



## NELGA GOOD PRACTICES:

Opinion pieces on land governance: **Experience sharing from NELGA Southern Africa**

The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) is a partnership of leading African universities and research institutions with proven leadership in education, training and research on land governance. Currently NELGA has more than **70 partner institutions** in over 40 countries and is organized in 6 regional and 1 technical nodes supported by a Secretariat.



## Background

The Namibian University of Science and Technology (NUST) through the Department of land and spatial sciences (DLSS) as a NELGA node has embarked upon an initiative to proactively contribute to national, regional and continental dialogues on land related issues. As part of the public outreach strategy for the DLSS and NELGA, staff members (and NELGA partners) undertake to write opinion pieces on Land Governance, which are published in the local newspaper, almost every month. The newspapers are: The Namibia, New Era, The Namibian Sun and Republikein. This initiative was started in 2017 to date. These opinion pieces also end up on the respective websites of these newspapers.

The main aim of these publications is to inform the public on various land governance related issues in different countries in Southern Africa (including Namibia). This is a platform for academics to diffuse their specialised knowledge on

land governance to the public, including policy makers. It is an opportunity to stimulate dialogue on topical issues. Furthermore, this exercise has the potential to enhance the visibility of the NUST, DLSS and NELGA since these opinion pieces are placed on the Newspapers, websites, and other social medial platforms (e.g. Facebook). This exercise will contribute to building capacity of the staff members of the DLSS/NUST (including other participating academic institutions) with regards to articulation of their knowledge from their respective areas of expertise and effectively diffuse such to the general public.

## Implementation

Implementation of this initiative began in **June 2017**.

A concept note was drafted to provide information on the objectives, methodology and to give guidance on the areas to be covered by the opinion pieces. The main focus is on land or land governance related topics. **The Department of Land and Property Sciences (DLSS)** at the time made a arrangement with some local newspapers to publish articles into their respective newspapers.

**NELGA partners at NUST** and beyond are encourage to regularly contribute opinion pieces. There is a system of quality control before submission to the newspapers.



## Results and lessons learnt

This activity resumed in **June 2017** and to date **61 Opinion pieces** have been published. **27 opinion pieces** were published between **2017 and 2020**. Another **34 Opinion pieces** have been published between **2020 to date**.

These opinion pieces have been contributed and published in various local newspapers by stakeholders from Namibia and majority of them from the **Department of Land Property Sciences (DLSS)** at the **Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)**.



In addition, these opinion pieces are **compiled into a booklet, every 4 years**. The first booklet containing **27 opinion pieces published between 2017-2020** is completed and available for dissemination. The second opinion piece booklet containing **34 (to date) opinion pieces published between 2021 and 2024** is still in progress.

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This initiative has received **encouraging reviews and feedback from stakeholders** and as such will continue.

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Opinions | 2020-05-08

ROYAL MABAKENG

THIS IS A reflective piece on how the government can improve the use of data to e pandemic.

## Why is this a good practice

- ✓ This approach allows **Academia to contribute to policy** as this pieces are widely read by government officials, politicians and the public at large
- ✓ It contributes to **public discourses** on land governance
- ✓ This initiative provides an **opportunity for especially young academics** to improve their writing skills





## Conclusions and recommendations

Although this initiative is a great success, there is still room for improvements.

At the moment majority of contributors are from Namibia, mainly from **NUST**. Efforts are being made to **ensure the participation of NELGA partners** from other countries in Southern Africa. This is not a major limiting factor, because some of these authors from **NUST** are nationals of other countries hence the current contributions are covering land governance issues at the national, regional, continental, and even beyond. However, a **wider participation is required** to promote ownership of the project.

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***The initiative contributes directly to contemporary public discourse on Land Governance.** – Tommy Bayers  
(Former Coordinator: NELGA Southern Africa)*

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