

Pocket Guide to South Africa 2016/17
Rural Development



The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) has an ongoing commitment to build sustainable rural livelihoods. It is also mandated to create and maintain an equitable and sustainable land dispensation, and act as a catalyst in rural development, to ensure sustainable rural livelihoods, decent work and continued social and economic advancement for all South Africans.

Over the medium term, the department will continue to focus on land distribution and agrarian transformation, and ensure the success of land distribution by supporting rural farmers, enterprises and industries.

The DRDLR is targeting to provide support to 5 000 households under the One Household One Hectare Programme and it is also envisaged that 384 households will be supported under the new initiative of the One Household Two Dairy Cows Programme.

Growing rural economies

The Agri-parks initiative supports rural enterprises, develops rural industries and facilitates the efficient movement of rural produce to markets. The initiative develops networked systems of agro-production, processing, logistics, marketing, training and extension services in district municipalities and developments on underused land.

Each agri-park supports smallholder farmers by providing capacity building, mentorship, farm infrastructure, extension services, and production and mechanisation inputs. Smallholder farmers own 70% of an agri-park, while the remainder is owned by government and commercial farmers.

Agri-parks are expected to contribute to government's targets of creating 1 million new jobs in rural economies by 2030, through the development of 300 000 new small-scale farmers and the creation of 145 000 agroprocessing jobs by 2019.

Since the inception of the initiative in 2015/16, approximately 10 566 smallholder farmers have been identified to benefit from Agri-parks, and 69 692 hectares of land has already been distributed. A total of R2 billion per year, over a 10-year period beginning in 2015/16, was allocated for the development of agri-parks in 44 districts.

Land Reform Programme

In 2016, the Constitutional Court ruled that the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 was invalid and contrary to the Constitution. The Commission on Restitution of Land

Rights (CRLR) was tasked to resubmit the act within two years. In the same period, the CRLR plans to settle claims lodged before 1998.

In terms of the judgment, should all claims emanating from original lodgement be processed before the two-year period lapses, the commission may approach the Constitutional Court for a review of the judgment. The Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 extends the deadline for land claims to June 2019. The amendment also criminalises false and fraudulent claims made by illegible people, which wastes taxpayers' money.

The Act also simplifies the procedure for the appointment of judges to the Land Claims Court, and the amendment of certain provisions aimed at promoting the effective implementation of the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994.

Extending the deadline for the lodging of claims was in line with the proposals of the National Development Plan, the CRDP and other growth strategies intended to promote national reconciliation and social cohesion.

The Act seeks to reopen the window for persons or communities dispossessed of their land due to past discriminatory laws and policies to lodge claims for their properties.

The CRLR is responsible for investigating and processing restitution claims. The CRLR also develops and coordinates restitution policies and oversees restitution court cases. The restitution programme is aimed at removing the settlement of land restitution claims under the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994.

The strategic objective of the CRLR is the restitution of rights in land or awards of alternative forms of equitable redress to claimants, within Medium Term Expenditure Framework budgetary allocation.

The CRLR seeks to provide equitable redress to victims of racially motivated land dispossession, in line with the provisions of the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994. It plans to increase the number of lodgement sites to 52 by 2019.

In 2016 the CRLR settled 804 land claims and finalised 672 of them. There were 1 530 claims targeted for research during the same period. However, the commission exceeded this figure and researched 1 558 claims.

The commission had committed to conclude research on all claims received before the 1998 cut-off date by June 2017.

The Communal Property Associations Amendment Bill was published in the *Government Gazette* in April 2016.

The amendment extends the application of the Act to labour tenants who acquire land, provides for general plans for land administered by an association and repeals the provisions relating to provisional associations.

It also provides improved protection of the rights of communities, in respect of movable and immovable property administered by an association, and adds clarity on the content of annual reports expected from associations.

Recapitalising and redeveloping redistributed farms

The Office of the Valuer-General, which has been operational since 2015/16, ensures efficient acquisition and equitable valuation of land.

The Recapitalisation and Development Programme ensures that redistributed land becomes productive and profitable by providing mechanised irrigation, farmer mentorship and farm inputs.

Since the programme began in 2008/09, 1 496 farms have been created from more than 4.7 million hectares of land acquired. Over the medium term, the department aimed to acquire approximately 281 165 hectares of strategically located land.

Deeds registration

The 10 deeds registries are located in Pretoria, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Bloemfontein, Kimberley, King William's Town, Vryburg, Mthatha and Nelspruit. These offices register deeds and documents relating to real rights in more than eight million registered land parcels consisting of township erven, farms, agricultural holdings, sectional title units and sectional title exclusive-use areas in terms of the Deeds Registries Act of 1937 and the Sectional Titles Act of 1986.

In the 2017/18 financial year, the DRDLR was expected to initiate and implement e-lodgement as the first phase of the Electronic Deeds.

Animal and Veld Management Programme (AVMP)

The AVMP is aimed at providing relief for farmers in rural areas operating under challenging circumstances made worse by spatial congestion and environmental degradation owing to overgrazing.

The programme will also help with soil rehabilitation, spatial decongestion and greening of the environment. It is part of government's intervention towards reversing the legacy of the 1913 Natives' Land Act, which led to the majority of black people being confined to 13% of the land, resulting in challenges of overcrowding and overgrazing in communal areas.

The department will identify farmers in communal areas who have showed potential for successful farming. Based on their track record, such farmers will be moved into some of the State-owned farms to enable them to expand their farming operations.

The AVMP is expected to reach the country's 24 poorest district municipality areas.

Comprehensive Rural Development Programme

To fulfil its mandate to develop rural areas throughout South Africa, the DRDLR developed the CRDP to tackle issues such as underdevelopment, hunger, poverty, joblessness, lack of basic services and other social ills which have become synonymous with rural areas and redistributing 30% of the country's agricultural land.

The CRDP addresses specific needs of the communities in rural areas such as running water, sanitation, housing and development support.

Rural Enterprise Industrial Development (REID)

REID aims to create an enabling institutional environment for vibrant and sustainable rural communities.

The Social Organisation and Mobilisation Unit is primarily responsible for the promotion of a participatory approach to rural development to ensure that rural communities are able to take full charge of their collective destinies.

The approach is predicated on social mobilisation of rural communities, so that there can be ownership of rural development projects and programmes.

The participatory approach is used to assess the needs of the rural areas through the profiling of households and communities.

The needs assessments are conducted through participatory rural appraisal methods, which also offer communities the opportunity to prioritise their needs.

The Technical Support, Skills Development and Nurturing Unit provides technical support to the institutions and structures established in rural communities, through skills development and capacity building. The unit determines skills levels of rural communities through household profiles, and develops training programmes aligned to interventions and economic opportunities. It is also responsible for the implementation of the job-creation model, which is aimed at improving households' basic needs, as well as promoting economic livelihoods.

The job-creation model further entails the empowerment of rural communities through skills transfer, developing artisans and enabling communities to start their own enterprises.

The Rural Livelihoods and Food Security Unit forms strategic partnerships that are important to the improvement of rural livelihoods, by promoting both economic development and the development of rural enterprises.

These strategic partnerships also facilitate value-added services such as agriprocessing, and the establishment of village industries and enterprises.

The strategic partners involved are from the private sector, state-owned enterprises and international organisations.

The Institutional Building and Mentoring unit is responsible for facilitating, building and mentoring institutions in rural communities.

This function involves the identification of existing institutions and the assessment of needs, including building new institutions to ensure sustainable development.

The unit is responsible for the establishment and facilitation of community structures such as the Council of Stakeholders. It is also responsible for establishing and building the capacities of cooperatives.

National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC)

The NARYSEC is a skills development initiative, which forms part of the comprehensive rural development programme's job-creation model.

The initiative recruits unemployed youth from rural areas between the ages of 18 and 25, who have passed Grade 12 or have higher qualifications, and equips them with business and entrepreneurial skills.

The initiative expects to increase the number of new participants by 2 700 each year over the medium term to reach a total of 8 100 by 2019/20.