



African Union



African Development Bank

United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa

## LAND POLICY INITIATIVE

## Guidelines for the Development of Curricula on Land Governance in Africa

### Universities and other training institutions:

University organs responsible for oversight on the development, approval and implementation of curricula at the teaching level need to be sensitized.

### Information, dissemination and sensitization:

An elaborate information, dissemination and sensitization programme needs to be devised and implemented. Partner institutions with capacity to scale up the message about the guidelines need to be identified and involved.

The Guidelines for the Development of Curricula on Land Governance in Africa support the implementation of the AU Declaration on land issues and Challenges in Africa, in particular the call for Member States to, “Build adequate human, financial, technical capacities to support land policy development and implementation”. The guidelines are informed by key background documents prepared by the LPI, including: i) the Regional assessment reports on land policy in Africa which identified, among other things, the challenges in Africa’s land sector ii) The background document on capacity development in Africa prepared from an examination of key capacity gaps in the land sector; iii) Assessment report on industry needs and gaps in curricula for land governance in Africa. The assessments note that the Curricula on Land Governance in Africa is often “imported,” producing land professionals who are not equipped to respond to Africa’s realities and dimensions of land governance and administration. The Curricula also tends to be technical, lacking in the social/cultural, political, economic and environmental aspects crucial to land governance. Further challenges on capacity in Africa include limited focus on Land tenure, political economy of land,

autochthonous populations’ ties to land and cultural/traditional land governance. The assessment further notes that current research is often not responsive to Africa’s needs partly due to inadequate resources, limited analytical capacity and inadequate data and capacity. At the institutional level, the assessments allude to the fact that most universities and other institutions of higher learning in Africa have inadequate capacity and resources as well as a notable weak link to policy makers and policy processes.

The guidelines were developed by a core team of drafters and expert reviewers in a writeshop, followed by a series of external review sessions as well as individual review by academics, researchers and land professionals.

The Guidelines mainly target universities and other institutions of higher, learning and research. The ultimate beneficiaries include students, policy and decision makers, practitioners and actors in the land sector. The guidelines are also a useful basis for development partner support to institutions charged with training and research in Africa.



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## Evolution of Land Governance

**Guideline 1:** The curricula ought to take cognizance of the evolution of land governance, emergence of land tenure pluralism and how that relates to contemporary realities.

## Industry and Programmes

**Guideline 2:** For good results, curriculum review should be preceded by an assessment of the prevailing needs of the industry. The assessment should be undertaken as a collaborative effort between universities and industry. A clear research agenda on land governance ought to be developed in universities.

## Land Governance in Rural Areas

**Guideline 3:** Curriculum on land governance in the rural sector needs to ensure land professionals have deep understanding of the types of land tenure arrangements required to incentivize greater on-farm investments; how property rights affect vulnerable groups' ability to participate in and benefit from agricultural development projects; the type of complementary programming necessary to incentivize climate-smart agriculture practices; as well as linkages between secure property rights and agricultural production.

**Guideline 4:** Curricula on land governance ought to pay attention to the promotion and understanding of the legitimacy of marginalized groups and indigenous land rights in Africa, viewed through the prism of human rights, and how they relate to spirituality, cultural identity and food security.

**Guideline 5:** Research to generate data and options for viable investment models in order to

yield equitable outcomes needs to be integrated in land governance curricula. In addition, curricula ought to guide the training and skills development in the area of participatory land use planning and community development to ensure national food security and rural livelihoods as an integral part of responsible agricultural investments.

**Guideline 6:** It is essential that curricula on land governance ensures students and land professionals have an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of pastoralism and the prevailing ecology, including the implications of changes in land use on access to pasture and water and ultimately their livelihood.

## Urban and Peri-Urban Areas

**Guideline 7:** Curriculum should expose learners to programs that acquaint them with the realities of urban and peri-urban settings in Africa and therefore stimulate innovative solutions (tenure security for land and housing rights, and access to services such as water and electricity)

**Guideline 8:** It is important that curricula in land governance address the different ways of financing urban development in a sustainable manner. Learners ought to be given the skills which are needed by public officers and government officials in order to apply innovative approaches involving wide ranging stakeholders in urban development projects.

## Women's Land Rights

**Guideline 9:** Curricula on land governance in Africa should acknowledge women's contributions and ensure that all people, regardless of sex, benefit from, and are empowered by, development policies and practices

**Guideline 10:** Curricula should expand the set of options, approaches and potential solutions for strengthening women's rights to land by exploring promising practices related to women's land rights. These best practices should reflect the diversity of the African continent by including practices from specific traditional systems which are favourable to women.

## Environment, Climate Change and Land

**Guideline 11:** Curricula on land governance need to incorporate knowledge on environmental challenges that led to resource degradation or depletion due to poor land governance and actions for restoring the integrity of natural resources and environmental management that are supported by governance and sustainable use principles. In addition, curricula ought to improve the knowledge (administrative, legal, planning and management, and behavioral) of both traditional and formal entities charged with the management and governance of natural resources under various land tenure regimes.

**Guideline 12:** Curricula on land governance in Africa need to focus on climate change knowledge in relation to land management practices that support adaptation efforts in agriculture, agro-ecological conservation actions and on policies that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture systems.

**Guideline 13:** In order to serve industry better, land professionals need to understand the value add of mapping, demarcation and delimitation of lands that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change that flood, displace population and lead to loss of land for communities.

## Conflicts and Land Governance

**Guideline 14:** Curricula ought to prepare land professionals so that they are able to analyse the nature of conflicts in their areas of operation and be able to come up with a proper typology for land management

**Guideline 15:** Curricula on land governance ought to emphasize the effects of conflicts on communities; the social and economic wellbeing of the people and how it undermines development; and should extract lessons from best practices.

**Guideline 16:** Curricula ought to include learning about land policies that are inclusive and take into account the various interests over land that would contribute to the reduction of land based conflicts. This should go hand in hand with prioritization of investment in land management in national and sub-national development plans

**Guideline 17:** When land professionals are familiar with the various triggers of land based conflicts and how land disputes can be resolved, and in particular how alternative systems of land dispute resolution can be made part of the national conflict resolution regime, they are able to perform their duties more effectively.

## Land Tenure and Property Rights

**Guideline 18:** Positive urbanization occurs when people feel secure. It is necessary for land professionals to recognize and understand all forms of legitimate tenure arrangements, such as formal rights, customary tenure and informal tenure.

**Guideline 19:** Context based land administration approaches can be implemented for individual land tenure regularization, customary tenure registration and informal settlement land recording. Curricula on land governance ought to pay particular attention to the uniqueness of contexts and the importance of adopting appropriate land administration approaches

**Guideline 20:** The concept of the continuum of land rights supports a flexible way of looking at land tenure rights and it allows the recordation of all types of people-to-land relations. When learners appreciate this flexibility of land tenure rights they are better prepared to serve communities.

## Land Information Management Systems

**Guideline 21:** Curricula on land governance ought to include training on the development of affordable and accessible Land Information Management Systems (LIMS) responsive to Africa's unique circumstances.

## Research and Innovation

**Guideline 22:** Research and innovation on land aimed at improved understanding, problem solving and the promotion of responsible and effective land governance, should be recognized and incorporated in curricula.

**Guideline 23:** Governments, land training institutions and universities and Africa's development partners ought to prioritise and invest substantially in land research and innovation programmes.

**Guideline 24:** While research specialisation has an important place to achieve deeper understanding of particular focus areas, adopting a coordinated, multi-disciplinary

approach, within an agreed research and innovation agenda on land, would be vital for curricula that bolster effective and sustainable land governance.

**Guideline 25:** Learning institutions ought to embrace, build upon and intensify these approaches and through research and innovation, come up with new ones so that they are successfully implemented, at scale, in local contexts

**Guideline 26:** Priority funding will need to be directed to centres and universities and training institutions committed to land governance research. Africa's multilateral and bilateral partners are also encouraged to pay special attention to this capacity gap in their resource mobilization plans.

## Implementation of Curricula Reform in Institutions

**Institutional monitoring and evaluation:** Institutions will assess their curricula reform in order to establish a well-coordinated, harmonized system that provides timely and accurate strategic information to support the implementation of the *Guidelines for Curricula Development on Land Governance in Africa*. These activities will form a critical part of tracking the performance of the guidelines in pursuing the land governance agenda in Africa.

**Management of Change:** The curricula reform agenda will support the building human capacities for land policy development and implementation. Universities and other institutions of higher learning have the opportunity to become the primary agents of change which will be driven by Africa's unique context, contemporary issues and

technology for the sustainable development of the continent. The Guidelines and the new curricula will be taken through the required validation and/or approval processes at Member State level, be they statutory or administrative, within the respective Ministries and Universities.

**Partnerships and collaboration of industry:** The successful implementation of the guidelines calls for the goodwill and support of institutions charged with the training of land professionals and the development and implementation of land policies. While the training institutions will prepare curricula and use it to train students, it is the institutions charged with routine land governance in government, the private sector, civil society, traditional authorities and development partners that can provide feedback on the performance of the graduates once in industry.

## Recommendations for the Implementing Guidelines

**Management of Change:** The curricula reform agenda will support the building of human capacities for land policy development and implementation, making Universities and other institutions of higher learning key agents of change in the African land sector. The revised curricula will be taken through the required validation and/or approval processes at Member State level, within the respective Ministries and Universities.

**Partnerships and collaboration of industry:** The successful implementation of the guidelines requires partnership within the land governance industry. While the training institutions prepare curricula and

train students, the institutions charged with routine land governance in government, the private sector, civil society, traditional authorities and development partners can provide feedback on the performance of the graduates once in industry.

Monitoring and evaluation of curricula reform: Institutions need to assess their curricula reform in order to provide a basis for tracking the performance of the guidelines in pursuing the land governance agenda in Africa

## Way Forward

**Oversight and policy guidance:** African Union is requested to endorse the guidelines and to play a continuous oversight role on implementation

**Sensitization and lesson learning:** Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are called to use the regional platform to disseminate Guidelines and sensitize Member states

**Resourcing, sensitization, curricula development and application:** Member need to demonstrate political goodwill through providing financial resources to curricula development and implementation on land governance. Key stakeholders in the private sector, the civil society, traditional authorities and development partners need sensitization to support development of new curricula.

**Pilots for learning:** LPI/ALPC is called to work with the Network of Excellence in Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) to conduct pilots to test the guidelines on new and existing curricula