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FUNDIN PROPOSAL:  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A LAND & AGRICULTURE POLICY CENTRE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Rural Land issues - broadly encompassing Land Reform, Agriculture and Rural Development - are recognised as critical issues in the process of transition to a democratic, non-racial

South Africa. Millions of South Africans, who live in rural areas have been dispossessed and disadvantaged by apartheid policies. Redressing this legacy of dispossession, and so creating the conditions for sustained development will require not only political commitment,

but also creative, innovative planning. Such planning must be based in the first instance, on the design of effective policy.

Unfortunately, policy-making for rural South Africa is no easy task.

Firstly, it is an area where the democratic movement lacks cohesive organisation: Relative

to the extent of the issue, only a small number of researchers, service organisations or civil associations are active in the field. Their efforts are dispersed and could therefore be more

effective. Although the efforts that have been made have had an impact far greater than might have been expected, there is no doubt that these efforts need to be made more substantial through effective coordination at policy level.

Second, the state's involvement in rural areas is through a whole range of institutions, including all the different Homeland Governments and the Department of Agriculture, which is itself in a process of restructuring. Getting to understand how these institutions function

and what implications there are for democratic policy-making is a major task. Third, commercial agriculture is dominated by white producer organisations, who have generally been resistant to formulating policies which will redress apartheid injustices. Seeking ways

to influence such institutions and gain their cooperation in policy change is a further task of democratic policy-makers.

Land and agricultural issues in the policy agenda

#### Land Reform Policy

Land issues are central to the South African political process, and will strongly influence the future of the agricultural sector. The basic challenge will be to correct past and present injustices without destroying the productive parts of the sector.

A great deal of debate has gone into land reform but a clear programme has yet to be formulated. The land reform process will involve a combination of the following measures:

- legal measures to restore land rights to dispossessed communities or individuals;
- affirmative action measures to assist the poor to obtain land;
- the use of the land market;
- the reallocation of insolvent farming enterprises;
- facilitating mechanisms including a review of existing legislation, credit policies and access to state and other commercial services.
- labour legislation and residential rights of farm workers
- land tenure and tenancy rights
- the position of women in agriculture and rural development.

#### Poverty

Devising effective means of reducing rural poverty in a sustainable manner will be an extremely high priority on any government dependent on winning the support of rural voters. A successful attack on poverty will call for a carefully designed, sustainable and well-distributed policy of economic development. It will also require a reorientation of public expenditure towards the rural poor and the redistribution of at least some assets in their favour. An anti-poverty strategy will require the design of a range of macro-economic and sectoral policies, the management and reform of public institutions and criteria for public investment in terms of favouring employment.

At present, drought relief programmes are addressing some of these questions and may lead to long-term strategic approaches to questions of poverty.

#### Development strategies for existing black farmers

Former Homelands and other areas where black farming is the norm have problems which are very different from those of commercial agriculture. These areas offer opportunities for investment for agriculture and rural development which would be justifiable in terms of income increases and from a social well-being perspective.

NGOs and private sector organisations have some experience in this area and there are many lessons to be learnt from neighbouring countries. Drawing on this body of experience to devise effective approaches will constitute a major process of analysis.

#### Environmental issues

Large parts of rural South Africa have become ecologically degraded. The difficult task of halting and reversing this and setting agriculture on a sustainable course will be a priority, particularly in the context of land reform and a restructured agricultural sector.

Although some of the black rural areas are the most eroded, they have not been subject to the degradation from over-cultivation, damming of rivers and streams and other measures which have transformed the natural ecology in commercial areas. Achieving a better balance between ecological protection and commercialisation will be an enormous challenge for policy makers.

#### Agricultural policy

To date agricultural policy including credit, extension and research, marketing and pricing has concentrated almost solely on serving the interests of large-scale commercial farmers. Re-orienting these policies to serve a much larger number of different kinds of farmers will be a major challenge. The impact of macro-economic policy on South African agriculture has drastically effected the profitability of the sector.

In the area of agricultural policy there is a substantial capacity for policy formulation and the challenge will be to involve people working in this sector in the process of reorienting policy.

#### Rural development

The area of rural development policy overlaps considerably with that of local government. In many ways rural development policy can make a more significant contribution to improving the well-being of rural people than agricultural policies.

The challenge is to find an appropriate combination of policies which promote agricultural, commercial and small-scale industrial activities with welfare measures and the proper provision of infrastructure and services.

Policies for rural development need to take account of how such resources are to be managed by democratic local government.

## 2. THE PROCESS TO DATE

It is against this background that the ANC Department of Economic Policy, in particular its Agriculture Desk, encouraged a research process to investigate the feasibility of establishing a Land Policy Centre.

During 1991, the Agriculture Desk commissioned a feasibility study with a view to establishing a policy centre. Out of this research emerged the need to establish an autonomous, independent research centre which would provide policy options for a future democratic government. In the process of conducting the study, the consultant, Susan Lund, interviewed a wide cross section of academics, non-government sector workers, and leaders in political and trade-union movements. General support for the establishment of the Centre was established. The current proposal draws strongly on the recommendations in the report by Lund, although further clarification has led to the decision not to base the Centre at a University, at least during its establishment phase.

In June 1992, a Working Committee was established to oversee the establishment of the Centre. This committee has appointed David Cooper as its part-time coordinator. An outline of the process leading up to the formation of the Centre has been prepared, (see Appendix 1), and the process of establishment has begun. However, in order to take this process further, some initial technical assistance funding is needed. (see phase 1 of budget) In this document, some idea of long term plans for the Centre are set out, but these will require further clarification once the Board takes over responsibility for the direction of the Centre.

It has been established that the Centre should be an autonomous policy research and advocacy centre, whose main aim will be to serve the policy needs of an interim government during the phase of transition, and a future democratic government. A longer-term role is foreseen for the Centre, of providing high-quality research to policy-makers in this sector trying to redirect government resources to serve the needs of the majority of the population. Clearly, the capacity to perform this role will depend upon the ability of the Centre to deliver high-quality policy recommendations based on creative research which strives for excellence. The Centre will seek to work closely with progressive Non-government organisations which have played a key role in offering alternatives in the rural sector.

The Centre will aim to have a coordinating role, bringing together research from all sectors - academic, non-government and government -, and deriving from such research the relevant policy implications. The Centre will strictly , limit its role to policy research and advocacy, and will not become involved in the longer-term research which may lead to policy recommendations, although it will support such research being carried out independently where appropriate. The Centre will seek to advocate policies which it considers to be

in the interests of rural people. It will train researchers in policy work, and will seek to provide an educational function in understanding policy to rural communities, once it has established its primary role, of conducting policy research and presenting its findings to relevant policy makers. The Centre will begin as a small institution, contracting out a large part of its policy research, while seeking to devote its resources to maintaining rigorous standards for the policy work it commissions, presenting briefing papers on current events in the sector, and performing an advocacy role in the sector. Once the quality of its policy work is assured, the Centre will devote attention to its educational role on policy issues, and to building capacity for policy making among researchers and decision-makers who have been denied the opportunity to develop such expertise under apartheid.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Centre will be:

3.1 To provide well researched policy options on land reform, rural development and agricultural reform, to meet the needs of an interim and a future democratic government.

3.2 To provide options for the reorientation of policy-making towards a democratic order.

3.3 To provide an analysis of existing policy and other policy proposals in the field.

3.4 To collate data and manage an information system for land and agricultural issues, including the collation of existing research.

3.5 To improve capacity for policy-making, while addressing race and gender imbalances.

### 4. LOCATION OF THE CENTRE AND STAFFING

It is proposed that the Centre be established in Johannesburg as an independent unit. The Centre should ideally be headed by two people who can share the responsibility for running the Centre's research and advocacy functions. These two directors should be recruited as soon as possible to oversee the critical establishment phase of the centre. At the same time, the Centre should appoint two administrative staff to assist the Directors. Within the first year, the Centre should employ a person to manage the information system, one research officer and one education officer.

The Centre should appoint a Board of Directors, chosen for their interest in the issues and their standing in the democratic movement, who will oversee the Centre's planning, contracts and relationships with other organisations. The

Board members should serve in their personal capacity, and should not be remunerated for their services. Consideration to balances between gender and race need to be combined with a mix of skills needed to oversee the project, including managerial, financial, research, academic and training considerations. The Board should consist of between 6 and 10 members and once Board members are appointed, future appointments should be in the hands of the Board. The Board should nominate a Chairperson who should have a responsibility to report annually to the democratic movement.

#### 5. PROGRESS TO DATE WITH ESTABLISHING THE CENTRE

In late May 1992, a Working Group for the Centre was established, under the chair of Trevor Manuel, head of DEP of the ANC. This working group undertook to set out terms of reference for the Centre, approach Board members and begin the process of recruitment. The Group is meeting monthly and has a programme which is designed to lead to establishment of the Centre by October 1992.

There have been a number of research projects which have been initiated by DEPls Agricultural Desk which give impetus to the formation of the Centre. Chief among these is the World Bank Agricultural Mission, in which counterparts from the ANC participated. The experience of the counterpart group will be important in defining the research programme of the Land Policy Centre.

Second, there have been offers of support from overseas institutions keen to help with the building of policy-making capacity and training in this field. Two institutions - the Food Studies Group at Oxford, UK, and the Land Tenure Centre at Madison, USA have been particularly supportive. The FSG group have put forward a substantial proposal for support to the EC, which needs to be examined in the context of this proposal.

#### 6. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The Land Policy Centre will strive to work closely with NGOs, academic-research institutions and others concerned with Land Policy including state institutions willing to do so. In particular, the Centre will coordinate its work with that being done by the Macro-Economic Research Group or its successor, the Economic Policy Research and Training Institute (EPRIT). It will also seek to work closely with those institutions which are associated with the MERG initiative, in particular Fort Here, where capacity-building is focusing on its role in the rural sector.

In summary, the following activities have been set out as objectives by the Working Group as Phase 1 of its programme:

a. By September 1992:

establish terms of reference for the Centre, appoint a Board, and be making good progress with establishing institutional arrangements, including the appointment of a research committee, for the Centre; making progress with the selection of staff for the Centre; set out the short-term programme for the centre; negotiate cooperative working agreements with local and overseas institutions wanting to support the work of the Centre; establish medium-term funding support for the Centre.

. b. By November 1992:

make arrangements to hold a launching workshop for the Centre;

appoint staff for the Centre

prepare a medium term programme for the Centre.

contract a research project on existing policy research being undertaken at South African and overseas institutions on land, agriculture and rural development. A research contract should provide for 30 days of research for this project.

contract a feasibility study to design a data-base system for the Centre.

This will require collaborative work with an information scientist

appointed by the Food Studies Group for a 30-day contract and for the

appointment of a research assistant to investigate existing data-bases held at South African institutions.

c. , By January 1993:

the Centre should be fully operational.

7. PHASE 2: INITIAL WORK OF THE CENTRE -1993

A number of initial projects, including those outlined above, have been identified by the Working Group. These include:

7.1

Identification of potential research partners. The Centre will actively seek out institutions willing to collaborate on policy work with the Centre. This will involve the Centre making contact with a wide range of institutions working in the field of policy research in agriculture and

## 7.2

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land issues. In the budget, provision is made to visit selected institutions in Europe, the USA and Africa, although much of the initial contact can be made by correspondence and through intermediaries.

Based on the identification of research already being undertaken in the field of Land, Rural Development and Agricultural Policy, Design and timetabling of a reseaxch programme for the Centre. This major undertaking assumes that research will be contracted out by the Centre, and that the Centre will actively seek out innovative research capacity in the country, and with overseas collaborating institutions. The Centre will also be open to approaches on research which fit its outlined programme.

In order to manage this research, the Centre will, through its Board, appoint a research committee to oversee the research programme. This research committee will consist of 4 people with a strong research skills and proven experience in the land, rural development and agricultural policy field. It will also delegate its members to oversee ongoing research projects.

The research programme needs to be very carefully designed within the capacity of the Centre; It should be noted that formal policy research is one of a number of activities undertaken by the Centre.

7.2.1 During 1993 the Centre will commission two major research papers, and three shorter studies. The major research papers will be undertaken by local institutions, wile the shorter studies will draw on international expertise in selected fields.

The major research studies will be in the area of land reform policy, and secondly a study of the institutions of government and commercial agriculture.

For budgetary purposes, each of these studies will be based on one year research contracts.

7.2.2 The shorter studies will be in the following areas: credit and marketing, women in agriculture and rural development, and rural poverty alleviation. For budgetary purposes, sixty days of research time is allocated to each of these projects. These three areas have been chosen because they are topics where policy interventions can impact significantly on the majority of rural people, and where the democratic movement does not currently have policy proposals in place.

7.2.3 In cases where more detailed preparatory research on policy issues is needed, the Centre will undertake to approach funders



to co-finance studies with an appropriate institution. But the Centre will restrict itself to policy research only in the first instance.

7.3 The Research Programme will be complemented by a briefing and advocacy programme which will be undertaken by the staff of the Centre. In this programme, the objective will be to produce briefing papers on current trends in the sector. This will include comment on government initiatives, for example the current drought and farmer debt relief, institutional changes, for example the current reforms of the agricultural boards, or the work of the government committee on return of land, non-government initiatives, for example the drought relief programmes of Kagiso Trust and IDT, and conferences, papers and policy workshops, for example the recent workshop on farm labour, or the paper on Land Courts.

7.3.1 In terms of the proposal of Food Studies Group, it is recommended that the Centre ask FSG to appoint a senior researcher for a six-month period, to assist the Centre to develop this function.

7.3.2 To carry out the briefing programme effectively, the staff of the Centre have to be knowledgeable about current trends in this sector and have a satisfactory information base to work from. The person recruited by FSG should have specialist knowledge of preparing briefing papers, and be familiar with South African land and agricultural issues.

7.4 The advocacy programme of the Centre will set out to influence policy-makers from grassroots to leadership levels both in the democratic movement and in the sector as a whole. The activities of the staff which will be needed to achieve the objectives of this programme will include close cooperation with non-government organisations and the policy implications of their work, engagement with rural people and their organisations, including trade-unions, civic organisations, women's organisations and producer groups, engagement with government and producer organisations in the commercial sector, and participation in forums where land and agricultural policy are debated, for example, conferences of agricultural unions.

7.5 Establishment of the database of the Centre should begin as soon as possible after establishment. Given the large volume of information available, it is essential that the Centre manages its database for greatest effect. As far as possible, data should be held electronically or cross-referenced with other institutions where it is easily accessible. The Food Studies Group (FSG) at Oxford University has put forward a proposal to assist with the establishment of the database and this

needs to be carefully examined with a view to implementation. While assistance from the FSG in design of the system will be valuable, operation should be undertaken by local staff employed for that purpose. The budget provides for a full-time data-base manager to be appointed to implement the design work undertake during Phase 1 of the Centre's activities.

## 8. LONG-TERM PROGRAMME FOR THE CENTRE - 1994 ONWARDS

### 8.1

Once the Centre has established its initial programme which should move as quickly as possible to develop a training capacity, both for policy workers and for policy makers in the field. Such a training programme should be under the direction of a training manager.

Training can be given through supervision of trainees working at the Centre or through courses organised on policy issues by the Centre. It will be useful to consider how such courses could be certificated through an appropriate institution.

A number of offers of assistance with training have been made by overseas institutions, for example IDS at University of Sussex and the Land Tenure Centre at Wisconsin. Co-financing for such training could be sought jointly with these institutions.

#### Dissemination of policy:

In the long-term, the Centre should play an active role in educating rural people about policy issues and how they can be involved in policy formulation. A creative programme which sets out to achieve these objectives would be of great value in the design of policy at local, regional and national level. The Centre could also use media to inform the general public about its policy work as a way of stimulating policy formulation for rural development.

In addition to political leadership or the future government being a potential user of the work of the Policy Centre, the Centre could actively work with non-government organisations on rural policy.

Clearly such a long-term programme of dissemination and participation in policy-making at a local level will require considerable resources which will have to be carefully managed if they are to be effective.

-At the same time, it is anticipated that the research, briefing and advocacy programme of the Centre will be maintained and strengthened. Clearly, the details of such programmes will have to be worked out as part of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Centre. The 3 year budget prepared below is based on the understanding that funding for years 2 and 3 is dependent on performance in 1993.