LAND-at-scale Exchange 2025

Land governance as a basis for sustainable development

Summary report

June 13-19 2025
Bogotá, Colombia



LAND-at-scale is a land governance support programme that aims to directly strengthen essential land governance components for men, women, and youth that have the potential to contribute to structural, just, sustainable and inclusive change at scale in lower- and middle-income countries, regions or landscapes.

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1. Introduction

The fourth LAND-at-scale (LAS) Exchange took place from June 13th to June 19th in Colombia. The first three days were hosted by LAS partners Conexión Colombia, Kadaster International, and Tropenbos Colombia in Santa Marta. Nearly 50 LAS project partners and knowledge partners came together to exchange lessons learnt and explore common challenges. This in-depth learning experience of the LAND-at-scale partners was followed by the Global Land Forum (GLF) organised by the International Land Coalition (ILC), which took place the following days in Bogotá. The exchange was closed with an afternoon to reflect on all learnings and connections between the LAS Exchange and the GLF.

As of 2025, eleven country projects are being implemented under the LAS programme, namely Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Mozambique, the Palestinian Territories, Somalia, Rwanda and Uganda; with Mali having been concluded. All active countries were represented at the Exchange. Learning is an integral part of the LAND-at-scale programme. Exchanging among project partners is not only meant to learn and gather inspiration, but also serves as a way of fostering solidarity among project implementers in the challenges they face to secure land rights for men, women and youth in their respective contexts. For this reason, the LAS programme organises annual in-person exchanges, followed up by quarterly virtual exchanges among the project implementers. Last year, the discussions were centred around 'Partnerships for Sustainable Change', specifically focusing on government-CSO collaborations. This year, the LAS partners jointly reflected on '**Land governance as a basis for broader sustainable development**', specifically an integrated approach of tenure security, environmental protection, and sustainable economic development.

This LAS Exchange was organized in Colombia and allowed project implementers to visit a LAS project site. After the field visit, the LAS partners joined the Global Land Forum, a tri-annual international gathering of over 300 land rights organisations, grassroots groups, Indigenous Peoples organisations, UN organisations, research institutes, government representatives, and development partners. During the GLF, the exchanges of LAS partners were therefore broadened with a wider group of representatives from CSOs, NGOs, research institutions, donors, and government representatives.



Figure 1. Global Land Forum following LAS Exchange.

The objectives of this fourth LAS Exchange were to:

- Foster the LAND-at-scale community;
- Update all partners on the progress of LAS interventions and results;
- Share between project partners on results so far and exchanging on (common) challenges and/or lessons learnt;
- Facilitate interactive and in-depth learning among project partners on key themes for adaptive programming and strengthening interventions;
- Visit a LAS project site to learn more about land governance interventions in Colombia and become inspired.

This LAS Exchange report summarizes key take-aways and actions from the discussions during the LAS Exchange and the Global Land Forum.

2. Exchange programme

Date	Programme		Location
Thursday 12th June	*Whole day*	Partners arrive in Bogotá before 12pm (midnight) – Stay in Hotel Habitel	Hotel Habitel, Bogotá
Friday 13th June	6.00	Pick up	Hotel Habitel, Bogotá
	8.45-10.20	Flight Bogotá to Santa Marta	Bogotá – Santa Marta
	10.30-11.15	Arrival Santa Marta airport and transfer to hotel	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	11.15-12.00	Hotel Check-in and freshen up	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	12.00-13.30	Lunch & introduction to understanding land governance in Colombia and the LAS project in Colombia	Meeting room, 1st Floor, Best Western Hotel
	13.45	Departure from Hotel to the Indigenous House/ Preparation for the IGAC experience	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	14.00-15:30	Visit to the Indigenous House. Presentation of the community; Land governance by the Arhuaco people (technical processes, software, photos, videos).	Casa Indigena Sta. Marta
	15:30-16.15	Introduction to Cadastral Update by the cadastral authorities IGAC Directorate; Experiences in working with ethnic cadastre and working with communities; Intercultural School Workshop.	Casa Indigena Sta. Marta
	16:30	Departure to Best Western Hotel Santa Marta	Casa Indigena Sta. Marta
	16.45-17:00	Coffee/ tea	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	17:00-18:30	Elaborating initial learning questions: • What are the obstacles and challenges to land titling in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta? • How important is alignment with government strategies and plans in achieving effective land governance in a country? Examples from your projects? • How do you think land tenure formalization contributes to its ecological function? What is missing? What complementary actions could support this? • Which elements resonate with your own experiences related to land governance and conservation?	Meeting room, Best Western Hotel

	19.00-21.30	Hosts for Peace Dinner (dinner experience)	Downtown Santa Marta
Saturday 14th June	6.00-6.45	Breakfast at the hotel	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	7.00	Departure to Katanzama – Visit to the LAS project	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	9.00-9.30	Walk to the Katanzama community	Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
	9.30-9.45	Traditional welcome	Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta - Katanzama Community
	9.45-10.00	Welcome from the Mamos and sharing of the project achievements	Katanzama Community
	10.00-10.15	Traditional dance by the Arhuaco	Katanzama Community
	10.15-10.30	Reflection on the Mamos: lessons and teachings	Katanzama Community
	10.30-14.00	Rotation of three Arhuaco-organized land governance experiences focused on the Colombian fit-for-purpose land administration approach: • Surveyors & land administration • Traditional knowledge & land use • Sustainable production & land	Katanzama Community
	14.00-15.00	Lunch at Katanzama	Katanzama Community
	15.00-15.30	Tour of the Katanzama community	Katanzama Community
	15.30-16.00	Closing and reflections of LAS Colombia with the Arhuacos	Katanzama Community
	16.00	Departure to Santa Marta	Katanzama Community
	19.00-19.30	Arrival at the hotel and refreshing	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	19.30-20.30	Dinner at the hotel	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
Sunday 15th June	8.00-9.00	Check-out and breakfast at the hotel	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	9.00-11.00	LAND-at-scale project updates: what are you bringing to Colombia?	Meeting room, Best Western Hotel

		• What has been your key learning over the past year from your own project? • How did you apply adaptive programming this last year? What did you adapt in your approach and why? • What is your focus for the coming year?	
	11:00-11:30	What are you bringing home from Colombia?	Meeting room, Best Western Hotel
	11.30-12.30	Lunch at the hotel	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	12:30-14:00	Free time; optional visit to the main museum of Santa Marta	Downtown Santa Marta
	14:00	Departure to Santa Marta airport	Best Western Hotel Santa Marta
	17:00-18:30	Flight Santa Marta to Bogotá	Santa Marta airport
	19:00	Airport transfer Bogotá airport terminal to Hotel Tequendama	Bogotá airport
	19:30-21:30	Dinner at Hotel Tequendama	Hotel Tequendama
Detailed programme Global Land Forum is available online: https://www.globallandforum.org/colombia-programme/			
Monday 16th June	8:30-18.00	Global Land Forum: Colombia and Latin America & The Caribbean Day	Auditorium Léon de Greiff, Universidad Nacional de Colombia
Tuesday 17th June	8.45-18.00	GLF - Working & panel sessions	Tequendama Hotel
Wednesday 18th June	8.45-18.30	GLF - Working & panel sessions	Tequendama Hotel
Thursday 19th June	8.45-12.00	Working sessions and Closing GLF	Tequendama Hotel
	13.00-17.00	Plenary LAND-at-scale session reflecting on GLF and follow-up	Tequendama Hotel
Friday 20th June	Whole day	Kadaster International & ITC Twente workshop / Visit to IGAC office AND / OR Bilateral meetings - optional please discuss with RVO project advisor (LAS) or others	Tequendama Hotel

3. Opening & Welcome to Colombia – Day 1

3.1 Opening

The first day of the Exchange started with traveling from Bogotá to Santa Marta. Santa Marta is located at the northern coast of Colombia, in the Sierra Nevada. This is one of the three locations where the LAND-at-scale project in Colombia is implemented.

On arrival in Santa Marta, the Exchange was officially opened by RVO, welcoming the LAS community to Colombia. After a quick (re-) introduction of all the participants, the microphone was handed over to the Colombian LAS partners; ICCO Conexión, Kadaster International, and Tropenbos Colombia.



Figure 2. LAS partner (Tropenbos Colombia) welcomes partners to Colombia & introduces the LAS project in Colombia incl. the three locations & results.

3.2 Land governance in Colombia & LAND-at-scale in Colombia

Jointly the Colombian partners kicked off by explaining the **context of land governance in Colombia**. Only a small part of Colombia has formal land papers. It is also a country where land distribution is highly unequal, meaning that a small group of people owns a very big amount of land. This unequal distribution is also reflected in gender, where women are disproportionally affected by unequal land distribution and men own more land and/or have more access to land. Additionally, the country is experiencing the impacts of climate change. Deforestation in the country is accelerating this, accompanied by significant biodiversity loss. Land degradation and erosion are common, where agriculture encroaches on forest land, and directly contributes to emissions. These are all important factors to keep in mind when speaking about land in the Colombian (rural) context.

The **system of land administration** is complex in Colombia, as shared by Kadaster International and presented in Figure 3 below, with key roles for several institutions including the Instituto Geográfico Agustin Codazzi (IGAC), the Agencia Nacional de Tierras (ANT) and the Superintendencia de Notariado y Registro (SNR). **ANT** serves as the main entity responsible for recognising and assigning land rights. Its mandate includes the allocation and formalization of rural properties—both public (baldíos) and private—under its jurisdiction. The ANT is also empowered to carry out judicial expropriation and to declare the judicial extinction of ownership over land that is not being productively used, in accordance with Law 160 of 1994, as well as over properties linked to criminal activities. **IGAC**, on the other hand, is in charge of managing the national cadastre. IGAC holds information on all types of properties—formal, informal, and public lands (*baldíos*)—throughout the country. This cadastral data is essential for land formalization processes, as it allows authorities to identify properties occupied without legal title.

However, there is currently no clear or efficient **institutional mechanism** to ensure the automatic exchange of information between IGAC and the ANT. While IGAC conducts cadastral surveys of informal properties, this data is not always shared in a timely manner with the ANT, which hinders the adjudication process. When the ANT receives information about an informal property, it initiates a technical and legal process to assess the eligibility for formalization. This includes evaluating the occupants, their connection to the land, and verifying a documented history of at

least 20 years of peaceful and continuous occupation. The ANT may conduct its own cadastral survey, but it must be validated by IGAC to ensure consistency and accuracy. In practice, due to the lack of coordination, both ANT and IGAC sometimes perform duplicate field surveys, leading to inefficiencies and confusing of citizens. Once the formalization or adjudication process is completed, property titles must be registered with the Office of Public Instruments Registry (ORIP), under the supervision of the Superintendency of Notary and Registry (**SNR**), which grants full legal recognition of ownership.

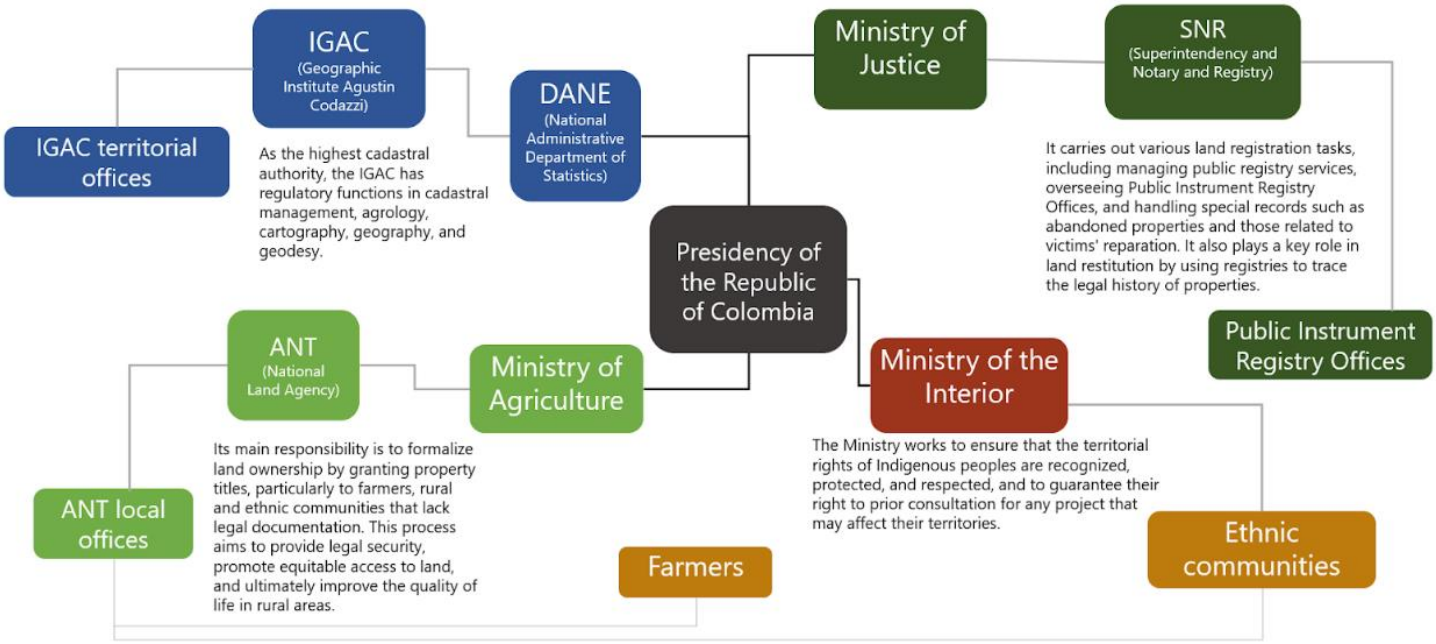


Figure 3. Land administration in Colombia - system and actors

The partners continued to zoom in on the LAS project. The project officially started at the end of 2020, with first pilots starting in 2021. The project worked in three pilot regions: Nuqui, Solano, and Sierra Nevada. All three sites worked on the integration of tenure security through the **Fit-for-Purpose (FfP) methodology** for land administration, environmental protection and governance i.e. through satellite imaging, and sustainable development and economic empowerment with products such as oil palm and coffee. These components reflect the specialized knowledge of the three partners. Overall, the project aims to **support land administration processes of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities,** in a fair, efficient, and effective manner, with an emphasis to improve the local economies.

The presentation highlighted the **results**, the challenges, and developments since they started the project five years ago. Overall, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are highly interested in this approach because it aligns closely with their traditional ways of engaging with climate and land. Key results per pilot site were shared, each with a local focus based on the needs of the participants:



Figure 4. Mapping of La Teofila, Solano

- **La Teófila, Solano** (Story map): In Teófila, the Makaguaje and Koreguaje indigenous peoples had reached agreements to work hand in hand with the National Land Agency (ANT) to correct the position of the polygon of their reservation, its expansion and the creation of a new reservation for the Makaguaje people, these agreements were reached in the first quarter of 2025. Communities were trained on how to map the land themselves, which was essential to achieve this result. Also, through production committees and better processes to extract and market the oil, and with the local palm management plan and restoration actions, the community has promoted the preservation of its natural resources.
- **Gunmaku, Aracataca, Sierra Nevada** (Story map): In Gunmaku, the community has gained knowledge to make autonomous measurements of their properties and manage the data in GIS, in particular of properties for the expansion of the reserve. This also includes technical information about endemic plants, enabling the community to make informed decisions for restoration efforts and to enhance their botanical garden. Additionally, the organization and quality improvement in coffee production have empowered the community to independently market 14 tons of specialty coffee.
- **Nuquí, Chocó**: In Nuquí, the Afro community has begun their training in measurement, particularly engaging youth. In addition, the community explores opportunities for own models of economic empowerment, focused on gastronomy and tourism. The territory is making progress in gathering information on the relationship between land tenure and the local economy. Environmental governance is strengthened by the ethno-development plan and by developing organizational and communications skills to facilitate its management.

Much work has also been done related to knowledge management, both by **Colombian and Dutch universities and knowledge institutes**, through for example studies or thesis, adopting FfP into the school curricula, as well as lobby and advocacy.

The session ended by engaging all LAS partners using an interactive quiz. Questions such as " How to say LAND-at-scale in Spanish? In how many regions does the "LAS Colombia project works", and "What has been one of the project results in Colombia?" were aiming to activate the group and summarise some of the main elements of the introductory presentation.

3.3 Casa Indigena

After the introduction, we took a short bus ride to the Casa Indigena, the Indigenous House, in Santa Marta. The presentation of the representatives of the indigenous community included a discussion of land governance by the Arhuaco people, including the technical processes, software, photos and videos. The Cabildo Arhuaco, the council of the Arhuaco and essentially the governance body of the indigenous group, shared their life and land philosophy with the group.



Figure 5. Casa Indigena presentation by Cabildo Arhuaco

The Arhuaco people explained that they were created to protect the land, and the land them. This symbiotic relationship between themselves and nature including the waves, the constellations and the mountains, means **there is an inherent responsibility to not surpass the boundaries of the system**. By taking care of the trees and the snow, they are taking care of their own bodies. How to take care of the territory and how to live well, is knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation, in particular by the *Mamos*, the spiritual leaders. These elders pass down local and spiritual knowledge and laws, and recognise that their knowledge is often perceived as less valuable to the outside world compared to that of the scientist or university graduate. This is why they called for cooperation with scientists. Additionally, participants learned how land recovery for the Arhuaco involves both legal processes and spiritual responsibility. One Arhuaco representative emphasised: "The recovery of territory implies a responsibility in the invisible world. That is what allows us to live in harmony with nature."

Take away #1: LAND-at-scale will continue to value indigenous and local knowledge as an addition and strengthening of scientific knowledge, holding mutual importance.

The story and background to the Arhuaco and land governance is well illustrated in a video they shared with the group. To watch the video created by the Arhuaco follow: Video Archuaco Sierra Nevada.

3.4 Instituto Geográfico Agustin Codazzi (IGAC)

The presentation by the Cabildo was followed by a presentation of the cadastral agency IGAC. IGAC shared their way of working with many different land stakeholders, including the Cabildo. They have been actively working with the communities to develop an ethnic cadastre. Additionally, **Intercultural School Workshops** are a central part of the work. The idea of these schools is to teach communities about land in its broadest sense, including how to map the territories themselves, but it is also meant as a place for IGAC to learn from the communities. A place for two-way learning, but also to include multiple groups in one space, including indigenous groups, but also peasants who live in and around the indigenous territories. Therefore, it becomes a space of intercultural learning.

Lesson learnt: Intercultural schools are space in which exchange and learning is stimulated among communities and with the government entity in which all participants are both students and teachers.

3.5 Learning questions

Upon return to the meeting room, the group reflected in smaller groups on four learning questions formulated by the Colombian partners;

1. What are the **obstacles and challenges to land titling** in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta?
2. How important is **alignment with government strategies** and plans in achieving effective land governance in a country? Examples from your projects?
3. How do you think land tenure formalization contributes to its **ecological function**? What is missing? What complementary actions could support this?
4. Which elements resonate with **your own experiences** related to land governance and conservation?

In response to the first question '*obstacles and challenges to land titling*', participants noted several challenges including:

- Topography of the area such as mountains which inhibits the ability to carry out surveying, delimitation and demarcation;
- The presence of conflict with a diversity of origins such as post-war or illegal activities and thus need for dispute resolution;
- Informal land tenure in particular of peasants and the lack of recognition of peasant rights;
- Competing land uses and mismanagement of land, specifically mining;
- The friction and need for integration between scientific methods of knowledge and traditional knowledge from the Mamo;
- Generational differences and the question of how youth will be valuing land in future;
- Overlapping laws, regulations and legal frameworks.

Other projects reflected on their own context, where each have some overlap in the challenges, in particular the generational differences, historical conflicts, and mismanagement of land.

Lesson learnt: Obstacles and challenges to land titling in Colombia include topography, (historic) conflict, informal land tenure, lack of recognition of peasant rights, competing land uses, different value given to knowledge forms, and overlapping legal frameworks.

Action point #1: Land and conflict is a main theme for many of the LAS projects. A LAND-at-scale webinar series will be organised this year focused on land conflict and displacement.

In response to the second question on '*alignment with government strategies'*, the importance of knowing government logic and plans was highlighted. Even if a government does not have an explicit plan, it will have a preference or direction. Additionally, the importance of taking advantage in moments of political will was highlighted, for instance a conference such as the GLF or COP30 can be a strategic moment to increase awareness for effective land governance. One response highlighted that "it is important if you want it to be sustainable, but full alignment is too ambitious". In the Ugandan case, their intervention had to be realigned with priorities of development partners and other land programming. Burundi experiences difficulty in aligning government strategies on land because they are supposed to be around 'equality', but the reality is different. Furthermore, alignment should ideally be a two-way process, communities and international cooperation should align to government, and the government should also align with what is happening on the ground.

Lesson learnt: Government alignment is challenging but essential for the sustainability of the work. Making use of moments of political will and keeping in mind the direction of the government, even in the absence of an explicit plan, can be useful entry points. Alignment should be understood as a two-way process.

In response to the third question related to '*tenure formalization and the relation to its ecological function'*, participants reflected on the concept of accountability. On the one hand, tenure formalization has the ability to contribute to many positive factors in relation to ecological sustainability of the land, for instance;

- Improve accountability and governance in a territory including stewardship;
- Act as an incentive for sustainable land use i.e. due to reduced encroachment of deforestation or halt land degradation;
- Act as a gateway to an inclusive approach, for example towards women and indigenous peoples;
- Support law implementation and enforcement;

- Facilitate access to climate finance.

However, conditions for this were also identified, such as the recognition of the stewardship and right to the land. Without this, formalization is ineffective and cannot achieve these goals. Additionally, critical notes included whether land formalization might also create ecological *dys*function. It has been proven that land markers can create more harm than good, it creates inequalities within the communities, and can lead to the commodification of forests. Participants reflected that the LAS project in Colombia illustrates both points; the conservation on the one hand, and the economic side on the other. Thus, having such a dual focus from this start, the risk of dysfunction can be limited.

Lesson learnt: Tenure formalization has the potential to positively contribute to ecological sustainability in cases where stewardship and right to the land are recognised. However, it should not be an assumption formalization always contributes to ecological sustainability, it can also lead to ecological dysfunction if mismanaged.

Action point #2: A LAND-at-scale Knowledge Café will be organised this year around the link between land formalization and ecological protection.

In response to the fourth question on what '*resonates with your own experiences*', Burundi shared that the challenge and need to combine innovation and traditions into a new system, resonated. Another aspect that resonated with partners was the need to focus both on collective strength as well as on autonomy of people, in particular vulnerable groups, to claim their land rights. Further, it was shared that the way of thinking several generations ahead is more commonly seen amongst other indigenous groups across the world; and this can create a positive impact on sustainable land use.

Lesson learnt: Cross country exchange is of added value as different aspects of the Colombian experience echoes internationally; the integration of innovation and tradition, collective strength and autonomy of people, and generational thinking.

4. Visit to Katanzama – Day 2

4.1 Sierra Nevada & Katanzama

On Saturday June 14th, LAS partners visited the LAS Colombia project. The project has been implemented in three regions across Colombia, but the focus for the day was the work in the area of Sierra Nevada in the reserve (outlined in green in the image below). Most of the joint partner work has been implemented in Gunmaku, located in the south west of the area high up in the mountains (circled in yellow). However, due to the difficulty to reach the terrain, the group visited Katanzama in the north where the mountain meets the sea (circled in red). Beneficiaries from Gunmaku were invited to join in Katanzama to share their experiences with the LAS project.



Figure 6. Sierra Nevada map - red Katanzama, yellow Gunmaku, blue Santa Marta

4.2 Welcome to Katanzama & traditional opening

In a traditional ceremony, the group was warmly welcomed to Katanzama. The Arhuaco and their spiritual leaders the Mamo explained to the group the context of the area and the challenges they face. The Arhuaco indigenous community covers the territory of four indigenous villages. The community is actively working to increase the area of the reserve. In collaboration with the government, they have set goals the expand their territory which corresponds to the envisioned area of the reserve and their ancestral lands. The Arhuaco emphasised that their territory is their identify.

Many changes have happened through the years, including climate change, tourism development, mining companies moving in, and different levels illegal activities and armed groups have resided in the area. Deforestation continues to be a problem and is increasing around them, accelerating with the presence of companies and mines. The Arhuaco also shared there was mainly livestock when they returned to their ancestral land. They have since a long time engaged with the UN and with Dutch organisations to regain their access and management of the areas. Since the Arhuaco moved back in the area, over 2000ha has been restored, and they wish to restore 5000ha more. Additionally, the Arhuaco have agreed in the community to use only 20% of the land for livelihoods, such as housing, coffee production or collecting raw materials (wood), leaving 80% for nature to thrive. Moreover, the identification and recognition of sacred places is of key importance for them, including the recognition of others. Finally, the opportunities offered by coffee production are key for the ability to have an income and employment opportunities in the community, also for youth.

Lesson learnt: The Arhuaco identify themselves as custodians of the land, which is seen through their understanding of land, their community made rules on land use (20% production and 80% nature), and goal to expand the reserve.

The visit then continued into three separate experiences correlating to the three strategies of the project: land administration, environmental protection, and agricultural production and income generation. The LAS partners were split into three groups to rotate between these three experiences. To facilitate learning and promote deeper discussions into common challenges and themes, the groups had been invited to formulate learning questions before the field visit.

4.2 Surveyors & land administration experience

In the session "Surveyors & land administration" the presentation demonstrated how **communities themselves are leading technical land administration**. Kadaster International is actively supporting the communities to develop these technical skills and capacities to collect the necessary data.



Figure 7. Arhuaco presenting their goals for expanding the reserve

Participants learned how Arhuaco land teams use sub-meter-accuracy GPS tools and field maps to gather spatial data. Juan and Kwamee, from the community mapping team, explained how their work evolved: "At first we focused on field data collection, but now we've moved to working in the office—editing data, making maps, and sharing results." They also emphasised the importance of lawyers, traditional leaders, and educated young people in the process, saying that capacity building is more important than equipment.

The goal is to incorporate unregistered plots into the Arhuaco reserve through legal purchases and formal recognition. "These plots are already occupied by us," one community member said,

pointing at a map, "but they're not yet legally incorporated. We want to expand the reserve and legally unify what is already lived reality". The recovery of land is an extensive process, requiring mapping and data collection, but also the dialogue with peasants (smallholder farmers) who have settled or encroached in these areas. This intercultural dynamic between these two groups, in which peasants have less rights, means that mediation is important. This aspect of negotiation and mediation between different user groups (in this case indigenous communities and peasant communities) was of interest to the group and was also something that some of the LAS partners further explored in a spontaneously organised mediation session by Tropenbos Colombia.

Overall, the work of Kadaster Colombia is grounded in fit-for-purpose land administration (FFP-LA) and the Land Administration Domain Model (LADM). The approach in Colombia has been adapted specifically for Indigenous territories.

Lesson learnt: Land administration including the FFP approach requires a focus on capacity building, both from field to office. In all land administration efforts, particular attention should be paid to the mediation between neighbouring groups such as indigenous and peasants, keeping in mind the existing inequality (in rights).

4.3 Traditional knowledge & environmental protection

During this experience, Tropenbos Colombia shared how they have been working with the community to visualise the protected land and ecological restoration. When Tropenbos initially arrived to work with the community they were told that they didn't need their "expertise", since they are experts themselves on environmental protection. However, after meeting a few times, both agreed that Tropenbos could support them to communicate about the progress made. Another topic on which they collaborated was the education of young people in the community, since they started to notice that the youth was no longer well informed about the history and were prioritising other things. Therefore, education now teaches them about the importance of the territory for their existence. A special thing in this area is that peasant communities also send their children to the schools of the indigenous communities. The message from these schools is really centred on co-existence and an intercultural approach between peasants and indigenous people.

Lesson learnt: Educating young people on the importance of an intercultural approach and the territory and is key to work towards future land protection. It is important to find ways for youth to engage and stay in touch with their environment to preserve land custodians for future generations.

Participants viewed satellite imagery, showing forest recovery between 1973 and 2025. Since 1973 the forest cover had been decreasing; and only in the last decades the forest has started te recover. Community leaders explained how they had reforested degraded areas by leaving 80% of reclaimed land for nature. "Our law," one said, "is not only legal. It is ancestral. We recover land to restore its spirit." Onassis, a local school director, added, "Environmental education is not just about teaching facts. It's about continuing our traditions and responsibilities. The children learn that from the Mamos".

Lesson learnt: Spiritual leaders such as the Mamo's can play a central role in defining the limits of land use and biodiversity protection (i.e. 80/20 rule) for the community.



Figure 8. Traditional ceremony with partners

4.4 Sustainable production & land

During this experience, a presentation on coffee produced in Gunmaku - up in the mountains of the Arhuaco territory - was given. This involved both tasting the coffee and understanding the production methods. Conexión has actively been working with the community to improve the quality and marketing of the coffee. Participants learned that Conexión has been working with the community to improve the quality by building drying racks made from local materials and facilitating a linkage to high value markets where consumers are willing to pay up to five times the price of the standard coffee in Colombia. The income from coffee production and sales has contributed to the food security situation in the area, as explained by the coffee producers.

Producer Jorge explained the Arhuaco philosophy behind coffee production: "We produce less, but we produce with quality and harmony. Our coffee comes from our land and our way of life". This is where again the 80/20 rule of land use was highlighted. Participants were intrigued by this. The presenters also shared how securing their access to and use of the mountainous lands - which are perfect for coffee production - are intrinsically connected to their identify: "coffee is us". Moreover, the process of tenure formalization in the area contributed to the sense of collectiveness and building cohesion in the community.

Lesson learnt: Sustainable livelihood practices such as coffee production can stimulate both income generating activities; while the coupled land governance activities contribute to building cohesion in the community.

Action point #4: Land Portal will create a blog and data story on the field visit.

5. Learning reflections & Programme-wide updates - Day 3

5.1 LAND-at-scale project & programme updates

With all projects present, this was a key moment to focus on a project updates. This consisted of two parts: firstly, an interactive session with the partners on their learnings of the past year, and, secondly, an update from RVO on general progress, results, and future developments.

Project updates

Project and KM partners were asked to reflect on three questions:

1. What was your **key learning** from the past year?
2. How did you apply **adaptive programming** this past year (i.e. based on the key learning)? Did you change your approach?
3. What is your **focus** for the coming year?

After reflecting on these questions, exchanging in smaller groups, and noting their responses on post-it notes, partners were asked to do a gallery walk and add onto other post-its if they have experienced similar learnings.

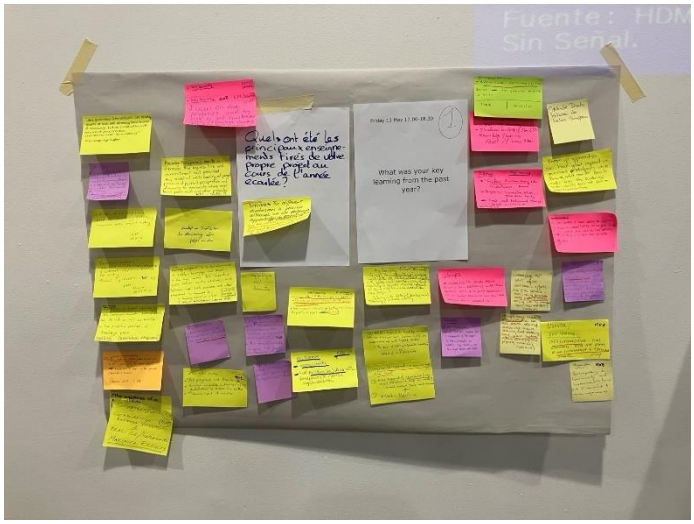


Figure 9. Project responses to one of the questions.

*What was your **key learning** from the past year?*

Country partners shared different insights, such as **Uganda**'s focus on institutionalization. The partners shared that different stakeholders are involved, especially at community level, but that there was not a clear strategy how to institutionalize their skills and involvements. To develop this, meetings were held with the community to ask them how they envisage this. From these meetings, the main take-away was that to institutionalize also implies streamlining. Institutionalization has to be very specific to the local realities, otherwise it can do more harm than good, for example generating mistrust between communities and institutions.

Lesson learnt: Institutionalisation is a balance between streamlining and a tailored approach to the local realities.

Chad shared that inclusive land reforms are not linear. Even if you follow all the steps according to the VGGT and have a working multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) in place, it can all come to a halt at a higher level. In the case of Chad, the new land policy went up to highest level of government and was then postponed due to clashes between higher level stakeholders. So, sensitization – involving all stakeholders at all times, was a key learning. We must go back to go forward again, to check-in. In an exchange with Niger these experiences from Chad were shared, and they found

that they had undergone a similar challenge and shared that continuous involvement is indeed key.

Lesson learnt: When working on inclusive land reform, continuous sensitisation – always involving all stakeholders at all levels at all times– is essential. Even if a stakeholder has been involved at an earlier stage, rotations in staff and key players must be kept in mind.

Both **Iraqi** and **Palestinian** partners stressed the importance of maximizing results by collaboration between practitioners and universities, which enabled them to adapt their programming.

Lesson learnt: Partnerships with universities are a key strategy to bridge the gap between academia and practitioners, for the exploration of knowledge gaps and integration of practical lessons learnt into university curricula.

Egypt shared that their key learning was how to structure a land use consolidation group as a farmer organization and how to facilitate fair decision making. Additionally, developing a better understanding what is expected from KM and how knowledge should and can be disseminated.

Knowledge Management partners reflected on which bottom-up approaches can have an impact in government strategies while showing good results. Simultaneously, it is important to make sure the burden of sustainability does not fall on communities when adapting the approach. A second reflection is that KM is a process that requires time and commitment, but when executed well it can provide key analytical points by looking at projects from different perspectives, while providing support to adapt and plan for future projects.

*How did you apply **adaptive programming** this past year (i.e. based on the key learning)? Did you change your approach?*
A trend in many projects was the increased focus on stakeholder engagement. **Iraq** shared that they have restructured engagement with relevant stakeholders to make dialogue more effective and inclusive. **Palestinian** partners shared that they have built more flexibility into their approach, also due to the contextual changes, and have spent time to update materials for capacity building at universities, schools, and ministries. Local workshop approaches have been tailored to the needs of local actors. **Egypt** shared that they have focused on stakeholder participation in multiple forms, such as farmers consultations, risk mitigation plans, but also discussing how to ensure cost sharing and collective inputs in the farmers organisations (corresponding to the land consolidated). Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture is integrated as a key partner to oversee the approach to land use consolidation. **Uganda** again reiterated the focus on institutionalization, in particular adaptations made to sustainable alternative dispute resolution (ADR) at the local level.

Colombia shared that they have focused this past year on their own sphere of influence, while trying to continue to push actors who are not yet on board. Additionally, the have made use of a change in political winds to push land governance. At project level, more focus was placed on recording of plans to facilitate sustainability, such as transparent environmental management plans in La Teofila, Gunmaku, and Nuqui. There was also an overlap with **Mozambique**, where both mentioned their interest in the role of land governance for inclusive carbon markets. **Egypt** also added that climate finance is of interest.

Action point #5: Explore opportunities to link to ongoing discussions around land and carbon markets and climate financing in the coming year, building on experiences and questions from Mozambique, Colombia and Egypt.

Burundi shared that the key adaptations were made in the gender approach. It is mainly cultural inheritance where ownership of land lies with men, while use of land is often in the hands of women. By law, men and women are equal, and the government wants to promote non-discrimination policies. When trying to promote women's access to land, the project has worked with judges in order to follow the law; however, push back is experienced from cultural practices. Additionally, government does not always apply existing laws in practice, thus partners have intensified dialogue with the government.

Lesson learnt: When working on issues of women's access to land, one must reflect on the level of government dialogues needed and adjust the approach when needed.

Somalia shared that the question 'what comes after the entry strategy and relocation' was key the past year. In this year, many IDPs that were facing threats of eviction, were relocated outside the city border, with less access to livelihood opportunities. Therefore, they found that the need to increase the focus on infrastructure development and economic development to connect people to livelihood opportunities, is essential. The **KM** partners shared that they see KM has been adapting also over the past year to find synergies between projects and KM, making sure they are intertwined. The result is that KM is now richer than before.

*What is your **focus** for the coming year?*

Palestinian partners will focus on the first batch of land professionals who finalise the newly established integrated MSc programme, facilitating transformative dialogue, and the dissemination of community actions plans (CAPs) for infringements of rights. Also, **Iraq** will focus on strengthening universities to increase sustainability of skills and knowledge developed. Building capacity - including technical knowledge - amongst all stakeholder groups, not only in the public sector, but also with universities and civil society, increased the sustainability of project efforts.

Action point #6: Continue to work with universities to strengthen institutional capacity and ground practical results into university curricula. For partners not working with universities, explore opportunities to do so in future.

Other plans for the coming year include:

- **Mozambique** shared that they will follow and hold a campaign to disseminate information about the revised land law.
- **Uganda** plans to develop a sustainability plan per region.
- **Burkina Faso** shared that they will focus on scaling up and developing the sustainability of interventions.
- **Somalia** the project will round off at the end of the year, in which the coming 6 months will focus on land use planning for informal settlements starting with land negotiations and owners.

- **Egypt** will focus on a number of aspects including private sector involvement and contract farming, raising the capacity of farmer organizations to manage negotiations, access finance, and access joint inputs.
- **Burundi** will focus on disseminating the lessons learnt of the project to the communities.
- **Chad** will implement the advocacy strategy together with the 3 partners to promote strategic land reform.
- **Colombia** shared that the joint project with the three partners is finishing now, but are searching for ways to still continue the support as there are still necessities to strengthen land governance.

Programme updates

A programme update was given by RVO. The programme coordinator presented the developments and highlights of the programme over the past year, as well as looking ahead towards the future of the programme.

Notable highlights in the past year were the development of a number of **boosters and add-ons** including a booster project in Colombia - Simplifying Colombia´s Rural Land Administration implemented by Kadaster International; a booster project in Mozambique, where the LAS approach is applied in synergy with a large food security programme of the Dutch embassy; and an add-on in Rwanda with Private Sector Development Toolkit - Improving the awareness on the benefits of ADR for the private sector. This means LAND-at-scale funds are now fully committed and no new projects are expected. All programme activities are expected to end by end 2026.

Additionally, many countries have already made use of the **country research ideas**. Through this, projects are able to apply for small research budgets (approx. €15,000,-) to explore a knowledge gap which will aid with adaptive programming. Until June 2025, seven country research ideas have been developed of which three have been completed. Additionally, three more are being developed to start in the coming months. There is still budget available for this, so partners are able to apply for additional ideas with their RVO programme advisor and KIT.

Action point #7: Utilize the Country Research Ideas and other (knowledge management) opportunities to support adaptive programming

Many new **communication materials** have been developed which are free for partners to use. Notably the professionalization or creation of:

- **Land Portal**: LAND-at-scale| Land Portal
- **RVO website**: LAND-at-scale| RVO
- **LinkedIn:** LAND-at-scale| LinkedIn
- **Infographic** LAND-at-scale incl. M&E results: LAND-at-scale| Infographic
- **Brochure** incl. case studies on land governance for sustainable development (Chad, Uganda, Mozambique,

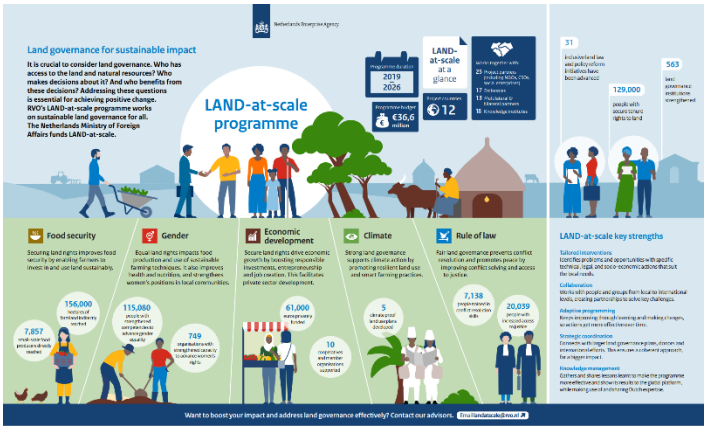


Figure 9. Infographic taster, for full image follow link

Iraq, and Colombia): LAND-at-scale | Brochure

Action point #8: All LAS partners are welcome to use LAND-at-scale communication materials and share news for LinkedIn.

Partners were shown the updated version of the **Theory of Change** (ToC) at programme level which has been developed based on project experiences, RVO programme advisors, and consultations with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of key stakeholders working on land programming. Partners are invited to share additional feedback. The ToC can be found in the virtual goodybag (link in annex).

Action point #9: All LAS partners are welcome to provide feedback on the updated Theory of Change

Finally, a **new Dutch policy letter** and its key themes were presented and how this influences a possible new phase of LAND-at-scale. The discussions of the continuation of the programme underwent delay due to the political developments, awaiting the publishing of the policy letter. The policy letter brought more clarity on the thematic focus. The following three interests and three themes were highlighted in the letter:

- The three interests; trade, stability and migration;
- The three themes; food security, water and health.

Land rights are seen as a theme the Netherlands will continue to work on and RVO sees opportunities to contribute to multiple interests and themes through land governance. LAND-at-scale can contribute to peace and stability, trade (local economic development), and migration (IDP's and refugees). Conversations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MFA) are progressing, with a planning to start a new phase of LAND-at-scale by the 1st of January 2026. The programme will include some countries that are currently part of the LAND-at-scale portfolio, and some new countries, however the final country list is being finalised at this time.

5.2 Learning questions & visit reflections

After these project updates, we went back to the field visit experiences of the previous day. To constructively discuss all reflections in depth, several central themes were identified by KM partners prior to the session. These 7 themes were:

1. The link between land (registration) and conservation
2. Land programming and economic development
3. Techniques and methods of land measurement and registration
4. Gender and land governance
5. Securing land rights for one group, what implications for others (indigenous-peasants)
6. Managing internal decision-making and conflict
7. The importance of framing one's project

The link between land (registration) and conservation

Overall, the importance of the work of the indigenous community is clear in both these themes, not only the act but the philosophy behind it, deciding and working jointly. Often restoration efforts are imposed from the outside, but in this case, there is intrinsic motivation. However, there could be more dialogue, especially with the peasants. Peasants have been working and living on the land often for some generations as well, and it cannot be assumed that they do not have a social and cultural connection to the land or ambitions to conserve it.

Land programming and economic development

The visit showed that economic growth can contribute both to protecting the land and putting more pressure on land systems. The group reflected on the fact that markets can cause inequities and conflict, especially between campesinos and large-scale agribusiness. Economic activities bring in money, and with money comes power and often tensions. Yet it offers opportunities, as long as communal elements remain at the core. For instance, the Arhuaco agreement to only use 20% of their land illustrates this. Overall, land must be seen as more than a commodity, and the power dynamics in commercialisation of products must be acknowledged when working on land.

Techniques and methods of land measurement and registration

Overall participants agreed that registration plays a role in legitimizing land rights, but it should not override ecological or customary governance systems. Thus, registration is not always the starting point. Rather a shift in mindset is needed, prioritizing environmental understanding, collaborative approaches, and autonomy of communities. In those cases, inclusive cadastres can be a game changer. When working on this, it is key to have the national university on board so they can integrate this into their curricula, like the Colombian case does well.

Gender and land governance

Women experience a triple burden in the community; unpaid housework, paid labour or work on production, and childcare/ family. Women are also often in the background and are not always included well in decision making processes. Feedback echoed across regions (e.g., Burkina Faso, Burundi, Somalia, Uganda): women do everything but rarely hold formal power. The challenge is not legitimacy, but visibility and leadership. As a participant from Burkina Faso stated, “women have power, but behind the scenes. But we need to support bringing them to the front”.

Securing land rights for one group, what implications for others (indigenous-peasants)

In all cases, conflict sensitivity is critical: Securing rights for one group may unintentionally deepen exclusion of others. Sometimes peasants are expelled from indigenous territories, and partners discussed this inequality and conflict, which affects all the groups. It was also noted that there is a responsibility of the government to mitigate inequality between different groups. On the other hand, the initiative from the Arhuaco to include of both peasants and indigenous children in the schools is a good idea for building alliances.

Managing internal decision-making and conflict

Participants noted that conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms was not so much touched upon. Some LAS partners highlighted government responsibility in resolving conflicts, while others shared their experience with conflict resolution at local level, without government intervention. Often local conflict resolution mechanisms have been in place for years. Based on the field visit in Colombia, LAS partners observed that the power of the community leader was of importance, including the general rule which is enforced on use of only 20% of the land productively.

Formulating science and traditional knowledge

Participants noted that the Arhuaco have learned how to present their story to the outside world, share their challenges and increase the understanding of their philosophy. They use terminology commonly used in academic settings and the structure of their presentations are of high quality. The importance of conveying your message should not be underestimated and may be helpful in other contexts for groups to make their case.

Overall, integration of approaches is possible—and even necessary: Environmental protection, economic development, and land tenure are interconnected.

Action point #10: Explore how in your own projects you can facilitate communities to make similar cases and strategies to share their stories.

The session was concluded with a reflection from Tropenbos Colombia on all the feedback from the global partners:

"When you're in a project and sharing with all this diversity, the questions you ask are as important as the answers you seek."

6. Global Land Forum - Day 4 – 7

There is a separate report for the GLF by ILC. The report can be accessed on the ILC website.

Global Land Forum

A few take-home messages include:



Figure 10. Ambassador of the Netherlands to Colombia

- True agrarian reform and climate resilience in Colombia must be built from below—centered on the voices, rights, and leadership of historically excluded groups: indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, peasants, youth, women, and artisanal fishers. Land is not just a resource—it is identity, culture, and the foundation for peace. Without structural inclusion, autonomy, and collective governance, no reform will be sustainable or just.
- In Latin America, the need for inclusive land tenure systems, especially for youth, women, and indigenous groups is clear. Addressing territorial conflicts, land grabbing, and energy/mining-related violence is key. Furthermore, ensuring the intergenerational transfer of land and creating attractive futures in agriculture to deter youth from violence or migration will be key to build a sustainable land and food system.
- Peasants continue to be the backbone of global food systems, yet remain the most food insecure. Without agrarian reform that guarantees land, seed rights, and participation, we cannot address global hunger or rural inequality.
- Land reform and tenure security are not only agricultural or environmental issues—they are central to resolving historical injustices, preventing violence, and ensuring food sovereignty across Latin America. As governments increasingly face the interlinked crises of climate change, rural poverty, and social unrest, this panel underscored that only through inclusive, participatory, and regionally coordinated efforts can Latin America secure a just and sustainable rural future.

LAND-at-scale sessions

RVO and LAND-at-scale partners contributed to a number of panels, a few take-home messages include:

- Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) are not just tools for implementation—they are spaces for co-creation, trust-building, and long-term transformation in land governance. But their success depends on inclusive leadership, sustained commitment, and the courage to shift power.
- Knowledge management (KM) is integral, not optional in the LAND-at-scale programme:
  - KM has evolved from being an "add-on" for projects to a core strategy that informs and allows for adaptive programming in project implementation.
  - KM enhances stakeholder engagement: Involving communities, governments, and academic partners improves trust, ownership, and results.
  - KM facilitates shared learning across contexts: Despite diverse national realities, common challenges and solutions emerge, making global peer exchange invaluable. As a result, projects are functioning as learning communities, locally and globally. This is facilitated by the creation of intentional spaces (e.g. writeshops, knowledge cafés, exchanges) to slow down, think critically, and ensure the programme truly serves communities and reaches its intended impact.

7. Reflection session GLF & LAND-at-scale Exchange

We started off by standing up and energizing. To start the afternoon, the group made a collective story: every participant had to add one word to the story. We ended up with a composition of inspiring and spontaneous words including: Action; novels; learning; knowledge; trigger; unique; campesinos; intercultural dialogues; *soluciones* [solutions]; transforming; *collectivo* [collective]; better; *apprantizage* [learning]; land; practice; great; *mambiadero* [traditional learning circle]; participatory; future; *unidad para tierra* [unity for the earth]; *distribucion* [distribution]; stubbornness; Colombia; solidarity and fun; environment; climate; revolution; towards; knowledge!

7.1 Diving deeper into selected themes

After everyone was energized, the floor was opened to propose themes around which you would like to continue discussing based on everything learned and shared during the LAS Exchange and the GLF. The following groups were formed:

- Group 1 (hosted by Severin): Environmental protection (connection between land governance and environment), collective securing of land rights and systems
- Group 2 (hosted by Ahmed): Participatory land management, land consolidation and sustainable land management, land scarcity and competing uses
- Group 3 (hosted by Ingeborg): Agrarian reform
- Group 4 (hosted by Muslim): Land administration domain model (LADM)
- Group 5 (hosted by Luis): Take aways for our hosts - Lecciones aprendidas: How to strengthen everything that we have presented in the community with everyone here
- Group 6 (hosted by Sandra): Inclusive land governance, social relations to land: Gender & Youth

Group 1: Environmental protection

In this group the following approaches and experiences were shared regarding the linking of land governance with environmental protection:

- Territorial management plans on community level;
- Awareness on the necessity to protect and restore the environment, using dialogue and social mapping, and providing information;
- Involvement of governance and community;
- Community research on good traditional and local practices, including focus on the implementation of the results (in writing, using drawing etc.);
- Applying agro-ecological approaches;
- Community development agenda.

These inputs will be used to inspire a knowledge café, as stated in action point #3.

Group 2: Participatory land management

There is a strong interest to continue sharing experiences:

- Egypt: Land Use Committees engage farmers, finances and contract farming
- Rwanda: how to deal with different interest in LUP (participation), for example land for forests, agriculture, and housing
- Uganda: LUP from top down to bottom up – collective land is all allocated and used (traditional authorities vs individual users)
- Mozambique: participation around communal land through associations; part of communal lands are assigned to youth

- Burkina Faso: Rights of women, experiences with registering land in the names of daughters instead of wives.
- Somalia: No land policy, urban and rural systems are different. Urban land is titled; rural land is mostly communal and is also assigned to IDPs and refugees. There is a shift from land tenure to land use.
- Burundi: land title/ land market, land reform for returnees and refugees. Inheritance leads to a lot of land fragmentation, need to avoid further subdivision.

How to continue sharing and on which topics? Suggested topics include:

- Different land users: IDPs/ refugees/ migrants/ women/ youth
- Land Use Planning (LUP), including land policy instruments, LUP approaches, practice of Land Use Committees/ Land Committees
- Urbanization of land
- Collective land and individual land
- Linkages between land rights, management and tenure

Lesson learnt: There are many different approaches to participatory land use planning at different levels, including the creation of a national or district LUPs and user committees to consolidate land, in which different user groups must be included in their development.

Methods that can be used to exchange on this topic is through Knowledge Cafés, papers, research, or networking between partners. In particular, this group proposed a collective research bringing together the experiences of all LAS countries related to issues of participatory land management, land consolidation and sustainable land use, and land scarcity and competing land uses.

Action point #11: Explore the possibility of a collective research on issues of participatory land management, land consolidation and sustainable land use and land scarcity and competing land uses.

Group 3: Agrarian reform group

The agrarian reform agenda/ the international Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20) to be hosted by Colombia in February 2026 is an opportunity. ICCARD+20 marks a renewed interest in agrarian reform, emerging amidst the ongoing climate and biodiversity crises. Therefore, in the 21st century, redistributive land policies should address not only land inequalities but also the pressing challenges of the climate crisis. Yet, many questions arose: Which type of reform/distribution, and who will drive it? Who will oppose it? What does agrarian reform mean for other countries?

Hands-on work on land formalization reveals competing claims to land, often rooted in the legacy of failed redistributive efforts. Those involved in these initiatives occupy a unique position, enabling them to investigate local histories of conflict, develop methodologies for conflict de-escalation (Tropenbos and CAPAZ report) and undertake actions that transcend "the ratification of what already exists".

Comprehensive agrarian reforms have rightly focused on strengthening the financial and productive infrastructure of rural development. However, in striving to be all-encompassing, they have often sidelined land redistribution, creating a situation in which marginalized rural populations receive everything except the land itself.

Lesson learnt: Redistributive land policies should address not only land inequalities but also the pressing challenges of the climate crisis.

FAO plans to technically support ICCARD+20 but the scope and role are still to be clarified with the government. LAS could help to build space for technical discussions and advocacy for a more complex agrarian reform (beyond distribution of hectares etc.) corresponding to the needs of the beneficiaries in a complex reality.

The setting of ICCARD+20 and the upcoming Annual Forums on Agrarian Change -announced by FAO during the plenary session on ICCARD on day 2 as part of ongoing efforts to deepen the implementation of the VGGT-- present a valuable opportunity to develop agrarian change indicators that go beyond the land use and agricultural area metrics currently available in the FAOStat database. In this context, the experience of LAS and similar projects can help shape the agenda for defining meaningful and relevant indicators to guide the technical advice FAO is expected to provide.

Action point #12: Colombian partners will apply for a research paper to analyze the opportunities and challenges related to the agrarian reform agenda as preparation of the ICCARD+20 and FAO will follow up for further opportunities.

Group 4: Land administration domain model (LADM)

The following aspects were discussed, with a focus on the LAS project in Iraq:

- Government support is crucial with working on land administration;
- Precise inventory of territory (geographical; juridical; economical) is important, including using base maps, formal and informal property records, values and legal status;
- Standardisation of terminology or a homogeneous syntax is essential. LADM can support in this, as in the interoperability of the different systems and databases;
- Government is responsible for decision making at different levels (regional, local, national) and linking land administration to disaster management, infrastructure development and planning, and environmental management.

Action point #13: Organise a learning loop with the LAS Iraq project on LADM and interoperability and standardization, and invite ITC Twente University as a resource organisation. If others are interested to join they can indicate their interest.

Group 5: Lecciones aprendidas

This group discussed with the Arhuacos how the discussions and lessons from the past week can be taken further/ how to continue. A few main aspects were touched on:

- The group discussed with the Arhuacos how they can become an equal partner not a beneficiary, in which indigenous authorities are recognised as environmental (public) authorities; this is also very much needed for further scaling of their work.
- The mapping of the land has been an opportunity, but the future perspective would be to have their indigenous cadastre under their own authority – to become the owners of the cadastre. And develop further to also map: secret sites and water resources (drinking water, fisheries).
- The Arhuacos want to develop educational materials to share their learnings and experiences with peasants and with governmental institutions.

Lesson learnt: When mapping the land, it is important that the map represents the core concerns of the community. For instance, if the underlying concern is the connection to the water resources, waterways should be visualized on the map. This supports the communication to outside groups.

The main barriers currently present include the lack of equal partnership, including the need to speak each other's language (Arhuacos to speak the institutional language, government to understand traditions better). Now they cannot move forward, because there is a certain area which has not been recognised, which for the Arhuacos is necessary. The obstacle is to legalize this piece of land as well, and still do the cadastral and judicial study.

Group 6: Land inclusion: Gender & Youth

When we talk about gender and youth, we also talk about intersectionality: youth is a very diverse group. One similarity is that for youth in general there is a lack of opportunities to stay in rural lands. But aside from that, there is a clear division of roles between male and female youth. In which particularly the double burden of work for women is striking: care and production. Also, cultural norms, customary practices and laws can lead to discriminatory practices of young women. A question discussed was also the definition of 'youth', which is very different in different contexts. Sometimes the distinction is made between children, youth and young adults; for the UN, youth is between 15 and 24 years of age; there are also cultural definitions.

The following could be considered to move the agenda on gender and youth forward:

1. Adaptive programming: integrate a gender analysis in the project design and baseline report, this allows to an understanding of gender relations and to identify real needs;
2. Research: Colombia has done research into gender & land; we need research on youth and land, from a gender perspective;
3. Learning loops: we can organize gender and youth focused learning loops;
4. Knowledge café: on gender and intersectionality.

Lesson learnt: Gender analysis from the baseline can inform project design and facilitate better adaptive programming tailored towards real needs.

Action point #14: Organise a knowledge café on gender transformative approaches and intersectionality.

7.2 Knowledge Management Synthesis study

During this session, the KM synthesis study was presented by Wytske Chamberlain – coordinator of the academic partner consortium as part of Knowledge Management programme of LAND-at-scale. The synthesis study brings together the different elements and findings from the academic consortium partners over the past few years. Before setting out on a land governance intervention, it needs to be clear what the envisioned outcome is. A starting point is to identify which obstacles to tenure security in specific, and contribution from land to wider livelihoods, can be addressed by land governance interventions. Inclusive engagement with communities prior to, during design and whilst implementing an intervention is critically important to become aware of such perceptions and subsequently address them in a way that is appropriate and suitable to the specific context. To be effective, sustainable and scalable, such local processes need to be interlinked with regional, national and even international actors. A main, overarching, conclusion that can be drawn from the various studies and research is that land governance is above all an ongoing process. At the end of the session, we watched a video made by the Arhuacos, which was a nice circle back to the start of the LAS Exchange.

8. Conclusions and follow up actions

The combination of the LAS exchange with the GLF again proved to be effective and valuable; broadening the network of participants, allowing them to share their experience in multiple settings, and take advantage of political will in Colombia for this important topic. The following action points and follow ups from the Exchange include those that arose from the 3-day LAS exchange and the reflection session after the GLF.

- **Action point #1:** LAND-at-scale will continue to value indigenous and local knowledge as an addition and strengthening of scientific knowledge with mutual importance.
- **Action point #2**: A LAND-at-scale webinar series will be organised this year focused on land conflict and displacement.
- **Action point #3:** A LAND-at-scale Knowledge Café will be organised this year around the link between land formalization and ecological protection.
- **Action point #4:** Land Portal will create a blog and data story on the field visit.
- **Action point #5:** Findings and opportunities in carbon markets and climate financing will be developed in the coming year, building on experiences and questions from Mozambique, Colombia and Egypt.
- **Action point #6:** Continue to work with universities to strengthen institutional capacity and ground practical results into university curricula. For partners not working with universities, explore opportunities to do so in future.
- **Action point #7**: Utilize the Country Research Ideas and other (knowledge management) opportunities to better implement adaptive programming.
- **Action point #8:** All LAS partners are welcome to use LAND-at-scale communication materials and share news for LinkedIn.
- **Action point #9**: All LAS partners are welcome to provide feedback on the updated Theory of Change.
- **Action point #10:** Explore how in your own projects you can facilitate communities to make similar cases and strategies to share their stories.
- **Action point #11**: Explore the possibility of a collective research on issues of participatory land management, land consolidation and sustainable land use and land scarcity and competing land uses.
- **Action point #12**: Colombian partners to reply for a research paper to analyse the opportunities and challenges related to the agrarian reform agenda as preparation of the ICCARD+20.
- **Action point #13**: Organise a learning loop with the LAS Iraq project on LADM and interoperability and standardization, and invite ITC Twente University as a resource organisation. If others are interested to join they can indicate their interest.
- **Action point #14**: Organise a knowledge case on gender transformative approaches.

Overall, the LAS Exchange 2025 was a success; the ability to again visit a LAS project site and to compare this with a very different but equally inspiring visit in Uganda last year was considered highly valuable by partners. The project in Colombia shows a broad range of issues that are common across the LAS portfolio and demonstrates inspiring approaches and results in these different areas, in particular the combined focus with environmental protection and sustainable production resonated with the participants. At the same time, it provided ample opportunity for reflections on scaling and sustainability, and how these issues are addressed in various ways in the different LAS countries and contexts. To end with a quote from one of the participants

"The land covers us all. And when we listen to it, we begin to understand our place in the world."

Many thanks to all who participated for their valuable inputs and for sharing their insights. And a special thanks to our knowledge partner the International Land Coalition (ILC) for organising the GLF. But the biggest thanks goes to our generous hosts of the Exchange this year, our LAS partners in Colombia: ICCO Conexión, Kadaster International, and Tropenbos Colombia.



Figure 11: Group photo at the Residence of the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Colombia

We look forward to continue exchanging with you all!