

Over 34,000 hectares of land allocated to women

A total of 56,869 hectares of land were allocated to different categories, with 34, 156 hectares allocated to 34 women at an average of about 1,000 hectares per female.



Source: Eddie Costhuizen via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Highlighting progress in implementing the Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy (BSLAP), Gloria Mosito from Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development said for the past financial year 2020/2021, the department in aligning itself to the Gender Response Planning Guidelines and the BSLAP, targeted to allocate 11, 987 hectares to females across the country under the Land Redistribution Programme.

For Land Tenure Reform purposes, Mosito said the department managed to acquire 7,127 hectares in 2020/2021, which benefited a total of 450 individuals of which 238 were women.

"In the current financial year, there are 1 636 hectares already transferred to six labour tenant families with a total of 97 beneficiaries under the Land Tenure Reform Programme [and] from the 97 beneficiaries, there are 42 females," Mosito said.

Beneficiary selection and land allocation objectives

Developed and adopted by government, the policy aims to provide fair, credible and transparent process and criteria for selection of beneficiaries for land allocation and leasing of State properties; and to rekindle the class of Black commercial producers who were destroyed by the 1913 Land Act.

The objectives of the policy are to support municipalities and other local authorities establish and extend human settlements and commonages; promote accountability and transparency within the department in allocating state assets; and ensure qualified, suitable and deserving candidates gain access to land on equitable basis.

"It aims to ensure special and targeted groups of land reform beneficiaries [including] youth, women, people with disabilities and military veterans, gain access to land for production purposes; and to ensure that the selected beneficiaries have the skills and capacity to maintain immovable state assets.

"It also aims to establish independent Land Allocation Panels to preside over the selection of suitable candidates for land allocation; to provide for standardised national land application system to ensure fair and transparent process of beneficiary selection and the rationing of resources; and to provide for the creation of a provincial and national land application register for potential beneficiaries of land allocation," Mosito highlighted.

50% land allocation must go to women

The policy proposes 50% allocation of agricultural farming land under the Redistribution Programme to smallholder farmers broken down as 50% to women, 40% to youth and 10% to people with disabilities.

The land allocation includes women who either have basic farming skills or demonstrate a willingness to acquire such skills; women headed households with no or very limited access to land, even for subsistence production shall be given access to land for the advancement of women.

From the youth, participants in the department's enterprise development/ incubation/ apprenticeship programme and agricultural para-professionals, are targeted. People with disabilities with no or very limited access to land, even for subsistence production, and individuals with a disability who work in an agricultural setting still face challenges of access to land will be prioritised.

"Military veterans, as defined in the Military Veterans Act, 2011 (Act No 18 of 2011) shall also be prioritised. This shall, however, exclude those who served in the Union Defence Force prior to 1961, and the South African Defence Forces prior to 27 April 1994, who want to venture into farming will be assessed and prioritised for access to land for production.

"Communal and stateland residents or individuals currently living on state-owned properties and whose livelihoods depend on subsistence farming, but have no form of tenure, should be prioritised for land allocation by the state," Mosito explained.

Challenges in implementation

Mosito also highlighted a number of challenges the department has experienced in implementation of BSLAP, these include limited number of applications from prioritised categories, invasion of farms when advertised for allocation, and poor quality business proposals from applicants for commercial farms.

"Some applicants are "uncomfortable" providing bank statements with their personal information to the department which are required as proof for capacity to utilise the farms effectively, and branding certificates mostly belong to men where women are married, therefore they are seen as fronts for husbands," Mosito said.

In order to realise the policy objectives, Mosito said specific farms will continue to be reserved for women applicants and farms that are located in safer areas are to be targeted.

"Women will be assisted through Provincial Departments of Agriculture to compile credible business plan, in order to qualify for commercial farms; beneficiary selection process will run concurrently with the land acquisition process so that farms

are immediately occupied upon acquisition to avoid invasions.

"The department is to develop a protocol that will empower women to have branding certificates issued in their names- furthermore, a section that deals with issuing of branding certificates is to be engaged in order to make provision for joint certificates where women are co-owners of livestock," Mosito said.

She added that the department will ensure that the branches deal with enterprise development and cooperatives assist women to formalise their farming operations so that financial records can be in the names of the farming enterprises and not individual names.

"This will minimise the reluctance to disclose personal bank statements as proof of ability or capacity to operate farms when applications are submitted," Mosito said.

Application process for leasing agricultural land

Land is advertised through print media and regional radio stations in order to reach as many people as possible and ensure transparency and equitable public process to eradicate any form of fraud and nepotism.

As part of modernisation process, Mosito said an online land offer and application system is being finalised, which will enable landowners willing to make land available or donate land for land reform purposes to do so.

"Relevant forms will be available online or in provincial and district offices of the department. The system will enable the department to create a National Land Register, which will be subjected to checks for suitability in line with various government prioritisation tools such as the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP). Provincial and district officials shall be designated to assist those who do not have access to technology to apply."

Mosito added that the department is currently in the process of calling for nominations of people who are to serve on Provincial and National Land Allocation Panels, and women will be included to serve on the panels.

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