

Comment period extended for Communal Land Tenure Bill

An additional sixty days has been granted to submit comments on the draft Communal Land Tenure Bill published in the Government Gazette on the 7th of July. The draft Bill seeks to transfer title for the former homeland areas as well as land restituted to communities to the communities that occupy the land, as the majority of this land is still formally owned by the state. The additional sixty days is welcomed as this will allow the public to be consulted fully, and will allow Agbiz in particular to consult with leading experts in the field to get a wholistic picture of the Bill's implications. A Bill of this nature was always likely to be contested as it affects a wide variety of stakeholders with vested interests, including communities, NGOs, traditional leaders, agribusinesses, organized agriculture as well as local government. Whilst the move towards titling may not be universally welcomed, especially by those with vested interests in the administration of those areas, Agbiz supports the intention as it is a precondition to investment into and developing these areas. The communal areas in the Eastern Cape for example contain some of the last remaining, under-developed high potential agricultural land and water resources. It is therefore vital that the tenure arrangements in those areas facilitate investment to fully realize the agricultural potential of these areas.

Agbiz is currently in the process of drafting comments on the Bill but welcomes the additional time afforded, given the complex nature of tenure relations in communal areas and the need to consult as widely as possible to inform our position. The due date for public submissions has been revised to the 4th of November 2017.

ENQUIRIES:

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