



Capitalisation of Experience

Case Study

Contribution of the multistakeholder platform on land governance to the formulation of national agricultural land tenure policies in Guinea

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The Capitalisation of Experience (Capex) is an initiative by the Mekong Region Land Governance (MRLG) project. It studies the conditions for success of the multistakeholder land governance platforms supported by MRLG in Southeast Asia and identifies lessons for future initiatives. To broaden this research and capture the diversity of such mechanisms, MRLG partnered with other organisations — the 'Land Tenure and Development' Technical Committee (CTFD), the International Land Coalition (ILC), and Welthungerhilfe (WHH) — conducting comparative analyses and case studies in other countries such as Guinea. This case study was conducted by ACORD Guinea with support from the CTFD.

The 'Land Tenure and Development' Technical Committee (CTFD) is a land governance think tank that produces and shares knowledge to inform stakeholder dialogue at various levels as land policies are formulated and implemented. The CTFD is supported by the French Development Agency (AFD), and has assisted strategic land stakeholders for over 25 years, building a wide network of West African partners, supporting their initiatives and strengthening their contribution to ongoing reforms.

In Guinea, the CTFD has worked since 2019 with **ACORD Guinea**, which serves as the technical secretariat of the **National multistakeholder platform on land governance (PFMA)**. This national consultation space was established in 2018 with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

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- and the drafting and coordination team that made this report possible.

This document is primarily intended for Guinean land actors. We hope that they can use it as a tool to support local communities and enhance their dialogue and consultation processes.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACORD	<i>Agence de coopération et de recherche pour le développement</i> Agency for Cooperation in Research and Development
AFD	<i>Agence française de développement</i> French Development Agency
ASAF	Support for agricultural statistics and land matters
CNOP-G	National confederation of farmer organisations (Guinea)
CODEC	Collective of civil society organisations that defend the rights of communities affected by development projects
CSO	Civil society organisation
CTFD	'Land Tenure and Development' Technical Committee
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EGF	National Land Forum
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
MAGEL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MUHAT	Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing and Territorial Development
OPA	Agricultural Trade Organisation
PFA	Agricultural Land Policy
PFMA	Multistakeholder platform on land issues
PFN	National Land Policy
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the land reforms undertaken in Guinea since the 2000s has been to move away from the regulatory frameworks inherited from the colonial period, and use more local governance practices and institutions to secure land for as many people as possible. The National Multistakeholder Platform on Land Governance (PFMA) was established in 2018 with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Since then, it has mobilised a wide range of stakeholders to facilitate these political processes, particularly the Agricultural Land Policy (PFA), with backing from the 'Land Tenure and Development' Technical Committee (CTFD).

This case study contributes to analysis of the success factors for multistakeholder partnerships on land governance in different countries.

Objectives and methodology

The study aims to identify the lessons learned from a multistakeholder platform that was involved in a land reform process in Guinea, through participatory research based on a literature review and data collected from group workshops and individual interviews with key actors.

Main Findings

1. Two parallel and partly complementary processes

In 2015, the land reform initiated by the Guinean government resulted in two parallel dynamics: the Agricultural Land Policy (PFA) and the National Land Policy (PFN). The PFA focused on the management of land used for agricultural activities, and operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture; while the PFN covered all other land uses and was led by the Ministry of Urban Planning. The PFA is therefore a component of the PFN. The two texts are connected in terms of their focus on decentralised land governance, securing land tenure and recognising customary land rights, particularly those of vulnerable groups. However, inconsistencies between the two policies still need to be addressed, as do certain weaknesses in the PFN (lack of a clear framework, non-inclusive development process).

2. A participatory multistakeholder approach

The PFMA has been entirely dedicated to supporting land governance reform in Guinea since 2019. With support from the CTFD, it has conducted six capitalisation studies on existing land management practices in the country's four natural regions, helped organise the National Land Forum (États généraux du foncier, EGF), participated in the EGF's ad hoc multistakeholder technical committee, and prepared civil society actors to engage in debates to ensure that these initiatives and the development of the PFAs would follow inclusive processes. This involved mobilising different stakeholders through national, regional and local consultations, local capacity building sessions, disseminating legislative texts and tools, etc. All these activities followed a participatory approach that brought together a range of different actors with shared responsibilities.

3. Results and changes observed

The main changes observed relate to institutional organisation, public policy guidelines, and actors' behaviours and practices. The EGF held at the end of 2022, which was chaired by the Minister of Urban Planning, showed the government's commitment to the reform and greater collaboration between stakeholders, particularly the ministries concerned. The PFMA was then designated as the body responsible for monitoring implementation of the EGF's recommendations, four regional consultation frameworks were set up to increase local actors' involvement and make the reform process more inclusive, and legislative texts and tools were disseminated to enable local communities to understand the process and air their concerns and demands.

Key lessons learned

- **The importance of institutionalising decisions within the administration.** Administrative procedures (ministerial orders) are needed to firmly root decisions within the ministries concerned and avoid problems associated with the personalisation of decisions, as progress can be undermined by changes at the head of institutions (ministers, chiefs of staff, national directors, etc.).

- **The need to train local stakeholders.**

Community leaders and other local actors need training to enable them to actively participate in land management debates. Thanks to the PFMA's determined efforts to involve them in discussions, customary authorities now play a major role in local land governance. The numerous training sessions and meetings organised by the platform helped raise local actors' awareness of ongoing political processes and enabled them to defend their interests in consultations.

- **The importance of effective policy implementation.** Members of the platform invested considerable effort in developing the PFA, but nothing will really be achieved until policies are adopted and implemented in accordance with their guidelines.

Conclusion

The PFMA's experience in Guinea shows that having an inclusive framework that brings together all stakeholders can open the way for dialogue and collaboration between different ministries and socio-professional stakeholders, limit institutional rivalries, and enable farmer and civil society organisations to participate in political debates. The fact that the PFMA was given the role of monitoring the EGF's recommendations shows that its positive contribution to land reform is recognised at the highest level. The platform proved itself to be highly effective despite the multiple financial and institutional obstacles it faced. Moving forward, its main tasks will include helping harmonise legal and institutional frameworks, monitoring the implementation of policies in a participatory and inclusive manner, continuing to advocate for inclusive land governance, and strengthening financial and technical partnerships to ensure that it remains sustainable.



Regional consultations on land management conducted using the Terristories tool ©ACORD Guinea

1. INTRODUCTION

The national multistakeholder platform on land governance (PFMA) is composed of stakeholders from civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, government, the private sector, local authorities, and farmer organisations. It has played a leading role in facilitating land-related political processes in Guinea since 2021, most notably by contributing to the development of the Agricultural Land Policy (PFA), whose implementation is led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. The platform also worked closely with the Ministry of Urban Planning and Territorial Development to organise the national land forum (EGF), which produced shared recommendations on the ongoing reforms.

The platform mobilised a wide range of rural land actors in different regions (farmer organisations, CSOs, local elected officials, members of the judiciary, customary authorities, etc.), enabled them to understand the process, and facilitated their active and constructive participation in consultations organised by the ministry. It also acted as an interface between institutions, enabling each ministry to work on its particular mandate. This case study aims to learn from the PFMA's activities and use these lessons to ensure that the multistakeholder dialogues it fostered continue into the future.

Study objectives and methodology

The specific aim of this capitalisation study is to examine the strategies implemented by the PFMA

in the six years since its creation, how they were supported by the 'Land Tenure and Development' Technical Committee (CTFD) in response to contextual changes, and the main changes that these actions helped bring about.

The study used a participatory and inclusive methodological approach, based on two main components:

- **Literature review and analytical framework:** information gathered from numerous stakeholders (public administration, CSOs, agricultural trade organisations (OPAs), local elected officials) was cross-referenced to understand the historical, technical and practical issues that led to the emergence of the multistakeholder platform.
- **Data collection and information gathering** (with support from the platform's technical secretariat): meeting platform actors and gathering their views on the PFMA's achievements, factors in its successes and failures, intervention strategies, and stakeholder perceptions. Valuable information and testimonies regarding different aspects of the capitalisation were gathered during collective workshops and semi-structured individual interviews with 23 actors (including six women) from civil society, farmer organisations, technical and financial partners, members of regional consultation frameworks, and resource persons.



2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

A brief history of land governance in Guinea

In the early 2000s several countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, etc.) conducted land reforms that aimed to move away from the regulatory frameworks inherited from the colonial period, and use more local land governance practices and institutions to secure land tenure for as many people as possible.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the French colonial administration had developed a land regime for its colonies based on three pillars: presumption of State ownership over so-called 'vacant and ownerless' land; recognising property rights through land registration; and an individual/a single (?) procedure for determining customary rights. This system introduced a dualism between 'modern' property rights and customary land rights, which were not officially recognised. The regime evolved over time to better frame the notion of vacant land and facilitate recognition of customary rights, but this shift occurred just before Independence and never led to such recognition by Territorial Assemblies – which feared that limiting State land rights would leave future independent nations unable to control land in situations where strong and diverse customary rights existed.

When Guinea gained independence from France in 1958, it used former colonial decrees to reaffirm the presumption of State ownership over the entire national territory. Decree 242/PRG of 1959 established the State's monopoly over all land and replaced land titles with administrative orders. In 1976, this approach led to the nationalisation of land owned by French companies, particularly those involved in the 'Franco-Guinean dispute'. After a failed initial attempt at land reform in the 1980s, Guinea finally adopted the Code on Private and State-owned Land in 1992 in a context of economic liberalisation. This Code, which is still in force today, repealed the 1959 decree and

reintroduced access to individual ownership for natural and legal persons, while maintaining the presumption of State ownership over vacant and ownerless land. Access to land was liberalised, with private property rights (land titles) obtained through a registration procedure. Following the first Republic regime of concessions and collectivised production factors (agropastoral farms, etc.), which maintained a State monopoly over land, the government moved to withdraw the State from all production and marketing activities while maintaining the presumption of State ownership. The Code on Private and State-owned Land introduced various tools (land use plans, registration, title deeds, etc.) and used a 'notarial logic' to regulate transactions, transfers and assignments, aiming to provide better legal safeguards, stimulate agricultural investment, ensure food security and protect natural resources.

An inadequate legal framework to secure land tenure

The overall legal framework only partly applies to urban land. It does not provide specific answers to rural land issues, and does not recognise local land rights. The Code on Private and State-owned Land only deals with rural land in Article 92, and then solely in terms of the rules for land that is used for environmental or productive purposes, which are defined in implementing texts. The texts provide no definition of rural areas, even though the revised Local Government Code distinguishes between urban and rural communes. A Policy Declaration on Securing Rural Land Tenure (DPFMR) was adopted in 2001 in order to better adapt land management to local realities. Its main objective was to record local rights in rural land use plans managed at the commune level, but it was never implemented, largely because of the political transition.

Guinea launched several processes to revise its legal and institutional framework in the early 2010s, with support from technical and financial partners such as the World Bank, USAID, the European Union and the French Development Agency (AFD). This support included:

- **a study on legal land tools** initiated in 2012 by the Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing and Territorial Development (MUHAT). This study used the World Bank's Land Governance Assessment Framework, with land audits conducted in each prefecture and presented at the national level. However, it was interrupted by the Ebola crisis of 2014 and then the suspension of EU funding. The process only resumed a decade later, after the September 2021 coup d'état, thanks to political support from the transitional authorities and FAO funding that was used to hold the National Land Forum (EGF) in November 2022 and draft a National Land Policy (PFN);
- **a process of reflection on expropriation** for public utility and compensation for rural lands, led by the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Energy with support from partners such as USAID (DPDDA II) and GWI (IIED/IUCN). A manual developed through a consensual, multistakeholder approach was drafted in 2016,

but was never formally adopted by decree as originally planned. A national framework for the resettlement of people affected by development projects in Guinea was developed in 2021 and is expected to be adopted soon.

- **a study on agricultural and rural land** launched in 2015 led to the participatory development of a roadmap for agricultural land reform. This roadmap was validated at a national workshop in 2016 and is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture through Component 3 of the Agricultural Statistics and Land Support Project (ASAF) financed by AFD.

The PFMA started working on these different processes in 2018, but its efforts to make them inclusive, complementary and involve different actors in the discussions were hampered by poor overall coordination and inter-ministerial collaboration. The coup on 5th September 2021 brought a transitional government to power and created a window of opportunity to advance Guinea's land governance reform, which had stalled for many years due to lack of funding and political will. Over the past two years, the PFMA has focused its efforts on key work to improve the legal framework, namely the PFA and the PFN.



PFMA technical meeting ©ACORD Guinea

Box 1. Key issues identified in the final draft of the Agricultural Land Policy (PFA)

Preserving the functions of agricultural, pastoral and forest areas: all agricultural land actors are concerned about the gradual disappearance of agricultural land and resources, largely as a result of urbanisation and mining concessions. The need to preserve them is therefore clearly stated in the policy.

Improving the governance of agricultural land: no single actor can ensure good land governance on their own. There is a need for mechanisms that can bring different actors together, encourage the creation and respect of local arrangements, and limit the risks of corruption and land speculation. It is also important to define the extent to which customary authorities play a formally recognised role in land governance, and clarify the distribution of responsibilities between State services, local governments, prefects and customary authorities, in order to avoid widespread problems with conflicts of jurisdiction between decentralised Agriculture and Housing services, and substitutions between prefectural and communal authorities.

Securing and formalising local rights, land transactions, and local land arrangements: recognising and securing individual and collective land rights exercised by different actors is a central issue for the Agricultural Land Policy, whether these rights are exercised by the State or individuals. Written formalisation is seen as a preferred means of encouraging land arrangements and enabling landless farmers to access land in the medium term, and can help secure public investments by projects or local governments. Regulating and monitoring land transactions is also a way of limiting speculation and land concentration. These new tools for securing land tenure should be adapted to rural realities in Guinea and easily accessible to farming communities.

Facilitating land access for the most vulnerable populations: many landless farmers have very insecure tenure due to their constant need to borrow land, sometimes on an annual basis. This insecurity is particularly marked in areas of high land pressure, and prevents such actors from making sustainable investments to improve the productivity of the land they farm. One of the main, consensually identified priorities for the PFA is to address this vulnerability and secure landless farmers' investments.

In addition to the usual issues of recognising and securing local land rights, land governance in Guinea also involves specific challenges in terms of State-citizen relations. This is due to several factors:

- **post-colonial land redistribution:** many plantations confiscated from French colonists (in the banana triangle in Lower and southern Middle Guinea) were nationalised and handed over to State enterprises for industrial crops. This redistribution created conflicts in communities that had hoped to benefit from the requisitioned land. Many people that had previously worked on these plantations felt marginalised and relocated elsewhere.
- **conflicts arising from collectivisation:** and collectivisation policies under the first Republic (agropastoral farms, etc.) created situations where the State and communities both claimed rights to land that local people used following de-collectivisation.
- **State dispossessions:** the public authorities' unilateral creation of new land reserves without considering existing local rights led to dispossessions and serious insecurity for local populations.

- **informal agricultural land laws:** agricultural land is not governed by a specific text, unlike other sub-sectors, which are governed by specific codes (such as the Mining or Pastoral Codes). Local land practices are governed by customary law and semi-formal transactions that are validated by local administrative authorities, but there is no clear legal framework for them.

Despite the reforms initiated over the past three decades, the land governance regime still struggles to meet economic and social development objectives or address local people's need for secure land tenure. The Code on Private and State-owned Land that was adopted over 30 years ago is clearly incapable of tackling current land realities in urban or rural areas. It needs to be revised so that it better serves land practitioners, users and institutions, and an agricultural land policy needs to be developed.

Box 2. Stakeholder voices

“

“I can only access land through sharecropping. Initially, we shared palm harvests with the landowner, but the system changed over five years ago, and each party's share is now agreed at the start of the season – it's usually 50/50, or 30% for the landowner and 70% for the farmer. Many farmers in our village rely on this arrangement as they do not own land, particularly young farmers, women and landless locals.”

Young farmer

“Women cannot inherit land from their parents, as land is left to sons not daughters. Because women are expected to marry and join another family, women who claim their share of a land inheritance or argue with men over land are frowned upon. Tradition (rather than religion) dictates that if a woman wants to farm, she can ask the men in her family for a plot. Customary law is still strong in our village, and lineage chiefs are very conservative. Nowadays some will agree to let women benefit from paternal land, but granting them full inheritance rights is out of the question.”

Religious leader

”

“

“Land is everything for rural women. It's their main source of income and capital. But socio-cultural constraints make it hard to access or secure land. Corruption does too. Clearly, access to land ownership is crucial for women's empowerment as they cannot fully engage in economic activities or secure livelihoods without it, which means their families face food and financial insecurity.”

Female farmer

Parallel and partly complementary reform processes

In 2015, the Guinean government initiated a land reform with two parallel dynamics. The first was led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAGEL), with a focus on reorganising agricultural land (crop production, sedentary livestock, forestry, inland fisheries). According to its roadmap¹, this component should result in both an Agricultural Land Policy (PFA) and an Agricultural Land Law.

The second reform dynamic was led by the Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing and Territorial Development (MUHAT), which was tasked with recovering land that had been taken by the State, developing the National Land Policy (PFN), and revising the 1992 Code on Private and State-owned Land. The National Land Forum recommended that the PFA and PFN should be developed in conjunction with each other, as the PFA is the

agricultural land component of the PFN, which covers all other land uses. MUHAT also stipulated that the PFN should be formulated through a participatory process that involves all national and local actors, and allows them to express their concerns and proposals for improving land governance in Guinea. This inclusive approach reflected a desire for greater openness in a ministry that was more used to only consulting its own departments³.

The relevance of and consensus around this agricultural land reform were reaffirmed by the second main recommendation formulated by the EGF in 2022.⁴ The agricultural land reform is also consistent with Law L/2024/007/CNT on agricultural policy, which announces the development of the PFA and the Agricultural Land Law. An interministerial and multistakeholder steering committee created by decree in 2022 is responsible for implementing the reform, which is closely monitored by the PFMA.



"The Code on Private and State-owned Land, which governs land management in the Republic of Guinea, only deals with rural land very marginally. It does not provide any appropriate solutions to agricultural land issues, and the resulting legal vacuum is now causing unprecedented tensions and pressures on land in our country. This is due to several factors, particularly population growth, urban expansion, climate change, environmental degradation, and the development of mining activities. Conflicts over the use of agricultural land resources are on the rise, damaging social relations between and within rural communities, and even within families... What is needed is a genuinely transparent and secure land governance system that will enable everyone to invest with confidence in agriculture, forestry, livestock farming and inland fisheries. I can assure you that this reform is one of my department's top priorities, and will receive all the necessary political support."

Hawa Sylla, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, at the first meeting of the Agricultural Land Reform Steering Committee in May 2023.²



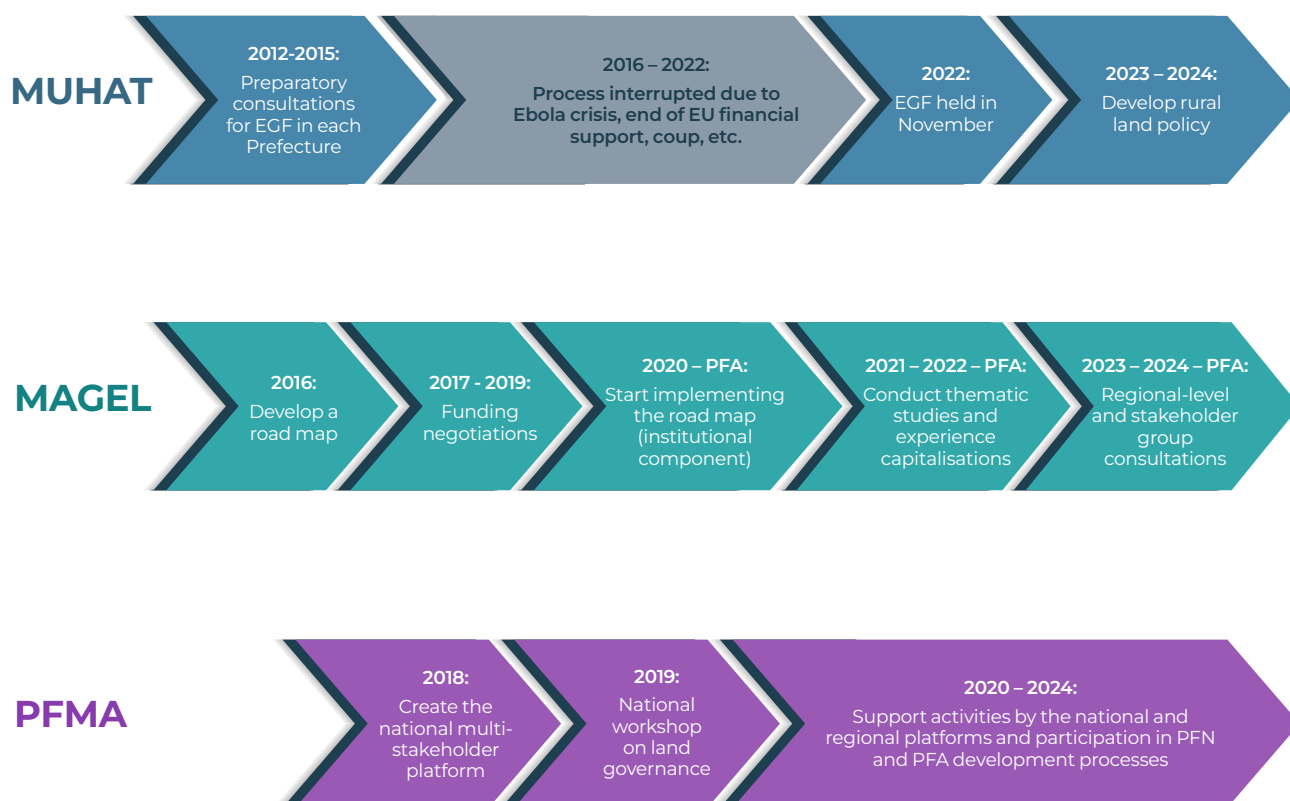
1 'Roadmap for Agricultural Land Reform. Revised version.' Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (May 2021).

2 Source: 'Agriculture: first meeting of the steering committee for agricultural land reform held,' *La Voix du Peuple* (17 May 2023): <https://lavoixduppeuple.info/agriculture-tenue-de-la-1ere-reunion-du-comite-de-pilotage-de-la-reforme-fonciere-agricole/>

3 For example, the urban forum organised by the Ministry of Urban Planning in 2019 was only attended by its own ministerial departments and technical services, and some of its technical and financial partners.

4 See Annex 2.

Figure 1: Parallel political processes conducted by Guinea's Ministry of Urban Planning (MUHAT) and Ministry of Agriculture (MAGEL) and actions carried out by the PFMA between 2012 and 2024



The participatory development process for the PFA

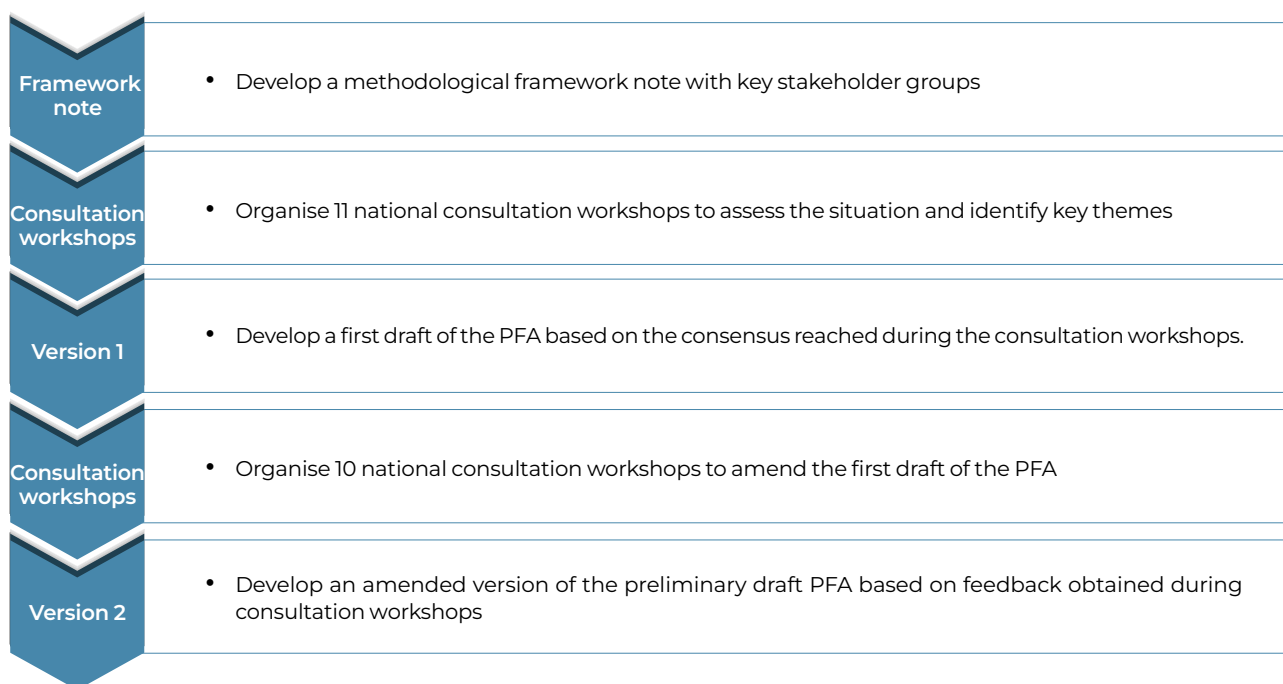
Preparatory activities for the development of the PFA began in 2021.⁵ These included:

- capitalisation of 37 experiences relating to agricultural land undertaken by development projects, mining companies, OPAs and CSOs,
- a study of the different types of agricultural property and land transactions and practices for securing land tenure,
- 10 ‘training-debate’ sessions for 150 people from the Rural Land Directorate, CSOs, APOs and organisations that defend women's land rights,
- assessment of the agricultural land situation in Guinea.

These activities provided the basis for a wide-ranging process of multistakeholder dialogue that began in late 2023, with 21 consultation sessions combining workshops for specific stakeholder groups and multistakeholder thematic workshops. The PFA thus reflects the consensus reached during these highly participatory and inclusive consultations, which brought together over 500 participants from 22 stakeholder groups. The preliminary draft PFA was then developed through a five-step iterative process shown in Figure 2 below.

⁵ See ASAF project technical note, December 2024.

Figure 2: Iterative process for drafting the preliminary PFA



The various consultations led to consensus on two main points: the need to recognise all legitimate individual and collective land rights and agricultural land transactions, and to fully

secure them through a decentralised system (at the municipal, district or neighbourhood level), with local land commissions established to ensure citizen participation (see Box 3 below).



National PFMA workshop to discuss land issues and promote the Voluntary Guidelines ©ACORD Guinea

Box 3: Main substantive innovations in the preliminary draft PFA ⁶

“The main guidelines that public action should follow in order to realise the vision for the PFA and achieve its objectives are set out in four mutually complementary strategic guidelines:

Guideline 1: Recognise and secure local people's and economic operators' legitimate land rights and land transactions

- Recognise all legitimate individual and collective land rights and transactions relating to land with the status of private agricultural holdings (this will entail creating a new status)
- Develop a decentralised (communal, district/neighbourhood) system to fully secure these rights and transactions, with multistakeholder land commissions to ensure citizen participation, and quick, affordable local procedures that are accessible to rural populations. Establish procedures to regularise semi-formal documents issued before the reform came into force. Handle disputes during the procedure to secure rights (land registration), after this procedure (complaints procedure), and adopt specific measures to support vulnerable people (low-cost, payment in instalments, etc.).

Guideline 2: Clarify land governance for hydro-agricultural developments to optimise their equitable and sustainable use

- Mandatory consensual procedures to clarify and secure the status of land prior to any development on State or private land:
 - ◊ For State land: legal security, mapping and physical security on the ground; transfer project ownership to municipalities when they have the capacity to manage such initiatives;
 - ◊ For private land: classify areas as 'Special Agricultural Development Zones';
- Measures to allocate plots fairly, secure beneficiaries (owners, beneficiaries and operators) and regulate land transactions, with specific measures for vulnerable people.

Guideline 3: Promote land development, investment and equity through the regulation of agricultural land markets, access to credit and optimised conflict management

- Measures to: (i) limit the sale of agricultural land, combat 'distress' sales and promote temporary agricultural land transactions with a duration of at least five years; (ii) combat land concentration; (iii) address failure to use agricultural land and tackle land speculation; and (iv) promote access to credit for agricultural producers;
- Mandatory agricultural land conciliation mechanism;
- Improve conflict resolution through the justice system.

Guideline 4: Optimise the management of State land and safeguard national agricultural land

Management of State land:

- Prepare an inventory of State-owned agricultural land and use a consensual process to clarify its status (State-owned land or private property) and boundaries;
- Where State ownership is confirmed, use legal measure to secure its status, and map and physically secure such land;
- Identify potential beneficiaries of secure use rights on State-owned agricultural estates.

Safeguard national agricultural land heritage:

- Identify and protect all land with high agricultural potential, and classify all urban and peri-urban agricultural land as 'Strategic Agricultural Zones';
- Identify and safeguard 'Agricultural Zones' in all mandatory land-use planning documents.
- Include mandatory maintenance of agricultural land use for at least 10 years in agricultural land ownership deeds;
- Reserve access to agricultural land ownership exclusively for Guinean natural and legal persons;
- Limit future access to land ownership to Guinean nationals. Non-Guineans will be allowed use rights, and will not lose property rights duly acquired prior to the introduction of this reform.

⁶ Source: Draft Agricultural Land Policy, December 2024.

A parallel process for the PFN with less participation

In 2023, the Ministry of Urban Planning hired two consultants to prepare a preliminary draft of the PFN with financial support from the FAO and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. This involved various activities:

- **a scoping workshop** with PFMA members to discuss the PFN's main areas of focus. Participants at this workshop reached a consensus on its vision and objectives and the roles and responsibilities of the actors concerned, and validated a roadmap for its development;
 - **the PFMA organised about 10 information and awareness-raising meetings** for key stakeholders (its member organisations, regional consultation frameworks, traditional communicators, journalists, magistrates, etc.). These meetings focused on topics such as land issues, the Voluntary Guidelines, preventing and managing land conflicts, and sharing experiences with stakeholders in Mali and Senegal.
 - **capitalising on existing work** (the EGF, studies conducted by the Ministry of Urban Planning, etc.) in order to propose the main guidelines for the PFN.
 - **organising four regional workshops** attended by CSOs, APOs, traditional authorities and decentralised administration officials. These workshops enabled regional stakeholders to discuss the studies and capitalisation efforts undertaken to enrich the PFN guidelines.
- **preparing the preliminary draft** of the national land policy.

At a meeting in February 2024 to analyse the PFN, most observations made by members of the PFMA related to methodological weaknesses in both its content and development process:

- **regarding the process**, members of the platform lamented the lack of inclusion and consultation with grassroots actors, the absence of capacity building to prepare stakeholders for the process, failure to follow the steps set out in the roadmap and report back to participants on the results of consultations, the opacity of the process, and failure to share drafts with PFMA stakeholders.
- **regarding the content**, members of the platform welcomed the weight given to recognising local land rights, which is a significant achievement. However, they felt that the document was overly administrative, insufficiently attentive to local people's lived realities, and lacked proposals for an overall framework or specific methodology for determining State-owned land and assigning it a consistent legal status. It also failed to define accessible, effective tools to secure land tenure and protect rural populations, or establish a clear legal balance between tools adapted to urban contexts and those relating to rural rights.



Regional PFN consultation workshop for CSOs and APOs in Mamou ©ACORD Guinea



Complementarities and links to be strengthened between the PFA and the PFN

Crosscutting analysis of the draft PFN and PFA identified several key points of convergence and complementarities that reflect a shared desire to reform land governance in Guinea. However, further work is needed to strengthen certain aspects and avoid overlaps and contradictions between the two policies.

Complementarities

- *The PFA as an integrated element of the PFN:* the texts explicitly recognise the PFA as a subset of the PFN specifically dedicated to the country's agricultural land.
- *Recognition of customary and community land rights:* both policies emphasise the importance of recognising individual and collective customary land rights.
- *Consideration of vulnerable groups:* although the PFA takes greater account of vulnerable groups than the PFN, both emphasise the need to include the land rights of women, young people, livestock farmers and migrants.
- *Decentralised land governance:* both documents promote participatory and decentralised land governance – although the PFA provides more detail on its operational modalities than the PFN.
- *Securing land tenure:* both policies present securing land tenure as an essential lever for sustainable development and social cohesion, although there are some differences in the tools and mechanisms recommended by the PFN.

Areas requiring improvement to ensure better coordination

There are several grey areas or inconsistencies between the two texts that require clarification and adjustment.

- *Lack of reference to the PFA:* to avoid duplication, the PFN should explicitly refer to the PFA on all matters relating to agricultural land.
- *Inconsistencies between the PFN and the PFA:* certain aspects of the draft PFN are redundant or contradict particular provisions of the PFA. The two policies need to be clarified to ensure that they are consistent on the land commissions' composition, roles and levels of intervention, recognition of local land rights, and the methodology for securing land tenure.
- *Need for a common definition of concepts:* the PFN should distinguish between the concepts of rural, urban and peri-urban land, and both policies should understand them in the same way.
- *Poor interministerial coordination:* the Ministries of Urban Planning and Agriculture need to work together more closely to ensure that the policies they are developing are complementary.
- *Failure to implement recommendations:* failure to follow up and effectively implement the EGFs' recommendations could limit the real impact of the resolutions adopted at the National Land Forum.

3. CREATING AND ORGANISING THE MULTI-ACTOR LAND PLATFORM

Origin, objective and mission of the Platform

Although farmer and civil society organisations (OPAs and CSOs) were leading local initiatives in the four natural regions of Guinea before the PFMA was created, they did not work in synergy with national sectoral approaches to land management, there was little coordination between stakeholders, and communities and some technicians lacked information on national and international legal land governance frameworks. Various structures (mainly OPAs and CSOs) organised local consultations between 2013 and 2014 to mobilise stakeholders, which led to the idea of bringing the relevant parties together.

The PFMA was accordingly created in June 2018, in a context where the principles promoted by the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests adopted in 2012 by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) were being disseminated and implemented. The PFMA was supported by

technical and financial partners such as FAO and AFD (through the CTFD), and strongly backed by ACORD Guinea and the Guinean authorities, notably the Ministry of Urban Planning and the Ministry of Agriculture, which formally committed to fully support the multistakeholder platform.

The platform's objective was to open up a space for dialogue, awareness raising and training on land issues in Guinea, and develop recommendations to improve public policies and legal frameworks. Its mission is to facilitate inter-stakeholder consultations – particularly between the State, local communities, civil society, universities, and the private sector – in order to promote inclusive and sustainable land governance. More specifically, this involves disseminating legal texts relating to land, evaluating land policy management and planning tools, strengthening the capacities of relevant stakeholders, and monitoring land grabbing and expropriations.



Grazing area in Timbi Madina ©ACORD Guinea

Diversity of actors and division of roles

Each group of actors in the PFMA has a specific function, and member entities have designated focal points that are supposed to actively and continuously participate in all platform meetings.

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“The climate of mistrust between actors no longer exists. Now that various documents are shared (agricultural framework law, Code on Private and State-owned Land, pastoral law, etc.), we have shifted from merely observing policy-making processes to playing a key role in them. I also host debates on the radio.”

Member of the Faranah consultation framework

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Government representatives are responsible for developing and implementing land policies. Their mission includes regulating land practices, resolving conflicts, and establishing an appropriate legal framework.

Local elected officials represented by the Guinean Association of Mayors participate in decision-making and the implementation of land resource management strategies to ensure that land policies reflect local concerns.

Civil society organisations defend citizens' rights, particularly those of vulnerable communities. They raise awareness of the importance of securing land rights and contribute to policy development by representing local people's interests.

Local communities provide knowledge of local realities and traditional practices, and contribute to land resource management and decision-making at the local level. Policies should effectively address their needs. Within the platform, they are mainly represented by federations and national platforms of farmer organisations.

Traditional communicators facilitate communication and mediation within communities and ensure that local voices are heard and respected in land discussions.

Private sector actors are involved in land use-related economic development. They must comply with land standards and collaborate with other stakeholders on sustainable development.

Socio-professional associations, which include bar associations, bailiffs, surveyors and architects, provide technical and legal expertise to ensure that land issues are addressed in accordance with professional and legal standards.

Universities and research centres provide analysis, studies and data that contribute to evidence-based policymaking, and strengthen other stakeholders' research and training capacities.

Media: grouped within the Natural Resource Management Media Platform, the media help raise awareness and disseminate information, thereby helping share knowledge on land issues and contributing to more transparent land management.

Regional land consultation frameworks established by the PFMA in the four natural regions of Guinea since 2019 participate in the management and regulation of land resources. Their main mission is to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders, notably national and local government authorities, farmers, herders and civil society. They aim to promote inclusive and participatory governance by tackling land rights, territorial planning issues and land conflicts. They also help develop land policies that are adapted to local needs, raise awareness of land-related issues, and strengthen transparency and accountability in land resource management. In short, they help secure land rights, prevent conflicts, and promote sustainable territorial development.

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“Everything used to happen in Conakry, but nowadays we are informed about what is happening at the national level thanks to this multi-actor platform and the Kankan consultation framework.”

Female participant from the Kankan framework

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Operating procedures of the Platform

The PFMA's governance system, which has been approved by relevant stakeholders, aims to encourage each member to get actively involved in organising activities. To this end, the presidency rotates between the Ministry of Urban Planning and the Ministry of Agriculture, and the vice-presidency is held by Guinea's National Confederation of Farmer Organisations (CNOP-G). ACORD Guinea acts as the platform's secretariat, organising contracts with partners and preparing the annual budget for submission to technical and financial partners.

The platform has a technical committee that conducts more detailed analysis, deals with strategic issues and plans, and leads the PFMA's land reform-related activities. This committee

has 16 members from diverse technical and scientific backgrounds:

- representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, Urban Planning, Housing and Territorial Development, Mines and Geology, Justice, Energy, and Women's Rights.
- representatives from civil society organisations (ACORD Guinea, CNOP-G, CNOSC, CODEC, CGLTE AO, and the National Network of Women's Organisations on Land Governance in Guinea – ReNOFF).
- representatives from universities and consultation frameworks (University of Sonfonia, Kindia consultation framework).
- representatives from projects and technical and financial partners (Economic Commission for Africa, FAO, ASAF project).



Regional PFN consultation workshop in Mamou ©ACORD Guinea

The technical committee also collaborates with technical and financial partners, national umbrella groups, traditional communicators and other subregional networks, including the Coalition for the Protection of African Genetic Heritage (Copagen) and the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles in West Africa. It convenes meetings when requested, according to the action plan, and as the need arises. Its activities are based on the roadmap that the Ministry of Urban Planning developed after the National Land Forum, which is used as a reference for drafting technical notes.

PFMA members regularly attend technical meetings to exchange information, share experiences and define common strategies. They are also involved in monitoring and evaluation to measure the impact of the platform's actions and adjust its strategies accordingly.

The platform has also established consultation frameworks in the four natural regions of Guinea.

Their mission is to strengthen land governance by involving various actors from local authorities, civil society and the private sector. The Mamou platform was created as a pilot experience in 2019 with one-off financial support from FAO; and three other regional consultation frameworks subsequently received support with assistance from the CTFD, the French Embassy in Guinea, and CCFD-Terre Solidaire. Members of the regional consultation frameworks were trained by the technical committee.

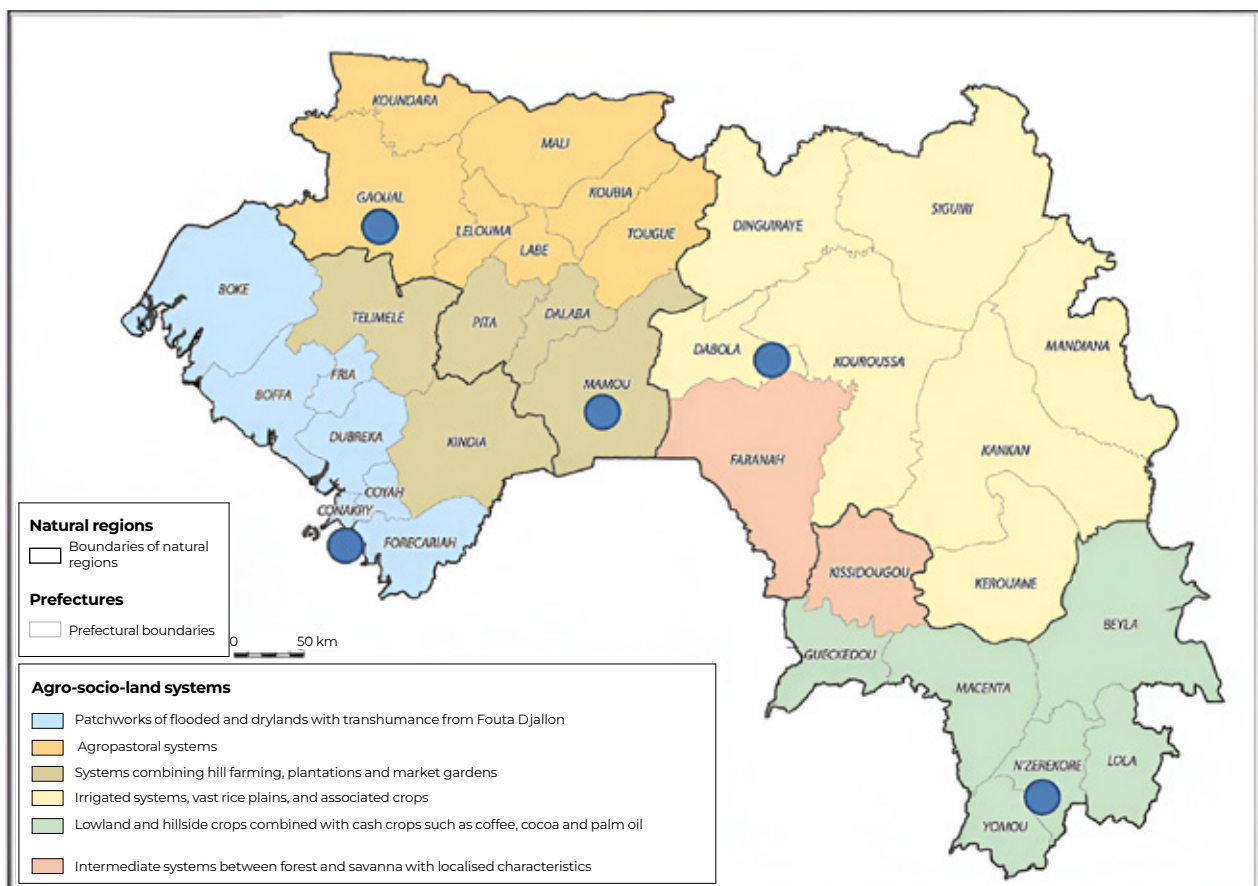
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“This platform allows me to organise land-related meetings without external support, and I now feel more confident expressing myself.”

Female member of the Dabola consultation framework

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Figure 3: Map showing the location of the national platform (Conakry) and regional consultation frameworks for the four natural regions



4. MODES OF INTERVENTION AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE MULTI-ACTOR PLATFORM

Capitalisation: Documenting local land management practices

The PFMA helps farmer organisations and CSOs that work on land issues in the four natural regions of Guinea document existing land management practices. Six studies were conducted with support from the CTFD between 2019 and 2021, when the process of developing the Agricultural Land Policy (PFA) started. These studies examined the processes used to secure land tenure and manage land conflicts, and their outcomes and current limitations, with a particular focus on the following topics:

- secure modes of access to rural land resources in Faranah Prefecture (Upper Guinea).
- good local land management practices in Nzérékoré Prefecture (Forest Guinea).
- practices followed by market gardening unions in Koumbia and Tanda Kandé in Gaoual Prefecture (Middle Guinea).
- integrated agriculture and livestock rearing as a model for sustainable conflict resolution in Kindia Prefecture (Lower Guinea).

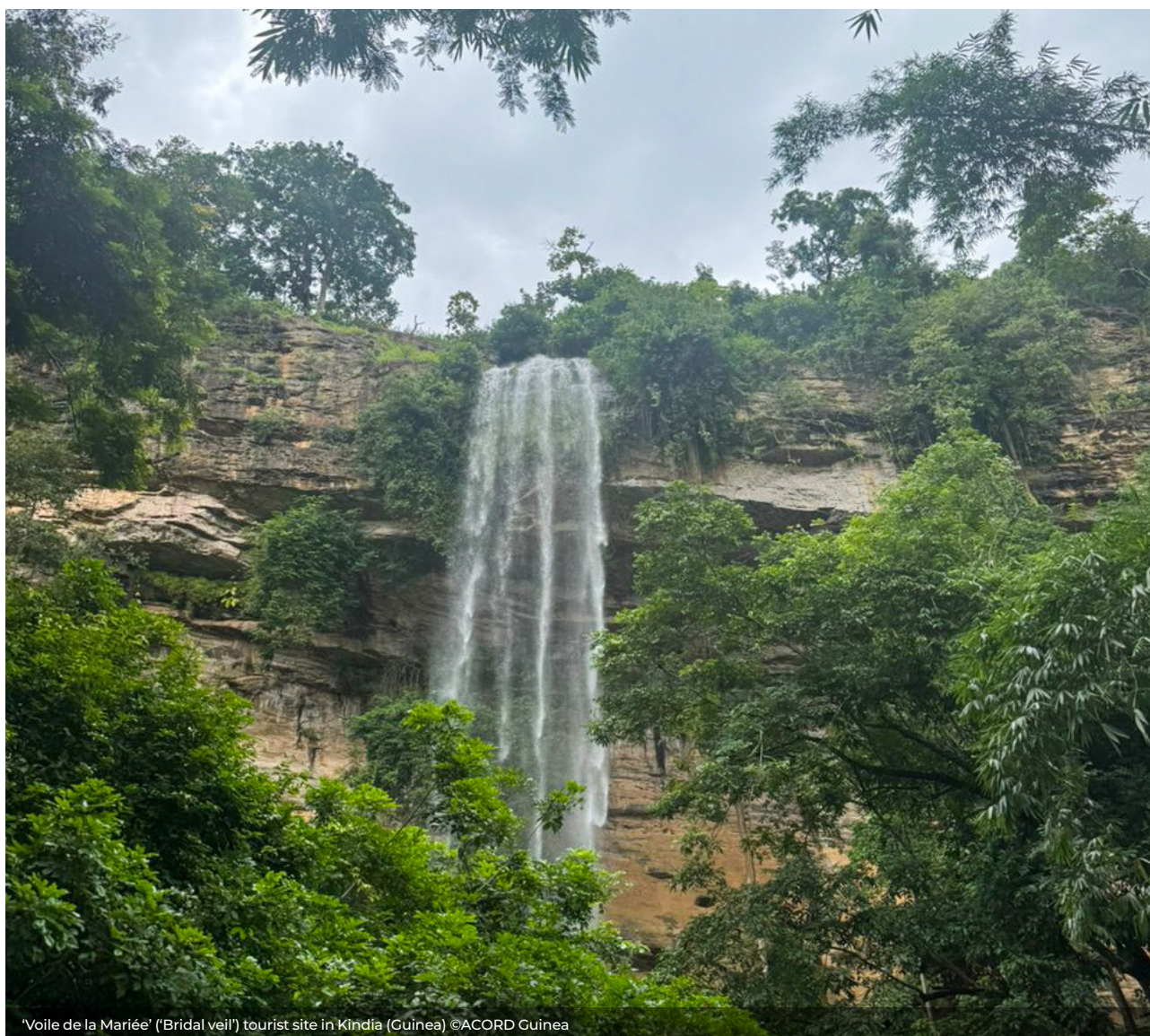
- secure modes of land access in Dalaba and Labé Prefectures (Middle Guinea).
- use of customary and statutory law to facilitate women's access to land in Macenta Prefecture (Forest Guinea).

These capitalisation studies underscored the importance of existing arrangements between local land governance actors on conflict resolution, customary authorities' efforts to reduce unequal access to land, agreements between landowners and landless farmers negotiated by farmer organisations, and drawing on past experience when assigning land uses and negotiating shared rules. CSOs used these studies in meetings to highlight the benefits of dialogue, consultation and involving diverse actors in local land governance, and to argue in favour of integrating local land commissions into the governance instruments envisaged by land policies. At the national level, they also legitimised the role that CSOs and customary authorities, which are often marginalised or ignored, can play in political dialogue.



"This multi-actor platform opened our eyes to the issues around women's and youth land rights in our area and at the national level, and the importance of securing land tenure and land transactions."

Former mayor and member of the Mamou consultation framework



'Voile de la Mariée' ('Bridal veil') tourist site in Kindia (Guinea) ©ACORD Guinea

Dissemination: making legislative texts and tools accessible

The PFMA developed materials to disseminate national legislation, legislative tools, and other land planning and management tools that are used in various parts of Guinea (land use and allocation plans, territorial coherence scheme, etc.) or even other countries in the sub-region (Mali, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire). These materials were shared at national and regional stakeholder debates on the agricultural land reform, to raise awareness, enable participants to compare them with local land management practices, and use them to address various issues in their communes. These exchanges highlighted the challenges facing the land reform, and the need to better align national legislation with practices on the ground so that greater account is taken of local customs at both the general level and in the guidelines for the future Agricultural Land Policy.

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“The multistakeholder platform has really helped us since 2018, through its decentralised capacity-building, awareness-raising and information activities, and its explanation of texts such as the Voluntary Guidelines, the Code on Private and State-owned Land, the land policy, and mechanisms for preventing and managing land disputes.”

Member of the Dinguiraye consultation framework

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Advocacy: Participating in the organization of the National Land Forum (EGF)

The PFMA also conducted advocacy actions to influence public policies and promote better governance of land resources.

Its member farmer organisations and CSOs were closely involved in preparations for the Land Forum (EGF) held in Conakry in November 2022, and helped draft the terms of reference and programme for this major event. After lengthy preliminary discussions with the government and technical and financial partners, the PFMA joined an ad hoc technical committee established by ministerial decree, which was tasked with preparing the EGF. This committee included a range of actors – representatives from the ministries and technical institutions concerned, CSOs, the Collective of CSOs that defend the rights of communities affected by development projects (CODEC), farmer organisations and the CNOP-G, academics, and partners. They were divided into three subcommittees, which were tasked with preparations for reflection on the legal and institutional framework, securing land tenure, land use planning, and land-related issues and challenges.

The PFMA used its mobilisation capacity to engage with a wide range of stakeholders (technical staff from ministries, CSOs, trade organisations, customary authorities, researchers, universities, and the private sector) and prepare civil society actors to actively participate in the Land Forum, influence its resolutions and strengthen civil society's contribution to ongoing political processes. It also initiated the drafting and publication of a memorandum of farmer organisations and CSOs (see Annex 1). As part of this highly inclusive preliminary process, which involved all bodies concerned with land issues, the PFMA also brought together a large number of stakeholders through local, regional and national consultations facilitated by the CNOP-G and other members of the platform's technical committee. Capacity-building workshops on the Voluntary Guidelines were held for actors from the four natural regions, with CSOs, farmer organisations, researchers and customary chiefs divided into thematic groups according to their areas of expertise. Preparations for the Land Forum also included meetings to inform and talk to stakeholders, studies conducted in the four natural regions, and analysis of legal texts. Letters were sent



PFMA representative reading the final declaration from the Land Forum
©Amel Benkahla

to inform partners, the Guinean government and several technical and financial partners (including AFD, CTFD, FAO and the Economic Commission for Africa) about the Land Forum, which they pledged to support.

The platform's vigorous mobilisation efforts yielded positive results on various fronts. These were reflected in the Forum's final recommendations (see Annex 2), which included the need for the country to adopt an Agricultural Land Policy, the importance of revising the Code on Private and State-owned Land in an inclusive manner, and the platform's designation as the body responsible for monitoring implementation of the 26 recommendations.

Capacity building: Training and preparing civil society for debates

The PFMA played a key role in establishing two new multistakeholder consultation frameworks in the regions of Lower Guinea (Kindia) and Upper Guinea (Kankan) in addition to those in Mamou and N'Zérékoré.

It also provided operational assistance with support from its partners (FAO, CTFD, the French Embassy, etc.), and helped strengthen stakeholders' capacity to engage with land governance issues. Working closely with the National Directorate of Rural Land and Heritage (DNFRP), which is responsible for developing the agricultural land policy, the PFMA trained leaders of farmer organisations, CSOs and women's rights organisations. This was done with AFD-funded support from the DNFRP's technical assistant, who has extensive experience helping develop land policies in the sub-region. The platform also organised training workshops for actors in the justice system, technical services and civil society, and meetings with traditional authorities to ensure that they were fully informed of the ongoing political processes. All these activities helped prepare local actors for the consultations conducted by the government as part of the process of formulating agricultural and national land policies.

Participatory approach and inclusive dialogue

The approach used to influence various land policies in Guinea largely relied on collaboration between diverse actors with shared responsibilities, namely:

- **the transitional government**, which was keen to demonstrate its commitment to structural reforms,
- **technical and financial partners** – notably AFD, FAO and CTFD – which provided advice and financial support,
- **civil society and farmer organisations**, which played a key role in consulting and mobilising local stakeholders,
- **the PFMA**, which facilitated dialogue between these different stakeholders and ensured that they were working towards the same end. The platform's technical expertise and knowledge of local realities reinforced its legitimacy in the eyes of national decision-makers and technical and financial partners, and enabled it to rally influential support for its proposals.

Thanks to this participatory approach, which involved a wide range of Guinean land actors, significant progress was made on both policies and developing preliminary drafts of the PFA and PFN.



Regional consultations on land management conducted using the Territories tool ©ACORD Guinea



Landscape and housing in Upper Guinea ©ACORD Guinea

Policy reform timeline and outcomes

2018–2020: laying the groundwork for the land reform

In January 2018 Guinea participated in the sub-regional workshop on rural land policies held in Saint-Louis, Senegal. This workshop, which was organised by the CTFD, was attended by delegations from eight countries who discussed the challenges and trajectories of land policies in West Africa and Madagascar. The following year, in March 2019, the Guinean Ministry of Agriculture, the PFMA and the CTFD organised an initial policy dialogue workshop on land governance in Guinea, the CTFD started supporting the platform, and work began on six capitalisation studies on practices to secure land tenure in the four natural regions.

From 2021 onwards: a new lease of life for land policies

The coup d'état on 5th September 2021 led to the fall of Alpha Condé and overthrow of the government by the National Committee of Reconciliation and Development (Comité national du rassemblement pour le développement, CNRD). This opened a

window of opportunity to relaunch long-delayed reforms, organise the Land Forum, develop the PFA and revise the Code on Private and State-owned Land and Property. Before the coup, CSOs were often regarded as an obstacle to the existing system, and the platform had found it hard to get the authorities to listen to grassroots organisations' views on the land reform process, but a new dynamic emerged following the regime change in 2021 and the political will shown by the CNRD.

Various forces and actors paved the way for the Land Forum to be held at the end of 2022, helping develop CSOs' skills and preparing grassroots actors to participate in the process. In February and March 2022, the national Directorate of Rural Land ran capacity-building sessions for member federations of the CNOP-G and the National Confederation of Socio-Professional Organisations in the Livestock Sector (CONASEG), as well as member organisations of CODEC. Then, in April of the same year, eight training and discussion sessions were held for members of OPAs and ReNOFF as part of Component 3 of the ASAF project. Consultation workshops were also held during this period as part of efforts to develop the PFA in the four natural regions of Guinea.

Meanwhile, the Steering Committee for the Agricultural Land Reform was created by decree in July 2022,⁷ and its composition, organisation and operation were specified by decree a few months later⁸. The national Directorate of Rural Land identified and developed 37 new initiatives in addition to the six reports published by the CTFD. These studies focused on:

- hydro-agricultural developments (land access, securing developments, securing beneficiaries and sometimes non-beneficiary farmers),
- managing land conflicts,
- providing agricultural land for farmer groups through negotiations with member federations of the CNOP-G,
- securing access to agricultural land for refugees,
- providing agricultural land to establish plantations, livestock watering points, etc.,
- securing women's access to land.

CSOs and grassroots organisations invested considerable effort in mobilising for the Land Forum that was held in Conakry from 14-17 November 2022 to define the strategic guidelines for the national land policy. The forum resulted in 26 recommendations regarding the development of an agricultural land policy, the revision of the Code on Private and State-owned Land, and other matters.

2023–2024: initiatives led by the platform

The PFMA continued to engage in political processes after the national Land Forum, organising national-level technical meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Urban Planning, using spaces for dialogue to facilitate local consultations, and sharing information and reports on ongoing developments. The platform also made reports on national-level studies available to the actors responsible for developing the PFA and PFN.

In May 2023, the PFMA participated in the first meeting of the steering committee for the

agricultural land reform, where representatives of its member CSOs and OPAs helped select potential participants who could inform the recommendations made at the multistakeholder workshops to discuss the agricultural land reform. In November 2023, the platform organised a meeting with customary authorities, OPAs and CSOs in preparation for this national multi-stakeholder dialogue.

In February 2024, the platform held capacity-building sessions on the ongoing land reform process for the media; and from February to May 2024, PFMA members organised technical meetings to assess the extent to which the Land Forum's recommendations had been implemented, present the first draft of the PFN to the PFMA technical committee, and improve its content. These meetings also provided an opportunity to reflect on the decree establishing CONAREFH⁹. CODEC, which is a member of the PFMA, formulated proposals and technical notes that were shared with the actors involved in the reforms in May 2024. These technical notes aimed to promote an inclusive and transparent approach to the development of land laws that would take account of local communities' concerns.

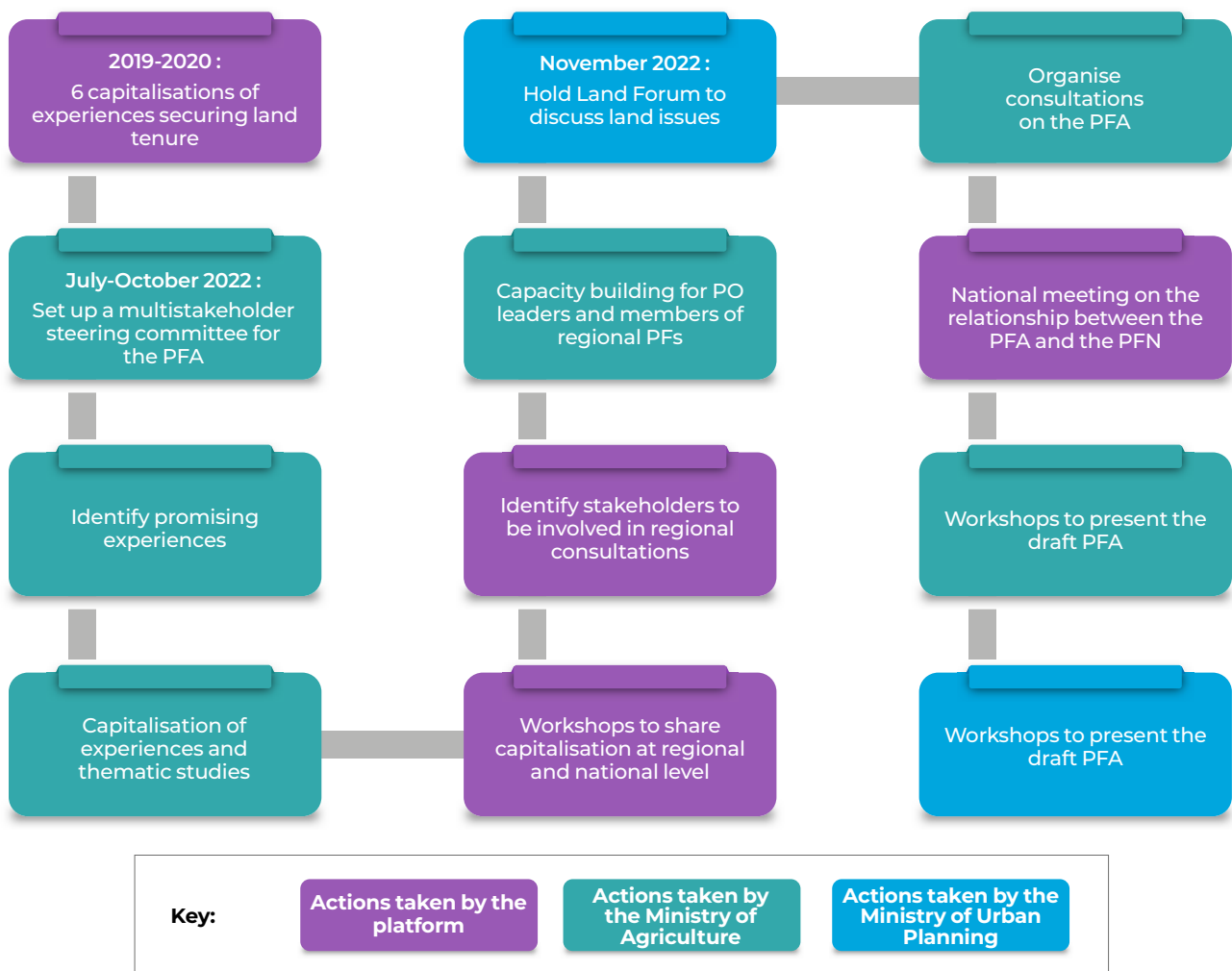
Throughout the process of developing the agricultural and national land policies, the PFMA organised national-level meetings in collaboration with the Ministries of Urban Planning and Agriculture to discuss the progress of both processes and formulate recommendations. Figure 4 below shows the iterative coordination of actions overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Urban Planning and the PFMA between 2019 and 2024. More generally, the platform sought to facilitate and usefully contribute to the political processes by preparing regional frameworks, sharing available knowledge and organising coordination meetings with the government. Its unique position at the interface between the two ministries enabled it to play a major role in the political dialogue.

⁷ Signing of Decree D/2022/0359/PRG/CNRD/SGG of 21 July 2022 regarding the establishment, powers, organisation and functioning of the Steering Committee for the Agricultural Land Reform.

⁸ Signing of Decree A/2022/3024/MAE/CAB/SGG of 26 October 2022 on the composition, organisation and functioning of the Steering Committee for the Agricultural Land Reform.

⁹ See Box 4 in Part 5, 'Results and Lessons Learned.'

Figure 4 : Coordination between actions overseen by MAGEL, MUHAT and the PFMA



5. RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Changes arising from the Platform's actions

Institutional changes

- **Government leadership:** the National Land Forum (EGF) strengthened political ownership of ongoing processes and provided a new strategic direction for the platform and other actors. The resulting recommendations were endorsed by the Ministry of Urban Planning, and the Forum was chaired by the Minister himself. The main recommendations reaffirmed the need to develop an Agricultural Land Policy (PFA) before revising the Code on Private and State-owned Land, thereby consolidating the Ministry of Agriculture's legitimate role in leading a political process that focused on agricultural land.
- **Strengthening inter-ministerial collaboration:** collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Urban Planning within the PFMA helped resolve their initial differences. Frequent technical meetings and regular dialogue between the two ministries and the platform helped clarify the government's position on land reforms and how the development of the PFA and PFN should be monitored.
- **Mandating the PFMA to monitor policies:** the platform was designated as the body responsible for monitoring the Land Forum's recommendations, thereby ensuring that forthcoming processes would be inclusive and



Palm plantation in Sérédou, Guinée Forestière ©ACORD Guinée

involve multiple actors. This decision reflects the trust established between political decision-makers and members of the platform¹⁰.

- **Creating regional frameworks for dialogue:** the PFMA established four consultation frameworks that enabled different actors to discuss land issues on a regular basis. This approach facilitated networking and information sharing so that all stakeholders could express their concerns and ensure that they were integrated into land policies. The national debates took greater account of the specificities and diversity of local issues, while regional actors were informed about national processes and had the opportunity to prepare for consultations.



"The existence of this platform before the launch of the land reform provided a great opportunity to mobilise actors to develop the PFN in a participatory and inclusive manner. The PFMA will play a key role in the institutional mechanism for implementing the policy, and will continue to function in accordance with its internal rules. The multi-actor nature of the platform makes it the preferred space to discuss, guide and ensure the quality of the land reform process in Guinea, and support MUHAT in implementing the PFN and MAGEL with the PFA and its action plan."

Excerpt from the National Land Policy

¹⁰ Although the recent creation of the National Commission for Land and Housing Reform (CONAREFH) seems to call this achievement into question (see Box 4).

Changes in public policy guidelines

- **Disseminating the Code on Private and State-owned Land:** a detailed study of key elements of this Code was conducted in June 2020 and widely shared with grassroots actors. This analysis of legislative and regulatory texts and sectoral processes sparked discussions on land ownership, customary and collective rights, and the mechanisms and institutions involved in land governance. It confirmed that the code was not fit for purpose (even in its revised form) and the need to develop complementary policies on agricultural land that place greater emphasis on recognising local land rights and local land management practices. These conclusions supported the guidelines of the PFA that was being adopted, which proposes that all agricultural land rights and legitimate transactions should be recognised and secured¹¹.
- **Inclusive national and regional consultations:** farmer organisations fully engaged in the consultations held during the development of the PFA, where debates focused on specific topics such as the land rights of women and vulnerable groups in order to contribute to more inclusive land reforms. Establishing multi-actor frameworks and preparing stakeholders for debates greatly facilitated the logistics of the consultations, enhanced the representation and participation of all stakeholder groups, and improved the quality of the discussions.
- **Recognising local land rights:** a consensus emerged on the need to recognise and protect legitimate individual and collective land rights, and broaden the framework for security of tenure beyond land titles. There were also many debates on semi-formal land transaction practices.
- **Drafting recommendations:** policy recommendations to improve the legal and regulatory framework for land developed by the platform were submitted to the competent authorities (see Annex 2).

Changes in actors' behaviours and practices:

- **Stronger stakeholder collaboration:** the participation of different stakeholder groups in these policy development processes reinforced synergies between them and helped reduce recurrent land conflicts.
- **More inclusive conflict resolution procedures:** courts and tribunals (such as those in Kankan) are starting to consider regional consultation frameworks as advisory bodies that can help resolve land conflicts. Customary authorities that used to regard young people as lacking in expertise now involve them in discussions.
- **Recognising the role played by women and youth:** women, youth and vulnerable groups previously played little role in land reforms, but are now recognised as a fundamental element of these processes.
- **Community engagement in land issues:** communities now know more about land issues and related concepts (securing land rights, inherited land, using documents to secure tenure). Their recommendations for inclusive land governance included establishing simplified tools to secure land tenure, protecting specific groups, and recognising collective land rights and customary land management practices.



Market garden plots run by the Kossimankan women's group in Kankan
©ACORD Guinea

¹¹ See Box 3, 'Main substantive innovations in the draft PFA.'



Mixed rice and mangrove in Lower Guinea ©Amel Benkahla

Difficulties encountered

During the process of land policy development, the platform faced several structural barriers.

- **Conflicts of ministerial competences:** the Ministries of Urban Planning and Agriculture were reluctant to pool their roadmaps. Before the Land Forums were held, the Ministry of Urban Planning did not recognise the Ministry of Agriculture as a legitimate actor that could lead such a process, despite the adoption of the July 2022 decree creating the steering committee for the agricultural land reform and specifying its prerogatives.
- **Divergent interests:** farmers, herders, investors, local elected officials and the State sometimes have divergent interests that lead to local tensions over land use. A prime example of this is disputes over former colonial lands used by local communities that were seized by the State. In recent years, the policy of delineating State lands has also caused conflict as the State does not recognise the legitimacy of existing rights, and has expropriated such land without compensation.
- **Ineffective legal framework and commodification of land:** land governance laws are often outdated, poorly implemented and provide limited protection for land rights, especially those of vulnerable communities. Land administration agents may benefit from this situation and therefore have little interest in clarifying the legal framework or relinquishing certain financially beneficial prerogatives. This issue was widely debated at the Land Forum, and behaviours that accelerate land commodification were condemned –these include legitimate owners and traditional authorities selling off large tracts of land in peri-urban areas; or government officials dividing up land (sometimes illegally) and appropriating some of the plots that should normally go to the State for public development projects (infrastructure, roads, etc.).
- **Limited institutional capacity:** the institutions responsible for land management often lack the human and financial resources they need to function effectively. The retirement of certain officials or changes at the head of technical departments or ministries can also greatly weaken or even jeopardise ongoing processes.
- **Poor ministerial participation:** although the Ministry of Urban Planning shares the rotating presidency with the Ministry of Agriculture, it has participated less frequently in PFMA meetings and now requires formal invitations to attend these events. This has complicated what was previously a very smooth collaboration, with some meetings even held at the ministry itself.

Box 4: The case of CONAREFH

The progress achieved by the PFMA in recent years has been undermined by the creation of the National Commission for Land and Housing Reform (CONAREFH) in May 2024. CONAREFH is overseen by the Ministry of Urban Planning, and composed of a steering committee supported by a technical secretariat. It is tasked with planning, coordinating, guiding and monitoring the land and housing reform process in Guinea, with a specific mandate to:

- review and propose improvements to the existing legal and institutional framework for the land and housing sector
- identify and formulate innovative new policies to make the legal and institutional framework more attractive, provide opportunities and guarantees for domestic and foreign investors, and promote security and social peace.
- propose sustainable solutions to prevent land-related conflicts and combat irregular occupation of roads and public facilities.
- propose draft resolutions and transitional measures for the management of land and housing.

CONAREFH was created despite the fact that the PFMA seemed to have become the reference space for political dialogue on land. PFMA members think CONAREFH is an unwieldy body whose stated mission (defining new guidelines for the reform process and conducting sectoral analysis, studies and other analyses) is inappropriate given that the land reforms are still at the policy drafting stage. Civil society groups also fear that this new body will reduce the space for political dialogue created by the PFMA, and lock the process into a sectoral approach. The PFMA has mobilised actors around these concerns and requested an audience with the Minister of Urban Planning.

At the time of writing this case study, CONAREFH had yet to become operational.

Lessons Learned

The innovations and good practices implemented by the PFMA include using solid evidence from studies to develop a strategy for political influence, disseminating legal tools to encourage community participation, regularly monitoring execution of its action plan during technical meetings, and mobilising local actors to gather data on land governance issues in order to inform national debates. Its advocacy work highlighted several key requirements for an inclusive land policy: securing the land rights of rural communities, including women and youth in land reform processes, and recognising the consequences of land conflicts for social and economic stability.

PFMA members identified eight key lessons learned from the platform's initiatives:

- 1. Anchor decisions** in administrative procedures (ministerial orders) to firmly root them within ministries and avoid problems caused by the personalisation of decisions. Changes in leadership (ministers, chiefs of staff, national directors, etc.) can undermine past achievements.
- 2. Implement policies effectively.** The platform's members invested considerable effort in developing the PFA, but nothing will be really achieved unless policies are adopted and implemented in accordance with their guidelines.
- 3. Support ongoing political processes.** To avoid contradictions, PFMA activities should align with current processes to develop national land policies. Its flexible funding and ability to adapt and respond to events enabled the platform to organise awareness-raising meetings for its members, and sessions to prepare for debates and analyse texts ahead of technical meetings with ministries to validate documents.
- 4. Train local stakeholders.** It is important to train community leaders and other local actors to enable them to participate meaningfully in land management debates. The fact that customary authorities now play a major role in local land governance is largely due to the PFMA's determined support, which involved numerous training sessions and meetings to raise local awareness of ongoing political processes and enable people to defend their interests in consultations.

5. Involve marginalised groups External funding and multi-actor collaboration can bring marginalised groups into political processes. Establishing regional consultation frameworks has enabled local actors to discuss issues such as women and young people's access to land, and ways of reducing inequalities and the precariousness of landless farmers.

6. Ensure citizen oversight. Active citizen oversight is needed to advance negotiations with the State, with support from influential allies within ministries.

7. Foster a climate of trust. Strong ties have been established between members of the PFMA technical committee, certain senior officials in

the two ministries, land experts, and leaders of civil society and farmer organisations. This translated into smooth cooperation within the platform and enabled actors to overcome difficulties together. Good relationships with ministry officials and an active secretariat help foster a climate of trust.

8. Mobilise adequate funding and technical resources. The CTFD provided crucial support for all PFMA actions since 2019, but funding was suspended at the end of 2024 pending a new agreement. The lack of any other sources of funding has placed the platform's operations in jeopardy, as it will only be sustainable if it can secure adequate financial and technical support.



Agricultural lowlands affected by urban development in Dubreka ©Amel Benkahla

Future prospects

Effective implementation of the policies that are currently being finalised would help establish stronger institutional, operational and participatory grounds for the ongoing reforms.

Help disseminate the content of land policies

The platform should play a central role in:

- disseminating the content of the PFA and PFN through adapted materials, targeted information sessions delivered in local languages, and community radio stations;
- capacity building for local actors (elected officials, CSOs, OPAs, women, youth, customary authorities, etc.) to ensure that they can appropriate and use the tools and mechanisms provided by the policies;
- running regional consultation frameworks to promote effective community participation in the implementation of reforms.

Participatory and inclusive monitoring of policy implementation

In accordance with the role it was assigned at the National Land Forum, the platform should:

- produce reports to help operationalise the land policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism;
- help establish and operationalise the local land commissions provided for by the PFA to ensure that land actions are transparent and justifiable;
- act as a space where local concerns, conflicts and lessons learned can be shared with national bodies.

Contribute to coherent and consistent legal and institutional frameworks

The PFMA should continue to act as an interface between sectoral ministries (Agriculture and Urban Planning), ensuring that:

- the PFN and PFA complement each other, particularly in terms of definitions, security tools and shared governance responsibilities;
- legislative and regulatory texts arising from the policies are consistent (Land and Domain Code, Agricultural Land Law, etc.);
- national legal instruments take account of local conflict management mechanisms.

Continue to advocate for inclusive land governance

The platform should continue to advocate strongly to:

- ensure that customary, collective and individual land rights are recognised, especially those of women, young people and vulnerable groups;
- promote the adoption of concrete measures to combat local speculation and land grabbing;
- ensure fair and sustainable land governance to support food sovereignty and territorial development.

Partnership development and consolidation

To ensure that it is sustainable, the PFMA should also:

- consolidate existing partnerships with the FAO, UN-Habitat, CTFD, French Embassy, etc.;
- seek new technical and financial partners, such as the World Bank, European Union, ECOWAS, and IFAD;
- define a strategy for mobilising donors and funds;
- evaluate results and adapt strategies;
- encourage current technical and financial partners to continue supporting the multi-stakeholder platform.

6. CONCLUSION

This case study aimed to share the lessons learned about the PFMA's involvement in developing Guinea's agricultural land policy. It shows that the existence of an inclusive framework that brings together all stakeholders can promote dialogue and collaboration between different ministries and socio-professional actors, limit institutional competition, and enable farmer and civil society organisations to participate meaningfully in political debates.

Land governance issues in Guinea are not only social, economic and legal, but also institutional. Thanks to its catalytic role, the PFMA has helped strengthen dialogue between stakeholders and give communities and local authorities a voice through their organisations and structures. The platform's composition and operating methods enabled it to unite stakeholders around a common goal: improving land governance by taking account of local realities and stakeholders' specific concerns. In order to achieve this objective, which is shared by the National Directorate of Rural Land responsible for steering the PFA development process, members of the platform – particularly the farmer organisations represented by the CNOP-G – played a prominent role in the consultations that took place across the country. The actions carried out by the PFMA also helped make the political processes more participatory, and prepare and enable stakeholders to voice their concerns in debates and consultations.

The national political transition following the coup d'état of 5th September 2021 provided a window of opportunity to hold the long-awaited National Land Forum in November 2022. On this occasion, the transitional government's designation of the PFMA as the body responsible for following up on the Forum's recommendations shows that in the space of just a few years, the platform had gained recognition for its usefulness and positive contribution to the conduct of political processes. Its effectiveness is demonstrated by the results it achieved despite multiple financial and institutional obstacles.

Of all the lessons learned from this experience, members of the platform emphasise the importance of consolidating achievements in regulatory and institutional mechanisms (particularly orders and decrees) in order to protect them from challenges that may arise due to the personalisation of decision-making spaces. To this end, it is important to firmly establish and formalise practices such as regular stakeholder meetings, using objective data to inform contributions to discussions, and strengthening actors' capacity to engage in dialogue about genuine land governance concerns, in order to ensure that spaces for dialogue and consultation like the PFMA are sustainable.



Mountainous area between Dabola and Mamou ©ACORD Guinea

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Rapport final d'exécution de la loi d'orientation agricole FAO – ACORD-Guinée du 8 décembre 2017 au 31 octobre 2018.



Member of the Kankan consultation framework in a market garden ©ACORD Guinea

Annexes

Annex 1: Recommendations from farmer organisations at the close of the National Land Forum (Extract from the Farmer Organisations' Memorandum)

In light of the findings and opinions expressed by local communities, what concrete recommendations for the State and other land actors can we as a collective make to ensure that the National Land Forum provides a springboard for more responsible and universally accepted land governance in Guinea?

We have two major recommendations for all actors:

- Adopt an Agricultural Land Law built around a coherent and inclusive Agricultural Land Policy that addresses all the shortcomings of the Private and State-owned Land Code relating to specific agro-sylvo-pastoral issues, and adopt an updated version of the Code that takes account of the innovations and lessons learned;
- Systematise secure access to land for vulnerable groups (women, youth, migrants, people with disabilities, etc.) and enshrine this in all future land legislation in Guinea, taking account of customary practices and local practices that support equitable outcomes.

A - For the State:

Recommendation 1: Ensure that Guinean legislation recognises local communities' collective land rights. Future texts should clearly include communities' agricultural lands (agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries) alongside those of the State, local authorities, individuals and legal entities.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen or establish land commissions at the prefecture, commune, and district/village levels by broadening their composition to include all land management actors, and redefine their roles in line with current concerns expressed in this memorandum.

Recommendation 3: At the national level, recognise, harmonise and validate all land ownership documents that take account of customary practices and local usages (recognition certificates, transfer certificates, property certificates, etc.).

Recommendation 4: Establish, monitor and evaluate mechanisms to manage agro-pastoral areas and prevent conflicts between herders and farmers.

Recommendation 5: Recognise and involve customary authorities and landowners in resolving land conflicts, by formalising such options in policy documents and practices.

Recommendation 6: Establish effective and accessible land transaction information systems in communes, in accordance with the right to information.

Recommendation 7: Limit agricultural land ownership (land titles) exclusively to Guinean nationals in order to combat land grabbing and speculation, which could compromise the national land heritage available to future generations.

B - For customary authorities:

Recommendation 1: End opaque and illegal land transactions, particularly sales of the same plot to multiple individuals by certain customary authorities that act as 'intermediaries'.

Recommendation 2: Improve organisation in order to better prepare and equip prefectural, regional, national and West African authorities to face the challenges of good land governance, as is already happening in other West African countries.

Resolutions:

At the end of this process, which is a prerequisite for an inclusive approach that involves all land actors, we farmer and civil society organisations in the collective commit to:

- Disseminate the conclusions of the National Land Forum to grassroots communities through consultations at various levels
- Work with the State to monitor, evaluate and capitalise on the implementation of all resolutions taken during the conference
- Inform, raise awareness and train grassroots communities on their rights and responsibilities under legal and legitimate provisions for land governance in Guinea

- Collaborate with all stakeholders in multi-actor spaces to ensure that our actions are synergistic, and land-related initiatives are coherent and continuous
- Where possible, contribute the human, material and financial resources required to implement collectively adopted texts and initiatives.

Finally, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to support the State and other land actors in making Guinea a country where land governance is inclusive, equitable, and allows all citizens to practice their livelihoods and live in harmony and peace with others.

Annex 2: Main Recommendations of the National Land Conference (November 2022)

The following recommendations were made after four days of fruitful exchanges on 15 themes previously validated by all actors in the national multistakeholder platform for responsible land governance in Guinea:

1. Revise the Land Code in a participatory manner, disseminate it, and then draft its implementing texts.
2. Draft an Agricultural Land Law based on a coherent and inclusive Agricultural Land Policy that addresses the shortcomings of the Code on Private and State-owned Land with regard to the specificities of agro-sylvo-pastoral lands and fisheries.
3. Make the national multistakeholder platform (PFMA) the monitoring body for these recommendations.

At the end of rich debates on the different themes, participants made the following additional recommendations:

For the Government:

4. Ensure judicial recognition of customary land mediation mechanisms
5. Legally recognise communities' ability to draft local land rules or charters.
6. Strengthen the National Land Fund, which should be partly financed by land taxes, to ensure that the reforms can be financed.
7. Set limits on individual land ownership (by Guinean or foreign nationals) based on the type of investment and land use.
8. Adopt simplified tools to secure land tenure that are adapted to the specificities of urban and agricultural land.
9. Establish multi-actor land commissions at the local level.
10. Update and adopt the manual on expropriations for public utility.
11. Regularise and end the issuance of private land deeds by local authorities, which are a major cause of land conflicts.
12. Establish specialised sections within local courts to deal with rural land issues.

13. Formalise good customary practices for managing land disputes by setting up a hybrid system (customary law and statutory law with consular judges).
14. Update the national pastoral land management scheme.
15. Ensure that Guinean legislation recognises the collective land rights of grassroots communities.
16. Establish accessible land information systems in communes.
17. Promulgate the revised Pastoral Code.
18. Include the identification and development of pastoral areas in local development plans.
19. Support the implementation of urban planning tools in order to limit urban sprawl.

For All Actors:

20. Systematically promote secure land access for vulnerable groups (women, youth, migrants, people with disabilities, etc.), taking account of customary practices and local uses that favour equitable outcomes.
21. Develop a capacity-building plan for land management actors and institutions.
22. Improve coordination between actors involved in urban planning.
23. Explore the feasibility of creating a national land management agency.
24. Evaluate the implementation of agro-pastoral land management instruments to prevent conflicts between herders and farmers.
25. Clarify the distinction between urban and rural areas.

For Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):

26. Map land practices and uses in each natural region.

Annex 3: Press release issued by Civil Society Organisations (November 2024)

ADVOCATE FOR GUINEAN LAND POLICIES AND LAWS THAT TAKE ACCOUNT OF FARMER ORGANISATIONS' LEGITIMATE CONCERNS

Conakry, November 2024 – Farmer and civil society organisations in Guinea issue an urgent call for the government to effectively consider their concerns in the ongoing land sector reform, particularly in the implementation of the **National Land Policy** and revision of the **Private and State-owned Land Code**.

Land is a strategic issue for development in Guinea, a country where nearly 62% of the population directly depends on agriculture for their livelihoods. Despite the progress that has been made in the reform process, rural land management faces many challenges, such as land commodification, ineffective mechanisms to secure tenure, and fragmented governance spread across several ministries.

Important but insufficient achievements

We acknowledge the progress made, notably the **National Land Forum**, local actors' participation in over 15 workshops, and the creation of **regional consultation frameworks**. But more needs to be done to address the complex challenges facing rural communities, particularly in terms of recognising **legitimate land rights**, adapting policies to **customary practices**, and access to mechanisms **to secure land tenure**.

Our concerns

There are several regrettable shortcomings in land management in Guinea, such as:

- **Delays in organising consultations** on the draft National Land Policy, which hinder meaningful participation by concerned actors.
- The **slowdown of the multi-actor platform**, which is essential for inclusive and consensus-based land reforms.

- The **lack of formal recognition of land rights**, particularly collective and customary rights.
- The **lack of effective decentralisation** of land governance, which makes land access difficult for many rural communities.

Our recommendations

To address these challenges, we make the following recommendations to ensure fair, transparent and inclusive land management:

1. **Revitalise the multistakeholder land platform** and respect its central role in formulating land policies.
2. **Accelerate validation of the National Land Policy** and revise the Private and State-owned Land Code through a consultative process.
3. **Systematically involve farmer and civil society organisations** in drafting land-related legislation.
4. **Decentralise land governance**, strengthen mechanisms to secure land tenure, and ensure that they are accessible to rural communities.
5. **Recognise collective and customary land rights** of rural communities in the Private and State-owned Land Code.
6. **Place the rights of women and vulnerable groups** at the heart of land policies.
7. **Take account of environmental issues** and the impacts of climate change in land management.

Conclusion

Farmer and civil society organisations call on the Guinean government to take concrete measures to address rural communities' concerns when revising land laws. These reforms must ensure **fair, inclusive and sustainable land management** for present and future generations.

Annex 4: Platform Communications and Visibility

The platform prioritised communication throughout its activities, involving the online press media and television to increase its visibility and publicise its progress and results. Published articles on its activities can be accessed by following the links below:

- « La Guinée veut se doter d'une plateforme multi-acteurs pour améliorer la gouvernance foncière », Agence Ecofin (12 juin 2018) <https://www.agenceecofin.com/gouvernance/1206-57677-la-guinee-veut-se-doter-d-une-plateforme-multi-acteurs-pour-ameliorer-la-gouvernance-fonciere>
- « Foncier en Guinée : une plate-forme multi acteurs voit le jour », *Guinée matin* (19 juin 2018) <https://guineematin.com/2018/06/19/foncier-en-guinee-une-plate-forme-multi-acteurs-voit-le-jour/>
- « Gestion du foncier en Guinée : la plate forme multi-acteurs de la société civile à l'offensive », *Radio environnement Guinée* (24 décembre 2019) <https://radioenvironnementguinee.org/archives/2535>
- « Gestion du foncier en Guinée : les rencontres entre acteurs de la plate forme "multi acteurs" de la société civile se poursuivent à Conakry », *La Guinéenne.info* (11 janvier 2020) <https://www.laguineenne.info/2020/01/11/gestion-du-foncier-en-guinee-les-rencontres-entre-acteurs-de-la-plate-forme-multi-acteurs-de-la-societe-civile-se-poursuivent-a-conakry/>
- « Gestion foncière en Guinée : des acteurs engagés pour une cause commune », *Radio environnement Guinée* (19 février 2020) <https://radioenvironnementguinee.org/archives/2732>
- « Réformes foncières responsables en Guinée : l'ONG ACORD-Guinée relance les activités de la

plateforme multi-acteurs », *La Voix du Peuple* (17 septembre 2024) <https://lavoixdupuple.info/reformes-foncieres-responsables-en-guinee-long-acord-guinee-relance-les-activites-de-la-plateforme-multi-acteurs/>

- « Réformes foncières : ACORD organise un atelier des acteurs du secteur » *Radio environnement Guinée* (9 novembre 2024) <https://radioenvironnementguinee.org/archives/8861>

Other articles published by member organisations of the PFMA can be accessed by following the links below:

- « Réunion technique d'échange entre acteurs du foncier sur l'innovation de la politique foncière nationale (PFN) et la politique foncière agricole (PFA) », *ACORD Guinée* (19 septembre 2024) <https://acordguinee.org/2024/09/19/conakry>
- « Processus de réformes foncières en Guinée : réunion de concertation entre les acteurs de la plateforme nationale multi-acteurs sur le foncier », *ACORD Guinée* (14 novembre 2024) <https://acordguinee.org/2024/11/14/processus-de-reformes-foncieres-en-guinee-reunion-de-concertation-entre-les-acteurs-de-la-plateforme-nationale-multi-acteurs-sur-le-foncier/>
- « Réunion technique d'échange entre acteurs du foncier pour l'innovation de la politique foncière nationale (PFN) et de la politique foncière agricole (PFA) », CODEC (17 septembre 2024) <https://www.codecguinee.org/2024/09/17/reunion-technique-dechange-entre-acteurs-du-foncier-pour-linnovation-de-la-politique-fonciere-nationale-pfn-et-de-la-politique-fonciere-agricole-pfa/>

The aim of the land reforms undertaken in Guinea since the 2000s has been to move away from the regulatory frameworks inherited from the colonial period, and use more local governance practices and institutions to secure land for as many people as possible. The National Multistakeholder Platform on Land Governance (PFMA), which was established in 2018, mobilises stakeholders to facilitate these political processes. This study identifies the lessons learned from the PFMA involvement in the land reform processes.

The Capitalisation of Experience draws lessons learned from improving land governance through multistakeholder platforms for policy dialogue, and is a joint effort of the following four organisations:



The **Comité Technique Foncier et Développement** (CTFD) is a platform of multi-disciplinary experts that discusses and debates rural and urban land issues in the Global South. CTFD meets under the tutelage of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD).

Please visit: www.foncier-developpement.fr

The **International Land Coalition** (ILC) is an independent global alliance of 300+ People's Organisations, civil society and intergovernmental organisations working together to put people at the centre of land governance.

Please visit: www.landcoalition.org

The **Mekong Region Land Governance Project** (MRLG) is a project of the Government of Switzerland, through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), with co-financing from the Government of Germany and the Government of Luxembourg. MRLG has been working to improve the land tenure security of smallholder farmers in the Mekong Region since 2014.

Please visit: www.mrlg.org

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) is a private politically and religiously independent aid agency in Germany that fights for "Zero Hunger by 2030". The **Land for Life Project** is supporting multi-actor partnerships working on land governance in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Germany.

Please visit: land-for-life.org

Funders:



MRLG technical partners:



Land Equity
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