

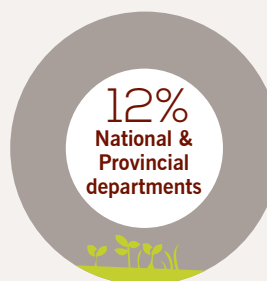
Not enough state land to meet **land reform targets**

Arguments that state land should be used to meet land redistribution targets are misleading. Very little state land is suitable for this purpose. Official data from 2002 show that **only 2% of the total of 12.6 million ha of state-owned land is suitable for land reform.**



of 12.6 million ha (of state land) is **available for redistribution**ⁱ

ⁱ Excluding municipal commonage (see overleaf)



National departments (including SAPS, SANDF, Correctional Services, Water&Environmental Affairs)
 Provincial agricultural land, schools, hospitals, etc.

675 449 ha **state land for redistribution**

Total estimated as follows: half of all provincial land designated as agricultural, school and hospital land, plus Financial Assistance Land administered by the National department of Agriculture

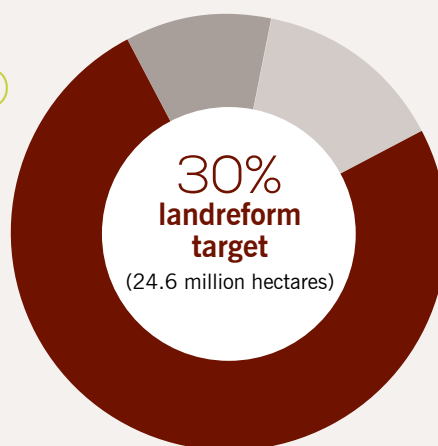
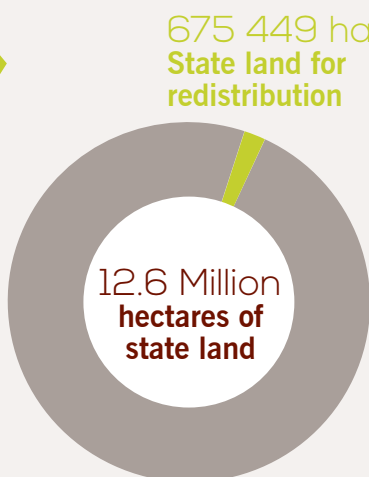
ⁱⁱ Communal areas includes ex-TBVC Bantustan and SGT land (11,740,361 ha); Ingonyama Trust land in former KwaZulu (2,902,056 ha); ex-SADT land outside geographical boundaries of former Bantustans (1,170,821 ha); former Coloured Areas administered in terms of Act 9 of 1987 (1,277,926 ha) and; land held in trust for African traditional communities by the Minister of Land Affairs (931,938 ha)

Source: DLA 2002

Even if ALL 12.6 million hectares of state land was distributed it would meet only **50% of the land reform target**

Land reform aims to redistribute 30%, or 24.6 million hectares, of privately commercial agricultural land. By 2011, 6.2 million ha had been transferred through restitution claims and redistribution (DRDLR, 2011).

Around 2% of state land, or 675 449 ha, is suitable for redistribution. This amounts to 3% of the target of 24.6 million ha.



- 75% Target yet to be reached
- 11% Redistributed by 2011
- 14% Restored by 2011

Municipal commonage can supplement beneficiary livelihoods

It is clear that very little state land is available for redistribution. However one form of state land, municipal commonage, can make a significant contribution to the livelihoods of some of the rural poor.

Grazing land, fields and wild resources on municipal commonages supplement rural household incomes and enhance household food security. In three Eastern Cape towns, for example, the incomes of over 10% of households would drop below the poverty line if contributions from commonage were to be excluded (Davenport et al, 2011).

Nearly half a million hectares of new commonage were bought for land reform between 1994 and 2003, accounting for 31% of all land reform purchases in 2003. Most of this was in the semi-arid Northern Cape (Anderson and Pienaar, 2003). Municipal commonage in the Free State in 2003 comprised around 113 000 hectares (Buso, 2003).

After 2003 commonage land was de-emphasised by the land affairs department. At present it is unclear how much commonage is available for poor households seeking access to land. Partly because 'agriculture' is not designated as a municipal function, many municipalities are administratively under-prepared for pro-poor commonage management (Atkinson, 2012).

Data challenges

Reliable and up-to-date data on state land ownership are still not available nineteen years after democracy, and the release of government's current land audit is eagerly awaited.

The lack of accurate information on municipal land is a particular problem. It is unclear, for example, whether or not there is scope to significantly increase the amount of land made available to poor rural households in the form of municipal commonage.

In the absence of reliable data, arguments that government should target state land for redistribution rather than privately owned land cannot be definitively refuted for once and for all.

Another problem arising from incomplete data is the lack of clarity in relation to how much land is being held by government, and then leased to land reform beneficiaries, through the Pro-active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS).

Recommendations

Conclude the state land audit and provide a clear database of available municipal land

Regularly update data about state land and report data publicly

Monitor and evaluate state land holdings, including national, provincial and municipal land

Improve policies on state land held by different spheres of the state

Identify suitable state owned agricultural land for redistribution

References

- Anderson M and Pienaar K (2003) 'Municipal commonage,' Evaluating Land and Agrarian Reform Occasional Paper 5. PLAAS: Bellville.
- Atkinson D (2012) Revitalising municipal commonages as a key approach to land reform and pro-poor agricultural development. Presented at Towards Carnegie III: Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality, University of Cape Town, 3-7 September 2012.
- Buso N (2003) Municipal commonage administration in the Free State province: Can municipalities in the current local government dispensation promote emerging farming? Unpublished report. HSRC: Bloemfontein.
- Davenport, N.A., Gambiza, J. and Shackleton, C.M. 2011. "Use and users of municipal commonage around three small towns in the Eastern Cape, South Africa". Journal of Environmental Management, 92.
- Department of Land Affairs, 2002.
- Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2011.

Author: Karin Kleinbooi with Alex Dubb, PLAAS
Series Editor: Rebecca Pointer
Design: Design for development,
www.d4d.co.za
Printer: Tandym Print

www.plaas.org.za
Tel: +27 21 959 3733
E-mail: info@plaas.org.za

Follow us:

 www.facebook.com/PLAASuwc

 www.twitter.com/PLAASuwc