



Tool 3-3

Negotiating reciprocal grazing agreements

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Objective

To assist neighbouring communities to negotiate when and how pastures and other resources will and will not be shared and to develop reciprocal grazing agreements.

Anticipated output

A reciprocal grazing agreement and resource use plan shared by two or more communities.

Participants in this activity

- Members of rangeland management institutions from the participating communities
- Other elders and community opinion leaders
- Government stakeholders: e.g. ward administrators, chiefs, etc.

When to use this tool

This tool relates to steps four and five of the participatory rangeland management (PRM) process—developing rangeland management plans and establishing rangeland management agreements. However, it can also be used with communities that are further along in their PRM actions as they attempt to develop healthy relations with neighbours (see Tool G-2 for a description of the stages and steps in PRM).



Introduction

The Third Leg of participatory rangeland management is based on recognizing that at times, the resources which a livestock owner needs will lie beyond the borders of his or her own community or rangeland unit. When herders bring their livestock into an area where they do not live without prior knowledge of the people who live there, it can undermine the local community's grazing plan and other rangeland management efforts and result in conflict. One approach to avoid this is to help neighbouring communities establish reciprocal grazing agreements.

This can be done at different scales. At the smallest and simplest, it can be an agreement that relates to two adjacent rangeland units. At the other end of the scale, it can involve multiple communities and rangeland units, and agreement between two or more pastoralist ethnic groups, even across international borders.

Before negotiating inter-community grazing agreements

Strategic planning for inter-community resource use and negotiation of reciprocal grazing agreements should be seen as a process rather than something that is done within a single workshop. A detailed discussion of that process can be found in *Holistic Grazing Planning and Reciprocal Grazing Agreements Approach*¹, which describes 11 steps in the overall process (see text box). This tool focuses on Steps 5–8 in that overall process and assumes that the participating communities have already gone through repeated interactions and have begun to establish mutual trust.

Reciprocal grazing agreements, which are an effective way to help prevent conflict and establish cooperative relationships between different pastoralist communities, can become even more powerful when embedded in an entire PRM process in which all four legs of rangeland management are being strengthened. In preparing to assist communities to establish grazing agreements with each other, the facilitating organization should first ensure at least:

- a. that some kind of basic democratic governance system—whether traditional or modern—is in place for each participating community (the First Leg);
- b. the participating communities have had a chance to assess their natural resources and grazing patterns and, at a minimum, have begun to discuss management (the Second Leg); and
- c. relevant government actors are aware and informed about the rangeland management institutions and rangeland management activities in each community (the Fourth Leg).

Steps in facilitating reciprocal grazing agreements

Step 1: Mobilization and sensitization of communities

Step 2: Establishment of core working groups

Step 3: Drawing of resource use maps

Step 4: Community validation of resource use maps

Step 5: Inter-community meetings

Step 6: Inter-community resource use strategic planning

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Step 7: Ratification and validation of the proposed plans elements

Step 8: Final reciprocal agreement signing

Step 9: Implementation of reciprocal grazing agreements

Step 10: Monitoring of the reciprocal agreements

Step 11: Declaration signing

Adapted from Obala et al. 2012

¹ Obala, E., Jenet, A., Garduno-Janz, F., Yusuf, L. and Craig, L. 2012. *Holistic grazing planning and reciprocal grazing agreements approach: Enhancing sustainable natural resource management in pastoralists drylands areas*. Nairobi, Kenya: International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and VSF-Germany.



In addition, the facilitating organization should normally bring together a broad cross-section of representatives from the participating communities a few times to discuss goals, problems and plans, and to reflect on patterns of herd mobility before beginning the process of actually negotiating how resources will be shared. Once this has been done, it can be helpful to do participatory mapping of conflict zones, stock routes and shared resources (see Tool 3-2).

Worksheet 3-3-1 on page 5 of this tool is a checklist to use before bringing together communities to negotiate shared grazing agreements.

Inter-community meetings

After representatives from the communities involved have met each other at least a few times; begun to establish mutual trust; reported back to their communities; and perhaps also mapped conflict areas, shared resources and stock routes, they may be ready to begin the actual process of negotiation and strategic planning for inter-community resource use. This should happen in a series of meetings. Representatives from the various communities involved should:

- identify conflict hotspots;
- identify pastures that are under-utilized because of resource-based conflict and discuss measures for preventing such conflict;
- identify pastures and other resources that will be subject to the plans, focusing particularly on those that are frequently subject to conflict;
- discuss which resources will be shared, and when and how access will be determined;
- take proposals for inter-community resource sharing back to their respective communities for review, input and endorsement;
- assemble again to harmonize the inputs from the various communities; and
- produce a final proposal for shared resource use.

See Obala et al. (2012) for a more detailed discussion of this process.

The role of the facilitating organization in this process is not to tell the communities what the agreement should look like; its role is to act as a facilitator and mediator who helps them to reach agreement with each other. In doing so, it is important to remember that each situation is different. Influenced by factors such as their unique landscapes and climatic conditions, culture and the degree of land pressure, different pastoral groups have different traditions around managing and accessing pasture. In some pastoralist traditions, grazing is essentially unrestricted and sustainability is achieved through autonomous mobility, with individual herders distributing themselves across the landscape as each seeks out grazing sites for their herd. Other pastoralist groups have few rules about access to land and grazing, but they control mobility and overgrazing through controls on access to water points. Some pastoralist communities have detailed governance and management systems with different categories of land and institutions that enforce seasonal grazing patterns and other restrictions.



These differences mean that there is no set form for a reciprocal grazing agreement. In some situations, a reciprocal grazing agreement may involve little more than a mutual agreement that herders will respect the seasonal grazing plan of the community where they are bringing their herds. A slightly more complex agreement may also include a time dimension, identifying when certain resources are open to access by anyone (such as during droughts) and when they are only to be accessed by local community members. Where traditions of land management and rangeland management are more complex, the agreement may go further and include some form of zoning and shared plans for managing and rehabilitating rangelands.

In all cases, the communities need to discuss how the agreement will be implemented and enforced, and by whom.

Inter-community strategic planning, validation and signing

Once an agreement has been reached and endorsed by the participating communities, it needs to be translated into action plans and a framework for implementation, enforcement and monitoring. One key aspect of this is regular meetings of representatives of the participating communities to review implementation of the agreement. It may also require each community to incorporate what has been agreed into their own grazing plan.

The final agreement and strategic plan then need to be validated by each of the participating communities to ensure broad ownership. The agreement can then be signed at a formal ceremony to which government officials, religious leaders and other opinion leaders are invited.



References

Obala, E., Jenet, A., Garduno-Janzen, F., Yusuf, L. and Craig, L. 2012. *Holistic grazing planning and reciprocal grazing agreements approach: Enhancing sustainable natural resource management in pastoralists drylands areas*. Nairobi, Kenya: International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and VSF-Germany.



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Worksheet 3-3-1

Preparation checklist: what needs to happen before inter-community negotiation and planning

<p>Which rangeland communities will be involved? Will the process involve planning and negotiation between two communities? Among a cluster of communities? Between entire ethnic groups?</p> <p><i>Starting small can lay a foundation later for more ambitious grazing agreements.</i></p>	
<p>Have the communities internally studied and discussed mobility and resource use patterns and related issues?</p> <p><i>Allowing communities to discuss this internally, to develop maps and to at least begin thinking about their own grazing plans before these potentially divisive issues are discussed in inter-community meetings can make the inter-community discussions less conflictive.</i></p>	
<p>Have representatives of the participating communities met together and begun to build mutual trust?</p> <p><i>Some level of trust building should precede the actual inter-community negotiation and planning.</i></p>	
<p>Are community members in general aware of the discussions with neighbouring communities?</p> <p><i>Members of the rangeland management institutions should not be pursuing grazing agreements with other communities without their own community members being aware. A strong consensus is needed within each community to allow for successful inter-community planning.</i></p>	
<p>Aside from representatives of the community rangeland management institutions, what other community opinion leaders should be involved? What other institutions and stakeholders should be involved?</p> <p><i>Identify key government actors who should be aware of any intercommunity agreements. These might include chiefs, ward administrators, officers from Kenya Wildlife Service, and others. Whenever possible, such government actors should attend some of the inter-community strategic planning activities.</i></p>	
<p>How will women be involved in the process?</p> <p><i>Proactively plan for the meaningful involvement of women in the process of negotiating, implementing and monitoring the inter-community plans and agreements.</i></p>	
<p>What maps will you need?</p> <p><i>Prepare maps of the rangeland units involved (typically printed on several A0 sheets). If there has been inter-community mapping of stock routes and rangeland resources (see Tool 3-2), those maps should be made available. However, normally it is preferable not to present such maps at the first meeting as they can become a distraction or a focal point for disagreement.</i></p>	
<p>Are you ready for follow-up actions? Does the facilitating organization have resources to support implementation of the inter-community strategic plans and reciprocal grazing agreements?</p> <p><i>Plan and budget for the facilitating organization's involvement beyond the stage of negotiating agreements.</i></p>	



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Photo credit: ILRI/Fiona Flintan

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