

Rural Development and Land Reform



The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) is committed to ensuring that South Africans in rural areas enjoy the same benefits as those in urban areas regarding the human rights and basic dignity guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

The department's key priorities are:

- rolling out the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) to all rural municipalities
- improving productivity in land reform projects through effective implementation of the Recapitalisation and Development Programme
- expediting the finalisation of land claims
- improving corporate governance and ensuring enhanced service delivery
- implementing proper change management and innovation strategies
- enhancing the efficiency of information management systems.

Land Reform Programme

The principles which underpin the new approach to sustainable land reform are:

- deracialisation of the rural economy
- democratic and equitable land allocation and use across gender, race and class
- strict production discipline for guaranteed national food security.

The Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014 extends the deadline for land claims to June 2019.

The amendment also seeks to criminalise false and fraudulent claims that have been deemed a waste of taxpayers' money, where people submit land claims, knowing that they do not have a valid historic claim to a piece of land.

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 Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights (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. Plans were in place to increase the number of lodgement sites to 23 by 2015/16, and 52 by 2019.

As part of the implementation of the National Climate Change Response Policy, long-term adaptation scenarios are developed to determine which sectors may be climate sensitive and to develop response strategies.

Cadastral survey management

Cadastral surveying is the survey and demarcation of land for the purpose of defining parcels of land for registration in a land registry. Cadastral surveying in South Africa is undertaken exclusively by or under the control of professional land surveyors.

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.

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

The CRDP is focused on enabling rural people to take control of their lives, with support from government. The programme

aims to effectively deal with rural poverty through the optimal use and management of natural resources through an integrated broad-based agrarian transformation and the strategic investment in economic and social infrastructure that will benefit rural communities.



The Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform had succeeded in helping to create a better life for millions of residents in villages throughout South Africa by providing food for the hungry, stimulating local economies, establishing jobs and reducing poverty.

In an effort to improve the economy, the DRDLR acquired and distributed land throughout the country. To ensure sustained production on land provided by government, smallholder producers, including those under the recapitalisation and development programme, were supported through various initiatives including access to information.

Historically disadvantaged producers were given support that enabled them to access water and water-use licences were finalised, thus enabling the farmers to irrigate their land.

Smallholder producers were assisted to access markets

and producer cooperatives and marketing depots were established to increase their competitiveness and take advantage of market opportunities.

Household and institutional and community gardens were established. Food was distributed to 2,8 million people through the Food for All Programme including community nutrition development centres. About nine million learners gained access to nutritious food through the School Nutrition Programme.

Infrastructure development has contributed to households gaining access to clean running water; sanitation and electricity.

Rural Enterprise Infrastructure 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 offers 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 DRDLR established the programme to complement the government's job creation model.

Narysec aims to help transform young people in the rural areas from being job seekers to being job creators in their own right, as well as reducing their dependency on social grants.

The long-term programme also aims to uplift rural areas with services and infrastructure. Youths are trained in various skills such as waste-water management, water purification, construction, electricity and agriculture so that they are marketable and can open their own businesses.