



ITEC- TISS International Certificate Programme
On
Land Reforms and Development



In Collaboration with
Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC), Ministry of External Affairs,
Government of India

Hosted by
Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Background

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, is the leading capacity building platform of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Instituted in 1964, ITEC is one of the oldest institutionalised arrangements for international capacity building, having trained more than 200,000 officials from 160+ countries in both the civilian and defence sectors.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is a community-engaged Social Science University, established in 1936. TISS was started as Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work and in 1964, it was granted the Deemed University status under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. Since its inception, the institute's vision has been to be an institution of excellence in higher education that continually responds to changing social realities through the development and application of knowledge, towards creating a people-centered, ecologically sustainable and just society that promotes and protects dignity, equality, social justice and human rights for all.

ITEC and TISS are collaborating to offer a Certificate Course on **Land Reforms and Development**. Land is one of the most fundamental resources shaping social, economic, and political life. In much of the Global South, land ownership and access remain deeply contested, rooted in histories of colonial dispossession, unequal distribution, and socio-political hierarchies. Land reforms—whether through redistribution, tenure security, or recognition of customary rights—have long been seen as a cornerstone for achieving **social justice, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development**.

India, with its diverse experiences in agrarian reform, cooperative movements, and digital land governance, provides a rich learning environment for international officials to explore both successes and challenges. Similarly, countries across Africa, Latin America, and Asia have experimented with varied models of land reform, offering comparative insights into policy design, governance, and implementation.

This course situates land reforms within the broader framework of developmental justice, emphasizing the intersection of equity, sustainability, and governance. It is designed to foster South-South dialogue, enabling participants to learn from shared struggles and innovative practices across the Global South.

Programme Introduction

“Land Reforms and Development” is an international certificate programme designed to provide a comprehensive overview of land reform, drawing from an interdisciplinary approach integrating social justice, political acumen and ecological sustainability. It is intended for mid- and senior-level government officials, social welfare administrators, and practitioners from civil society and CSR sectors who work in land policy, welfare delivery, and local governance.

It moves beyond conventional technical training to foster a deeper analysis of the political economy of reform and the innovative, context-sensitive strategies emerging from Southern realities. By convening officials in India, the course aims to build a community of practice equipped to design and implement land policies that are not only administratively sound but are also morally just and sustainable for future generations. It explores how land reforms intersects with welfare policy, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and digital governance. By blending classroom-based

instruction with experiential learning, participants gain the analytical and technical skills required to address land-related challenges in diverse contexts of the Global South.

Through a combination of lectures, interactive workshops, simulations, and field-based learning, participants will engage with global policy frameworks, comparative case studies, and applied techniques in land management. The course brings together legal, technological, and governance perspectives – linking land administration with social welfare delivery, digital data systems, corporate social responsibility (CSR) partnerships, and community participation.

The programme draws from key international frameworks, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – while grounding discussions in Indian experiences like the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), the Forest Rights Act (FRA), the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), and SVAMITVA. Together, these frameworks will enable participants to design locally appropriate, socially just, and technologically robust land reforms aligned with the development priorities of their respective countries.

Programme Objective

1. Build Foundational Knowledge:

To provide a historical and comparative understanding of land reforms in the Global South.

2. Integrate Legal, Policy, and Ethical Frameworks:

Introduce international and national frameworks governing land, forest, and indigenous rights (e.g., VGGT, UNDRIP, PESA, FRA, DILRMP, RADPFI) and foster ethical, transparent decision-making in land administration.

3. Promote Technological and Digital Capacities:

Equip participants with practical skills in digital record management, GIS-based mapping, data governance, and the design of integrated land information systems.

4. Enhance Institutional Coordination and Participatory Governance:

Build capacity for collaboration among government departments, community institutions, and private actors to promote convergence and participatory land use planning.

5. Strengthen CSR and Resource Mobilization for Land Governance:

Develop the ability to leverage CSR funds, partnerships, and multi-stakeholder platforms for land-related projects and welfare-linked infrastructure.

6. Encourage Sustainability, Social Justice and Gender Equity:

Critically evaluate land reform policies through the lenses of social justice (caste, class, gender, indigenous rights) and sustainable development.

7. Foster Global South Collaboration:

Encourage cross-learning and exchange of best practices among participating countries, highlighting innovative, context-specific governance models.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Analyse historical and institutional trajectories shaping land systems in the Global South.
- Interpret and apply international and national laws and frameworks related to land, forests, and indigenous rights.
- Use participatory, technology-enabled methods for land mapping, record management, and dispute resolution.
- Integrate land administration within broader welfare and social policy frameworks.
- Design and manage CSR-supported initiatives and resource partnerships for land governance.
- Employ inclusive strategies to strengthen gender equity and community participation.
- Formulate locally relevant action plans that align with global sustainability and social justice goals.

Dates and Duration

Date: 10th February to 23rd February 2027

Duration: 2 weeks

Programme Structure

The programme retains a blended structure combining **60 hours of classroom-based learning** and **40 hours of experiential learning**. It balances theoretical understanding with field immersion, emphasizing practical applications and peer exchange.

1. Classroom Component (60 hours)

- Lectures and discussions with domain experts, academics, and policymakers.
- Thematic modules on:
 - Foundations - Land, Power, and Social Justice
 - Contemporary Policy Dilemmas & Tools
 - Policy Frameworks and Governance
 - Digital transformation and data governance
 - Gender, inclusion, and ethics in land governance

2. Experiential Learning Component (40 hours)

- Field visits to government offices, CSR-funded projects, and community-managed commons.
- Simulations on conflict resolution, participatory planning, and negotiation.
- Practical exercises in GIS mapping, digital record modernization, and project proposal development.
- Peer-to-peer exchanges and collaborative development of local action plans.

Eligibility

The programme is open to:

- Development administrators, planners, and government functionaries engaged in land and rural governance.
- Practitioners from civil society organizations, research institutions, and CSR initiatives working in land, tenure security, and participatory planning.
- Participants from countries across the Global South, particularly from South Asia, who are involved in public administration, land policy, or community governance.