

Langa Livestock Farmers Association

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30 January 2015

SUBMISSION TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON THE RECAPITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

This document will attempt to summarise the detail pertaining to the transaction of a group of 70 members. Whereby a farm land was acquired through the then LRAD Programme in 2009. The extent of the farm is 2528 ha. Situated in Hopefield District on the West Coast. Approximately 54% of the farm is arable land (1375 ha) and the balance for natural grazing and habitation (1153 ha).

The emphasis over the decades has been on farming livestock (mainly sheep and cattle), grain production (wheat; oats; korog and lupine). But has since expanded to also planting canola and both sweet and sower lupine.

The ownership of the farm is 100% BBBEE and as such with the number of beneficiaries prescribed by the programme, much needs to be desired in terms of being fully commercial and be able to equitably declare dividend in a dignified manner, for a lack of a better word.

i. Recapitalisation Programme:

The programme as is and the intent thereof as outlined in the NDP must be applauded, and the opportunity given to the beneficiaries and other stakeholders to express where improvements need to be made is commendable. However:

- Procrastination from Officials assigned as extended officers leaves much to be desired.
- The loss of time due to the above and the negative impact on planting rotation is very costly.
- The delays in approval period for grants applied for, thereafter releasing the approved funds makes it difficult if not impossible to plan ahead.

A practical scenario:

The department issued a letter of approval of among other the Capital grant of R10 831 100 ; Planning grant of R1 624 665 and Household grant of R1 668 900 and the funds were approved in April 2009 then Land Affairs undertook to release further funding for the project pending our success of the initial grants. We have since been trying to get these funds from the department after 2009 to no avail. Part of the request for the funding was to address the question of water which was/is not conducive for human and live stock consumption. Instead of getting the funds; an irrigation system to the value of ± R750 000 was installed in the farm without the proper communication with the PMT (Project Management Team), the installation of a Borehole in 2013 which is still having salty water

despite the Beneficiaries and the Farm Dwellers hoping for clean water that can also be of human consumption.

To compound matters, the DRDLR Project Leader (Mr. Anele Yekwa) who has since left the Department requested that we write another B.P. in 2013/14 Since there is no Officer currently assigned to our project complicates matters to undesirable proportions.

In order not to fail the Government and the beneficiaries, the entity had to explore various options to survive, including making loans, which we have all serviced. These other options can be tabled granted during verbal presentation if granted such an opportunity.

ii. Recommendations:

That:

- The policy revisits the question of huge groups.
- Policy allows for current big groups to be e.g. split into smaller (15 persons), be allocated other smaller farms available.
- Policy to allow the buy out option of dormant beneficiaries.

The latter is based on experience within the group; whereby more than 50% of the beneficiaries are inactive (re: sweat equity).

We further recommend that:

- Extension officers are evaluated through the same oversight visits.
- The Mentors they (Officers) recommend do from time and again appear before the Portfolio Committee.
- DRDLR and DOA give advice on BBBEE compliant supply chain, and that first right of refusal be granted to those compliant.

Because of the fact stated above of not having a Project Leader; we tried to contact by email and telephonically with the Directors in the department Mr. Slingers and Mr. Pheiffer at the end of 2014 for some answers on the availability of the extension Officer into our Project Management Team Meetings.

In conclusion, we request that we be granted an opportunity to attend the verbal presentation session. If not too late be afforded an opportunity to further allude to the written submission.

Should a need arise for clarities please do not hesitate to contact us on the contact numbers provided.