
Capitalisation of Experiences (CapEx) in Supporting Pastoral Development

Addressing Vulnerabilities of Pastoralist Societies in Sub-Saharan Africa

For the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) work in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa, pastoralism is a key domain. The Subgroup Pastoralism of the SDC Agriculture & Food Security (A&FS) Network undertook a Capitalisation of Experiences (CapEx) in Supporting Pastoral Development as an internal learning process.

Launch

In March 2014, the Subgroup members, i.e. Programme Officers (POs) of the SDC Offices in Bamako, Ouagadougou, Niamey, N'Djamena, Cotonou, Nairobi and Addis Ababa, launched the CapEx in Biltine, Chad. On that occasion, they identified issues about which they wanted to learn more, so as to be more effective in supporting the development of pastoral economies and livelihoods. This CapEx was supposed also to inform the new SDC Cooperation Strategy Horn of Africa in the spirit of "learning from the Sahel" and it also provided an opportunity to include experiences of SDC and partners in Central Asia.

Experience collection

During the CapEx process, the POs consulted documented knowledge and interacted with partners and knowledgeable persons in order to capture relevant experiences. This was done both individually and during two mini workshops in Bamako and Cotonou that brought together local partners and experts. A team of two experts, recruited in the middle of the process, assisted the Subgroup members as process facilitator and coach for the POs, ensuring the quality of the content and linking to relevant international experience.

Concluding event and key results

In November 2015, the group met again in Isiolo, Kenya in order to validate the work accomplished, which was presented in the form of draft CapEx briefs on eight issues: (1) Cross-border transhumance corridors in West Africa; (2) Land use and pastoral spatial planning in sub-Saharan Africa; (3) Organisation of pastoral civil society and strengthening pastoral voice in policy dialogue; (4) Alternative livelihoods for former pastoralists in rural settings; (5) Livestock insurance for risk management; (6) Access to rural advisory services to improve pastoral systems; (7) Maintenance of pastoral water infrastructure; and (8) Promising practices in supporting management of water resources in pastoral area. Through the assistance of coaches, peer assistance and taking up enriching perspectives from local actors, these briefs were reviewed, finalised and uploaded on the Internet after the workshop. A ninth CapEx brief presents additional issues related to pastoralism in sub-Saharan Africa: (a) Education and skills development; (b) Research for and with pastoralists; (c) Local mechanisms for managing disaster and climate risk; (d) Conflict management and advocacy in natural resource management; (e) Gatekeepers and development brokers; (f) Agropastoralism as a mixed mode of livelihood; (g) Stakeholder analysis in pastoral development; and (h) Infrastructure needed to support pastoralist livelihoods. The briefs are intended primarily for SDC and its partners at country and regional level, and for SDC staff in Switzerland. They will also be useful for other development practitioners and donors engaged in pastoral development.

CapEx as a model process

This process, with some amendments, can serve as a good practice for other cross-country and cross-regional experience-capitalisation processes. The work was mainly done by thematic POs. All concerned SDC Offices were highly supportive. The CapEx was anchored in the work programmes of the A&FS Network and the West African Working Group on Food Security and Rural Development. External process facilitation and thematic coaching proved to be extremely useful. It would best be associated right from the beginning of a future CapEx. Face-to-face meetings and workshops for capturing experiences, peer assistance at the validation workshop at the end of the work and the digital video storytelling are key elements of this successful methodology. The high level of individual commitment by all involved made this cross-continental, cross-regional and cross-country joint learning process a success.



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