



Issue 3 – December 2007

Introduction

Land is a central asset for rural people, agriculture and development. The use and management of land covers a wide range of issues. In this edition of the eBulletin we look at some of these issues, including DFID's land and agriculture priorities drawing upon an example from Rwanda.

Agriculture & Land, Jonathan Lingham, Land Focal Point, DFID

This edition coincides with a resurgence of interest in the rural development sector. DFID's new ministerial team has made it clear that their two prime interests are in tackling and responding to the challenge of climate change, and in promoting growth as a way of maintaining progress towards the twin goals of reducing poverty and hunger. In Africa in particular, agriculture has a key role to play in delivering sustainable economic growth, and this in part explains the decision to



significantly expand DFID's agricultural research budget over the next three years. At the same time, the World Bank's latest World Development Report, showcased in the last eBulletin, takes as its theme Agriculture for Development, the EC has signalled its intention of substantially increasing its spending on the sector, and African governments themselves are well on the way to meeting their 2003 commitment of spending 10% of national budget on agriculture and rural development.

The challenge ahead is considerable. To meet the MDG targets, some observers estimate that agricultural growth in Africa needs to be maintained at 7%, a level that is going to be difficult to sustain even on the back of the current commodity boom. There is also the new challenge of high food prices, which potentially have a disproportionate impact on poor people in both urban and rural settings. And for DFID, human resource constraints force us to look for innovative ways of delivering our programmes while at least maintaining (and preferably even increasing) our impact. With senior management encouragement we are in the process of establishing a number of "focal countries", as one way of achieving this result. In relation to this, DFID's Policy and Research Division has reaffirmed its readiness to provide support from the centre to overseas offices seeking to help them thicken their policy engagement in-country.

Jonathan Lingham, [Renewable Natural Resources and Agriculture](#) DFID

DFID Land Policy

In July 2007 DFID released their [Land Policy Paper](#), highlighting the importance of access and secure rights to land for poor people as a route out of poverty. Drawing heavily on DFID's recent experience in Africa, in particular the Rwanda example highlighted in this issue, and Asia, including post-conflict states, the paper emphasises increasing pressure on land resources through increasing population and environmental degradation as real issues that any reform needs to deal with if solutions are going to be sustainable. As well as providing evidence of the benefits of land reform the paper also identified strong governance as a crucial component of any land registration policy.

Land Tenure Reform in Rwanda



The Land Tenure Reform Programme for Rwanda, Phase 1, started in 2005. Run by the [Ministry of Lands](#) (MINITERE) its purpose is to establish a clear strategy for land reform and set out a fully costed, time bound plan for national implementation.

The issues are complex, ranging from detailed points of policy and law through to the establishment and support of land management organisations, how to implement the law on the ground and the likely consequences and outcomes.

The theoretical benefits of tenure reform have been tested in many countries worldwide. The results have often been disappointing, especially in Africa. Lack of capacity needed to deliver land titles and planning services efficiently has been a common cause of failure.

In Rwanda's case, the Civil Code offered formal legal title but this was only available in the towns and cities, in effect only to those who made substantial investments in the land. It was not accessible to the majority of ordinary Rwandans. Almost all of Rwanda's land is still held under customary or local tenure. Successive waves of violence between 1959 and 1994 have weakened these relatively informal structures. Population pressure, land scarcity and economic development are now increasing the demand for and hence the value of land. An active informal market in land has arisen to meet that demand. Customary tenure, such as it is, is no longer enough. As a result all citizens are increasingly demanding access to formal systems to register their rights in land.

In 2003, the Government of Rwanda started a long process of consultation on land tenure. It revealed broad support for land tenure reform and led to the drafting of the [National Land Policy](#) (2004) and the enactment of the [Organic Land Law](#) in 2005. In 2006, MINITERE carried out detailed field consultations. This was followed in 2007 by field trials regularisation tenure using locally appointed committees of technicians to see how the population would respond to formal systems and what the practical difficulties would be in its implementation.

There are significant grounds for optimism in reforming land tenure in Rwanda. Despite the fact that they have to do the identification of land parcels on satellite images, the process has moved very swiftly. Committees are able to register up to 450 parcels a week with community consensus of boundaries and far fewer disputes than expected.

Both local institutions and individual households have participated fully in this first step towards land registration, for the first time giving them a stake in, and access to formal law. To build on these strengths, Government intends to adopt a flexible approach; one which is based on popular participation and uses simple, robust, transparent and clear procedures.

The trials have clearly demonstrated that the public are receptive to change, and that implementation is not only feasible and simple, but necessary. The land registration process has not revealed any sea-change in the way that people manage their land but it has given

individuals more confidence in their holdings whether owned or rented. Additionally the process has shown how families use the land as part of their livelihood strategies often buying or renting plots in other parts of the local area to meet their agricultural and livestock production needs rather than relying just on homestead plots.

Though Rwanda is relatively new to land reform there has been significant interest from other countries that have a longer experience in the land reform process, in the initiatives Rwanda is taking. The demographics of the country, combined with rapid economic growth, and a forward thinking government, are driving the process forward more quickly than elsewhere. The government is moving quickly from the academic discussions to the practical aspects of implementation.

In several respects the Rwanda experience in land reform is unusual, starting from a blank canvas. What happens over the next few years will be of interest to all involved in the land sector.

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Land Resources

World Bank Land Thematic Workshop

As part of the [World Bank](#)'s annual Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) week, the [Land Policy and Administration Thematic Group](#) at the World Bank organised a two day workshop in 2006 entitled '[Land Policies & Legal Empowerment of the Poor](#)'. This brought together experts from across the development spectrum to share ideas and experiences of land reform. As well as providing a forum for discussion a number of key note speaker sessions were held, giving an insight into recent developments in the field. All of the presentations given during the workshop are available [here](#).

PLOW Land Module

The [Professional Development for Livelihoods \(PLOW\)](#) has produced a module on [Land and Property Rights](#). Along with an overview and [briefing note](#), there are links to [key texts](#), [further reading](#) and [policy debates](#).

Land Resources Links

The [International Land Coalition](#) website contains many links and resources on land around the world.

The [Natural Resources Database](#) offers free mapping services to developing countries to assist with GIS and natural resource management.

The Rural Poverty Portal has a section on [Land and Rural Poverty](#).

ELDIS portal has links to papers and websites on [Land Tenure](#) and DFID's [Research for Development](#) (R4D) also has links to various projects on land and natural resource management.

The IFAD President published a [Secure Access to Land](#) paper in 2007 for the Commonwealth Ministers' meeting.

[GIS and Participatory Approaches in Natural Resource Management](#) (2001).

Danish Institute for International Studies has published a series of papers on [Land Rights and Land Conflicts in Africa](#)

The University of Birmingham's International Development Department division has undertaken a series of studies on [Informal Land Rights in Six African Cities](#)

International Organisations & Policy Papers

The World Bank has published a range of [Land Policy and Administration](#) papers the most recent being [Land Administration Reform: Indicators for Success and Future Challenges](#)

The FAO's [Land Tenure and Management Unit](#) supports productive and sustainable land use management.

UN Habitat has produced a [Policy Makers Guide to Women's Land, Property & Housing Rights Across the World](#).

The [European Commission's Land Policy Guidelines](#) were published in 2004.

SIDA's Position Paper on [Natural Resources Tenure](#) includes their position on land tenure reform in relation to development.

The [Land Tenure and Property Rights Community of Practice](#) pages of the ARD Website have a number of best practice resources available.

Further Land links will be available on our [website](#) from early 2008.

Events & Training

A five day course on [Value Chain Development](#) will be held in the Netherlands in January 2008 for practitioners to examine the various approaches that exist and the roles that donors, development organisations, private sector organisations, governmental organisations and other stakeholders can play.

The Summer Institute course on [Livelihoods Under Stress](#) is offered by the Feinstein International Center from Tufts University, held on the campus of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 15- 27 June 2008.

LRC Consortium member the Overseas Development Group at University of East Anglia will be running a [Professional Training Course on Climate Change and Development](#) between 1-12 September 2008.

The LRC: The Bigger Picture & Contacts

The [Livelihoods Resource Centre](#) is managed by [HTSPE](#) in association with [IDS](#), [ODG](#) and [Coffey](#). The LRC provides services in two areas: specialised **commissioned services** for DFID Advisers and **core resources** posted on the website and eBulletin.

Contacts

For comments or suggestions on content, please email: [Jessica Riordan](#)

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For all other enquires relating to the Livelihoods Resource Centre, please email lrc@htspe.com or visit our website www.livelihoodsrc.org.

