



USAID PROGRAM BRIEF

LAND TENURE & PROPERTY RIGHTS

ETHIOPIA

OVERVIEW

USAID's work with land tenure and property rights (LTPR) in Ethiopia began with the Ethiopia Land Policy and Administration Assessment in 2004, which led to the following projects: (1) Strengthening Ethiopian Land Tenure Policy and Administration Program (ELTAP) from January 2005–June 2008; and (2) the Ethiopia Strengthening Land Administration Program (ELAP), 2008–2013. ELTAP was implemented to: reform the legal framework for land and property by harmonizing regional land administration and use laws with federal legislation; improve the awareness of land users and stakeholders about land administration and land use laws and regulations; and strengthen the capacity of federal and regional governments to implement second level land registration and certification. Both ELTAP's achievements and ongoing technical and policy challenges created demand for the successor ELAP project.

STATUS

Beginning in August 2008, ELAP (5-year project) was designed to further strengthen rural land tenure security by: improving the legal framework; advancing public awareness of land rights; reforming administration and use laws; promoting investment in land through legal reforms and land certification; and strengthening the capacity of federal and regional land administration agencies to conduct legal reform and deliver land administration services. This work is carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MOARD). Work with the Regional Land Administration Agencies of Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, and Tigray under ELTAP was expanded to also include Afar and Somali regional states under ELAP, six regions in total. Other partner institutions such as the Ethiopian Mapping Agency, universities, and private sector are engaged in specific training, public awareness, and research services.

SUCSESSES

Key accomplishments under the ELTAP project include:

- **Land Certification and Administration** Trained 855 men and 269 women in land certification and cadastral surveying. Renovated 15 Woreda (region) and 186 Kebele (district) offices to improve land record storage. Developed and piloted fast and cost-effective methods of cadastral surveying using handheld GPS. Demarcated land holdings and registered the rights of 146,824 households to 704,754 parcels of land.
- **Public Information and Awareness** Crafted and disseminated tailored messages to diverse populations to strengthen rights awareness. A total of 626 men and 17 women were trained in PIA methodologies. Ten national and regional radio spots were produced, 28,000 information brochures disseminated, and 10,500 copies of laws and regulations were printed and distributed.
- **Tenure Security and Dispute Resolution** Land Administration and Use Proclamations harmonizing state law with federal law were passed in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, and Tigray regions. Courses on land law were delivered at Federal and Regional levels for 466 judges/officials and at the Kebele level for 592 land administration committee members. Courses on dispute resolution helped train 529 judges and officials.

In addition, training and study tours exposing participants to international lessons and practices helped to create political champions that now advocate for land tenure reform and institutional change in Ethiopia.

Key accomplishments under the ELAP project since August 2008 include:

- Assisted Somali and Afar regions with drafting their Land Use and Administration policy/proclamations with submission to cabinet for approval, expanding the legal work under ELTAP to Ethiopia's pastoral regions;



Site of cadastral surveying and registration in the highlands of Amhara Region, Ethiopia.

- Helped regional governments in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, and Tigray select two high-potential investment areas each for expansion of work on land certification and facilitating land transactions. Work was undertaken to field test high resolution satellite imagery for cadastral surveying;
- Facilitated USAID's participation in national consultative meetings including: a) the Ethiopia Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management; b) Enhancing Rural Land Use Rights Transactions and Facilitating Access to Rural Land for Commercial Investment; and c) donor consultative sub-group meetings on land administration.
- Provided technical assistance to the MOARD in drafting white papers— a) Review of Land Administration and Land Use Planning Policy and Programs in Ethiopia; and b) Ethiopia Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management; and
- Provided external training to 4 MOARD and regional EPLAUA staff at the PRRG Best Practices for Land Tenure and Resource Governance course in Nairobi in March 2009.



A farmer proudly displays his land holding certificate and plot map.

These reforms have collectively increased tenure security and resulted in positive impacts: (a) increased investment by smallholders in soil and water conservation and perennial crops including timber; (b) expanded area in intensive crop production; (c) enhanced land rental markets; (d) enhanced gender equality in land tenure rights; and (e) reduced land disputes.¹ Combined with other GOE/donor interventions, these impacts are helping to address problems of food security, economic growth, and instability, in particular for the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable.

CHALLENGES

Government lacks the resources to rapidly scale-up work on land certification, while suffering from severe capacity constraints, both nationally and in the regions where land tenure reform is the most progressive. While multiple donors are expressing interest in lending support, managing these interests is a major challenge, particularly given other problems of interagency coordination between regional and national government. Furthermore, problems of drought and floods, influenced by climate change, food insecurity, and high energy costs are increasing demand for the most productive land and water resources, giving rise to a number of emerging issues: balancing individual rights with state and national mandates for public and private investment, modernization, and food security; managing the interests and tensions between biofuels for renewable energy and food production; and mainstreaming the rights of the poor and vulnerable groups in order to broaden and secure their access to productive resources. These and other issues will require careful and ongoing assessment of the issues concerned, their priority, and intervention strategies.

FUTURE

ELAP will continue to work with donors, the GOE and Regional State governments to rationalize resources for land tenure reform and capacity-building efforts. It will also continue its efforts to further strengthen the legal framework on land administration by harmonizing state and federal law; promoting tenure security to enhance private investment through legal reform and land dispute resolution; strengthening public information and awareness; connecting rights in law with rights in land through land demarcation and delivery of certificates to 56,000 households and 280,000 parcels; improving coordination of government agencies and donors; and building capacity via training at national, regional, district, and community levels.

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¹ Measured by Negatu et al for ELTAP based on household survey and key informant interviews, and confirmed by Deininger et al (2007) and Holder et al (2007) based mainly on household survey and statistical analysis.