



Case Study Series Summary Sheet

REGION: Central and Eastern Europe

TITLE: Land consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe: a regional approach

Summary

In 1989, Central and Eastern European countries began a programme of land reform and farm restructuring as part of an overall strategy of transition from centrally planned agriculture to privatization and market development. However, land fragmentation became an issue and risked compromising the productivity and competitiveness of their economies compared to those of Western Europe. Furthermore, for some countries membership in the European Union and the accession process had critical implications on their economy and on the possibility of accessing funds for agriculture development.

FAO, together with its partners, initiated a long-term programme to assist countries in the region to develop responses to the problems of land fragmentation and to use land consolidation as a development tool. Institutional and individual capacities were developed, over a significant period of time, through a combination of three main types of interventions: regional workshops, technical publications and field projects. The regional workshops provided the venues to assess needs, share information with neighbouring countries and discuss issues with specialists. The technical publications, customized to local languages and contexts, provided guidance at institutional level. Finally, the field projects enabled countries to gain practical experience and create the basis for developing a national strategy for land consolidation.

The case study documents the experiences of Armenia, Serbia and Lithuania. Despite the differences in their context and readiness of their institutional and organizational structures, the three countries strongly recognized the need for modernization in agriculture and led the formulation process for a national strategy for land consolidation. FAO and its partners have been engaged in supporting these processes for almost ten years.

Critical factors leading to successful capacity development interventions

The factors which contributed to the success of this intervention were:

- Opportunity arising from interconnected national/international factors: The post-socialist reform programmes in Central and Eastern Europe, together with accession to and membership of the European Union, enabled the reorganization of privatised land holdings through land consolidation.
- Ownership and commitment: Armenia, Lithuania and Serbia recognized the importance of a legal framework for land consolidation and participated actively in the programme.
- Mix of modalities of intervention: Institutional and individual capacities were developed, over a significant period of time, through a combination of three types of intervention: regional workshops, technical publications with reference guidelines, and field projects for practical experience.
- Creation of a regional peer network: The creation of a peer network, sustained in part through annual workshops, was an important mechanism for national actors to learn collectively about modern approaches to land consolidation.
- Customisation of training materials: A range of training materials customised to local languages and contexts were developed with training units that emerged at national/local level.
- FAO's technical experience: FAO, together with its partners, mobilised experience in developing responses to the problems of land fragmentation and using land consolidation as a development tool.

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