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“Development on the margin”

## The Role of Agricultural Service Organisations in the Process of Agricultural Transformation in the Khorezm Province, Uzbekistan

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### Abstract

Uzbekistan has experienced a chain of agricultural reforms since 1991. The Uzbek government maintains strong control over its agricultural production to ensure food security and economic growth. The process of de-collectivising land crucially modified inter-human relationships within the agricultural production system, as well as between the now diverse groups of agricultural actors and the state.

Agricultural service organisations (AgSOs) play a crucial role in offering agricultural inputs, sales organisations, financial and insurance services to transform the agricultural economy of Uzbekistan. Originally, AgSOs were established to serve state collective farms during Soviet times, and were centrally managed. Yet, due to agricultural reforms, that led to the creation of individual-owned farms, AgSOs have moved from being centrally managed and providing services for a few state farms to providing services to a much larger contingent of individual farmers.

In this poster, I examine the role of agricultural service organisations, particularly the Machine-Tractor-Part (MTP), Fertiliser Company and Bio-labs in the agricultural transformation processes in Uzbekistan. The central research question is what happened to AgSOs in the Khorezm region of Uzbekistan during the ongoing processes of agrarian change? The data was collected through various qualitative methods between 2009 and 2010.

Initial results showed that these organisations apart from providing services (*i.e.* provision of fertilisers, seeds, machinery, consultations, etc.), fulfilled many other socio-political functions during the agrarian change process. These include various tasks requested by the state administration, such as providing machinery to state farmers, participating in numerous meetings arranged by the state administration with regard to organising cotton and wheat agricultural campaigns, fulfilling the private tasks of bureaucrats, as well as relicts from Soviet times such as acting as a social security net for its personnel. The analysis reveals that agrarian transformation has produced three types of service organisations, which differ in its relationship to the state, financial wellbeing and potential to develop into private sector, etc.

**Keywords:** Agricultural services, organisations, post-socialist transition, rural development, transformation, Uzbekistan