

Getting land consolidation pilot projects sustainable. Capacity building

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Introduction

In Central and Eastern Europe land consolidation is practised a long time ago or is even new. Land consolidation can be considered as an important instrument to reduce land fragmentation and to stimulate farm structure improvements. Land consolidation can achieve sustainable rural development.

In this paper I would like to discuss different subjects about getting land consolidation project sustainable in an ongoing programme and to tell something about capacity building for project leaders and team members.

What are the differences between pilots and programmes?

In the FAO- Land Tenure Manual “Operations manual for land consolidation pilot projects in Central and Eastern Europe, Rome 2004” on page 3-4 an analyse is made about how a pilot project may differ from projects in an ongoing programme. The analyse is written on five main themes as follows:

Legislation

Pilot projects:

Pilot project usually operate under existing legislation and without the enactment of new consolidation acts. Transactions within a pilot project will tend to take place under the same rules as any other transactions in agricultural land, and on the basis of voluntary agreements. This can allow for flexibility test practices.

Long term programme

Projects are implemented under a comprehensive land consolidation law. This law should be drafted using the experiences of approaches tested in pilot projects.

Participation

Pilot projects:

In pilot projects it may be difficult to introduce procedures that have provisions for compulsory participation. There are often sentiment against compulsory participation because of past experiences. Also, processes are as yet untested and a first pilot project has no successful local examples to point to. Extensive information and awareness campaigns are needed to overcome fears.

Long term programme

The participation of all land owners within a project area may be required if the project includes large infrastructure components. There is thus a need for provisions to address those who have no interest in the project or are even against it. An element of compulsion of expropriation is often provided in legislation in a way that empowers a specific government agent but yet defines procedures to protect individual owners.

Initiation of projects

Pilot projects:

The lead agency will usually have take responsibility for identifying the communities for the first pilot project as the concept of land consolidation is not yet familiar to land owners.

Long term programme

Initiatives increasingly come from landowners and local communities as the concept of land consolidation becomes familiar through publicity of the first pilot projects.

Valuation

Pilot projects:

Market prices often cannot easily established because of outdated valuation schemes, relatively small number of transactions and limited information on prices. Potential sellers and buyers may have widely differing expectations of land values. Direct negotiations between seller and buyer with assistance from project personnel may be needed to establish values.

Long term programme

Valuation procedures will evolve as the first project are implemented. As land markets develop land values will be increasingly influenced by recent transactions for similar types of land.

Transfer and registration:

Pilot projects:

An owner could have a single document that details all transactions for that person. By signing this agreement form, the owner agrees to participate in the project under the specified terms. After the new layout has been agreed to, and demarcated and surveyed, the document required for transfer should be prepared and signed by owners and officials. The new parcels and their ownership should be registered. The final determination would thus occur after registration.

Long term programme

Land consolidation legislation could provide for all changes in ownership and parcel layout resulting from the project to become effective following legal approval of the reallocation plan. The approval would form the basis of registration, rather than transfer document such as deeds. The legal determination could be made through the legal approval and not by the subsequent registration.

Major subjects to discuss and to find out if these are the subjects to conquer. Depending of the experiences in a CEE country and its vision about land consolidation it is possible to identify pilot area for land consolidation to find out the missing links. Important is the role and the views of the land owners and land users.

This view can be different about land consolidation. Some land owners wishes to farm commercially. Others uses the land for subsistence and some owners don't even know where there property is located, who is using it.

The land user probably uses his land already as much as he likes. He will arrange every year the use of the land. There are very much small stakeholders with an average use of 1,5 ha.

Information

To get awareness for land consolidation it is necessarily that the results of the pilots are broadly communicated. The team members of a pilot project can visit other pilots to see what

the problems and solutions are. Farmers/Land owners will only become active if they see the benefits of the project. Like less parcels, sufficient water management, suitable roads for agricultural activities.

Good project management

To start a pilot project it is necessary to make a plan in a structured way.

A way to work it out is for example the cycle of life of a project.

Project management knows four phases:

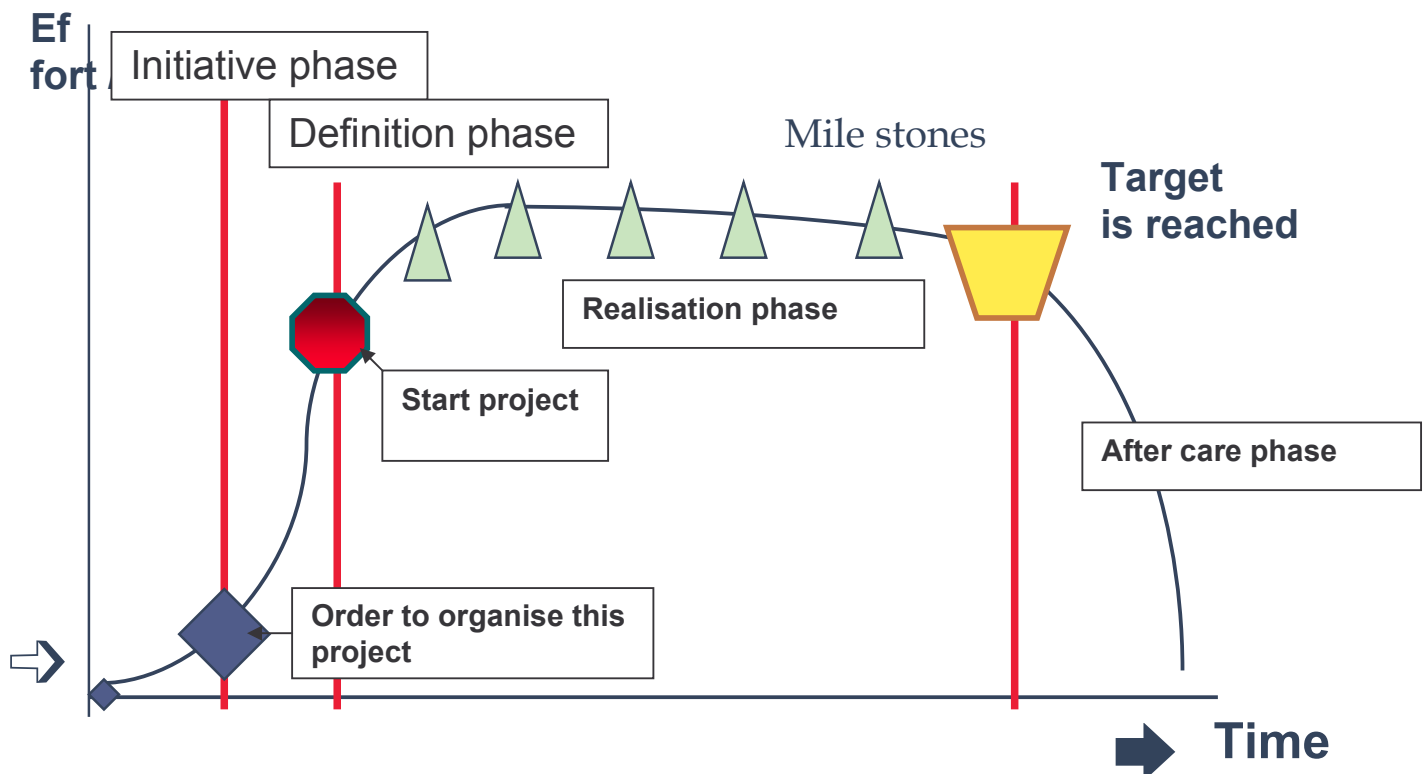
The initiative phase: Who is the initiator, Who wants this project.

The definition phase: What do we want to reach, which results will be reached at the end of the project: An autonomous voluntary parcel exchange project or an integrated plan base land consolidation with a package of objectives and subsidized measures or a fully integrated land consolidation plan based on a land consolidation law. What are the milestones to reach. When and how are the land owners and land users participating. What kind of board is needed to support this project. Finance, Labour etc.

The execution phase: To realize the plan with different milestones.

The after care phase: Evaluation of the project on experiences to work out in a long term programme. Exchange this information to other project.

The cycle of life of a project



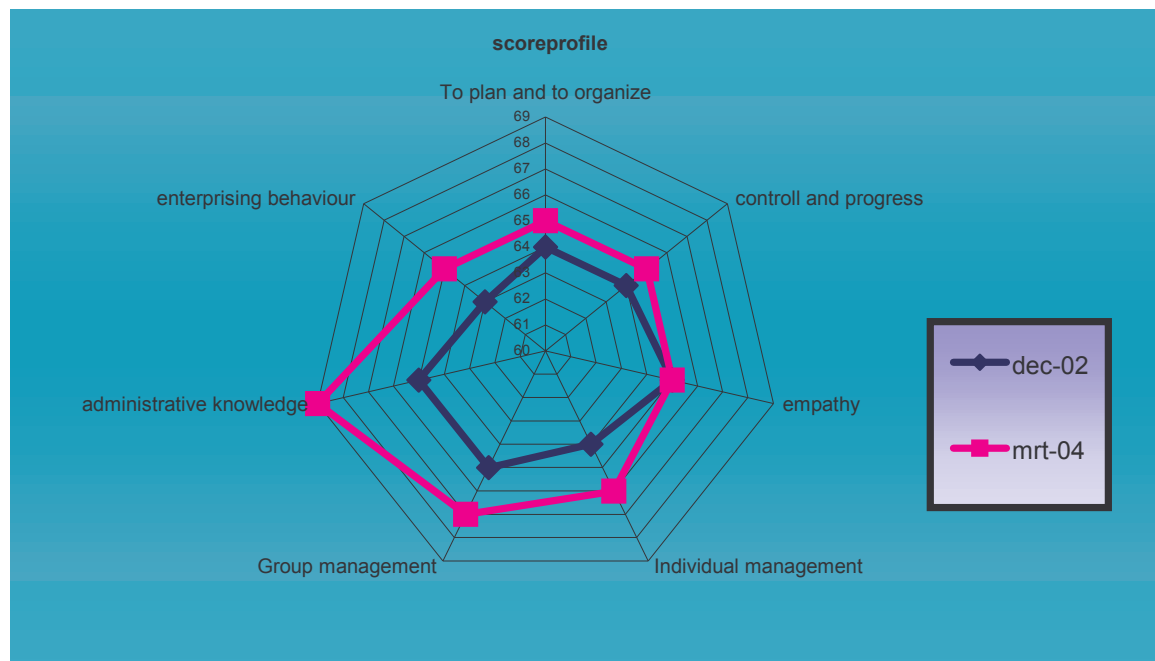
Capacity building:

To make a project successful it is necessary that a good team is working on the project. The team with different qualities give the best change to improve the results.

The Government Service for Land and Water Management in the Netherlands uses competence profiles for selecting project leaders and team members. The seven competencies are:

1. To Plan and to organise: To make priorities, to set out a scheme and to maintain his own work and that from other members of the team.
2. Control and progress: To guard the progress of the different processes, have the overview of the project and takes if needful measures.
3. Empathy: The project leader recognizes the position of the other team members, the needs and feelings. He/she is able to listen carefully and shows respect for the relations.
4. Individual management of people: Coach and motivate the team members.
5. Group management: He/she has the capability to stimulate the cooperation's of the group and stimulate to reach the target together.
6. Administrative knowledge: Anticipate on events, which has influenced the current policy and the performance of the land consolidation.
7. Enterprising behaviour: Recognize the mission of the company and the mission of the customer. The project leader has the capability to work out by negotiations both interests.

To find out what level the project leader is acting, it is possible to interview team members about above competencies. With a radar diagram you can make a score by starting the project and during the project to see if there is any progress in the skills of the project leader.



To work out the personal competencies of the team leader it is essential to increase the knowledge on organisational and institutional requirements, financial background, communication and legal framework.

During the Technical Assistance Land Consolidation project Hungary-The Netherlands experience is build up in trainings and workshops to make pilot land consolidation projects. This project is a cooperation between the Dutch Service for Land and Water Management, the Dutch Cadastre and the Hungarian Ministry of Agricultural, Rural Development in Budapest.

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