

Expanding Chinese Rural Land Registration Programme

International Land Systems (ILS), Inc., USA, and the Anhui Agriculture Commission have signed a memorandum of understanding to further develop a rural land registration and mapping program for Anhui Province. The memorandum comes immediately after concluding a successful United States Trade and Development Agency-funded technical assistance pilot. The initial pilot established a rural land certification process in China's Anhui Province, and registered rural farmers' households in two Chinese villages to secure their property rights.

The memorandum was signed on July 18 by ILS executive vice president Peter Rabley and Anhui Agriculture Commission director of Personnel Management Zhang Zekun at the Maryland State House in Annapolis. Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley and Anhui Province Governor Wang Sanyun were official witnesses of the signing. The memorandum expands the scope of the project to include registering and mapping rural lands in at least five townships, two townships in Jinan District and three townships in Qianshan County, representing an estimated 60,000 rural households.

Anhui Province was an early pioneer in China's land reform, beginning in the late 1970s when rural lands were de-collectivized and individual households were assigned contract rights. As the growth of China's population continues, protecting rural, agricultural land is a priority for the nation and a matter of ensuring future food and economic security.

During the initial pilot, ILS introduced methods and technologies to map the agriculture land parcels of rural households in China, and also established a modern digital land registry and land records archive system in Feidong County, Anhui Province. The agreement reached between ILS and the Anhui Agriculture Commission establishes a commitment to continue to work collaboratively to refine methods and models to more efficiently, cost-effectively, and accurately record farmers' land rights.