

Responsible Consolidation of Customary Lands: A Framework for Land Reallocation

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SUMMARY

The nature of Ghana's rural customary land tenure and agricultural system has resulted in the fragmentation of the farmland parcels in the area, reducing food productivity. The primary interventions to increase food productivity in Ghana have been largely focused on intensive cropping of farms, use of fertilizers, and mechanized farming. However, the small and separated farmland parcels that resulted from the shifting cultivation farming system, practiced in the past, militated against these approaches, creating an inverse relationship between the farm size and productivity. An approach used by several countries to combat land fragmentation is land consolidation. An important step of land consolidation is land re-allocation, where farmland parcels are reorganised and redistributed. However, most current land reallocation approaches focus on the technical aspects, at the expense of the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects which are important on customary lands. This paper develops an approach for land re-allocation to support responsible land consolidation on customary lands taking these factors into consideration.

We identify the key principles of customary land tenure and the general requirements of land re-allocation. The key requirements of land reallocation include the existence of a mediating authority, land mobility, supportive local customs and social relations, the farming system, the land fragmentation situation, and the land tenure system. A land re-allocation approach is developed from the principles and requirements, and applied to a rural farming in Ghana called Nanton. The results showed that even though the developed approach was able to significantly reduce land fragmentation, both physical and land tenure, in Nanton, the local customs were an obstruction to the technical processes to achieve the best form of the farm structures. However, this is the basic tenet of a responsible approach - to consider all aspects of a society and technology when undertaking a process (Asiamana et al., 2017a). This study recommends two lines of further research. First, the local customs should be further studied to understand how the re-allocation between two

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families can be undertaken without compromising the land tenure system or increasing land tenure fragmentation. Secondly, the framework of the customary land reallocation should be further developed into a spatial decision support system to enable its easy application.

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