

Evaluation Report for the TLI Project phase 1



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Glossary

List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BTL	Business Transformation Lab
CDE	Center for Development and Environment
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CFS-RAI	Committee on World Food Security's Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EOA	Ecological Organic Agriculture
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessments
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FiBL	Research Institute for Organic Agriculture
FIBL	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
GPFS	Global Program Food Security
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
LBI	Land-Based Investment
LEI	Land Equity International
MLRG	Mekong Region Land Governance
MSP	Multistakeholder Platform
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAI	Responsible Agriculture Investments
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
RRM	Risk Reward Model
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound.
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers
TLI	Transformative Land Investments
TLIP	Transformative Land Investment Project
VGFSyN	Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries & Forests

Definitions and explanations/use of terms in this report

Agroecology—According to the FAO, Agroecology is an integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems. It seeks to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans, and the environment while considering the social aspects that must be addressed for a sustainable and fair food system.

Transformative Land Investments (TLI). TLI are large-scale land-based investments that adopt a holistic, systems-oriented approach to simultaneously generate environmental, social, economic, and societal benefits. These investments aim to develop innovative and integrated

solutions to systemic challenges faced by marginalized populations and fragile landscapes. By adhering to agroecological principles and promoting environmental stewardship, economic growth, and human well-being, TLIs seek to ensure sustainable food systems and responsible investment practices that respect the rights of local communities.

Land-based investments involve allocating capital into land assets with the expectation of generating returns through various means. These investments can encompass a range of activities, including Agricultural Development, Forestry, Energy (e.g. hydropower), Infrastructure Development or Mineral mining

Responsible Agriculture Investments, RAI. FAO defines RAI as investments that are sustainable and beneficial to livelihoods, the environment, and communities. These investments should respect human rights, foster food security and nutrition, and support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. The FAO emphasizes that responsible investments should generate positive social, economic, and environmental impacts.

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I. Executive Summary

The Transformative Land Investment (TLI) Project (TLIP), a collaboration between SDC, CIFOR/ICRAF, and partners, aims to promote sustainable and inclusive food systems by improving land tenure and fostering responsible investments in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana, Laos, and Myanmar. Following agroecological principles and voluntary guidelines (VGGT, CFS-RAI), TLIP supports the effective consideration of environmental and social impacts in investor practices and policy frameworks. SDC funded 80% of the first phase (2022–2025) but decided in early 2025 to discontinue support due to budget cuts before considering this external evaluation but after finishing its content. This evaluation by FiBL, commissioned in 2024, assessed TLIP's effectiveness using DAC/OECD criteria. The methodology included document reviews, stakeholder consultations, surveys, and participatory workshops. The evaluation assessed the project based on DAC/OECD criteria.

The **Relevance** of TLIP is high, particularly for the target group if involved in (potential or acute) conflicts. In those cases, poverty risk is high, and the food system becomes dysfunctional. However, we can't see (yet) how the approach is a lever for being transformative. For example, agroecology is a system by design with high knowledge needs, and it is not a system by default as a result of responsible investments.

Coherence: TLIP fits very well in the GPFS strategy 2021-24, particularly on the objectives level. It follows the logic of bringing evidence to the global debates of the international community well. On national levels, the externally designed TLIP engagement is welcomed and coherent with the objectives but does not integrate well into poorly coordinated international cooperation strategies.

Effectiveness is good so far, particularly on the output level, but it is very uncertain if outcomes (in planning after 10 years) will be achieved qualitatively and quantitatively. Outcome development has not started yet. Assumptions are not fully explicit; some haven't been fulfilled yet, and risks remain.

The **Efficiency** of the TLIP implementation is very high. The project has delivered a multitude of document resources and research results that were promised in output planning.

The project's targeted **Impact** for phase 1 is minimal when assessed against the overambitious targets stated in the planning document. Provided the project strategy is further refined and developed considering our recommendations and SDC invests at the same level, we expect the impact to happen, however, to a lower level than planned and at a later stage.

Sustainability has not been sufficiently addressed yet. While the Project Document describes a sustainability strategy, this issue is delegated to the future. The visionary sustainability statement depends on strong impact and context development, which are not observable now. Co-funding of the next phase is not yet assured.

The TLIP project integrates gender inclusiveness effectively, with strong sensitivity and engagement at both global and country levels. Youth was not a primary focus in project planning and was only considered during implementation, requiring more emphasis in future phases if prioritized by SDC. While TLIP aligns with agroecological principles, it underestimates the knowledge and capacity-building required for smallholders' adoption in their practices.

Given future development options, SDC can either maintain TLIP's current trajectory, expand its activities, or narrow its focus while keeping resource levels constant. Contrary to the evaluator's assessments, preferring more focus, implementors prefer diversifying or maintaining the present plan.

The evaluation concludes that the project has significantly contributed to the land governance debate, linking responsible investments to transformative food and agriculture systems. It has demonstrated strong coherence, relevance, and efficiency at the output level, with well-functioning partnerships and dedicated staff. However, its complexity, broad scope, limited resources, and ambitious goals have limited its overall effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. This is also due to the currently still short project implementation period (2.5 years out of 11 years that were planned) in which impacts of the system's transformative nature can't be expected.

The recommendations assume that the overall budget remains the same (10 Million USD for 3 years), with SDC providing 50%. Overall, the evaluators consider the TLIP an important project highly relevant to the food system (including for the future one-health approach). TLIP has a very innovative character and the potential to profile consortium partners and SDC in development approaches. We recommend the continuation of the project with strategic adjustments.

The FiBL team makes six recommendations, which are further detailed and substantiated in Chapter 6:

1: Continue investment in TLI with increased or at least the same efforts

2: Revise the objective system

#3: Reduce complexity, focus the strategy

#4: Stress transformation strategy

#5: Stress sustainability concept

#6 Improve usefulness for SDC's global work

2. Background and Methodology

2.1 Introduction, context

Large-scale land investments in Africa and Asia often harm smallholders, women, and ecosystems using unsustainable exploitation methods and exacerbating food insecurity. To address this challenge, the thematic section Food System of SDC and CIFOR/ICRAF partnered with a consortium of LEI, RECOFTC, and SNV to implement the Transformative Land Investment (TLI) Project (TLIP). TLIP eventually promotes sustainable, inclusive food systems by improving land tenure systems and promoting responsible investments, following agroecological principles and voluntary guidelines such as VGGT and CFS-RAI. TLIP focuses on integrating environmental and social impacts into investor practices, fostering inclusive policies, and influencing national, regional, and global frameworks. The project targets Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana, Laos, and Myanmar on a national level, ASEAN and African Union on a regional level, and the global level institutions (various fora), leveraging local expertise and political will to counter adverse land investment impacts. Gender equity, resilience, and ecosystem health are central goals.

SDC finances 80% of the project's first-phase cost, aiming for long-term sustainability through partnerships and innovation for governments, the private sector, and the international cooperation community.

The main reference documents for this collaboration are the GPFS program framework 2021 – 2024, the TLIP project document phase 1, and the annual reports 2022 and 2023 with all their linked documents. TLI started in January 2022, with a launch event in June 2022, and lasts until June 2025 (42 months). In 2024, SDC called for an external evaluation with the OECD/DAC criteria in the SDC Guidance for Evaluation framework of May 2024, which it commissioned to FiBL. The evaluation is based on the TOR of SDC and the FiBL offer. The inception report, which FiBL discussed with the project team and approved by SDC, explains the details of the evaluation process.

In February 2025, SDC decided to stop the TLIP after the first phase. This decision was not based on this evaluation report but on their need to cut programs based on parliament decisions in December 2024 that SDC's means substantially and forced the SDC management to reduce their activities.

2.2 Objective & scope of this evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide SDC with an external assessment of the first phase of the project and contribute prospectively to the learning-accountability-steering triangle. The objectives were to (a) evaluate the first two years of the project phase 1 according to the DAC/OECD criteria against the planning; (b) assess the systemic changes and impacts that were or are about to be triggered by the project; and (c) recommend to SDC how to strategize the TLI support after the present contract expiring mid-2025.¹

The scope of the evaluation includes all TLIP activities so far in all countries and on the regional and global levels. The evaluation focuses on the overall project, looking at the management, global, regional, and country levels. It takes Ghana and Laos as cases to investigate the countries and pillars, respectively, of the project's mechanisms to coordinate and implement interventions. Other countries participated in the general discussions and were subject to the overall assessment.

¹ More details see TOR, proposal and inception report

2.3 Evaluation methodology

Figure 1 visualizes the evaluation process, which includes seven steps: inception, data collection, verification, and synthesis. The steps were conceptualized to ensure a good independent evaluation (i.e., external assessment) while involving stakeholders to optimize participation and reflection (i.e., stakeholder learning).

As a means to obtain a broad project understanding, the experiences and opinions of the various project-related players, including partners from other donors and others involved in the TLIP, were considered. Nevertheless, the core of the evaluation relates to the review of existing documents and the feedback from the consortium partners, SDC, and participants of the various project formats in Ghana and Laos. Due to the short project period and the fact that the project is still piloting concepts and working with first applicers from the government, private sector, and civil society, e.g., what they call “champions among investors”, it was difficult to get qualified sector feedback from a bigger sample size.

We held nine virtual group interviews, 11 meetings in Ghana and, 14 meetings in Laos. Two virtual workshops, one focused on the African countries and one on the Asian countries (with 10 and 18 participants), discussed the outcomes of the survey and future options with participatory methods (Mentimeter, in which we received 202 contributions for 3 questions including some contributions from other interactions to the same questions). We invited 113 persons to the survey relying on addresses from the various consortium partners (among 0 from Mozambique, 37 from Ghana, 34 from Ethiopia, 15 from Laos, and 9 from Myanmar). Out of the 113 invitees, 24 responded (overall participation rate of 14 %, 0% Mozambique, 33% Ghana, 30% Ethiopia, 13% Laos, 8% Myanmar and 16% from side of the project implementors). The invitations to the survey (including 3 times reminders) were sent out in English, Portuguese, Amharic, and Lao.

The multitude of sources by the various provided a wide range of information and impressions. We processed them with our knowledge, our own means, and with the assistance of artificial intelligence. We balanced and weighed information based on the sources, considering interests to get to a picture that was as sensible as it was possible for us. We can't fully exclude certain biases, for instance, having an overweight group of actively participating groups over others who preferred to be absent.

The detailed methodology is presented in the inception report.

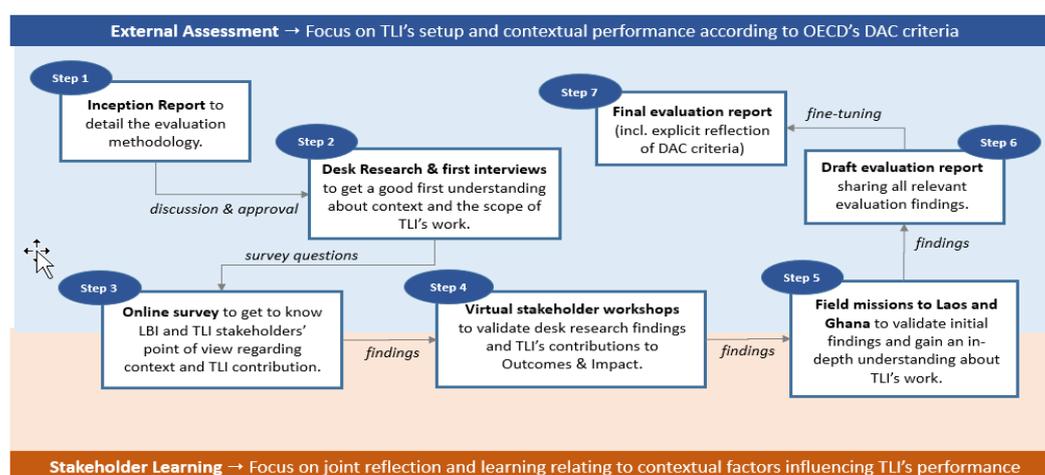


Figure 1: Overview of the different steps involved in the evaluation process

The diversity of the involved methodological steps allowed a broad but still well-focused participation of various stakeholders. Thereby, the specific purpose and degree of participation (see Figure 3) varied, e.g., considering the context, the TLIP commitment, and the triangulation of information. By doing so, we tried to be sensitive to stakeholders' roles, responsibilities, interests, and the gender balance among stakeholder groups (i.e., women/men, youth). Unfortunately, the participation of beneficiaries and target groups was underwhelming since we didn't reach a representative number of them, and the messages we received were biased by the over-representation of project implementors and some main project beneficiaries. This is partly also explainable due to the early stage of the project (after two years, when the implementors have a duration of 11 years in mind). We extrapolated the information we received and balanced it based on the original documents.

The evaluation's "checklist" is the SDC-evaluation questions, based on the DAC criteria outlined in the TOR and made more precise in Appendix 6.2. The evaluation team also decided during the process to consider the following points when answering evaluation questions.

- The geographical scope, i.e. the countries and their institutions.
- The content of action represented in the pathways.
- The level of interventions, i.e. country, region, and continent.
- Tools and strategic issues:
 - The Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP), Risk Reward Model (RRM), Community of Practice (CoP), and Business Transformation Labs (BTL) are described below.
 - Gender and Youth, Agroecology, Management and Finance

Our outlook concept derives and assesses different scenarios. Those are based on the lens of 3 strategic directions paired with 3 operational dimensions (see Figure 2).

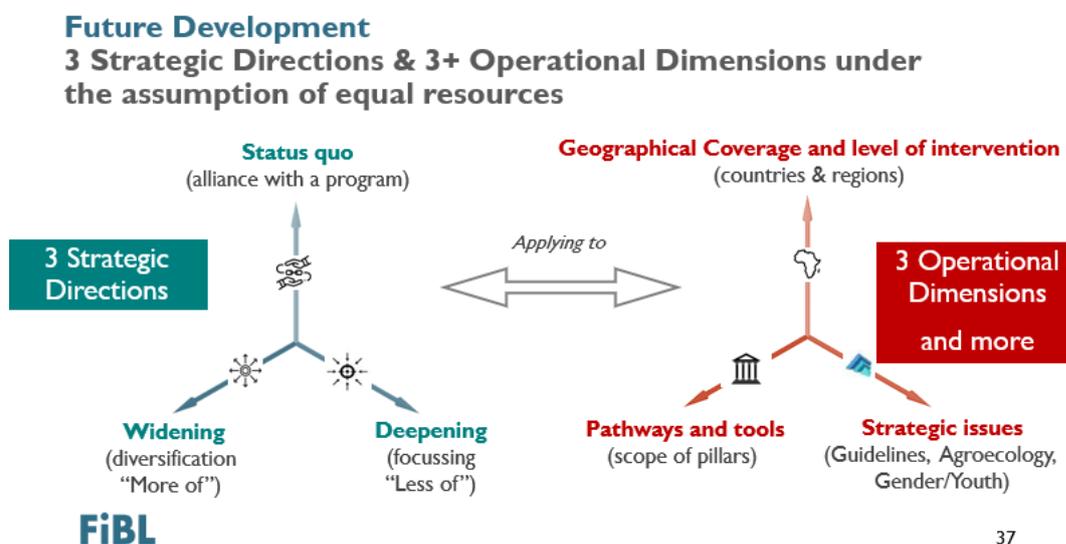


Figure 2: Overview of the 3 strategic directions and the 3 operational dimensions considered in the evaluation and discussed in the virtual Workshops.

3. Evaluation Findings

3.1 The TLIP and the SDC support in a nutshell

The project promotes Transformative Land Investments (TLI), aligning with SDC's Global Program on Food Security and the Sustainable Development Goals. TLIs aim to enhance land

tenure security, livelihoods, resilience, and ecosystem health in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana, Laos, and Myanmar. It operates through three pathways: transforming investor practices, strengthening national business ecosystems, and aligning global/regional development strategies.

At the investment level, TLIP supports companies seeking sustainable practices, showcasing risk-reduction and win-win solutions. Outputs and project instruments include the so-called “Investment Risk-Reward Model” (a tool for governments to assess, administrate, and steer land investments), “Business Transformation Labs” (a counseling instrument for private sector investors), “Multistakeholder Platforms” (stakeholder exchange events), a “Community of Practice” (a Civil society forum), and gender-transformative toolkits.

The first outcome is for investors to integrate socio-economic and environmental impacts into their practices. The second is for governments to adopt policies, regulatory frameworks, and incentives that foster TLI. The project collaborates with national governments and civil society to align policies and incentives with TLI. Outputs include appraisals of enabling environments, multi-stakeholder platforms, and grassroots communities of practice. The third one is that national and international development initiatives adopt commitments, guidelines, and finances that promote TLI. The project advocates for alignment among donors and organizations to harmonize strategies and metrics. Outputs include gap appraisals, co-developed mainstreaming models, and harmonized metrics for LBI financing.

The project benefits marginalized rural communities by enhancing food, nutrition, and tenure security, especially for women. It empowers civil society, strengthens government capabilities, and de-risks sustainable business models.

Phase 1 (2021–2024) focuses on countries with substantial LBI activity and sustainability challenges, creating a foundation for systemic change.

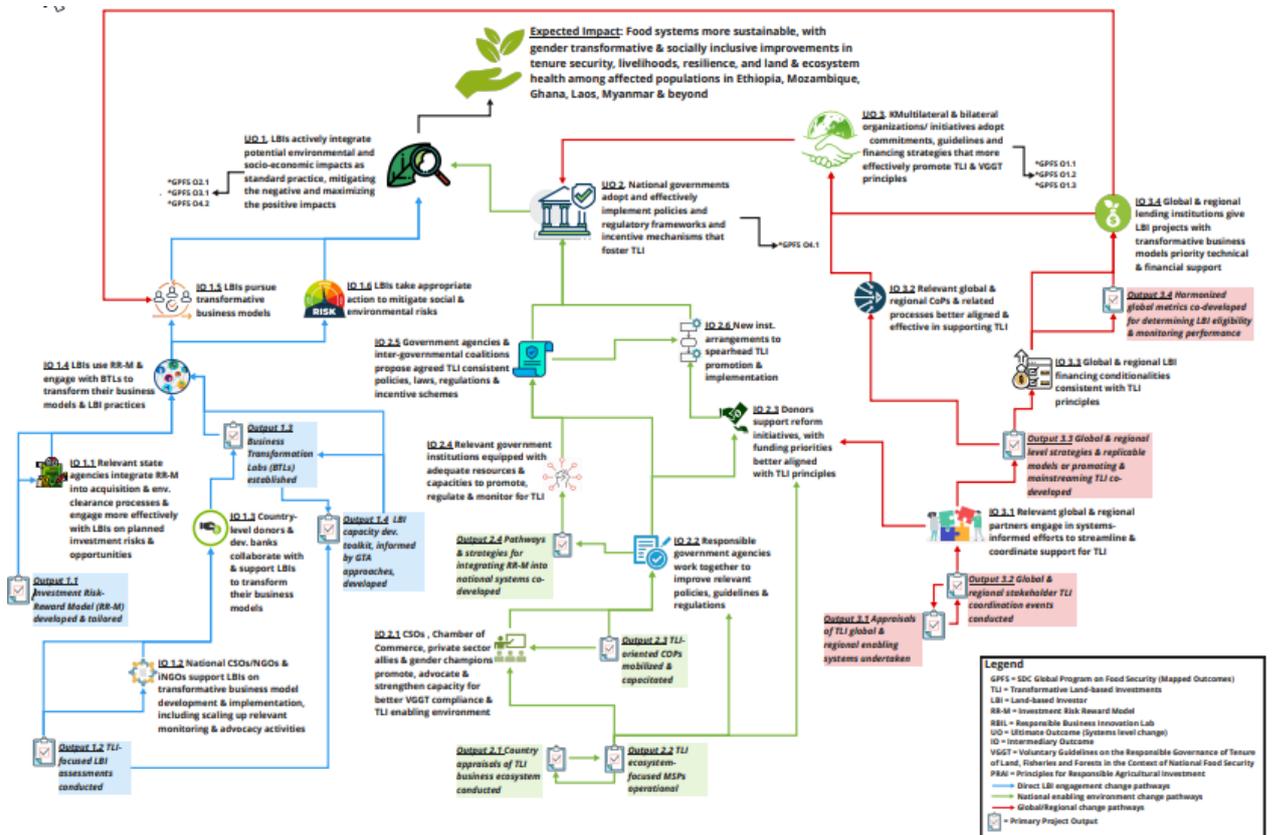


Figure 3: Theory of change of TLIP by TLIP (Prodoc)

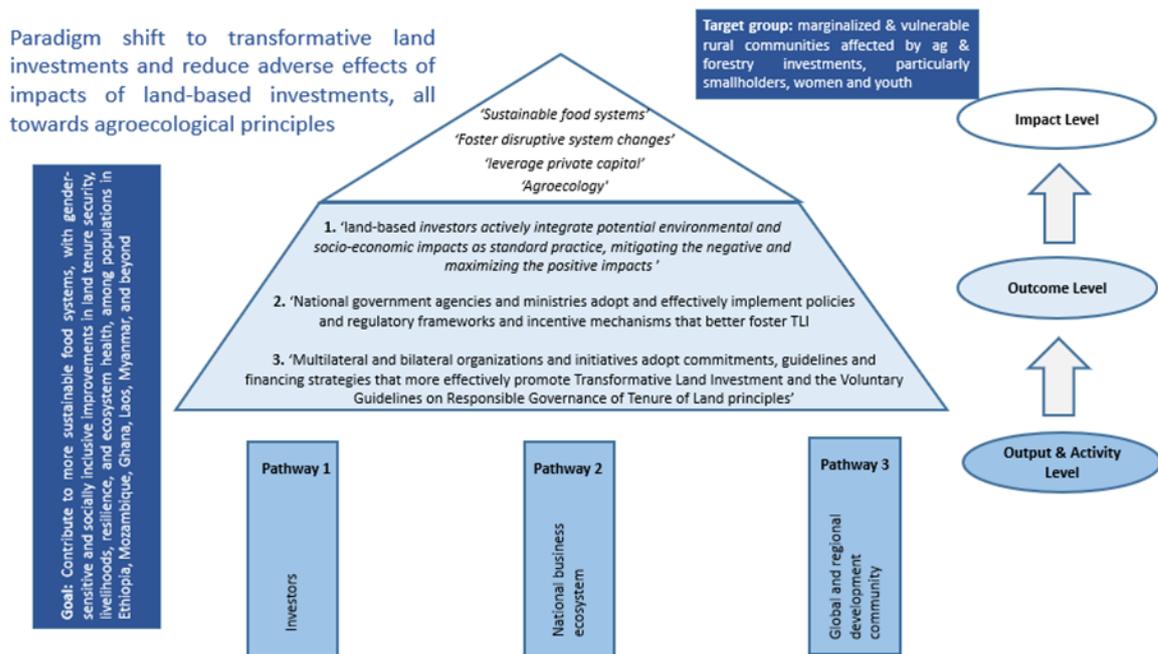


Figure 4: Our overview understanding and visualization of the TLI project

3.2 Assessment according to DAC/OECD Criteria

The TOR provided 50 evaluation questions, which we answered individually under Appendix 6.2, a separate report based on data collection and information. In this chapter, we summarize our observations and the evaluation team's assessments for each of the six DAC criteria. Conclusions and recommendations will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.2.1 Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right thing? The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

The relevance of land-based investments (LBI), simultaneously a problem and an opportunity, is high for smallholder families' food systems, which provide nutritious and healthy food, livelihood security, and environmental health. Responsible LBIs, aligned with agroecological principles, can empower smallholders—especially women—by enhancing access to resources, markets, and sustainable farming practices. They support land tenure security by respecting local rights and fostering inclusive policies, which are essential for social and economic stability. Agroecology's focus on diversity, resilience, and circular systems promotes environmental health and reduces reliance on monocultures that degrade ecosystems. When coupled with equitable frameworks, RAI values, and incentives, LBIs can drive sustainable development, improve rural livelihoods, and support climate-resilient agriculture, creating a balanced pathway for food security and environmental sustainability.

In all target countries, we see pressure on land at the cost of smallholders' well-being. Investors and governments are violating smallholders' rights and needs. Responsible investment can, in fact, be an approach to solutions. The problem is widely recognized, and many agencies, including those involved in TLIP, actively promote principles as developed and agreed upon, e.g., in CFS-RAI. The issue is highly relevant for stakeholders in land conflicts, which arise when land becomes scarce and gets a high value (which is the case in many countries).

However, there is little evidence that supporting investors, land governance, and advocacy to the international cooperation community transforms local food systems regarding agroecology, food security, and improved nutrition. While the topic of land-based investment is often addressed, its ambition to be transformative is new.

We found the issue relevant in all contexts (all five countries, two regions, and the global level). We found interest and demand by concerned stakeholders to be active in that topic. The demand comes mostly from people and institutions that work on and for the system (e.g., civil society or experts) rather than from persons that work in the system (target for change such as governments, investors, and international donor communities).

The issue is relevant due to prevailing problems. We see high interest from beneficiaries, target groups, and stakeholders in the TLIP messages and good participation in the TLIP offers. On the other hand, we can see little change so far in practices due to TLIP and little (political) willingness to change or apply the solutions TLIP offers to context challenges. The project has recently been introduced in a rather saturated support market, and its intervention intensity (e.g. investment per country) is very thin compared to other interventions.

We observed the following points in TLIP that are relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **relevance**:

- **Limited Success and Persistent Issues:** Despite numerous initiatives by the global cooperation community to address land tenure and food security, success remains limited, and unsustainable practices persist.
- **Context-Specific Challenges and Relevance:** Land governance is critical for local people in places, where conflicts and land issues are prevalent. In their absence, it is not, and smallholders show limited interest. They then prioritize resource depletion and poor agricultural practices.
- **Generic, locally adapted Approach:** The TLIP applies a centrally designed logic of change for all countries, which was contextualized with extensive consultations in a second instance only. While this ensures consistency, it may fail to address specific needs in sufficient depth and effectively change existing mechanisms of governments and the private sector.
- **Challenges in Achieving Long-Term Impact:** The project emphasizes capacity building and knowledge sharing but avoids challenging unsustainable or illegal practices. Without pressure or incentives, achieving tangible change remains difficult. The TLIP targets (investors, governments, and the international community) are not very open to reforms, are power-oriented, and are defensive.
- **Survey Insights and Stakeholder Engagement:** Survey participants rated TLIP's relevance highly (average 8/10), especially in Laos, but acknowledged biases. They found it realistic to improve the food system and nutrition via RAI (7.8).

1 - 2 ²	Overall, we rate Relevance as high, particularly for the target group if involved in (potential or acute) conflicts. In those cases, poverty risk is high, and the food system becomes dysfunctional. However, we can't see (yet) how the approach is a lever for being transformative. For example, agroecology is a system by design with high knowledge needs, and it is not a system by default as a result of responsible investments.
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² 0 = not assessed, 1 = highly satisfactory, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = unsatisfactory, 4 = highly unsatisfactory

3.2.2 Coherence

How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.

The project's rationale is very well aligned with the priorities and the language of the GPFS. It creates all the linkages of concept and action developments with the conceptual frameworks as demanded by SDC. The same is the case for the project's publications. TLIP is also coherent with government policies and international guidelines on global and regional levels. We haven't found coherence challenges regarding objectives, principles, values, or good practices. The project has an extraordinarily sound scientific and logical, convincing foundation that fits the priorities of SDC and other donors excellently. Governments and policies also don't challenge the objectives and the principles and underline them with their documents.

Many donors and projects address land-based investments. For instance, in Laos, GIZ supports smallholders in claiming their rights with advisory tools. CDE develops cartographic resources for the government to manage land investments and enables it to enforce compliance with laws. Similarly, the MLRG (SDC project implemented by LEI) supports the government of Laos in overcoming bureaucratic land governance issues in managing land concessions. The initiatives are all developed independently and with their own programmatic and strategic logic. On an operational level, we found TLIP's efforts to collaborate and find synergies, but with limited possibilities. In our observations, even within SDC, we found little design compatibility and limited information and interest in the TLIP work since global and national/regional programs serve different strategic frameworks and are reported separately. For instance, TLIP is not listed by the Swiss embassy in Vientiane among all the Swiss contributions.

TLIP has new elements compared to other land investment and land security projects, such as the transformative holistic ambition, instead of only focusing on improved governance or stakeholders' knowledge of their rights. This message is compelling but not integrated by other actors, and it comes in isolation since the weight of TLIP is very little in a country-specific context, where other actors (e.g., GIZ, but also SDC) invest much more per year and over a much bigger lifespan. Project staff try to overcome the challenge with operational measures but can't fix the systemic coherence challenge and their limited convening power. We found various synergies (e.g. taking over of expiring working groups from closing projects) but little donor and/or government coordination.

With the RRM, TLIP proposed a new tool coherently with other actions. The other innovations (CoP, MSP, BTL) are collaboration tools that fit well into the landscape of international cooperation and are well accepted. While they are welcomed by beneficiaries who share the objectives, we haven't found evidence that they reached those who need to change to reach the TLIP objectives.

To conclude, in theory, TLIP is very coherent and compatible with other interventions. In practice, coordination and collaboration with other projects are limited—not because of operational deficiencies, but due to frame conditions for which the three targets (government, private sector, and international community) are responsible. There is adequate project concept response, but the power of GPFS and TLIP is too little if the objective of systemic change is really envisaged.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **coherence**:

- **"Donor Crowdedness"** with overlapping initiatives and competition between programs may create systemic coherence challenges that need better alignment. This criterion was not sufficiently considered in the choice of countries.
- **Operational Synergies but Systemic Gaps:** We observed collaborations at the operational level between implementers of projects with similar objectives, which

fosters synergies, for instance, between MLRG and TLI projects in Laos. However, we saw little coordinated sector transformation design and limited systemic coherence.

- The strategy for the new “**Section Health and Food**” has not yet been published. From the little we know (e.g. the “one health” concept), we don’t expect big challenges to make TLIP coherent with it. Addressing the triple burden of nutrition is already a general TLIP objective.
- **Varied Policy and Stakeholder Dynamics:** Policy coherence and stakeholder engagement vary by country. Ghana shows more openness and stakeholder leverage than Laos, where a top-down approach dominates. Efforts to align with existing initiatives have helped maintain continuity in some regions.

2 - 3	TLIP fits very well in the GPFS strategy 2021-24, particularly on the objectives level. It follows the logic of bringing evidence to the global debates of the international community well. On national levels, the externally designed TLIP engagement is welcomed and coherent with the objectives but does not integrate well into poorly coordinated international cooperation strategies.
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3.2.3 Effectiveness

Is the intervention achieving its objectives? The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

The lower the objectives in the project framework, the more they are achieved. The project had operational challenges getting started, not least due to late COVID measures and general logistic issues in some countries (e.g., Myanmar and Mozambique); however, it managed to catch up, and the project generally produced the planned, mostly qualitative outputs expected so far.

RRM is developed (not yet fully tailored), LBI needs assessments done, BTL established and gender toolkits developed. Country appraisals are conducted, MSP events occur, CoPs are operational, and RRM pathways are discussed. Outputs that target the international support community (pathway 3) are progressing. Hence, we expect TLIP to mostly achieve the planned outputs without or with little delay until the end of phase 1 in mid-2025. It is unclear if the project wishes, and SDC grants a no-cost extension. On the level of Outputs, TLIP has been effective.

The outcomes' achievements are more critical. We see land-based investors actively integrate socio-economic criteria and measures to improve their impacts on the concerned communities. However, these are limited to the so-called “champions,” with few (so far, max 5 per country; more are planned for coming phases) committed investors (or their CSR and PR departments) that see the need for responsible investments. They may also be driven by ethical considerations. However, the pressure of consumers (often via standards such as organic) or export country legislators or the social unrest of the concerned communities is much more effective. Rarely do they react to local compliance requirements due to weak enforcement. We have encountered only two investors who claim to have changed due to the project; in general, we perceive that they have inspired TLIP so far. As such, this is not an issue since TLIP can learn, and their piloting and conclusions are more effective than project or science messages. However, the champion’s achievements in general can't be attributed to the project, and we haven’t found sufficient evidence that the project reaches many investments that need to change their behaviors (outcomes).

The same is the case for governments. The project managed to get into dialogue with governments; however, we have not encountered cases that led to government institutions

(executive, legislative, or judicial) adopting mechanisms to improve land administration and governance, let alone policies, frameworks, and incentives that foster transitions.

Equally, we found that TLIP found dialogues and interest in being a discussion partner of multilateral interest groups (e.g., the Interlaken group for private sector action to secure community land rights). However, so far, there is no evidence of commitment, guidelines, or finances that promote transformative land investments with at least some contribution of TLIP.

Since the ProDoc states that outcomes are to be expected after 10 years, a non-achievement of outcomes after 2.5 years can't be a critical point of assessment. Regarding whether the evaluators expect that the outcomes are likely to be achieved, we have mixed expectations and feel that the ambitions and assumptions need to be revisited with more realistic and modest expectations of outcomes and impacts.

Since outcome development has not fully started, we can't extrapolate effects or verify or reject assumptions that were made. Generally, we expect that outcomes can be observed over time if the project continues with the concept described and implicitly in the minds of the responsible persons. We see a competent and committed team, but we feel that the project is spread out too thinly to achieve what it is designed for. More focus and depth are needed if the ambitious objectives are to be reached.

We can, however, state that the outcomes won't be achieved based on the described outputs (which will be done soon), and more performance is needed to achieve the ambitious outcomes. We see a mismatch in the logical framework when 3 years of outputs are put in relation to outcomes after 10 years. There is not only a need to continue the planned 12 activity line for the years 4 to 10 but to have a more outcome-oriented rather than an output-oriented strategy.

In the first three years, much research and assessment work was done. This includes the development of baselines and tools and the creation of trust in networks. Facilitating outcomes has not started, and transformative impacts are very far. So far, we have not seen the TLIP levers of change that trigger demand for improved land governance, improved land-based investments, and adjusted development aid. The RRM can potentially improve land governance and responsible investor behavior if used by governments and investors. Whether they are willing to invest in that tool in the future is very uncertain.

As far as cross-cutting topics are concerned, TLIP engages seriously in gender and conducts deep-going gender analyses. These analyses are gender-specific and focus on women's needs and the opportunity to work gender-transformatively. This activity is planned and performed according to an expected output.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's effectiveness:

- **Ambitious Design and Slow Positioning:** The project began with strong scientific grounding but underestimated the time and effort needed to navigate national and international systems. Despite the commitment and competence of

The Logframe provides ambitious Outcomes

- *UO1 objectives: A) 21 investors/countries using the RRM to appraise investments. B) 35% improvement on a transformative business practise index, C) leveraged investment ratio of 22.1 and D) 33 LBI accessing BTL services.*
- *UO2 objectives: A) 15% improvement of a Business Ecosystem Index. B) 2.5 Million USD New national resources allocated to promoting TLI (Ethiopia and Ghana)*
- *UO3 objectives: A) 5 Million USD additional global financing for promotion of TLI and B) 3 revised policies promoting TLI*

partners, overambitious planning led to delays in operationalization.

- **Unproven strategy and big steps in Theory of Change**
While the TLI strategy is innovative, its transformative potential remains unproven. The step between land tenure governance and agroecology is very big.
- **Monitoring**
TLIP still needs to build the framework that is monitoring quantitative indicators and targets. Achievements are reported mostly qualitatively with detailed narratives, but this approach limits the ability to measure broad impacts or cost-effectiveness.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Data Usage**
TLIP collected quality data for country appraisals but lacks evidence of governments effectively using this data.

As with any theory of change, the TLIP impact chain is based on assumptions. For the Outcomes, the Output assumptions are relevant and we discuss them here:

1. *LBI and state agencies are engaged in RRM.* We see government agencies engaged, but we also realize that the engagement time is long and that engagement of operational civil servants is not yet sufficient to achieve Outcome 1. The political will of higher-level government and parliament people is required to achieve change.
2. *RRM is adapted to needs:* That is an achievable assumption in the hand of the TLIP, which is happening.
3. *Assessments of LBI are made based on quality data and gender focused:* The pilot assessments are in the hand of TLIP. However, the step that Governments and Investors assess LBI with a TLI focus has not happened (yet)
4. *BTL are adapted to domestic needs/priorities:* As far as we could observe they are adapted to the needs of the champions.
5. *BTL are well staffed and capacitated:* This is not the case. BTL is on project staff. They would need to build own structures and it requires from LBI a readiness to pay for transitional services (which is there if services of high quality and relevant).
6. *LBI engaged in gender tools and willing to incorporate these in business:* Champions are but not LBI on broad level. Bold assumption
7. *Quality data collected for country appraisal:* TLIP has collected quality data, but we cant see how governments work with these data.
8. *MSP with relevant stakeholders adapted to national level.* The Forum has so far not been a driver of change, rather an opportunity to exchange
9. *Relevant CSO in CoP and tailor-made capacity building:* CSO have capacity and willingness, but are not resourced for that. They prefer mandates over training.
10. *State agencies are willing to integrate RRM in their systems:* We can see willingness by civil servant, but could not see the interest to invest and change.
11. *Quality data are accessible and analyzed on regional and global level:* Yes, by Academia, but not regional/global governance structures
12. *Availability and interest of target participants at global events.* Interest is confirmed, however limited convening change power.
13. *Donors supportive of TLI and willing to explore how to integrate in programming:* TLIP input

- **Overambitious Outcomes in Limited Time**

The project outcomes were designed to be achieved over an 11-year horizon (with high targets in the Logframe). However, non-achievement is more a result of ambitious design and short timelines than operational flaws.

1 and 3	Overall, we rate effectiveness as good so far, particularly on the output level, but it is very uncertain if outcomes (in planning after 10 years) will be achieved qualitatively and quantitatively. Outcome development has not started yet. Assumptions are not fully explicit, and some of them haven't been fulfilled yet and remain risks.
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3.2.4 Efficiency

How well are resources used? The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.

Resources have been used efficiently. The project has produced many intellectual products that are either available to the project management (e.g., company details of investors), to beneficiaries (e.g., RRM data for governments), or to the public (e.g., scientific publications). The various project staff were productive and produced materials of high academic quality. As stated in the previous chapter, the project covered the planned activities and delivered the expected outputs thanks to the hard-working and efficient staff. The team has met regularly on various levels (project, continent, and national) and coordinated effectively. The outputs (e.g., the enabling environment document) contain much precious information in coherent structures. We observed that the staff's academic qualities and performance are very good. TLIP personnel are very busy (including commitment beyond their working time without complaints) and work efficiently.

TLIP has used the resources extensively. We expect a burning rate close to 90%, particularly regarding internal personnel costs. The project could catch up with delays in the beginning. There is likely no need for a no-cost extension.

We see the potential for efficiency gains in reducing complexity on various levels (see recommendations). While much information has been collected and stored, not all information has been used. Details are scattered, e.g., in reports and Excel sheets, and a central database with information that directly feeds into operations is missing. Some of this information based on staff's industrious and efficient work from research and interviews is also confidential and expires quickly.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **efficiency**:

- **Strong Financial and Implementation Performance:** Financial management shows an 85% burn rate over 1.5 years, with most budget lines utilized well. Implementation stayed largely on track despite challenges like COVID and government delays, supported by excellent coordination, expert delivery, and alignment with Prodoc structures.
- **Complex Project Structure and Communication Issues:** The project's complexity, academic language, and numerous activities make it challenging for stakeholders, beneficiaries, and even insiders to understand. Simplifying the intervention structure and using more accessible communication could improve efficiency, engagement, and impact.
- **Underutilization of produced resources**
Rich resources like databases and detailed company information are underutilized. Prioritizing practical, directly applicable outputs (e.g., actionable contact lists) over highly technical details could enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the work

- **Civil Society Engagement and Focus Shift**
Civil society finds capacity building relevant but prefers mandates with direct beneficiary engagement over theoretical training. Shifting from awareness-building to action-oriented interventions could make the project more effective for NGOs and target groups.
- **Risk of Over-Prescription**
While useful, the detailed and prescriptive project document adds complexity and limits flexibility. Reducing the number of interventions and focusing on fewer, clearer priorities would mitigate management risks and improve operational efficiency.

1	Overall, we rate that efficiency as very high. The project has delivered a multitude of document resources and research results that were promised in output planning.
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3.2.5 Impact

What difference is the intervention making? The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

The impact created so far is limited. It is not quantifiable and only observable in single cases. This can be explained by the short project duration and strategy, which stresses inception activities such as research, set-up, and trust-building through networking and events in the first year. Impact building and observation have not been part of the project. A second factor is the rather long impact chain in the project. From deep research, for example, of a multitude of investment projects, standards landscape, gender study, or scientific publications to changing the national frameworks, private investor behavior, and donor methodology to sustainability food system transitions based on agroecological principles, it is a very long impact chain with bold assumptions and uncertain attributions.

If the expected outcomes are uncertain, the envisaged transitions are even more uncertain. Stakeholders in the evaluation mission's focus group discussions rightly wondered how the agroecology transition could happen without technical capacity building or other agroecology-specific actions. Also, government civil servants concerned with the rule of law of land-based investments did not see the logic and direct link to the food system, without specific interventions and specialized competence in that area and not considering, for instance, short value chains or territorial food markets with agroecological or organic products of the targeted local communities. Private companies observe standards (in Laos and Ghana, mostly GAP, Organic Agriculture, and, to a lower degree, Fairtrade) and provide that information to the database. While the project does business counseling, it does not have the strategy or capacity to support technical and certification challenges

While there is no doubt that agroecology development needs investors to join in creating the impact on broader livelihoods, there is little evidence that responsible investment and good investment governance lead to the agroecology transition beyond single case studies. According to the initial plan, the TLIP still has 7 years to demonstrate the impact chain, which, in our view, requires more food system-specific measures rather than relying on responsible investment alone.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **impact**:

- **Planned Impact Not Yet Realized:** The anticipated impacts remain theoretical, with no observable community changes. Governments have not implemented policy changes, and investors either follow their own principles or remain unreachable. Champions' activities improve with pre-existing efforts.

- **Unrealistic Impact Targets:** The ambitious impact targets (e.g., 292,180 producers benefiting and 160,718 ha improved) for Phase 1 were unrealistic.
- **Strong Focus on Research and Analysis:** The project has excelled in generating rich research and analyses on various topics, including policy, gender, and investment standards. However, this has not translated into observable impact yet.
- **Disconnect Between Impact Planning and Evaluation:** The SDC evaluation questions in the TOR did not address the planned impact figures, suggesting limited relevance of these targets. This disconnect highlights a need for more grounded and realistic planning to align impact expectations with achievable outcomes.

4	Overall, we rate the project's progress as minimal compared to the targeted impact for phase 1. Provided the project strategy is further refined and developed considering our recommendations and SDC invests at the same level, we expect the impact to happen, however, to a lower level than planned and at a later stage.
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3.2.6 Sustainability

Will the benefits last? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.

The project's objective is that by 2030, the BTLs will become financially independent public-private or non-profit organizations using grant funds and service fees. Secondly, it foresees institutionalizing and outscaling transitional land investments through additional partnerships, training, exchange, and external grant provision. These partnerships shall be part of phase 3 before phasing out TLIP. Thirdly, TLIP believes that country systems will take over project activities. TLIP also believes that horizontal coordination between various actions towards transitional land investments with improved coherence and harmonization, e.g. through consistent metrics and greater harmonization and addressing inefficiencies of development agencies, would be part of the TLIP impact and sustainability contribution.

The evaluation team has not encountered these visions at the implementation level, probably not least because TLI intends to address its sustainability in phase 3 only. Future action plans shall provide more details on how this vision is achieved.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's sustainability:

- **Uncertainty Around Co-Funding and Continuation.** The requirement for 50% co-funding in the next phase has not been met yet, jeopardizing the continuation of the 11-year strategy.
- **Sustainability Vision Versus Reality:** The Prodoc outlines an idealistic sustainability vision, which relies on significant outcomes and impacts that are neither not (yet) observable nor don't seem realistic at this stage. A clearer and more practical sustainability plan is needed.
- **Sustainability of Key Components:** The RRM and BTLs show the most potential for long-term sustainability if supported by a robust business plan. In contrast, MSPs and the CoP are unlikely to become self-sustaining unless adopted by other projects.
- **Lack of Exit Strategy:** The project lacks a well-developed sustainability objective and exit strategy. Without concrete plans and agreements on how elements will be sustained post-project, their long-term viability depends on being taken over by subsequent initiatives.

3	Sustainability is insufficiently addressed yet. While the Prodoc describes a sustainability strategy, this issue is delegated to the future. The visionary sustainability statement depends on strong impact and context development, which is not observable now. Co-funding of the next phase is not yet assured
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3.3 Lessons learned and transversal issues assessment

3.3.1 Lessons concerning Gender & Youth

TLI does not have explicit transversal issues; however, gender inclusiveness is prevalent in the project. TLIP has a serious analysis before and during the project phase. Publications and analyses discuss gender issues decently and are very sensitive to gender in their messages to business and government targets. Structural, mostly cultural-based gender problems are named openly, and the project takes clear positions and is credibly engaged in gender through its sensitivity and transitional ambitions. This can be stated at the project management and global level, but also in the focus countries we visited.

Youth is not an explicit topic in the project planning. It came up during implementation, and it is an SDC evaluation question. We found that the project team is intrinsically oriented to Youth and the next generation, but that Youth is introduced as a new criterion and, therefore, much less considered in implementation. For example, we don't find Youth analyses in research, or start-ups of young people are not a specific project target in the BTLs. If a priority for SDC, Youth needs to be part of a management briefing for the second phase. That would not be a big challenge for the TLIP2.

3.3.2 Lessons concerning Governance

While we had intensive discussions with SDC and the global and country-level project management, we had little contact with the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC minutes were not subject to the evaluation documentation that was provided by SDC&TLIP, and we have only heard from the PSC and have not interacted with it. The annual reports mention external expert participation in the PSC, which is good, but don't report on the PSC's performance. We also did not see the PSC actively participating in the survey and the virtual workshop. Overall, no concerns are reported, but we can't assess the PSC's role and performance.

3.3.3 Lessons concerning Agroecology, Local Markets, and Nutrition

Agroecology, local markets, and nutrition are important topics of SDC that come from the GPFS strategy. This is well reflected on the objective level. Staff is also well aware and credibly represents the values and the directions promoted by Agroecology. However, the project design ignores that the transformation to agroecology requires more than secure land tenure and investors that provide responsible labor. The assumption that Agroecology leads to the stimulation of local markets and nutrition-sensitive agriculture is quite robust. However, a big step exists between assuring land security and supporting smallholders' changes towards more sustainable agriculture practices. Agroecology is not agriculture input but knowledge- and attitude-intensive and requires specific capacity building if a transformation to Agroecology is expected to happen on the farm level.

3.3.4 Project triggers/ levers for systemic change and global scaling

The theory of change (see Figure 2) suggests that improved land management by investors (UO1) based on RAI will impact the food system positively and lead to resilient smallholders, sustainable agriculture, and healthy nutrition. It also suggests that good land governance and good international cooperation influence investors' behavior. TLIP has (as with every project) output/outcome and outcome/impact assumptions. These assumptions are big, and the attributions of the project are rather small compared to the big expected impacts. Big steps need clearly identified levers that are powerful enough beyond the project influence so that envisaged change can happen. For TLIP, the evaluation team failed to see sufficient convening power of the various elements, which are all desirable but supposedly too weak to trigger change sufficiently far so that the models can be used to propose and convince in the global RAI dialog. While we support the intent and the logic, we question that TLIP has sufficient (financial and others such as reach to stakeholders, network, reputation, and time) resources to have as much impact as planned in so many arenas and topics (5 countries, 2 regions, global level and being transformative for land governance, food system, nutrition, and gender).

4. Assessing Options for future Developments

This report was developed based on the premise that SDC may further support TLIP according to the initial plan or use the opportunity of a need for a new project contract to introduce change, including on a strategic level. This may be grounded on evaluation findings, changes in the framework conditions (Swiss parliament or Government decisions, budget opportunities or internal strategic adjustments, changes in global, regional, or country situations or consortium changes), or changes in the partner's willingness to commit. We only discuss the evaluation findings and don't consider political change that is happening (e.g., parliament debates or the willingness of partners to fulfill the 50% co-funding condition).

Approaching the options for future development, we chose a very simple model (see Figure 3) that differentiates between the options of a) keeping the plan (**Status Quo**), b) expanding the activities (**Diversification**) or c) reducing the number of activities (**Focus**) always under the assumption that the overall resources remain the same. Important elements that can be applied are a) the geographical coverage/level of intervention, b) the pathways and tools, and c) the strategic themes.

We discussed future development on various occasions during the evaluation process, most formally at the two inclusive and virtual workshops where participants were asked to participate in the discussion and contribute their priorities. Based on the logic of Figure 3, we had 212 responses in 1 - 2 words each (more than one response per person was possible) to the three questions a) What should the project do the same (or what is planned in the Prodoc), b) what should be done less and c) what should be done more. The result is the word clouds below. Of course, these results are not representative, depending on individual engagements, and they had more of a brainstorming nature. However, the results are indicative and inspirational and contribute to the evaluators' impressions.

- Focus on **Capacity Development** aimed at **local consultants and government agencies** not least for project sustainability;
- Adaptation to Local Contexts and **flexibility for tailored approaches** rather than a one-size-fits-all model.
- **Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs):**
- **Resource Mobilization** to support the expanded activities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluating** the impact of diversified activities, supporting understanding of what works and what does not, allowing for continuous improvement.

Figure 7: Word Cloud of 35 responses (from Workshop and other responses) to what should be done less

Deepening, focusing: What should TLIP do less?

35 responses



Interestingly, Myanmar figures are again at the top of the list, indicating that there is a discussion about Myanmar's involvement. The benefit of global-level work is challenged, as are Capacity building/ training/ participation and analytic work. We interpret that as a call to direct action rather than a capacity to advocate.

Overall, there is little call to focus on activities and on increasing resources in a specific area at the cost of others.

During the interviews, again there were less ideas on how to focus. Participants stated that there is a need for

- **Clear guidelines on the project.** Due to TLIP's complexity and the opportunity to simplify, it shall become more straightforward and, hence, be more effective.
- **Focus on local contexts**, including a need for flexibility.

5. Evaluators` conclusions

5.1 Positive conclusions

- The project had an **impressive analytical start** and contributed a lot of academic and local context information to the international debate on land governance. It is a high-value resource for international organizations and academia supporting responsible investments, enriching the debate by linking it more to food and agriculture systems such as agroecology.
- **High relevance**, good coherence, excellent efficiency, and effectiveness on the output level. However, there is low effectiveness on the outcome level, **little impact so far, and an infant sustainability concept.**

- Despite challenges, the project set up and **performed well** in most countries. The partners collaborate well and contribute their long-term experience and assets to the project. Very little energy is lost due to internal conflicts, idle processes, and duplications.
- The project has **highly qualified and highly intrinsically motivated, even passionate staff**, with big ownership in the case of transformative land investments. In the two evaluation focus countries, they gained the trust of their partners (i.e., champions, government working groups, etc.)

5.2 Critical conclusions

Project complexity is too high

- TLIP is **very complex and difficult to explain**. The context's complexity, the diversity of project approaches, and the academic language present communication challenges. This is one reason there is limited outreach and few people outside the inner circle of implementation participants.
- The project intervenes in 5 countries, 2 regions, and the global level, and it addresses 3 target groups in 12 Outputs and with 4 guiding tools. All in all, that means roughly more than **50 results to be managed and monitored**. At the same time, it has an **extremely long impact chain** with big assumptions and uncertain attributions. The basic idea of making responsible investments transformational to sustainable food systems is compelling. However, the first 2,5 years of the project could not bring evidence that this will happen on a broad scale.
- TLIP takes a holistic approach and aims to showcase how the proposed methodology based on RAI can make a difference in reality and improve the social, economic, and environmental living conditions of smallholders in low-income countries. This noble and desirable goal is coherent with the GPFS strategy. However, while we endorse holistic analyses, interventions must be more targeted (acupuncture method). The project can't have this enormous convening power required for such a holistic approach. It must reduce its ambition, focus the intervention, and share the work with other initiatives.

Project resources are too broadly allocated

- TLIP resources are in the ordinary frame of an SDC global project. The project budget is low given the performance, ambitions, and complex setup. The various units of TLIP work lean and benefit from progressing IT development and the habit of working virtually and remotely. Nevertheless, change needs sufficient depth in each context.
- While the project works efficiently with the resources, effectiveness needs to improve. This requires priority on targeting the outcomes (beneficiary's behavior change) instead of focusing on one's **performance**.

Review of Theory and Levers of Change

- We conclude that after 2.5 years of project implementation, we have too little information and uncertainties about fulfilling the explicit and nonexplicit assumptions for achieving outcomes and impacts. Assumptions are the donor's responsibility; therefore, SDC needs to test assumptions once again before entering a new contract. The theory of change needs to be revisited and revised qualitatively and quantitatively in relation to the available resources.
- We particularly feel that food system ambitions and agroecology introductions need specific measures or further and deeper collaboration partnerships (e.g., with the APP

project, the ALISEA network, or CDE in Laos), with work sharing and the possibility of deepening the work.

6. Recommendations on further TLI Support

We make these recommendations based on the assumption that the overall budget remains the same (10 Million USD for 3 years), with SDC providing 50% of it and the partners finding sufficient co-funding in the TLIP budget.

We consider the TLIP an important project highly relevant to the food system (including the future one-health approach). It has a very innovative character, and the potential to profile consortium partners and SDC in development approaches. Hence, **in our view, the project must continue.**

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, we see a clear **need for reforms for the next phase of the project** to make it a successful component of the SDC global program and eventually also serve Swiss multilateral collaboration (this means projects shall reach the objectives and be useful as a reference for SDC in global and internal debates).

We have the following recommendations:

1: Continue investment in TLI with increased or at least the same efforts

TLI is a relevant issue, and the idea of transforming food systems through TLI deserves a real chance. While the investments so far risk getting lost in the too-thin spreading of resources, the idea can be a game changer, when it gets the required strategic and financial support. If well-focused, TLI can become a successful SDC asset with the present means level.

2: Revise Objective System

We recommend keeping the overall goal (Prodoc version) in principle but include “Food System,” “Agroecology,” and “Nutrition” to make the strategy more explicit. We also recommend removing the target countries from the overall goal to clarify that intervention countries serve as representative cases for the global concept contributions rather than with a national agenda and commitment.

In communication, TLIP should become more modest and evidence-based. Differentiate between TLI and TLIP. Promote realistic goals and success cases of TLIP and TLI.

The outcomes shall focus mainly on Investors (UO1) and the International community (UO3).

Articulate the ToC in more detail, especially linking the impact chain from outputs to outcomes.

#3: Reduce complexity, focus the strategy

The main focus of the TLIP is to demonstrate that TLI promotion works and that the approach can be copied. Therefore, the focus needs to be on the transformational character rather than on general land management (from LBI management to TLI). TLIP shall reduce its intervention elements and focus on two countries. We recommend:

- Two successful countries are sufficient to reach the purpose of testing the approach and promoting it on a global level. Ghana and Laos (alternatively, Ghana and Ethiopia) are suitable for that. (-> overall strategy)
- On the outcome level, focus on the work with investors (-> UO1, for the national level) and the international community (-> UO3, for the regional and global levels). The work with Governments (UO2) shall focus on the RRM and one annual MSP event.

- Turn BTL into Business Development Services companies (BDS) in the market system approach (MSD) and support them in their business plan and technical competence depending on investors' demand. A part of BTL actions must be direct interventions at the community level to support the target group in adopting food system changes such as agroecology and nutrition. (focus Output 1.3)
- Reduce the MSP to a flexible annual event (reduce Output 2.2)
- Turn the CoP from capacity building into mandates for the NGOs to accompany communities in the BTL program (re-strategize Output 2.3 and include into 1.3). Create a link to BTL so that the LBI's CSR means to contribute to the NGO mandates.
- Support the introduction of RRM for countries that invest in it (conditional to relevant cost contribution from the governments. The countries invest, TLIP supports rather than the other way round as of now). Make a long-term business plan for the RRM use (re-strategize 2.4)
- Gender and youth should be cross-cutting and mainstreamed across all outputs and not an output on their own (mainstream 1.4).
- Focus UO3 on a clear advocacy strategy for TLI and harmonized metrics (re-strategize 3.3 and 3.4) in a limited number of highly relevant fora.
- Give up 1.1., 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, and 3.2. Conclude the work done in Phase 1 and integrate these assets into the re-focused activities where appropriate and needed.

This requires strong strategies a) for BTL (turning into sustainable BDS), b) on Civil Society mandates (to support communities for food systems improvement facilitation), c) on RRM introduction (on demand of Government and companies that are paying), and d) advocacy to international communities (with a target on selected relevant processes). Ownership and driving change must come more from stakeholders rather than from implementing service providers.

#4: Stress transformation strategy

Review the Theory of Change and identify the levers and triggers for transformations starting in phase 2. Set "SMART" objectives and realistic assumptions. Focus on creating outcomes rather than outputs. Test the robustness of the TLI approach and make credible recommendations for the SDC global-level work. Set up clear and feasible MEL with timed indicator progress

#5: Stress sustainability concept

A realistic sustainability plan shall be developed with concrete business plans relying on the participation of market actors rather than on follow-up programs by the donor community and other international funding. RRM and BTL are the elements with the highest sustainability opportunities if they are based on the ownership and investment willingness of sustainable service providers/users. TLIP and SDC shall only be catalysts.

#6 Improve usefulness for SDC global work

Given the nature of TLIP as a global program with a global scope and SDC's interest in profiling the Swiss contribution and reputation in the global cooperation communities, the TLIP needs to include SDC as a beneficiary. Consequently, TLI considers and orients itself to these needs and provides relevant services for behavioral change. SDC may benefit from high-quality policy briefs, methodological materials, and evidence of how the TLI of TLIP and other actors can be effective and impactful. The new "One Health" approach in the future SDC section strategy 2026 onwards shall play a role in planning phase 2.

7. Appendices

7.1 SDC DAC evaluation grid

Tool 7: Assessment Grid for the DAC Criteria

Transformative Land Investment Project (TLIP) for the Period 2022-2025³

Period of phase: 2022 – 2025

Project Number: 7F-10494.01

Contribution agreement: 81071212

Assessment Grid for project/programme evaluations of the SDC interventions

Version: 30.06.2020

Note: this assessment grid is used for evaluations of SDC financed projects and programmes (hereinafter jointly referred to as an 'intervention'). It is based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria.⁴ In mid-term evaluations, the assessment requires analysing the likelihood of achieving impact and sustainability. All applicable sub-criteria should be scored and a short explanation should be provided.

Please add the corresponding number (0-4) representing your rating of the sub-criteria in the column 'score':

0 = not assessed, 1 = highly satisfactory, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = unsatisfactory, 4 = highly unsatisfactory

³ Project name as used in the ProDoc title

⁴ For information on the 2019 revisions of the evaluation framework see: Better Criteria for Better Evaluations. Revised Evaluation Criteria. Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2019.

Key aspects based on DAC Criteria		
Relevance		
1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group.	1	Overall, we rate Relevance as high, particularly for the target group if involved in (potential or acute) conflicts. In those cases, poverty risk is high, and the food system becomes dysfunctional.
2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not included in target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention.	1	Same as above, since the RAI is a priority in all target countries and it is very political.
3. The extent to which core design elements of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group.	2	We see the needs reflected by the target group directly influenced by land-based investments. However, we can't see (yet) how the approach is a lever for being transformative. For example, agroecology is a system by design with high knowledge needs, and it is not a system by default as a result of responsible investments
Coherence		
4. Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies).	3	TLIP fits very well in the GPFS strategy 2021-24, particularly on the objectives level. It follows the logic of bringing evidence to the global debates of the international community well. On national levels, the externally designed TLIP engagement is welcomed and coherent with the objectives. However, global and national SDC programs don't collaborate well. There is little interest and acceptance from national programs.
5. External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other	2	It fits well with other donors' priorities. However, there is little donor coordination and collaboration. Everyone—including SDC—has their

actors in the country and thematic field (complementarity and synergies).		own programs. There is a big donor crowdedness, and the interest of governments and investors is limited.
Effectiveness		
6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.	2	Overall, we rate effectiveness as good so far, particularly on the output level, but it is very uncertain if outcomes (in planning after 10 years) will be achieved qualitatively and quantitatively. .
7. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes).	1/ Output 3/Outcom	Outputs for phase 1 are achieved or expected to be achieved. However not so the outcomes. Outcome development has not started yet. Assumptions are not fully explicit, and some of them haven't been fulfilled yet and remain risks
8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.	1	No transversal themes were identified. Gender is an output and is well achieved. Youth is not part of the project design, but addressed to some extent
Efficiency		
9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.	1	Overall, we rate that efficiency as very high. The project has delivered a multitude of document resources and research results that were promised in output planning.
10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).	1	While there were delays in some countries in the beginning, they catch up and are expected to achieve outputs by end of the phase
11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.	2	Monitoring framework not yet set up. Extensive qualitative baselines for project work purpose but not for all target indicators. PSC was absent during evaluation and cant be assessed.

Impact		
<p>12. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention.</p> <p>Note: when assessing this criterion, the primary focus is the intended 'higher-level effects'. In the event that <i>significant</i> unintended negative or positive effects can be discerned, they must be specified in the justification column, especially if they influence the score.</p>	4	<p>Overall, we rate the project's targeted impact for phase 1 as minimal. Provided the project strategy is further refined and developed considering our recommendations and SDC invests at the same level, we expect the impact to happen, however, to a lower level than planned and at a later stage.</p> <p>The project planning overstated the impacts, which are not measurable with reasonable means.</p> <p>Implementors counted on 11 years of implementation and the assessment takes place 2.5 years after launch.</p>
Sustainability		
<p>13. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.</p>	3	<p>Sustainability is insufficiently addressed yet. While the Prodoc describes a sustainability strategy, this issue is delegated to the future. The visionary sustainability statement depends on strong impact and context development, which is not observable now.</p>
<p>14. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.</p>	3	<p>Partners have contributed co-funding (20%) but for the next phase it is not yet assured.</p>
<p>15. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.</p>	3	<p>There is high dependency of implementors and target groups on donor financing. Appetite for political and company policy reforms is low and depends on consumer and rural neighbourhood community pressures. Change is desperately needed, but challenging to achieve. Focus required which is difficult in global system-oriented program.</p>

7.2 Answers to the evaluation questions

See separate report

7.3 Literature

Project documents

- Needs survey
- Lao Results
- Lao analysis
- Community Survey
- Gender Analysis
- FGD guide
- Appraisal LaoPDR
- Appraisal Myanmar
- Appraisal Ethiopia
- Appraisal Ghana
- MSP Consultations LaoPDR
- MSP Launch Ghana
- MSP Launch Ethiopia
- MSP Stakeholder List Mozambique
- MSP CoP Planning Document SSA-SNV
- MSP Terms of Engagement Ghana
- A Ghana CoP Launch Report
- Initiatives mapping.xlsx
- Global appraisal full report
- Global appraisal summary
- Progress Report - Transformative Land Investment, different years
- TLI Communications Strategy
- TLI_LogFrame
- Launch Program

Other literature

- C. Luttrell, A.M. Larson, G. Schoneveld, R. Kalman, E. Gallagher (2024): Transformative land investment - How do environmental, social, governance and societal standards add up? Info brief CIFOR-ICRAF
- G. Schoneveld, X. Weng (2023): Smallholder value creation in agrifood chains: Value network approach. In: Elsevier - Land Use Policy 131 (2023) 106676
- G. Schoneveld (2022): Transforming food systems through inclusive agribusiness In: Elevier - World Development 158 (2022) 105970
- Netherland Enterprise Agency (2024): LAND-at-scale Mali: Boosting local capacity to manage land conflicts and protect customary rights in Mali (<https://projects.rvo.nl/projects/nl-kvk-27378529-las20ml1o>)
- CIFOR-ICRAF (2024): Land investment standards and guidelines - An overview in light of the need for food systems transformation (2024)

7.4 Reference to other deliverables

The evaluation produced the following available products:

1. Letter of interest and FiBL-Technical and financial offers
2. Inception report
3. Minutes of the interviews
4. Results of the survey
5. Country mission minutes
6. Workshop Presentation
7. Report about the answers to the 50 Evaluation Questions
8. SDC Evaluation Grid
9. Administrative reports (finances, timesheets, and supporting documents)

7.5 Ghana and Laos Mission Plan

Ghana 20th – 28th October, 2024

Sunday, 20th October

- Travel time for Toralf. Arrival in Ghana 19:50 – 20:40

Monday, 21st Oct, 2024:

SNV OFFICE

- 8:30 – 10:00 In-person meeting with SNV: Security briefing for TLI evaluators at SNV office, introductions, review of mission visit in Ghana, overview of SNV, and presentation on TLI project phase I activities and results.
- 10:30 – 11:30 Online interview with TLI stakeholder from the MSP, Mr. Selorm Quame, Oil Palm Association of Ghana
- 12:30 – 14:00 Online interview with Mawuli Sevor, CIFOR, Data- Household survey
- 15:00 – 16:00 In-person meeting with Magdalene Wüst, Deputy Head of Co-operation – Swiss Embassy; North-Ridge, Accra

Tuesday, 22nd October, 2024

FIELD VISIT

- 5:00 – 20:00 BTL Champion - MIRO Forest Limited at Drobonso, Ashanti Region.

Wednesday, 23rd October, 2024

SNV OFFICE

- 10:00 – 11:00 Online interview with TLI Stakeholder from the BTL, Prof Kingsley Opoku Appiah, KNUST Business School
- 13:20 – 14:05 Online interview with CSO stakeholder on the MSP, Dr. Abena Karikari, Abuntu for Development; CSO- MSP
- 14: 15 – 15:00 Team discussion on interviews

Thursday, 24th October, 2024

AT PEDUASE VALLEY RESORT, EASTERN REGION

- 8:00 -10:00 to Peduse, Eastern Region.

- 10:00 – 12:00 Observation at TLI stakeholders meeting at Peduase Valley Resort: SNV review meeting with TLI Stakeholders.
- 14:20 – 15:25 In person interview with TLI RRM Expert, Dr. Frank Gyamfi Yeboah, KNUST Department of Economics.
- 16:00 Travel, TLI evaluation Team from Suhum to Accra.
- Toralf Departs from Accra.

Friday, 25th October, 2024

FIELD VISIT

- 8:00 -10:00 Travel to Suhum, Eastern Region .
- 10:15 – 15:00 Field visit to Land-based investor Champion, Yayra Glover Organic Cocoa at Suhum, Eastern Region.
- 14:00 -14:30 Summary visit update to Toralf

Monday, 28th October, 2024

- 9:00 am - 10:15 In-person interview by TLI evaluator Ernestina joined online by Toralf with Dr. Foster Boateng, TLI Stakeholder from MSP, Director for the Tree Crop Development Authority in Ghana.
- Interview recording editing.

Laos 20th to 27th November 2024

Thursday

16 - 17.30: TLIP Team Laos: in Person and online

- Logistics (program, debriefing, mission finances, contacts, etc.), Overview of TLIP Laos, clarification of approaches, introduction to partners, and start brainstorming about future orientation.

Friday

08:30 – 10:00: Mr. Micah Ingalls (Mekong Region Land Governance, MRLG)

- MRLG and its work, touching points and synergies with TLI, SDC coordination, and suggestions to TLI from an expert view.

11:00: SDC office Mekong region/Laos:

- SDC in Laos/Mekong, relation to TLIP and global program including MLRG. Complementarity with private sector work. From rice sufficiency to nutrition. Land tenure security. Dialog with China.

13:00 – 14:30: Ms. Phouvone Thammavong (Investment Promotion Department, MPI)

- Work with TLIP under MoU. RAI Task Force, RRM Model for new investment projects, administrating/managing investors, participation, regional guidelines, Gender, challenges of law enforcement, incentives for responsible investments, prosperity of farmers as objective.

15:00 – 16:30: Ms. Khankeo Oupravanh (GIZ)

- From RGIL to ILM-MR, FPIC, Reaching the village and smallholders, extension materials, need for learning attitude and simplicity, Conflicts and resolutions

18:00 – 20:00: Manivanh Aliyavong and Marie-Christine Lebret (Ali-SEA, GRET)

- ALISEA, ASSET and APP, Agroecology in TLI, contribution to same SDC strategy

Saturday

12.30 Team Discussion

- Logistics (program, debriefing, mission finances, contacts, etc.), Overview of TLIP Laos, clarification of approaches, introduction to partners, and start brainstorming about future orientation. Lab and MSP/MSD and their functioning.

13.30 – 15.00 Saffron Coffee

- Company profile and its operations, growth strategy, relationship to farmers and building groups, scalability of their approach

16.30 – 18.00 FGD Discussion in the village

- Livelihood, challenges, extension, coffee growing, village and natural resources development, economic development and wellbeing impact, nutrition, health and education, MEL

Sunday

09.00 – 10:00: Team discussion

- RRM, CoP and its functioning. More/less/status quo of xy for future

11:00 Discussion at the Airport/Flight

- CoP, Capacity Building and role of Gvt/CSO and private sector in Laos, MSP, Lab, Myanmar

Monday

8.00 DALaM/MAF

- DALAM/MAF role in TLI with SAEDA, RAI, study tours, Vision and work of DALAM for RAI, RRM unknown, Gvt vision for Ag and RLI, collaboration Gvt with project without CSO, (impact) monitoring. Role of ASEAN (Guidelines) for Gvt

10.00 MLRG, regional RAI advisor, Naomi

- TLI and ASEAN, Backstopping and assessment work and scientific publications, RRM and its opportunities and challenges, Link to global food system discussions, private sector, and finance sector; role of incentive/regulations(carrot/stick), role and limits of CSO. More/less of ..

13.00 LaoDRRHA

- Work of LaoDRRHA and AsiADRRRHA. RAI techn. working group, role of CSO, CSO functioning and development suggestions. More/less of ...

15.30 SAEDA

- Role of SAEDA in TLI. CSOs and platforms in Laos. History, structure and operation of SAEDA. TLI and agroecology and organic agriculture, ALISEA, PGS/ICS. More/less of...

Tuesday: CDE visit and debriefing with the team in RECOFTC Vientiane office.

7.6 Terms of References (TOR)

See separate file

Answers to Evaluation Questions

for the Project

Transformative Land Investment Project / Period of phase: 2022 – 2025

Project Number: 7F-10494.01



Appendix to main report 7.3: Answers to evaluation questions

Final Version

**Markus Arbenz (FiBL), Toralf Richter (FiBL), Marcus Giger (CDE),
Ernestina Mensah (Ghana), Khamlouang Keoka (Laos)**

Frick – Switzerland, 28 January 2025

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List of Abbreviations

(see complete list in the main report)

AU	African Union
CDE	Centre for Development and Environment
CFS-RAI	Committee on World Food Security`s Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems
EEA	Enabling Environment Appraisals
EOA	Ecological Organic Agriculture
ESG	Environmental and Social Governance
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessments
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FiBL	Research Institute for Organic Agriculture
GPFS	Global Program Food Security
ILC	International Land Coalition
LBI	Land-Based Investment
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
RRM	Risk-Reward Model
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and
TLI	Transformative Land Investments
TLIP	Transformative Land Investment Project
TPP	Agroecology Transition Platform
VGFSyN	Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition
	VGGT Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries & Forests

Answers to the evaluation questions

Evaluation Steps:

Step 1 Inception report: purpose planning

Step 2 Desk research/specific interviews: information gathering

Step 3 Online survey: information gathering

Step 4 Virtual workshop, verification of information so far

Step 5 Field missions: information gathering

Step 6/7 Evaluation report, synthesis

Steps 2, 3 and 5 are sources of information. 1, is the organization, 4 is a verification and 6/7 is the synthesis.

Sources of Information:

- A. Literature/documents
- B. Stakeholders on global (g) and local/country levels (c)
- C. Staff on global (g) and country level (c)
- D. SDC/donors
- E. FiBL/Evaluators.

#Q	Question	Answer from Step	Answer from source	Remarks
Relevance – is TLI responding to a priority?				
I Ia	How far is the TLI project on a global level relevant to contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030? And specifically, related to the selected countries?	3, 5	B, C, D	
	The TLI project promotes sustainable land investments and, by doing so, contributes to SDG goals, enhancing food security, fostering gender equality, and building resilient ecosystems. Its integrated approach and focus on collaboration with various stakeholders are essential for achieving meaningful progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Continuous monitoring and adaptive management will be necessary to ensure that the project remains responsive to the evolving needs of the communities it serves and effectively contributes to the global goals.			

Results

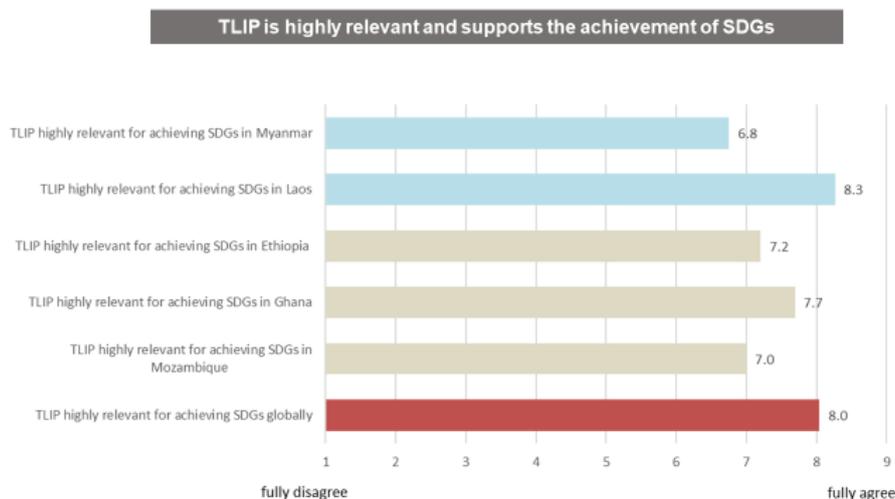


Figure: Results of the online survey (n = 24)

1. Alignment with Specific SDGs

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** TLI focuses on enhancing livelihoods and resilience among rural populations, contributing to poverty reduction through improved land tenure security and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** The TLI project aims to enhance food security by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and responsible land-based investments (LBIs). By targeting marginalized communities, the project seeks to improve access to safe and nutritious food, directly contributing to the goal of ending hunger.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** The project emphasizes gender-sensitive approaches, aiming to empower women and marginalized groups in land tenure and agricultural practices. By promoting women's rights to land and resources, the TLI project supports gender equality and social inclusion.
- **SDG 15 (Life on Land):** TLI promotes responsible land management practices that protect ecosystems and promote biodiversity. This focus on environmental sustainability aligns with the goal of combating land degradation and ensuring the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.
- **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** The TLI project fosters collaboration among various stakeholders, including government, private sector, and civil society. By building partnerships and harmonizing donor strategies, TLI enhances collaborative efforts towards sustainable development.

Moreover, the TLI project explicitly aims to contribute to more sustainable food systems, which is crucial for achieving multiple SDGs. By focusing on improving land tenure security, livelihoods, and ecosystem health, the project supports overarching goals related to food security and nutrition.

Through initiatives such as Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) and Business Transformation Labs (BTLs), the TLI project facilitates knowledge sharing and capacity building among stakeholders. This supports **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** by promoting learning and innovation in sustainable practices.

The TLI project is designed to complement regional and national programs, particularly in countries like Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Laos, and Myanmar. By addressing local challenges related to land-

based investments and food systems, the project aligns with SDC's commitment to supporting sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in these regions.

Based on the responses of the project responsible persons in the respective countries, we found the following results by country:

Ghana

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** TLI focuses on enhancing livelihoods and resilience among rural populations, contributing to poverty reduction through improved land tenure security and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** TLI aims to improve food systems and enhance food security by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and responsible land-based investments (LBIs). The project targets marginalized communities, aiming to benefit approximately 25,000 vulnerable individuals.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** The project emphasizes gender-sensitive improvements in land tenure security and livelihoods, empowering women and marginalized groups.
- **SDG 15 (Life on Land):** By promoting agroecological practices and sustainable land management, TLI contributes to the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Ethiopia

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** TLI focuses on enhancing livelihoods and resilience among rural populations, contributing to poverty reduction through improved land tenure security and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** Similar to Ghana, TLI aims to create more sustainable food systems, addressing food security challenges in Ethiopia.
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** The project promotes practices that enhance environmental resilience, aligning with climate adaptation strategies.

Mozambique

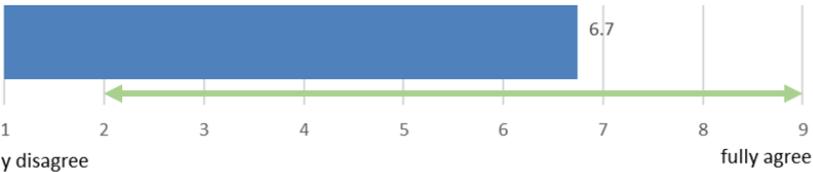
- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** TLI focuses on enhancing livelihoods and resilience among rural populations, contributing to poverty reduction through improved land tenure security and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** TLI's focus on sustainable agricultural investments aims to improve food security and nutrition among vulnerable populations.
- **SDG 15 (Life on Land):** The project encourages responsible land management practices that protect ecosystems and promote biodiversity.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** TLI aims to empower women and marginalized groups in land tenure and agricultural practices.

Laos

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** TLI focuses on enhancing livelihoods and resilience among rural populations, contributing to poverty reduction through improved land tenure security and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** TLI supports the development of sustainable food systems and responsible agricultural investments, addressing food security issues in Laos.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** The project emphasizes social inclusion and gender-sensitive approaches, aiming to empower women in agricultural practices.
- **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** TLI fosters collaboration among various stakeholders, including government, private sector, and civil society, to create a conducive environment for responsible investments.

Myanmar

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** TLI aims to improve livelihoods and resilience among rural communities, contributing to poverty alleviation.
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** The project focuses on enhancing food security through sustainable agricultural practices and responsible land investments.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** TLI addresses gender disparities in land ownership and agricultural practices, promoting women's empowerment.

2	Are the concepts such as transformational land-based investments, VGGT, RAI, etc., sufficiently clearly defined?	3	B, Cg	
2	<p>While the concepts of VGGT and RAI are recognized as important guiding frameworks on an international level for land-based investments, stakeholders feel that the definition should be translated into more practical guidance. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensure effective implementation and stakeholder engagement, ultimately contributing to the project's goals of promoting sustainable and responsible land investments.</p> <div data-bbox="301 535 1096 600" style="background-color: #444; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Concepts of TLI are clearly defined and well known </div>  <p><i>Figure: Results online survey (n = 24)</i></p> <p>In detail:</p> <p>The TLI concept has been developed by the project consortium and framed as a holistic approach to promoting responsible land-based investments that are socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. It emphasizes the need for business models that support smallholder farmers and local consumption while adhering to agroecological principles. However, while the overarching goals and principles are outlined, specific operational definitions and metrics for what constitutes "transformational" investments will be explicitly detailed in a later phase of the project.</p> <p>The Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure (VGGT) serves as a normative framework aimed at ensuring secure land tenure rights and promoting responsible governance of land, forests, and fisheries. While the guidelines are recognized for their inclusivity and focus on human rights, critiques suggest that they can be ambiguous and may not provide clear, actionable measures for implementation.</p> <p>The Responsible Agricultural Investments (RAI) principles are intended to guide agricultural investments to ensure they are socially responsible and environmentally sustainable. In Southeast Asia, they have been adopted in their own version (ASEAN RAI), taking into consideration the regional context. While the RAI provides a framework for promoting investor responsibilities, public discussions have expressed concerns about their effectiveness in practice.</p> <p>Interviews conducted during the project reveal that while the importance of these concepts is recognized, their definitions may not be uniformly understood across different stakeholders. For instance, some stakeholders are well-versed in VGGT and RAI, while others lack familiarity.</p> <p>The TLI principles were developed to shift the focus from VGGT and RAI discussions to a more integrated food systems approach, and they can be assessed as an innovative contribution of the project to the discourse.</p>			
3	How far can the TLI principles contribute to improved Food Systems?	5	B, C, D	
	<p>The TLI principles have the potential to contribute to improved food systems by promoting sustainable practices, empowering smallholders, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and linking policy with practice. However, principles alone will not change the investment policies without any change in the cultural and political environment, including of governments and private sector actors.</p>			

It is a realistic idea to successfully promote improved food systems and improved nutrition via more sustainable practices in LBI

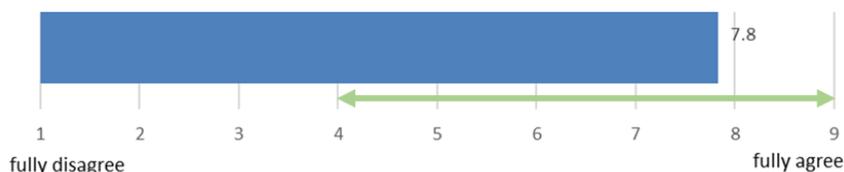


Figure: Results online survey (n = 24)

How does it contribute in theory?

Governance and Tenure Security: The TLI principles emphasize the importance of secure land rights, particularly for women and marginalized groups. By fostering equal land rights, the TLI enhances tenure security, crucial for encouraging investment in sustainable agricultural practices. Secure land rights give farmers the confidence to invest in their land, thereby improving productivity and contributing to more resilient food systems.

Social Inclusion: TLI principles advocate for social inclusion by expanding market opportunities for smallholders and strengthening their access to productive resources. By empowering smallholder farmers and enhancing their bargaining power, the project can help integrate them into value chains, ensuring they benefit from agricultural investments. This inclusivity is essential for building equitable food systems that can withstand shocks and contribute to overall food security.

Environmental Stewardship: The TLI principles promote the protection of high conservation value ecosystems and adopt agroecological production practices. By advocating for sustainable land management and circular production along the supply chain, the project contributes to environmental resilience, which is vital for the sustainability of food systems. Healthy ecosystems support agricultural productivity and food security, making environmental stewardship a critical component of improved food systems.

Mitigating Negative Impacts: The TLI principles include mechanisms to prevent negative unintended consequences of land-based investments. By addressing potential risks and ensuring compliance with environmental and social safeguards, the project can help avoid the pitfalls of large-scale land acquisitions that often lead to food insecurity and displacement of local communities. This proactive approach is essential for maintaining community access to food and resources.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: Establishing Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) is essential for aligning policies and practices with the TLI principles and ensuring that food systems are responsive to local needs and challenges. Engaging diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes enhances the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving food systems.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing: Through initiatives such as Business Transformation Labs (BTLs) and training programs, the TLI project facilitates knowledge sharing and capacity building among stakeholders. However, the trickle-down effect of such training activities for the farmers at the community level is not yet given at that moment. This focus on education and training is crucial for promoting sustainable practices and ensuring local producers meet international standards. By equipping stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge, the TLI principles can lead to more effective implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.

4	Is it realistic to promote agroecology and improved nutrition via LBI's?	3, 5	B, C	
While promoting agroecology and improved nutrition via LBIs may be realistic or not, success will depend on a comprehensive approach that includes stakeholder engagement, capacity building, financial				

	<p>incentives, and effective monitoring. Ongoing commitment and collaboration among all stakeholders will be essential for meaningful transformation. Identifying levers and triggers with convening power, such as potential social unrest, concrete customer requests, and/or legislative minimum requirements, is key to starting a transformation process.</p> <p>The TLIP emphasizes integrating agroecological practices into LBIs by promoting equity, gender, environmentally friendly methods, and sustainable agricultural practices. TLIP wants to empower the targeted smallholders and create political willingness in the private and governmental sectors and the international cooperation community.</p> <p>The link between LBI and TLI principles and agroecology is logical; however, it is not a mandatory step since responsible land investment may still lead to non-agroecological farming practices by investors and smallholders in the investment areas. So far, there is little evidence that promoting TLI leads to the uptake of agroecology and improved nutrition on a broader level. That would need more time. As stated in Q3, we see three preconditions for transitions to happen:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pull approach: To implement AE practices, financial mechanisms, such as tax benefits or subsidies for companies adopting AE practices, can encourage responsible investments. Aligning financial incentives with sustainable practices motivates LBIs to prioritize agroecology and nutrition in their business models 2. Push approach: Investors consider TLI principles to avoid risks such as a dissatisfied workforce, public scandals harming their reputation, and negatively influencing customers' purchase decisions or legal pursuits. 3. Framework conditions conducive to TLI create a plane-level field between private sector competitors so that costly investments to lower negative environmental and social impacts (e.g., labour laws, one health requirements, environmental emission, or residue standards). <p>Finally, it must be underlined that investors need to commit to a long-term commitment beyond the project's duration. Agroecology is not a quick-fix solution. The transition to sustainable practices may take time to yield visible results, and investors and donors must be prepared for this timeline.</p>			
5	To what extent did the TLI phase I address the main challenges of the countries?	5	B, Cc, D	
	<p>The TLI Phase 1 project made significant strides in addressing the main challenges faced by the participating countries: Ghana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Laos, and Myanmar.</p> <p>In detail:</p> <p>Ghana faced issues related to land tenure security, inadequate representation of local stakeholders in land-based investments (LBIs), and the need for improved community relations. To answer the challenges, the project established Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) to enhance stakeholder engagement and representation. Needs assessments were conducted to identify gaps in LBI practices, and a focus was placed on agroecological production systems to promote sustainable practices. The project emphasized community-level assessments to ensure local needs were addressed.</p> <p>Ethiopia's main challenges included attracting responsible investments while ensuring that local communities benefit from LBIs. Concerns about the effectiveness of existing policies and the need for better coordination among stakeholders were also prevalent.</p> <p>To answer the challenge, the project facilitated stakeholder engagement through MSPs and conducted needs assessments to inform policy improvements. The project aimed to strengthen the enabling environment for LBIs by collaborating with government agencies to adopt and implement policies aligned with TLI principles.</p> <p>Mozambique experienced startup delays due to bureaucratic processes and personnel changes, which hindered effective stakeholder engagement.</p>			

	<p>Despite these challenges, the project initiated community-level assessments and engaged external specialists to address personnel issues. The establishment of MSPs was planned to enhance collaboration among stakeholders and address the unique challenges faced in the country.</p> <p>Laos faced challenges related to the implementation of land policies, community participation in investment decisions, and the need for better alignment of existing platforms.</p> <p>As answer, the project contributed to existing MSPs and facilitated discussions on policy environments for responsible agricultural investments (RAI). Needs assessments were conducted to identify barriers and opportunities for improving the enabling environment for LBIs.</p> <p>Myanmar's challenges included limited government representation in stakeholder discussions due to the current political situation in the country and the need for improved community engagement in LBIs.</p> <p>The project established MSPs that united private sector and civil society actors to answer the challenges, enhancing dialogue and collaboration. Needs assessments were also conducted to understand the specific challenges faced by LBIs and local communities.</p>			
6	Does the project address the main issues faced by the rural poor, and especially those who are most left behind such as women and youth in the rural areas?	5	B, Cc	
6	<p>The TLI project has tried to address the challenges faced by the rural poor, particularly women. For example:</p> <p>The project recognized the need to target vulnerable populations, including women and disabled individuals. It acknowledged the unique challenges faced by these groups and called for more specific activities to address their needs. This indicates a commitment to inclusivity and social equity within the project framework.</p> <p>Establishing the MSPs has facilitated dialogue among various stakeholders, including local communities. This collaborative approach is crucial for ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are heard and considered in decision-making processes related to land-based investments.</p> <p>The TLI project has implemented training sessions to equip women with essential skills to participate in land-based investments. For example, specific training programs have been initiated for women in banana and plantain cultivation, enhancing their economic opportunities. This focus on capacity building is crucial for empowering these groups and improving their livelihoods.</p> <p>However, strong traditional norms and societal pressures, which often hinder women's participation in leadership roles and land access, challenge the project's impact-building actions. The project must address these cultural barriers to ensure women can fully benefit from its initiatives.</p> <p>Through Focus Group Discussions with the rural poor, we also realized that land management issues were only of interest in those places where concrete and acute land conflicts are prevalent. Communities targeted to awareness creation activities (including by other projects and organizations) without present conflicts are little interested in land tenure issues. Those groups, however, asked for technical support, including for animal/plant or soil health and productivity increase. They felt that agroecology can't be introduced without agroecology-specific support measures on the farmer level.</p>			
7	Which of the project activities were more relevant to tackle the different objectives of the phase?	5	C	
7	<p>Different activities and tools collectively contributed to address the TLI project's objectives in phase 1.</p> <p>Needs Assessments (Activity 1.2)</p> <p>It involved comprehensive assessments of land-based investors (LBIs) across the five target countries. By interviewing a diverse range of LBIs, the project aimed to identify gaps between current business models and TLI principles, as well as barriers to implementing more responsible practices. The insights gained</p>			

	<p>from these assessments were crucial for informing subsequent project activities and ensuring alignment with the specific needs and contexts of each country.</p> <p>Risk-Reward Model (Activity 1.1)</p> <p>Developing the Risk-Reward Model (R-RM) was a key activity aimed at helping LBIs understand the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts of their investments. On the other hand, the model supports governments in their land-based management and relationships with investors.</p> <p>By calibrating and parameterizing the model through workshops and consultations, the project ensured that the indicators used were relevant to national priorities. This model is a tool for guiding investors toward more sustainable practices, thereby addressing the project's objective of integrating TLI principles into investment decisions. However, while the model in principle is a great tool to assess the impacts of investing, the data availability in countries could limit its use.</p> <p>Business Transformation Labs (Activity 1.3)</p> <p>The establishment of Business Transformation Labs (BTLs) was designed to facilitate co-innovation and capacity building among investors. By providing a platform for dialogue and collaboration, the BTLs aimed to support LBIs in adapting their business models to be more transformative and aligned with TLI principles. This activity directly contributes to the project's goal of fostering responsible agricultural investments. Selected champions have been trained and shared experiences among peer sustainability leaders.</p> <p>Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs)</p> <p>The creation and operationalization of MSPs were essential for promoting dialogue among various stakeholders, including government, private sector, and civil society. These platforms allow for the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and best practices, which is vital for building a common vision and ensuring that TLI principles are effectively integrated into national policies and practices. In all interviews, MSPs were underlined as an important possibility for exchanging and planning commonly LBI-related issues across sectors.</p> <p>Gender Assessment</p> <p>Conducting a gender assessment was a critical step in understanding the specific challenges faced by women in the context of land-based investments. This assessment informed the development of gender-sensitive strategies and ensured that the project addressed social inclusion as a key objective.</p> <p>Community-Level Assessments</p> <p>The project initiated community-level assessments to gather insights on the needs and challenges faced by local populations affected by LBIs. This activity is crucial for ensuring that the project remains responsive to the realities on the ground and that the benefits of land investments are equitably distributed.</p> <p>While all activities played a role in the project's success in phase 1, the MSPs and needs assessments emerged as particularly effective in laying the groundwork for future phases. Moving forward, it will be essential to build on these foundations and address any gaps identified during Phase 1. In Phase 2, BTLs and RRM will play a more important to attract more investors and also as source of financial project contributions via services.</p>			
8	How far were project design, scope, implementation modalities and budget adequate to reach the planned objectives and outputs?	5	C, D	
8	<p>The evaluation of the project regarding its design, scope, implementation modalities, and budget reveals a generally positive alignment with the planned objectives and outputs. Below is a detailed assessment based on the findings from Phase 1:</p> <p>The project design was structured to address the complexities associated with land-based investments (LBIs) through a multi-pronged approach. Key components such as the Risk-Reward Model (RRM),</p>			

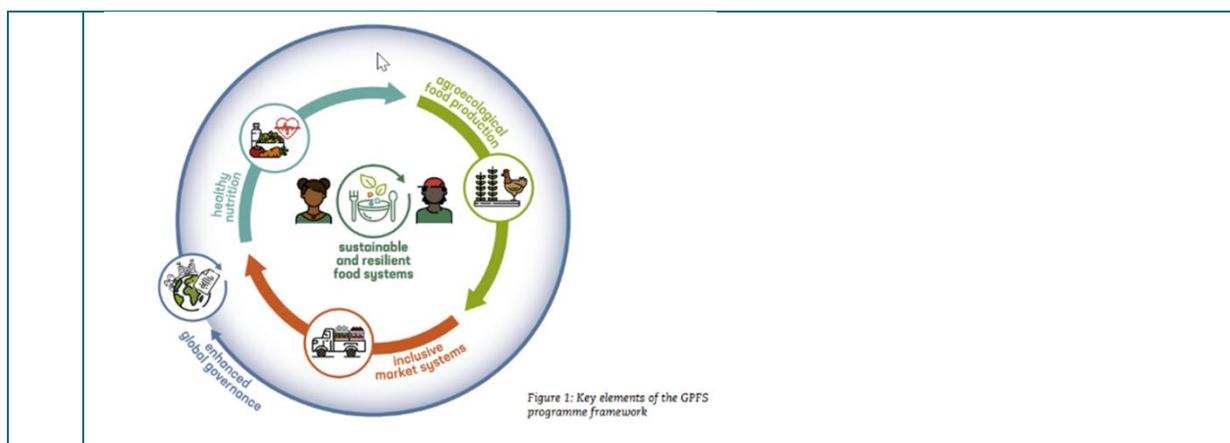
	<p>Business Transformation Labs (BTLs), and Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) were integrated into the design, indicating a thoughtful approach aimed at fostering collaboration among various stakeholders.</p> <p>However, the complexity of the project documentation was noted as a challenge. Stakeholders found it difficult to navigate the project design, which led to initial delays in implementation. Simplifying project documentation and providing clearer guidelines could enhance understanding and facilitate smoother implementation.</p> <p>In regard to the scope of the project, we can emphasize that the covered topics are all relevant and appropriately focused on large land-based investments in agriculture and forestry. The targeting countries have faced significant challenges related to land acquisition and commercial agriculture. The emphasis on establishing MSPs and communities of practice (COPs) was seen as a positive step towards fostering collaboration among stakeholders in the project countries.</p> <p>While the broad scope allows for a comprehensive approach, it also presents challenges in ensuring that interventions are contextually relevant and tailored to each country's specific needs. The varying levels of progress across countries indicated that local contexts significantly influenced implementation.</p> <p>The tools RRM and BTLs were recognized as effective in engaging stakeholders and facilitating dialogue. The MSPs, in particular, were highlighted as instrumental in bringing together government, investors, and civil society to address land governance issues.</p> <p>Also, some challenges have been noted in the local context. Interviews pointed out that the project sometimes lost focus on local contexts, as certain tools had been previously attempted in other settings without sufficient adaptation. A more context-sensitive approach that builds on existing frameworks could improve effectiveness.</p> <p>Regarding resource allocation, the budget was generally considered adequate for delivering the project outputs. Resources were primarily allocated to stakeholder engagement and capacity-building activities, which are crucial for the project's success. However, there were concerns about the need for additional resources in specific areas, particularly in Component 3, where activities were perceived as too numerous and less focused.</p> <p>The project demonstrated flexibility in adapting its budget to unforeseen challenges, such as COVID-19 and bureaucratic delays. This adaptability suggests a degree of responsiveness to the project's evolving needs.</p>			
<p>9</p> <p>9a</p>	<p>Were topics such as Gender and Youth sufficiently addressed during phase I?</p> <p>Are there good results to be mentioned?</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>B, C, D</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>9a</p>	<p>While the TLI project in Phase 1 made significant strides in addressing gender issues through assessments, strategies, and community engagement, the focus on youth appears to be less explicitly defined (neither in the ProDoc nor in a focus of activities).</p> <p>How gender issues have been addressed?</p> <p>A comprehensive gender assessment was conducted to identify specific challenges faced by women in the context of land-based investments (LBIs). This assessment informed the development of a gender and internal capacity development strategy, ensuring that project activities were gender-sensitive. The assessment can be understood as a "living document," indicating a commitment to ongoing updates and responsiveness to emerging issues.</p> <p>Based on the assessment, gender-sensitive strategies have been developed, including toolkits that address gender-specific gaps and promote women's participation in decision-making processes. The focus on creating women-centered groups alongside mixed-gender groups was a positive step toward enhancing women's roles in agricultural value chains.</p>			

	<p>The project also conducted community-level surveys and focus group discussions to capture women's perspectives and assess barriers to their participation. This participatory approach was crucial for understanding local dynamics and tailoring interventions to meet women's needs.</p> <p>Positive feedback from women representatives and some considerable outcomes can be stated at this moment. Stakeholders greatly appreciated the project's focus on gender and social inclusion. Establishing gender-specific policies by organizations involved in Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) indicates a shift towards more gender-sensitive practices within these organizations.</p> <p>How youth issues have been addressed?</p> <p>While the project recognized the importance of youth engagement, the focus on youth was less pronounced than gender.</p> <p>Although there was no dedicated youth assessment, the emphasis on social inclusion and equitable benefit distribution suggested an awareness of the importance of engaging youth in LBIs. The project's focus on capacity building and community engagement likely included youth as a target group, but specific strategies for youth involvement were not clearly articulated.</p> <p>Establishing the BTLs and MSPs allowed youth to participate in discussions and decision-making processes related to land investments. However, specific outcomes or metrics related to youth engagement are not documented.</p> <p>Stakeholders noted that while gender issues received more attention, there is a commitment to expand youth engagement in future phases. More focused initiatives that specifically address the needs and aspirations of young people in rural areas are necessary to enhance their involvement.</p> <p>To conclude, the results indicate a positive reception of gender-sensitive approaches, but more concrete outcomes related to youth engagement and empowerment would strengthen the project's impact in this area as the abundance of the young generation in rural areas is obvious. Moving forward, it would benefit the project to develop clearer strategies and metrics for youth involvement to ensure that their needs and perspectives are adequately addressed. Altogether, realizing tangible results will require continued commitment and targeted actions in the subsequent phases. So far, the gender and youth topics have been addressed but are still far away from indicating any transition progress.</p>			
10	Could the food system approach be sufficiently be addressed?	5	C, D	
10	<p>The food system approach was addressed in Phase 1 of the project, but its effectiveness and comprehensiveness varied across different aspects.</p> <p>What positive outcomes could be noted in addressing the food system approach?</p> <p>The project adopted a comprehensive understanding of food systems that extends beyond food security to include environmental, social, and health considerations in a holistic approach. This holistic perspective is essential for addressing the complexities of food production, distribution, and consumption.</p> <p>The project actively promoted sustainable agricultural practices, such as agroecology and integrated soil fertility management or integrated organic certified operators to the so-called champions. Diversification of production, agroforestry, or intercropping has been promoted as a sustainable production practice. These practices are vital for enhancing productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability, aligning well with the goals of creating a resilient food system. Also, regarding food consumption, important topics have been addressed in stakeholder discussions, such as diversified diet and reduced malnutrition.</p> <p>With the establishment of MSPs and the facilitated dialogue in the groups, the complexities of food systems could be addressed. It could be ensured that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes to shape and develop sustainable food systems in the target countries. It</p> <p>There are still some areas of concern:</p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there was a strong theoretical understanding of food systems, stakeholders expressed concerns about the practical implementation of these concepts at the grassroots level. There is a need for more concrete actions and strategies to translate discussions into tangible outcomes that benefit local communities. • Although there were efforts to address gender issues, the specific engagement of youth in the food system approach appeared to be less pronounced. More targeted initiatives aimed at empowering young people in agricultural practices and decision-making processes would enhance the inclusivity of the food system approach. • A robust monitoring and evaluation framework is essential to assess the effectiveness of the food system approach. Continuous feedback mechanisms should be established to adapt strategies based on real-time data and stakeholder input. This would help ensure that the project remains responsive to the needs of the communities it serves. • Stakeholders raised concerns about the sustainability of the food system initiatives beyond the project's lifespan. Mechanisms should be established to ensure that the benefits of training and capacity-building efforts are maintained and built upon in the future. • The effectiveness of translating discussions in platforms (e.g., MSP, CoP) into concrete actions remains critical. Practical implementation of food system concepts at the grassroots level cannot be automatically assumed. We see a need to translate discussions into tangible outcomes that benefit local communities.
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Coherence - how well does the TLIP fit?

II	How far is the project aligned with the program framework of the Global Program Health and Food (previously Food System Section) and also with other SDC programs in the countries/region?		D	
11	<p>The project strongly aligns with the program framework of the Global Program Food Security of SDC. Below are the key aspects of this alignment (the program framework Health and Food is not yet published)</p> <p>The project explicitly aims to contribute to more sustainable food systems. It promotes agroecological production systems, which enhance food security while contributing to environmental sustainability, a shared priority.</p> <p>The TLI project has also tried to engage with other SDC programs at the country level. For instance, discussions about synergies with the SECO project focused on nutrition in Ghana indicate a recognition of the need for integrated approaches. However, challenges remain in achieving effective collaboration, as some SDC country programs are reluctant to support global initiatives.</p> <p>Despite the alignment with the program framework, several challenges have been identified, such as the complexity of the project documentation and the varying levels of stakeholder engagement across different countries. This impacts the effectiveness of implementation.</p> <p>Moving forward, the TLI project will need to strengthen its alignment with the Global Program Health and Food, which is in development, for instance, with the one Health concept.</p>			



12	How could synergies with other global programs as well as country/regional programs of SDC be improved?	5	C, D	
12	<p>To enhance synergies with other global programs and the country/regional initiatives of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the following strategic approaches are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular communication channels with structured communication protocols among various SDC programs and global initiatives to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of ongoing activities and can identify potential areas for collaboration. In addition, joint planning sessions could be established that bring together representatives from different SDC programs and global initiatives. • The MSPs used in the project can serve as hubs for connecting with other SDC programs and global initiatives, fostering cross-program collaboration and sharing best practices. • Another way to use synergies is to harmonize goals and indicators among various programs to facilitate joint monitoring and evaluation efforts, making it easier to assess the collective impact of these initiatives. • Also, identifying thematic areas where the TLI project intersects with other programs, such as gender equality, youth empowerment, and sustainable agriculture can create synergies that enhance overall program effectiveness. • Developing joint capacity-building initiatives may also benefit multiple programs. These could include training sessions, workshops, and resource-sharing platforms that enhance the skills and knowledge of stakeholders across different initiatives. <p>By pooling resources among SDC programs and global initiatives e.g. sharing financial, human, and technical resources, programs can maximize their impact and reduce duplication of efforts.</p> <p>Involving local actors in discussions about potential synergies would help identify local needs and priorities, ensuring that collaborative efforts are relevant and effective.</p> <p>Establish feedback mechanisms that allow local stakeholders to share their experiences and suggestions regarding synergies between different projects and programs. This can help refine collaborative strategies and ensure they are responsive to on-the-ground realities.</p> <p>Hence, future project phases could incorporate mechanisms for collaboration from the outset, ensuring that synergies are built into the log-frame and project objectives.</p>			
13	Are there promising results at country level, which could be used by the Health and Food section at global level in policy dialogue?		C	

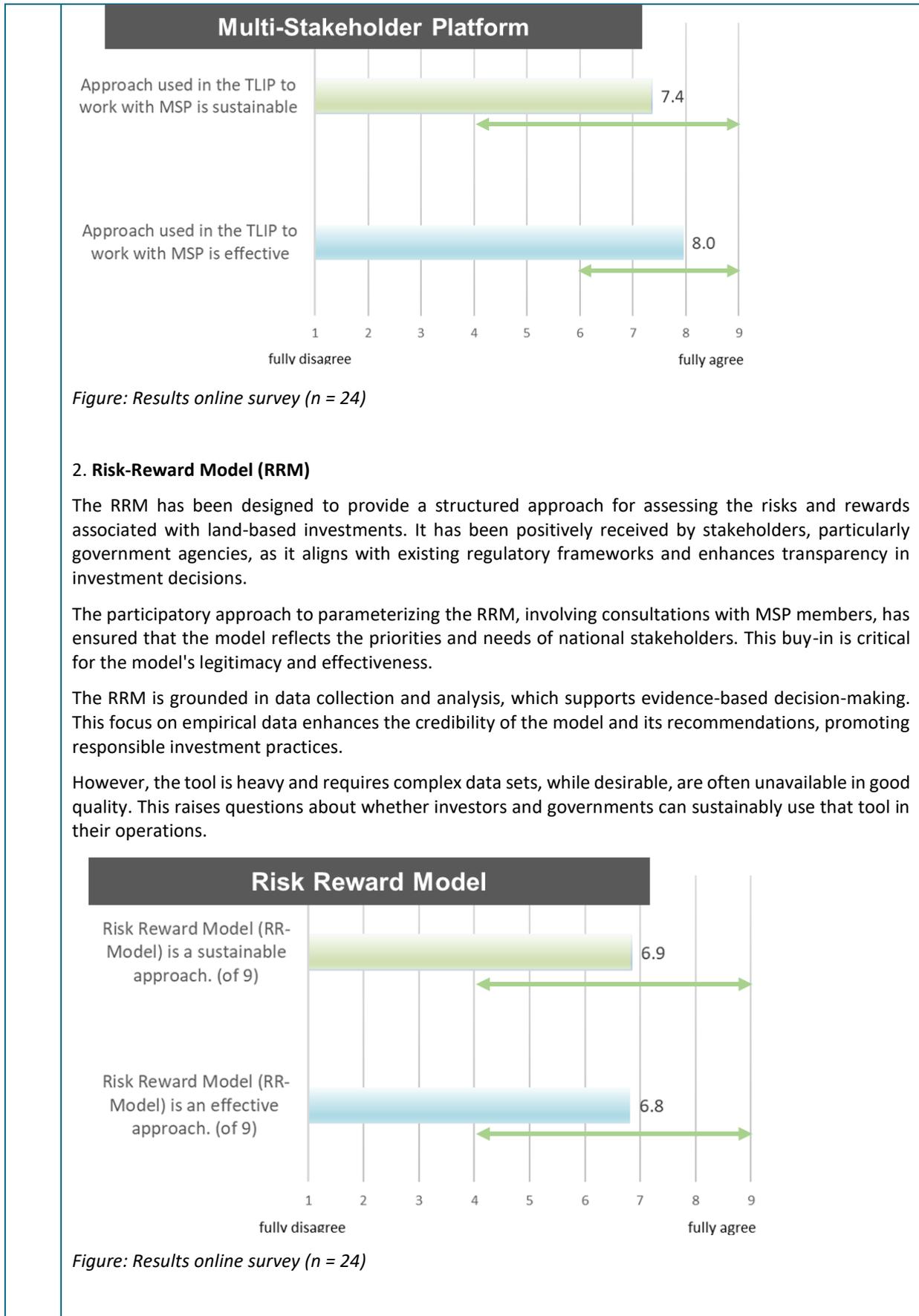
13	<p>There are first results at the country level that the Health and Food section in global policy dialogue can effectively utilize. By focusing on sustainable agri-food value chains, access to finance, the role of MSPs, agroecological practices, and social inclusion, the project can provide concrete examples and evidence to support advocacy for transformative changes in food systems globally.</p> <p>Data from households associated with land-based investors, such as Yayra Glover and GOPDC in Ghana, indicate a lower perception of food insecurity than other producers. For instance, households linked to Yayra Glover reported a lower perception of food insecurity on the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIS) than those associated with other companies. This suggests that the TLI project contributes to enhanced food security at the community level, a critical aspect of global health and food policy discussions.</p> <p>The project has fostered better community engagement between land-based investors and local populations via mediation efforts to facilitate dialogue and collaboration. This leads to improved relationships and reduced conflicts. This model can serve as an example of how to enhance local participation in agricultural investments.</p> <p>The TLI project promotes gender inclusion, particularly by establishing policies that reserve a percentage of leadership positions for women within associations. Incorporating gender-sensitive approaches in agricultural policies is increasingly recognized as vital for achieving sustainable development goals.</p> <p>The emphasis on sustainable practices, such as agroforestry and integrated soil fertility management, improves agricultural productivity and contributes to environmental sustainability.</p> <p>The project has the potential to generate evidence-based policy briefs that encapsulate the lessons learned and best practices from the country-level implementations. These briefs can serve as valuable resources for the Health and Food section's advocacy efforts at global fora.</p>			
14	<p>To what extent is this program aligned with other donors, and how could the synergies, collaboration, and cooperation with these other donors and partners be improved in the future?</p>	5	C, D	
14	<p>The program has established collaborative relationships with various donors, including GIZ and UNDP. These partnerships have facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogues and shared learning experiences, particularly in countries like Laos and Ghana. For example, integrating GIZ's work on responsible agricultural investments has been recognized as a positive collaboration.</p> <p>The project has also engaged in global initiatives, such as the Interlaken Group and the AgroEcology TPP, which has helped raise its visibility and create opportunities for collaboration with other organizations working on related issues.</p> <p>Despite these positive collaborations, some challenges hinder effective synergies.</p> <p>The project implementors mentioned that some SDC country programs exhibit a reluctance to engage with global initiatives, which can limit the potential for synergies and integrated outcomes. This territorialism can manifest in hesitance to support TLI even if the concept as such is good.</p> <p>In addition, clearer communication protocols among stakeholders are needed to ensure that all partners are aware of each other's activities and objectives. This includes regular updates and joint meetings to discuss progress and challenges.</p> <p>To improve the situation in the future, project designs should explicitly incorporate mechanisms for collaboration with other donors from the outset. This includes identifying potential partners and aligning objectives to create a cohesive approach that leverages each organization's strengths.</p>			
15	<p>How far is the private sector involved and willing to change investment policy and modalities?</p>	3, 5	B, C	
15a				

	How far are the Governments involved in the project and are there indications for willingness to change or adapt and improve investment policies			
15 15a	<p>Private sector involvement</p> <p>The private sector's involvement has been significant, across various countries and project activities.</p> <p>Private sector representatives have been involved in MSPs and BTLs and share insights on responsible investment practices here. Private investors also received technical support to understand how to integrate these TLI principles into their operations.</p> <p>However, many private sector investors have also expressed awareness of the barriers to adopting better practices, such as poor relationships with host communities and bureaucratic red tape. Often, TLIP works with interested company representatives who cannot make all decisions, particularly regarding investment funds (e.g. CSR or communication or technical department). From their side, there is also a clear demand for more streamlined and transparent regulatory processes. Investors have highlighted the need for clearer guidelines and support mechanisms to facilitate responsible investment. Eventually, it is in the interest of companies to be competitive and maximize profits. The best opportunity is when these principles are at risk (e.g. conflicts with local communities or demand of clients)</p> <p>Some hinted at stiff competition in their markets, forcing them to use all possibilities to save costs. We also talked to private sector representatives who hinted at internal hierarchies and that staff seeing the need for RAI are not involved in investment-level decisions.</p> <p>The private sector partners that we interviewed had shown interest in collaborative approaches, such as contract farming and partnerships with local communities.</p> <p>Governmental involvement</p> <p>The involvement of governments has been significant but on different levels, country by country.</p> <p>Governments have been actively engaged in the MSPs. Including government representatives in these discussions indicates a commitment to collaborative governance and sustainable land management.</p> <p>The TLI project has successfully collaborated with various government agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agencies and the Lands Commission. These partnerships are essential for navigating regulatory frameworks and ensuring compliance with environmental and social standards, demonstrating a proactive approach to aligning project activities with national policies.</p> <p>The project has initiated discussions around policy reforms, particularly concerning land acquisition guidelines and community involvement. Governments are willing to review existing policies to identify gaps and ensure alignment with transformative land initiatives (e.g. Laos and Ghana). Nevertheless, the reform processes are very complex (e.g. in Laos, a multitude of departments in various ministries deal with land issues, while due to capacity, willingness, and time reasons, the project has established relationships with half of them only).</p> <p>The TLI project has focused on enhancing the capabilities of some government officials in land use planning and investment management by dedicated training programs on responsible investment practices and the development of regulatory frameworks.</p> <p>Representatives have acknowledged existing barriers to effective land investment, such as bureaucratic inefficiencies and inadequate support for marginalized groups, as an indication of the government's willingness to change policies and regulations. This recognition is a critical first step toward policy adaptation, highlighting areas where reforms are necessary. On this level, the focus is on land rights management and RAI, and the link to the food system is far-fetched in this context.</p> <p>Government representatives clearly demand streamlined and transparent regulatory processes. For example, discussions in Laos have emphasized the need for coherent legal frameworks governing land-related investments, suggesting a willingness to engage in policy reform to facilitate responsible investment.</p>			

	While there is a willingness to adapt policies on a technical level, the current political climate, particularly in countries like Ghana and Myanmar, may hinder immediate progress in policy implementation. Stakeholders have expressed concerns that governmental reticence may be influenced by the election cycle or political crisis, which often leads to a slowdown in decision-making processes.			
Effectiveness - is the TLIP achieving its objectives?				
16	To what extent were the project results as outlined in the result framework achieved so far?	3, 5	B, C	
16	<p>The project has made some progress in achieving the output-level results outlined in its result framework, although challenges remain.</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>The project has successfully engaged various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors. The MSPs have facilitated dialogue and collaboration, essential for fostering a supportive environment for transformative land investments.</p> <p>Capacity Development</p> <p>Efforts have been made in capacity development, particularly among civil society organizations. Training sessions have been well-received, and participants have begun to develop their own action plans to integrate gender equality and social inclusion into their work.</p> <p>Establishment of Tools and Frameworks</p> <p>Key tools such as the MSPs, the RRM, the CoP, and BTLs have been introduced and are well accepted among stakeholders. These tools have laid a foundation for promoting responsible investment practices, but challenges in data access and implementation have slowed progress in some areas. However, the evaluators could not see the models working in practice, so we could not study their application in detail.</p> <p>Variability in Implementation Across Countries</p> <p>The pace of implementation and the achievement of results vary significantly among countries. Ghana has been noted as being far advanced in its implementation, but countries like Mozambique and Myanmar are heading behind as they face specific challenges that have slowed progress.</p> <p>Community-Level Engagement</p> <p>While efforts have been made to engage communities through surveys and focus group discussions, stakeholders have noted a lack of visible impacts at the community level. This suggests that more focused efforts are needed to ensure that the project's benefits reach the intended beneficiaries on a community level.</p>			
17	Did the project develop and nurture a comprehensive monitoring-evaluation-learning plan to keep track of the results?	5	Cg	
17	<p>The monitoring and evaluation framework in the Logframe is very complex, and serious monitoring of all the indicators would require a lot of effort.</p> <p>The first two annual reports focus on quantitative achievements.</p> <p>The project management intends to develop the MEL framework by the end of the project phase, and we have not seen its present stage. Therefore, it is too early to assess it. The project implementors have mentioned that many indicators and indices have been developed and also used for monitoring, which will feed the MEL at a later stage.</p> <p>According to them, the project team has been heavily engaged in ensuring these indicators and indices comply with best practices and standards. They report having at least a thorough baseline for</p>			

	components one and two (to the private sector/governments) to monitor performance later (however, most baselines are zero).		
18	Was the selection of the 5 countries effective to promote the TLI approach?		B, Cg
18a	Are there indications of better results in other countries, especially referring to West Africa?	3	
18	<p>The effectiveness of the selection process can be assessed through several key factors:</p> <p>Alignment with Project Objectives: The selected countries were prioritized based on their relevance to land-based investments and the potential for impactful interventions. The project team indicated that these countries have growing land investment sectors and tangible entry points for solutions, aligning well with the TLI approach, which aims to address complex land governance and investment challenges.</p> <p>Diversity of Contexts: The diversity among the selected countries provides a broad spectrum of socio-economic and political contexts, which is beneficial for testing and adapting the TLI approach. For instance, Ghana and Laos have been noted for their relatively advanced implementation of TLI principles. Mozambique and Ethiopia present significant challenges that could yield valuable lessons for future project phases.</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement: The effectiveness of the selection is also reflected in the level of stakeholder engagement achieved in these countries. In Ghana and Laos, we witnessed, for example, the establishment of the MSP has facilitated dialogue among various actors, including government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders. This engagement is crucial for promoting the TLI approach and ensuring it is responsive to local needs and conditions.</p> <p>Capacity for Impact: The project team expressed optimism about the potential for significant impact in Mozambique and Ethiopia, despite the challenges these countries face. The belief that these countries hold greater long-term potential for transformative change underscores the effectiveness of their selection. The project's focus on capacity building and stakeholder engagement in these regions is essential for driving meaningful results.</p> <p>Challenges in Implementation: While selecting countries appears effective, challenges have emerged during implementation. For instance, the initial ambivalence of stakeholders in Myanmar has posed difficulties in gaining buy-in for the TLI approach. Additionally, bureaucratic hurdles and the need for tailored strategies to address local contexts have been highlighted as areas requiring attention.</p> <p>Indications of Better Results in Other Countries</p> <p>Regarding the potential for better results if other countries had been chosen, particularly for West Africa, not a clear picture arose from the discussions. There were mentions alternative regions and countries, such as West Africa, but also Zambia or Cambodia (instead of Myanmar).</p>		
19	Was the process on how to select champions adequate in terms of effectiveness as well as transparency and accountability?		B, Cg
19	<p>The process for selecting champions has been assessed regarding effectiveness, transparency, and accountability.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement was an important criterion for achieving the project objectives effectively. A participatory approach involving key stakeholders from government, civil society, and the private sector informed the selection of champions. This engagement is crucial for ensuring that the selected champions are recognized and respected within their respective sectors, thereby enhancing their effectiveness in promoting TLI principles.</p>		

	<p>Another important criterion is alignment with project goals. The identified champions are expected to represent responsible private sector interests and support the project’s objectives of fostering sustainable land-based investments.</p> <p>Regarding the transparency of the selection process, we can confirm that it was based on specific criteria, though not explicitly detailed in the documents.</p> <p>The effectiveness of the selection process is also dependent on how the outcomes are communicated to stakeholders. Ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about the selection process and the rationale behind the choices can enhance transparency and foster a sense of ownership among stakeholders.</p> <p>Including various stakeholders in the selection process enhances accountability, allowing multiple perspectives to be considered. This collaborative approach helps mitigate biases and ensures the selected champions represent the broader community.</p> <p>However, the champion approach also led to choosing those companies that are well-known in the sector for their RAI and already receive a lot of external support. This complicates the assessment of the attribution of progress to TLIP, and the potential for further spread of impacts is also difficult to assess.</p> <p>Where are areas for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the selection process has been effective, there is room for improvement in ensuring broader representation among champions. Engaging a more diverse range of companies, including smaller enterprises and those from underrepresented sectors, could enhance the project's overall representation. • The project focused on Western-oriented investors, which may not always be the most urgent target. In Ghana and even more in Laos, we found that Chinese investors are significant, but are not represented among champions. Accessing Chinese investors requires specific skills (e.g., Mandarin language and cultural sensitivity and different counselling skills). Interestingly, TLIP (unlike other LBI projects) has staff with Mandarin language proficiency. 			
20	Appreciate the effectiveness of the different project tools introduced by the TLI project (MSP, RR-Model, Labs, etc.).	3, 5	B, C	
20	<p>The project has introduced several key tools to enhance stakeholder engagement, promote sustainable practices, and facilitate responsible land-based investments. The effectiveness of these tools — specifically the Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), the Risk-Reward Model (RRM), and the Business Transformation Labs (BTLs), but also the Community of Practice (CoP)— are promising in various aspects of project implementation and outcomes. However, as the most models just started to be operational or the RRM still had to be filled with data on the period of evaluation, we can just do a provisional assessment.</p> <p>1. Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs)</p> <p>The MSPs have proven effective in fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors. These platforms have created a common forum for dialogue, allowing stakeholders to share insights, validate project activities, and develop shared action plans.</p> <p>The establishment (or inheritance of them from outphasing other projects) of MSPs with good participation has enhanced stakeholder engagement, ensuring that local perspectives and concerns are integrated into decision-making processes. This inclusive approach has been crucial for building trust and ensuring that the project is responsive to local needs.</p> <p>MSPs are tasked with feedbacking annual appraisals of the enabling environment, which allows for ongoing assessment of progress and identification of gaps. This iterative process supports adaptive management and ensures that strategies remain relevant to the evolving context.</p>			



3. Business Transformation Labs (BTLs)

The BTLs have been instrumental in providing technical guidance to champion investors, helping them to adapt their business models to TLI principles. This capacity-building aspect is vital for fostering sustainable practices among land-based investors.

The BTLs facilitate co-innovation through diagnostic activities, such as household surveys of champion families and focus groups. This collaborative approach allows for developing tailored solutions that address specific challenges faced by investors and communities.

By focusing on local realities and investment-level challenges, the BTLs ensure that interventions are contextually relevant and responsive to stakeholders' needs.

Continued support, capacity building, and contextual adaptation will be critical for maximizing the effectiveness of these tools and ensuring their sustainability beyond the project's duration.

The champions provide good feedback. Since BTLs are free for investing operators, there is no real proof of their relevance. Readiness to pay would be a good indicator of relevance.

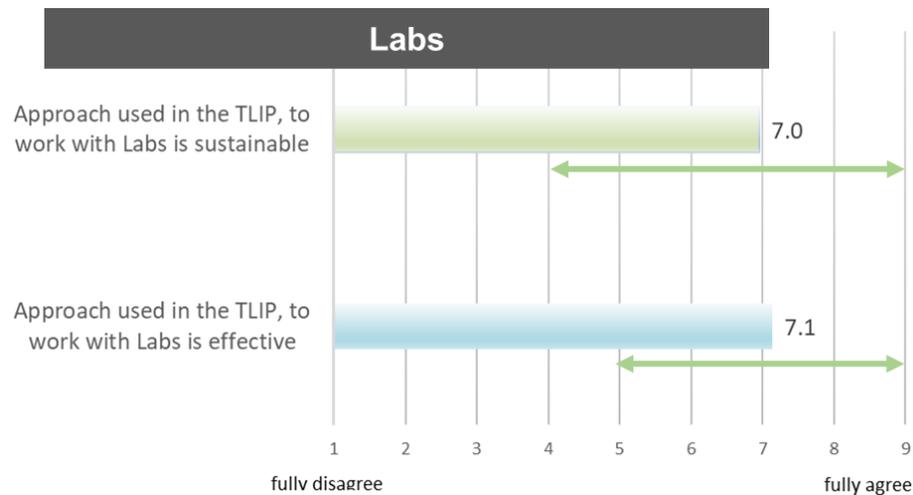


Figure: Results online survey (n = 24)

4. Community of Practice (CoP)

Civil society appreciates the Community of Practice. Through this mechanism, NGOs can participate in TLIP. NGOs reported that training was useful and particularly interesting when new topics were raised (e.g., TLI was new to many). However, NGOs also mentioned that they would have preferred mandates and on-the-job training. Like this, the TLI (or also, e.g., Gender) training was only theoretical with little application.

21	Are there alternative or better tools which could achieve better results?	3	B, C	
21	<p>The interviews discussed several alternative or complementary tools. We did not go in-depth to assess whether a tool would have been a better alternative. Some examples which have been mentioned during the interviews:</p> <p>Linking Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Nutrition (LANN)</p> <p>This tool has been widely applied in Laos and focuses on integrating agricultural practices with nutrition and natural resource management. By addressing food security and nutrition more directly, LANN could complement existing TLI tools and enhance their effectiveness in promoting sustainable land investments.</p>			

GIZ and FAO Tools

Tools developed by GIZ and FAO were mentioned as potentially beneficial for the TLI project. These tools could provide additional frameworks or methodologies that might improve effectiveness, particularly in areas where current tools face challenges, such as data sharing and stakeholder engagement.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Utilizing GIS for land use planning can provide a comprehensive spatial analysis of land resources. This tool helps identify optimal areas for investment while considering environmental and social factors, thereby enhancing decision-making processes related to land tenure and community needs.

Engaging local communities in land use planning processes ensures that their needs and perspectives are integrated into investment decisions. This participatory approach fosters greater community buy-in and reduces conflicts over land use. CDE uses GIS.

Real-Time Data Collection Tools

Implementing mobile data collection tools (e.g., KoBoToolbox, ODK) can facilitate real-time monitoring of project activities and outcomes. This capability improves responsiveness to emerging issues and enhances the quality of data collected from communities and stakeholders.

Outcome Mapping

This approach focuses on changes in behavior, relationships, and actions of stakeholders rather than just measuring outputs. It provides a nuanced understanding of the project's impact on local communities and stakeholders, allowing for more effective evaluation of outcomes.

Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM)

This model emphasizes continuous learning and adaptation through stakeholder collaboration. It is particularly effective in complex environments where multiple factors and stakeholders influence land use and investment decisions.

Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

CBNRM empowers local communities to manage their natural resources sustainably. By integrating community governance structures, this approach enhances local ownership and accountability in land-based investments.

The **World Bank ESMFREDD+ Safeguards** requirements for land-based investment in the context of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), sets out a comprehensive set of safeguards, particularly those aimed at conserving or restoring forests, and mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration. These safeguards ensure that the environmental and social impacts of such projects are carefully considered and managed.

Digital Platforms for Stakeholder Engagement

Utilizing digital platforms (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams) for stakeholder engagement can facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration, especially in contexts where in-person meetings are challenging. These tools enhance transparency and allow for more frequent updates and feedback loops among stakeholders.

Behavioral Insights and Nudging Techniques

Applying behavioral insights to encourage responsible investment practices can be effective. For example, providing information highlighting social norms or peer behaviors can motivate investors to adopt better practices without imposing strict regulations.

22	Are there examples of best practices and good results which could already be used for policy dialogue at global level?	3, 5	B, C	
22	<p>The project has generated several best practices and positive results that might be utilized in global policy dialogue.</p> <p>The biggest potential for international promotion of TLIP is the TLI approach of making the land tenure project transformational for the food system. However, it is premature to promote that concept in the absence of good success stories, let alone evidence that TLI can be repeated and scaled.</p> <p>Establishing MSPs in various countries has effectively fostered collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including government, civil society, and private sector actors. The success of MSPs in promoting stakeholder engagement and consensus-building can serve as a model for similar regional and global initiatives, but it is not innovative.</p> <p>The RRM developed by the TLI project has been tailored for each focal country, allowing local land-based investors (LBIs) to assess potential investment impacts. This model shall not only aid in decision-making but also promotes transparency and accountability in investment practices. The validation and piloting of the RRM can provide valuable insights for global discussions on investment frameworks and risk management strategies. Again, it is too early to promote RRM, but we see opportunities for that to arise.</p> <p>The project has implemented capacity development activities aimed at enhancing the skills of local stakeholders, including government officials and investors. These initiatives have focused on improving governance practices, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship. The positive outcomes from these capacity-building efforts can inform global policy dialogues on the importance of investing in human capital and institutional capacity for sustainable land management.</p> <p>The TLI project has conducted comprehensive Enabling Environment Appraisals (EEAs) in multiple countries, analyzing regulatory frameworks and identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. These appraisals have provided actionable recommendations for enhancing the investment climate. Sharing the findings and methodologies from these appraisals can contribute to global discussions on best practices for creating conducive environments for responsible land investments.</p> <p>TLIP has actively participated in global and regional initiatives, such as the Interlaken Group and the Agroecology Transition Platform (TPP). These engagements have raised the visibility of the TLI approach and facilitated knowledge exchange on sustainable land investment practices. The lessons learned from these interactions can be valuable for designing advocacy strategies to international fora related to land governance and investment.</p> <p>The project has documented successful examples, such as the integration of agroforestry practices and gender-sensitive policies, which can inspire other investors and stakeholders. These case studies demonstrate the potential benefits of adopting TLI principles and can encourage broader policy adoption.</p> <p>The TLI project has promoted better community engagement between land-based investors and local populations. The mediation efforts highlighted by stakeholders demonstrate how the project facilitates dialogue and collaboration, leading to improved relationships and reduced conflicts. This community engagement model can serve as a best practice for global policy frameworks aiming to enhance local participation in agricultural investments.</p>			
Efficiency – how well are resources being used?				
23	Were project resources efficiently utilized to achieve the project results?		Cg	
23	<p>The project was noted for its effective allocation of resources, particularly in relation to stakeholder engagement and meetings. Most resources were directed toward facilitating these interactions, which are essential for the project's success. Below are some key findings.</p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project successfully engaged various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors. This collaborative approach not only enhanced the project's legitimacy but also maximized the impact of resources by fostering shared ownership and commitment among stakeholders. • The project demonstrated flexibility in adapting its strategies based on local needs and realities. For instance, conducting community-level assessments and gender assessments reflected a responsive approach to resource utilization, ensuring that interventions were relevant and effective. • Significant investments were made in capacity development activities aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of local stakeholders. This investment in human capital is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes and maximizing the long-term impact of resources. • The TLI project effectively utilized existing tools and frameworks, such as the Enabling Environment Appraisals (EEAs) and the Risk-Reward Model (RRM), to guide its interventions. By building on established methodologies, the project optimized resource use and avoided duplication of efforts. • Despite the overall efficient utilization of resources, the project faced challenges related to national bureaucracies and logistical issues, particularly in countries like Mozambique and Myanmar. If not addressed, these bureaucratic delays can hinder timely implementation and may lead to inefficient resource use. 			
24	Were the coordination mechanisms fit for purpose to achieve the project results?		C	
24	<p>The coordination mechanisms established by the project were mostly fit for purpose in achieving the project results, although some challenges were identified. Below are some key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MSPs were a central coordination mechanism within the TLI stakeholders, facilitating dialogue among diverse stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), and private sector actors. • The project implemented regular internal meetings and utilized communication tools, such as WhatsApp groups, to enhance coordination among stakeholders. This adaptability in meeting frequency and format allowed for a more responsive approach to coordination, essential in a multi-country project with varying contexts. • The organization of consultation workshops, particularly the four workshops per year for the Lao RAI focal group, demonstrated a commitment to inclusive engagement. These workshops brought together mass organizations, universities, private sector representatives, development partners, and banks, fostering collaboration and ensuring diverse perspectives were considered in decision-making processes. • While the coordination mechanisms were generally effective, some implementers noted they were not always efficient. Concerns were raised about the complexity of communication lines and the sustainability of different platforms and tools after the project's conclusion. This fragmentation could potentially hinder the overall effectiveness of the project, leading to duplicated efforts or misalignment of objectives. • The project benefited from pre-existing relationships among partners (e.g. RECOFTC and LEI), which facilitates smoother coordination. The rapport built during the proposal development phase allowed for more effective collaboration once the project commenced, underscoring the importance of relationship-building in achieving project objectives. 			
25	How efficient was the partnerships between the different project actors?	3, 5	B, C	

25	<p>The partnerships among different project actors within the project can be characterized as largely efficient and good, with several key factors contributing to this assessment:</p> <p>The project benefited from pre-existing relationships among partners (see Q24). This foundation of trust and familiarity among partners is an asset and has been crucial for the project's success.</p> <p>Various coordination mechanisms were implemented, including regular meetings and the use of communication tools like WhatsApp groups. The ability to adapt meeting frequencies (higher in the beginning) and formats based on stakeholder needs contributed to effective collaboration and bridging the gap between large geographical areas (from Ghana/Mozambique to Laos).</p> <p>The engagement of stakeholders in the MSPs has been noted as a significant strength, leading to increased buy-in and collaboration.</p> <p>The partnerships have focused on capacity building and learning from successful examples. The sharing of experiences and best practices among partners has contributed to a good relationship. However, it has not challenged the behavior of targets so that the outcomes/impacts can be reached.</p> <p>Some implementers expressed concerns about a lack of cohesion between various components of the project, which could hinder overall effectiveness.</p> <p>However, the project also demonstrated flexibility in adapting its strategies. For example, in response to risks encountered in countries like Mozambique and Ethiopia, the project team was able to engage new champions and adjust their approaches quickly. This adaptability is a testament to the strength of the partnerships and the collaborative spirit among project actors.</p>		
26	<p>Based on the risks identified during the planning and implementation period, how did the project mitigate these risks to achieve the project objectives?</p>	Cg	
26	<p>Risks were identified at the start of the project and recorded in a risk register. For each risk, mitigating measures were identified. Then the mitigating measures were considered to see what is the resulting risk. If the resulting risk is such that this is deemed undesirable, then either additional mitigating measures are required, or certain changes need to be made to the project. The risks are monitored throughout the project. If there are changes in risk levels, then mitigating measures may need to be revised.</p> <p>During the project, risks have been monitored continuously. This allowed the team to respond quickly to emerging issues. Regular meetings and updates facilitated real-time assessments, enabling the project to adjust its strategies as needed.</p> <p>The project ensured that local perspectives and concerns were integrated into decision-making processes by involving local government representatives and community leaders. This engagement reduced the risk of community pushback and enhanced buy-in for project initiatives.</p> <p>Recognizing the potential risks associated with gender inequality and social exclusion, the project promoted gender-sensitive approaches and sought to include marginalized groups in decision-making processes to mitigate risks related to social unrest and dissatisfaction among underrepresented populations.</p> <p>We also observed the flexibility for adaptations of strategies when risks materialized. For instance, in response to emerging conflicts in Ethiopia, the team quickly sought new champions to engage with, ensuring that project momentum was maintained despite challenges. Also, in Myanmar and Mozambique, the project showed flexibility to adapt the implementation plans according to changed situations, which had been encountered.</p>		

27	How far did the TLI project coordinate with other interventions by other donors/projects?	5	C, D	
27	<p>TLIP is based on the international VGGT and HLPE RAI processes (including ASEAN RAI) and integrates into the efforts to support ongoing processes. As such, this requires coordination and integration. The project has made efforts to coordinate with local interventions by various donors and projects, particularly during the initial phase. Examples include the MLRG/SDC project in Laos (also implemented by LEI) and GIZ projects in various countries. Another example is in Ghana, where the TLIP collaborated with the Swiss Embassy's support for Naira's consulting, which focuses on developing key agricultural value chains such as cashew and oil palm. This collaboration aims to complement the activities of other projects and avoid duplication of efforts.</p> <p>The project actively participated in numerous seminars, events, and meetings to align its objectives with those of other organizations. For example, the project engaged with initiatives such as Grow Asia and SNV, which organized the Food Systems pavilion at COP27. This involvement not only enhanced TLI's visibility but also created opportunities for collaboration with other stakeholders in the field. Or TLIP took over various out-phasing vessels for their collaboration tools such as CoP or MSP.</p> <p>The Project Steering Committee includes external members from organizations such as Oxfam, Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), and the International Land Coalition (ILC).</p> <p>Seeking partnership is ongoing. Recently, there have been efforts to partner with the African Union, and ASEAN is also seen as an important factor that can influence the LBI sector.</p> <p>Discussions with GIZ and FAO highlighted the importance of understanding the donor landscape and consolidating efforts across countries like Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana, and Laos to foster systemic change.</p> <p>Establishing MSPs has been a key mechanism for facilitating coordination among various stakeholders, including other donor projects. These platforms provide a space for dialogue and collaboration, allowing the TLI project to align its objectives with those of other initiatives and ensure that all parties are working towards common goals.</p> <p>However, the whole coordination process is not without challenges. Most of the projects operate with their own logic and structure, and they need to report on their own priorities. This is even the case with Swiss government support such as SECO (Ghana) or geographical SDC programs (Mekong). Some collaborations are still in the phase of finding common interests and opportunities to collaborate (e.g., with CDE in Laos). For more, see answers on Coherence questions.</p> <p>Moving forward to a second phase, the TLI project will need to continue strengthening its coordination mechanisms and exploring – in view of the impact challenges and the need for convening power - how the work can be shared.</p>			
Impact - do we reach the overall goal?				
28	How far did the TLI phase I influence already policies in selected countries? How far can these policies be considered transformational?	3, 5	B, C, D	
28	<p>Phase 1 started efforts to influence policies across selected countries, particularly through establishing Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), engagement with regulatory bodies, and advocacy efforts.</p> <p>The TLI project has actively engaged in policy discussions in countries such as Ghana and Laos. TLIP was invited to contribute to land policy dialogues for sharing its messages.</p>			

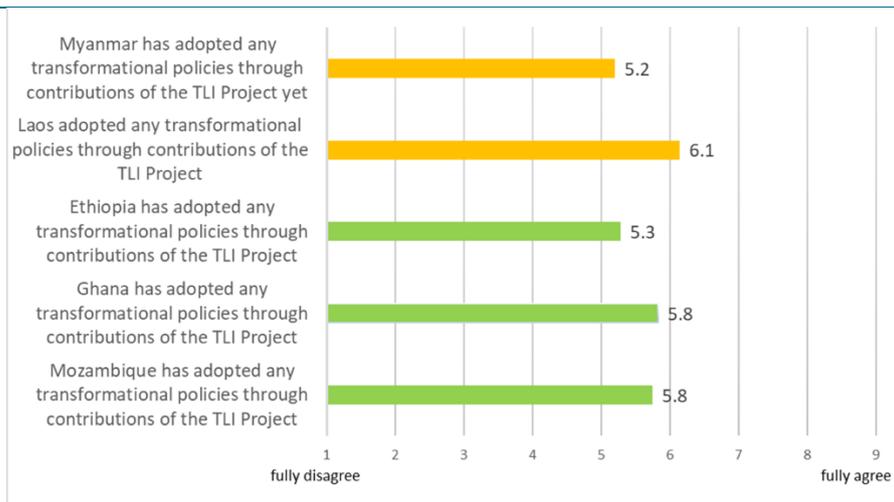


Figure: Results online survey (n = 24)

In Ghana, the TLI project has contributed to formulating the Lands Act, which addresses issues related to large-scale land acquisition and investment. Advocating TLI principles in this legislation pushes towards more responsible land governance practices. TLIP emphasizes sustainability, social inclusion, and gender equity. For example, the project has advocated for gender-sensitive approaches in land use policies, shifting from traditional practices that often overlook the needs of women and marginalized groups. This seeks to empower previously underrepresented voices in decision-making processes.

The TLI project promotes the integration of Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) principles into investment decisions. By encouraging investors to adopt practices that minimize negative environmental impacts and enhance social benefits, the project fosters a paradigm shift in how land-based investments are approached.

The emphasis on training and capacity building for local stakeholders, including farmers and community leaders, is critical to equip actors with the knowledge and skills needed to engage with policy processes. Active citizens are empowered to advocate for their rights and interests to governments and investors alike.

29	Are there examples of investments that changed their policies and or modalities in line with TLI principles, especially regarding smallholder farmers and the local population?	3, 5	B, C, D	
29	<p>Yes, we found some champions to apply TLI principles regarding smallholders and the local population</p> <p>Yayra Glover Limited (YGL) in Ghana</p> <p>YGL has actively engaged with the TLI project, which has significantly influenced its approach to land acquisition and management. The company faced challenges with land acquisition for a 1,000-acre project. Through knowledge gained from TLI seminars, particularly regarding land tenure systems and legal requirements, YGL established a land committee focused on engaging traditional authorities to ensure fair land rights for women and the local community. This policy shift reflects TLI's emphasis on social inclusion and equitable land access. YGL has committed to ensuring that at least 20% of land ownership is held by women by the end of the project.</p> <p>A similar example could be seen with the company Miro Forestry in Ghana, operating in the wood processing sector.</p> <p>In Laos, we visited Saffron Coffee, a small company that sources coffee from local farmers, processes it, and markets it in a tourist café in Luang Prabang and in specialized high-priced shops. Saffron Coffee has the reputation of a social local entrepreneur from whom many projects learn. Smallholder coffee bean</p>			

	<p>suppliers confirmed good investor practices but also that they are not dependent on it due to limited volumes.</p> <p>Mekong Timer is a big investor with very big land concessions for fast-growing timber in Laos. They face land conflicts because smallholders are living on the land the government provides. Their Corporate Social Responsibility department collaborates with TLIP is BTL. Challenges arise that investment decisions are not made by the CSR and not in Laos, but by international investors. However, the TLIP can influence using the company's internal mechanisms.</p>			
30	<p>Are there examples of investments that changed their policies and or modalities in favor of protecting the environment?</p>	3, 5	B, C, D	
30	<p>The project has successfully influenced several investments to adapt their policies and modalities in favor of environmental protection.</p> <p>Sustainable Production Practices</p> <p>Investors in Laos and Ghana have adopted more sustainable production practices, such as agroforestry practices, mulching or, intercropping. Others reported activities which include avoiding deforestation, or protecting watersheds. This shift reflects a growing commitment to conserving natural resources and enhancing environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)</p> <p>The TLI project has emphasized the importance of integrating social and environmental considerations into investment practices and analyzed the status quo via the country appraisals.</p> <p>Enabling Environment Appraisals (EEAs) conducted in various countries, including Laos and Ghana, have led to the development of frameworks that require Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs, e.g. in Ghana) for projects that may significantly affect the environment. This requirement encourages investors to consider the environmental implications of their activities before proceeding.</p> <p>Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy in Ethiopia</p> <p>In Ethiopia, the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy has influenced investors to adopt practices that align with environmental sustainability. This includes conducting Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) prior to project implementation, ensuring that potential negative impacts on the environment are identified and mitigated.</p> <p>Specific Investor Initiatives</p> <p>The Mekong Timber Company has sought support from the TLIP to enhance its initiatives on gender equality and youth engagement while focusing on sustainable land use planning and conflict resolution. Their commitment to integrating these practices demonstrates a proactive approach to environmental management alongside social responsibility.</p> <p>The Saffron Coffee Investment recognizes the need to engage more effectively with smallholder farmers and is keen to invest in farmer group formation, which promotes sustainable agricultural practices and improves supply chain efficiency. It plans to support farmers with agriculture extension services.</p>			
31	<p>Did any investor adopt agroecology as an approach in its LBI?</p>	3, 5	B, C, D	
31	<p>Yes, there are documented examples of investors adopting agroecology in their land-based investments. Already in the baseline assessments.</p> <p>The investor assessments reveal that several investors adopt agroecological practices as part of their operations. For instance, companies involved in oil palm and cocoa production have focused on biological pest management and improving the recycling of byproducts within their production systems. Organic is one of the most often mentioned standards the investors adhere to (<i>even though, unlike, for instance, the significantly smaller Rainforest Alliance or Fair Trade standards, Organic is not part of the global</i></p>			

	<p><i>standards assessments by TLIP</i>). This is the case, particularly in Laos, where the government supports GAP and organic standards, including for export markets and participatory guarantee systems, PGS (Laos is one of the few countries that accepts PGS in its organic regulation, LOAS), which is an enormous opportunity for the local food system.</p> <p>Cassava Production in Laos</p> <p>Some investors engaged in cassava production (mostly starch for export) have adopted practices such as intercropping and crop rotation. These methods are somehow components of agroecology, aimed at protecting soil health and combating degradation, even if they do not reflect the holistic nature of agroecology.</p> <p>Contract Farming in Ethiopia</p> <p>In Ethiopia, large land-based investors increasingly engage in contract farming arrangements that benefit smallholder farmers. These models not only enhance productivity and income for smallholders but may also incorporate agroecological practices that promote sustainable land use and environmental stewardship. This is especially the case if buyers insist on agroecological criteria.</p> <p>Specific Investor Examples</p> <p>Yayra Glover Limited (YGL) in Ghana has integrated agroecological principles into its operations, particularly in its training programs for farmers. YGL emphasizes the importance of combining organic and inorganic fertilizers for effective soil management, a key aspect of agroecology.</p> <p>The members of the Oil Palm Association in Ghana have begun to incorporate agroforestry practices into their training manuals, educating farmers on the benefits of integrating economic trees into their plantations.</p> <p>What are the challenges?</p> <p>While there is a clear desirability to move towards adopting agroecology, the transition is described as very slow. Many investors are still navigating the complexities of integrating these practices into their operations. Community members with whom we discussed that question pointed out that agroecology is knowledge-intensive and requires long-term capacity building and an extension support system for farmers. It is not a natural consequence of more responsible land investments but an investment in sustainable farming in itself.</p>			
32	Are there documented examples of any other impact on people's livelihood in terms of social or economic improvements?	5	B, C, D	
32	<p>The project staff reports orally about the very first impacts on people's livelihoods; however, there are no documented examples, but we came across various cases.</p> <p>The project has advocated for adopting more sustainable production practices among investors. Approximately 70% of companies involved in the company analyses reported in the interviews that they contribute to public and social infrastructure development, such as roads, schools, and health clinics. This investment enhances community welfare and access to essential services, thereby improving overall living conditions.</p> <p>About 30% of companies have reported to support initiatives that promote livelihood diversification, such as handicraft production and intercropping. This diversification helps create additional income streams for local farmers, enhancing their economic resilience and reducing dependency on single crops.</p> <p>Implementing contract farming arrangements has improved smallholder farmers' access to markets. By allowing them to sell their products directly to companies, these arrangements often not only increase farmers' income but also give them access to inputs such as seeds and fertilizers without the need to refinance them. Farmers get a market guarantee and lower the risks. If prices are fixed beforehand, farmers have stable prices but also may miss price increases (unless, like in the case of Saffron Coffee, farmers have a minimum price, but they go up with the market). Saffron also invests in the formation of farmer groups and aims to improve marketing and enhance product quality and production techniques.</p>			

	<p>This collective action is expected (by company and farmers) to improve the economic conditions of the farmers involved.</p> <p>The Mekong Timber Company has initiated programs to promote gender equality and youth engagement. By focusing on these areas, the company addresses social inequalities while enhancing the overall economic participation of women and youth in the local economy.</p> <p>The Avocado Company has been involved in public environmental education, indirectly contributing to improved livelihoods by raising awareness about sustainable practices. This education can lead to better agricultural practices, ultimately enhancing productivity and income for local farmers.</p> <p>The Rubber Company is working on improving local farmers' access to markets. By facilitating better market connections, the company aims to enhance the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, allowing them to sell their products at fair prices and increase their income.</p> <p>Many larger companies involved in land-based investments have contributed to local development by investing in infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and schools. These contributions not only improve the quality of life for local communities but also create an environment conducive to economic growth.</p> <p>Adopting agroecological practices can lead to more sustainable farming methods. For example, the promotion of intercropping and crop rotation among cassava plantations is expected to improve soil health and increase yields, benefiting local farmers also economically</p>
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Sustainability beyond the project support

33	How far are the tools and instruments introduced by the TLI (MSP, RR-Model, Labs) sustainable?	3, 5	B, C	
33	<p>The tools and instruments introduced by the Transformative Land Investment (TLI) project are the Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), the Risk-Reward Model (RRM), the Community of Practice (CoP), and Business Transformation Labs (BTLs).</p> <p>If there is a clear sustainability plan (business plan behind it), the RRM and the BTLs have the best opportunities to sustain themselves. RRM may become supported, internationally used software operated by a business unit. BTL may be qualified business development services that offer TLI-based services on the consultancy market.</p> <p>As set up now, it is unlikely that the MSPs gain such momentum that they will turn into a self-sustaining format unless other projects take this up. The same is the case for the CoP as confirmed by member NGOs.</p> <p>The sustainability of the MSPs is closely tied to their integration into existing governmental and institutional frameworks. For instance, in Ghana, there are plans to append the TLI MSP to a national land sector MSP established by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. This integration suggests a pathway for the MSPs to continue functioning beyond the project's lifespan, as they will be embedded within a larger, permanent structure.</p> <p>The TLI project has emphasized the importance of stakeholder ownership in MSPs. By encouraging representatives from various organizations to take responsibility for the platform's activities, the project fosters a sense of commitment that is crucial for long-term sustainability. Interviewees, however, saw no possibilities to invest independently in MSPs and CoP.</p>			
34	Are there indications that project tools and instruments as introduced by the TLI can be taken up by the country systems and institutionalized?	3, 5	B,C,D	
34	Survey results indicate that countries involved in the TLI project have rated the three primary tools introduced—namely the Risk-Reward Model (RRM), Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), and Business Transformation Labs (BTLs)—highly. This positive reception suggests a strong recognition of their value and utility in addressing land-based investment challenges.			

	<p>In Ghana, ideas are underway to integrate the RRM, MSP, and BTL into governmental entities, but no concrete financial commitments have been made so far. This integration reflects at least interest from local authorities to adopt these tools as part of their operational frameworks, thereby enhancing their sustainability and relevance beyond the project's lifespan.</p> <p>The TLI project has engaged with government representatives and decision-makers, facilitating discussions around land policy and governance. This engagement is crucial for ensuring that the tools and instruments developed through the TLI project are recognized by relevant authorities.</p> <p>There are also few evidences of early adoption to be mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana (OPGAC) has developed gender-specific policies as a result of its participation in the MSP • MSP in Ghana indicates a strategy for institutionalizing the TLI tools. 			
35	How big is the appetite by the private investors to invest time and financial resources in such tools and instruments?	3, 5	B,C,D	
35	<p>The appetite among private investors to invest time and financial resources in the tools and instruments is influenced by several key factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While investors hardly participated in the evaluation, we heard that there is an increasing willingness to engage with certification standards to meet market demands (e.g. international organic), indicating a proactive approach to sustainability. • Investors demand technical assistance to navigate the complexities of sustainable investments. The TLI project offers this in BTL by providing tools (RRM and community diagnostic tools) and frameworks that investors can utilize to improve their practices. • Some investors, particularly larger ones with more resources, are willing to allocate financial resources towards sustainable practices, especially when they perceive a clear return on investment. This is particularly the case if they can mitigate risks (such as political pressure from the Government or communities or international customers) • The commitment to invest in these tools and instruments is often contingent on the perceived stability and support from government policies. Investors are more likely to engage if they see a supportive regulatory environment incentivizing sustainable practices. <p>Hence, for appetite, investors need to see a return on investment. They need to solve a problem or exploit an opportunity. Their action is not charity and only marginally Corporate Social Responsibility</p> <p>But also challenges and barriers have to be mentioned. Many smaller investors struggle with access to finance due to bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of collateral, such as land titles. These challenges lower the appetite to invest in transformations for smallholders and workers. Even if there is willingness, there may be no ability to invest in TLI.</p>			
36	To what extend are knowledge, information and experiences documented and shared during the project implementation at the local, regional, national and continental level?	3, 5	B, C	
36	<p>The project has established instruments for documenting and sharing knowledge, information, and experiences at various levels—local, regional, national, and continental.</p> <p>National Level</p> <p>At the local level, MSPs have facilitated dialogue among stakeholders, including community members, local government representatives, and private sector actors. These platforms serve as forums for discussing best practices, challenges, and successes related to land-based investments. Documentation occurs through meeting minutes and reports, ensuring that experiences and lessons learned are captured and shared among participants.</p>			

	<p>Local civil society organizations (CSOs) actively discuss and share knowledge in the smaller CoP forum focusing on CSO.</p> <p>BTL is designed to improve investors' practices. Staff involved in BTL are strong learners and can bring forward their experiences.</p> <p>In countries like Ghana, the TLI project has been invited to participate in land policy dialogues, contributing to discussions that shape national policies.</p> <p>Regional Level</p> <p>The TLI project has engaged in regional dialogues and workshops that bring together project implementors on a regional (and once also) interregional level. The more advanced countries, Ghana and Laos, can serve as learning objects. This cross-country learning is documented and shared through reports and presentations, allowing for the dissemination of successful strategies and practices.</p> <p>The project has initiated the development of policy briefs based on regional assessments, which are shared among participating countries to inform and guide local practices.</p> <p>Continental Level</p> <p>The TLI project aims to align with broader continental initiatives, such as those led by the African Union. While documentation at this level is still developing, there is recognition of the need to share lessons learned with continental bodies to inform policy and investment strategies across Africa.</p> <p>The project also shared its findings and experiences with regional bodies and networks, contributing to a collective understanding of best practices in land-based investments.</p> <p>Overall, the project has emphasized the importance of developing communication materials, such as "how guides" and policy briefs, to facilitate understanding and sharing of project outcomes. It has also scientific publications. These materials are intended to enhance stakeholder engagement and ensure that knowledge is accessible to a wider audience.</p> <p>However, some stakeholders have also expressed concerns about the complexity of project documentation and the rather complex language used.</p> <p>Clearer guidelines, a more prominent communication and promotion of all concepts on all level, more user-friendly formats to facilitate information sharing, and appropriate language adapted to the realities of the stakeholders are needed.</p>
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Lessons Learned and Recommendations

37	What lessons can be learned from the phase I in regard to relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability and how they are shared?	3, 5	B, C, D	PSC discussion
37a	What recommendation could be drawn for the phase 2?			
37	What are the lessons learned from Phase 1? We tried to sort them by DAC indicators:			
37a	<p>Relevance</p> <p>Overall, we rate Relevance as high, particularly for the target group if involved in (potential or acute) conflicts. In those cases, poverty risk is high, and the food system becomes dysfunctional. However, we can't see (yet) how the approach is a lever for being transformative. E.g., agroecology is a system by design with high knowledge needs, and it is not a system by default without external influence.</p> <p>Coherence</p> <p>TLIP fits very well in the GPFS strategy 2021-24, particularly on the objectives level. It follows the logic of bringing evidence to the global debates of the international community well. On national levels, the</p>			

	<p>externally designed TLIP engagement is welcomed and coherent with the objectives but does not integrate well into badly coordinated international cooperation strategies.</p> <p>Effectiveness</p> <p>Overall, we rate effectiveness as good so far, particularly on the output level, but it is very uncertain if outcomes (in planning after 10 years) will be achieved qualitatively and quantitatively. Outcome development has not started yet.</p> <p>Some assumptions have not been fulfilled yet, and question the achievement of outcomes.</p> <p>Efficiency</p> <p>Overall, we rate that efficiency as very high. The project has delivered a multitude of document resources and research results that were promised in output planning.</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>Overall, we rate the project’s targeted impact for phase 1 as minimal. Provided the project strategy is further refined and developed considering our recommendations and SDC invests at the same level, we expect the impact to happen, however, to a lower level than planned and at a later stage.</p> <p>Sustainability</p> <p>Sustainability is insufficiently addressed yet. While the Prodoc describes a sustainability strategy, this issue is delegated to the future. The visionary sustainability statement depends on strong impact and context development which is not observable now. Co-funding of the next phase is not assured.</p> <p>Recommendations see main report</p>			
38	How can the phase 2 of the TLI fit into a program framework of the new Health and Food section?	5	C, D	decentralization and new Health and Food section
38	<p>The framework of the Health and Food section is known only from presentations and public discussions. Publication of the framework is planned for the summer of 2025.</p> <p>The big lines of TLI will probably still fit into the new strategy since the target groups won’t change and the focus on nutrition and agroecology seems to be continued. The one health concept and the focus on nutrition could be well integrated into TLIP. However, it is not clear how a focus on food security over a focus on the food system would impact TLIP.</p> <p>Overall, it is premature to answer this question seriously.</p>			
39	How far was gender mainstreaming considered in the overall design and implementation of this phase, and how could it be improved in the future?	3, 5	B, C, D	See Q9
39	<p>Some observations and considerations of gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation:</p> <p>The TLI project has made efforts to integrate gender issues into its framework. This is evident from the gender assessments conducted, which identified specific challenges related to women’s access to land and resources. The project aimed to develop gender-sensitive strategies and tools, such as the gender scorecard, to evaluate the gender sensitivity of initiatives.</p> <p>The establishment of COPs has facilitated ongoing discussions about gender issues, allowing stakeholders to share experiences and best practices. This platform has been instrumental in promoting gender awareness among civil society organizations and has contributed to the visibility of gender-related challenges in land governance.</p> <p>Gender-sensitive training sessions were conducted in various countries, including Ghana, Laos and Myanmar, to enhance stakeholders’ understanding of gender issues in land-based investments. These</p>			

	<p>training programs aimed to empower local civil society organizations and promote gender equality in land governance.</p> <p>See more on gender in the previous gender related questions and in the gender chapter in the main report.</p>			
40	How far were challenges and opportunities of the youth considered in the overall project design and implementation and how could these challenges and opportunities be better considered in the phase 2?	3, 5	B,C,D	See Q 6 and Q9
40	<p>Youth is not an explicit topic in the project planning. It came up during implementation, and it is an SDC evaluation question. We found that the project team is intrinsically oriented to Youth and the next generation, but that Youth is introduced as a new criterion and, therefore, much less considered in implementation. For example, we don't find Youth analyses in research, or start-ups of young people are not a specific project target in the BTLs. If a priority for SDC, Youth needs to be part of a management briefing for the second phase. That would not be a big challenge for the TLIP2.</p>			
41	How far were the implementing modalities and the selected partners adequate regarding the achievement of the different results of the phase and could be the design and partner selection improved, respectively fine-tuned.	5	C	
41	<p>The implementing modalities and partner selection in Phase 1 have been assessed as effective, but there are areas for improvement too.</p> <p>The project design was noted to be complicated and difficult to navigate, which led to delays in implementation and confusion with stakeholders that hardly participated in the evaluation. We conclude a strong implementation force however, so far not very well-developed stakeholder relations (at least not in all countries) and little ownership of the stakeholders so far.</p> <p>Interviewees repeatedly highlighted that the complexity made it challenging for them to understand their roles and responsibilities. Simplifying project documentation and providing clearer guidelines could enhance understanding and facilitate smoother implementation.</p> <p>Initially, the project faced ambivalence from stakeholders regarding land issues, which are sensitive in many African contexts. However, over time, there has been a shift towards greater cooperation. At the end, the establishment of trust and collaboration among stakeholders was a positive result. Future phases should prioritize focus on the work with stakeholder and their behaviors so that outcome and not only outputs can be achieved.</p> <p>The project demonstrated flexibility in adapting to challenges, particularly in countries like Myanmar, Mozambique and Ethiopia, where risks materialized and delayed the process. This adaptability is crucial for effective implementation and should be continued in future phases too.</p>			
42	How has the private sector been involved in the project design and implementation, and how its role and responsibilities could be improved in a new support?	5	C	See Q15
42	See answer to Question number 15			
43	Which are the good practices from this phase, which should be replicated and scaled up as far as possible in a new support, and which methods and project activities which should be avoided in the future?	3, 5	B C D	

43	We have addressed the answer of this question in the main report. There are detailed strategic recommendations on all levels, what should be re-designed and what should be continued. Overall, we feel that the project should more focus in its strategy and activities, while concentrating on achieving outcomes (behavioral changes of target groups).		
44	Make any other recommendation towards SDC Health and Food section, which could be useful for the promotion of agroecology/organic agriculture at global level and in the 2 regions.	3, 5	B,C,D
44	See final chapters in the main report		
45	Co-financing: how likely will a co-financing of 50% be possible in phase 2 (for which partner and which country)?		
45	<p>The consortium expressed a strong will to find the finances for a 50% co-financing. Unlike in the first phase, this won't be possible internally. Some partners categorically excluded participation with their own finances. Reaching out to other donors is going on.</p> <p>There are no country or partner-specific indications for upcoming co-funding.</p> <p>While 50% is too ambitious for that, we see opportunities in designing the project with financial contributions from stakeholders. For instance, the future "marketer" of RRM needs to present a business plan with commercial investments from their side since they would benefit from future RRM databases/software.</p> <p>Similarly, BTL services could be offered fee-based, while TLIP would subsidize capacity building, product development, and marketing of the services. TLIP shall also provide start-up funds for new companies to offer BDS services based on what BTL has initiated.</p> <p>The stakeholder interest in contributing financially to Phase 2 is strong, particularly from organizations such as Yayra Glover Ltd (YGL), the Tree Crops Development Authority (TCDA) in Ghana or Mekong Timber in Laos. Their expressed willingness to support the project indicates a positive outlook for potential co-financing opportunities if that fits an investment logic.</p> <p>Government partners may also be asked to participate in the co-funding (possibly in kind), while demonstrating their interest to reform with the help of TLIP.</p>		

Management response - Project Evaluation

Transformative Land Investment (TLI) project, phase 1

The present Management Response (MR) assesses the external evaluation of the TLI project phase 1 and responds to its recommendations. Due to the budget cuts decided by the Swiss parliament in December 2024, SDC has decided to discontinue its support to the TLI project after the termination of phase 1.

After a verbal communication with CIFOR/TLI on February 13, 2025, a letter was sent to CIFOR/TLI on February 24, 2025 informing CIFOR/TLI that SDC will not be able to finance another project phase, as planned previously. Therefore, for the present external evaluation, the Section Health and Food at SDC (here referred to as SDC) is not in a position to take measures for Phase 2.

The TLI has been planned as a multi-phase project stretching a project duration of 10-12 years. With the closure after phase 1 (2022-2025), not all planned outcomes, defined for the entire project (i.e. until 2030) will be fully met. However, SDC is looking into possibilities to integrate some of the results and processes of the TLI phase 1 into other SDC regional or country programs (Mozambique, Laos, Myanmar, Mekong region). However, the extent to which this is possible remains open.

SDC will share the evaluation report and findings with SECO, which is also active in the sector of private land-based investments in Ghana. SDC, in agreement with the CIFOR/TLI, also stands ready to inform and promote the TLI results with other like-minded partners and donors whenever and wherever possible.

Assessment of the evaluation

The evaluation has been designed before SDC decided to discontinue its support after phase 1. While the phasing out from TLI has always been a possible scenario in view of possible budget cuts, SDC decided to perform a full-fledged external project evaluation in order to have an external view in case of a continuation of the project beyond phase 1.

Therefore, the TORs of the evaluation were designed as looking forward, in view of planning phase 2 of the TLI project. The selected team (FIBL) performed the evaluation well, and all involved stakeholders were satisfied with the evaluation process which gave the possibility for exchanges and discussions.

The different products as per TORs (inception report, final report, and answers to the SDC questions) were submitted with slight delays but the results were overall satisfactory.

Main findings

SDC appreciates the quality of the evaluation report. The report is clear, informative and coherent. SDC also generally agrees with the main findings of the evaluation.

The TLI made, despite the complexity of the topic and also despite challenges in different countries due to conflicts, movement restrictions and political tensions considerable progresses towards achieving the planned outcomes and outputs as set out in the project design. SDC also agrees with the evaluation's finding that the project was slightly overambitious and did not sufficiently address outcome and impact levels so far.

The main products of the TLI project which SDC would like to recommend others to take up are the Risk and Reward Model (RRM) and the Business Transformation Labs (BTL), which have been developed during phase 1 of the TLI project.

While other products or collaborative approaches such as the Multistakeholder Platforms (MSP) and the Community of Practices (CoPs) are highly recommended to be continued by other organisations, they are maybe a bit less innovative and may overlap with project instruments developed by other partners.

Recommendations

1. Continue investment in TLI with increased or at least the same efforts	
2. Revise Objective System	
3. Reduce complexity, focus the strategy	
4. Stress transformation strategy	
5. Stress sustainability concept	
6. Improve usefulness for SDC global work	
Fully agree	Partially agree Disagree

Recommendations, management response and measures

Recommendation 1: Continue investment in TLI with increased or at least the same efforts		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
Due to budget cuts decided by the Swiss parliament in December 2024, SDC will not be able to continue its financial support to subsequent phases of the TLI after the conclusion of phase 1. SDC stands however ready to provide non-financial support to TLI to identify other potential donors.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) SDC informs relevant other stakeholders, including relevant SDC country offices, about the TLI project, its products and processes, which can be taken up by other programs/projects working in the sector.	VLD/ABAAM	2025
b) SDC will share information about, and support the use of successful TLI products at global level, and with other partners such as the ILC.	VLD/ABAAM	2025
Recommendation 2: Revise Objective System		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
In case of a hypothetical new phase, SDC would support this recommendation and ask CIFOR/TLI to simplify the objective system by setting fewer priorities in accordance with the project results and the stakeholder responses so far.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
No actions as TLI has been discontinued.		
Recommendation 3: Reduce complexity, focus the strategy		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree

Similar to the previous recommendation, SDC would insist on the implementation of this recommendation.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
No action as TLI has been discontinued		
Recommendation 4: Stress transformation strategy		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
Similar to the two previous recommendations, this would be taken up in a hypothetical new phase.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
No action as TLI has been discontinued		
Recommendation 5: Stress sustainability concept		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
SDC would agree with this recommendation in case a new TLI phase 2. The development of a sustainability and phasing out strategy would have been important in Phase 2. According to our analysis, the RRM and the BTLs would have the highest opportunities to be taken up by the national systems.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
No action as TLI has been discontinued		
Recommendation 6: Improve usefulness for SDC global work		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
Despite the phasing out decision of SDC, the topic of sustainable land-based investment is expected to remain high in the development agenda. For the time being, socially inclusive, environmentally sound and profitable land-based investments are rare, especially in Africa. Despite generally accepted principles such as RAI and VGGT, practical examples of implementation of such principles remain rare.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
SDC will continue to highlight the relevance of RAI and VGGT in LBI in global fora and with SDC partners such as ILC, IFAD, FAO, etc.	All levels	All time