



Tool I-1

Guiding principles for community rangeland governance

November 2018

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Objective

To assist personnel from county government and other facilitating organizations to appreciate the fundamental principles for governance of community rangelands

Anticipated output

Personnel from county government, nongovernment organizations and other facilitating organizations assist communities to strengthen the First Leg of rangeland management—building the capacity of their democratic governance structures and decision-making processes

Participants in this activity

Personnel from county government and/or other facilitating organizations

When to use this tool

This tool describes principles that are important throughout the entire participatory rangeland management (PRM) process. However, it will be particularly important at step two of the PRM process—setting up or strengthening rangeland management institutions. (See Tool G-2 for a description of the stages and steps in PRM.)

Introduction

The establishment and/or strengthening of functional community-based rangeland management institutions is fundamental to the success of participatory rangeland management (PRM). The rangeland management institution is the body or group that will take on the roles and responsibilities of rangeland management on behalf of the community. The strength of the rangeland management institution is therefore critical. This includes strong skills and capabilities of members of the institution for carrying out the duties assigned to them.

PRM takes place primarily on community land. While in some situations there may be private land and/or public land within a rangeland unit that is being managed, normally most or all of the land will be community land. This implies that any rangeland management institution or other community organization that is making decisions about the use of that land is doing so on behalf of the entire community. The rangeland management institution is accountable to the community and representatives on the institution are there to serve the community as a whole.

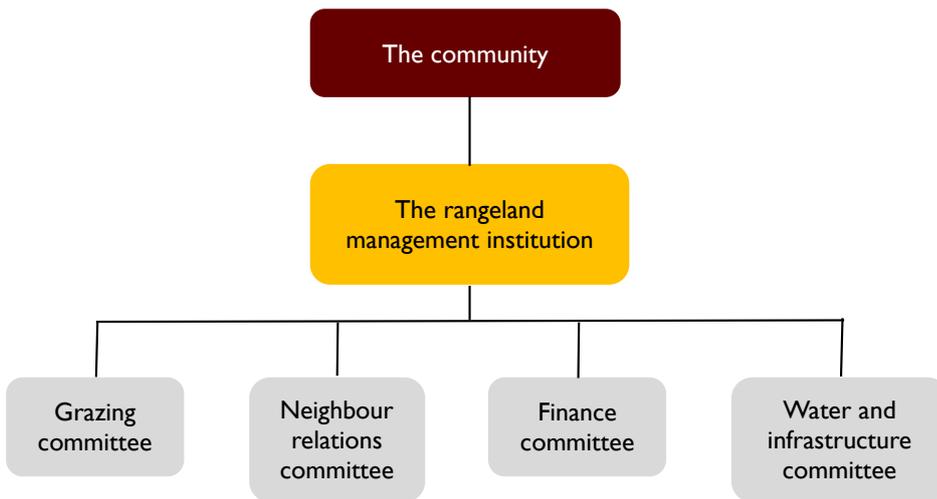
While considering representation and accountability, it can be helpful to think in terms of an organogram. With these kinds of community organizations, often you may see an organogram showing the community at the bottom. This is incorrect. An organogram gives a visual representation of lines of authority, with each group or actor in the organogram accountable to a group or actor above it. This means that the community should be at the top. The rangeland management institution reports to the community (see Figure 1-1-1). This accountability to the community often takes the form of an annual general meeting.

A related principle is inclusivity. It is important that women, youth, minority ethnic groups and other segments of the community that might be marginalized are represented in the community governance institutions and have the ability and opportunity to express their views. When a variety of perspectives are able to inform the community's collective decision-making processes, it enriches the decision making. A simple example is the creation of grazing plans and rules. If these are developed solely by elders without the participation of young people who do most of the actual herding work, the plans and rules may be unrealistic or may not be supported by those young herders. Inclusivity is also a question of fairness.

Fundamental principles for governance of community rangelands

- The primary right to manage rangelands on community land belongs to communities.
- PRM is built on a foundation of democratic and accountable community governance structures and processes. This includes some kind of rangeland management institution which serves and is accountable to the community as a whole.
- Inclusivity is a key to both the fairness and the effectiveness of the rangeland management institution.
- The main task of PRM is to build the capacity of the rangeland management institution and related community governance processes.

Figure 1-1-1: A simplified organogram for community rangeland governance.



Another implication of the fact that the rangelands are mostly located on community land is ownership and the right to make decisions for managing the land belongs to the community; not national government, not county government, but communities. The Constitution of 2010 and the Community Land Act of 2016 make this very clear. Government has a role to play and responsibilities for oversight, regulation and promotion of the public good; but the primary responsibilities for managing community land belong to communities. The primary role of personnel from facilitating organizations is to support the community's own planning and action, not to impose ideas on the community. See Tool 4-2 for further elaboration of the relationship between PRM and the Community Land Act.

Capacity development

It is likely that the capacities of the rangeland management institutions will need to be strengthened to build the knowledge and skills required for managing the rangelands in modern times. In order to do this, facilitating organizations need to develop their own capacities and training skills in both community engagement and inclusiveness, and in promoting adaptive management of rangeland resources by a community-led management institution.

The rangeland management institution will need to build recognition and understanding of itself and its status in relation to the other institutions with which it will work. Central to its role is the ability to make decisions about rangeland management and to take action to follow up on those decisions. Good decision making will determine the success of the overall rangeland management system.

The process described above is complex. To help keep the process on track, it will be important to ensure clear communication between all parties throughout using local language and ensuring step-by-step information dissemination to all PRM parties.

Customary institutions and community rangeland governance

The rangelands have historically been managed according to customary governance systems. The advantage of working with a customary system is that it recognizes and endorses the well-established roles and rights of different members of a community. It also incorporates the existing management mechanisms that prevent overexploitation of resources and promote sustainable use and availability of resources for all community members, as well as occasional visitors. However, customary systems also have their limitations, as not all have a history of inclusiveness. Certain groups within communities may feel, and indeed be, excluded and marginalized. Support may be needed so that excluded groups can be accommodated, and/or linkages made with forums and institutions where these groups can be fully represented and involved.

References

Flintan, F. and Cullis, A. 2010. *Introductory guidelines to participatory rangeland management in pastoral areas*. Addis Ababa: Save the Children USA. Available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/99430>

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