

Development of a Land Consolidation Instrument in the Republic of Azerbaijan

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SUMMARY

The Republic of Azerbaijan implemented in the 1990s after the independence from the Soviet Union a land reform in which the state owned agricultural land was distributed equally to the rural population. The outcome of land reform was a farm structure characterized by land fragmentation and small farm sizes with an average holding size of 1.6 ha of agricultural land, typically divided into four to five parcels.

The Government of Azerbaijan has recognized the need to address the structural problems in agriculture and requested in 2015 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to support the introduction of land consolidation in the country. During 2016-2019, FAO has through a technical assistance project supported the Government to take initial steps towards an operational land consolidation programme. A land consolidation pilot project was implemented with a feasibility study and preparation of a draft Re-allotment Plan. Land consolidation was embedded into a broader local development context through the elaboration of a Community Development Plan for the pilot community. Based on pilot experiences land consolidation policy was developed with a draft land consolidation strategy, a draft land consolidation law and a draft state programme on land consolidation. Developing land consolidation legislation is a corner stone in the process of preparing for a national land consolidation programme. The process in Azerbaijan tested the forthcoming FAO Legal Guide on Land Consolidation.

The paper presents and discussed the lessons learned from the initial introduction of a land consolidation instrument with focus on the next steps towards an operational national land consolidation programme that will be able to contribute to the development of commercial family farms in Azerbaijan. In this way the paper is relevant also for other countries in the process of introduction of land consolidation instruments.

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