



NEX RETROSPECTIVE

THEME - "FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: EXPLORING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS ON
LAND IN AFRICA"



June 7, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The latest edition of the NELGA Knowledge Exchange webinar series on responsible land investments in Africa was held virtually on June 7, 2023.

This edition aimed to promote knowledge exchange, enhance institutional capacity, and support the implementation of the African Union's land agenda.

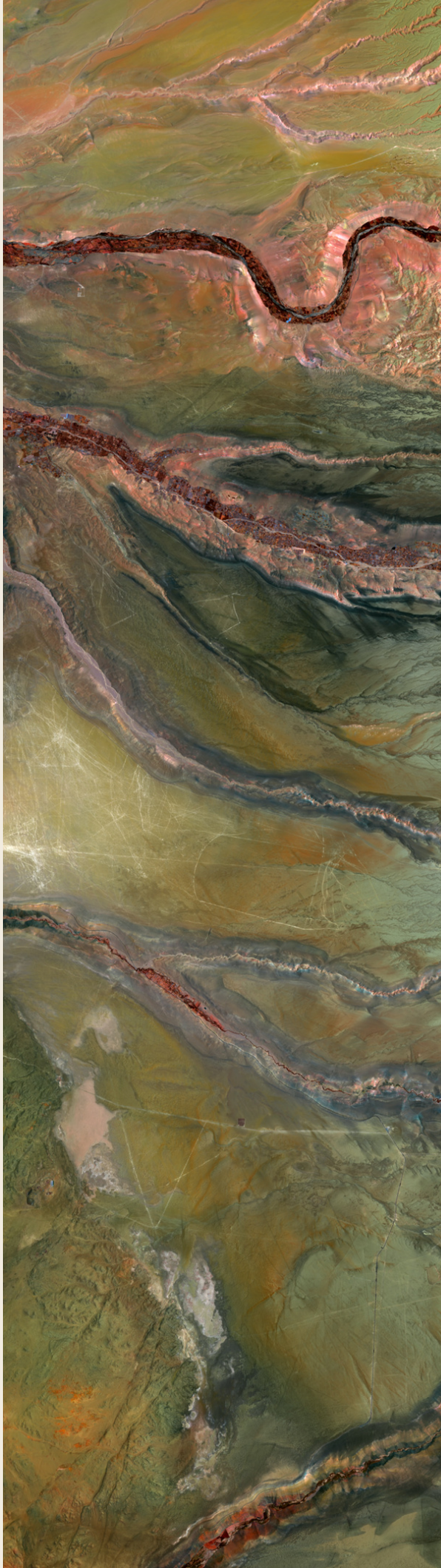
Land governance in Africa faces various challenges, including weak legal frameworks and insufficient institutional capacity. Responsible land investments are vital for sustainable development and require the active participation of all stakeholders.

The project component "Responsible Governance of Investments in Land," funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, aims to promote responsible investments in Ethiopia, Laos, and Uganda.

Focusing on compliance with land use regulations, advisory services for investors, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and protection of local land users' rights, the project works closely with government and civil society to: review policies & laws, increase awareness & compliance, and promote community participation.

The webinar discussed: the importance of responsible land investments in Africa and the challenges faced, strengthening capacities of government authorities, investors, and smallholder farmers and underscored the need for more stringent policy and regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible land investments.





PROGRAM

The NEX was moderated by Fred Opiyo, with presentations from Daniel Kirumira, Alex Muhumuza and Dr Zerfu Hailu.

The NEX commenced with an opening statement by Dr Arno Sckeyde, the head of the GIZ-implemented program "Strengthening Advisory Capacity for Land Governance in Africa." Dr Arno Sckeyde set the tone for the event, emphasizing the importance of responsible land investments and the need for collaborative efforts to address the existing challenges.



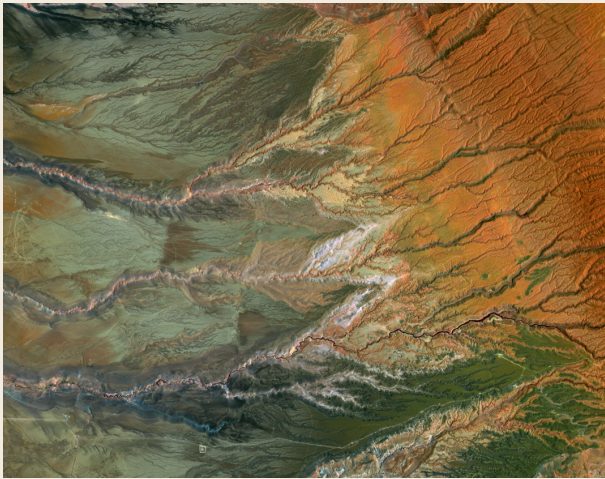
PRESENTATIONS

The webinar featured presentations from various experts in the field.

The first speaker, Mr. Daniel Kirumira, introduced the project component Responsible Governance of Investments in Land (RGIL). The project is funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and is implemented in Ethiopia, Laos, and Uganda. The project aims to ensure that private investments comply with land use regulations and involve advisory services. It also focuses on promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues, particularly with community members, and empowering local land users to understand their tenure rights and be satisfied with investments in land.

The webinar also featured a presentation by Alex Muhumuza, a consultant with NIRAS IP (a consultancy firm contracted by GIZ to develop capacity building knowledge materials for the RGIL component), who provided an overview of the RGIL project in Uganda. The project aligns with international guidelines on responsible investment and has developed capacity development materials based on these principles.

Community trainers were trained at the district and regional levels to ensure the effective implementation of responsible land investment practices. Multi-stakeholder dialogues and alternative dispute resolution committees were established, enabling continuous engagement between the government, investors, and local communities.



CONTINUED

Dr Zerfu Hailu, Country Coordinator, NIRAS project - Ethiopia, shared their experiences and findings. The Ethiopian government has a ten-year perspective plan to increase the area coverage of large-scale agriculture and agricultural production.

Implementation challenges such as conflicts between communities and investors, weak government support, and low productivity have emerged. Through capacity assessments and multi-stakeholder dialogues, the project aims to raise awareness and promote responsible investment in land. The engagement has resulted in increased stakeholder awareness, and further integration of the developed materials into academic institutions is recommended.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

During the webinar, participants engaged in a lively Q&A session, which highlighted key points and challenges related to responsible land investments in Africa.

The discussion emphasized the importance of engaging women and youth in investment projects, ensuring their rights and working conditions. While some investors have proactively addressed these issues, there is still room for improvement in promoting responsible investment practices across the board.

Participants also raised concerns about the adverse effects of investments on the environment, health, and local livelihoods. Land disputes and conflicts between smallholder farmers and investors were identified as critical challenges that need to be addressed through effective land governance mechanisms and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

OBSERVATIONS

- Women and youth not effectively engaged in investment projects in Africa.
- Investments in land can have adverse environmental impacts.
- Conflicts between smallholder farmers and investors are a critical challenge.
- Existing policy and regulatory frameworks are not stringent enough for sustainable development and community protection.
- Government authorities, investors, and smallholder farmers need capacity enhancement for responsible land investments.
- Developed capacity development materials and guidelines need integration into academic curricula.





RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Promote equal opportunities** and improve working conditions for women and youth.
- **Encourage sustainable practices** and minimize negative effects on ecosystems.
- Advocate for more **stringent policy and regulatory frameworks**.
- Focus on **promoting responsible land investment practices** and **raising awareness of tenure rights**.
- Integrate **responsible investment guidelines** into relevant academic curricula.
- **Establish platforms for knowledge exchange**, information sharing, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work together to enhance responsible land investments in Africa, leading to sustainable development, food security, and improved well-being for local communities.

CONCLUSION

The NEX webinar on responsible land investments in Africa provided valuable insights into the Responsible Governance of Investments in Land project and its implementation in Ethiopia, Laos, and Uganda. The project aims to ensure compliance with land use regulations, empower local land users, and promote multi-stakeholder dialogues. Responsible land investments are crucial for sustainable development, food security, and the well-being of local communities.

The webinar emphasized the need for collaboration among stakeholders, including governments, investors, civil society organizations, academic institutions and local communities, to address the challenges associated with land governance and promote responsible investment practices. The role of women and youth in investment projects, as well as the environmental and social impacts of investments, were key discussion points. The importance of aligning investments with national laws and international principles was highlighted.

Participants were encouraged to continue sharing knowledge and insights on land governance topics and to actively engage in promoting responsible land investments that benefit all stakeholders, particularly local populations, including women. Participants were also encouraged to integrate the different capacity development materials, guidelines on responsible investments into the relevant curricula in academic institutions. The NEX served as a platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building, contributing to the overall goal of promoting sustainable land governance in Africa.



FURTHER READING

[NEX Presentation-Introduction to RGIL](#)

[NEX Presentation -Accomplished
engagements and created impacts In
RGIL Ethiopia](#)

[NEX Presentation - NIRAS -UGANDA](#)

[RGIL NIRAS MSD23-Uganda Information
Sheet CD Materials](#)

[An Introductory Guide :To Responsible
Land-Based Investment for
Communities,Government And Investors](#)

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