

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE MODELS TO ACQUIRE LAND SUSTAINABLY IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE.

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ABSTRACT

Land redistribution must be accompanied by the relevant resources required for sustainable farming production and its beneficiaries must be capacitated before being settled on farms. Then farming productions must be monitored and evaluated for sustainability. Then, livelihood improvement on land reform beneficiaries must be put on scale. Based on all this mentioned factors the research was initiated to develop a model which will ensure that land acquisition is done in a sustainable manner to ultimately improve livelihoods of beneficiaries.

Key Words: Land Reform, Sustainability, Models and Livelihoods, Extension Support.

1. BACKGROUND

Most of the land reform beneficiary livelihoods were not improved since the year 1994 namely the farming income and profit received from the farming businesses. Hence there is a need to develop a model towards sustainable farming when funded by Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program. Extension officers from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the land reform farms beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders were interviewed in this study.

Literature reflected that more than 70% of rural household survive through agricultural activities, not necessarily from full time farming practices and 3% (4 Million) of SA land surface is considered to be a high potential agricultural land (Last, C.2006: 3). It is therefore postulated that most of the farmers livelihoods in the country can be improved by means of agricultural activities or profits yet it is not currently happening. Application forms and documents normally used by applicants from the Department of Land Affairs as from the period when the interest groups apply for settlement on the land till when the land was transferred to them were also looked into.

Although the term land reform is more apt to confuse than to clarify unless one examine briefly the different circumstances in which it is used in and the connotations that it has to different people. It must bring about an improvement in income distribution and social status of rural people and it must improve the incentives that persuade farmers to undertake hard and productive work.

It is unfortunately true that many politicians are interested in land reform without clear understanding of its importance in agricultural development. They often want to use land reform as a tool to achieve political goals without considering the impact it has to provide to the beneficiaries. Hence it is considered that, the aftercare support on land reform in the Free State is not appropriate and sufficient (NAFU representative in Lejweleputswa district).

In some development programs, land reform has been used to destroy land ownership aspirations (Philip, 1975). Literature reflected that handling more agricultural land to South

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African's black majority is not enough to cure the country of widespread poverty, especially in underdeveloped rural areas, focus must be more on social services and infrastructure in impoverished rural areas (Louw, C.2006: 15).

Stephen, (2006:35) stated that government should legalise ownership for those who want to farm and build houses for those occupying the land illegal. Since poverty is primarily about lack of choice and inability to take advantage of opportunities (Verschoor. 2004: 1). In real terms a poor person cannot choose on what is provided to him or her. This was witnessed by 80% of the land reform members who are currently passive in the farms they were settled in.

Several stakeholders were tasked with the responsibility of providing the necessary services to the beneficiaries of the distributed farms or land. The idea was to improve the basic living standards of the land reform beneficiaries. Unfortunately since then it was taken from the Integrated Development Plan, 2012 that few researches were conducted neither to investigate the livelihood improvement contributed by the tasked stakeholders to the beneficiaries, who were settled within each of the five local Municipalities of the Free State Province nor to develop a model of success when acquiring land and when providing an efficient and appropriate post settlement support.

The Land Redistribution and Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme is designed to offer black South Africans an opportunity to access agricultural land so as to improve their nutritional status and their incomes if intending to farm at any scale as well as to create stronger linkages between farm and off farm income generating activities (LRAD a sub programme of the Land Redistribution Programme, Draft, June 2001).

In order to farm successfully, a farmer must know natural resources namely: soil, climate and plants, for a crop farmer the nature of the soil and climate determines what can be grown in a specific field and what farming practices should be used (Laker.2005).

Sibanda,(2001:5) reflected that the key constraints to the delivery are the adequate government capacity for land reform that is lack of effectiveness organisational, technical and managerial support to new farmers and land reform beneficiaries beyond the point of land Acquisition.

The Strauss Commission was established by the Presidential commission in 1995 to make recommendations on what reform will be needed to create an enabling environment for provision of rural financial services to formerly disadvantaged people which also reflected that loan repayment for disadvantaged people must be flexible (White Paper on South African Land Programme, 1998:24-39).

The beneficiaries must be willing to live on or near their land to operate or work on it and they must be committed to use the grant (Integrated Programme of land reform and Agricultural Development in South Africa, final document, 2004:8). Though it is clearly dominant that the beneficiaries are not satisfied about the service they are receiving from the support service from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, as reflected by the office of the MEC based on the farmers complaints forwarded to his office.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to investigate the land reform programs developed for land reform beneficiaries and interest groups and based on the findings develop a model.

2.1 Specific objectives

- 2.1.1 To investigate various land reform programs.
- 2.1.2 To investigate whether the farmers understand what is the support service from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- 2.1.3 To consolidate the failures and successes and compile a model for successful LRAD program.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The goal of land reform is to provide the wider majority of the South African population with access to land for residential and productive use in order to improve their livelihood with a particular emphasis on the poor labour tenants, farm workers, women and emerging farmers (Smith, 2004:466-474). Whereas the ultimate objective of development is to improve the quality of life of people, developing countries need to identify and implement poverty reducing strategies and to assess the extent and depth of poverty (Shinns & Lyne, 2005). Economic poverty has been defined as the inability to attain goods and services considered essential to human being, disadvantaged groups in rural South Africa have been left with fewer resources, including land, lower levels of education and spatially divided household due to the need for external incomes (Shinns & Lyne, 2004:74-88).

Bromley and Daniel (1995:99-103) stated that 85% of South African's land and 95% of its industrial undertakings are in white hands. Black people owned only 13% of land before 1994 (Van Zyl, Kirsten & Binswager.1996: 17-17). According to Gozalez and Lopez. (2003:27-30) traditionally, land reforms were based on controlled redistribution of expropriated or frontier lands with the aim of reducing ownership concentration, but without much regard to production efficiency hence agricultural development in Colombia has involved substantial misallocation of resources. The policy did not reduce poverty in the rural areas and limited the access of poor farmers to good land that was occupied by low intensity livestock ranching.

Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) is designed to provide financial assistance to black South African citizens to access land specifically for agricultural purposes. The strategic objectives of the sub programme include contributing to the redistribution of the country's agricultural land, improving nutrition and incomes of the rural poor who want to farm on any scale, congesting overcrowded former homeland areas and expanding opportunities for women and young people who live in rural areas (Policy on agriculture in sustainable development, 2005).

Risk is a central issue of all financiers and if not addressed properly, finance in a free market economy will always elude the emerging farmers which will result in a failure of a sustainable land reform program, lack of access to formal credit and to fill financial intermediation services impedes agricultural development and hampers the efforts to alleviate rural poverty (Jordaan, A. J, 2004:4). Alternatively infrastructure helps to optimise farmers productivity and sustainability of natural resources and it also assists farmers to proper farm

planning and use (Mokitlane, 2006:8). To achieve optimum utility land should fulfil more than its obvious function that is to provide food and raw materials for clothing and shelter, the proprietorship of land should give the individual farmer security, guaranteeing not only his subsistence but also opportunity for advancement (Edward and Harris, 1969).

In this view the cost of extension is related as much to the number of hectares hence it is unreasonable to expect the same number of extension agents to serve 600 000 smallholders as has been servicing 20 000 white farmers (Zimmerman, 2000). Agricultural extension is a service or system which through educational procedures, assists rural people in improving their productive efficiency and income by bettering their levels of living, lifting social, educational and environmental standards of rural life (Seobi, 1990:47). It will require South Africans to be intellectually and technically skilled and to have superior communication, leadership and social abilities (Morwala, 2006: 22). It is overemphasized by GFRAS report which is reflecting that extension officer's curriculum must be reformed (www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/gfras-publication.html).

The main areas of knowledge that is important to the extension agent and which forms the basis of extension training; technical skill, the agent must be adequately trained in the technical aspects of his work and have a good working knowledge of the main elements of the agricultural system in which he is working, rural life which includes anthropological and social studies of the rural area where agent is working, local traditions, practices, culture and values; policy, the agent must be familiar with the government policy and other institutional policy which affect rural areas, development programmes , credit programmes and bureaucratic and administrative procedures; adult education, since extension is an educational process, the agent must be familiar with the main approaches of adult education and group dynamics and with the technique of developing farmer participation in extension activities(Seobi;1990:60). A strong technical support system is essential in order to help extension officers to provide a service to their target groups that will bring challenge and establish viable farming communities (du Toit, 1999:256-262).

Realizing that they cannot afford the expensive extension services yet they were dissatisfied by the services offered by the government, the Italians did what their ancestors did 400 years ago, they took extension into their own hand by setting up interest groups, forming associations and they bypass the motionless authorities or the old associations and the model which was established was supported by most of the commercial farmers and it was managed by three major farmer associations (Jordaan, Nell & Zecca, 2004:46).

In land redistribution it is certain to include substantial direct and indirect upfront costs to the beneficiaries in terms of money and labour, such upfront costs include direct program participation costs, moving costs, necessary land improvements and the opportunity costs of foregone activities during the transition (Zimmerman, 2000). Since emerging farmers with limited equity and off farm income face liquidity challenges in servicing standard mortgages to finance land acquisition (Lyne and Darroch, 2004: 173).

Land reform is seen as proceeding in tandem with the restructuring of agriculture, to open opportunities for black producers and for small scale farming in particular (Van der Westhuizen, 2005:3). Many factors are motivating the formation of farmer groups, including an efficient means for community and transmitting information, sharing information (eg study groups, focus groups, identifying and evaluation of group techniques, improving on farm and off-farm income (Stevens &Terblanche, 2004:40-49). Louw,(2005: 29) stated that

most farming enterprises comprise of several sections which may be operated as separate business units, although they may be viewed separately in valuation process, they become one, ultimately comprising of the value of a farm as single unit and it is useless to separate the business components from the land. Performance of the farm is determined by the way the farm is managed, the nine most important factors that affect the success of a farm are, slackness or lack of discipline, timorousness, time management, standard of living, greed, keeping records, lack of judgement, adaptability and stagnation (Theunissen, 2005: 30-31).

The review notes that LRAD has delivered over one million hectares at a cost of R2.1 billion, at the end of 2003/2004 although most of the projects were not operational this is attributed to lack of funds for production inputs hence Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program (CASP) has been introduced to address these production challenges and it will be followed by capacity building and extension programs (Kupka, 2005:29). Land Affairs launched the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development Programme in 2001, though it remains the Department's flagship redistribution project its success is debatable, reports on an aspirant black farmer whose future look bright as a beneficiary, but when the department fail to honour its undertaking, it left him in debt and without a farm (Louw, 2005:30).

4. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

4.1 Sample frame

The study only focuses in the Lejweleputswa District which comprises of five Local Municipalities viz Nala, Tswelopele, Masilonyana, Matjhabeng and Tokologo.

4.2 Involved stakeholders

The extension officers and project officers were interviewed from both the Department of agriculture and rural development and the department of land reform and rural Development and from the interviews the route map towards sustainable land acquisition was developed.

4.3 Workshops, Seminars and meetings

The secondary data was used as obtained from the workshops, seminars and meetings where the author attended and participated.

5. FINDINGS

It was found that even the farmers with high-level schooling would be considerably worse off if the flow of new technology and access to financial services were to be halted and all the products are important into the human capital production process below and above it (Van Rooyen & Van Zyl, 1996:58). Van Rooyen & Van Zyl (1996:59) stated that the mission of the extension workers should focus on the information communication to inform and assist farmers with decision-making on technology choice and farm management, sub-invention processes provide an important opportunity for extension workers to participate in farm systems research although this aspect should not be viewed as the main function of extension with the impact viewed as negligible on aspects such as technology intervention, germoplasm, general science and public choice dimensions. Extension workers should primarily view their responsibility in human capital formation process as brokers of knowledge and information and to provide a vital facilitating link between farmers and the

research training system. Last, C. (2001:13) argued that development did not start with physical goods but with people and their education, organisation and discipline. Beukes, O. (2006:19) stated that LRAD received less support from the public as well as the private sector.

The longevity and sustainability of an agricultural development projects can be based on factors such as; project initiated by the community, careful selection of beneficiaries, availability of high potential human resource, the availability of high potential natural resources, the high degree of self-sufficiency in terms of finances and technical capabilities, for every start of the project, easy access to extension services and easy access to markets (Potgieter, Potgieter & du Toit, 1996:85).

Agriculture involves the sustainable and productive utilisation of the natural resources and other inputs by the people for plant and animal production purposes. (Blignaut,1996:5).

In selection of the beneficiaries of the state land one must always remember that because the target group is the poorest of the poor they are mostly illiterate and it is impractical to use questionnaires or request detailed information (Olivier, 1999:205-212). Land resource must be able to foster agricultural production on a sustainable basis, besides delivering products over the short run hence land must be preserved and conserved in perpetuity (Groenewald, 2004:673-682). This could be promoted by a reformed extension curriculum as reflected by GFRAS report, (www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/gfras-publication.html).

Results reflected that there are several land allocation programs (SLAG-Settlement Land Acquisition Grant, LRAD-Land Reform and Agricultural Development Program, Restitution and PLAS-Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy) previously utilized by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in allocating land to various applicants.

In Settlement land Acquisition grant a group of people applied for land and they were acquiring free as it was purchased from a grant for them.

With Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development program, individuals were mandated to apply in a group whereby each reflected his own contribution which was supposed to be evaluated for the amount of value it worth so that it to contribute in the grant granted for purchasing of land.

Restitution program deals with the claiming of land which was previously disposed from the owners, whereby they could either possess it back or be refunded for the value of their land.

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) program is whereby individuals apply for farms and they lease it for five and more years, whereby their production and practices are ultimately evaluated.

In all the above discussed programs it is eminent that all the programs have been executed although it could not be fairly justified that were sustainable. Whereby more than one individual were supposed to work one farm it was found that not all of them were active on the farm.

The LRAD project cycle was compiled with the extension officers as it was postulated that it was the best program just that the screening of the interest groups before land acquisition

must be done. The proposed LRAD project cycle was developed which lead to ensuring that land is acquired sustainably as it is reflected in Table 8 below. Notwithstanding the fact that the PLAS program could work but most of the farmers reflected that they cannot use their PLAS farms as collateral. Hence findings reflected LRAD as the best program if it is supported by the CASP fund and Illima.

Table 1: The project cycle for acquiring land through LRAD versus the proposed project cycle.

LRAD Project cycle	Proposed LRAD project cycle
Registration of land request via land affairs (90%) or The land request registered via extension officer (10%)	Registration of land request via Land affairs or the extension officer using a standard checklist developed to assess future potential beneficiaries/farmers. In this stage individuals of the interest group can be approved or disapproved
Completion of the application form for acquiring land which is categorized into; applicants info, their past experiences, farm details, available resources, enterprises they are proposing to be engaged in	Completion of the application form for acquiring land which is categorized into; applicants' info, their past experiences, farm details, available resources, enterprises they are proposing to be engaged in.
Feasibility study-The Department of agriculture draw it via extension officer	Feasibility study- The Department of agriculture draw it via extension officer
Project identification report-Business plan of the Project is done at this stage with all the information compiled above	Project Identification Report done.
District grant committee- The grant for preplanning is approved in this stage hence valuation of the land to be purchased is done in this stage. Legal entity formation is also done in this stage	The submission is written to transfer the farm, with all the information compiled above
Provincial Grant Committee-Land acquisition is approved at this stage-usually the copy of the file of the approved project must be send to agriculture	PGC- approve transfer of land-The file is transferred to agriculture- For detailed B/Planning
Spending of the BOG start and the leader in the spending of the BOG is the planner –EO are assisting with advices were necessary	Drawing of the detailed business plan is done with all the information compiled above, which could be either utilized to seek money from the commercial banks or any other fund or CASP. The business plan drawn is inclusive of spending of BOG
If there is a need the CASP B/plan is drawn by Dept of agriculture	Approval of funding
	Implementation of the business plan- Remember control must be done on each and every step

CASP funding model was developed with the practical experience of extension officers and it is believed if it can be implemented accordingly after acquiring land through land reform program it could be sustainable. Figure 1: Below reflect all processes which need to be followed when funding a Land Reform Project;

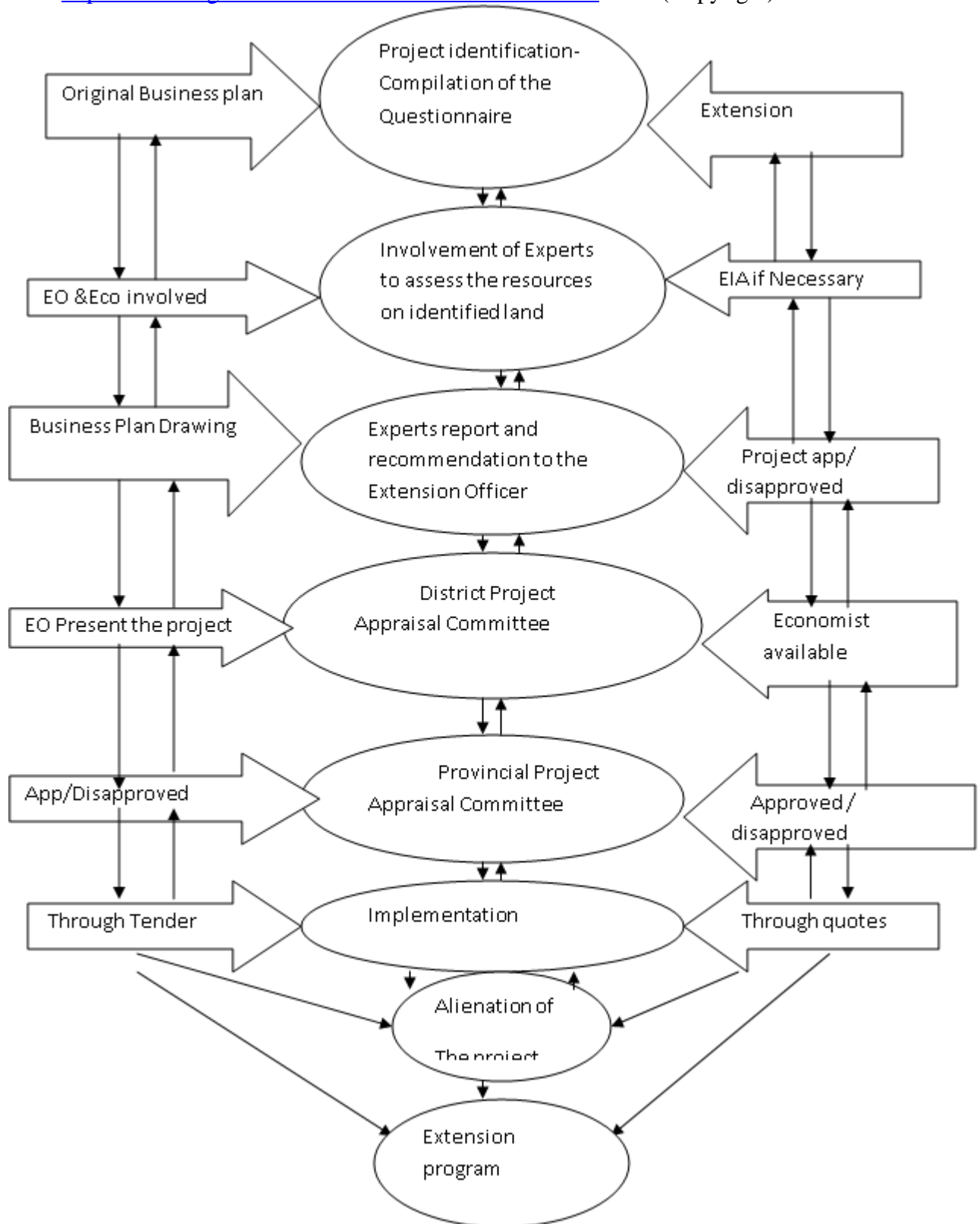


Figure 1: Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program fund Model for funding sustainably

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was found that most of the land reform beneficiaries are not meeting their basic needs and that could have detrimental impact towards farming sustainably. Beneficiaries were unaware of some of the services provided by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Department of Agriculture must hold road shows whereby it will be selling its services to the farmers.

It is also recommended that Department of Land Reform and Rural Development introduces a new program which will allow the land reform beneficiaries to use their acquired land as collateral or LRAD program must be brought back and be managed accordingly as reflected above in Table 1.

Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program funding Model for funding sustainably in Figure.1 must be introduced to Department of Agriculture with the extension program on it and it must be well managed by extension officers and project officers. Then projects will be funded in a sustainable way which will improve the farm's profits and ultimately improve the livelihoods of the farmers.

In conclusion, land could only be acquired sustainably if the relevant stakeholders are working together and the above developed model is used when funding land reform farms through CASP.

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