

Strengthening accountability for land governance

More than a decade after the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), legitimate land rights are widely acknowledged as essential for sustainable development and just transitions. Yet, without structured and outcome-oriented accountability frameworks, implementation remains uneven, fragmented, and largely self-reported. In many contexts, progress is measured in terms of strategies adopted, consultations conducted, or gender references included, rather than tangible improvements in tenure security, recognition of customary rights, or protection against dispossession. This pattern creates a persistent gap between normative commitments and lived realities on the ground.



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Land rights and human rights are intrinsically linked:

Secured access to land is a precondition for the realization of the right to food, housing, water, and self-determination.

The realization of human rights—including the right to information, participation, remedy, equity, and non-discrimination—serves as a safeguard that enables people in vulnerable situations to secure access to land.



Strengthening accountability therefore requires a clearer human rights lens. Secure land tenure is closely linked to internationally recognized rights, including the rights to food, housing, livelihood, participation, and non-discrimination. When land-based climate, biodiversity, or restoration measures restrict access to land without safeguards, meaningful participation, or effective grievance mechanisms, the issue is not only one of policy quality but of rights protection.



Through its **Rights4Land** work, TMG contributes to operationalizing accountability by tracking national implementation of the VGGT and identifying gaps between policy commitments and practice. This includes comprehensive national and local assessments in countries such as Malawi and Sierra Leone, where TMG analysed how land tenure commitments are reflected in legislation, land administration systems, and implementation processes. In addition, TMG has linked this accountability work to land-use planning processes in Ethiopia and supported the development of practical capacity-building manuals to strengthen institutional implementation and safeguard legitimate land rights in practice.

This is complemented by locally embedded accountability tools such as the Haki Ardhi Land Rights Reporting Tool, which enables community-based documentation of land rights violations and strengthens access to justice. Together, these approaches connect community-level evidence with national and international reporting processes, reinforcing the principle that land governance reforms must be assessed against concrete outcomes, including tenure security and the realization of human rights.

Learn more here:

[Human Rights4Land Rights4Land Monitoring Tool Manual](#)
[Rights4Land Summary Report Sierra Leone](#)

Get in touch

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