

ISSUES OF LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE ORGANIZATION OF NON-AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

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Abstract: This article examines the distribution of land among economic sectors, the current status of non-agricultural land users, and the organizational challenges associated with non-agricultural land use. It further outlines approaches to addressing land and environmental protection issues in the establishment of non-agricultural land units across various regions, as implemented through land management projects.

Keywords: land use, land and environmental protection, agriculture, ecological requirements.

Introduction

Purposeful and systematic efforts are being undertaken in the Republic of Uzbekistan to organize non-agricultural land use on a sound institutional footing. Concurrently, a legislative framework has been established to regulate land relations, and within the broader context of ongoing reforms, the efficient utilization of limited land resources has been identified as one of the foremost priorities facing the nation.

Lands designated for non-agricultural purposes occupy a substantial area within the Republic. By their composition, they encompass plots permanently allocated for industrial and transport enterprises, energy production facilities, auxiliary structures, resorts, nature reserves, hydrotechnical and water management installations, and other infrastructure. Urban and peri-urban territories, in turn, incorporate a wide variety of land owners and land users.

For non-agricultural land users — with the exception of resorts, nature reserves, and facilities designated for environmental protection and public health — the principle of strict land conservation is mandatory, as is the obligation to develop such land in accordance with the most progressive design and technical solutions. The central objective in organizing these land uses is to maximize the proportion of land occupied by productive facilities and to increase the density of development within designated areas.

Analysis and Methodology

At present, only 59% of industrial enterprise lands are utilized in accordance with their designated purposes. In urban areas, 52% of the territory directly serves urbanization functions. The remaining, undeveloped portions are largely suitable for the construction of buildings and structures. The aggregate of non-agricultural land use units constitutes the land economy of the country. As of January 2022, the total area of such lands amounts to 1,945.4 thousand hectares, including 879.6 thousand hectares belonging to industrial, transport, and

other sectoral enterprises, as well as thousands of urban settlements covering 224.1 thousand hectares. This category also includes various infrastructure facilities — water supply systems, gas pipelines, electricity networks, road networks, tree belts, and similar installations — whose functioning is inextricably linked to the land, its quality, and its location.

The organization of non-agricultural land use falls within the scope of land management activities. Article 12 of Chapter 3 of the Land Code stipulates that the allocation of land to non-agricultural entities is to be carried out through inter-farm land management projects.

Table 1. Lands Designated for Industrial, Transport, Communication, Defence, and Other Purposes by Region

No.	Region	Total Land Area (thousand ha)	% of Total Land Area
1	Republic of Karakalpakstan	178.2	20.6
2	Andijan	20.7	2.3
3	Bukhara	86.6	9.8
4	Jizzakh	27.6	3.1
5	Kashkadarya	67.4	7.7
6	Navoi	57.0	6.5
7	Namangan	57.5	6.5
8	Samarkand	85.5	9.7
9	Surkhandarya	111.1	12.6
10	Sirdarya	11.4	1.3
11	Tashkent	81.8	9.3
12	Fergana	50.8	5.7
13	Khorezm	18.8	2.1
14	Tashkent city	25.2	2.8
	Total:	879.6	100

Source: National Report on the State of Land Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan. — Tashkent, 2022.

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the volume of land designated for non-

agricultural purposes in the Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent regions is considerably higher than in other regions of the country.

In the current era, characterized by the urgent need to introduce resource-saving technologies, the issue of land conservation must be accorded the highest priority. With this in mind, the further improvement of non-agricultural land use is envisaged through the following measures:

- prioritizing the modernization of existing industrial enterprises and transport infrastructure, while placing restrictions on new construction;
- widespread adoption of multi-storey construction, integrated placement of facilities, and utilization of underground space;
- introduction of waste-free and low-waste production technologies, processing of by-products, and allocation of specialized areas for raw material storage and the establishment of protection zones;
- siting of land-intensive industries on low-productivity lands;
- accelerating the construction of high-grade arterial roads and rural roads with hard surfaces.

The rational organization of land use across regions improves territorial coordination among agriculture, water management, forestry, the mineral resource complex, and all other sectors of the economy. The land units that together constitute the land economy, along with fixed production assets, are highly variable in composition: some enterprises are liquidated or reorganized, new land users are established, and the character of land relations in the country continues to evolve. These changes must be subject to state regulation, directed toward safeguarding the interests of society as a whole.

Small Industrial Zone in Yangiyul District, Tashkent Region

Pursuant to Resolution No. 657 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated 27 October 2020, "On Measures to Establish a Small Industrial Zone in the Yangiyul District of the Tashkent Region," a small industrial zone (SIZ) was established on 36.0 hectares of unused reserve land under the jurisdiction of the district administration, located within the "Tinchlik" mahalla. The zone was created with the objectives of promoting the socioeconomic development of Yangiyul District, fostering favorable conditions for entrepreneurial activity, and increasing employment and household incomes.

In this context, the land use system takes shape under the influence of national traditions as well as natural and economic conditions. Land management serves as an instrument for regulating land use and improving the land economy, and must therefore be continuously updated to reflect ongoing changes in production and territorial organization.

Expanding the area of one type of land use — for instance, a given land fund category — inevitably requires a reduction in another. Different types of land use are thus in inherent tension with one another. For this reason, the distribution and redistribution of land among sectors is an issue of considerable importance, complexity, and one that is not always resolved on a well-founded basis. Given the limited nature of productive land and the

constraints on the area of arable land, the reclamation or enhancement of land productivity can only be achieved at significant capital cost and is contingent upon the level of scientific and technological advancement. Even the preservation of existing productivity requires substantial labor and financial inputs. In the course of production, land quality may improve or deteriorate; and if used improperly, land may become entirely unfit for use. Land must therefore be protected from mismanagement, from irrational distribution and exploitation, from physical degradation, from pollution, and from other adverse impacts that diminish the quality of land and of the natural resources associated with it. The protection of land and the environment is directly linked to the organization of land use; accordingly, land protection measures must be developed as an integral part of the land management process.

Discussion

In the process of land allocation and the organization of sound land use, the protection of land must today be incorporated as one of the central objectives across all components of a land management project or scheme. In order to most effectively and comprehensively address land and environmental protection issues, they must be considered in the context of the entire territory comprising the land use system — in present conditions, this territory corresponds primarily to the administrative district level. Economists currently link district development to industrial growth, which in turn requires land for the siting of industrial enterprises. This matter is addressed through inter-farm land management projects providing for the allocation of land to industrial entities within the district territory. In this process, actions that are scientifically unsubstantiated or whose consequences are uncertain must be avoided, as the magnitude of potential damage in such cases may be exceptionally large.

In the course of land management design, the requirements for land and environmental protection may be violated for the following reasons:

- erroneous decisions by land management specialists and designers;
- project design errors arising from the failure to account for all necessary measures;
- non-compliance with scientifically grounded methodologies, normative standards, and established rules of land management practice.

Land protection constitutes an independent task and, simultaneously, the foundational basis for organizing the protection of other natural resources. Any environmental measure must rest upon a rational and scientifically substantiated organization of land use and land conservation. Inter-farm land management is therefore regarded as the primary and fundamental element not only of land protection, but of comprehensive environmental protection as a whole.

Conclusion

Land use units, within which specific productive activities are carried out, constitute the basis for the organization of natural resource and environmental protection at the district level. Accordingly, the surrounding environment and natural resources must also be protected in proximity to these units.

The protection of land and the natural environment in the planning and design process consists, first, in the purposeful identification of means that preclude or maximally limit any form of harm — particularly harm resulting in a reduction of the biosphere's productivity — caused by improper human activities; and second, in the application of methods that prevent the deterioration of land quality and adverse impacts on surrounding territories in the course of land use. The ultimate objective is the proper utilization of land and natural resources throughout the processes of production and other forms of economic activity.

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