calculate appropriate compensation for land restoration and rehabilitation efforts. The focus on sustainable land management includes not only agricultural lands but also coastal lands (Yssyk-Kul lake, Chu, Talas rivers, etc), arable lands, pastures, tourism zones, mountain slopes, and other vulnerable ecosystems.	
Public association 'Jalal-Abad agrarian	Train farmers, women in soil-preserving agricultural techniques	

Paraguay

Table 4- Paraguay Stakeholders

LEVEL	INSTITUTIONS	MANDATES	PROJECT'S IMPACT ON THE TARGET GROUP/USERS	INFLUENCE OF TARGET GROUP/USERS ON THE PROJECT
National and departmental	INDERT	Promote the harmonious integration of the peasant population into the economic and social	The project will strengthen considerations of women's rights to land, and shed light on key roles of women on	Enhance women roles on rural development and provide

		development of the Nation. a) adapt the agrarian structure, promoting access to rural land, sanitizing and regularizing its tenure, b) coordinate and create the conditions conducive to development that enables roots leading to the consolidation of beneficiary producers, c) configure a strategy that integrates participation, productivity and environmental sustainability.	national land tenure policies, specially though the effort of strengthening peasant rural communities roots, that are key to food production.	technical support and leadership on activities. Promoting recommendations for policy gaps with regards to realizing women's rights to land in the law.
National	Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development	Establishes and evaluates the National Environmental Policy, promoting research, recovery, conservation, preservation, protection, ordering, management and sustainable use of natural resources	The project will help to realize the diagnosis on the link between LDN and gender, and help identify concrete and adequate actions to support LDN-gender-tenure considerations in the (i) National land degradation neutrality strategy, (ii) National Gender Strategy in the Face of Climate Change (iii) National gender equality plan within the framework of the convention to fight desertification and drought	Provide technical guidance on land use issues by ensuring that the assessment considers integration of relevant gender aspects in the tools used for collection and processing LDN data and taking into account gender disproportionalities.
National	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	Coordinate and lead all the agriculture policies	Shall incorporate projects tools in his small farmers policies, and coordinate actions with MADES and INDERT on field	Provide technical guidance for development of fields intervention strategies, specially in women farms.
At societal level	Non-State Actors	Informal organization such as Community Development Committees, Farmer Groups, Community based Organizations, Women Groups, they contribute to data, IPLC perspectives, sharing lessons learned and informing the assessments.		

South Sudan

Table 5- South Sudan Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDERS MAPPING AND CAPACITY NEED ASSESSMENT FOR ADDRESSING TENURE GOVERNANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY IN LAND RIGHTS TO STRENGTHEN LDN INITIATIVES IN SOUTH SUDAN

Purpose

Align Land Actors at all levels, especially the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in a strategic vision for the land sector, with a clear plan and structure for land administration and user management from national to sub-national to ensure effective coordination, collaboration among key land actors in support of policy processes at all levels to enhance decision making capacity to integrate tenure and gender equality considerations into LDN policies, plans and investments aligning with the FAO and UNCCD [Technical Guide](#) Key benefits include but not limited to:

awareness created on the framework for tenure governance and gender equality in land rights to strengthen LDN initiatives at all levels and building advocacy work to address rights to land

complexities of customary laws application with regards to land rights of men and women and youth as one of the priorities to gender responsive land tenure recognition reforms initiatives are understood and ignited at all levels

complexities around aligning tenure recognition reforms with land investments are understood by the concerned governments in relation to the importance of formal documentation to be used in transactions

legislative and law enforcement capacity on land matters at state and county levels are enhanced and implementation mechanisms to translate laws into actionable plans are developed

intergovernmental Coordination Mechanism/structure for land reforms at National, State, County, Payam, Boma levels are promoted, to foster sustainable land management practices and environmental protection.

Target Group/Users	Land Related Institutions and Agencies, the Local Government structures, Task Force on National Land Policy, Women Land Rights Working Group, Women Organizations, Housing, Land and Property Working Group, UNCCD Technical Working Group in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, South Sudan Land Alliances, Natural Resources Working Groups/Management Committees(NRMC), Community Land Committees CLM, County Land Authorities, Local Government Councils, Municipalities, Payam Land Councils, Women Groups, Peace Committees, Traditional Chiefs, Farmers and Farmers Associations,
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Transitional National Legislative Assembly (NTLA)

	LEVEL	INSTITUTIONS	MANDATES	PROJECT'S IMPACT ON THE TARGET GROUP/USERS	INFLUENCE OF TARGET GROUP/USERS ON THE PROJECT
1	National	Standing Specialized Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure/ Parliamentary Land Committee (Regulation 134(17) of the TNLA Conduct of Business Regulations 2011, amended 2017	d) Monitor and oversees the policies and activities of the Land Commission and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development e) Scrutinize existing legal and regulatory frameworks in consultation with relevant ministry of Lands and the Land Commission f) Enact legislations on various issues including Community Land, environmental conservation and Urban development.	The project will enhance understanding of legislators on intersectionality and interaction between different land uses while scrutinizing National land use policies/ plans and assess the benefits accrued for men and women.	Providing technical guidance on gender issues; Promoting understanding on legal and policy gaps with regards to realizing women's rights to land in the law.

			g) Oversee implementation of land policies, standards and Regulations and Urban Planning, management and development		
2	National	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (Land Act section 54)	a) Formulate policies, standards and regulations on urban planning and urban land management to regulate the use of land and natural resources; b) Development of a Master and Physical plan for capital cities, define and demarcate its territory c) Development of a master and physical plan for the capital city; define and demarcate its territory; develop a real property tax system; control and restoration of the environment. d) Management of public lands held in trust by the national government e) Management and exploitation of subterranean resources in coordination with the concerned states f) Manage and protect historical sites of common national interest g) Provide framework for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction h) Develop a framework for real property tax system i) Control and restoration of the environment j) Provide framework for systematic land registration in coordination with states	The project will enhance the capacity of the MLHUD to integrate gender equality considerations into the development and implementation of a Land Sector Strategic Investment promoting land use planning and implementation Enhanced coordination will support the capacity to monitor and evaluate the differential impact of land investments on women and men	Provide technical guidance on land use by ensuring that the assessment considers integration of relevant gender aspects in the tools used for collection and processing LDN data and taking into account gender disproportionalities.

			k) Establish and maintain harmonized national land registration system		
		The land Reforms Coordination Unit Chapter 5 of the National Land policy	a) Coordinate the preparation of a land policy implementation Strategic plan through a participatory process that involves all key stakeholders at national, state and Local Government b) Develop and implement a capacity Building and communication plan for implementation of the national land policy c) Develop and implement a Resource Mobilization Strategy to generate resources needed to implement the national land policy d) Develop and implement a Land Rights Education and Awareness Creation Strategy to develop and sustain public awareness and engagement with the land policy as a way of strengthening demand for reforms among the citizenry	The project will enhance the mobilization of requisite capacity and cooperation of land related sector ministries and agencies of government and development partners, the civil society and women organizations, the private sector and Research Institutions in developing a land policy implementation framework that supports tenure governance and gender equality in land rights to strengthen LDN initiatives in South Sudan	Ensure that the assessment considers integration of relevant gender aspects in the tools used for collection processing and dissemination of LDN data and taking into account gender disparities in land tenure governance
		South Sudan Land Commission(Art. 2.7 of the Wealth sharing Protocol, Constitution, Art.172 section 52&55(4)).	The South Sudan Land Commission advises the government including the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development, and the President of the Republic of South Sudan on matters of land. The Commission also hears land disputes involving the different levels of government , inter and intra state. In addition, the commission advises the different levels of government on land policies such as land registration, and the use of sub-surface resources. The commission may also advise the government on IDPs and Returnees issues	The project will support the process of tenure governance framework for assessing the financial, economic, sustainability and costing of the Land Sector Strategic Investment Plan activities; and help identify the underlying gender and tenure dynamics and socio-economic drivers and barriers hampering land degradation neutrality achievement	Provide a gender responsive M&E framework and tools for evaluating proposals for financing of the Land Sector Strategic Investment Plan activities

3	State Level	Ministry of Housing Lands and Public Utilities(Land Act Sections 36,43&,54).	Mandate: Management of state land and natural resources Management, lease and utilization of state land Development, conservation and management of state natural resources and forestry resources Querying regulations own and rural planning resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction regulation of land tenure, usage and exercise of rights in land Management of the survey office elineation of boundaries between community lands ontinues registration within the state and quality evaluation oversee and coordinate different levels of land administration and management in the state development and implementation of state physical planning Functions in relation to customary land rights Registration office: Registering and de-registering of customary land rights as advised by the traditional Authority^{[11]⁷³} approving of requests for allocation of land beyond 250 feddans for commercial, agricultural, forestry, ranch, poultry or farming purposes as advised by the County Land Authority or Payam Land Councils Contributions to the project: This body will contribute to the project by participating in dialogues, contributing data to assessments, take part in trainings and multi-stakeholder structures.
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4	County Government	County Land Authority	a) Hold and allocate public lands vested in it with the approval of the concerned ministry in each state subject town and municipal planning in the county^{[12]⁷⁴} b) Make recommendations to the concerned state ministry of gazetted land for planning c) Advise the concerned state ministry on any matter connected with the resettlement of persons in the county d) Facilitate the registration and transfer of interest in land e) Support and assist any cadastral operation and survey in its jurisdiction Assist in traditional Authorities in exercising their functions and liaise between them and the concerned state ministry Will contribute to the project by participating in dialogues, contributing data to assessments, take part in trainings and multi-stakeholder structures.
		Local Government Councils	a) The Council shall enact by-laws to regulate the land management b) Land use control and protection systems c) Land Acquisition, allotment and withdrawal systems d) Land lease and land rights transfer systems e) Pastoral an agricultural land to guarantee land safety Contributions to the project: Will participate in dialogues, contribute data to assessments, take part in trainings and multi-stakeholder structures.
		Council Land Committee (Land Act section 91)	a) Protection of council land b) In consultation with state government, authorities, develop Council land Development Plans c) Preparation of local policy guidelines for the development of council physical and social infrastructure d) Preparation of policy guidelines for land use rights e) Maintenance of council cadastral systems for keeping up to date records of land registration f) Development of land registration, distribution and allocation schemes and schedules for council land management g) Mediation of consultation processes of land lease between the community and other investors h) Supervision of operational processes of land survey, land valuation and statistical data collection by government and nongovernmental organizations

			i) Establishment of land dispute resolution mechanisms Contributions to the project: This committee will contribute to the project by participating in dialogues, contributing data to assessments, take part in trainings and multi-stakeholder structures.
		Payam Councils(Land section 49&50) Land Act	a) Allocation of public land vested in it with the approval of the concerned commissioner b) Land planning and demarcation c) Support the registration and transfer of interests in land d) Protection of customary land rights of communities e) Assisting Traditional Authorities and leaders in the management of the community's lands f) Protection of communal grazing land, forest, wetlands and water resources g) Dispute resolution on issues related to land h) Protection of environment i) Liaising with the county Land Authorities Contributions to the project: The councils will participate in dialogues, contribute experiences, participate in trainings
5	Boma Levels	Traditional Authorities(Constitution Article 167; Land Act Art., 15&166)	a) Deal with matters affecting local communities b) Allocation of customary land rights c) Allocate land not more than 250 feddans for commercial. Agricultural, ranch, poultry or farming purposes; d) Prior to allocation of land, notify the County Land Authority or the Payam Land Council - furnish them with the relevant land documents e) Cancel customary land rights allocated if the holder fails to observe the terms and condition in relation to the customary law and practice Contributions to the project: Will support the project through participation in dialogues, contributing experiences, participating in trainings
6	At societal level	Non- State Actors	Informal organization such as Community Development Committees, Farmer Groups, Community based Organizations, Youth Groups, Women Groups, Religious sects and churches, Contributions to the project: They will contribute to data, IPLC perspectives, sharing lessons learned and informing the assessments.

Sri Lanka

Table 6- Sri Lanka Stakeholders

Name of Institution	Mandate	How they will contribute to the Project
Government		
Ministry of Environment	The Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka remains committed for the management of the environment and natural resources of the country, maintaining the equilibrium between the trends in rapid economic development and use of natural resource base.	Overall coordination, and implementation of the project. and monitoring and evaluation. Facilitating multi stakeholders working platform more collaboratively and effectively.
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation	LANDS SECTION: The Ministry's land section mission is to effectively and efficiently manage land resources to an optimal level and contribute to the country's socio-economic development while maintaining environmental equilibrium. AGRICULTURE SECTION: The Agriculture section has a comprehensive mandate aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring food security. IRRIGATION SECTION: Providing wellbeing of community & environment by fulfilling multiple water users through Water Resources Development & Management	Develop and enforce any land reforms or recommendations to improve tenure security and promote women's land ownership. Facilitate land allocation for women farmers and support sustainable practices to meet LDN targets. Take part in multi-stakeholder consultations and advance women's interests relative to agricultural lands.
Ministry of Women and Child Affairs	Follow-up and evaluation of policies, programs and projects related to the subjects of Women and Child Affairs the subjects of the departments and statutory institutions and government corporations affiliated to the ministry based on the national policies implemented by the government.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms and providing as-needed policy recommendations.
Ministry of Plantation industries	The Ministry of Plantation Management in Sri Lanka is responsible for overseeing and promoting the development of the plantation sector, which includes tea, rubber, coconut, and other minor export crops	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; bring perspectives on questions of land tenure.
Ministry of Urban Development Construction and Housing	To provide leadership in formulating policies and implementing projects in the field of urban development and housing through regulating urban development, providing shelter and infrastructure facilities for all communities, physical planning, facilitating construction industry, coast conservation and marine pollution prevention, flood	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; bring perspectives on questions of land tenure.

	mitigation and wetland management, land development and condominium management	
Department of Wildlife Conservation	To conserve wildlife and nature by the sustainable utilization of people, material and land through participatory management, research, education and law enforcement and ensure the maintenance of biodiversity and forest cover as exist today	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; bring perspectives on questions of land tenure relative to biodiversity.
Ministry of Rural Development Social Security and Community Empowerment	Formulate and execute programmes for providing and enhancing legal, institutional and human resource services for the economic empowerment, social protection of women, children, vulnerable and disadvantaged people considering national priorities and requirements along with international standards.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; bring perspectives on questions of land tenure, and social implications.
Department of Irrigation	To harness, develop, conserve, regulate, allocate and manage water resources in the country to secure & enhance the returns it produces, directly in the sphere of agriculture and indirectly in other spheres such as environmental, domestic, industrial and power in collaboration with other organizations.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms, contribution of knowledge on water resources in particular lands.
Land Commissioner General	Management of State Land at a well-coordinated level adhering to the National	Develop and enforce any land reforms or recommendations to improve tenure security
Department	Policy and ensuring optimum utilization of State Land to gain sustainable development while confirming the freehold ownership of land	
Natural Resource Management Centre (NRMCC), Department of Agriculture	Optimize the use of land and water resources to achieve a higher and sustainable agricultural productivity while ensuring the food security of the people of Sri Lanka and thereby improving their livelihoods.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; Implementing SLM practices in priority areas
Land Title Registration Department	To contribute to establish an improved Land Management System in Sri Lanka through the process of Land Settlement and Title Registration that determines the ownership of state owned and private lands and confirm the title of every land parcel	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; raise issues relative to title and tenure security
Register General's Department	Registration of legal documents pertaining to movable and immovable properties and registration of land titles in Sri Lanka and registration of marriages, births and deaths which are very important events of the populace, preservation of such documents and the issue of certified copies there from at request and thereby assisting the populace to protect their rights.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms;
Land Reform Commission	The process involves implementing land reforms, improving land productivity, managing resource ownership, protecting resources, paying compensations, investing in economic fields, and maintaining a land reserve for national development.	multi stakeholders participation, land reform and tenure security
Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka	Utilize land and water for innovative agriculture, renewable energy, and environmental conservation to improve living standards. Lead advancements in agriculture with cutting-edge technology, support renewable energy, and promote tourism for the betterment of Sri Lanka's community and their quality of life	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; Provide inputs on land productivity improvement
Land Use Policy Planning Department	Formulation of policies, preparation of plans and facilitating their implementation to achieve the optimum utilization of land resources while maintaining sustainability and environmental balance.	Land productivity improvement

Forest Department	Manages forest conservation, reforestation, and policies addressing land degradation in protected areas.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; bring perspectives on questions of land tenure. boundary demarcation
Department of Coast Conservation & Coastal Resource Management	The sustainable development of coastal resources and the management of coastal processes to optimize social, economic and environmental status of Sri Lanka.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms;
Survey Department	To provide high quality land information products and services through professionally qualified and dedicated personnel.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms;
Sri Lanka Hadabima Authority	Agricultural diversification, settlement development, watershed management, land management, and marketing of agricultural products through coordination with various governmental and non-governmental agencies.	Participation in multistakeholder platforms; Implement SLM practices in ground level
Local NGOs and Civil Society		
Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR)	Empower women and advocate for gender equality	Raise issues relevant to women's interest relative to LDN
Law and Society Trust	Promote legal reforms for equitable access to resources, including land.	Provide data and recommendations on issues related to tenure
Rural Development Foundation (RDF)	Enhance rural livelihoods through sustainable development initiatives.	Organize community programs to facilitate knowledge for rural populations on land rights and sustainable land use practices
Academia and Research Institutions		
Universities	Conduct research on land use, agriculture, and sustainable development.	Provide data and research to inform and promote sustainable land management practices
Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute	Conduct research and training on land and agricultural issues.	Develop evidence-based recommendations for policy changes and capacity-building programs for local stakeholders.
International Organizations and Development Partners		
FAO	Promote sustainable land management and food security.	Provide guidance, procurement, synergies with development initiatives while keeping food security and women's rights central to development activities.
UNDP Sri Lanka	Support sustainable development and gender equality initiatives.	Seek synergies with development activities for alignment and cohesion
World Bank	Fund land management and rural development projects.	Seek synergies with development activities for alignment and cohesion
European Union (EU)	Fund projects promoting gender equality and sustainable development.	Seek synergies with development activities for alignment and cohesion
Asian Development Bank	Fund rural and land development projects in Sri Lanka.	Seek synergies with development activities for alignment and cohesion

Private Sector Involvement

The private sector has a significant role to play in working towards LDN and reinforcing secure tenure. The interest of the private sector is apparent from the fact that over 16,000 business entities have signed up to the universal sustainability principles of the UN Global Compact^{[13]⁷⁵}, which adhere to the VGGT and note the ‘Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems’.^{[14]⁷⁶} Given this interest, the project should build on this momentum and support countries in mobilizing their private sector. The project will support the following roles for the private sector which will then be adapted to the local contexts in the pilot countries:

- Data generation/information- private sector could potentially fund research initiatives that generate evidence on land tenure, women's access to land, and its impact on LDN. They could also support digital support, mapping, development of tools, GIS, and other mobile platforms for tenure security.
- Public-Private partnerships and financing- private sector could potentially invest in blended finance models (e.g., grants, loans, guarantees) to support tenure security initiatives that align with LDN goals. They can also support marginalized groups and their tenure security through sustainable value chains and supporting socially responsible enterprises.
- Advocacy & Policy support- The private sector will engage through the multistakeholder platforms to provide their own perspectives and recommendations on tenure governance, women's access to tenure for LDN.

In Sri Lanka, the private sector actors include farmers and land surveying companies.

2.4 Innovation & Transformative Change, Knowledge management, Policy coherence and Capacity development

2.4.1 Innovative and Transformational Change

The project is **transformational** in that it is supporting systemic change. This will be done by addressing root causes of land degradation and insecure land tenure by **reforming policies, and governance systems**, through the national assessments/methodologies implemented in countries. The aspiration is that through implementation, the project will support long-lasting improvements in land governance, women's access to land tenure and sustainable land management.

The project is also transformational as it supports **replication and scaling up**. This project is a pilot, with an eye to upscale findings and results and support other countries in strengthening their land tenure governance for LDN. Component 3 outputs and activities provide pathways for scaling up at the national or regional level, while Outcome 1 will aggregate tools/methodologies suited to LDN-gender-tenure that could be replicated in

other countries for the same purpose. The project will expand impact beyond initial sites, reaching more communities and ecosystems.

The project will also be transformative in the manner in which it will engage multiple stakeholders at the national and international levels. The project will engage government, private sector, civil society, indigenous groups, and research institutes in co-creating solutions. This ensures buy-in and sustainability of outcomes through collaborative governance.

The project is innovative in several ways:

- It will aggregate/refine tools/methodologies to support countries to address the LDN-gender-tenure nexus which they have been unable to do.
- It will be implemented through collaborative international partners who will leverage their expertise and networks to best support national governments. This will be an opportunity to harness the skills and talents of various institutions, synergize them to produce new approaches to tenure, gender's integration in tenure for LDN.
- It will develop and apply cutting-edge technologies to support decision-makers in practical ways

2.4.2 Knowledge Management

The project has been designed to leverage the expertise of partners and to utilize the tools available for improved LDN. All of Component 3 is dedicated to knowledge management and to upscale information from the national level to the global scale and vice versa.

The project will take advantage of FAO's wide networks to connect with policymakers and leading CSOs in related fields (such as WeCAN, Forest Landscape Restoration, Ecological Restoration and other areas) that do not currently link with UNCCD and LDN target setting. Furthermore, the project will also inform FAO's Gender-Lex, a crosscutting thematic database of FAOLEX, providing free access to national and international legal and policy instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment. Please see Section 2.3 for more examples of how FAO's mechanisms will be leveraged.

Analysis and policy guidance documents on land-related topics, including country-specific analyses on SDG progress under FAO custodianship. Relevant learning materials and case studies will feed into the Women's Land Rights (WLR) Platform, a unique and powerful web-based resource that provides an inclusive space for women across the world to share and document their experiences and perspectives around land rights – amplifying voices, increasing visibility, building strategic cohesion, and advancing collaboration between WLR stakeholders. It is designed to elevate grassroots women's voices to a regional and a global stage. The Platform provides the opportunity and venue to use storytelling as an impactful tool for advocacy and movement building, while also mapping organizations across the world who are working in various sectors that intersect the WLR movement.

In addition, project results will feed into the Land Collaborative, a global knowledge and South-South knowledge and learning exchange platform and Community of Practice (CoP) aiming to promote transformational partnership in the land sector; and works in partnership with the public and private sectors and civil society to mobilize knowledge, leadership and capacity in the South, from local to global levels.

In terms of capacity development, the project will enhance human, institutional and technical capacity on a national level. Building human, institutional, and technical capacity ensures effective implementation, sustainability, and long-term impact. The national assessments will determine where countries need most assistance. However it is foreseen that the project can support capacity development in the following areas:

- Strengthen land tenure institutions to improve service delivery, transparency, and accountability
- Facilitate collaboration between land, environment, and agricultural ministries to integrate LDN and gender equity into land policies and programs
- Enabling knowledge exchange, integration of global data, through regional workshops, learning networks, and demonstration projects.
- Fostering capacity-building programs within national institutions, universities and with appropriate CSOs and research institutes.
- Establishing the appropriate gender metrics so that women's participation is prioritized in all training, leadership, and decision-making processes, beyond the project life.
- Assist governments in reviewing and updating land laws to recognize and protect women's land rights.
- Develop gender-sensitive policies and guidelines for allocation of tenure rights, and dispute resolution.
- Train government officials, land registrars, and surveyors in land governance best practices, including the use of modern land administration tools.
- Develop and deploy data collection and monitoring systems to track land use, degradation, women's access to land and tenure security at large.
- Train technical staff in analyzing geospatial data and using decision-support tools to guide land management for monitoring.
- Promote the use of innovative practices like agroecology, regenerative land use, and ecosystem-based approaches.
- Train land officials and communities in the use of digital tools for land mapping, registration, and monitoring.

By enhancing human, institutional, and technical capacity, a GEF LDN project can create an enabling environment where equitable land tenure and sustainable land management thrive. These efforts ensure that women and marginalized groups benefit from secure land rights, and that countries achieve lasting progress toward LDN.

[1] FAO and UNCCD. 2022. Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality. FAO, Rome and UNCCD, Bonn. Available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-05/cb9656en.pdf>

[2] In the context of this project, when gender equality is referred to it is in relation to tenure rights. While promoting gender equality within tenure may have other positive secondary impacts and support gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) at large, for the purposes of this project, gender equality is focused on improving women's tenure.

[3] Ministry of Agriculture of Paraguay. Agriculture Statistics. Available online at: <https://portal.gis.mag.gov.py/arccgis/apps/sites/#/geoportal/>

[4] See notice at <https://www.mades.gov.py/2024/11/19/mades-realiza-validacion-del-mapa-de-degradacion-de-tierras-en-la-ecorregion-de-neembucu/>

[5] FAO and UNCCD. 2022. Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality. FAO, Rome and UNCCD, Bonn. Available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-05/cb9656en.pdf>

[6] FAO and UNCCD. 2022. Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality. FAO, Rome and UNCCD, Bonn. Available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-05/cb9656en.pdf>

[7] The five context-specific pathways include: Pathway 5- Designing and implementing tenure-responsive, participatory land use planning; Pathway 6- Supporting LDN through land administration tools; Pathway 7- Recognizing and documenting legitimate tenure rights on public lands; Pathway 8- Recognizing and documenting tenure rights for the sustainable management of commons; Pathway 9- Allocating and strengthening rights and duties on private land

[8] FAO and UNCCD. 2022. Technical Guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality. FAO, Rome and UNCCD, Bonn. Available online at: <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-05/cb9656en.pdf>

[9] WOCAT remains the UNCCD recommended platform for documenting sustainable land management practices and has a vast global network of partners, while the GEO-LDN Initiative responds to a call made by the UNCCD to bring data providers and data users together and support global efforts to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation globally. Data generated by these platforms could be leveraged or referred to by pilot countries.

[10] ILC. Land Collaborative. Available online at: <https://www.landcoalition.org/en/the-solutions/national-land-coalitions/land-collaborative/>

[11] Article 15 Land Act 2009

[12] Article 46 Land Act 2009

[13] UN Global Compact, established in 2000:

<https://unglobalcompact.org/participation/join/commitment#:~:text=More%20than%2016%2C000%20participating%20companies,of%20the%20UN%20Global%20Compact.>

[14] FAO. 2012. Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

This project will demonstrate the collaboration among international and national partners to deliver programming that provides results for national governments while supporting the global commons on advancing work on the LDN-gender-tenure nexus. As a result, the project will be executed by different partners, with FAO as the implementing partner supporting timely implementation of the agreed project results, operational oversight of implementation activities, reporting, and for effective use of GEF resources for the intended purposes and in line with FAO and GEF policy requirements.

Landesa, TMG, and National Government Counterparts, in all 4 demonstration countries, will act as the lead executing agencies of the project components. ILC will support National Government Counterparts in executing Component 2 of the project. These partners will mobilise a broader partnership of technical actors operating at the national and global levels (see details in section 1.7). Landesa, TMG and the ministries identified below will act as component leads, leveraging the comparative advantages of each partner, while the partnership as a whole, will secure complementarity of capacities, objectives and perspectives of intervention through coordinated and effective collaboration at the national and local level. This will support efficient execution of the project with aggregated technical and financial resources. Through collaboration during the project preparation phase, executing partners identified which activities each can contribute to, to ensure synergy, alignment and aggregating expertise. This collaboration makes this project a unique endeavour to advance work on the LDN-gender-tenure nexus within countries and beyond for the global commons.

- **Component 1** will be executed by Landesa
- **Component 2** will be executed by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources in Kyrgyzstan; INDERT and MADES in Paraguay; Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD) in South Sudan; and the Ministry of Environment in Sri Lanka. ILC will provide a helpdesk function to countries for the execution of Component 2. In Paraguay, due to legal reasons government entities cannot be transferred funds directly without a decree, for that reason FAO will technically be the Executing Entity but will work in collaboration with INDERT and MADES. In South Sudan, previously conducted capacity assessments determined that institutions do not yet have the capacity threshold to directly absorb funds—to support institutional capacity

development FAO will provide execution support services but work in partnership with the MLHUD and part of the project's activities will help build the capacity of the Land Reform Unit within this body.

- **Component 3** will be executed by TMG

The workplan in Annex G provides greater detail on which partner will be responsible for which output

The project organization structure is as follows

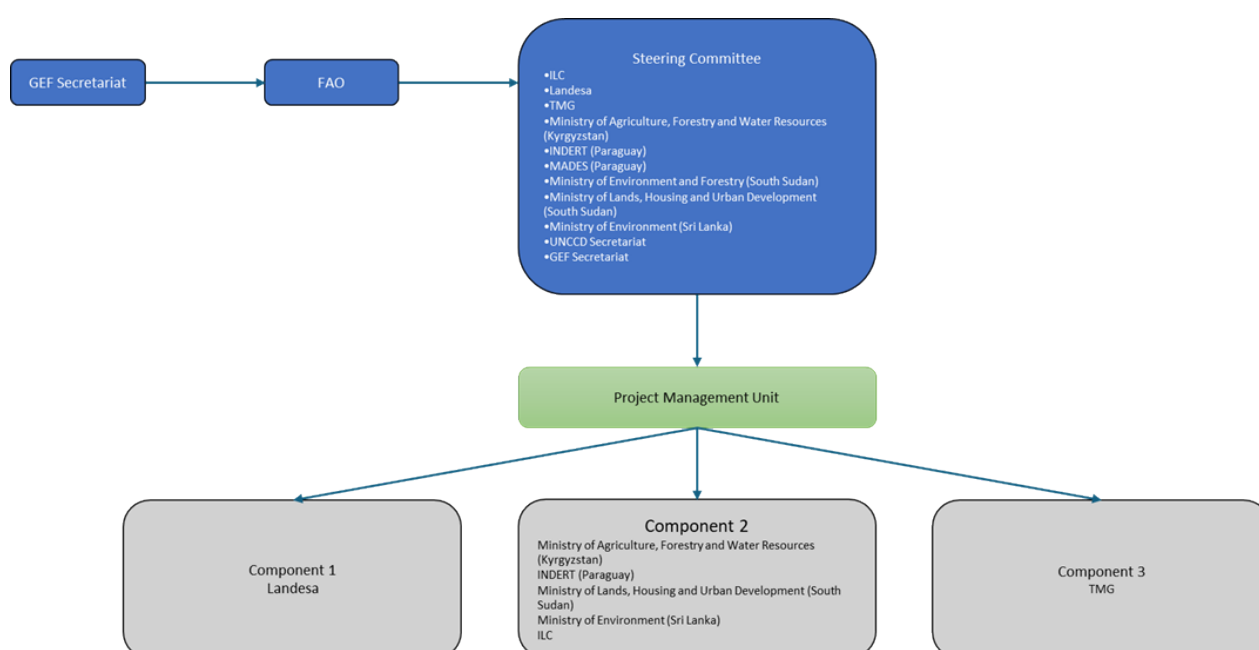


Fig. 2 Implementation Arrangements

FAO will chair the Project Steering Committee which will be the main governing body of the project. The PSC will approve Annual Work Plans and Budgets on a yearly basis and will provide strategic guidance to the Project Management Team and to all executing partners.

The PSC will be comprised of representatives from ILC, Landesa, TMG and participating government representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water (Kyrgyzstan), INDERT (Paraguay), Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (South Sudan), and the Ministry of Environment (Sri Lanka). The members of the PSC will each assume the role of a Focal Point for the project in their respective agencies. Hence, the project will have a Focal Point in each concerned institution. As Focal Points in their agency, the concerned PSC members will: (i) technically oversee activities in their sector; (ii) ensure a fluid two-way exchange of information and knowledge between their agency and the project; (iii) facilitate coordination and links between the project activities and the work plan of their agency; and (iv) facilitate the provision of co-financing to the project.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be composed of a Project Manager and Gender and Knowledge Management Expert. The project manager will be housed in FAO to ensure coordination among all the different collaborating institutions and efficient delivery of outputs; the Gender and Knowledge Management Expert will be housed in Landesa for gender mainstreaming, monitoring, and knowledge sharing. The ToRs of these roles are provided in Annex L.

In addition to limited and pre-identified and agreed upon execution functions, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will be the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) for the Project, providing project cycle management and support services as established in the GEF Policy. As the GEF IA, FAO holds overall accountability and responsibility to the GEF for delivery of the results. In the IA role, FAO will utilize the GEF fees to deploy three different actors within the organization to support the project (see Annex M for details):

- The Budget Holder, Land and Water division Director, will provide oversight of day-to-day project execution;
- The Lead Technical Officer, Land and water officer from the land management team of the and water division, will provide oversight/support to the projects technical work in coordination with government representatives participating in the Project Steering Committee;
- The Funding Liaison Officer(s) and the GEF Technical Officers (GTO) within FAO will monitor and support the project cycle to ensure that the project is being designed and carried out in accordance with FAO and GEF minimum fiduciary and technical standards.

FAO responsibilities, as GEF agency, will include:

- Administrate funds from GEF in accordance with the rules and procedures of FAO;
- Oversee project implementation in accordance with the project document, work plans, budgets, agreements with co-financiers, Operational Partners Agreement(s) and other rules and procedures of FAO;
- Provide technical guidance to ensure that appropriate technical quality is applied to all activities concerned;
- Conduct at least one supervision mission per year; and
- Reporting to the GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office, through the annual Project Implementation Review, the Mid Term Review, the Terminal Evaluation and the Project Closure Report on project progress;
- Financial reporting to the GEF Trustee.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

Yes

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

At the global level, FAO will retain a limited direct execution role, complementing the expertise of key global partners such as Landesa, TMG, and ILC. FAO will primarily leverage its recognized strengths in global coordination and capacity development, including its established e-learning courses on VGGT, SDG 5.a.2, and sustainable land management. These resources will support the project's broader goals, particularly through Component 1, where FAO will develop specialized capacity-building packages. FAO's long-standing experience in designing tailored trainings for transformative multi-stakeholder dialogues will be critical in this context.

FAO's role will also include hosting e-learning modules on the FAO e-Learning Academy, ensuring the project's outcomes are accessible globally and have lasting sustainability. This academy, with its wide global reach, will ensure the broad dissemination and long-term impact of the training content. While the technical content will be provided by project partners, FAO's expertise will be pivotal in transforming this content into effective e-learning materials. FAO will also engage a part-time project coordinator to streamline operations and ensure alignment with global frameworks like the VGGT and relevant initiatives such as the UNCCD-FAO tenure security for land restoration initiative. This role will enhance project delivery, while also maintaining the partnership's collaborative and cohesive nature.

At the national level, FAO will provide direct execution support services in Paraguay and South Sudan, where the local conditions require FAO's involvement to support project activities. In Paraguay, the government has requested FAO's support due to the lengthy and uncertain process required to amend the country's budget through legislation, which would delay project implementation. As such, FAO will work closely with Paraguay's National Institute of Rural and Land Development (INDERT) and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES) to provide execution support, including facilitating the hiring of consultants and providing logistical services for multi-stakeholder dialogues and capacity-building activities.

In South Sudan, due to gaps identified in the country's institutional and operational capacity, FAO has been asked to step in and provide support services, including collaborating with the Ministry of Land, Housing, and Urban Development (MLHUD). FAO will focus on building the institutional capacity of the Land Reform Unit within MLHUD and support the implementation of key project activities, such as organizing assessments and facilitating capacity development.

In both countries, FAO's role will be to support the governments' leadership, acting as a neutral convener in sensitive tenure and gender issues. By maintaining a behind-the-scenes supporting role, FAO ensures that the governments of Paraguay and South Sudan remain in control of the reform and dialogue processes, while benefiting from FAO's ability to foster trust and effective collaboration between diverse stakeholders. This approach will allow for meaningful, inclusive, and skillful engagement in national dialogues, ensuring the successful delivery of the project's key outputs.

In all cases, FAO will provide support services, including logistics for venues and travel arrangements, at no additional cost to the project budget. These services are designed to strengthen national ownership while benefiting from FAO's specialized expertise in facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement.

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

UNCCD-FAO Initiative on Tenure for Land Restoration- is a collaborative effort to integrate land tenure considerations into LDN and land restoration projects. Its primary goal is to ensure that secure land tenure is recognized as a fundamental part of achieving sustainable land management and restoration objectives. At CoP 16, this initiative encouraged the creation and implementation of policies that support secure land

tenure, and collaborations among various stakeholders, including governments, local communities, and international organizations, to address land tenure issues collectively and enhance the efficacy of restoration efforts. The UNCCD–FAO initiative seeks to create an enabling environment where secure land tenure supports and accelerates land restoration activities, ultimately contributing to broader environmental and socio-economic benefits. The project can anticipate sharing research, lessons learned and expertise generated by this initiative.

The Global Land Observatory is a collaborative effort to enhance global data set and analyses on governance of tenure led by FAO, ILC and CIRAD. The efforts on improving datasets on governance of tenure under GLO has allowed FAO to contribute to the COP 16 with suggestion on how to advance on tenure data integration to UNCCD reporting. In addition the efforts by GLO initiative to produce state of the effort information on governance of tenure is generating momentum in the tenure community and it will be possible to build on it to communicate on the LDN – Tenure – Gender nexus during the project life time.

Initiative 3: Stand for her land

Initiative 4: Women land rights initiative (TMG... not the platform,)

The GEF funded Pilot Project for GEF-8 Enabling Activities for National Reporting under the UNCCD will be deployed in Paraguay. This project aims at supporting countries to undertake the periodical reporting to UNCCD for the PRAIS 5. It will help the government to produce high quality report in a participatory and multistakeholders approach. It will be implemented tentatively from April 2025 to March 2027. The production of high quality data on land degradation will be a key inputs for this project to cross them with tenure and gender equal access to tenure in Paraguay and deepen the analysis in innovative manner. As mentioned in Section 1, the **LDN Target Setting Program (TSP) 2.0** run by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD is currently active in 18 countries, and refines LDN targets through tools like spatial mapping and inclusive land-use planning. It emphasizes improving governance frameworks to align restoration efforts with local and national needs, supporting policies that secure land tenure and enable sustainable practices.^{[1]⁷⁷} This project will benefit from lessons learned and capacity building tools. It will be able to build on some of the consultative processes and methodologies developed under the TSP 2.0.

[1] <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/new-horizons-land-restoration-18-nations-spearhead-next-phase-ldn-tsp>

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	11,000	11,000		

Male	9,000	9,000		
Total	20,000	20,000	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Low	While climate risks and emergencies are a reality in the pilot countries, it is not anticipated that these will disrupt project activities, unless there are extreme weather events and capacity building efforts are temporarily delayed. The existence of climate risks, may in fact reinforce and strengthen political will for holistic responses to mitigate negative climate impacts, giving importance to LDN initiatives such as this project.
Environmental and Social	Low	Given the scope of this project which is primarily based on using appropriate tools and methodologies for land actors to address tenure – gender and LDN, there are not field activities that could have environmental and social effects. The only effect is that the project is promoting greater access for women to tenure security and this is within the current legal and political regimes, keeping culture and practices into account. The project supports women's access with an eye to support the socioeconomic and environmental benefits that this will yield (greater sustainability of SLM interventions, food security, family health, social integration). National stakeholders engaging in the project will ensure multi-stakeholder participation from the onset to avoid any social challenges and will operate within legal frameworks.
Political and Governance	Low	It is not foreseen that changes in government or political will, will affect the project results. The project is in line with capacitating the public service and key policymakers and decision-makers regardless of who comes into power. The project is in line with current UNCCD objectives, and helps countries to achieve the LDN objectives they have set for themselves. The issue of tenure and particularly women's access to land is a sensitive one, however, as the project approaches/methodologies will be developed in collaboration with country representatives, it is expected that the project will be responsive to the national needs regardless of any political changes.
INNOVATION		

Institutional and Policy	Moderate	There is the risk that policymakers and decisionmakers do not sufficiently engage in the project or do not make use of the outputs of the project. For that, the project will have to be developed in tandem with national needs and must be extremely responsive to the gaps and barriers identified. Component 2 is structured so that countries pilot the products co- developed in this project to foster a learning-by-doing approach. It is anticipated that through active implementation and through accompaniment, policymakers and decision-makers will be able to use and apply project deliverables, rendering the outputs more likely to be sustained. Component 3's focus on knowledge sharing also allows the sharing of best practices so that findings from the pilots can be leveraged in other countries.
Technological	Moderate	There may be a chance that under Component 1, as tools/methodologies are aggregated, that an app or other database technologies are used under Component 2. With technology, there is always the risk that the technology used becomes outdated, unable to be kept up, or requires a high threshold of tech literacy that stakeholders may not have, or may not be able to upgrade. The project will ensure that the baseline tools and trainings are provided in tandem with any tools developed by the project with a sustainability strategy, and with clear roles and responsibilities of who will manage the technology and how.
Financial and Business Model	Low	The pilot countries will be benefitting from the project and findings will be integrated into the policy environment. Given that the project is geared to address the capacity gaps identified, there is less risk of active funding needed beyond the project to sustain results. The nature of the interventions are all at the policy level without expensive costs of infrastructure (for example), so the demands of future funding is not high. The project can also help to clarify the needs for targeted intervention which can then be turned into subsequent projects or programs to be presented to donors.

EXECUTION

Capacity	Low	The international partners identified for execution of the project have demonstrated experience in working efficiently with stakeholders and for delivering high quality programming. They will be working in tandem with national partners executing the project in-country, and there will thus be two levels of accountability and support.
Fiduciary	Low	The executing partners selected have all demonstrated fiduciary responsibility. In cases where challenges exist (South Sudan), FAO will be carrying out direct execution.
Stakeholder	Moderate	Given that the project will be geared to policymakers and decision-makers, those executing the project may have a tendency of only working within governmental partners. The executing team will have to ensure that findings and support are provided to stakeholders beyond government to have a cohesive response to LDN needs. The way to mitigate this is to ensure that a

		variety of stakeholders are part of the methodology/tool development so that they engage from the onset.
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Low	Overall the risks of this project are low. The project is geared to address the capacity gaps that countries face in improve land tenure, and women's access to tenure for LDN. It will be implemented at a policy level with few field activities.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project aligns with various international agreements, conventions and protocols despite being an LD project. For instance, there is strong alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework^[1]⁷⁸, which this project contributes to in the following ways:

- **Target 1: Plan and Manage all Areas for Biodiversity Loss-** By improving land tenure governance and enhancing women's land rights, the project promotes participatory and equitable land-use planning. Secure land tenure encourages sustainable land management practices and the restoration of degraded land, contributing to biodiversity conservation and preventing further degradation.
- **Target 2: Restore 30% of all degraded ecosystems-** The project strengthens tenure security, which motivates communities, particularly women, to invest in restoring and maintaining degraded ecosystems. This directly supports the restoration goals of the GBF, including increasing the resilience of ecosystems.
- **Target 3: Conserve 30% of all land, water and seas-** By addressing tenure insecurity and promoting gender equality, the project fosters local stewardship of conservation areas. Secure tenure rights incentivize community involvement in maintaining protected and restored areas, aligning with the GBF's '30x30' target.
- **Target 9: Manage wild species sustainably to benefit people-** Women, particularly in rural areas, often depend on biodiversity for livelihoods. Improving women's access to land enables them to adopt biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and reduce overexploitation of wild species.

- **Target 11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contribution to People-** Improved tenure governance and people's secured access to land, provides greater incentives for communities to protect natural resources and derive livelihoods
- **Target 23: Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action-** The project explicitly integrates gender equality, focusing on strengthening women's participation, including indigenous women's participation, in land governance. This aligns directly with the GBF's emphasis on equitable representation in decision-making and resource access.

3.1 Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies

The goal of the Land Degradation Focal Area in GEF-8 is to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation, desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

The Land Degradation Focal Area (LDFA) strategy aims to contribute to its goal through: 1) avoiding and reducing land degradation through sustainable land management (SLM); 2) reversing land degradation through restoration of production landscapes; 3) addressing desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD) issues, particularly in drylands, and 4) improving the enabling policy and institutional framework for LDN.

The project will enable stakeholders to promote LDN principles at multiple levels related to the responsible and equitable governance of tenure; to address national obstacles to LDN attainment; to promote good governance and respect for land tenure; and to align private and public investments with LDN principles. The project will support CSOs - which are active in the areas of governance of tenure and/ or land degradation neutrality - to strengthen the inclusion and representation of smallholders in LDN actions, including actions funded by the GEF and other donors as well as private investments in LDN. The targeted CSOs will be primarily CSOs which are already part of multi stakeholders dialogue mechanisms or networks at national or global level and will - as such - participate to strengthen CSO networking and dialogue on LDN and tenure and can contribute to enhancing south-south cooperation. The project will also provide capacity and serve as a platform for groups in vulnerable situation such as Indigenous Peoples, youth and women to participate more actively in the UNCCD process.

The project aims to link across the Rio Conventions gender action plans; the Voluntary Guidelines of the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of National Food Security; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas as well as global gender equality norms and standards, such as those guaranteed by CEDAW and ICESCR.

The UNCCD GAP asserts that gender mainstreaming is essential "to address the gender inequalities that disproportionately undermine women's effectiveness as agents of change in the implementation of the Convention, [and] would enhance the achievement of LDN targets."

The GAP outlines four priority areas to incorporate in LDN implementation: i) ensure women's participation in decisions taken during the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives to implement the UNCCD; ii) integrate women's economic empowerment in UNCCD implementation activities in order to eradicate their extreme poverty; iii) strengthen women's land rights and access to resources; and iv) enhance women's access to improved knowledge and technologies that relate to effective UNCCD implementation, including LDN.

COP 15, Decision 11: Gender Plan of Action	Women's rights, land ownership, participation and leadership, capacity building	Objective 1.1 Increase all women and girls' rights to ownership and control over land and access to natural resources and to water, to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
COP 15, Decision 8: Capacity- building and development and technical and scientific cooperation	Women, indigenous peoples & local communities, capacity building, expertise sharing, human rights	Also urges Parties and invites other Governments to put in place enabling environments including relevant policies, legislation and administrative measures, as appropriate, to promote and facilitate capacity-building and development at various levels, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, and women and youth organizations Guiding Principles 8e. Indigenous peoples and local communities, gender and youth perspectives should be fully integrated into biodiversity capacity-building and development efforts, taking into account the Gender Plan of Action Goals and Objectives 1c. To promote and facilitate the development, transfer and use of appropriate technologies, including indigenous and traditional technologies subject to free, prior and informed consent, according to national legislation
COP 15, Decision 28: Biodiversity and agriculture	Soil, tenure, women, indigenous people & local communities	Activity 1.9 Promote ways and means to overcome obstacles to the adoption of good practices in sustainable soil management associated with land tenure, the rights of users of land and water, in particular women, the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, in accordance with national legislation and international instruments, recognizing their important contributions through their knowledge and

The different decisions made at UNCCD COP14 call for a stronger support to country Parties to implement the concept of LDN at national levels, through guidance for (i) raising awareness, building capacity and facilitate voluntary technology transfer related to LDN practices, (ii) strengthening national level coordination for LDN through adequate land governance and integration in policy frameworks, (iii) Strengthening the national voluntary LDN target setting process, and (iv) mobilizing LDN financing and strengthening collaboration with GEF. The project aims to advance these specific areas of country support.

3.2 Alignment to FAO Strategic framework, SDGs and Country Programming Framework

3.2.1 FAO Strategic Framework

The FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-2031 outlines FAO's vision for a sustainable and more food secure world for all.^[1] It seeks to support the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for **better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life** (also known as the four betters), leaving no one behind.^{[2]⁷⁹} This LDN GEF project focused on improving the land tenure and gender nexus for LDN, directly contributes to these goals through its emphasis on gender equity, land restoration and

building countries' capacity to support their LDN objectives. In particular the project supports the four betters in the following way:

- The long-term of this project seeks to restore degraded land, which in turn would sequester carbon, build climate resilience and improve sustainable land-use practices. These align with FAO's emphasis on resilience and the better environment, and better production priorities.
- The FAO's Strategic Framework promotes gender equity. This project which seeks to enhance women's access to land and resources, ensuring they benefit from land restoration efforts, is in line with this and the better life priority.
- Technology, innovation and data have been identified in the FAO Strategic Framework as cross-cutting accelerators for impact, while reducing trade-offs. This project's focus in developing tools/methodologies and approaches seeks to support countries to generate evidence-based approaches to LDN which are in line with the framework.

3.2.2 Alignment with SDGs

Tenure security is critical to achieving land degradation neutrality and significantly contributes to the achievement of many of the SDGs:

▪ SDG 1: No Poverty

- **Target 1.4:** Ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land.
- **Indicator 1.4.2:** Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights as secure.
- **Reason for alignment:** Secure land tenure is a key factor in poverty reduction, especially for marginalized groups like women, enabling better livelihoods and economic opportunities, as it gives them greater access to assets, and could generate livelihood/food opportunities. [\[3\]](#)⁸⁰

▪ SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- **Target 2.3:** Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, including women and indigenous peoples, through secure access to land.
- **Indicator 2.3.2:** Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status.
- **Reason for alignment:** Land is the single greatest resource in most countries and provides the platform for many peoples' homes, their employment and the production, processing and distribution of their food and other products. Secure land tenure can contribute to agricultural productivity and food security, contributing to sustainable livelihoods and improved nutrition. [\[4\]](#)⁸¹

▪ SDG 5: Gender Equality

- **Target 5.a:** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land.
- **Indicator 5.a.1:** Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex.
- **Indicator 5.a.2:** Proportion of countries where the legal framework guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.
- **Reason for alignment:** Women can face legal, socio-economic and cultural barriers to land ownership. [\[5\]⁸²](#) Addressing these gaps helps empower women economically and socially, and increase their choices and opportunities. By investing in greater women's access to land, the project improves upon the gender imbalance. Further, the FAO is the custodian for the Target 5a and has developed methodologies to support countries to monitor and report on their progress on women's access to land rights. [\[6\]⁸³](#) This experience will be integrated during project implementation.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action**
 - **Target 13.1:** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.
 - **Indicator 13.1.2:** Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies.
 - **Reason for alignment:** LDN contributes to climate resilience by protecting ecosystems and promoting sustainable land management, which is critical for mitigating climate impacts. While this will not be an immediate outcome of the project, it is anticipated that improved land management will increase climate resilience.
- **SDG 15: Life on Land**
 - **Target 15.3:** Combat desertification, restore degraded land, and achieve a land degradation-neutral world.
 - **Indicator 15.3.1:** Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area.
 - **Reason for alignment:** LDN directly contributes to restoring ecosystems, preventing desertification, and ensuring sustainable land use practices. [\[7\]⁸⁴](#) This project supports countries to meet their LDN objectives, thereby supporting healthier ecosystems.
- **SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**
 - **Target 16.3:** Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all.
 - **Indicator 16.3.1:** Proportion of victims of violence who reported their victimization to competent authorities.
 - **Reason for alignment:** Secure land tenure, especially for marginalized groups, supports rule of law and reduces conflicts over land, promoting stability and justice. [\[8\]⁸⁵](#)
- **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**
 - **Target 17.9:** Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building.
 - **Indicator 17.9.1:** Dollar value of financial and technical assistance committed to sustainable development.

- **Reason for alignment:** This project will support multi-stakeholder partnerships both within countries and outside, support international processes and global partners.

3.2.3 Alignment with National Policies, Plans and Priorities

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is committed to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals are integrated into national policies and are reflected in the National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040.

The Kyrgyz Republic, as a member of the world community, has signed dozens of international environmental treaties and conventions in the field of environmental sustainability:

- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): Kyrgyzstan signed this convention on December 6, 1994, and ratified it on May 30, 1997.
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Kyrgyzstan signed this convention on June 12, 1992, and ratified it on June 15, 1996.

Kyrgyzstan's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, with emphasis on the need for greater awareness-raising. Key areas including aligning public policy and conservation actions on the ground, as well as restoring the most vulnerable ecosystems and genetic resources, significantly reduce the rate of species loss, degradation and fragmentation of their habitats.^{[9]⁸⁶} These efforts contribute to LDN by maintaining ecosystem services and preventing further land degradation, thereby aligning with this project.

Kyrgyzstan has set national voluntary LDN targets, established a baseline, and formulated measures to achieve LDN. This includes sustainable land management practices aimed at reversing land degradation trends. In its National Action Plan to combat Desertification (NAP), the government highlights that combating land degradation is a priority for the state.^{[10]⁸⁷} The project thus contributes to the NAP.

Kyrgyzstan is advancing its National Adaptation Plan under the UNFCCC process to enhance climate resilience. The NAP aims to integrate climate adaptation into national and sectoral planning, focusing on reducing vulnerabilities in key sectors such as agriculture and water resources. By addressing climate-induced land degradation, the NAP supports LDN objectives. Through supporting LDN initiatives, the project is in line with the NAP.

In 2018, the long-term National Strategy of the Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040 was approved. The strategies define the priority directions for the main sectors, including agriculture. The priorities of the programme related to agriculture are the development of cooperatives based on a cluster approach, the development of organic agriculture, rehabilitation of irrigation networks, adaptation to climate change, environmental sustainability, and the development of the regional growth centres.^{[11]⁸⁸} The project is aligned with the concepts of environmental sustainability.

The Kyrgyz Republic has undertaken several international commitments to achieve gender equality, which is in line with this project which seeks to enhance women's economic opportunities, including:

- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).
- The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (ratified in 1996).
- ILO Convention No. 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the Workplace.

Kyrgyzstan was one of the first countries in Central Asia to adopt:

- The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (2008). According to Article 13 of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women,' in conjunction with Article 25 of the same law, the state is obligated to ensure equal rights for individuals of different genders to use land plots and to take the necessary measures to achieve real gender equality.
- The Law on the Protection and Safeguarding Against Domestic Violence (2017).

Since 1996, five national programs have been adopted and implemented to achieve gender equality, all of which have been successfully completed.

In 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality until 2030 and the National Action Plan for 2022–2024, which includes five priority areas:

- Expanding women's economic opportunities.
- Cultural policies and functional education.
- Protection against gender discrimination and fair justice.
- Women's political participation.

- Regulatory policy

Paraguay

This project is in line with Paraguay's international commitments. Paraguay has developed the NAP for the period 2018-2024 under the UNCCD. The key objectives of this plan are: (i) implementing measures to prevent and reduce land degradation, thereby preserving soil health and productivity; (ii) enhancing the country's capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to drought conditions to minimize adverse impacts on agriculture and water resources; (iii) promoting practices that ensure the sustainable use of land resources, balancing environmental, economic, and social needs. Given the project's focus on supporting countries' endeavours for LDN while addressing the barriers related to gender and tenure, the project is well aligned with the NAP.

Paraguay developed a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) under the UNFCCC in 2021 which highlights its adaptation planning in the areas of agriculture, water resources and infrastructure. Improved

Paraguay has a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The NBSAP emphasizes sustainable land management practices, which are crucial for achieving LDN, especially with regard to maintaining or improving the amount and quality of land resources necessary for ecosystem functions and services. By focusing on sustainable forest management and the conservation of natural resources, the NBSAP directly contributes to preventing land degradation and promoting restoration efforts, which is well aligned with this project.

Paraguay has submitted National Communications to the UNFCCC, detailing its greenhouse gas emissions, climate change impacts, and mitigation efforts. The Second National Communication includes proposals for national mitigation programs aimed at reducing GHG emissions.

Paraguay, as a member state of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), approved the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) in 2011 and assumed the commitment to adopt the VGGT within the framework of the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) of MERCOSUR held in Porto Alegre in 2016.

Until now, in Paraguay there are no policies nor law that link land tenure, LDN and gender issues.

Some concrete and specific measures that head towards an elimination of barriers to access to land for rural women are noted in the Annex K- Gender Analysis.

South Sudan

Since becoming party to the above conventions, South Sudan has submitted a number of national reports, strategies and plans such as National Adaptation Programme of Action, (NAPA) - 2016, Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), 5th National Biodiversity Report (5th NR), Initial National Communication (INC) report, and National Capacity Self-assessment (NCSA) report, The South Sudan National Environmental Policy (2015-2025) endorsed by Parliament in April 2016, the National State of Environment and Outlook Report (SEOR) -2018 and most recently the Second Nationally Determined Contribution - (2021) and National Adaptations action plans, (NAP)- 2021.

- **National Action Program (NAP) under UNCCD-** The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) hosts the UNCCD agreement and is responsible for coordinating implementation of activities proposed under the National Land Degradation Neutrality Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2030. It includes the following strategic objectives: (1) Maintain or improve the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services: i.) maintain or improve agricultural productivity, in order to enhance food security; ii.) Increase resilience of the land and populations that dependent on the land); (2) Seek synergies with other social, economic and environmental objectives; and (3) Reinforce responsible and inclusive governance of land and land - based resources.
- **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) under UNCBD-** South Sudan's NBSAP mobilizes national and subnational stakeholders to support and undertake biodiversity management activities. The project will intersect with the implementation of the 7 strategic objectives for the NBSAP through the 24 Targets outlined in the NBSAP. The principles adopted within the spirit of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, from which the CBD emerged include, the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle and the user pays principle, among others from Agenda 21. They will support fast tracking of biodiversity management espoused in the NBSAP for South Sudan.
- **National Communications (NC) under UNFCCC-** The National communication (NC) and the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the UNFCCC serves as one of the baseline for selecting the priority for mitigation and adaptation sectors. The reports, which were submitted in November 12, 2015, and revised in September 30, 2021 2021 respectively to the UNFCCC secretariat, present South Sudan GHG inventory for the years 2000 and 2010 with trend analysis for the period 1995-2010 and sectorial mitigation measures to reduce the national emission.
- **Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) under UNFCCC-** The Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) will assist the project building on the rational of TNA aimed at achieving sustainable development through integration of environment, social and economic issues and enhancing linkages and collaboration across various sectors as well as improving partnerships between the government, private sector, civil society and communities on matters of environmental management and climate change adaptation mitigation and resilience. Hence TNA project comes to complement all the efforts of the global policy.
- **The Environmental policy** provides for environmental impact assessment and consultations and consults with local and national stakeholders. The project is in line with it as it seeks to improve spatial planning and land management.

South Sudan developed its **Land Degradation Neutrality Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2030)**, supported by the strategic objectives to:

- Maintain or improve the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services
- maintain or improve agricultural productivity, in order to enhance food security
- Increase resilience of the land and populations that dependent on the land)
- Seek synergies with other social, economic and environmental objectives and
- Reinforce responsible and inclusive governance of land and land -based resources.

The Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare developed the **National Gender Policy** 2013 which sets out strategies geared towards rural women empowerment through their engagement in agriculture and promoting food security, shifting from subsistence to business orientation. These and other women-targeted policies are noted in Annex K-Gender Analysis.

The project's focus on LDN and women is well-aligned with national commitments.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has developed several strategic plans to address environmental challenges. These plans align with the country's commitment to achieving LDN and include the following:

- **NAP under the UNCCD-** Sri Lanka formulated its NAP to combat land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought. Key priorities include: implementing practices to prevent and reduce land degradation, ensuring the sustainable use of land resources; enhancing the capabilities of institutions and communities to effectively manage land resources and address desertification challenges; securing financial and technical resources to support initiatives aimed at combating land degradation and promoting sustainable land use. The
- **NBSAP under the UNCBD:** Sri Lanka's NBSAP for 2016-2022 outlined several priorities, including: protecting and managing ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity to prevent biodiversity loss; promoting the sustainable utilization of biological resources to ensure long-term ecological balance and benefits to local communities; integrating biodiversity considerations into national development planning and sectoral policies to ensure environmental sustainability.
- **NC under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** Sri Lanka has submitted multiple National Communications, with the Third National Communication (TNC) highlighting priorities such as: implementing strategies to reduce emissions across various sectors, including energy, transportation, and agriculture; developing and promoting adaptive measures to address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities and ecosystems; enhancing awareness and understanding of climate change issues among the public, policymakers, and stakeholders to foster informed decision-making. Improved land management policies in the service of LDN are foreseen to better capture carbon and support sustainable agriculture.
- **Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) under the UNFCCC:** Sri Lanka's TNA process identifies and prioritizes technological solutions to address climate change challenges. Priorities include: promoting the adoption of

renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions; identifying and implementing technologies that enhance the resilience of agricultural systems to climate variability and change; developing and deploying technologies for efficient water use and management to address challenges posed by changing precipitation patterns and water scarcity.

3.3 Lessons learned from past projects

Please see Section 1.5 which highlights lessons learned from past projects.

[1] FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. Available online at: <https://www.fao.org/strategic-framework/en>

[2] Ibid.

[3] UN-Habitat. Land Tenure Security. Available online at: <https://unhabitat.org/topic/land-tenure-security>

[4] FAO. Governance of Tenure. Available online at: <https://www.fao.org/tenure/resources/collections/land-tenure/en/>

[5] USAID. Women's Land Rights and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Overview. Available online at: <https://www.land-links.org/document/womens-land-rights-and-womens-economic-empowerment-wee-overview/>

[6] FAO. 2018. Realizing Women's Rights to Land in the Law: Information Note on SDG Indicator 5.a.2. Available online at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/79145938-f566-438b-8401-c57052a29f8f/content#:~:text=As%20the%20designated%20custodian%20for,and%20For%20control%20over%20land.>

[7] UNEP Decade on Restoration. Available online at: <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>

[8] UNCCD. 2022. Secure land rights to restore nature and improve livelihoods for all. Available online: <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/secure-land-rights-restore-nature-and-improve-livelihoods-all>

[9] GoK. 2016. Biodiversity conservation priorities of the Kyrgyz Republic till 2024. Available online at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/kg/kg-nbsap-v3-en.pdf>

[10] GoK. 2017. National Land Degradation Neutrality Targets. Available online: https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/ldn_targets/2018-11/Kyrgyzstan%20LDN%20Country%20Commitments.pdf?

[11] National Development Strategy of Kyrgyzstan.

[1] CBD. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Available online at: <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Yes

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement.

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project

Consulted only; Yes

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor;

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B project description?

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low	Low		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

5.2.1 Socio-economic Benefits

The project will initiate processes that will yield socioeconomic benefits and contribute to decent rural employment. While these results will not be direct outputs of the project, it is anticipated that by investing in improved land tenure, including land tenure for women, to achieve LDN, the project will strengthen the enabling environment for positive socioeconomic benefits, and will pilot the practices which will have long term positive social impacts. The socio-economic co-benefits of advancing LDN through the project include reducing rural poverty and promoting food and water security as well as gender equality and women's empowerment, resulting in improved social welfare outcomes.

Some of the anticipated benefits include:

- **Improved socioeconomic circumstances for women-** Improving women's economic status is essential for the overall improvement of their social status and well-being. Yet, for their economic status to improve, in general, women need secure land tenure rights^{[1]⁸⁹}, which the project will invest in. Further, improving women's access to land could also generate cooperatives, community groups and promote the emergence of collaborative land management and development projects, which support community engagement and sharing of benefits. Enhancing women's rights to own or have secure tenure over agricultural land has positive impacts on empowerment, investment, natural-resource management, access to services and institutions, resilience and food security, reducing gender-based violence and increasing women's bargaining power.^{[2]⁹⁰}
- **Less conflict and more clarity about land tenure rights-** Clarifying land tenure can reduce conflicts over land use, fostering improved coexistence within communities.
- **Environmental benefits-** With secure tenure, land users are more likely to invest in restoration techniques, such as reforestation and agroecological practices, contributing to the LDN objectives, and buffering communities from the vagaries of the climate. Strengthened ecosystems also mean greater ecosystem services (e.g. erosion control, flood management, carbon storage, cleaner air, pollination, disease and pest control) which can support healthier and safer lifestyles and contribute to food security. Further, women with land rights can cultivate diverse crops, ensuring nutrition and food availability for families and communities.
- **Skills development and training opportunities-** The project will support capacity development, as needed, to improve tenure governance. This will involve specific trainings, development and use of selective tools, and promote greater skills development for stakeholders working on these issues.
- **Policy and institutional strengthening-** Addressing LDN in a holistic way, such as including tenure and gender aspects, can strengthen the policy environment and foster improved alignment among multisectoral policies. The focus on multi-stakeholder work, and inclusion of gender, offers opportunities for mainstreaming gender and tenure beyond this project.

5.2.2 Global Environment Benefits

The project is aligned with the GEF LD Focal Area strategy, and specifically Goal 1, aligning GEF support to promote UNCCD's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) concept through an appropriate mix of investments. This project will help to create an enabling environment to support LDN target implementation (Objective 2 of the GEF7 Land Focal Area) by strengthening the capacity of a wide range of stakeholders to implement LDN principles, established safeguards, and good practices and supporting policy decisions that enable countries to meet international commitments under the UNCCD. The project will allow stakeholders to promote LDN principles at multiple levels to address national obstacles to LDN attainment; to promote responsible governance and gender equality for land tenure.

Progress towards LDN targets through enhanced gender-responsive tenure security will also make efforts at restoring and protecting soil biodiversity, habitat rehabilitation, and ecosystem health more sustainable.

Land tenure security can also lead to improved adaptation outcomes in a range of areas. Secure tenure rights, including through customary systems, can incentivize farmers to adopt long-term agroecology and/or climate-smart practices, e.g., planting trees in mixed cropland/forest systems. Inclusive and responsible tenure policy for forests has the ability to reduce ecological vulnerability, as secure rights to land and forest resources can facilitate efforts towards more sustainable use if appropriate technical, policy or market support are available. Reforestation and agroecology efforts can also support carbon sequestration.

5.2.3 Decent Rural Employment

Improved tenure security, and women's access to tenure, for LDN will have considerable long-term effects. The project is piloting activities to strengthen tenure arrangements for LDN, and the following trickle-down benefits for decent rural employment can be foreseen (please note these are not direct outcomes of the project but strengthened LDN-gender-tenure nexus could yield the following positive benefits with the appropriate policy mix):

- **Greater sources for livelihoods-** Empowering women to own land can lead to additional income streams from agroforestry, livestock, and other land-based enterprises, which diversifies sources for livelihoods
- **Agricultural productivity and resilient farming-** Secure land tenure encourages long-term investments in sustainable practices, improving soil health and boosting crop yields. Women, as primary caregivers of land, can often adopt diverse crops and become part of new value chains, that contribute to food security and reduce land degradation.
- **Access to credit-** with women having greater access to land, they could leverage this asset for credit for farming inputs, entrepreneurial activities, and small businesses.

[1] IFAD. 2021. How To Do- Securing Women's Tenure Rights: Land Tenure Toolkit. Available online at: https://www.ifad.org/documents/d/new-ifad.org/htdn_wlr-oct2021-pdf

[2] FAO. The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems. Available online at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/cf566816-e3c6-42a3-be37-77f86e4050cf/content>

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
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FAO	GET	Global	Land Degradation	LD Global/Regional Set-Aside	Grant	2,000,000.00	190,000.00	2,190,000.00
Total GEF Resources (\$)						2,000,000.00	190,000.00	2,190,000.00

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

50000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4500

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
FAO	GET	Global	Land Degradation	LD Global/Regional Set-Aside	50,000.00	4,500.00	54,500.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)					50,000.00	4,500.00	54,500.00

Please provide Justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
Total GEF Resources					0.00

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
LD-4	GET	2,000,000.00	3275000
Total Project Cost		2,000,000.00	3,275,000.00

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	Investment mobilized	3062000
Recipient Country Government	(South Suda) Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	75000
Recipient Country Government	(Paraguay) Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Rural y de la Tierra (INDERT)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	88000
Others	International Land Coalition	Grant	Investment mobilized	50000
Total Co-financing				3,275,000.00

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

FAO's investment mobilized portion includes: Capacity building of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities with regards securing their tenure rights (in view of strengthening their environmental custodianship); Monitoring of land tenure and governance, including tenure security, women's land rights, etc. The database also includes biophysical and environmental layers related to land (such as soil productivity, carbon related indicators). It will also serve the land indicator monitoring in relation to CBD and UNCCD;- Evidence generation and capacity building on the nexus between gender dynamics, land tenure security and agricultural productivity towards inclusive and sustainable food systems transformation in South Sudan. This work is meant to provide a comprehensive evidence base for the design of gender-responsive investments and programmes in South Sudan; Data (SDG5a1 and SDG5a2) and capacity development on women's land rights.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	1/16/2025	Maude Veyret-Picot	3208883251	maude.veyretpicot@fao.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
M.A. Amankulov	GEF OFP Kyrgystan	Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision	1/13/2025
Lilian Portillo	GEF OFP Paraguay	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	3/4/2025

David Batali Oliver	GEF OFP South Sudan	Ministry of Environment and Forestry	3/5/2025
B.K. Prabath Chanadrakeerthi	GEF OFP Sri Lanka	Ministry of Environment	1/10/2025

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
Project Objective and indicators targets:							
Component 1: Inclusive, integrated and informed decision-making							
<u>Outcome 1.1:</u> 1.1 LDN policymakers, decision-makers and practitioners widely use a combined assessment tool and capacity development package on the LDN tenure-gender equality nexus	# of Comprehensive capacity building programme and analytical tool/methodology aggregated/refined in applicable form, to accompany countries in improving land tenure governance, with improved tenure access for women, for LDN, with gender transformative	VGGT exists and provide a framework to assess and improve governance of tenure, including the management of land, fisheries, and forests. Helps countries identify tenure-related barriers to sustainable	Relevant baseline data has been collected and analyzed on tenure-gender-LDN-related gaps in Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka The review of tool and methodology to assess LDN –gender-tenure nexus has been finalized; a comprehensive tool/methodology is under development to support countries' assessment of LDN-gender-tenure	1 Comprehensive capacity building programme and analytical tool/methodology are developed to be adapted by Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, South Sudan and Sri Lanka in improving land tenure governance, with improved tenure access for women, for LDN	Interface of tools/methodologies; documentation on capacity building programme Interviews	International partners, through guidance and support of national partners, can develop a capacity building programme, including appropriate tools and methodologies, to address the key gaps to substantially improve tenure governance, including improved access to tenure for women, for LDN	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
	programming elements %age of policymakers, decision-makers, and practitioners trained in the use of the assessment tool and capacity development package who actively apply it in their work (disaggregated by sex)	land management and formulate actions to ensure equitable land access and security. However, socialization among land actors is limited.					
<u>Output.1.1.1</u> 1.1.1. A co-designed combined assessment tool for the LDN-gender equality nexus at national and local levels developed -	Country-specific assessment tool/methodology aggregated/refined in implementable form # of stakeholders (disaggregated by sex and organization type) involved in the co-design process of the assessment tool	VGGT LDN Target Setting Programme and LDN reporting UN-Habitat has a Global Land Tool Network Land Governance Assessment	International partners review/consult and test tool/methodology with country partners	1 tool/methodology developed per pilot country to support assessment of the LDN-gender-tenure nexus	Presence of tool/methodology Interviews, consultation minutes	International partners, through guidance and support of national partners, can develop a tool/methodology that can substantially improve tenure governance, including improved access to tenure for women, for LDN	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
		Framework Geo-spatial tools Customary Land Tenure Assessment Tools Land and Soils Assessment Tools					
<u>Output.1.1.2</u> 1.1.2. A co-designed capacity development package to assess and plan interventions across the LDN-tenure-gender equality nexus developed -	# of co-designed adaptable capacity development package developed %age of stakeholders who report that the capacity development package is practical and responsive for addressing LDN-tenure-gender issues (assessed by yearly surveys)	Sri Lanka has commenced a process of national consultation on the questions of tenure and LDN. There are no adaptable capacity development package on the LDN-Gender-Tenure nexus in the baseline in the	Capacity gaps have been identified in all four countries	1 capacity development package adaptable to the countries – including one generic e-learning module on LDN – Tenure and gender nexus are formulated	Capacity development package with training materials	Political will exists to implement the capacity development package developed.	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
		pilot countries					
Component 2- National-level evidence-based implementation							
2.1 Land actors are equipped to integrate tenure security and women's access to land in LDN initiatives	# of land governance actors capacitated on tenure security and gender-sensitive land management practices Proportion of LDN action plans or strategies developed as a follow up that explicitly address tenure security and women's access to land # of land tenure governance institutions adopting gender-sensitive policies or practices aligned with LDN objectives	South Sudan has several land working groups mobilized on discussing tenure (see baseline section for list); Sri Lanka has had the national dialogue following the Joint Initiative. Policy gaps exist in all four pilot countries; limited intersectoral collaboration	Trainings underway to conduct the assessment and development package Assessment of baseline policies, plans, strategies and action plans with recommendations for improvement	100% of identified land actors at inception have received capacity building support Key recommendations to update policies, plans, action plans with improved tenure-gender-LDN considerations	Training reports Participation lists Minutes Review of policies, plans and action plans	Land actors have the willingness and ability to participate in capacity development	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
	# of follow-up actions or commitments made by stakeholders on land tenure-gender-LDN as a result of the interventions						
2.1.1 Country and local-level assessments of the LDN-Tenure-Gender equality nexus conducted	# of comprehensive local-level assessments of LDN-Tenure-Gender equality nexus conducted	South Sudan has conducted an assessment of SDG 5.a.2 adherence in the country	Multi-stakeholder groups are set up in each pilot country, and inform the assessment process	4 comprehensive local-level assessments of LDN-Tenure-Gender equality nexus conducted	Assessments Interviews, Documentation	The assessment process will support capacity building and implementation	Project Coordinator
2.1.2 Inclusive gender-responsive multistakeholder dialogues conducted	# of multistakeholder dialogues conducted with representation from diverse stakeholder groups, disaggregated by sex and stakeholder type (e.g., government, civil society, community leaders)	Tenure-related multistakeholder platforms exist in South Sudan and Sri Lanka.	At least one multistakeholder dialogues conducted per country	At least 3 multistakeholder dialogues conducted per country	Meeting minutes Participation Lists Recommendation lists	There is high engagement in multistakeholder consultations	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
	# of marginalized groups (e.g., indigenous people, rural women, youth) represented in the dialogues						
2.1.3 Tailor-made national level capacity development interventions rolled out	# of national-level capacity development interventions designed and implemented # of knowledge products (e.g., toolkits, guidelines) disseminated to land governance institutions to support integration of women's land rights into LDN initiatives # of gender champions identified promoting the inclusion of gender in	There are no tailored capacity development packages on the LDN-Gender-Tenure nexus in the baseline in the pilot countries 0	Stakeholders input into draft capacity development programme and timeline for implementation At least 4	4 national-level capacity development interventions designed and implemented	Documentation Knowledge and capacity development products and toolkits	Country partners have ownership and support to implement activities, and learn by doing Gender champions can maintain the pressure of gender-inclusive LDN action and support gender-transformative actions	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
	LDN-related initiatives			At least 4	Communications products, speeches, meeting notes		
Component 3: Knowledge Management and Learning							
3.1 South-South and Triangular Cooperation and exchange of lessons learnt is enhanced, lessons and knowledge are captured, developed, and shared for scaling of tenure governance and gender equality in access to land in LDN investments	# of lessons learned or good practices identified, documented, and shared through SSTC initiatives Number of knowledge products (e.g., case studies, guidelines, toolkits, reports) developed and disseminated to support tenure governance and gender equality in LDN Number of replication initiatives or projects inspired by SSTC knowledge exchanges	There are currently no LDN-Gender-Tenure related lessons learned generated from the pilot countries. The Joint Initiative in Sri Lanka has recently facilitated a national workshop and it is anticipated that some of those findings will be communicated to international partners	Project experiences shared through UNCCD fora	Evidence of pilots being replicated in other countries	Workshop minutes Presentation decks	Global fora provide spaces for upscaling lessons learned, best practices, and share best practices	Project Coordinator
3.1.1 Global spaces for	% of existing global LDN-related fora which	The UNCCD Secretariat	Project products are shared in at least 4 global fora	100% of pilot countries accessing,	Presentations	Other country participants will be	Project Coordinator

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
knowledge management, peer learning, and triangular cooperation between participating countries and partners are used	include workshops on gender-tenure-LDN nexus Percentage of participating countries actively contributing to or accessing resources (e.g., tools, case studies, lessons learned) shared in global LDN-related spaces	facilitates several fora where the nexus can be discussed (COP, CRIC, TSP, Gender Caucus) FAO (VGGT, Land and Water Days) UN Women and SDGs (SDG5, 15, High Level Forum) ILC's Global Land Forum Commission on the Status of Women Rights and Resource Initiatives for Indigenous Peoples		using, and sharing resources, tools and case studies in international fora 100% of participants in international events where project content is presented report having their learning be enhanced from project results	Workshop Materials Knowledge Products	interested and will be able to learn from pilot country experiences	

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target	Final target	Means of verification	Assumptions	Responsible for data collection
3.1.2 Evidence-based knowledge products generated and multiple events organized on the integration of governance of tenure and gender equality into LDN initiatives	# of publications documenting project's lessons learned Percentage of participants in events who report increased knowledge or understanding of governance of tenure and gender equality in LDN initiatives	0 publications documenting project's lessons learned	At least 1 publication 50% of participants report increased knowledge of land tenure-gender- and LDN	At least 2 publications 100% of participants report increased knowledge of land tenure-gender- and LDN	Publications Presentations Workshop Materials Knowledge Products	Other country participants will be interested and will be able to learn from pilot country experiences	Project Coordinator

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
GEF - project design expert (PDE)	30,000.00	20,827.00	8,576.00
National consultants	17,300.00	7,289.00	10,819.00
Design and validation workshops	2,700.00	2,489.00	0.00
Total	50,000.00	30,605.00	19,395.00

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.

Kindly note that this is a global normative project.

ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

FAO Cost Category	Unit	No of units	Unit Costs	Outcome 1.1	Total C1	Outcome 2.1	Total C2	Outcome 3.1	Total C3	M&E	PMC	Total	Responsible Entity
5013 Consultants													
Project Coordinator	Year	3	43,333		-		-		-		130,000	130,000	FAO
Gender and Knowledge Management Expert (housed in Landesa)	Year	3	27,000		-		-	69,182	69,182		11,818	81,000	Landesa
5013 Sub-Total Consultants				-	-	-	-	69,182	69,182	-	141,818	211,000	
5650 Contracts													
Landesa Component 1 delivery	Contract	1	121,667	100,000	100,000		-	21,667	21,667			121,667	Landesa
ILC Component 2 delivery	Contract	1	121,667		-	100,000	100,000	21,667	21,667			121,667	ILC
TMG Component 3 delivery	Contract	1	121,666		-		-	121,666	121,666			121,666	TMG
Terminal Evaluation	Contract	1	58,000		-		-		-	58,000		58,000	FAO
Terminal report	Contract	1	7,000		-		-	7,000	7,000			7,000	FAO
Government contract for Component 2 delivery (application of capacity building programme, hosting multistakeholder consultations, training on mainstreaming national tools and methodologies, skill building of national policymakers disseminating information, data)	Contract	1	264,250		-	256,000	256,000	8,250	8,250			264,250	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources of the Kyrgyz Republic
Government contract for Component 2 delivery	Contract	1	264,250		-	256,000	256,000	8,250	8,250			264,250	Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka
Government contract for Component 2 delivery	Contract	1	264,250		-	256,000	256,000	8,250	8,250			264,250	FAO (to support INDERT/MADES in Paraguay)
Government contract for Component 2 delivery	Contract	1	264,250		-	256,000	256,000	8,250	8,250			264,250	FAO (to support Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development)
5650 Sub-total contracts				100,000	100,000	1,124,000	1,124,000	205,000	205,000	58,000	-	1,487,000	-
5021 Travel													
Lump Sum Travel for Trainings and Workshops (international fora, domestic travel, mentoring activities, South-South peer consultations)	Year	3	11,667		-		-	35,000	35,000			35,000	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources of the Kyrgyz Republic
Lump Sum Travel for Trainings and Workshops (international fora, domestic travel mentoring activities, South-South peer consultations)	Year	3	11,667		-		-	35,000	35,000			35,000	Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka
Lump Sum Travel for Trainings and Workshops (international fora, domestic travel, mentoring activities, South-South peer consultations)	Year	3	11,667		-		-	35,000	35,000			35,000	INDERT/MADES of Paraguay (funds channelled through FAO)
Lump Sum Travel for Trainings and Workshops (international fora, domestic travel mentoring activities, South-South peer consultations) 35k per country	lump sum	3	11,667		-		-	35,000	35,000			35,000	MLHUD of South Sudan (Funds channelled through FAO)
5021 Sub-total travel				-	-	-	-	140,000	140,000	-	-	140,000	-
5023 Training													
E-learning, webinars, mentoring programme	lump sum	1	40,000	40,000	40,000		-		-			40,000	FAO
Global Workshop	lump sum	2	10,500		-		-	21,000	21,000			21,000	Landesa
Global Workshop	lump sum	2	10,500		-		-	21,000	21,000			21,000	TMG
Global Workshop	lump sum	2	10,000		-		-	20,000	20,000			20,000	ILC
5023 Sub-total Training				40,000	40,000	-	-	62,000	62,000	-	-	102,000	-
5024 Expendable procurement													
5024 Sub-total Expendable procurement				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6100 Non-expendable procurement													
6100 Sub-total non-expendable procurement				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5028 GOE Budget													
Translation	lump sum	1	20,000	10,000	10,000		-	10,000	10,000			20,000	Landesa
Translation	lump sum	1	20,000		-	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000			20,000	ILC
Translation	lump sum	1	20,000		-		-	20,000	20,000			20,000	TMG
6300 Sub-Total GOE Budget				10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000	40,000	-	-	60,000	-
TOTAL				150,000	150,000	1,134,000	1,134,000	516,182	516,182	58,000	141,818	2,000,000	-

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.

There were no specific comments from Council or other partners. Comments received during the PIF were integrated in both the PIF and ProDoc, e.g.

- Please ensure that the Gender Action Plan will be budgeted, monitored and reported on regularly. This has been done. The results framework is gender-sensitive as well, and gender has been integrated in all aspects of the project.
- Consultation with WOCAN. The PPG has provided an opportunity for consulting WOCAN resources.
- The Stakeholder Engagement Plan should include women's organizations: this has been done.