

ERRA's Rural Landless Programme

ERRA Council in its meeting held on February 9, 2007 decided to provide cash grant of Rs. 75,000 to each verified landless family in the earthquake affected rural areas for the purchase of a new piece of land (at least 5 marla) enabling them to construct their houses.

In compliance with the decision a comprehensive project is being implemented with the support of UN-Habitat. The project has been finalized after a series of consultative meetings with the Governments of NWFP and AJ&K. For clear identification of landless families, the following definition of beneficiaries under the policy has been developed:-

“A rural landless means a person who owned land on the 8th of October, 2005 and is so recorded in the land records or a registered sale deed, and has, as a result of the earthquake, lost whole or part of the land, provided that the land not destroyed is less than 5 marlas”.

The Landless Compensation of Rs. 75,000 is in addition to Rs. 175,000 which is being paid for the construction of seismically safe houses under ERRA's Rural Housing Policy. Total project cost is US\$ 50 million (PKR 3 billion) funded by USAID. Implementation cost is US\$ 730,000 funded by DFID

The policy caters to the landless residing in residual camps as well as the landless living outside camps.

The salient features of Landless Compensation Policy are as follows:-

- Land Verification Unit (LVU) have been established at Tehsil level in Mansehra, Balakot, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Hattian, Bagh, and Haveli to facilitate the process of disbursement. LVUs provide information on the financial assistance process, register landless persons, verify their claims and maintain database of landless persons. LVUs comprise representatives from the Revenue Departments, Civil Society and army. The objective of establishment of LVU is to ensure disbursement of the compensation in an effective, transparent and efficient manner.
- The LVUs submit the verified lists to ERRA Headquarters through Revenue Departments. ERRA will transfer the financial assistance based on the lists to the Revenue Departments which will send the relevant amounts to respective District Officer Revenue and District Coordination Officers.
- The LVUs issue cheques to landless persons during 'one window operation'. One Window Operation is a mechanism devised to organize mutation of land and disbursement of financial assistance at one spot on the same day.
- Grievance Redress Committees have been established to receive, record and decide upon any complaint/representation made with regards to the preparation of the list of landless persons.

All the LVUs are functional. The claims are being verified through Revenue Departments NWFP and AJ&K and spot checks by LVU staff. So far 670 camp landless and 971 non-camp landless claims have been registered.

ERRA is also undertaking a comprehensive survey of hazardous land owners in the rural areas with the support of Geological Survey of Pakistan. The survey will determine accurate number of people living on High Hazardous Areas. The households living on High Hazardous Areas will be provided landless grant under ERRA's Rural Landless Policy for purchase of alternate piece of land.

Implementation Update:

UN-Habitat has so far interviewed 7342 people in AJK and NWFP as of February 25, 2008. The application forms of 5429 people have been filled out of which 1515 cases have been rejected. UN-Habitat has accepted 718 applications which are in the various stages of verification process.

Landless grant has been disbursed to 147 people (139 males, 8 females) through one window operations. ERRA has already released landless grant for 552 cases which will be disbursed to verified landless people in the subsequent one window operation.