

WOCAT



Land Tenure for SLM tool

Lessons learned from implementation in Madagascar

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What is the Land tenure for SLM Tool?

It is a WOCAT tool that supports land tenure integration into SLM practices, linking the existing and future body of knowledge captured in the WOCAT Global SLM Database (<https://qcat.wocat.net>) to the nine VGGT pathways. The Tool takes a people-centered approach to identifying land tenure priorities to enable the adoption of SLM practices.

It assesses how the tenure governance system in the SLM practice area is serving the tenure needs of the community and how these needs are changing as a result of the SLM practice. It guides communities in linking their observations to the VGGT pathways to prioritize areas for integration of tenure actions in future SLM activities.

The LLANDDEV pilot

LLANDDEV (Land, Landscape and Development) is a research lab attached to a master programme under the Forestry and Environment Department of the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar. LLANDDEV Programme and applied research focus on sustainable land and natural resources management.

LLANDDEV was the first WOCAT partner to test, between July and August 2023, the «Land Tenure for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Tool» in Madagascar.

This fact sheet describes the pilot's process, lessons learned and outcomes.

The process

The information required for the Tool is collected through literature review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions.

Combining these methods helps address the complexity of the land tenure domain, make maximum use of existing land information, and maintain a people-centered, bottom-up and Fit-for-Purpose approach in the identification of tenure needs and recommendations.

- ✓ The **Literature Review** and **Key Informant** Interviews with national and local level stakeholders capture the legal and policy frameworks, the land administration and governance systems, and the national strategies for land. They help contextualize the questionnaire, assess tenure capacity, and identify information gaps.
- ✓ In addition, LLANDDEV convened a **Multi-stakeholder Consultation** with line ministries and agencies, civil society, and development partners to (1) raise the partners' awareness of the linkages between SLM and tenure, the tool, and the pilot; (2) promote the Tool's uptake; (3) map cross-sectoral challenges and opportunities for synergies between the SLM and tenure actors; and (4) foster future policy dialogue.
- ✓ The field staff of the Agricultural fuel breaks Project implemented the tool through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). A **one-day session on land tenure in Madagascar**, facilitated by WOCAT associate Land Tenure Specialist Guglielma da Passano, helped build a common understanding of basic tenure terminology and the legal and policy framework for land in Madagascar.

The session helped familiarize the LLANDDEV team with the tool's questions, process and objectives. During the session, the team validated the tool and discussed the questions to ensure the consistent translation and recording of the answers.



The objectives



The Tool was used in Madagascar as an 'add-on' to layer the tenure dimension to SLM Technologies captured in the WOCAT database. It focused on two different SLM projects, the LLANDDEV Fire Breaks for Agriculture Project, which prioritized activities to secure tenure for beneficiaries, and the GIZ Individual Village Reforestation (RVI) Project, where land tenure was initially not addressed.

The pilot's first objective was to verify the Tool's questions and format in terms of adequacy, adaptability, and relevance, and its alignment to the WOCAT technologies' documentation.

The Pilot was also intended to identify the tenure issues associated with specific SLM practices in the Boeny region of Madagascar and to investigate the linkages between tenure security and individual SLM practices to inform future programming.

The Madagascar experience would additionally raise awareness among WOCAT partners on how to use the Land Tenure for SLM Tool.

The team

The Tool's execution requires the mobilization of a team of facilitators who have access to the communities, preferably speak the local language, and understand the local context.

In the Madagascar pilot, a team of Project field staff implemented the questionnaire. All staff had SLM expertise and experience with tools and data collection.

Even more importantly, the team had already worked with the communities under the projects. The Tool implementation provided an opportunity to enhance their land tenure capacity.



- ✓ During the **Tool implementation Planning**, the team discussed targeting and group composition for the FGDs. An agreement was reached that each group would have 3-6 participants. Groups would be gender disaggregated if they included different age groups, and mixed if they targeted specifically the youth.

The tool implementation strategy was designed, setting the number of FGD per project and number of participants. An agreement was reached on team composition, roles and responsibilities, and timelines for implementation. Each FGD would be facilitated by a team of two, one conducting the discussion and one responsible for documenting the answers provided. All tool answers would be recorded on paper. FGDs in the same communities would run in parallel so that the teams could compare progress at the end of each day and learn from experience.

- ✓ The **Tool implementation** ran for 3 weeks. Two teams of two facilitators each, coordinated by one supervisor, identified 60 sex-disaggregated and mixed groups and ran FGDs in 24 communities. Women-only groups were always interviewed by a team comprising at least one woman. Each FGD took between two and three hours, and each team was able to run two FGDs a day.
- ✓ **Data consolidation and quality assurance** were primarily the team coordinator's responsibility. The end-of-the-day debriefings comparing information emerging from the different team experiences helped monitor and ensure equal progress and minimum quality standards across the teams.

The **Data analysis** was performed by the WOCAT Associate Land Tenure Specialist in collaboration with the team. The objectives of the analysis were: to identify programming options, and identify information and knowledge gaps.

- ✓ The **Restitution of results** is the last, yet critical, step in the Land Tenure for SLM tool implementation. It ensures transparency and accountability toward all stakeholders. The modalities and contents for each target audience are discussed in detail in the Recommendations and Way Forward section of this factsheet.

MADAGASCAR PILOT at a GLANCE

2 Projects
2 SLM practices

12 villages
60 FGDs
5 women-only
22 men-only
33 mixed

240 participants
64 female
176 male

1 month

2 teams
4 facilitators &
1 supervisor

Outcomes and Observations

LLANDDEV implemented the module to integrate the WOCAT documentation of two SLM projects and to better understand and document the interaction between tenure security and SLM.

FGD participants' profiles. Out of 60 groups, 30 belong to communities that have benefitted from GIZ Individual Village Reforestation (RVI) Project, and 30 to communities that have benefitted from LLANDDEV Agrioculture Fuel breaks Project. Most groups are **highly diverse** in terms of ethnicity, religion, patrilinear or matrilinear, monogamous or polygamous, etc. Both migrant and non-migrant households include **landowners and land users**.

Land-related challenges. With the increasing demographics and land degradation, the plots are progressively more fragmented and less productive in Boeny, and there is growing competition to access productive land and water. **Production, productivity, and secure access to productive land and water for irrigation are the prevalent concerns among the groups.** While people are engaging with SLM projects, they struggle with the limitations imposed on land use and with the lack of short-term profitability of their investments.

Securing tenure through acquiring a certificate or a title is a vehicle for improving land use and management. Many of the group members have already gone through this process, thanks to the support of the projects, but a large number of project beneficiaries remain without a formal title to the land because the process is beyond their individual reach due to its cost and complexity. In some of the communities, the groups have collectively obtained land certificates and then subdivided and assigned plots for individual use, though they may not have individual certificates.

Incremental tenure security. The groups' perceptions define the types of land based on the perceived tenure security they provide. Unregistered land is the most tenure insecure, followed by land certified in the name of a group or cooperative, land certified in the name of individuals, private land that has been inherited but not subdivided, and private land in the name of the individual or nuclear family which is perceived to be the most tenure secure.

Land ownership. On average, **64% of the landowners are men, 25% are women**, and the remaining **11% are owning jointly**. In migrant communities (75% of the groups included migrant heads of households), land is owned predominantly by men. Land ownership is more diverse in the non-migrant communities' groups. The average size for man-owned land is 3-4 hectares, while for women it is 1-2 hectares. Most of the landowners indicate that their land is fragmented into different plots.

Women and the youth have limited capacity to participate in decision-making over the land. They retain only secondary rights or work as labor for the family. On average 35% of women and 38% of men are estimated to migrate either seasonally or permanently, leaving the family household with limited capacity to put the family land to productive use.



Challenges & Success Factors

Timing of the tool. The average age of the Focus Group Discussion participants was high with only 24 participants below 28 years of age over a total of 240 participants. At the time of tool implementation, many youth were absent from the villages due to seasonal migration in search of jobs.

FGD composition. In the mixed groups, women were often less represented and less vocal than men.

Land tenure support. The one-day session on land tenure in Madagascar helped to build among facilitators a common understanding of basic tenure terminology and the legal and policy framework for land in Madagascar and of the tool's question, process, and objectives.

Team of field staff. A project team implemented the tool. The staff had previous knowledge of the area and the SLM technologies and challenges faced by communities. LLANDDEV's capacity, the clear demand, the ownership over the process, and the delivery of concrete programmatic outcomes contributed to the positive outcome.

Existing trust with communities. The tool was implemented in areas targeted by the two projects where the level of awareness of SLM and tenure is in general, higher, and there is mutual trust with project teams.

The level of understanding of SLM and tenure issues is in general higher because of the capacity built by the projects. The team observed buy-in and openness to discuss land issues. They considered that it would have been more difficult to discuss tenure issues had there been no previous relationship.

On average, 31% of households have water for irrigation. Access varies considerably between communities. In 6 communities 100% of the households have water for irrigation. In 18 communities, 14 of which are migrant, less than 10% of the households have access to this resource.

Land use. Under RVI, the destination of use of the land has shifted from pastures or agricultural land, to forestry. Under the Agricultural fuelled breaks project, most land was savannah or already destined to agriculture. Under both projects, thanks to the technology, the **land value has increased.** Farming tasks are distributed among men and women, but when it comes to livestock, large livestock is predominantly the responsibility of men, and small livestock is the responsibility of women and children.

Types of land. Respondents declare that their communities occupy three types of land: owned by the Government (66% of the land is registered in the occupant's name, 34% not registered), owned by the local council (85% registered in the occupant's name, 15% not registered), and privately owned by the nuclear or extended family (95% registered). The groups do not seem to differentiate much between the Certificate and the Title, overall considering that they provide similar levels of tenure security.

Tenure security. Almost 50% of the groups do not perceive a threat to their tenure security. Less than 5% of the groups differentiate between women landowners, whose land rights are at risk, and men who do not feel threatened. 20% of the groups feel moderately confident in their tenure security. The remaining 25% of the groups felt tenure insecure; of these 80% are from migrant communities.

Tenure governance. Regarding the level of confidence in the tenure governance system, almost 60% trust the system, and only 14% of the groups do not feel confident in its capacity to protect their land tenure rights.

Respondents rate their level of understanding of their land rights and responsibilities low to medium. There is a general agreement that women, the youth, and more generally secondary right holders have more limited opportunities to access and own land and to participate in tenure governance. There is a medium level of confidence in social protection mechanisms for tenure rights at the community level, which often becomes lower for women and the youth. The socio-economic protection is mainly rated as low, with few exceptions where given groups rate it as medium, especially for men.

Land disputes. The most common land disputes concern boundaries, encroachment and inheritance. Less frequently they concern access to water or land use. The conflicts are between communities or family members. The majority of the disputes are concentrated in specific areas within the communities, normally where the land is particularly fertile and or in proximity to water. Conflicts often emerge seasonally or when resources become scarcer. Some groups, especially those under RV, observe that land tenure conflicts have diminished with time.

Land dispute resolution. Extra-judiciary mechanisms are the most common means to resolve land disputes, with the family, customary, or community chiefs acting as mediators. These mechanisms are considered accessible to all and reasonably effective since they lead in most cases to mutual agreements among the parties. The groups' satisfaction with existing dispute resolution mechanisms increases in the RVI communities. Less than 10% of the groups indicate tribunals as a viable option to resolve disputes.

The groups recognize as limited the current governance system's capacity to protect all legitimate tenure rights, stating it does not enable SLM implementation.

Gender. Most groups agree that women have access to land and can enjoy tenure security, yet they recognize that women in general are not aware of their tenure rights.

Community tenure. Despite the fact that most groups declare that as a community they do not feel threatened in their tenure security, most of them are often faced with land disputes. Dispute resolution mechanisms are not considered effective when dealing with inter-community disputes or disputes with external actors.

Land Degradation and land tenure. The groups unanimously agree that land degradation is higher on unregistered land, that an investment is required to put in place SLM practices, and that, if given a choice, those among them who do not have a certificate, or a title would acquire them as a way to increase their tenure security.



Recommendations & way forward Madagascar

LLANDDEV implemented the module to integrate the WOCAT documentation of two SLM projects and to better understand and document the interaction between tenure security and SLM.

During the Tool, the teams discussed with each group the questions that helped profile the SLM and tenure interactions within the communities. The analysis of this data led to the formulation of the following recommendations for action.

Recommendations

Policy. Land tenure is intrinsically linked in Boeny to land use and management. Production, productivity, and secure access to productive land and water for irrigation are the prevalent concerns among the groups. The limited coordination between governance levels and technical institutions translates into limited profits for project beneficiaries, especially in the short term, and disincentivizes the SLM practices.

1. *Open a policy dialogue on how to improve coordination at the national and local levels among land tenure and SLM stakeholders, in order to ensure that land tenure becomes an enabler for SLM practices.*
2. *Investigate options for land readjustment and land consolidation to revert the land fragmentation trend and increase production and productivity.*
3. *Analyze and strengthen existing incremental options to secure tenure rights, such as the group certificates, to assess their suitability for scaling up.*
4. *Develop specific instruments to ease women and youth secure access to land, to ensure efficient use of land resources, and provide livelihood opportunities.*

Capacity, awareness, processes. The limited awareness of land rights and responsibilities, especially among women and the youth, and the cumbersome and expensive land registration processes are perceived as a bottleneck in securing tenure rights to increase production and productivity.

5. *Empower and capacitate local governments to provide incremental services to secure tenure rights as part of a local strategy to improve sustainability in land use and management.*
6. *Make tenure information more accessible to diminish the number and intensity of land disputes at the local level.*
7. *Develop an awareness campaign to raise women's and youth's awareness about land rights and responsibilities and options to secure land for agricultural production.*

Land Tenure for SLM Tool Lessons Learnt

Lessons learnt from the Madagascar Pilot can strengthen the WOCAT tool and help partners adopt it.

- ✓ The Tool has been evaluated as adequate, adaptable, and relevant to the Madagascar SLM Projects' context. The questions were pertinent and understandable, and the format was lengthy but in line with the WOCAT database tools.
- ✓ The tool captured well the two different technologies and helped identify the two projects beneficiaries' different tenure perceptions.
- ✓ Some of the responses to the questions about perceptions should be **simplified** by removing the medium option, leaving only low and high, to increase clarity and encourage debate in the group.
- ✓ The results describe the typologies of tenure issues associated to specific SLM practices in the Boeny region of Madagascar, help better understand **the tenure needs associated to specific SLM practices**, and identify programming options to address these needs.
- ✓ The respondents were often not able to come to an agreement on how to translate their previous answers to respond to Chapter 4 questions that link the findings to the Pathways. When the Tool is implemented at the community level it might be more appropriate to mobilize a land tenure technical expert to work with the implementing team using chapter 4 as **guidance after the field work to formulate the recommendations for the restitution**.
- ✓ While the Madagascar pilot does not alone provide enough evidence of a causal relationship between tenure security and specific SLM practices, it does **point to concrete programming options to secure tenure rights and better defines the research questions that future tools should address**.
- ✓ The Tool worked well in Madagascar because LLANDDEV used it to address some of the research questions it had already identified. **The clear demand, the ownership over the process, and the delivery of concrete programmatic outcomes contributed to the positive outcome.**

Testing the Tool, next steps

The Land Tenure for the SLM Tool's primary objective was to serve as an **add-on to the WOCAT Global SLM Database**. Its relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness in this context have been tested in Madagascar.

The second Tool objective was to serve as a **stand-alone tool to integrate land tenure in the practice project, programme, or policy decision-making**.

The future Pilot/s will test the Tool's effectiveness for situation assessment, planning, conflict management, and risk identification and mitigation in the project context. Verify if, as per the intended design, Chapter/s relevant to the assignment can be separated and used for programming outside the scope of the WOCAT documentation.

Specific objectives include tenure risk identification and mitigation, land conflicts mitigation, increased tenure security for increased sustainability of results, or taking stock of how land tenure is affecting the Project. The Tool in this context can be implemented at any stage of the Project or Programme, from inception and design to the final evaluation and exit strategy phases.

In the case of **policy processes**, the Tool can help take stock of the situation on the ground, explore the linkages between SLM and tenure in the specific context, and identify policy recommendations at the local level that can feed into the policy process.

Feedback from the Pilot on the above objectives will inform the final review and finalization of the Tool.

Interested in finding out more?

You can request a copy of the English or French draft of the WOCAT Land Tenure for SLM Tool by contacting the WOCAT Secretariat (wocat.cde@unibe.ch).

If you think the Tool could be useful to achieve your organization's objectives and want to engage with the pilots, you can contact the WOCAT Secretariat and discuss options for implementation.