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# EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH PASTORALIST POPULATIONS: GUIDANCE FOR USAID OPERATING UNITS

JULY 2020

This document was produced by Tetra Tech under the Integrated Land and Resource Governance Task Order (ILRG; 7200AA18D00003/7200AA18F00015) for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Tetra Tech and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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# INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has designed this pastoralist programming guidance document to provide a practical tool for USAID missions and operating units (OUs) to more effectively engage with pastoralists. This guidance complements and is informed by the [USAID Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (PRO-IP) and comprises one piece of USAID's collection of guidance documents on engagement with Indigenous Peoples. This document highlights challenges, lessons learned, and best practices derived from USAID programming involving pastoralists to help operationalize the PRO-IP's objectives and operating principles. It also aims to ensure USAID OUs appreciate the complexities associated with pastoralists so that they can effectively design activities that engage pastoralists following the guidance provided by the PRO-IP.

USAID should consider pastoralists' development priorities and promote their participation in program design and implementation. Engaging pastoralists, understanding their development priorities, and facilitating their participation in all stages of the program cycle through well-structured communication, consultation, and engagement strategies help safeguard against unintended adverse impacts and foster local solutions as envisioned in the [Journey to Self-Reliance](#). Through effective engagement, USAID missions and OUs can develop programs that address various challenges while promoting practices that support pastoralists across different sectors, thus furthering Objective 2 of the PRO-IP (see Box 1). This requires identifying pastoralists in a context-specific manner, engaging them as partners throughout the program cycle, and developing a deeper understanding of pastoralists' needs, capacities, and interests.

The intersectionality of pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples is complex, context-specific, and sometimes controversial. [Studies](#) have examined this intersectionality, noting that pastoralists have longstanding cultures, unique indigenous knowledge, and have faced similar histories and challenges as other Indigenous Peoples, including state policies that contributed to their marginalization, entrenched poverty, discrimination, and human rights violations. Moreover, global alliances, such as the [World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples](#), as well as [international treaties](#)<sup>1</sup> and [standards](#) highlight other recognized linkages between pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples.

The key challenges, lessons learned, and best practices highlighted in this document help USAID staff more effectively identify groups as both pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples following the PRO-IP. As stated in the PRO-IP, USAID uses a set of criteria rather than a fixed definition to identify Indigenous Peoples (see Box 2). These criteria also draw from those established in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Performance Standard 7 of the International Financial Corporation (IFC). It is worth emphasizing that not all pastoralists share these characteristics, and not all pastoralists identify as Indigenous Peoples. Based on these criteria, and depending on the geographic

## BOX 1: THE PRO-IP'S FOUR OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen engagement with Indigenous Peoples to safeguard against harm and support their development priorities and self-reliance.
2. Increase the integration of Indigenous Peoples' concerns across all sectors of USAID's portfolio of investments and promote cross-sectoral development approaches.
3. Empower Indigenous Peoples and their representative organizations to advocate for, and exercise, their rights and practice self-determined development.
4. Foster an enabling environment for Indigenous Peoples to advocate for, and exercise, their rights.

<sup>1</sup> In 2007, pastoralist representatives from over 60 countries worldwide signed the Segovia Declaration of Nomadic and Transhumant Pastoralists. This declaration calls on governments and international organizations to "seek prior and informed consent before all private and public initiatives that may affect the integrity of mobile indigenous peoples' customary territories, resource management systems and nature."

location, context, and other factors, some or all of these criteria may apply to pastoralist groups as subsets of Indigenous Peoples for purposes of identification per the PRO-IP.

Although USAID endorses criteria as opposed to a fixed definition, broad conceptual definitions of pastoralism may serve as a helpful starting point in the identification process. While there is no one-size-fits-all definition, FAO, for example, published a technical guide entitled [“Improving Governance of Pastoral Lands,”](#) which states that “pastoralism is defined as extensive livestock production in the rangelands and it is practiced worldwide as a response to unique ecological challenges.” [FAO](#) further describes how pastoralists’ customary governance institutions, cultural practices, and livelihoods are highly dependent on herd mobility. According to [other studies](#), pastoralism can sometimes be characterized by the degree of movement, from highly nomadic to transhumant to agro-pastoral.<sup>2</sup> Although broad definitions must be treated as overly simplistic given the flexible, opportunistic, rapidly changing nature of pastoralists, these conceptual definitions and the guidance presented in this document can be used to develop a general understanding of the concepts and issues, and then determine on a case-by-case basis whether a particular group can be identified as pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples per the PRO-IP criteria shown in Box 2. Given these inherent difficulties associated with identification, it may be helpful to account for other factors relevant to the PRO-IP criteria, including the legal and political context surrounding pastoralist groups, the cultural role that livestock production plays in the livelihoods of pastoralist groups, whether the groups manage resources following customary norms and practices, and whether the groups have a collective attachment to land and resources, among others. More details on the challenges associated with identification are discussed in the Challenges section below.

This guidance document incorporates feedback from interviews with USAID livestock, pastoralism, land governance, and agricultural development specialists, as well as other technical experts with relevant experience and knowledge. This guidance is also based on desktop research of USAID program documents and other relevant sources. This guidance can be used together with other internationally recognized guidance documents, toolkits, and analyses such as those shown in Box 3.

#### BOX 2: THE PRO-IP POLICY’S CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The criteria below are used by USAID to identify Indigenous Peoples:

- a. self-identification as a distinct social and cultural group;
- b. recognition of this identity by others;
- c. historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;
- d. collective attachment to territories and their natural resources;
- e. customary social, economic, or governance institutions that are distinct;
- f. distinct language or dialect; and/or
- g. resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

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<sup>2</sup> “Transhumant” [has been defined](#) as the regular movement of herds between fixed points (e.g. fixed summer and winter pastures) to exploit seasonal availability of pastures. Agro-pastoralism relates to the practice of agriculture of growing crops and also raising livestock.

### BOX 3: GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS, TOOLKITS, AND ANALYSES

[The Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#)

[IFC Performance Standard 7 on Indigenous Peoples](#)

Forthcoming Bureau of Resilience and Food Security paper on pastoralism

[FAO's Pastoralist Knowledge Hub](#)

FAO's [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure \(VGGT\)](#)

[IFAD's Toolkit- Engaging With Pastoralists- A Holistic Development Approach](#)

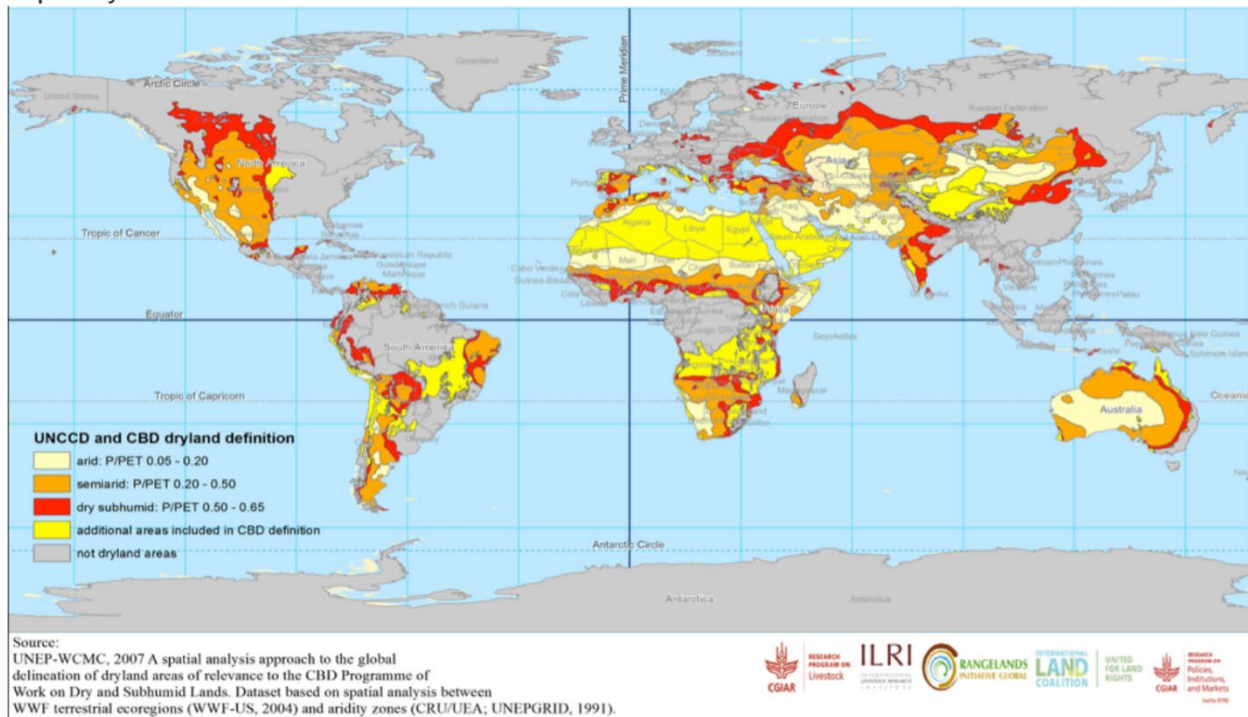
FAO's technical guide on ["Improving governance of pastoral lands"](#)

[UNEP/EA.4/RES.15 Innovations in Sustainable Rangelands and Pastoralism \(2019\)](#)

[UNEP's A Case of Benign Neglect: Knowledge Gaps About Sustainability in Pastoralism and Rangelands](#)

[FAO's Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative \(PPLPI\).](#)

Map of Drylands



The image above indicates the world's dryland areas and is used to get a sense of where pastoralists may be found in the world; however, it is not a comprehensive map of pastoralist communities.

IMAGE ACCESSED FROM [HTTPS://LANDPORTAL.ORG/BOOK/THEMATIC/RANGELANDS-DRYLANDS-PASTORALISM](https://landportal.org/book/thematic/rangelands-drylands-pastoralism)

## CHALLENGES/KEY ISSUES

This section draws attention to the challenges associated with programming involving pastoralists. Applying the PRO-IP will help missions and OUs address these challenges and better align USAID priorities and objectives with pastoralists' self-determined development. Before discussing the key challenges related to pastoralist programming, this section sets the context by briefly highlighting aspects of the history of pastoralist-focused programming funded by USAID and other donors.

### Setting the Context

Throughout its history, USAID has periodically [reflected](#) on the successes and failures of livestock interventions and adjusted programming accordingly. In the 1960s and early 1970s, for example, [the conventional policy model for livestock projects](#) primarily aimed at making livestock systems more productive in terms of beef produced for markets. Projects at that time focused primarily on production processes while improving the quality of animals, increasing offtake for the market, and improving rangeland conditions. Yet over time, it became increasingly clear that these livestock policies had been promulgated without a sufficient understanding of the social, economic, and ecological systems by which pastoralists operate. [More research](#) was needed to appreciate the complexities of pastoralists' social, economic, and dryland management systems. [Some programming that affected pastoralists](#) focused on sedentarization and support of [state policies that promoted the individualization and privatization of rangelands](#), placing pastoralist mobility under territorial control. Over time, donors and implementers have realized that [strict boundary demarcation and individual titling](#) can be antithetical to pastoralist mobility and tenure flexibility. [Often attempts to influence the property rights of pastoralists](#) did not fully appreciate the communal nature of pastoralists' resource management systems as well as their social and economic motivations. Beginning in the 1960s [in Kenya](#), for example, the World Bank supported the conversion of large areas of Maasai land to a form of group tenure called "group ranches," which later in the 1970s were broken up [due to increased sedentarization and individualization of land tenure rights](#). These shifts in land tenure arrangements [reduced livestock mobility and lowered the quality of pasture land](#) available for grazing. Programs promoting the establishment of ranches as a way of intensifying herding often conflicted with traditional pastoralist livelihood systems and were progressively [abandoned in the 1980s](#). By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, [there were numerous studies and project experiences](#) that highlighted problems associated with pastoral development programming based on Western models of land titling and livestock production.

More recently, governments and donors have supported policies and initiatives that recognize and protect pastoralists' customary governance institutions and their right to control and manage rangeland resources following traditional norms and practices (see, for example, p. 11-14 of [IUCN study](#) for positive examples from Mongolia, Tanzania, Niger, and South Sudan, among others). The Government of Ethiopia's Council of Ministers recently approved a National Pastoral Development Policy that recognizes the rights of pastorals and their customary institutions and sets a vision, strategies, and programming framework for ensuring socioeconomic development and resiliency in pastoral areas. To ensure more effective pastoralist engagement and to better inform donor decision making related to programs affecting pastoral areas, the PRO-IP and this guidance document help promote consultative approaches to programmatic design and implementation. These approaches aim at enabling a better understanding of pastoralists' traditional knowledge and their complex social and environmental relationships so that programming can more effectively engage and [support pastoralists](#) moving forward.

Before discussing lessons learned and best practices related to pastoralist programming, several illustrative challenges are highlighted below to help USAID OUs understand the intricacies of designing and implementing programs in pastoral areas.

### **There is no one-size-fits-all approach to identifying pastoralists.**

USAID has not established standardized tools and criteria for identifying pastoralists. Developing such criteria is highly complex and case-specific given that, for pastoralists, lines of identity are formed around nationality, religion, ethnicity, territory, and livelihoods and often overlap. In some countries where USAID operates, pastoralists are commonly identified as such based on the size of their herds, the primacy of animal husbandry and livestock production as livelihood activities, and the use of transhumance, among other characteristics. Similar to other Indigenous Peoples, pastoralist groups [often self-identify or are recognized](#) as such based on their traditional way of life, values, and customary norms. Entrenched norms and customary practices dictate modes of access to resources and the locations of [traditional livestock corridors](#).

It may be worthwhile to take time to learn about and appreciate the critical role that these customary norms, as well as the roles that mobility, access to resources including water and grazing lands, and customary governance systems, play in the lives of pastoralist groups. It is important to recognize the linkages between these characteristics and some of the PRO-IP criteria (shown in Box 2), such as (1) collective attachment to territories and their natural resources; (2) customary social, economic, or governance institutions that are distinct; and (3) resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

The PRO-IP states “Indigenous Peoples are not a monolithic group, and it is critical to recognize that many distinct voices exist within each community... [and] address this heterogeneity in USAID’s programming.” Similar to identification issues related to other Indigenous Peoples, a key challenge related to the identification of pastoralists is the common conflation of ethnicity with livelihood identity. For example, in parts of West and Central Africa, donors and implementers sometimes mistakenly identify all pastoralists as belonging to one ethnic group, e.g., the Fulani, even though there are more nuanced distinctions within and among pastoralist groups. It is worthwhile to recognize and appreciate these nuances and complexities when identifying groups following the PRO-IP criteria.<sup>3</sup> It is also important to recognize the distinctions between pastoralists and other groups that herd livestock such as ranchers.



**Pastoralists’ Grazing Corridor.** A village land adjudicator trained by the Feed the Future Land Tenure Assistance (LTA) activity in Iringa District, Tanzania, shows a Barabaig pastoralist leader the area demarcated as a grazing corridor for pastoralists’ livestock. The digitally generated map is displayed at the village land registry for residents to check the boundaries of their land parcels and raise any objections or corrections.

PHOTO CREDIT: STUDIO 19 FOR THE USAID CENTER FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

Given variations across regions, clearly defining the distinctions between pastoralists, ranchers, and other types of livestock raisers is difficult; however, [some scholars](#) have identified these distinctions based on whether the livestock is raised for commercial or subsistence purposes, the level of productivity and technology utilized, and the degree of mobility. Looking out for the presence of longstanding, entrenched customary norms, as well as distinct cultural, social identities, and other PRO-

<sup>3</sup> The PRO-IP states that “the Agency has developed a comprehensive guide to inclusive development called ‘Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and Mission Operations (ADS 201 Additional Help)’ that includes an Inclusive-Development Analysis (IDA). The Agency has annotated the IDA to assist USAID’s Operating Units in identifying Indigenous Peoples more precisely and understanding the legal landscape, socio-economic context, and geography in which they exist, as well as the challenges, opportunities, and potential conflicts they face. The [annotated IDA is available at USAID’s Indigenous Peoples’ website](#).”

IP criteria, may be useful in understanding whether there is a presence of Indigenous Peoples within and among these various groups that graze livestock.

The PRO-IP states “when trying to determine who qualifies as Indigenous Peoples, USAID’s Operating Units must consider relevant stakeholders both inside and outside the specific geographic location in which our partners propose to implement a development project...” [Understanding vested interests, conflict dynamics, political economy, and power relations of various actors](#) present in pastoral areas are relevant to the identification process. Often outside actors, [including urban elites that hire herders to raise livestock, as well as armed militias and extremist groups](#), disrupt traditional pastoralist systems and livestock value chains, triggering conflict hotspots while also making the identification process more problematic. Emerging in some pastoral areas is the presence of “neo-pastoralism,” which [has been defined](#) as a militarized form of entrepreneurial absentee livestock ownership, primarily involving large herds of cattle owned by urban elites and led by hired drovers (often heavily armed) that take advantage of seasonal grazing resources in spaces with limited governance. Depending on the situation and characteristics as compared with the PRO-IP criteria, not all “[neo-pastoralists](#)” may fit the Indigenous Peoples identification criteria established in the PRO-IP. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that just because a pastoralist group is hired to graze livestock does not necessarily mean they cannot be identified as Indigenous Peoples for purposes of the PRO-IP. Many pastoralists have lost livestock resources and have decided to become hired herders to rebuild assets. Another reality to consider in the identification process is that some pastoralist groups have fully shifted into sedentary agriculture and other livelihood practices due to loss of livestock, conflict, and other factors affecting their herding practices.

[Conflicts](#) between farmers and herders further complicate the identification process (see Conflicts discussion below). These [conflicts can often be linked to complex tenurial relationships](#) related to the control over livestock water points and the seasonal grazing lands. While some hired herders have intentionally damaged crops, [threatened farmers with violence](#), and otherwise disrupted farmer livelihoods, farmers sometimes use this as an excuse to exclude all pastoralists from their lands—even pastoralists with legitimate customary claims to land and resources who can be identified as Indigenous Peoples per the PRO-IP identification criteria. Understanding these conflict dynamics is relevant to identifying the presence of Indigenous Peoples.

### **Donors often face challenges associated with ensuring pastoralists benefit from development programs.**

Many pastoralists benefit directly and indirectly from USAID programming, yet there is room to increase integration of pastoralists across all sectors and further Objective 2 of the PRO-IP. Sector-based assistance to pastoralist communities is often shaped by an intent to integrate pastoralists into markets, strengthen livestock value chains, promote the use of productivity-enhancing livestock practices, build resiliencies to economic and climatic shocks, strengthen land and resource rights by decentralizing rangeland governance, and devolving management responsibilities, among others. Several USAID programs have focused on increasing access to livestock water points and other resources as well as improving animal health and nutrition to allow those who raise livestock to increase incomes and improve livestock production methods (see Lessons Learned section below for illustrative examples of USAID programming). USAID has also worked to increase the sustainable intensification of farmland, thus reducing the pressure to bring new land into production. These combined efforts indirectly address resource competition issues between pastoralists, farmers, and other groups.

At the same time, there are several challenges ensuring pastoralists benefit from development programs. First, it is crucial yet challenging to understand pastoralist identities and livelihoods in a manner that enables the provision of appropriate humanitarian and development assistance packages for pastoralists. Second, while many humanitarian livestock programming beneficiaries are pastoralists, donors, including USAID, that support both humanitarian and development programs have historically placed more focus



on crop agriculture than on pastoralism. Moreover, there are more agronomists than livestock specialists within USAID. Third, USAID programs often operate in silos and lack an integrated approach to addressing pastoralist issues. As discussed below in the Lessons Learned section (see the [USAID Pastoralists' Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion \[PRIME\]](#) project case study), greater impacts can be achieved when pastoralist-focused projects from multiple sectors are integrated than when they are implemented separately. PRIME found that comprehensive, multi-sectoral programming optimized the resiliency of pastoralist groups. Fourth, the lack of clear standards and performance monitoring indicators applicable to pastoralists, coupled with the absence of disaggregated data on pastoralists, makes it more difficult to determine whether USAID programs are achieving intended objectives of benefiting pastoralists. For example, [Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards](#) and Gender/Social Equity Standards are often used when supporting pastoralist communities in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of natural disasters and other crises. However, these standards are often insufficient in helping USAID design development assistance packages that holistically address the social and cultural identities of pastoralists that may identify as Indigenous Peoples.

**There are often inherent challenges associated with engaging pastoralists.**

Building trust with pastoralist groups is often a challenging step in the engagement process related to Objective I of the PRO-IP. A series of initial, face-to-face meetings are often needed to establish trusting relationships that enable the advancement of project activities. Yet, time and funding constraints make it difficult for USAID to fully understand and account for the full range of pastoralists' rights and development priorities. Given the mobile nature of pastoralists, it can also be difficult for USAID and its implementing partners to track them down and engage pastoralist groups in consultation, especially in conflict or remote areas. At the same time, although it is often challenging to engage highly mobile herding community members, elders, women, and youth within pastoralist communities tend to be relatively less mobile and more accessible.

Donor engagement with pastoralists is often done through intermediary organizations or through funding specific groups engaged in relevant livelihood activities (e.g., engaging pastoralists as livestock production groups), and there is limited time and funding available to take time to fully appreciate broader issues around social and cultural identities. USAID typically conducts assessments and also relies on the expertise of partners to identify the lifesaving and livelihood needs of pastoralists and understand pastoralists' systems, priorities, and interests, but often more research is needed to fully grasp the complex dynamics of pastoralist systems and traditional norms and practices. Additionally, some USAID projects have found that literacy and language barriers pose limitations to learning about and effectively engaging pastoralist groups (see Afghanistan [USAID Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation, and Capacity Enhancement \(PEACE\) project](#) case study below).

Given these difficulties, it is worth emphasizing that two-way communication with pastoralists through ongoing, culturally appropriate consultations over the life of a project or activity is critical to furthering Objective I of the PRO-IP. It is necessary to first listen to pastoralists and then to identify shared or diverging goals for development activities to reach a consensus on the objectives and approaches to achieving them. The Best Practices section below provides additional guidance on engaging pastoralists.

**While some state policies acknowledge and respect the rights of pastoralists, implementation remains a challenge.**

The PRO-IP applies to USAID's operations in all countries and contexts, including those whose governments and legal systems do not formally recognize, respect, or protect the rights of pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples who live within their boundaries. However, in many countries in which USAID operates, states have not established or adequately implemented legal frameworks on pastoralism or otherwise protected the rights of pastoralists within their territories. Even in countries where [legal and policy frameworks recognize the rights of pastoralists](#), governments may not have effectively

implemented these frameworks to adequately enforce the rights of pastoralists. Moreover, livestock ministries often have weak capacities, limited resources, and are unable to sufficiently meet the needs of pastoralists. To address this issue in Afghanistan, the PEACE project found that fostering strong working relationships with champions within Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock was key to building government support for the project’s activities and objectives.

Although [several governments](#) have enacted policies that support pastoralism, some [states reject pastoralism](#) as a livelihood activity, viewing it as a source of conflict or an impediment to progress and development. In Mali, a general challenge faced by Fulani pastoralists is their tenuous relationship with the State. Some Fulani pastoralists are reportedly aggrieved, marginalized, and excluded by post-colonial governments dominated by ethnic groups that [primarily favor sedentary communities](#). Pastoralists sometimes perceive formal governance systems as threatening mechanisms that give preferential



**Kenyan Pastoralists Prepare Hay Bales.** Pastoralists in Kenya learn how to grow grasses that can be harvested for animal fodder, which enables their communities to better raise and trade livestock for a living. Growing grass for fodder provides a source of income for many, who sell the hay bales at a local livestock market that Feed the Future helped build. PHOTO CREDIT: RANELLE SYKES, USAID

treatment to those who are wealthy and politically connected. For example, when state actors establish development plans and policies, [pastoralists are often left out of the process](#). A “whole of government” approach involving various government entities at national and local is needed to fully engage with pastoralists to develop common solutions to development challenges.

Given the long and complicated histories surrounding pastoralists and state actors, it is often difficult to engage pastoralists in discussions with governments (see USAID LAND project, Ethiopia, in the Lessons Learned section below). Governments [have often struggled to](#) understand pastoral systems, control pastoralists’ movements, [tax their incomes](#), and incorporate them into development plans and programs. Pastoralist communities often resist government

interference due to mistrust, resentment, and [historical grievances against state actors](#). Pastoralists sometimes view both government and donor interventions as unduly influencing their traditional way of life, and thus they may refuse to participate in government and donor programs. These complicated relationships make it difficult for donors to maintain a balance between various interests.

### **The presence of existent and emerging conflict hotspots in pastoral areas creates difficulties for donor programming.**

Across various regions, conflicts have erupted in pastoral areas as a result of land governance challenges, [land acquisition by governments and outside actors](#), resource competition over key water points and prime grazing areas, and climate change dynamics, [among others](#). The impacts that conflicts are having on pastoralists and the ability of USAID to program for pastoralists pose significant challenges. In Afghanistan, for example, the armed conflict has contributed to a decline in animal health and productivity, increased economic burdens on pastoralists, increase in animal mortality, decline in herd sizes, and loss of livelihoods (see PEACE project in Afghanistan case study below).

Moreover, the expansion of agriculture into grazing lands, coupled with the erosion of secondary tenure resource rights<sup>4</sup> for pastoralists, has [triggered new conflicts and aggravated existing](#) ones. Pastoralist-farmer conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR), which is often rooted in issues of resource access, has made it difficult for USAID to develop a formal process for engaging with pastoralists to address needs. As seen in Niger and Burkina Faso, access traditional [or informal justice mechanisms](#) can help reduce conflict between herders and farmers, however, local systems of justice often tend to [favor the farmers over the herders](#). Movement of pastoralists and especially in conflict-ridden areas makes it difficult to meet with stakeholders at different levels of pastoralist governance structures. Leaders are not necessarily fixed and identifying who the leaders are can be difficult, especially in conflict areas.

More research is needed to better understand conflict dynamics, including how [conflicts](#) (and other challenges [e.g., climate change]) are shifting pastoralist migration routes. The [complex relationships in pastoral areas](#) among conflict drivers, such as weak land governance, resource scarcity, climate change dynamics, and violent extremism, limits the ability of USAID and implementing partners to understand or direct influence on the drivers of conflict. This makes it difficult to fully understand the degree to which a driver of conflict is strictly resource-based or instead related to other grievances or influenced by extremist or militant groups or other predatory actors.

As it has for other Indigenous Peoples, conflict has often contributed to increased marginalization and discrimination of pastoralists. Conflicts have also in some countries [hardened public discourse](#) against pastoralists; for example in Nigeria, where farmer-herder conflict to some extent contributed to anti-pastoralist rhetoric, [anti-grazing laws](#), and the questioning of pastoralists' citizenship status. The emergence of violent extremists in pastoral areas in the Sahel and other regions complicates matters and exacerbates existing tensions. In West Africa, for example, there is sometimes a misguided perception that there is a direct link between pastoralism and the spread of militant violence. This perception is inaccurate and potentially further marginalizes pastoral groups. Violent extremist organizations across the Sahel sometimes send representatives into villages to blame the Fulani for the violence, increasing instability in the region for their own purposes. Rumors often spread into the peaceful areas of the affected countries and may negatively affect ethnic relations in those areas as well. In recent years, farmer-pastoralist conflict, and the presence of violent extremists in pastoral areas, has been primarily framed [as a security issue](#), but this framing does not tell the whole story. Conflict and the rise of violent extremism are issues that interact with broader governance, political economy, and environmental challenges affecting pastoral areas.

Bearing in mind the PRO-IP Objective 2, the confluence of factors affecting conflict dynamics in pastoral areas requires donors to follow a multifaceted and integrated approach to programmatic design and implementation. The narrow focus on security issues associated with conflict and violent extremism in pastoral areas relates to a previous point made about donors needing to reduce silos and integrate approaches to address security, development, and conservation objectives simultaneously. USAID missions, in coordination with respective U.S. Embassies, can play a key role in engaging with and coordinating other development agencies to better understand and address some of these challenges associated with conflict in pastoral areas.

To further Objective 1 of the PRO-IP, “[Do No Harm](#)” principles must be adopted when designing and implementing programs in conflict-affected pastoral areas. It is important to bear in mind, even though land titling and other forms of rights formalization are advocated for, that some donor projects can trigger additional conflict risks if not carefully tailored to the local context. For example, some scholars and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on West Africa have perceived [land titling programs as triggering violent farmer-herder conflicts](#). Land formalization in pastoral regions can

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<sup>4</sup> Secondary tenure rights “[allow people to use property belonging to another for specific purposes or limited periods of time](#)” (e.g., grazing rights).

sometimes backfire or at a minimum benefit only wealthy and politically connected pastoralists. In some cases, land titling and other programs contributed to the closing of common properties used by pastoralists for traditional grazing or [benefited sedentary farmers instead of pastoralists](#) who have lost secondary rights to water points and grazing lands.

USAID implementers including Search for Common Ground have found that community-based solutions reduce triggers for violence, improve security outcomes, and lead to more targeted responses to violence. Search for Common Ground, with support from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, plans to release [a multi-sectoral toolkit on effective approaches](#) to transforming farmer-herder conflicts. Invisible Children has worked with partners to establish an [Early Warning Network](#) to monitor the emergence of conflicts involving pastoralist groups in CAR and the Democratic Republic of Congo. As discussed below (see case study on the Afghanistan PEACE project), stakeholder engagement, following a two-step approach of (1) providing conflict resolution training to pastoralists and other stakeholders on both sides of the conflict and then (2) facilitating dialogues between these stakeholders, was key to resolving longstanding conflicts that threatened the safety and wellbeing of pastoralists, enabling them to access migratory routes without being threatened or killed.

### **Donors often face challenges associated with promoting gender equality and social inclusion within the customary governance institutions of pastoralist communities.**

[Pastoral women](#) play pivotal roles in engaging in conservation, resource management, cultural activities, and socioeconomic activities, ensuring their households' basic needs are met. However, their values and responsibilities are not always recognized. Pastoral women face challenges related to owning property and participating in decision-making processes. Increasing awareness of women's concerns, values, and inputs as pastoralists can strengthen women's roles in pastoral communities, thus reducing their vulnerability to external shocks.

Patriarchal, gerontocratic customary norms sometimes make it hard to conduct gender mainstreaming in pastoral contexts and communal land areas and engage directly with women and youth in pastoral communities. In some contexts, pastoralists' cultural norms challenge the notion that women should be represented on community committees and reinforce men's roles in governance and community leadership (see USAID Land Administration to Nurture Development [LAND] project case study below).

More research is needed to examine the [changing nature of gender roles](#) in pastoral areas. Women and men typically have different priorities regarding pastoral livelihoods' varying objectives for raising livestock, roles, and responsibilities, and differing abilities to access information and technologies to increase livestock production. Additionally, fragmentation of rangelands and sedentarization of pastoralists [affects women and men differently](#), since in some contexts women tend to focus more on household welfare and livestock's contribution to nutrition, while men focus more on livestock production and income generation.

[Studies](#) have shown that the benefits of increased livestock production and market integration tend to favor men over women, but women's livestock marketing groups have in some cases [shown greater success](#) as compared to formal livestock marketing cooperatives led by men. To address these challenges, donors need to fully understand and address gender issues in pastoral areas following a gender-sensitive approach to programmatic design and implementation. [IFAD](#), [FAO](#), and [other organizations](#) have developed useful guidance on engaging pastoral women.

### **Natural disasters and climate change pose significant challenges for pastoralists and donor programming in pastoralist areas.**

Natural disasters, droughts, and climate change create challenges for both pastoralists and USAID programming, especially when they trigger disruptions in livestock production caused by collapses in

pasture and water availability, economic livelihoods, access to markets, land, and resource governance systems, among others. For example, as discussed in the Lessons Learned section below on the USAID [PRIME project](#), severe droughts and associated impacts on pastures and water points create serious challenges for pastoralists as well as pastoral-focused programs. PRIME found that droughts and other extreme weather events trigger challenges that include loss of livestock, income, and resources, as well as increased competition over pasture and water that can sometimes erupt into full-blown conflict.

When it comes to responding to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, donor agencies need to intervene early in the disaster cycle. While there are four phases of disaster—(1) the alert phase; (2) the alarm phase; (3) the emergency phase; and (4) the recovery phase—the need for evidence to inform interventions means that USAID tends to intervene at the emergency phase, at which point many livestock are already dead or dying. [Livestock Early Warning Systems](#) and tools/technologies can be helpful in understanding and mitigating the risks to pastoral communities posed by disasters and extreme weather events (see, for example, the Netherlands Space Agency’s Sustainable Technology Adaptation for Mali’s Pastoralists [STAMP] project’s [use of tools in Mali](#)). Readers can refer to the Leveraging Tradition and Science in Disaster Risk Reduction in Mongolia-2 (LTS2 – Mongolia) project case study, which highlights USAID-funded livestock early warning systems implemented in Mongolia.

### **Pastoralists often face difficulties linking to markets and adopting market-oriented approaches to economic livelihood activities.**

Related to Objectives 3 and 4 of the PRO-IP, USAID often works with pastoralists to link to local markets to increase incomes and improve livelihoods. Pastoralists often have [sophisticated, long-distance, and opportunistic transhumance](#) systems by which they herd livestock to urban markets. However, their abilities to link to markets are often hindered by security issues, [disruptions in livestock corridors](#), or difficulties accessing water points and prime grazing areas. As demonstrated by the USAID [PRIME project](#) in Ethiopia and the USAID [Kenya Resilience and Economic Growth in Arid Lands-Accelerated Growth \(REGAL-AG\)](#) project (see case studies below), there can also be challenges related to building pastoralist capacity for market engagement, strengthening market systems, and improving productivity and competitiveness of livestock products. Although the PRIME project found that pastoralists have a long history of market engagement, literacy remains a challenge, and middlemen, including those that fatten livestock, sometimes fix prices for personal gain, and otherwise disrupt pastoralist livelihoods and abilities to generate income. PRIME facilitated a range of strategic approaches that enabled pastoralists to cut out the middlemen and increase incomes, among other successes listed below.

The issues of overgrazing and the social dynamics around herd sizes can contribute to challenges affecting market orientation, economic development, and other aspects of donor programming in pastoral areas. Pastoralists in many countries occupy marginal agricultural lands and rangelands and



**Strengthening Value Chains in Ethiopia.** An Ethiopian camel driver leads a caravan to the nearest market hub, multiple days away on foot. For pastoralists spread across Ethiopia’s Afar, Somali, and Tigray regions, camels are often an integral part of life, not only as pack animals but also a source of nutrition. In 2013, USAID launched the Camel Milk Value Chain Development project to improve the entire camel milk value chain, from birth to market, in Ethiopia’s Somali region.

PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN DWYER / THE CLOUDBURST GROUP

grasslands with limited productivity potential. Overgrazing and soil degradation have further reduced the productivity of rangelands, affecting livestock production, market orientation, and economic livelihood opportunities. In some pastoral cultures, men's social prestige relies on the number of livestock he owns and thus discourages market sales of animals. This, in turn, leads to increasing herd sizes on smaller and increasingly degraded lands. Furthermore, conflicts across several regions have reduced movement between grazing areas and contributed to overgrazing in pastures with a high concentration of animals. Development programming needs to tackle the dynamics of overgrazing and the social prestige around livestock ownership to understand how to approach market sales with their target group.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Case Study I:** [USAID Land Administration to Nurture Development \(LAND\) program in Ethiopia \(2013–2018\)](#)

### **Program Overview:**

- LAND supported the Oromia and Afar National Regional States (NRSs) to define the land rights of pastoral communities, register and certify their landholdings, and define the roles and responsibilities of government and pastoral customary institutions to administer land rights and manage rangeland resources.
- The project focused on (1) strengthening rural land governance of pastoral populations; and (2) surveying and demarcating communal lands for registration and certification of pastoral landholdings.

### **Implementation Challenges:**

- LAND's initial design reflected an inadequate understanding of the social structures of pastoralist communities and limited knowledge on pastoral livestock and resource management systems.
- LAND hosted consultations with government officials and community representatives; however, there was some contentiousness around how to define community boundaries.
- In Ethiopia, methodologies for demarcating, adjudicating, and registering pastoral communal landholdings had not been tested before the implementation of LAND. There was a general lack of consensus among Ethiopians regarding what form the certification of pastoral land rights should take.
- Insufficient knowledge and understanding of pastoral livelihoods complicated by community distrust of outsiders made it difficult to expedite interventions or keep to work plan schedules. Government officials often lacked awareness regarding property rights of pastoralists, particularly in Afar (NRS). The project team worked in a political environment where many government officials assume open rangeland belongs to the government as opposed to pastoralists. Many officials expressed reluctance when asked whether they would cede control of large tracts of land to pastoral communities.
- Community cultural norms often challenged the notion that women should be represented on community committees. This made it difficult to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming in pastoral contexts and communal land areas.

### **Successes:**

- LAND facilitated studies on customary natural resource management and governance systems in Afar and Oromia NRSs. LAND supported Oromia NRS to register the land rights of communal pastoral lands and issue certificates of landholding.
- LAND established and trained pastoral advisory committees (PACs) and pastoral land adjudication committees (PLACs). LAND also conducted extensive awareness raising, consultation meetings, and validation workshops in addition to community meetings.

- LAND prepared an operational manual for surveying, mapping, and registering pastoral land and supplied regional, zonal, and woreda governments with surveying and office equipment.
- LAND supported the development of regulations and operational manuals for surveying, mapping, and registering pastoral land. LAND solicited inputs from women and vulnerable groups within pastoralist groups and helped ensure their interests are accounted within pastoral governance structures. LAND also helped strengthen pastoral community land governance entities (CLGEs) and helped ensure they are more democratic, transparent and accountable.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to pastoral land rights certification. Each pastoral group has its own diverse cultural, ecological, and economic conditions. Understanding these conditions is a prerequisite for adapting standardized technical approaches.
- Confronted by political vacuums and weakened customary governance, the creation of PACs and CLGEs helped to mobilize pastoral populations and develop governance mechanisms. The CLGEs, supported by guidelines and bylaws, helped to improve governance and served as the legal entity for the pastoral community's certification of grazing areas
- The project learned that it is important to avoid breaking down rangelands held as common property by pastoralist groups into smaller units, to build upon existing customary institutions wherever possible, and avoid establishing new institutions.
- Political will requires significant cultivation and continued support; governments must take ownership of processes and be open to change. Overcoming misunderstandings on the viability of pastoral livelihoods was essential to change minds and generate political will.
- The success of LAND was contingent on the ability of communities and officials to understand the interests of one another, allow time for processing information, and negotiate sustainable outcomes. Consultations were essential throughout the life of the project to ensure understanding of perspectives and positions of all parties and to reach the final negotiated outcome.

### **Case Study 2: [Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion \(PRIME\) in Ethiopia](#) (2012–2019)**

#### **Program Overview:**

- PRIME worked to strengthen market systems where pastoralists and those transitioning out of pastoralism operate so that they can earn higher incomes and be more resilient to climate change shocks that exacerbate chronic poverty and recurrent food insecurity.
- Project activities aimed at improving productivity and competitiveness of livestock and livestock products, enhancing adaption of climate change via natural resource management, and strengthening alternative livelihoods for households, among others.
- PRIME was implemented in 46 *woredas* (districts) in the drylands of the Somali, Afar, and Oromia regional states of Ethiopia.

#### **Implementation Challenges:**

- A severe drought in the project's focus areas triggered challenges including loss of livestock and income from agricultural activities as well as a reduction in veterinary services.



- The drought not only severely limited household income and consumption of highly nutritious foods (e.g., milk), but it also had cascading impacts on local economies, triggering high levels of unemployment.
- Increased competition for pasture and water in PRIME's focus areas led to conflict in several places.
- Pastoralist communities often lacked the skills and capacities needed to effectively link to markets.
- It took time for the Government of Ethiopia to establish a clear vision for the socio-economic development of pastoralists.

#### **Successes:**

- The PRIME project strengthened pastoralists' resilience to withstand shocks and stresses from climate change through market linkages.
- The average household in both PRIME areas and in all of the pastoralist status groups saw a modest increase in their wealth, as measured by ownership of assets. PRIME increased household income by 78%, greatly surpassing the goal of a 10% increase in all areas.
- Despite record droughts, PRIME-targeted households showed only a 4% decline in food security, compared to 30% in other households.
- Despite the extreme droughts, PRIME surpassed targets for increases in incomes and the use of animal health services.
- PRIME supported the improvement in dietary diversity for children and pregnant and lactating women in target pastoralist communities.
- PRIME identified and helped to revitalize the centuries-old Rangeland Council system and helped rehabilitate more than 42,000 hectares of rangelands.
- PRIME interventions helped increase the use of animal health services from private veterinary pharmacies to 22% of households (5% over the target of 17%).
- 39,459 pastoralist households were supported to apply new technologies or management practices to maintain healthier livestock and pastoral practices. Additionally, 5,270 pastoralist households received vouchers for veterinary products to protect herds during the drought.
- Women's participation in natural resource management committees and the growth of village-level savings and loan association groups, whose members are mostly women, played a significant role in increasing women's participation in decision making in their households.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- Greater impacts for pastoralists can be achieved when interventions from multiple sectors are combined than when they are implemented separately. The PRIME Endline Report found that comprehensive, multi-sectoral programming (in this case, USAID PRIME interventions were linked with those of the USAID LAND project [discussed above]) optimized resilience impacts for pastoralists.
- The positive resilience impacts were brought about by strengthening a wide range of resilience capacities spanning beyond the economic to include human and social capital, psycho-social

capacities, safety nets, disaster risk reduction, and access to markets, services, and infrastructure.

- The sharp deterioration of food security and resilience capacities of pastoralists in Borena could have been prevented with earlier information on food security trends, where interventions were concentrated, and which are likely to have the greatest impact. To leverage optimal impacts in shock contexts, conduct interim monitoring and evaluation, and use the information gained for adaptive management.

### **Case Study 3: [Leveraging Tradition and Science in Disaster Risk Reduction in Mongolia-2 \(LTS2 - Mongolia\)](#) (2015–2019)**

#### **Program Overview:**

- Starting in June 2013, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) supported the Leveraging Tradition and Science in Disaster Risk Reduction in Mongolia (LTS) project, which evaluated existing disaster risk reduction disaster management systems. The project also examined herders' accessibility to disaster-related information and prevention messages and identification of potential information tools.
- The project trained local administrative units in emergency management planning and tested a mobile messaging platform, called an Advanced Weather Information Service (AWI), that enabled herding communities to access, interpret, and apply weather forecast information to their management practices.
- The LTS project also developed management tools for managing risks of extreme weather events such as severe winters in which thousands of livestock are lost due to cold and starvation.
- Expanding upon the results of LTS, the LTS2 project focused on accomplishing four goals: (1) further institutionalization of AWI; (2) improved use of rangeland carrying capacity information distributed through SMS for herders and local communities; (3) improved rangeland management/planning at the aimag and soum level to prevent and mitigate dzud/drought; and (4) the introduction of local communities to sustainable mitigation activities based on Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) to address effects of dzud on individuals, households, and local and rural communities.
- Since the system launched in June 2016, for two consecutive years, SMS usage has peaked during the winter and early spring seasons, which means people are using the information seasonally, especially for dzud or harsh winter conditions, empowering them to make informed decisions in the face of natural disasters.

#### **Implementation Challenges:**

- While developing the SMS weather system for herders, the program faced challenges determining which sources should be used for weather forecast and forage information, where the system server and database should be located, and what syntax/content to provide when sending SMS messages to herders.
- When the project first began, there was limited coordination and no clearly defined goals on reaching end-users. In this context, information and knowledge products are being produced, but they are not reaching local communities, herder households, local administrators, and first responders who can utilize such necessary information.

### **Successes:**

- Herders continue to use AWI to plan their daily work including managing herds, cutting hay, setting up camps, moving to new pastures, shearing wool, etc.
- The project's grants program benefitted herders by supporting repairs and construction of wells and dipping baths and provided training in veterinary laboratory techniques and vet portable fences in rural communities. As a result of these activities, thousands of herders and livestock were able to access safe drinking water drawn from the rebuilt wells. The grants also supported veterinary corrals that were used to assist veterinarians in vaccinating over two million heads of livestock from over 7,000 herder households.
- The project developed a training curriculum and lesson books focused on [LEGS](#). Following this curriculum, the project trained and built the capacity of herders.
- The project provided rural herders in 91 bags of 17 soums with access to 12 kinds of real-time information on weather and pasture via SMS.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- The use of traditional, indigenous knowledge and science of pastoralists was critical to the development of effective tools that enabled better information sharing and data collection that helped pastoralists manage disaster risks.
- The project was praised for its important role in providing lesson books and other information to young and inexperienced herders. These lesson books incorporated best practices into a single book with simple language that is easy to understand for herder communities.
- The LEGS lesson books and training proved effective, and the project was praised for consolidating LEGS information into a single book with digestible language to be utilized by herder communities. The project provided LEGS tools and methodology to 171 soums of Mongolia through the aimag and soum level training. Consequently, training participants have revised soum disaster plans by using LEGS tools with the active participation of local communities from all over Mongolia, resulting in 100 ready-to-use action plans that incorporate LEGS interventions.
- As a result of attending the project's training, herders planned early for harsh winters and understood that having a smaller number of high-quality livestock yields better financial outcomes than a large number of low-quality livestock. They also understood the importance of sharing early warning information and the pivotal role that community participation can play during the early warning and early recovery stages.

### **Case Study 4: [Afghanistan Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation, and Capacity Enhancement \(PEACE\) project](#) (2006–2012)**

#### **Program Overview:**

- The project aimed to improve extensive livestock production in Afghanistan and focused on institutionalizing within the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) rangeland management tools and approaches that deal with the risk inherent in livestock operations for migratory herders in Afghanistan.
- The project developed a Livestock Early Warning System (LEWS) to predict where annual forage occurred, a Nutritional Profiling System (NIRS) technology to provide critical data for the

operation, and a Livestock Management Information System (LMIS) to help herders efficiently market their products.

- Resolving conflicts along pastoralist corridors became a primary focus in the final 2.5 years of the project. The project built capacities of government employees at the Independent General Directorate of Kuchi and local leaders (herders and villagers) to mitigate and resolve conflicts.

#### **Implementation Challenges:**

- Security issues and conflicts over mobility and resource access prevented the movement of livestock between winter and summer rangelands in Afghanistan.
- The war in Afghanistan, the presence of militant groups, and other social factors contributed to extreme distrust between herders and villagers that further limited mobility of pastoralists.
- It was difficult to engage and build the capacity of MAIL officials given the limited capacities, lack of strong leadership at most levels, lack of incentives, and an unclear agenda for helping pastoralists.
- The project faced challenges associated with building government capacity and sustainability due to the high turnover rate of MAIL employees.

#### **Successes:**

- Using participatory methods and conflict mediation training techniques involving pastoralists and other stakeholders, the project was successful in resolving long-standing conflicts that existed on pastoralists' migratory herding routes, enabling safe access of pastures for pastoralists.
- MAIL staff in Kabul and at provincial levels were trained to collect rangeland information and on how to use the LEWS.
- MAIL staff can now use LEWS to predict the location, quantity, and quality of forage available so that migratory herders can mitigate the risks associated with unpredictable environments.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

- Pastoralists play a critical role in Afghanistan's economy yet continue to be marginalized as a result of prejudice, mistrust, and other factors. Long-term commitment and support are needed to effectively work with government agencies focused on rangeland and livestock issues. More support for Kuchi leaders is needed so they can address the needs of pastoralist populations, especially given these populations' low levels of literacy and education.
- Capacity-building efforts enabled conflict resolution when participants took responsibility for solving their conflicts rather than having an outsider dictate the results.
- Coordination with government and local NGO partners was essential to identify specific needs of pastoralists, locate appropriate participants, and tailor training and messaging to ensure cultural appropriateness.

#### **Case Study 5: [Kenya Resilience and Economic Growth in Arid Lands- Accelerated Growth \(REGAL-AG\)](#) (2012–2017)**

##### **Program Overview:**

- REGAL-AG aimed to increase economic growth in selected rural communities, including pastoralists in Kenya, by building a more inclusive and competitive livestock value chain.

- The project fostered a vibrant livestock value chain that generates opportunities for those all along the value chain, including pastoralist livestock keepers.
- The project improved market access, which entailed livestock market construction and the provision of grants to businesses looking to start or expand in products or services related to the livestock value chain.
- The project also provided policy advice and best practice guides for topics such as animal health and market management.

### ***Implementation Challenges:***

- Linking livestock marketing associations (LMAs) to markets and ensuring LMAs have access to loans proved difficult. This challenge arose from the fact that LMAs often did not have enough collateral to be supported by financial institutions. That said, the project was successful in establishing partnerships with livestock entrepreneurs and financial institutions.
- Lack of trust between LMAs and market actors negatively impacted livestock market operations. To address this mistrust, the project facilitated stakeholder dialogues to promote shared understandings, but this facilitation process proved slow and tedious.
- Lack of access to artificial insemination services to boost the breed of good dairy cows was a challenge faced by pastoralist livestock producers, which directly affected the project's supported entrepreneurs that engage in milk processing operations.

### ***Successes:***

- The project increased the availability and affordability of animal health inputs and services needed to help pastoralists benefit from market participation and worked with livestock keepers to help them reduce their vulnerability.
- 7,436 livestock keepers have access to animal health services and inputs through a customer-oriented animal health provision model;
- 1,475 individuals received short-term livestock sector productivity training.
- 2,100 individuals have applied improved technologies or management practices related to livestock productions.
- 620 job opportunities were created through livestock market construction work.
- Fifteen entrepreneurs and 22 agro-vets and veterinarians were selected to receive business development grants.
- The project provided technical assistance to help pastoralists establish livestock strategies.

### ***Lessons Learned***

- It can take time and extensive consultation to build trust between LMAs and other market actors such as market institutions. An incremental approach to stakeholder dialogues is needed to building trusting relationships between market actors.
- Learning tours were an effective strategy facilitated by the project that enabled LMAs to transfer knowledge, more effectively collect revenue, and strengthen their skills in market operations.

- Learning tours and the knowledge shared through these tours also contributed to more harmonized relationships between LMAs, county government revenue collectors, and other market actors.

## BEST PRACTICES

This section provides best practices for operationalizing the PRO-IP's five operating principles (shown in Box 4).

### Identifying pastoralist groups.

Given the variation in pastoralist groups across regions, appropriate approaches to identifying them vary and need to be tailored and specific to the particular area. USAID staff should avoid relying on broad categorizations and generalizations, since various groups present in pastoral areas often have divergent livelihood and development needs.

In addition to using this guidance document, the PRO-IP identification criteria, and other resources (e.g., those listed in Box 3) while also speaking with pastoralists' leaders, organizations, community members, and relevant subject-matter experts can help inform the identification process. The Challenges section above identifies key issues that are relevant to the identification process. Additionally, in line with the PRO-IP, it may be worthwhile to consult and analyze the needs of stakeholders from inside and outside of pastoralist areas that may be affected positively or negatively by relevant USAID development outcomes, or who have an interest in or can influence the outcomes. It may be useful to also review and analyze the various legal and policy frameworks applicable at local, national, and regional levels as part of the identification process. As noted above, understanding vested interests, the history of grievances, conflict dynamics, and power relations of various actors present in pastoral areas is relevant to the identification process.



Cattle camp outside of Bor, Jonglei County, South Sudan.

PHOTO CREDIT: MEGAN HUTH, TETRA TECH

including programs that strengthen land and resource rights, help pastoralists link to market, improve livestock health and rangeland management, resolve conflicts in pastoral areas, and develop LEWS and other tools for monitoring the effects of climate change on livestock and pasture resources. Other opportunities associated with pastoralism and pastoral livelihoods include programs focusing on tourism and [conservation](#) in rangeland areas.

As described in the Challenges section above, challenges often include identifying and engaging pastoralists, supporting women's empowerment within pastoralist societies, ensuring pastoralists benefit

### BOX 4. THE PRO-IP'S FIVE OPERATING PRINCIPLES

1. Identify Indigenous Peoples.
2. Analyze Indigenous Peoples' opportunities and challenges.
3. Engage Indigenous Peoples.
4. Safeguard Indigenous Peoples' rights and wellbeing.
5. Establish partnerships with Indigenous Peoples.

### Analyzing pastoralist opportunities and challenges.

Traditional skills and knowledge of pastoralists have been and continue to be vital to livestock and agricultural production, global food security, innovations in health and medicine, conservation and management of the environment, and maintenance of resilient and diverse societies. As stated in the PRO-IP, USAID staff should determine opportunities for pastoralist involvement, including (i) how and when to engage pastoralists during the program cycle; and (ii) which issues, development objectives, projects, and/or activities are most relevant or them. As the Lessons Learned section highlighted, there is a wide array of activities that USAID can support to foster pastoralists' Journey to Self-Reliance,

from donor programming, ensuring state actors respect and protect pastoralists, addressing conflict in pastoral areas, building pastoralists resilience to natural disasters and climate change, and linking pastoralists to markets. These high-level challenges are illustrative, and there are likely others. To better understand the various issues relevant to pastoralist groups, the PRO-IP recommends that USAID staff conduct [Inclusive Development Analyses \(IDAs\)](#). IDAs and other relevant assessments are critical for engaging pastoralists in a culturally appropriate manner, and for pursuing participatory approaches to designing projects and activities that take the political economy of a given group and location into account.

### **Engaging pastoralists.**

Over the years, pastoralist experts have made significant progress in developing the concept of participation and scaling up the level of participation in relief and development programs targeting pastoralists from co-option to social mobilization. Based on experience, it is clear that talking directly with pastoralist groups and learning about their traditional knowledge can help achieve various development outcomes, such as livestock disease prevention, rangeland management, economic growth, increased agricultural productivity, and others. According to the PRO-IP, informal conversations followed by structured engagements are important to establish “a two-way flow of information that facilitates mutual understanding about potential programming.” Consulting directly with pastoralist groups and leveraging their traditional knowledge can help USAID staff further Development Objectives 1 and 3 in the PRO-IP.

Engaging pastoralist groups is a slow process requiring extensive consultation. The consultation process needs to be harmonized with existing legal frameworks and unwritten customary norms and practices. Participatory, consultative approaches involving pastoralist communities should be followed to understand their valuable knowledge, helping USAID reevaluate and iteratively adjust approaches to context. Different methods of engagement need to be developed and organically formulated on a case-by-case basis. Across parts of the Sahel, for example, various communities living in the same place have different livelihood practices; thus, engagement and associated interventions need to be tailored to each specific livelihood practice. See Box 5 for illustrative guidance from FAO regarding participatory approaches to pastoralist engagement.

#### **BOX 5. FAO'S PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO ENGAGING PASTORALISTS**

FAO Guidelines on "[Improving governance of pastoral lands](#)" establishes key steps in participatory processes:

1. Preparing the ground;
2. Setting the framework;
3. Participatory situational analysis;
4. Deliberation process; and
5. Learning from the process and improving commitment to participation (evaluation) (see page 52 of hyperlinked FAO guidance for more information).

As indicated above, pastoralist groups are far from homogenous. Moreover, pastoralist groups are organized at different levels within various countries but often lack effective political power and support to defend their interests, especially at the local level where resources are governed. Understanding the historical context, structures pastoralist governance institutions, and intricacies of pastoral systems are pivotal to effective engagement.

### **Safeguarding pastoralist rights and wellbeing.**

As stated by the PRO-IP, sustained engagement and consultation are critical to identify potential impacts of projects and activities and safeguard against potential harm. The PRO-IP also establishes a step-by-step process for safeguarding Indigenous Peoples that can be applied in pastoral contexts. The PRO-IP recommends that USAID staff and/or partners first carry out written analyses of potential impacts, including social impact assessments or questions on potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples in an initial environmental examination. Measures for mitigating potential adverse impacts should be developed in consultation with pastoralists. Where pastoralists have a collective attachment to project areas and





**Ziana from Maendeleo Women's Group.** The Feed the Future Tanzania NAFKA II Activity works with women's groups to build members' capacities in record keeping, gender and leadership, and the sharing of good agricultural practices and post-harvest handling techniques. Ziana Suleman Gazabeki is a member of one such group, the Maendeleo Women's Group, of which she is currently the treasurer.  
PHOTO CREDIT: NEVIL JACKSON

there are (1) risks of possible impacts on human rights, livelihoods, and culture; (2) potential adverse impacts on pastoralist' land and territories, natural resources, or sacred sites; and (3) threats that might result in physical relocation, then USAID OUs should seek the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of pastoralists (see FPIC guidance on p. 21 of the PRO-IP). Information gathered through FPIC and due diligence processes can be used to assess, monitor, and mitigate any risks of [potential adverse impacts](#) on pastoralists,<sup>5</sup> as well as reputational risks to USAID and the US government.

As highlighted above in the challenges section, ensuring "Do No Harm" principles are adopted in pastoral areas can be challenging, particularly in conflict-affected areas. The Afghanistan PEACE project case study in the Lessons Learned section illustrated the effectiveness of conflict

mediation training and stakeholder dialogues that engage pastoralists, farmers, and other stakeholders in and around pastoral areas. The European Commission Humanitarian AID Office has also published [guidance](#) based on pastoral-focused project experience in semi-arid regions of Kenya that provides a detailed "Do No Harm" framework that can be applied in conflict-affected pastoral settings. Moreover, Collaborative Learning Projects' [Do No Harm Handbook](#) may also be instructive.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel, but rather to build upon existing initiatives when it comes to developing peace and conflict resolution processes in pastoral areas. For example, governments and donors like USAID have often promoted the [establishment of Pastoral Codes](#) and other legal instruments that have proven effective in clarifying pastoral rights and addressing conflict in pastoral areas. Engaging subject matter experts, such as those from the [Tufts University Feinstein Center](#), who have dealt with these issues for the past few decades may help USAID staff understanding how best to address conflict. In eastern [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), [local Peace Committees have demonstrated notable](#) success in managing tensions and disputes between farmers and pastoralists. Through its outreach with pastoral communities, the Sam Ouandja Peace Committee has also facilitated dialogue between community members in nearby Yangou Wassa, CAR, and Sudanese pastoralists who seasonally pass through the community. Historically, there

#### BOX 6: RECENT SUCCESSES IN ETHIOPIA RELATED TO PASTORALIST PROGRAMMING

With support from USAID and other donors, the Council of Ministers of Ethiopia approved a National Pastoral Development Policy in February 2020 that recognizes the rights of pastoralists and their customary institutions and sets a vision, strategy, and programming framework for the resilient development of people in the pastoral areas. The Policy supports an integrated approach to development programming and aims to build the resilience capacities of pastoralists and other livelihood groups in the pastoral areas. To help implement this Policy, the USAID/Ethiopia Mission continues to develop and adopt conflict-sensitive, multi-sectoral approaches to programmatic design and implementation to promote peacebuilding and address the interrelated development challenges affecting pastoralist in Ethiopia.

<sup>5</sup> One example of projects that may have potentially adverse impacts on pastoralists is irrigated agriculture projects in low-lying areas that deprive livestock of access to water and some dry season grazing areas.

were tensions between the groups due to damage that herds inflicted on crops. However, through sensitizations facilitated by the Peace Committee, the groups identified strategies to resolve disputes and mitigate conflicts, such as paying for damage to crops. Such efforts can help prevent minor disputes over resources from sparking more intensive and violent conflict.

**Establish partnerships with pastoralists.**

As highlighted in the Lessons Learned section, it can take time to build trusting relationships with pastoralist groups and fully understand their development priorities. Holding a series of face-to-face meetings, including informal discussions and structured consultations, is critical to establishing trust and partnerships with pastoralists. Per the PRO-IP's guidance, a true partnership with pastoralists means that they have genuine decision-making authority and serve as equals in the design of a project or activity, as well as its implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. As stated in the PRO-IP, partnerships can include engagement and co-creation with pastoralists, including through pastoralist advocacy groups, associations, or other representative organizations, in all stages of the process to design projects and activities. Establishing meaningful partnerships with pastoralists can help advance their Journey to Self-Reliance, enhance their ability to promote their rights, determine their own priorities, and otherwise further the objectives established in the PRO-IP.