

FIG Working Week 2020, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Concept Note
Joint FAO/FIG Academic Forum on the VGGT
10-14 April

Background

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) have through a LoA agreed to organize two joint sessions with core emphasis on supporting the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT) during the FIG Working Week (WW) in Amsterdam. The FIG Academic Forum is the platform within the FIG General Assembly where the Academic Members of FIG and other academicians gather to discuss about academic responsibilities and prepare actions.

During the FIG Working Week in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2016, the FIG Academic Members decided to form a working group ‘Exploring the VGGT in Practice’. The aim of the working group was to identify and strengthen the role of the surveying and land professional in the implementation of the VGGT.

The 2018 and 2019 Academic Forum built upon the previous engagement. FAO presented an overview of the engagement of FAO with the academic sector at country level. Shared challenges were presented from the range of countries. The identified similar challenges are: limited awareness on the VGGT, knowledge of teachers/lecturers, building/strengthening collaboration between governments and Academia and lack of financial resources.

FIG together with Geo-Information Netherlands (GIN), The Netherlands’ Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency (hereinafter Kadaster) and The ITC Faculty of the University of Twente will lead in carrying out the FIG Working Week 2020, which – under the overall theme: “Smart Surveyors for Land and Water Management.”

The 2020 Academic Forum

The overall theme of the 2020 FIG Working Week: “**Smart Surveyors for Land and Water Management**” – will include the “Guidelines” and improved governance of tenure as one of the main thematic tracks. Under the FAO/FIG Letter of Agreement, the general objective is to disseminate the VGGTs, raise awareness, develop capacity, engage professional, academic and teaching institutions, and develop partnerships between FAO and FIG surveyors towards improved governance and application of the VGGTs. This is one of two joint FAO/FIG sessions, organized in cooperation with FAO Tenure staff, to consider how academic institutions and other stakeholder can address the specific experiences related to the implementation *of the* “Guidelines”.

The 2020 Academic Forum aims to focus on how improved land administration/land management based on VGGTs, can help deal with land degradation, soil erosion and desertification. Recently, the historic decision was taken at 2019 UNCCD COP 14¹, where the declaration states under item 9² to: “*Reaffirm the relevance of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security for better access,*

¹ The *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – Conference of the Parties* held in New Delhi on 2-13 September 2019.

² <https://www.unccd.int/news-events/new-delhi-declaration-investing-land-and-unlocking-opportunities>

control and stewardship over land and equitable tenure security, in accordance with relevant national legislation, for the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of sustainable land management.” According to the UNCCD Executive Secretary, with secure tenure rights and better access to credit and technology for all land-users - women and men– we can, in the years to come, see this Convention to Combat Desertification deliver real impact. At scale.

In consideration of the above, the Academic forum session will be held under the title - **“VGGT and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification into the implementation of the Convention.** *The aim of the session is to consider how the VGGTs can support land degradation neutrality, adoption of land-based solutions, through improved Land Administration and Land Management. We consider that this challenge of addressing desertification provides both an excellent example of how the VGGTs can help address climate impacts, and considers how the academic sector might contribute.*

The academic forum focuses on the role of the academic sector in the implementation and dissemination of the VGGTs through strengthened role of surveyors. A “strengthened role of surveyors” is a connecting entry point to address and discuss the role of academia, especially in mainstreaming the modern data and experiences by sharing knowledge about approaches which work, by bridging the technological and the societal perspective, by educating workforce, and by strengthening and developing the profession of surveying and spatial planning. Central to this is methods to secure land tenure rights in deserts or drought-prone regions, including those pastoral areas with seasonal migration.

The VGGT programme targets both university curricula and research, and continuous professional and capacity development courses. Thus, surveying students and graduates will be informed about available tools and how to use these tools, they will learn and get experiences.

The session will be held as a series of presentations and floor discussion focusing on how land administration and land management (based on the VGGT) can help address land degradation, soil erosion and desertification through showcasing existing available practices and case studies. By presenting some experiences, there will be the opportunity to show case and then to explore how university research and continuous professional development courses can strengthen the role of surveyors for enhanced application of the VGGT. As this is highly important for ensuring university curricula, research and continuous professional development courses promote a participatory approach, equitable gender inclusion, transparency and providing tenure security not only to the statutory but also to customary tenure rights. These are all directly related to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the contribution of securing tenure rights (through new surveying methods and VGGT implementation) to the 2030 development agenda.

Expected Outcome:

A better understanding on possible ways and opportunities to strengthen university research and continuous professional development courses in informing surveyors about their role on how surveying and spatial data (e.g. maps, cartography) play a key role for achieving sustainable LM. In addition, it will help to identify good practices and lessons learnt based on the VGGT framework, including in Land Administration (LA)/Land Management (LM) instruments to address Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). Subsequently, session output will be useful to build upon discussion findings that will contribute to a Technical Guide (TG) development for VGGT integration into LDN.

Thus, it will be another unique opportunity for surveyors, spatial planning professionals and beyond to discuss together key challenges and possible solutions based on the VGGT for improved land administration and sustainable LM. The floor discussion will be extended to Academic Members, as well as to practitioners at government and global level, including UN agencies on how (based on the VGGT) Land Administration/SLM can contribute to LDN and soil erosion and what an important role research could play. The floor discussion will be held in order to better understand role of surveyors in application of the VGGT principles.

Hence the 2020 Academic Forum will explore the following questions through a floor discussion on:

1. Nexus land tenure – LDN: How VGGT principles through LA/LM are important to apply in Survey, Spatial planning and to integrate into Land Degradation Neutrality framework (LDN)?-Tea Dabrundashvili, Land Tenure Officer, FAO
2. What are possibilities and available tools to consider as good practices and lessons learnt for the use of such approaches (VGGT and LDN) in in sustainable Land Management and Land Administration -In this context, would be discussed the case presented by FAO/CBL division–and/or a case study from the field, by the partner CSO
3. What are opportunities within university research, and continuous professional development courses to apply the VGGT and integrate those in LDN? - ICT/David Mitchell (?)

Session Programme

Co-Chairs: David Mitchell TBC and Javier MolinaCruz TBC

Rapporteur: TBD

Format and timing (90 minutes)

Time (Estimate slots within 90')	Topic/activity description	Role/ responsibility	Confirmed?
11.00 – 11.05	Opening comments	David Mitchell/Javier MolinaCruz	
11.05 – 11.15	Presentation 1: Nexus land tenure – LDN: Why VGGT principles through LA/LM are important to apply in Survey, Spatial planning and to integrate into Land Degradation Neutrality framework (LDN)?	Tea Dabrundashvili, Land Tenure Officer, FAO	
11.15 – 11.25	Presentation 2: Case Study on Sustainable Land Management	FAO /CBL	(name to be provided by CBL)
11.25 – 11.35	Presentation 3: Case Study from the field, by the partner CSO	Partner CSO	(name to be provided by CBL?)
11.35 – 11.45	Presentation 4: What are opportunities within university research and continuous professional development courses to apply the VGGT and integrate those in LDN?	David Mitchell	

11:45 - 12:25	Facilitated floor discussion based on the 3 questions above	Javier MolinaCruz	
12.25 - 12:30	Closing remarks	David Mitchell / Javier MolinaCruz	