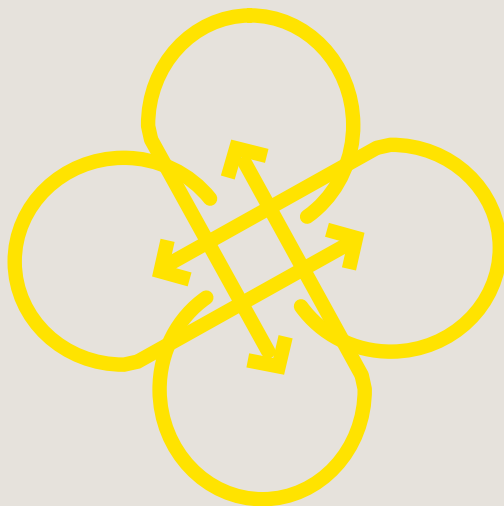


# FROM THE BOTTOM UP:

Creating an enabling environment  
for sustainable land management



A community-driven investment guide for the UN  
decade on Ecosystem Restoration

First Iteration



| **Global  
Soil Week**

**(TMG)**  
ThinkTankforSustainability  
Töpfer Müller Gaßner

# FROM THE BOTTOM UP:

## Creating an enabling environment for sustainable land management

A community-driven investment guide for the  
UN decade on Ecosystem Restoration

September 2019

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## Foreword

This guide presents investment strategies to create an enabling environment for sustainable land management (SLM) and ecosystem restoration. The investment strategies presented are based on the main outcomes of the Global Soil Week (GSW) 2019 which was held in Nairobi from 26 – 30 May under the title of “Creating an enabling environment for sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in Africa”. More than 200 participants analysed concrete work done in 15 African countries. The GSW 2019 was organised by TMG Research gGmbH in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). It was co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya, Benin, Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Ethiopia.

The strategies presented in this guide are the result of the collective deliberations in workshops and in the plenary of Global Soil Week where the conditions of success of projects have been analysed by the participants. Based on this in-depth analysis of a range of sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration initiatives from across the African continent, participants of the Global Soil Week jointly derived the investment strategies in plenary sessions.

The absence of an enabling environment often undermines the sustainability of investments in ecosystem restoration and sustainable land management. At the same time, this enabling environment is often not the focus of ecosystem restoration or SLM initiatives. This needs to change if global goals on healthy ecosystems are to be achieved, and if these achievements are to include those who are food insecure, vulnerable to climate change or marginalized within their respective societies.

Overall, the investment strategies show that it is possible to proactively create an enabling environment, even in the context of comparatively short-term, project-based interventions.

This guide is both a representation of the main findings of the Global Soil Week and starting point for a further collection of successful projects and initiatives to broaden the evidence base on how to create enabling environments at the local level. This guide is, hence, a first iteration of what we envision to be a continuous learning process.

Please share your insights and experiences in creating an enabling environment for sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration with us so that we can jointly build an expanding knowledge base. Visit us at [www.tmg-thinktank.com](http://www.tmg-thinktank.com) and join the call for evidence at [www.globalsoilweek.org/callforevidence](http://www.globalsoilweek.org/callforevidence).



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## Acronyms

CBOs – community-based organisations  
 CSOs – civil society organisations  
 GSW – Global Soil Week  
 ICRAF – World Agroforestry Centre  
 IPBES – Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services  
 IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
 NGOs – non-governmental organisations  
 PES - Payment for Ecosystem Services  
 SLM – Sustainable Land Management  
 UN – United Nations



# Background

**We are failing to protect the very ecosystems that sustain our existence, the impact is already felt by the most vulnerable and marginalized.** The Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assesses that land degradation is negatively affecting the well-being of more than 3 billion people. It is further estimated that, by 2050, 4 billion people will live in drylands greatly affected by an increased occurrence of extreme weather events, decreasing land productivity and reduced crop yields<sup>1</sup>. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its special report on climate change and land confirms these trends and stresses that the most severe effects will be felt in less developed regions of the world where the possibilities for mitigation and adaptation for vulnerable and marginalized people are limited.

**Getting Investments in Nature-based Solutions to climate change right.** While land related responses contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation can further increase the demand for land, there are responses that contribute positively to sustainable development, combating land degradation and enhancing food security while not increasing the demand for land further. Among these responses, inclusive investments in SLM with an ecological and socioeconomic focus can contribute to a reduction and/or prevention of land degradation, the maintenance of land productivity and in some places, even reverse the adverse impacts of climate change on land degradation.<sup>2</sup>

1 IPBES. (2018). The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration. Montanarella, L., Scholes, R., and Brainich, A. (eds.). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 744

2 IPCC. (2019). Climate Change and Land—Summary for Policymakers. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

**Impacts of Investments in SLM can be sustained and benefit marginalized smallholders if an enabling environment is in place.** Unsustainable land use practices are typically caused by a multitude of factors including disputes over land rights, poor access to markets and financial credits, insufficient investment in research and development, single sector-focused development plans, and weak governance institutions.<sup>3</sup> Making investments in SLM last and benefit the most marginalized requires enabling smallholders to sustainably manage land and natural resources. An enabling environment needs to address the abovementioned factors. Further, investments in SLM and ecosystem restoration needs to support responsible rural governance, so that the necessary services can be provided even after programme investments are fading out. This implies empowering vulnerable and marginal land users so that they can hold service providers accountable.

**Yet, there is a lack of attention on creating an enabling environment.** Despite the scientific recognition of the importance of investing in an enabling environment, such as secure land tenure, extension services, or social accountability, SLM programmes by and large do not respond to it. The necessary investments are often labelled as being too political or being beyond the mandate of SLM programmes. Furthermore, discussions on the enabling environment are often led in very abstract terms. By and large, the how to-question remains unanswered. This lack of attention to the enabling environment is one of the key reasons why there are so many challenges in achieving the sustainability of SLM investments.

3 IPBES. (2018). The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration. Montanarella, L., Scholes, R., and Brainich, A. (eds.). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. 744

**The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the focus on Nature-based Solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation are tremendous achievements; this investment guide aims to support their implementation.** Making the most of the window of opportunity offered by the renewed recognition of the importance of healthy ecosystems for sustainable global development, requires bridging the gap between these global processes and local level implementation. That is what this investment guide sets out to contribute to.



## Methodology:

A collective, bottom-up learning process on how to create an enabling environment for sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture at the Global Soil Week 2019

**The Global Soil Week 2019 addressed the challenge of “Creating an enabling environment for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture in Africa”.** The Global Soil Week attracted over 200 participants ranging from practitioners and project implementers, community-based and civil society organisations, farmers associations and other interest groups, researchers, local government representatives as well as technical experts in the fields of governance, finance mechanisms and extension services. Discussions were held from 26 – 30 May on the ICRAF Campus in Nairobi, Kenya.

**The Global Soil Week focused on local level initiatives to create an enabling environment.** There cannot be any doubt, the policy environment needs to be right to enable sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration. Global challenges have to be met by local solutions. It is a well-known fact that progressive policies often face implementation challenges at the local level. The Global Soil Week focused on those investments in creating an enabling environment at the local level. Its results should be read as being complementary to policy reforms or initiatives to strengthen policy implementation.

**A case-based, bottom-up learning process to collectively derive strategies to create an enabling environment.** Over the course of four days, participants of the GSW 2019 discussed and analysed thirty cases covering areas as diverse as securing land use rights for women, sustaining farmer to farmer extension, or providing financing models to smallholder farmers from fifteen African countries as well as India.<sup>4</sup> In a stepwise approach, differences and similarities between the cases were analysed and more generally applicable strategies for inclusive investments in SLM were formulated, presented, and peer reviewed. With a focus on community-driven processes as a core element of an enabling environment, the GSW 2019 concluded by discussing how these strategies can be supported by various actors including local and national governments, international development organisations and research institutes.

4 Annex 1 shows an overview of GSW cases



## Key investment strategies to create an enabling environment for sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration

**What do we mean by key investment strategies:** The strategies presented below are a selection of the strategies formulated at the GSW 2019. They build on the results of discussions during the GSW 2019 and a further review of existing approaches and studies. They do neither provide a complete list of strategies to create an enabling environment nor an exhaustive description of activities to successfully achieve the individual strategies. Rather, they provide possible entry points based on existing successful projects and approaches which could serve as guidance and inspiration for strengthening community-based approaches towards an enabling environment. They should be complemented by the experiences of additional initiatives and contribute to a growing body of knowledge on how to actually go about the creation of enabling environments. Ultimately, the question of how to achieve a strategy needs to be adapted to any specific local context.

**Strengthening responsible rural governance for impacts beyond projects.** Programme and project investments will continue to assume a pivotal role in achieving progress in sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration. Results of the GSW 2019 provide three general reference points for the creation of enabling environments: First, an enabling environment needs to rely on service providers that are largely independent from external financial support which requires the strengthening of relevant service providers during the lifetime of a project. Second, the enabling environment needs to be designed so that project investments in SLM can translate into benefits beyond the immediate target group.

Last but not least, the GSW 2019 has shown that community-driven processes are at the core of creating enabling environments and sustaining investments in SLM at the local level.

**Key investment strategies as entry points for creating an enabling environment.** Based on the analyses at the Global Soil Week, key strategies have been developed to provide concrete entry points for strengthening processes in support of an enabling environment, even where national or subnational policy implementation processes might lag behind:

Cases	Strategy N°						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Improving traditional systems of soil fertility (Togo)	●						
Projet Équateur (The Democratic Republic of Congo)			●	●			
Land-access for women through intra-household agreements (Burkina Faso)	●	●				●	●
Laikipia Permaculture Centre (Kenya)	●				●	●	
Recommunalization of tenure to secure pastoralist production, livelihoods and ecosystem integrity (Kenya)		●					
Community Land-lease guidelines (Kenya)	●						
Upscaling Evergreen Agriculture (Rwanda, Somalia, Ghana, Mali, Niger & Senegal)		●			●		
The Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project (Kenya)			●	●			
Chia Lagoon Watershed Management (Malawi)		●					●
Pooling of Municipal Resources - ADECOB (Benin)				●			
Human Rights-Based Community Empowerment - Action Aid (Kenya)				●			
Limbua Ltd. (Kenya)					●		●
Apis Agribusiness (Ethiopia)					●	●	
NABARD (India)					●		●
Improving ecosystem services in degraded dryland areas (Kenya)						●	●
Tem Sesiabun Gorado (Benin)						●	

Strategies	
1	Securing land access and use rights for marginalized land users, such as women or landless households, through locally developed tenure agreements.
2	Recognizing community level land tenure agreements and land use planning through endorsement by local authorities.
3	Investing in equitable benefit sharing of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) receipts for the inclusion of landless households who are often left out if benefits are linked to land ownership.
4	Achieving voluntary coordination of SLM/ extension service providers for better service provision and broader outreach.
5	Creating opportunities for value addition, economies of scale, and enhanced market access at the local level by setting up community production, processing, marketing and training facilities.
6	Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups in SLM interventions and strengthening post-project sustainability through improved targeting mechanisms.
7	Strengthening the role of civil society organisations and community-based organisations as process facilitators.

**Table 1:** The strategies within this investment guide are influenced by the evidence-based experiences of multiple case studies at GSW 2019. The table below visualizes from which cases each strategy has been developed. © TMG Research gGmbH 2019



## #1: Securing land access and use rights for marginalized land users, such as women or landless households, through locally developed tenure agreements

### ● The issue:

The link between land tenure security and investments in ecosystem restoration and sustainably managing land resources has long been recognized.<sup>5</sup> Sustaining investments in SLM remains difficult where secured ownership, access to or use of land is weak or lacking. For instance, SLM measures require investments that generally materialize in the medium- to long-term while there are high implementation costs at the outset. Farmers who fear losing their land through insecure tenure have little incentive to invest in such measures. Therefore, tenure security, secured access and use rights to land are central for land users to engage in SLM on a continuous basis.<sup>6</sup> SLM projects are often implemented in a context where smallholder farmers, women and other vulnerable and marginalized groups face insecure use rights or ownership of land. This provides neither the necessary incentives to employ SLM techniques, nor does it ensure that these groups benefit from SLM practices in the medium- to long term. For instance, women often face particular challenges within families when it comes to secure tenure rights. It has been observed that they are expelled from certain plots of land after having invested in soil fertility enhancing measures rendering them unable to reap the benefits of their investments.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance: Holden, S. and Ghebru, H. 2016. Links between Tenure Security and Food Security in Poor Agrarian Economies: Causal Linkages and Policy Implications. CLTS Working Papers 7/16, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Centre for Land Tenure Studies.; Kabubo-Mariara, J., Linderhof, V. and Kruseman, G. Does land tenure security matter for investment in soil and water conservation? Evidence from Kenya. AfJARE 4(2): 123-139.; Lovo, S. 2016. Tenure insecurity and investment in soil conservation. Evidence from Malawi. World Development, 78. pp. 219-229. ISSN 0305-750X

<sup>6</sup> Meinzen-Dick, R., Markelova, H. and Moore, K. 2010. The role of collective action and property rights in climate change strategies. CGIAR CAPRI Policy Brief No. 7. IFPRI: Washington.

Or in contexts of inaccessible formal land leasing procedures and unregulated, informal lease agreements, land lessees are unable to claim their rights in situations of e.g. crop theft, damage of crops without compensation, or conflicts over arbitrary changes of boundaries. Also, landowners may end up breaking contracts without due notice.

### ● Investment Opportunities:

Securing land access and use rights for marginalized land users does not always require national policy reforms. On the contrary, in many countries, national legal frameworks are rather progressive in safeguarding the rights of, e.g., women or indigenous communities. However, the enforcement and implementation of these frameworks at the local level is often weak. Locally developed and endorsed tenure agreements can be a viable solution to secure land access and use rights for vulnerable land users where appropriate national policies are lacking or not sufficiently implemented.

Examples of such locally developed agreements include:

- i. The **recognition of women's land use rights within the family/ household through Intra-family use rights transfer**. In comparison to the transfer of ownership rights, use rights transfer is often more acceptable by the male head of the household. It proves to be a more feasible strategy in attempts to distribute power in the household.
- ii. Securing landless farmers' access to land through lease agreements that are accessible and affordable based on **community developed land lease guidelines**. Developing the guidelines through a community-driven process creates ownership for the guidelines and supports later adoption and use.



### ● How to go about it:

When supporting locally developed tenure agreements that strengthen the use rights of vulnerable land users, the following activities and processes have proven to be instrumental for such agreements to be respected:

- i. Investing in and building on **locally recognized processes of consensus building** – this has proven to be an important procedural precondition for widespread support and acknowledgement of tenure agreements within families and the community as a whole.
- ii. Creating awareness and **holding consultations at the lowest administrative levels** to enhance acceptance and participation in the process – participation by local authorities in different steps of the agreement processes has been vital to ensure their subsequent formal recognition by local authorities (see also strategy #2).
- iii. **Engaging the community members directly in the actual drafting of agreements or guidelines** facilitated by a community-based organization building on agreed criteria for roles and responsibilities; empowering communities to jointly negotiate tenure agreements or guidelines including an important focus on rights awareness – a community-based organization as process facilitator was a critical factor for the success of such guidelines (see also strategy #7).
- iv. Increasingly **formalising agreements with community-validated processes** where other legal structures are missing or where official and accessible processes are lacking; the formalisation of tenure agreements needs to be ensured at some level to provide effective tenure security. Where formal legal avenues are inaccessible, a stepwise process of formalisation based on widespread community acceptance can equally provide tenure security.

v. **Involving traditional leaders throughout the process** (where relevant); respecting (and jointly altering where necessary) traditional methods of decision-making and land allocation – where traditional governance systems are in place these need to be respected, and jointly altered if necessary, to provide tenure security especially for women. To ensure that norms discriminating against women or other groups are overcome – where they exist – the presence of an external facilitator is pivotal.

vi. Awareness raising on **the economic benefits of women's secure access to land**; educating men and women on women's socio-economic rights to foster a common understanding of the importance of improving women's access to land has proven to be an important tool to strengthen women's access to land.

## #2: Recognizing community level land tenure agreements and land use planning through endorsement by local authorities

### ● The issue:

Local level authorities often lack the capacities to develop land use plans at the community level. Involving communities in land use planning processes is therefore not only advisable from a point of view of subsidiarity, it is often necessary to make land use plans come about at all. Once developed, it is key that local authorities recognise communally developed land tenure agreements and land use plans. Two reasons stand out: First, community level land tenure regulations and agreements require protection against external threats who often come from more powerful or resourceful actors. This requires a thorough understanding by all stakeholders of the nature of the agreements and access to grievance mechanisms if agreements are not respected. Second, statutory planning processes developed at municipal or higher levels should reinforce rather than contradict land tenure agreements and land use plans developed by the community.

### ● Investment Opportunities:

When municipal statutory planning authorities lack the capacity to develop land use plans at the community level, communities themselves can develop these land use plans. The endorsement of agreements is facilitated by an active engagement of local authorities from the beginning of the agreement/negotiation process. Engaging and holding continuous consultations at the lowest administrative levels to enhance acceptance and participation supports the recognition of such agreements by local authorities and ensures coherence with existing legal frameworks. Existing stakeholder platforms and other existing structures such as development and land use planning processes that bring relevant stakeholders together can provide the basis for a common understanding of the agreements by all parties involved. The use of these platforms and processes further facilitates the identification of relevant grievance mechanisms if agreements are violated. n soil fertility enhancing measures rendering them unable to reap the benefits of their investments.

### ● How to go about it:

Acknowledging the differences and complexities of individual countries' legal frameworks and administrative procedures, the following provides some examples of how the recognition of community-developed tenure agreements by local authorities can be supported:

- i. Working with civil society organisations as process facilitators that assist in blending community norms with requirements of gender equality and the inclusion of marginal groups within the community (see also strategy #7).
- ii. Ensuring active participation by local officials throughout the process by giving them key roles in meetings, e.g. mayor chairs important meetings, documentation of land tenure arrangements at municipal office.

iii. Integrating communal land tenure agreements, use and management rights into local development and land use planning processes – land classification and land use registration as part of such planning processes is an important tool to recognize community level tenure agreements and can provide the basis for tenure rights holders to protect their rights against competing claims.

iv. Supporting the **formulation of communally agreed by-laws** and their legal backing at e.g. municipal or district level to ensure bylaws align with national frameworks and are respected throughout the community; such bylaws can both promote SLM measures (e.g. the amount of space to leave between crops and stream or agreements on use of vegetative cover to protect soil) but also support a recognition of local tenure agreements, especially where customary tenure is prevailing.

**#3: Investing in equitable benefit sharing of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) receipts for the inclusion of landless households who are often left out if benefits are linked to land ownership**

### ● The issue:

Land ownership or other forms of secure tenure is often a requirement to receive PES benefits generated from SLM practices or other sustainable agriculture and/or natural resource management measures. Landlessness may therefore exclude people from accessing benefits from PES schemes, even if they are engaged in SLM practices. With existing land rights providing the basis for engaging individuals into PES, not only landless households but also households or communities with informal land tenure arrangements may be excluded from receiving benefits of PES schemes. Furthermore, because conservation outcomes are hard to measure, cost effectiveness is often a measure that is being used to evaluate the performance of PES, with the result that there is a tendency towards targeting large-scale landowners rather than smallholder farmers as the transaction costs

to engage poorer or smallholder farmers are too high. However, it is widely acknowledged that not considering dimensions of equity can have negative implications on the goal of maintaining ecosystems. The key question is how to create incentives for the participation of landless households in SLM activities.

### ● Investment Opportunities:

Benefits generated from PES schemes can be distributed to individuals or communities, or a combination of both. Investing in benefits that serve the entire community can be a tool to reduce conflicts from excluding non-participants and further support restoration objectives. This is particularly important where non-participants to PES have lost their access to resources. Basing the distribution of benefits on community level requires informed communities and trusted local governance systems at the local level. Hence, investments to strengthen community institutions should be an integral part of any PES scheme.

### ● How to go about it:

With the success of community-wide PES investments schemes largely depending on well-functioning community institutions, some specific examples of ensuring a more equitable distribution of PES benefits that include landless households are:

7 See e.g. Pagiola, S.; Arcenas, A.; Platais. (2004). Can Payments for Environmental Services Help Reduce Poverty? An Exploration of the Issues and Evidence to Date from Latin America. *World Development* 33(2). Pp. 237 -253; Porras, I. (2010). Fair and green? Social impacts of payments for environmental services in Costa Rica. International Institute for Environment and Development.

8 See e.g. Pascual, U., Phelps, J.; Germendia, E.; Brown, K.; Corbera, E.; Martin, A.; Gomez-Baggethun, E.; Muradian, R. (2014). Social Equity Matters in Payments for Ecosystem Services. *BioSciences*. 64 (11); Calvet-Mir, L., Corbera, E., Martin, A., Fisher, J., Gross-Camp, A. (2015). Payment for ecosystem services in the tropics: a closer look at effectiveness and equity. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*. 14. Pp. 150 – 162.

9 Dougill, A.J., Stringer, L.C., Leventon, J., Riddell, M., Rueff, H., Spracklen, D., Butt, E. (2012). Lessons from community-based payment for ecosystem services schemes: from forests to rangeland. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society Britain*. 367. 3178 – 3190.

- i. Using PES receipts for **investments in community infrastructure**, e.g. equal access to water, construction of schools, inclusive extension services.
- ii. Including landless households in benefit schemes by **Investing in Income generating activities**, such as beekeeping, poultry farming.
- iii. Support **land access for landless farmers** to enable them to receive carbon benefits, e.g. through intra-household tenure arrangements or by supporting lease arrangements between landowners and landless farmers eligible for PES benefits (see also strategy #1).
- iv. Working with **community representatives who are elected by different interest groups** to ensure broad representation of interests within the community in the identification of investment priorities.
- v. Working with **existing structures** and investing specifically in **organisational capacities of community-based organisations** (see also strategy #7).

## #4: Achieving voluntary coordination of SLM/extension service providers for better service provision and broader outreach

### ● The issue:

At the sub-national level (e.g. villages, catchment areas, communities) there are a multitude of actors that provide services for SLM. These include different governmental agencies (formerly the main actors for the provision of extension services), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), producer and other farmer organizations, private sector actors including input suppliers, purchasers of agricultural products, training organizations, development cooperation agencies, and religious groups.<sup>10</sup>

10 Neuchâtel Group. (1999). Common framework on agricultural extension. Paris: Bureau des Politiques Agricoles et de la Sécurité Alimentaire.

All of the above have their own objectives, interests, scope of influence and restrictions. While many of these actors are present in the same areas, interventions and activities are often conducted in silos, with little or scattered coordination among relevant institutions and organizations. At the same time, an effective coordination body with oversight of the entirety of SLM services and providing informed decisions in terms of intervention areas, topics and actual needs is often absent. As a result, conflicting advice, inefficient use of resources as well as the consolidation of dependencies on external (aid) funding mechanisms and assistance is often the reality experienced by local communities.

#### ● Investment Opportunities:

There is a need to provide space in which knowledge is pooled and coordination amongst sectors and different levels of governance can be realized. Local level authorities remain the domain in which the collaboration between different service providers should be coordinated. At the same time, local level authorities need to be strengthened to be able to assume this role.

#### ● How to go about it:

The need for better coordination and the use of multi-stakeholder platforms risk putting further capacity constraints on local governments. But there are ways to minimise the additional burden created by the need for coordination. Among the specific opportunities to strengthen coordination of SLM service providers while minimising additional burdens are:

- i. Strengthen/build on **locally established cooperation models** that do not always need to be highly formalized and bring together all SLM service providers (public and private).
- ii. Support the **development of guidelines to outline coordination between stakeholders and government** or amongst stakeholders themselves. While the latter is important to ensure harmonized SLM approaches at the local level, local government should assume oversight functions.

iii. **Embed public extension services in local development plans and local budgets** to include the allocation of resources for oversight and coordination functions.

iv. **Local government pooling of resources among municipalities** for better service provision which can be supported by the strengthening of municipal associations and/or municipal councils with the mandate to fulfil coordination functions .

v. Base project interventions on a **needs assessment carried out together with local authorities and other service providers** in a given area to ensure better coordination

### #5: Creating opportunities for value addition, economies of scale, and enhanced market access at the local level by setting up community production, processing, marketing and training facilities

#### ● The issue:

Smallholder farmers often face challenges in producing consistent and sufficient volumes to gain access to certain markets. This is due to a number of reasons: They often lack the negotiation power to secure favourable agreements. Limited access to training facilities can pose obstacles to e.g. effective coordination in efforts and production choices. In addition, smallholders often have limited opportunities to engage in value adding activities beyond primary production which leaves them highly vulnerable to fluctuating primary commodity prices.

## ● Investment Opportunities:

Economies of scale are often associated with large-scale agriculture and processing. However, the notion of economies of scale is not intrinsic to the size of a farm, but rather to a transition from informal and personalized to institutionalized forms of organisation. Institutionalized processes decrease transaction costs by reducing uncertainties and supporting technology adoption.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, smallholder farmers can develop economies of scale through models for collective action. Collective action allows small-scale farmers to combine their products and gain access to larger markets that require the provision of consistent and larger volume of products. These economies of scale can take various forms such as cooperatives and business models that develop economies of scale for smallholder farmers to integrate in value-added chains. Creating economies of scale at the local level and developing value-addition activities for natural resources near harvesting sites is possible and particularly important for commodities where processing needs to take place near harvesting sites.<sup>12</sup>

## ● How to go about it:

Some entry point for strengthening activities and approaches in support of opportunities for value addition and creating economies of scale at the local level include:

- i. Support the **organisational capacities of local cooperatives** – for smallholder farmers to make use of the advantages of cooperatives, investments in organisational capacities are crucial for them to truly benefit from concerted efforts.

11 Collier, Paul, and Stefan Dercon. 2014. 'African Agriculture in 50 Years: Smallholders in a Rapidly Changing World?' World Development 63: 92–101.

12 Morris, Mike, Raphael Kaplinsky, and David Kaplan. 2012. "One Thing Leads to Another"-Commodities, Linkages and Industrial Development'. Resources Policy 37: 408–16.

- ii. Providing **local and direct access to inputs, storage, and processing facilities** to reduce transportation and transaction costs for marginalized producers. This can, for instance, take the form of decentralizing and locating processing facilities in rural village centres or organising transport of products from individual farms thereby removing the burden of transport costs from farmers.
- iii. Support **collective processing and marketing facilities** by e.g. strengthening farmer organisations and farmer associations as umbrella organisations, providing trainings (e.g. governance, financial management) and pooling of resources to invest in processing, storage and transportation.
- iv. Support **locally managed training facilities**, e.g. one example showed women groups who were so successful in their sourcing and selling activities based on permaculture practices that they could invest in a multi-functional training centre as a joint effort.
- v. Training in **technical and management expertise** in processing and marketing of products to strengthen local expertise and organisational capacities.

## #6: Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups in SLM interventions and strengthening post-project sustainability through improved targeting mechanisms

### ● The issue:

SLM practices have been promoted by development initiatives and organizations since decades. However, the continuation of introduced measures often slows down as soon as the provision of inputs (equipment, seeds and seedlings) from the respective project comes to a halt. Also, there is often no extended dissemination and continuation of successfully tested practices beyond farmers targeted directly by projects.<sup>13</sup>

13 Rauch, T; Kersting, D. (2016). Making service systems work for food security and sustainable land management. Strategic recommendations for targeting smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and India. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Studies on the reasons for low uptake among smallholder farmers reveal that a lack of access to the services necessary for successful adoption (consulting, financing, inputs, outlet markets) are a major obstacle to the dissemination and sustained application of such practices. This applies particularly to the most vulnerable and food insecure farmers, including women-headed households, who are often not reached by extension services.

#### ● Investment Opportunities:

Improved targeting mechanisms of SLM interventions need to put stronger focus on vulnerable and food insecure households, with a particular focus on female-headed households. Targeting mechanisms need to go beyond already better-off model farmers both in terms of facilitating access to services for food insecure farmers as well as promoting a broader uptake and continuation of measures after project activities come to a halt. Appropriate methods of equitably reaching women, men and other stakeholder groups differ from place to place and social norms particular to an area should guide the provision of extension services.

#### ● How to go about it:

Concrete measures to improve targeting mechanisms and more equitably address women in the provision of extension services include:

- i. Targeting **vulnerable households, including women-headed households, as model farmers** provides the opportunity to design delivery services according to the needs of vulnerable households rather than already better-off farmers with different needs and possibilities.
- ii. Purposefully **Including women and young people during community consultations** that would normally be dominated by men; this requires consultation processes designed to the needs of different stakeholder groups in specific contexts, e.g. different composition of participants at different times, consideration of time and venue of meetings, etc.

iii. Supporting the **formalisation and functioning of women farmer groups** to facilitate their access to extension services.

iv. Supporting **locally accessible and managed training facilities**, including those run by women groups, to ensure broader and continuous access to training, especially for vulnerable households and women.

### #7: Strengthening the role of civil society organisations and community-based organisations as process facilitators

#### ● The issue:

Marginalized or vulnerable individuals and communities often lack the necessary access to information and capacities to e.g. effectively organise themselves, facilitate agreement processes or successfully claim their legitimate rights. Local governments are often overburdened in fulfilling the demands of their various mandates and consequently fall short of facilitating inclusive processes where needed. Both of the above has significant impacts on the inclusiveness of investments in SLM as well as post-project sustainability of investments. It is important to keep in mind that civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) are not necessarily legitimized through democratic processes and, hence, often cannot fulfil a representative function. Yet, they often play an important role in creating democratic spaces and providing technical and legal assistance to communities and local governments. In addition, both CSOs and CBOs are often present in intervention before and after any given project and are trusted by the communities. They can significantly contribute to make investments reach vulnerable and marginalized members of communities as well as ensuring that activities continue after projects come to a halt.

## ● Investment Opportunities:

The analysed cases have shown that CSOs and CBOs can play a key role in various processes supporting inclusive SLM investments if they support the interests of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Strengthening their role as facilitators and mediators in such processes is an important element of an enabling environment. These processes include negotiations and agreements on access and use of land within communities but also in exchange with local and national authorities; support in facilitating decision-making within communities; providing sensibilization training or conduct lobby and advocacy work on the community, local and national level. The cases further provided examples of the vital role of CSOs and CBOs in strengthening collaboration between local governments, grassroots organizations and the community; facilitating access to SLM services for marginalized groups; developing statutes and bylaws to qualify communities as legal entities or promote SLM measures; and ensuring that local legal recognition processes are linked to sub-national and national policy processes.

## ● How to go about it:

When working with CSOs and CBOs it is important to understand whose interests they represent and whether their outreach includes the most vulnerable and food insecure households. Strengthening the role of CSOs in processes of facilitating the adoption of SLM measures through inclusive investments and ensuring that measures are being sustained has proven to be effective when the following criteria are fulfilled:

- i. Involving CSOs and CBOs in project design from the start and offering **opportunities for partnerships through formal cooperation agreements**.
- ii. Working with **CSOs who have strong ties in the community/region**, who speak the local language and who continue to be present in the area after project completion.

- iii. Working with **CSOs who are trusted among community members** due to long-term presence in the intervention area; this underlines the importance of investing in trust-building activities.
- iv. Working with CSOs and CBOs who have **long-standing experience in SLM and land governance issues specific to the intervention area** thanks to their long-term presence in the area.
- v. Supporting **CSOs who provide rights awareness trainings to citizens** so that they know their legitimate rights and avenues to protect them.
- vi. Supporting rights and leadership trainings to **build bargaining and collective action skills amongst women farmers** in order for them to effectively organize and engage in politically mandated participatory processes.
- vii. Supporting **Inclusive and participatory platforms** that give CSOs and CBOs a forum for sharing their expertise and experiences with other actors (from the public and private sector), e.g. including CSOs and CBOs in regular coordination meetings with existing local governance structures, such as village development and natural resource management committees.
- ix. Supporting **legal frameworks that recognize and ensure institutional participation mechanisms** of CSOs and CBOs.





Our invitation to you: we welcome your experiences to jointly broaden the evidence base

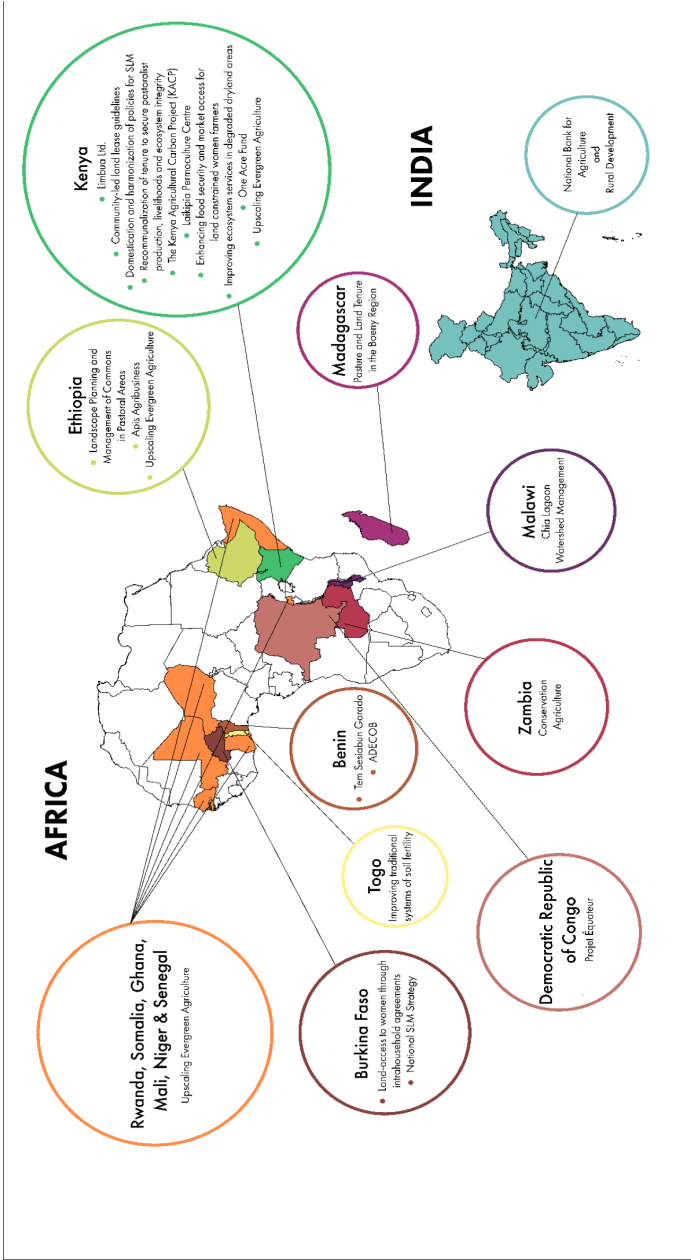
This community-driven investment guide is the starting point for a broader collection of evidence of community-driven processes for SLM and ecosystem restoration. It provides a number of key investment strategies to create an enabling environment for SLM and ecosystem restoration. It also provides examples of how to go about achieving those strategies that are derived from the analysis of thirty cases from different African countries as well as India. Communities around the world hold so much more knowledge and we are eager to reflect this knowledge in the next iteration of this guide. If you are interested to join, please get in touch ([info@tmg-thinktank.com](mailto:info@tmg-thinktank.com)).

We very much look forward to hearing from you!



GSW 2019 & Beyond:  
Call for evidence

Annex 1: Map of GSW 2019 cases



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