

OUTLINE

Regional Workshop on Land Tenure and Land Consolidation Land Banking and Public Land Management

21 - 24 June 2010
Prague, Czech Republic

Background

Recognition of the potential role of land consolidation in rural development in Central and Eastern (CEE) Europe has come relatively recently. During the 1990s, attention was focused on the “first wave” of land reform, i.e. privatization and restitution and the accompanying tasks of building land registration systems to protect land rights. It was only towards the end of the 1990s that the problems of fragmentation became a concern. The concept of land consolidation as a tool to improve rural conditions is now becoming widely accepted but key technical information is often still not easily available to people in land agencies.

FAO, together with its partners, has embarked on a multi-year programme to assist Eastern European Transition Countries (including European CIS, Caucasus and South-Eastern Europe) to develop responses to their problems of fragmentation and adverse rural conditions. This programme comprises three interrelated components: regional workshops, technical guidelines and field projects. The Czech Ministry of Agriculture has been an important partner and has supported five workshops in Prague (2002, 2005-2008).¹ These workshops have provided a forum for specialists from different countries to meet and to develop a peer network. This support by the Czech Ministry of Agriculture and the resulting development of expertise within CEE countries has had a catalytic effect in expanding and strengthening other initiatives, including FARLAND (“Future Approaches to Land Development”) supported by the EU, and provided also a model for a workshop funded by the Government of the Autonomous Region of Galicia, Spain in 2009.

Early workshops identified the need for information on how to start land consolidation activities in a country. In response, FAO prepared guidelines on the design and operation of land consolidation pilot projects. Subsequent workshops served to disseminate these guidelines. The foundation of workshops and guidelines has allowed several countries to initiate activities in land consolidation: Consequently, FAO has supported Armenia, Hungary, Lithuania and Serbia in the introduction of land consolidation activities, and has provided technical supervision in projects funded by other donors in Croatia and Moldova. FAO guidelines on land consolidation were also used in an EU-funded project in Kosovo. The experiences of these projects is being documented and made available to other countries that are just beginning. In addition, two projects are currently under preparation for Albania and for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Past workshops (2006&2007) have addressed the EU’s Rural Development Programme 2007-13 (RDP) and, in particular, its requirements and funding options for land consolidation. The RDP is relevant not only to EU countries but also to all Eastern Europe/CIS countries whether they are acceding countries, candidate or potential candidate countries, or European Neighbours. This led to the elaboration of a report - “Rural development policies and programmes of the European Union and their effects on land consolidation” - published in

¹ Countries participating in the series of Prague regional workshops are: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine, and the territory of Kosovo.

The workshop proceedings are available at: http://www.fao.org/world/regional/REU/land_en.htm

2008. Topics discussed in 2008 included land banking as an instrument for efficient land administration and land consolidation, methodologies for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment of land consolidation, and furthermore with modern approaches to land registration and land information systems. The participants discussed and prioritized in a participatory exercise their needs in terms of capacity building and technical information.

An assessment by FAO based on previous workshops and discussions with people from CEE countries shows there is a strong interest in the region to learn more about land banking, and in particular, to learn from the experiences of others in establishing and operating a land bank. There is also a similar strong interest in learning how to improve public land management.

A regional workshop in 2010 will provide the opportunity for senior land administrators to learn about how to introduce land banking and to modernize public land management. The workshop will enable participants to assess the requirements of their own countries for land banking and public land management. In addition, the workshop will serve to provide input to future FAO guidelines on the topics.

Furthermore, by giving the opportunity to the participants to exchange their experience and to follow-up on the experience of their fellow countries, the workshop will help to reinforce and consolidate the knowledge gained by participants, and will further strengthen the peer network between participants. This is important if lessons learned are to be shared across borders.

The 2010 regional workshop will be held in Prague, from 21 - 24 June 2010. Invited participants will be senior officials responsible for land consolidation, land banking, public land management and rural development in countries of the region, and particularly from CIS countries. The number of participants will depend on travel costs, but it is anticipated that non-EU countries represented at previous workshops will participate too. In addition, it is expected that several EU countries will participate at their own expense. It is anticipated that several land tenure specialists from Western European countries will provide technical advice at the workshop.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshops are to:

- Inform on the technical topics and improve knowledge and foster sharing of experience – lessons learnt among the participants, whereby it is intended that countries that have already experience with the technical topic will be among the key-presenters;
- Inform on own requirements, experience and lessons learned when implementing land banking and public land management in the participants' countries;
- Strengthen the peer network of land administration professionals in Central and Eastern Europe who are responsible for implementing land banking and public land management projects.

Outputs

The output of the workshop will be a CD disk documenting technical presentations on the main topics of the workshop.

Activities

FAO will take primarily responsibility for the following activities:

- Draft the programme for the workshop;
- Prepare background papers and resource documentation in preparation for the workshops and eventually guidelines/manuals resulting from the resulting discussion;
- Identify potential CEE/CIS participants including speakers to present country case studies;
- Identify potential Western European participants including speakers to present technical papers;
- Arrange for the preparation of workshop documents including conclusions.

A Czech NGO will be contracted for the local arrangements necessary for the workshop, whose task would be to:

- Assist FAO in the identification of potential participants from CEE/CIS countries.
- Ensure the participation of representatives from CEE/CIS countries from the potential participants identified by FAO, by contacting participants and making all travel arrangements such as visa, transport (prepaid air tickets), board and lodging, etc.
- Organize an appropriate venue for the workshop.
- Reproduce and disseminate the workshop programme and background documents among participants at the workshop.
- Provide secretarial and general assistance to participants and speakers throughout the duration of the workshop.
- Prepare final workshop documents and ensure its distribution among all participants.

Draft Agenda

Day 1: Introduction

Technical programme on land banking:

- Presentation of experiences of selected countries that have introduced land banks.
- Working session for participants to assess requirements for land banking in their own countries and needs assessment for elaborating FAO guidelines.

Day 2: Technical programme on land banking:

- Continuation of working session on land banking.

Technical programme on public land management:

- Presentation of experiences of selected countries with public land management.
- Working session to assess requirements for public land management and needs assessment for FAO guidelines.

Day 3: Field trip to illustrate technical topics discussed (if possible)

Day 4: Wrap-up, lessons learnt and emerging issues in land tenure and land consolidation (half day)

if no field trip:

Day 3: Technical programme on public land management:

- Continuation of working session on public land management.
- Wrap-up, lessons learnt and emerging issues in land tenure and land consolidation for future discussion.