



CapEx in supporting pastoral development

Access to rural advisory services to improve pastoral systems

Marc Bloch, February 2016

Key messages

- The future of pastoralism highly depends on the quality and type of livestock-related services provided to pastoralist communities.
- Mobile advisory services that build on both local knowledge and modern insights and have been created with and for pastoralists will be more acceptable to them and will have a bigger impact than has been the case with conventional stationary services.
- Governments have the responsibility to ensure that pastoralists have access to services, but they are often not able to offer good-quality services themselves. Public-private-partnerships, whereby a government-subsidised service is provided by a private entity, could be a model that achieves a good mix of quality and cost-efficiency of services.
- The role of donor agencies is to provide support to initiate and build up services and to ensure high quality but will be effective only if the recurrent costs for providing these services are borne by the Government and/or by the pastoralist communities concerned.



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CapEx series on pastoralism

Pastoralism is practised on a quarter of the globe's surface and provides a source of food and livelihood for millions of people, especially in areas that are too dry or high for reliable production of food crops. For the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) work in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, pastoralism is a key domain. Having recognised the value of learning from experiences in development cooperation across countries and regions, the Subgroup Pastoralism in the SDC network for Agriculture and Food Security undertook an internal learning process called "Capitalisation of experiences in supporting pastoral development" (CapEx Pastoralism for short). The Subgroup members identified issues about which they wanted to learn more, so as to be more effective in supporting the development of pastoral economies and livelihoods. During the CapEx process, they compiled information and formulated texts on selected topics. This brief is one of a series of briefs that came out of this process. The briefs are intended primarily for SDC and its partners at country and regional level, particularly in West and Eastern Africa, and SDC staff in Switzerland, but also for other development practitioners and donors engaged in pastoral development.

1. Introduction

In the past century, pastoral zones have usually been neglected by governments for consideration in economic development programmes and establishment of public services. Few social, financial and technical advisory services (veterinary, information, training etc) – and often of low quality – were provided to pastoralists. Consequences are high levels of poverty, food insecurity, degradation of natural resources (i.e. rangelands, soil and water), a high dependence on relief, and an increasing frequency of conflict over scarce natural resources. Today, pastoralists are faced with a multitude of challenges and situations that need informed decision-making. Access to high-quality, affordable and reliable Rural Advisory Services (RAS) is critical so that pastoralists are in a better position to take the right decisions to improve livestock production, innovate, protect the environment and improve their livelihoods. RAS can contribute to improving pastoralists' livelihoods and strengthening their capacities to deal with risk and change. Such services assist in spreading new ideas and sharing existing technologies and practices, as well as in supporting the organisation of pastoralists and linking them to markets.

RAS have to respond to specific needs formulated by pastoralists and include the following:

- Information services: these include geobotanical and hydroclimatic information, as well as updates on, e.g. pastoral conditions, disease dynamics, market prices and various research projects related to pastoralist production systems;
- Training and advisory services on livestock production/management, natural resource management, business skills, life skills, conflict resolution etc;
- Veterinary services (vaccination, animal healthcare);
- Input supply: access to animal feeds, drugs, seeds and other inputs;
- Financial services: access to credit facilities, grants and subsidies;
- Mediation and advocacy services: for conflict resolution, policy development and support;
- Infrastructure and transport services: markets, roads, public transport, water for livestock etc.

In addition to these services along the livestock value chain, it is important to provide social services such as access to water, education and human healthcare to pastoralist communities to improve their standard of living and to make life in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) more attractive.

¹ Adapted from the GFRAS (Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services) definition in Adolph (2011).

² Adapted from the European Training Foundation definition (<http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/home>).

Key terms

Rural Advisory Services (RAS) include all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers (in this case, pastoralists) and other actors to assist them in developing their own technical, organisational and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and wellbeing. These services address a specific issue or need expressed by a farmer/pastoralist or a group of them and are normally provided by public or private RAS organisations during one or several advisory sessions. Often, useful information is also summarised in a short document (fact sheet, brochure) or a video, or is provided via mobile phone. Advisory services support farmers/pastoralists in taking an informed decision and in making the best possible use of the resources at their disposal.

Vocational education and training equips learners with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required.² These are normally longer-term courses (three months to more than one year), follow a given curriculum and lead to an officially recognised certification.

Information services are services that provide processed data/ knowledge/ information for informed decision making.

Veterinary services deal with all activities concerning animal healthcare and disease control. This includes, among others, disease outbreak control, disease prevention, disease investigation/diagnosis, drug and vaccine control and provision, and therapeutic services.

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to have their voice heard on issues that are important to them, defend and safeguard their rights and have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.

Compared to arable farming communities, pastoralists live in very remote areas with low population density and their herds are highly mobile. Road networks and public transport are poor. Especially poorer pastoralists are not always aware of some of the services offered by governments and private agents, or do not have the means to access them. Therefore, RAS in the ASALs should be “mobile” and developed together with the pastoralist communities. In some cases, pastoralists can play an active role in the delivery of services. For instance, community-based animal health workers or Pastoralist Field School facilitators recruited from within the pastoralist communities can offer services in their own and neighbouring communities. Some of the services may need to be subsidised to ensure their continuation.

2. Specific cases

The following case studies are examples of good practice in providing technical services to pastoralists. They show the importance of high-level government commitment (Case 1 and 3) and the role that local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can play in assisting the Government in service provision (Case 2 and 3). They also describe the role that an external donor agency can play in supporting these efforts.

Case 1: Rift Valley Fever vaccination campaign in Wajir County, Kenya³

The threat of an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) in arid areas is significantly higher during the wet season and especially when the rains are extremely heavy. Based on experiences made during the El Nino rains in 1997 and 2006, the Wajir County authorities decided to launch an extensive RVF campaign before the expected El Nino rains in 2015. SDC and the County authorities joined forces to ensure that the campaign could be launched within days so that animals could be vaccinated before the vector developed after the first rains. SDC purchased 1,000,000 doses of the vaccine, the National Drought Monitoring Authority covered costs for logistics (fuel, transport, accommodation) and the County authorities provided manpower to conduct the campaign. In this case, leadership and ownership lay with the national structure while the international partner had a support function. This case also shows the efficacy of joining forces to ensure quick action.

³ Source: Marc Bloch, SDC Consultant for Pastoralism & Food Security, Kenya



Livestock market in Farimaké, Mali
(Credit: Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation)



CAHW vaccinating Fulani cattle in Benin
(Credit: George Djohy)

Case 2: Integrated animal and human health services in Timbuktu, Mali⁴

The 4-year project “Projet santé nomade Tombouctou” (Nomadic Health Project Timbuktu) was implemented in 2007–11 by AVSF (Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières / Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders) together with the local NGO ADESAH (Association pour le Développement Endogène au Sahel / Association for Endogenous Development in the Sahel). Its approach was based on four pillars:

- i) Health: a mobile system for human and animal healthcare that involved movement between pastoralist camps to offer preventative, curative and awareness-raising activities; a main activity was communication for behavioral change;
- ii) Natural resource management focused on two key resources in pastoral systems – water and pasture – through three activities: reseeded pastures, protecting natural regeneration of woody species, and rehabilitating pastoral wells;
- iii) Income diversification, which involved development of appropriate infrastructure and strengthening the local technical and organisational capacities (market facilities, herders’ and women’s cooperatives);
- iv) Structuring the pastoral sector: the development planning for pastoral areas was focused on food security.

Some of the main lessons learnt were:

- A community-managed mobile “one-health” service can assure good-quality service for people and animals and raise awareness in the pastoralist communities about nutrition and hygiene;
- Improving the natural environment to provide diverse sources of feed leads to better livestock production (milk, meat, reproduction), consumption of more milk in the families and increased revenues for both women and men;
- When pastoralist women increase and diversify their sources of income and food, they can provide their families with grain and other daily consumer goods acquired locally;
- To achieve food security, it is important that an integrated development plan be developed jointly by the local communities and administration and the technical and financial partners.

Case 3: Pasture management advisory service in Kyrgyzstan⁵

In Kyrgyzstan, the 2008 Pasture Reform and the 2009 Pasture Law initiated the establishment of Pasture Committees that are responsible for managing the use of pastures at the level of the Aiyl Okmoty (lowest administrative unit, which includes several villages). To enhance the capacity of these Committees, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources engaged CAMP Alatoo (a national NGO that grew out of the Central Asian Mountain Partnership) to develop a guide on pasture management planning and training modules to train the Pasture Committees.

⁴ Source: Cisse Hamet, SDC Rural Development Programme, Mali; www.confedmali.net/doukafa/?q=node/37

⁵ Source: Aida Gareeva, Senior Project Coordinator, PF CAMP Alatoo



Pasture in Kyrgyzstan (Credit: Alatoo)

The guide includes information on how to:

- Define the number of grazing livestock
- Define internal and external borders of pasture areas
- Calculate the carrying capacity of the pasture
- Develop annual grazing plans
- Monitor grazing plans and develop monitoring systems for grazing areas
- Increase the capacity of pasture users
- Develop an operational plan for the improvement of pasture areas and pasture infrastructures
- Calculate the amount of fees for use of pastures and establish a Pasture Committee budget.

To disseminate the guide, CAMP Alatoo collaborated with the Agency for Development and Investment of Communities (ARIS) and Kirgizstan's Rural Advisory Service. Over 40 training-of-trainer courses were organised. Up to now, 350 Pasture Committees have been trained and are developing and implementing medium-term pasture management plans.

The main lessons learnt were: i) it is an effective approach to involve local NGOs like CAMP Alatoo for service development, because the NGO can combine scientific data and approaches with local capacities and knowledge to elaborate the guide, which Pasture Committees can adapt and implement; and ii) facilitation of pasture management plans is an important service, because it builds local capacities and mobilises the community.

3. Lessons for development cooperation

3.1 Analysing the situation

Services for pastoralists in Kenya's ASALs normally do not exist and, if they do, they are town-based and not easily accessible to pastoralists. The quality and reliability of services provided by Government institutions are normally very low, and the services offered by private companies are often not affordable for small-scale pastoralists or are biased towards selling specific products. Various state and non-state institutions such as research centres, NGOs and community-based organisations offer better-quality services, but these services are usually largely or entirely donor-funded and stop as soon as donor support ends. In many cases, pastoralists are also not aware of the existing services.

Access to rural advisory services to improve pastoral systems

Pastoralism is a very complex profession and pastoralists operate under conditions of uncertainty and high risk. Pastoralism will have a future only if pastoralists can further develop their traditional management strategies and become better able to cope with droughts and other risks that challenge their food security.

Organisations aiming at improving RAS in the ASALs need to recognise the following:

- Pastoralism is not only a profession but also a lifestyle and a culture with a high non-monetary value for countries and people in the Horn of Africa and it is within this complex framework that pastoralists are becoming more commercially oriented and further developing their coping strategies.
- Government support is an essential precondition for a strong pastoral sector in the ASALs, and the willingness of governments to provide an enabling policy framework and guidelines for pastoralist development is critical for the future of pastoralism and retaining young people in the sector. This includes the provision of RAS and financial support and the development and enforcement of appropriate policies, rules and regulations, together with the pastoralists.
- Protection of the natural environment is important not only because it constitutes the basis for livestock production; by protecting the environment, pastoralists also render an important service to the society, and RAS can play a role in guiding them in this task.
- Improving livestock production is important, but it will have little impact if services are not provided along the pastoral value chains (meat, milk, hides etc) to help address the major constraints and opportunities faced by pastoralists, processors, traders and other businesses at different levels and points along each value chain.

3.2 Identifying entry points for development cooperation

When seeking to strengthen access to services for pastoralists, development agencies need to take the following into consideration:

- Sustainable services for pastoralist need government commitment and effective forms of financing. Therefore, project support must be balanced with systematic, foundational funding and institutional approaches to reforming and strengthening pluralistic RAS systems.
- Given the diversity of rural life and needs, it is important to work with and support different types of service providers that also use different approaches. Public-sector service providers play a coordinating, technical backstopping and quality assurance role. They are critical for reaching disadvantaged groups such as pastoralists, and they offer more impartial advice than do private-sector providers. Pastoralist organisations are often the most sustainable type of service providers in more remote dryland areas, if these organisations are representative of the locally practising pastoralists, such as Pasture Committees that assume responsibility for pasture management at community level (see Box 3). Private-sector companies and NGOs also need to be strengthened as service providers, so that they become familiar with new farmer-driven RAS approaches and facilitation methods and can provide technical information and training that is appropriate for the ASALs.
- Because the smaller pastoralist households will not be able to pay for RAS or are not used to paying for such services, it will be a challenge to offer RAS such as training, advice, vaccination campaigns and distribution of information materials on a full cost-recovery basis. These services have to be provided or subsidised by the government at least as long as the pastoralists are not fully convinced of their benefits. Governments need to recognise this and make respective provisions (e.g. budget allocations).
- The emphasis in development cooperation should be on strengthening the capacity of individuals (trainers, advisors, researchers etc) and national service providers in extension methodologies, communication and facilitation techniques and technical skills in livestock production, pasture management and farm management in the ASALs. Provision of free services by international organisations will be short-lived and can undermine efforts by Governments, private companies and community-based organisations to provide services.

3.3 Interacting with policy processes

Development agencies need to engage in advocacy work to ensure that pastoralists' needs are integrated into national policies and are on the international agenda. To have a good basis for advocacy, they need to analyse existing information about pastoralism and services in the ASALs, identify gaps and support research to fill these gaps. They need to strengthen the capacities of pastoralist organisations to collect and analyse relevant information themselves and to use this effectively in their own advocacy activities.

Development agencies can also play a useful role in supporting pastoralists in advocating for, e.g., better infrastructure, social services and RAS; or locally managed marketing facilities and more transparency in marketing procedures; or changes in laws to allow community-based health services for animals and humans in remote areas, operating in good linkage with stationary governmental or private service providers in towns. They could also support policy dialogue about more nuanced and realistic approaches to food-safety regulation in animal products so as to reduce risks of contamination along the (often informal) value chains, rather than prohibiting the income-generating activities by poor processors and traders (often women) of animal products and driving them "underground" (see, e.g. Roesel & Grace 2015). Here, external development agencies can join forces with national researchers and producer, processor and trader organisations to convince Governments to adopt a pro-poor approach to developing safe value chains for animal-source foods. These are only a few of the many issues about which development cooperation could amplify the voices of pastoralists in policy processes related to livestock-related services.

3.4 Key principles to guide the development-cooperation process

- National / local ownership and readiness of the government to provide the necessary political framework, to enforce policies, rules and regulations and to cover or subsidise costs are essential.
- While advisory services can provide substantial support in a relatively short period if these services have been adapted to the ASALs, it is equally important to provide longer-term vocational education and training that leads to officially recognised certification that will qualify graduates for employment, e.g. as extension agents, or simply give them recognition as being qualified pastoralists.
- A cross-border dimension is critical in the arid and semi-arid lands, especially with regard to cross-border rangeland management and disease control, conflict mitigation and risk management.
- Accountability of service provision has to be ensured by putting in place a complaint mechanism and other systems that ensure that the services become more "pastoralist driven".
- Pastoralist-driven extension services (e.g. Pastoralist Field Schools, community based animal healthcare) are especially important because they are cost-effective, they incorporate local knowledge, and they are well accepted by pastoralist communities.

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