

Illovo Sugar Africa and partners launch LandAssess Tool

In order to implement its land rights policies and commitments, Illovo Sugar Africa has collaborated with Landesa and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in the development of a new Landesa LandAssess Tool.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

The LandAssess Tool guides companies through a series of questions to measure whether they have carried out specific actions that demonstrate compliance with best practices for responsible land-based investment. The tool uses a set of checklists to assess the company's performance, such as policy and capacity assessment; legal, administrative and institutional review; impact assessments; consultation and engagement; contracting and agreements; grievances and feedback; encroachment and land-use change.

Illovo's operations in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania were used as the backdrop for the LandAssess Tool's development and ultimate testing. Landesa developed the LandAssess Tool – a risk assessment and management instrument - to help companies conduct land rights due diligence and monitoring specifically for agricultural projects. While the tool currently focuses on agricultural issues, it can also provide important guidance to other sectors as well.

Scott Schang, senior director of corporate engagement at Landesa adds, "The LandAssess pilots at Illovo's operations in Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania provided us with critical feedback from employees and civil society organisations to help us ensure the tool not only meets businesses' needs for a practical tool that allows them to manage the implementation of land rights commitments over time, but does so without sacrificing the quality of the content."

Further deployment

Illovo staff in Tanzania are already using the LandAssess Tool to help manage their implementation of the company's Group Guidelines on Land and Land Rights. Illovo's other countries of operation expect to be deploying the LandAssess Tool in the near future too.

“As an African agricultural and agro-processing business, we believe it is our responsibility to ensure the protection and management of community land rights and landholdings very keenly. When Landesa approached us to partner with them to test their LandAssess Tool, we were thrilled to be able to assist. The tool thus provides an unparalleled view of our operations from a land rights point of view and incorporates an insight-driven framework on how to prioritise any issues that arise. As an organisation that is committed to creating thriving communities around our businesses, LandAssess has delivered a new, shared-value platform through which to understand, engage and relate to our stakeholders,” says Gavin Dagleish, group MD, Illovo Sugar Africa.

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