



Land and natural resources in Swaziland

Land tenure is broadly of two types, Swazi National Lands (SNL) and Title Deed Land (TDL), which account for 54 and 46 per cent of land area respectively. Tenure over SNL is not defined by legislation, the land is being controlled and held in trust by the King and allocated by tribal chiefs according to traditional arrangements. There is a structural divide between large-scale TDL and small scale SNL with its predominantly smallholder agriculture. Sixty-one per cent of SNL farm holdings are less than one hectare in size. Most farms are thus very small. The rapid population increase is, in turn, exerting pressure on land availability for cropping and grazing, forcing households to produce crops on increasingly fragile lands. The Land Policy drafted in 1999 intends to address a number of issues, i.e. improving gender equity in land allocation and protection of property rights; the use of SNL as collateral for loans, and the introduction of an efficient, effective and comprehensive system of land administration, rangeland management issues. Unfortunately the policy was never formally endorsed and land tenure and land reform remains one of the most controversial national policy issues.

Mapping of land and natural resources

Remote sensing and (GIS) have been crucial in the planning and management of Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project (LUSIP). The data gathered are used primarily to inform farmers on how to make the best use of the newly irrigated land. Geographically referenced data of the area are used to produce maps pinpointing the households that need special attention; those with very low incomes or situated on land with especially poor crop yields. They also use the maps to outline current land-ownership patterns and to plot community facilities, such as schools and clinics. The mapping information helps LUSIP staff to give advice to the traditional land authorities when planning future land use. The data can help them designate grazing and rangeland areas, resettle people onto irrigable land, and develop guidelines for water supply, roads and electricity. As the project has progressed, the team have been updating the maps and GIS data to keep track of their activities. They now note the exact locations of households on land receiving irrigated water and which have already benefitted from the project's services, including training and crop advice. Knowing exactly which farmers are participating in the scheme, and who has already been contacted, means managers can monitor progress, plan future activities and avoid duplication or wasting resources by visiting homes not directly affected by the project.

Land and water allocation in irrigation schemes

LUSIP has been dealing with a number of complex land and water rights issues, including the resettlement of people affected by infrastructure development, displacement of other people from grazing land, how to conduct land use planning exercises and how to guarantee secure tenure, for members and other local residents. In the absence of a new policy and legal framework, the Project has developed practical options for securing equitable access and tenure security within the existing policy and legal framework. Procedures have been developed by the project for land sharing between



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those whose land is being irrigated and those without access to irrigated land. Initially it was proposed that the project would do this across chieftaincies but this was found to be unworkable. The focus is now on local arrangements. Land rights by customary owners whose land is being irrigated are relinquished through the chief and allocated to water user groups, of which the previous owners are members. This process is being documented through an “enhanced” Chief’s Letter of Consent.

Group involvement in land and natural resource management use and planning

LUSIP is using the instrument of Chiefdom Development Planning (CDP) as a framework for sustainable rural development and for achieving its broad objective of reducing poverty within the PDA through the commercialisation and intensification of agriculture. A committee oversees a Participatory Community Resource Assessment and facilitates the development of Local Economic Development Strategies (with key strategic focus areas and objectives). The CDP is therefore a tool for community planning. Its fundamental underlying principles are: empowerment, self-reliance, responsiveness, partnership, accountability, transparency, equal participation, inclusiveness, responsibility, equity, efficiency, consensus building and representation.

Inclusive business model

Farmers’ Companies (FCs) are being formed to integrate those community members which want to participate in sugar production through the irrigation scheme. Creating ‘community’ companies is a new and challenging approach in the face of customary norms for many of the community members. This presents a range of challenges to the implementation of the LUSIP, which affect how quickly and thoroughly the tools for inclusive business development are taken up and accepted. People express the fact that there are compromises involved, even to the ‘core values of the community’, and for some members the company formation process touches upon very sensitive issues. The Project’s response in the face of these challenges has been to consciously encourage and provide space/time for the groups to honestly and openly address the difficulties arising.

Conclusions and next steps

LUSIP offers a great opportunity for learning, especially with regards to the allocation of land and water rights in irrigation schemes and the setting up of inclusive businesses. The challenges LUSIP is facing with issues of land sharing in irrigation schemes are an ideal opportunity to start a process towards a Burdens and Benefits analysis. Similarly, approaches and tools for addressing issues related to the recognition and enforcement of CDP land use plans, in particular grazing management and livestock development plans, need to be strengthened. Furthermore, links with the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) will be facilitated. Finally, there is an opportunity to apply the “gender criteria” tool that the GLTN has developed to the work being done in LUSIP I and LUSIP GEF.



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Land and Natural Resources Learning Initiative for East and Southern Africa

IFAD and UN-Habitat, through the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), have entered into a partnership to implement the ‘Land and Natural Resources Learning Initiative for Eastern and Southern Africa (TSLI-ESA)’. The initiative aims to improve knowledge management strategies and approaches towards pro-poor and gender-sensitive land and natural resource tenure rights in selected East and Southern African countries.

TSLI-ESA focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on the following five themes:

- i. Using technically advanced geographic information technologies, such as aerial photography, remote sensing technology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping land and natural resource rights, use and management.
- ii. Recognising and documenting small-scale farmers’ land and water rights in irrigation schemes.
- iii. Recognising and documenting group rights, focusing on range and grazing lands, forests and artisanal fishing areas.
- iv. Strengthening women’s access to land.
- v. Documenting best practices in securing land and natural resource rights through business partnerships between small-scale farmers and investors.