



Concept Note

Monitoring Land Governance and Land Tenure Security in the Arab Region

Expert Group Meeting

14-15 July, 2021

I. Background

Being based on the outcomes of the two trainings conducted earlier on the "Monitoring Land Governance and Tenure Security", the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) is another part of the Agreement of Cooperation (AoC) between Rasheed (Transparency International-Jordan) (hereinafter referred to as Rasheed TI-JO) and UN-Habitat/GLTN aiming to implement different areas of work of the overall program on "Good Land Governance in Support to Inclusive Development, Peace and Stability" funded by BMZ and implemented by the Global Land Tool Network / UN-Habitat.

Access to, ownership and control over land is key for sustainable livelihoods, peace and protection of the planet. Agenda 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) affirms the importance of tenure security in fighting poverty and food insecurity, promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, reducing land degradation and achieving peace and stability. Being involved in the transformation process, the Arab region, however, is facing some obstacles and challenges, particularly within the scope of

land governance and tenure security. Moreover, there is a lack of quality information and data around land within the region, which subsequently leads to issues in regards to transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making around land. Either positive or negative changes that can be attributed to land tenure and governance processes can only be measured through monitoring and influence assessment of key outcomes based on data evidence. Monitoring of land tenure and governance issues is key for planning and policy decisions at local, national, regional and global level.

Given their multifaceted meanings, land and its related concepts have been a challenging issue for policymakers, which addresses a significant need in comprehensive monitoring system for land governance and tenure security that are clearly understood and practiced.

The Arab region needs a consolidated efforts and information on land governance, which would include information coming from different expert stakeholders, whether local authorities, private sector, civil society organizations, non-profit sector, etc., therefore, contributing to a comprehensive picture on the status quo of land governance both on local and region levels, and defining its trends and issues as well as forecasts and strategies for the development. Such information is necessary for evidence-based policy making in the field of land governance and tenure security, while availability of such data is also an important precondition for better transparency and accountability in the land sector.

The EGM will take the advantage of global best practices, dynamics and initiatives regarding land governance monitoring, in addition to the developed capacities and skills of the participants and outcomes of two trainings.

By bring together a broad panel of experts this EGM is aiming to initiate the development of the conceptual framework designed to conceptualize, develop, build, and apply a functional and analytical frameworks for formulating land governance in the region and particular countries. By supporting data democratization in terms of broadening the scope of stakeholders able to provide quality data and information in regards to the land-related SDG indicators, it also aims to benchmark land governance and identify areas that require further attention and monitor progress in addition to developing recommendations for the improvement of the land sector and jointly developing a strategy for implementation an action plan for land monitoring in the region.

II. Objectives of the EGM

Based on the mutual exchange of experiences, knowledge, expert opinions and provided trainings on the tools and initiatives for land monitoring within the training sessions, the EGM focuses on the following objectives:

1. Based on the marked key challenges of the different countries, explore solutions for the region to overcome these challenges in view of a broad based implementation of land monitoring in the Arab region, including existing effective global and regional initiatives and practices that can be adopted or integrated;
2. Identify common land-related indicators in the represented states;

3. Create the opportunity to look at the broader context of land monitoring and land data generation initiatives that exist globally and are being implemented to a certain extent in the Arab region (e.g. GLII, MELA, PRIndex, LANDex, etc.);

4. Provide the opportunities for states to understand the challenges, complexities and options for monitoring land governance, report on SDG indicators, develop their own broader monitoring frameworks building on the work done through different initiatives, and ensure that a solid monitoring structure is put in place for effective decision-making;

5. Set the tone for development of the unified package of tools and approaches for land monitoring in the region and strategies that are adaptable to each state in order to ensure the future sustainability of the project;

6. Based on the developed capacities, discuss the creation of possible opportunities to deliver this experience to both local and national levels within the states in the MENA region initiating first steps in conceptualizing the monitoring exercise in these countries.

III. Outcomes of the EGM

The expected outcomes of the meeting are the following:

1. Developed strategy for implementation and an action plan for land monitoring in the Arab region, including strategies for awareness creation, development of national indicators for effective monitoring and data collection, dissemination and policy engagement, etc. as well as roles of different actors, etc.;

2. Draft land data collection plans for countries at the end of the event, for participants to further discuss and develop them once back home in collaboration with other relevant national and international partners;

3. Defined steps for raising awareness on the importance of land governance and monitoring it; information sharing, generation of land data, and leveraging data for more transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decisions about land;

4. Defined core land monitoring indicators and identification of complementary regional and national indicators;

5. Identified particular roles of different groups of stakeholders in enhancing the implementation of monitoring of land governance and data creation on national level, and defined first practical steps for the stakeholders to follow;

6. Consolidated priorities and approaches for the way forward towards the improved land governance and tenure security.

IV. Focus Areas

In preparation for the discussions, participants will be provided with some guiding questions to consider:

1. What are the possible solutions that could be applied to the identified key challenges in MENA region/sub-regions based on the outcomes of the trainings?

2. How to mitigate the complexities for monitoring land governance and ensure that a solid monitoring structure is put in place for effective decision-making?
3. How the existing effective global and regional land monitoring and land data generation initiatives and practices can be adopted or integrated?
4. How to effectively report on SDG indicators?
5. What should be included to the strategy for implementation and an action plan for land monitoring in the Arab region?
6. What are the possible opportunities to deliver this experience to both local and national levels within the states in the MENA region?
7. What the land data collection plans for participated countries could be in order to further discuss and develop them once back home in collaboration with other relevant national and international partners?
8. How could transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decisions about land be ensured?
9. What are the approaches for data collection and alignment of tools that could be effectively coordinated in the particular state?

V. Methodology and Content

Pre-EGM

In preparation for the EGM, Rasheed TI-JO and ILC have jointly conducted pre-EGM meetings with the participants, who will attend the EGM, in order to be prepared for countries and sub-regions to have different priorities and thus collection plans, and to decide on some common, core indicators/tools that can unify the region, and gather the feedback and suggestions from the participants in regards to the priorities of their countries when it comes to monitoring land governance. It will allow the experts to come up with clearer positions for some blocks of the information for the EGM i.e. to develop stronger concepts and materials with more consensus and sustainability resulting in the development of the unified strategy for enhancing the implementation of the land monitoring that is adaptable both nationally and regionally. These meetings allowed contributing to the regional standardization of the mentioned strategy, which will be deployed at the EGM, and its best fit for aligning it at national level within different states in the region.

It should be also mentioned that these pre-EGM discussion meetings allowed experts to identify and clarify the needs of particular countries and sub-regions, and understand which data is available and which is not as well as what the sources of such data are.

In order to ensure the best working environment, the participants were divided into the following groups:

- Group 1 – Jordan, Egypt, Palestine
- Group 2 – Sudan, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Iraq
- Group 3 – Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon

- Group 4 – UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman

These meetings were scheduled to be held over the following dates:

- 17.05 (Mon) 10-12 Italy time (Jordan, Egypt, Palestine)
- 19.05 (Wed) 10-12 Italy time (Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Iraq)
- 20.05 (Thu) 11-13 Italy time (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon)
- 24.05 (Mon) 10-12 Italy time (UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman)

After all sessions of the pre-EGM meetings are conducted, the participants are to be requested to fill in an Excel sheet questionnaire that will help to gather their reflections and feedback on the land indicators, availability of particular data in their countries whether it is official or not, determine the focus areas. In addition, they are also to receive the guiding questions to consider before coming to EGM, in order to be able to do their own research if needed, and be able to engage in the discussions during the EGM more actively and effectively. This will also enable them to prepare themselves to the EGM to initiate the start of monitoring exercising.

EGM

The EGM is being planned to take place on July 14-15, 2021 in Jordan in hybrid form combining both in-person and online participation (unless the pandemic situation will not allow to hold the event physically – it will be held fully virtually). The event will be moderated, with guiding presentations on key topics and panel discussions over the course of the agenda.

All participants will be able to communicate and work together, however, they will be technically divided according to the predefined criteria in 3-4 smaller groups (the same as for the pre-EGM meetings) to facilitate their closer collaboration, especially when developing the recommendations and defining steps for future strategy, ensuring their interaction, sharing expertise and experience, and tackling issues from different angles and perspectives

The participants will be asked to provide Rasheed (TI-JO) with document summarizing the information and main points regarding the strategy that covers 1) leveraging data for more transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decisions about land; 2) awareness creation, development of national indicators for effective monitoring and data collection, dissemination and policy engagement; and 3) data collection and alignment of tools. The guidelines for structuring will be provided in advance, and each group will have a lead partner, who will be responsible for submitting group`s summing-up paper.

The event will be conducted in an interactive way in order to combat the one-directional way of knowledge transfer that comes in lecture-style, and to empower conversations and group interaction to allow participants to learn from each other. The event will strongly support the expansion of attendees focus areas, sharing their inputs and comments as well as suggestions and recommendations.

The final event agenda will be developed and shared separately before the EGM in advance.

VI. Participants

The meeting will be organized gathering national land departments and statistical offices as well as key stakeholders and attendees of the previous training events, namely CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, development agencies, academia, professional individuals, consultants, and researchers working on good land governance and tenure security within Arab states.

It aims to bring together around 25 key actors from the Arab states in order to ensure an ideal working environment with respect to the organization's/person's priorities, but also to ensure a balance between genders, geographical regions, different types of experiences, cultural backgrounds as well as between representatives of organizations, institutions and individuals.

VII. Materials

Before the event:

- All the necessary information and guidelines for the event will be shared with participants in advance by email.

After the event:

- All materials shared with/by participants during the event will be uploaded on Google Drive that will serve as a knowledge hub for the covered issues.

- Participants will be kindly requested to submit summarized group documents summing up the discussions and highlighting concrete strategy and action plan for implementation of land monitoring in the Arab region.

- Participants will be kindly requested to fill a small survey in order to receive their feedback on the meeting.

VIII. Working languages

English will be the working language of the event. However, English-Arabic and Arabic-English simultaneous translation will be provided to ensure that participants can use the language that is most comfortable for them to communicate.