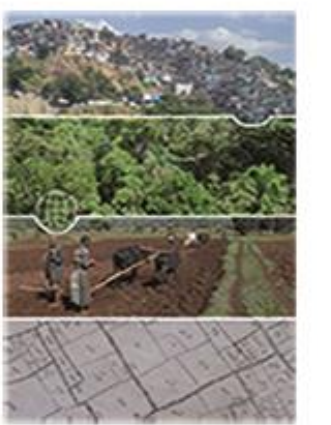




# Responsible Land Governance: Towards an Evidence Based Approach

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## Action-Oriented Strategic Research for Improving Responsibility and Gender-Equitability of Land Tenure Governance

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### Introduction

Mokoro's multi-country practical action-oriented strategic research project, **the WOLTS Project**, has three long-term goals:

1. To establish a stronger evidence base on the internal and external threats to women's land tenure security in selected developing countries, especially in the context of large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs);
2. To strengthen the capacity of communities, NGOs/CSOs and local governments to protect and secure women's land rights in the face of these threats, contributing to a paradigm shift that sees gender equality and women's rights mainstreamed within community land management, land tenure governance and land rights protection efforts worldwide; and
3. To see tangible improvements in women's land tenure security in the communities and countries reached by the project, and wider sharing and dissemination of the lessons learned and tools developed for a greater and more lasting impact.

WOLTS is initially focusing on pastoralist communities in mineral-rich areas of Mongolia and Tanzania. The team are mid-way through a 2-year pilot study in four communities affected by mining LSLAs, looking at the intersection of gender and land relations in different pastoralist contexts and developing a methodology for continuing community engagement.



### Key research methods

- The foundation of the community level research is the WOLTS **baseline survey**, which also plays an important role in informing and refining the participatory fieldwork design.
- Baseline survey data deepens understanding of the selected communities' demographics, livelihoods, gender dynamics and perceptions of land tenure security.
- The **participatory fieldwork** is specifically designed to build on the findings from the baseline and explore them in more detail.
- A range of techniques are used – with the choice of tools and exercises, and the selection of disaggregated target groups for focus group discussions and of target 'types' of individuals for biographic interviews, all guided by baseline survey analysis.

**This careful and deliberative approach is designed to strengthen understanding of participants' existing land tenure arrangements and land management and governance practices, thereby stimulating discussion and debate within the community about what changes might be desirable and how they could be achieved.**



### Methodology

The WOLTS methodology starts by investigating the state of women's land tenure security through participatory fieldwork. From this, WOLTS looks to assess possible means to improve gender equity in land tenure governance and secure women's land rights from internal threats within communities, as well as to support communities to withstand external threats to their land and natural resources. WOLTS seeks solutions that are grounded in the participatory fieldwork findings and which draw on international best practice. The aim is to develop both generic and contextually-appropriate tools that include developing the capacity of local people, partner organisations, and land tenure governance institutions and processes to support gender equity and specifically protect the land rights of the most vulnerable people.

A core WOLTS principle is to take a medium- to long-term approach to both our country- and community-level engagement, and our assessment of potential future impacts on gendered social relations with respect to land. The methodology recognises the need to wait and see whether any changes supported by the project will be negated by reversion to long-standing customary practices and land tenure arrangements, or whether changes in social norms around land relations and land management and governance processes will instead gather sufficient social legitimacy to bed in.

The methodology developed during the current pilot study consists of six phases as follows:

#### 1. Inception

- Ensures comprehensive background research and literature reviews to feed into the community selection process and later analysis of fieldwork findings.

**The WOLTS approach rests on partnering with national NGOs/CSOs, identified during the inception phase, and training and capacity building work to enable partner organisations to engage in research and develop tools to protect and strengthen women's land rights on the ground.**

#### 2. Community selection

- Includes establishing selection criteria with partners and selecting communities to work with that are genuinely open to working with the WOLTS team towards improved gender equity in their land management and land tenure governance.

#### 3. Baseline survey

- Feeds into and facilitates more comprehensive analysis over a phased period of research and engagement with the communities, serving as a tool to develop understanding and inform future project activities.

**WOLTS places great importance on taking a long-term approach to achieving real change and the community baseline survey is fundamental to this, serving as the benchmark against which to measure impacts of the project over time.**

#### 4. Participatory research

- Makes a major contribution to understanding the nature of land tenure arrangements in the selected communities and the main threats to women's land rights in particular, using a range of tools and methods to ensure good triangulation of data.

#### 5. Tools testing

- Feeds back findings from the research to the communities, to support the development of capacity building tools and processes to strengthen gender equity, so as to best protect women's land rights from internal threats while also supporting communities and local governments in their dealings with investors bringing externally-driven LSLAs.

#### 6. Dissemination

- Recognises the importance of wider sharing and dissemination of tools developed and lessons learned, nationally and globally.

**The WOLTS approach is highly iterative in nature, developing and adapting the methodology throughout the 2-year pilot study and seeking to share experiences and gather feedback from all interested stakeholders to strengthen our impact over time.**

### Conclusions and lessons learned

- The intersection of gender, land, pastoralism and mining is not one about which a lot is already known. WOLTS contributes to this knowledge gap in a practical and action-oriented way.
- Experience gained from the WOLTS research highlights the benefits of taking a long-term approach to improving the responsibility and gender-equitability of land tenure governance – and of taking a methodologically rigorous approach so that any long-term change in social norms around gender and land can be clearly measured.
- Without doubt, the capacity to mainstream protection of women's land rights within community land protection efforts takes time to develop. Establishing partnerships with local NGOs/CSOs, local governments and communities through a long-term participatory research and engagement strategy enables time for such capacity and understanding to grow.
- Initial findings from the WOLTS research will be published in the coming months, so watch this space!



### Acknowledgements

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People Centered Conservation, Mongolia



Haki Madini, Tanzania



Photo credits: L. Natsagdorj, K. Lanz, Z. Driscoll & J. Grabham

### Further information

Please visit the WOLTS webpage for updates on our work and to view forthcoming reports of findings from our research in the four pilot communities:

<http://mokoro.co.uk/project/womens-land-tenure-security-project-wolts/>

You can sign up to our WOLTS mailing list by emailing [zdriscoll@mokoro.co.uk](mailto:zdriscoll@mokoro.co.uk).