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## IMPROVING SECURITY OF RIGHTS TO RESOURCES THROUGH PARTICIPATORY RANGELAND MANAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIA

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**Abstract:**

The pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia cover around 65% of the country's surface area. Rangeland resources are managed under collective common property arrangements, which are increasingly coming under pressure from both internal and external forces of change including alternative, but not necessarily 'appropriate', land uses.

Thus it has become imperative to more formally recognise and protect customary rangeland management institutions and arrangements, bearing in mind that there may be a need for some adaptation to current and future socio-economic, environmental and political contexts.

In response, a process of participatory rangeland management (PRM) has been developed, both to improve the management of rangeland resources and their security of access for local rangeland users. The USAID-funded PRIME project has played a key role in this development, up-scaling the approach across pastoral areas in Oromia, Afar and Somali regional states. This paper describes the experience of PRIME with PRM, the challenges faced and opportunities arising. It concludes by discussing the relevance of PRM as an approach for improving the management of and security of access to rangeland resources in Ethiopia, and beyond.

**Key Words:** Participatory rangeland management, PRM, Ethiopia, Pastoralist, Land tenure, Planning, Mapping, Customary Institutions, Governance,

## **I. BACKGROUND**

The pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia cover between 60 to 65% or around 78 million hectares of the country's surface area. Low, variable rainfall means that rangelands, including extensive drylands, predominate. Pastoralism tracks and utilises the resulting patchily distributed water and other rangeland resources, and as such is the most suitable land use system for the majority of these areas. Rangeland resources are managed under collective common property arrangements. The pastoral community has managed their rangelands through their customary system for centuries. Such deep-rooted rangeland management tradition follows an ecosystem approach, which primarily depends on the seasonal availability of pasture and water. Customary institutions have traditionally managed access and protection of these resources, but in some places the authority and ability of institutions to carry out these roles is being challenged by both natural and human-induced forces.

Alternative and often 'inappropriate', land uses, such as felling trees for charcoal making and rain-fed cropping with low probability successful harvest, are threatening the sustainability of rangeland resources – land uses often developed without an understanding of rangeland systems including their integrated and holistic nature. Tenure security in the rangelands, including in Ethiopia, is weak. Because of the collective and multi-dimensional characteristics of land use and access in these areas, rights (ownership, access and use) are difficult to define and protect: policies and legislation where they exist, fail to adequately address these issues. Planning of land use is top-down and without the knowledge, input and support of rangeland communities. Migration into rangeland by non-locals, as well as out-migration by the youth in particular has become common, meaning that groups and communities are more diffuse and fluid than they used to be. This further challenges the authority of customary governance institutions.

In this context in Ethiopia's rangelands there is a steady appropriation of land driven from both national and local actors. Previously communal resources, and in particular water, are increasingly being privatised. Development and government agency interventions have supported the development of private water tanks or points, whose owners charge for use. This has introduced financial transactions for what was previously a common and shared property. Such interventions have set in place rapid processes of change where communal and reciprocal relations and arrangements have been replaced by individualistic ones, and mobility has reduced as settlement and income-generation activities around such water points has increased. Not only has this concentration of land use led to environmental degradation, but also the growth of more individualistic and commercially-oriented attitudes, which has challenged communal and collective reciprocal support systems so important to survival in a dryland environment.

In Harshin *woreda* in Somali region for example, the community led a process of subdivision of what were previously communal, quality grazing areas. This has been directly linked to development interventions in the area, which supported the establishment of individual water storage tanks or *birkeds* and the charging of water drawn from them. In a process, which locally is called ‘axe robbery’ (or *gudin boob*) individuals grabbed land before others could enclose it. Today nearly all the traditional communal grazing lands have been broken up and individualised. The individualised and settled mixed agricultural production system that has developed is at high risk of failure in times of drought and in particular if development and/or government agencies are not there to bring in the water to fill the storage tanks that the local population have become increasingly reliant upon. Only one of thirteen *kebeles* in the *woreda* maintained their communal grazing areas – here the Elders saw the danger of breaking up the rangeland and a community decision was made to ban individual enclosures in order to keep the land open and communal (Flintan et al 2011).

By not having formal rights to land and resources, it is easy for non-community parties to disregard the informal rights of rangelands users to their land. Because rangeland users often have to move with their cattle to track dryland resources, and utilise these variable resources across a large area, they do not use every part of the rangeland all the time. Thus it is easy for non-local stakeholders to classify pastoral lands as ‘vacant’ ‘empty’ or ‘unused’ or ‘under-used.’ The lack of legitimacy, even recognition given to pastoral land use for example, by government means that pastoralists are not included in decision-making processes related to their lands, even though they may be highly affected as a result. It also means that compensation is not paid when their land is taken from them.

In the last ten years, steps have been taken to improve the security of group rights in the country. Land certification (first level) and registration has to date mainly focused on individualised and sedentarized rights. But increasingly attention is being given to group or communal rights including more *mobile* group rights (including those of pastoralists) both in land policy and legislation, and in land use planning and management activities on the ground. Access rights to communal holdings of rural land are recognised by the Constitution and Proclamation (456/2005) and pastoralists are becoming more vocal and demanding that their landholdings be registered and certified. This is one of the major issues they raise at the annual Ethiopia Pastoralists’ Day celebration.

Within this context, federal and regional governments are taking steps to develop formal communal land tenure systems. To date two pastoral-dominated regions – Afar and Somali regions – have developed policies and legislation for pastoral communal lands, but these have not yet been implemented. Critical

issues that need to be addressed in the continuing development of these policies, laws and regulations and their implementation include i) identifying the most appropriate land tenure system that works within the context of federal law<sup>1</sup> and Ethiopia's Constitution yet provides for the effective functioning of the spatially and temporally flexible pastoral (and other rangeland) production systems; and ii) an accompanying governance system that can effectively govern and manage the 'nested hierarchal' sets of rights found in multi-use landscapes such as rangelands.

In the meantime, some development actors have been supporting communities to improve access to resources that they depend upon. Some of these resources such as forests had been placed under government control, even though historically communities had managed them. Developing institutions and mechanisms to return this control to resource users, which are both acceptable to government and communities has been challenging, but perseverance and a strong movement of collaborative actors advocating for change based on proven good practice has had positive results – as described below participatory forest management is now a well-accepted process by all stakeholders including government. Resources in rangelands have received less attention, and not least because until recently rangelands have remained mainly under the control of rangeland users. However as described above, pressures on rangelands have increased greatly in recent years and thus securing the rights of rangeland users to their resources and land is becoming ever more urgent.

In response, a process of participatory rangeland management (PRM) has been developed, with the objectives to both improve the management of rangeland resources and their security of access for local rangeland users. The USAID-funded PRIME project (Pastoral Areas Resilience and Market Expansion) has played a key role in this development, building on the work of previous initiatives including the USAID-funded Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative (PLI) in Borana zone and the support provided by a consortium of NGOs in Bale zone and Afar. PRIME has learnt from these experiences and supported the up-scaling of pilots across pastoral areas in Oromia, Afar and Somali regional states with the aim of developing and implementing robust climate smart rangeland management.

This paper describes the experience of PRIME, the challenges faced and opportunities arising in supporting the implementation of the PRM process. It concludes by discussing the relevance of PRM for improving the management of and security of access to rangeland resources in Ethiopia, and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> Namely the Federal Land Administration and Use Proclamation No. 456/2005, as well as the Federal Lands Expropriation and Compensation Proclamation No. 455/2005.

## II. PARTICIPATORY RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

### The Development of Participatory Rangeland Management in Ethiopia

PRM was developed in 2010 by a USAID-funded project called Enhanced Livelihoods in the Mendera Triangle (ELMT) in order to offer a model for better securing rights to resources and improving community management in Ethiopia's rangelands. Save the Children/USA, the lead organisation for ELMT, developed the 'participatory rangeland management' (PRM) approach drawing from and building on the well-accepted participatory forest management (PFM) process and practice. In 2010 an introductory guideline was launched (Flintan and Cullis 2010), which laid out the process and how it should be applied in pastoral areas. Originally PRM was made up of three key stages – Understanding, Planning and Implementation, and eight steps. The process commences with the identification or confirming of the appropriate unit for rangeland management (such as a traditional grazing area). Rangeland resources are identified and a governing community association or institution is strengthened or set-up. A Rangeland Management Plan is developed based on an in-depth rangeland inventory and community action planning. Access to resources is improved through the drawing up of a legally binding Rangeland Management Agreement between the community and local government, with rules and regulations (bylaws) defined, based on the Rangeland Management Plan. Since 2010, organisations that have piloted PRM have slightly adapted the process, adding in and/or changing some of these original steps.

**Figure 1: Stages and steps of PRM as developed by Flintan and Cullis (2010)**



Following the launch of the Introductory Guidelines to PRM by the Minister of Agriculture in 2010, the PRM process was piloted in two different parts of the country. FARM Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia piloted the PRM approach in the lowlands of Bale zone, Oromiya region with some modifications to the steps and their implementation. The pilot *kebele* (village) were divided into blocks encompassing around 80 households of between 8-20,000 hectares per block depending on population density. These blocks were the starting point for data collection (rangeland inventory) and establishing management processes, activities, rules and regulations. The NGOs assisted the local communities to develop Rangeland Management Plans for the different blocks, the management of which was the responsibility of newly-established Rangeland Management Cooperatives. FARM Africa and SOS Sahel who have long experience with participatory *forest* management in which it is normal for cooperatives to be established for forest management and enterprise development, believed that this community organisation was also suitable for rangelands. A Rangeland Management Agreement was then drawn up and signed by the Rangeland Management Cooperative and local (*woreda* or district) government. This approach differs from that supported by the PRM Guidelines above, in that it works inside government administrative boundaries rather than across them which could in future challenge cross-boundary resource sharing and mobility. It also supports the development of Cooperatives as the governance structure, which is good for developing business and local enterprises, but can compromise the authority of more customary institutions. Building on the experience in Bale, FARM Africa is now piloting the approach in Afar region.

The second major piloting of PRM took place in Borana Zone, Oromia Region where Save the Children/USA worked through the USAID-funded PLI II project. Using the PRM Introductory Guidelines as a starting point, the approach was once again slightly adapted, with the addition of two steps including a ‘do no harm’ analysis. The development of the pilots in Borana closely followed the launch of the PRM Introductory Guidelines in 2010, and continued for around three years, until the end of the PLI II project. Save the Children – USA (SC-USA) estimates that the process involved more than 30,000 pastoralists/agro-pastoralists and initiated steps towards improved rangeland management of more than 2 million hectares. Guidelines for implementation and details of the experience of SC-USA can be found in Kebede et al 2013.

The successor project of the PLI II, PRIME – took forward the work started in Borana zone. CARE-Ethiopia working through local NGOs such as SOS Ethiopia has been leading the process and has made significant strides in the scaling-up of the PRM approach.

## Governance structures and PRM

Traditionally, community elders have been responsible for making decisions about the management of different resources across multiple-use dryland landscapes including rangelands. Governance of these resources tends to occur at different levels from a rangeland through to seasonal grazing areas, through to a tenure ‘niche’ such as a well or a tree – all of which tend to be communally used, accessed and managed. In addition, and as has been seen more recently, there may have been the introduction of more individualised uses of land such as agricultural plots or private water points. Today, these private property resources also need to be incorporated into dryland governance structures and systems. Traditionally, customary institutions are the ones responsible for making decisions about NRM. However under new challenges and constraints it may be that customary institutions alone are no longer capable or appropriate for these roles and responsibilities.

### Box 1: Land management in Borana

Recent studies by the PRIME project show that there remain two categories of rangelands in the community. The open grazing area is managed by customary institutions (*Abba dheedas*) and is commonly accessible to members of the *dheeda* community, and neighboring communities through negotiation. The second category of rangeland is the “*kalo*” (reserved rangeland), which is managed at *reera* (sub-*dheeda*) level. The reserve is often fenced for use during the dry season. This area can be reserved for calves, lactating animals, and weak animals. Access to the reserve is discussed and decided by *Jarsa reera* (the community elders), and only a few animals are allowed to graze at a time so that the reserve is not depleted. Crop farming is expanding in Borana. The farmland is locally called *obru*. A community member can request the *kebele* administration for a plot of land for crop production. The *kebele* administration consults the *abba olla* (traditional village leader) and the *Jarsa reera* to check whether the requested cultivation would affect grazing areas, reserve pasturelands, routes to grazing areas and water points. However, the land can rarely sustain more than one or two seasons of cultivation and then will be abandoned. Others can then request the local administration and traditional leaders to use the land without the permission of the former user of the same plot. This is because the land belongs to the community and the *Abba Olla* has the authority to reallocate land for another purpose. Water management tends to be of more importance than grazing area management – the *Abba herrega* (father of the water) is considered to have greater authority than the *Abba dheeda* (PRIME 2013).

As a result it is challenging to find the appropriate answer to the question: ‘*What is the best institution for governing communal resources and lands?*’ Experiences in Ethiopia suggest a number of possibilities including associations, user-groups, cooperatives and others that are only recognised informally but equally strongly at the local level, be they customary institutions, descent groups or spatially defined groups.



A number of traditional well-functioning local level institutions exist for communal land management where users, including secondary users, are well defined as an exclusive right-holding group in the eyes of the communities and their neighbours. There are other situations where this is not the case, such as in large open access grazing areas impossible to control. Here, the devolvement of group rights - where management and specific rights at lowest appropriate level are established not with traditional existing institutions but with *induced* institutions- means the formation of institutions composed of members, who did not previously form a group (Andersen and Dupuy 2009). This could be a participatory forest management (PFM) group, a watershed user group (WUG) or a PRM group, which can cut across common property regimes for communal lands as well as state and private lands. WUGs may consist of all residents within the given watershed boundary or they may consist of a group of landless people/youth, which is given access to highly degraded areas for rehabilitation under Food Security/Food for Work arrangements. A PFM group may cut across traditional individual *kobo* rights for trees where beehives are hung for honey production. And a PRM group may have several layers or ‘nestings’ of different tenure regimes from communal grazing areas, to individual agricultural plots and water points.

In order to enter into a legal agreement with government, a community body should have legal status. Without legal status, it is not possible to legally enforce legislation or bylaws, though customary authorities have different degrees of control and/or authority. Without legal status it would be difficult to bring offenders to formal authorities such as the police or courts. Ethiopian law currently recognises only certain types of organisations, namely:

1. Cooperatives,
2. NGOs, and
3. Private enterprises.

Though Associations such as Water User Associations can also be given a degree of legal status.

A Cooperative according to law is said to be formed by individuals on a voluntary basis and who have similar needs for creating savings and mutual assistance by pooling their resources, knowledge and property. A Cooperative must conform with the Cooperative Societies Proclamation 1998.<sup>2</sup> Cooperatives can acquire legal recognition and support once registered with the local Cooperative Office. All levels of government recognise the legitimacy of a Cooperative. A Cooperative needs a manager and an accountant. The local government Cooperatives Bureau are responsible for building the skills and capacity of the cooperatives and there are resources available for this.

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<sup>2</sup> Cooperative Societies Proclamation No. 14/1998.

According to some research findings (Cafod-Trocaire-SCIAF 2011 in Getahun 2014) in the last decade governmental organisations and projects as well as NGOs have created over 400 cooperatives in Borana alone. Over half of the cooperatives are SACCOs (Savings and Credit Community Organisations); the rest are mostly agricultural cooperatives dealing with the marketing of livestock or gums/resins. A few production or processing cooperatives have been set up as well. The most important limitations of the cooperatives reported were their lack of initial capital and capacity to administer the cooperative's rules and activities and maintain functionality.

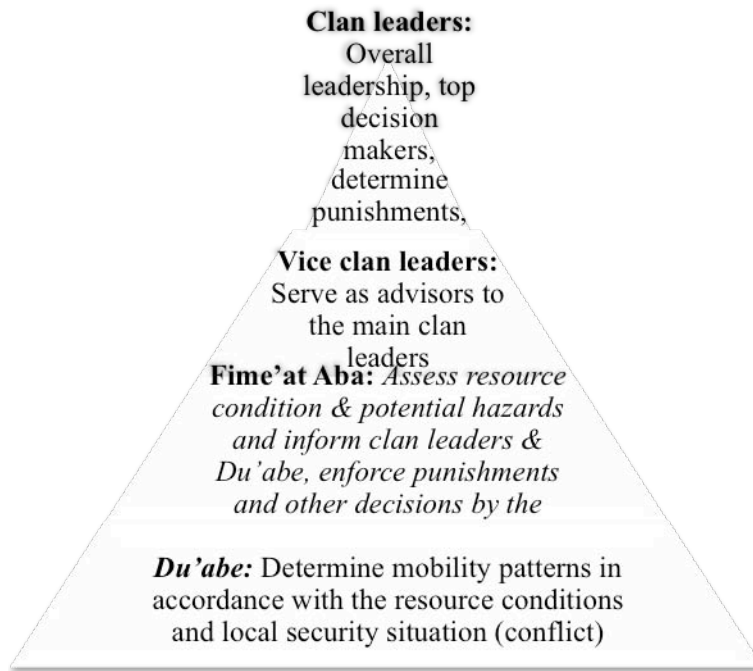
As mentioned above, though some NGOs implementing PRM chose and developed the cooperative as the management and governance organisation responsible for PRM at the local level, PRIME believes that the customary institutions and/or an adapted or strengthened form of a customary institution is *more* appropriate. Indeed, where customary institutions are still functional, they can be given legal recognition under a revised or new law and strengthened. Many argue that this will result in more effective governance systems than if a new institution that is alien to the community is formed.

As a first step when developing or strengthening the PRM institution, discussions with key informants are carried out in order to identify known elders and community decision-makers. Discussions on the potential and appropriate institutional set-up and the PRM purpose and process are then carried out with these decision-makers. Additional important stakeholders are identified and mobilised to participate in the process. Building on traditional structures, management units are developed and/or strengthened at different levels (see Figure 3).

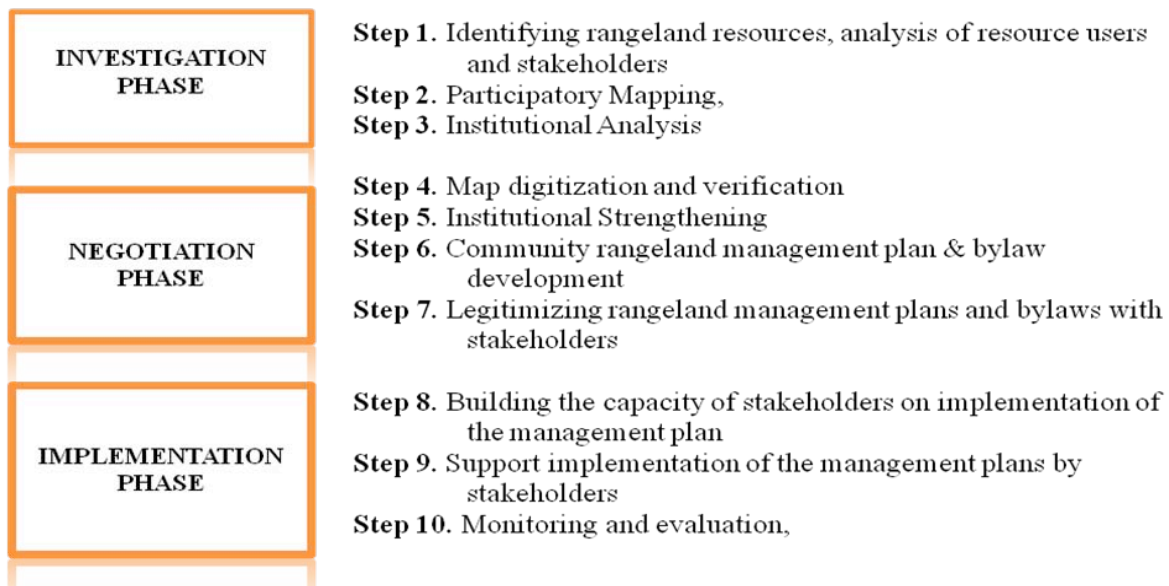
**Figure 3 Guji-Borana Customary Institutions' strengthened through PRM in Oromia Region**



**Figure 4 Afar Customary Institutions' strengthened through PRM in Afar Region**



**Box 1: Key steps in PRM adapted and implemented by CARE Ethiopia and its partners through PRIME**



Additionally, in a bid to open up the representation of different social groups in rangeland management decision-making processes, Rangeland Management Councils (RMCs) are established at the level of the grazing system area, and at sub-system levels. These are composed of customary/clan leaders, youth and women's representatives and in a few cases, government experts as e.g. secretary for the Council in some areas. The Council is responsible for deciding use and management of the resources and handling related conflicts that might arise. It is anticipated that local and regional government will give formal recognition to the Councils. It is also anticipated that the Council will be the one to sign any formal agreements with government related to the resources, their access and use (i.e. based on the rangeland management plan described below). The Council is seen to be the body that will mobilise communities, negotiate and take forward land use planning and management negotiations and decisions, and take up opportunities for securing land and resource rights. The foundations of these institutions are the customary institutions that still exist and function (see Figures 3 and 4 above).

### **Information gathering and planning**

Participatory mapping of natural resources has proved to be a vital and powerful information-generating tool for identifying and understanding the use of resources and access to them<sup>3</sup>. It enables communities to articulate to planners and others the extent, complexity and richness of their resources, which *they* fully appreciate but which others may not. In addition, discussions that take place during the mapping process provide opportunities for identifying challenges and problems, as well as potential solutions to rangeland management issues. The map produced can be used in negotiation processes during the definition of different land use zones and access arrangements. It is a key piece of documentation in the management plan for a rangeland unit, providing a visual summary of the area and its relevant resources. The map can also be used as a baseline for monitoring and evaluation, and within adaptive management processes: a resource map, and all its' supporting information, serves as a benchmark to track changes over time.

#### *Mapping in PRM*

Mapping in pastoral areas prior to PRM had focused on the Peasant/Pastoral Association unit – in Borana similar to a traditional *madda*. This unit encompasses a village or possibly two villages and does not reflect local use of resources and in particular grazing which covers a much larger area than this. Development actors have recognised the limitations and dangers of this including that if maps are limited to administrative boundaries, use outside these boundaries will be missed. As such, it is now agreed that

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<sup>3</sup> Other tools could include seasonal calendars, rangelands species matrices, and rangeland condition/health historical trend analysis.

good practice in rangeland planning and management demands a larger unit as the areas of focus, based on the current use of rangeland users. As a result, PRIME supported the mapping of the *dheeda* and *sub-dheeda* (traditional grazing area) in Borana, which as can be seen below cuts across administrative boundaries.

Mapping at this scale is challenging. When SC-USA first carried out a rangeland mapping exercise of a *dheeda*, a number of flipcharts were taped together and the map was drawn onto these. Attempts were then made to digitise the map(s) however, some of the points were difficult to access so could not be verified and positioned. It was felt that this process was too time-consuming and there was also the problem of scale. As a result, SC-USA decided that rather than using the hand-drawn maps it would be more effective to use 1:50,000 topographic maps as a starting point from which the community could identify key landmarks and then show resources, livestock routes etc. Geo-referencing helped to define the exact boundaries of the management unit.

PRIME prefers to keep the pen with the community, and giving them the opportunity to start with a blank 'screen' (piece of paper) on which they first map the resource (rather than using topographic maps). The information drawn-up is then digitised through a process where key features are matched from the community map to a printed-out satellite image. Some ground-truthing and GPS readings were also used. The information can then be over-laid with maps of *woreda* and *kebele* boundaries, and different data-sets including such as population data and identified hazards. This has also enabled PRIME to provide an estimate measure of hectares for the different grazing areas and sub-grazing areas. Throughout the process, community discussions are facilitated, there is a review of management systems and all map features are agreed upon. Cross-community discussions and agreements on system boundaries and cross-system reciprocal use rights are also facilitated. An institutional analysis of different resource users and decision-makers is also carried out.

**Plate1 Mapping of rangeland resources in PRIME intervention areas.**





## *Planning*

Working in rangelands, including across *woreda* boundaries is not made easy by government administrative or financial structures and procedures. However, initiatives such as government-led watershed management, sustainable land management and river basin planning show that it is possible to do this despite the challenges. Though the application of these initiatives in drylands has been limited to date, they are providing a growing evidence base that planning at scale is beneficial for both communities and the environment. Comprehensive land use planning in Oromia region also provides opportunities for a more integrated approach to development across larger areas.

Working closely with government, the PRM approaches described try to link local level planning processes with government ones. In Ethiopia decentralisation has opened up opportunities for multi-sector, multi-stakeholder, integrated planning at different levels with the participation of land users. *Woreda* have become the centre of socio-economic development providing opportunities to tackle poverty at the grassroots level. A ‘local-level participatory planning approach’ (LLPPA) has been developed, through which *woreda*-level government experts can collaborate with communities on planning, implementation and evaluation. With this in mind, the federal Land Use Administration and Use Directorate (Ministry of Agriculture) is developing a Manual for Participatory Land Use Planning in Pastoral Areas.<sup>4</sup> This Manual will encourage *woreda* government to work with local land users to develop a *Woreda* Participatory Land Use Plan, which will map and define land use in the *woreda* including rangelands. The Manual stresses that cross-*woreda* planning should take place where a traditional grazing area flows and is shared across *woreda* boundaries, and a Joint *Woreda* Land Use Agreement should be established. It is anticipated that through this approach traditional grazing areas (including those that flow across several *woredas*) will be protected as a land use, and then protected for management by local rangeland users through processes such as PRM. The Manual has taken specific and encouraging steps to adapt more ‘normal’ land use planning processes to the needs and nuances of pastoral areas including rangelands.

However, to date, local governments have been restricted in their response to these opportunities due to limited capacity and resources. In addition poor infrastructure and communication in dryland areas makes it difficult for people to attend meetings and/or participate in decision-making processes. Government

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<sup>4</sup> Supported by the International Land Coalition (ILC) Rangelands Initiative working through Oxfam GB and GIZ in Ethiopia (see paper being presented at this conference: Tigistu et al (2016) *Woreda* (district) Participatory *Land Use Planning in Pastoral Areas of Ethiopia*).



officials at local and higher levels may not fully understand the complexities of dryland environments including rangelands and why dryland populations use and manage the natural resources in the way that they do. Pastoralists in particular tend to be left out of local planning and decision-making processes that take place. And when they do take part, their knowledge and experiences may not be appreciated. Processes such as PRM can help to address these challenges within a semi-formalised framework, building on more formalised processes such as *Woreda* Participatory Land Use Planning in Pastoral Areas.

## **Rangeland Management**

The PRM approach argues that the current (often traditional) rangeland and the boundary (albeit porous) of that area are the entry point for defining the rangeland management units (i.e. usually larger than a *kebele*). It also argues that customary institutions or users' councils based on the customary institutions (or clan) is the appropriate governing body (i.e. not a *kebele*-based Cooperative). CARE International is taking this approach as part of the PRIME work there – using the customary grazing area as a starting point for PRM implementation. Under guidance from local communities the larger *dheeda* (which can encompass up to thirty *kebeles*) has been divided into sub-*dheeda* or *reera* (which can still include around three to four *kebeles* or villages). Communities or clans who share resources are regarded as a rangeland system. Where the rangeland area is large, it can be appropriate to divide it into various sub-systems or rangelands sub-units as components of the larger rangeland system, based on who most frequently shares resources.

### *Rangeland Management Plan*

More systematic community-led land use planning has been recommended for rangelands including, what can be interpreted as, a zoning of land for agricultural use and other for grazing or browse (Tache 2013). The production of a Rangeland Management Plan not only provides strategic direction for those involved but also is a useful process in itself. Experience has shown that the more detailed the Plan, the more transparent and effective it proves to be. Different planning cycles are required. Some may be short – annual or semi-annual; and others will be for longer periods of time (five years for example).

The production of a Rangeland Management Plan is a requirement of the processes described here, and has been made necessary for acquiring a Rangeland Management Agreement. The Rangeland Management Plan is also the starting point for the development of bylaws that control local land/resource access and use, including that of primary and secondary users.

In its current form PRM provides greatest guidance on rangeland management planning and on developing the organisational and institutional structures (including roles and responsibilities) at the local level that are required for implementing those plans. This includes more secure rights to resources and land. To date, documentation of PRM has provided little guidance on rangeland *management* itself – the implementation part. Not least, this is because the approach has been piloted in a few cases over a relatively short period of time. Though to a degree some of the steps involved in PRM are already being carried out by communities as part of their customary pastoral production systems and/or everyday activities, PRM makes a difference by formalising and organising (though still flexible/adaptive) a step-by-step process.

PRIME has developed a set of principles and components for the development of Rangeland Management Plans in the areas where it works. These state that the Rangeland Management Plan should:

- Be a joint effort between selected community members, local government and rangeland ecologists;
- Be done at a rangeland system level, though describe functions of sub-rangeland units in system management;
- Identify community land use plans across rangeland systems in line with landscape ecology and land user interests;
- Define rules governing resource use and access;
- Define land rehabilitation and enhancement techniques, location and timing of application;
- Define roles, responsibilities of users and decision-makers;
- Outline enforcement mechanisms.

PRIME has been supporting the development of Rangeland Management Plans in all the areas where it works. So far management plans and bylaws have been developed for 13 rangeland systems and implementation of the Plans is being supported in all of these. PRIME is now trying to facilitate the legitimization of these Plans by government (see below) together with supporting their implementation by communities, whilst continuing to support the development of others.

The Rangeland Management Plans that have been produced by the communities have very much focused on improvements and investments in the land such as removal of bush or invasive species, re-instating lapsed grazing management practices, improving the occurrence of palatable species, and soil and water conservation measures. In addition, many plans have promoted corrections of settlement locations –

where settlements have been recklessly established in the middle of good pasture reserves. The Rangeland Management Council responsible for the area works with the local *woreda* Land Use and Administration Office to re-site those settlements that are out of place and are causing a fragmentation of the rangeland threatening its productivity. This locally driving resettlement results in more consolidated settlement areas, whilst also preserving rangeland productivity. In the Plans guidelines are found how each activity should be carried out, who has roles and responsibilities, and a timeline. The Rangeland Management Plan for Malbe Grazing Area includes for example:

- Correct the positioning of settlements in relation to location of grazing areas;
- Revitalize community's cultural practices of rangeland management, integrate with scientific practices and adopt viable practices of rangeland management;
- Identify and systematise the utilization of dry and wet season grazing locations;
- Adopt the practice of rotational grazing in wet season grazing areas through resting grazing areas;
- Increase accessibility of water resources in the rangeland system.
- Protect important cultural sites;
- Improve the availability and accessibility of pasture in dry seasons;
- Adopt appropriate restoration practices to rehabilitate severely degraded rangelands,
- Increase the availability of grass through improving site conditions for local grass species.

These management plans have been used as the foundation for defining activities for rangeland management, with the community responsible for implementation with PRIME financial and resource-support. PRIME is now supporting the implementation of the plans, encouraging communities to take up their full roles and responsibilities. PRIME is limited in the financial support that it can provide to communities, so it is anticipated that communities themselves must find the resources to carry out the plan and undertake activities with out payment. In most cases, communities understand the importance of investing in such activities if the long-term productivity of the rangelands and thus their livelihoods, is to be maintained.

### *Benefit Sharing*

PRM approaches aim to be collaborative and inclusive, requiring and promoting community control over decision-making processes related to rangeland management. In return they encourage commitment to the processes and activities, roles and responsibilities and discourage dependency on external assistance.

Collective problem solving and consensus building reflect priorities of dryland users, including the poorest and marginalised. Moreover, spaces are created where people empowered with knowledge can come together and discuss, share and generate meaningful information deemed important by them. Problems should be solved in a timely manner and questions are answered as they arise. PRM targets the community as a whole because the community will affect decisions made and/or be affected by them. It avoids targeting one particular group over another in order to avoid difficulties in implementation and effectiveness, and the threatening of the communal and collective nature of pastoral society. Being part of a large and significant process supports the growth of unity and reduces conflict (Kebede et al 2013).

Because PRM is an integrated approach that seeks to improve the wellbeing of the community as well as the sustainable management of natural resources, the approach seeks to improve the equitable sharing of benefits from PRM activities. For instance, in pastoral communities, it is often the case that immediate benefits from improved access to natural resources (grazing, water, minerals) may be more directly gained by those who are better off in the community i.e. those with larger herds. With affirmative action PRM can provide a platform for ensuring that the poorer and more vulnerable groups benefit too. During discussions about PRM with the community, SC-USA introduced thoughts on equity – how to make the benefits from good rangeland management more equitable and not only benefiting those with large herds of livestock. One way of doing this, a community decided, was to use communal enclosures for cut-and-carry of grass and haymaking (ibid). The benefits from PRM are less obvious than in PFM, and thus usually of less interest to outsider groups such as government enterprises. As such PRM is more concerned with good management, rather than a means of raising direct income for communities so the benefit-sharing aspects (at least, those that are monetary-based) are often less critical.

Despite not specifically targeting women, PRM can provide opportunities for a better valuing of women's knowledge and role in rangeland management, improving women's understanding of NRM challenges and potential solutions, and increasing women's participation in decision-making processes. Benefits can include going to meetings and discussing problems with fellow community members; receiving information during planning meetings that can be shared with other community members; improvement in rights and empowerment within the rangeland management setting and homestead context; and practical interventions that reduce women's work load and/or improve men's contribution to tasks that previously were carried out mainly or only by women (e.g. grass cut-and-carry for young or weak animals) (Kebede et al 2013).

### **Box 2. Key results of PRM to date**

Some of the key results achieved through the PRM approach by PRIME include:

- Wet and dry season grazing areas are redefined, verified, negotiated and agreed.
- Customary Institution's structure reviewed and strengthened at all levels (rangeland system, sub-rangeland units and *Kebele* or village levels) in a more inclusive way by involving women and youth.
- Blocked mobility routes or access roads to key pasture & water resources were reopened.
- Inappropriate farmlands were abandoned, private enclosures dismantled, and inappropriate settlements were rearranged,
- Communal reserves expanded instead of private enclosures that restrict mobility.
- Reduced the frequency of resource based conflicts and improved inter community relationships, and smoothen resource use and sharing.
- Improved pasture resource availability through collective community actions on removing noxious weeds and managing undesirable species. Community owned the approach/system
- Government buy-in: PRM is generally acknowledged as a 'good practice' approach and has been given support at the national level.

### **Securing rights to resources**

One of the key rationales and strategies of the original adaptation of PRM from participatory *forest* management was to 'put on the table' a process that **could** (had potential to) be used to better secure rights to resources for local land users (more specifically local rangeland users) in a context where there was not much else to offer. It was believed that this could be achieved through the establishment of a legally-binding agreement between local government and a community group giving that group the use rights of land and resources in a designated area. However this has proved challenging to achieve in a political/legislative vacuum of a formalised pastoral land tenure security. As such, though FARM Africa was able to establish a Land Use Agreement between the Rangeland Management Cooperative and the local *woreda* government, no such agreement has been achieved with customary institutions under the PRIME project.

Despite this bottleneck and the lack of formal agreement between local government and communities, pastoralists have been implementing their Rangeland Management Plans. Implementation of the Rangeland Management Plan is a key step in the process of PRM – it moves from preparation to action. Implementation of the Plan can be linked to NGO or government-supported assistance projects, which can provide the necessary resources and support (including technical support). In particular where

activities focus on rangeland improvement, this can help legitimise the pastoral use of lands by showing that they are making active investments in their land. However, though these steps were achieved without a signed Management Agreement with local government, community members have stressed that if the Rangeland Management Agreement had been signed then much more could have been achieved. Not least the community would have been able to access resources for such as schools, clinics and veterinary posts. In addition the implementation of PRM continues to face challenges and constraints. Rangelands are increasingly being fragmented or lost to encroachment of farmlands, private enclosures or settlements. There is a weak capacity of customary institutions to enforce decisions, and in particular where government is over-riding decisions made by such Institutions and/or competing for resources. As a result conflicts over resource access are increasing, with territorial tensions between neighbouring ethnic groups.

PRIME takes the following specific steps and strategies to improve the legitimacy and legalisation of PRM and its institutions and activities:

1. Supporting customary institutions to be formalised and recognised in rangeland management.
2. Supporting nested governance and reconciling land uses: ensuring all stakeholders reflect on and agree on management plans and institutions (including private sector, farmers, agropastoralists).
3. Reviewing/approving local plans and accompanying bylaws and processes by government stakeholders.
4. Having formal linkages to Land Administration Bureaus and Pastoral Commissions at regional levels and working with another USAID-funded project called LAND (Land Administration to Nurture Development).
5. Reviewing by-laws by government against GoE legal frameworks.
6. Facilitating the adoption of institutions and plans towards use by other projects and initiatives.

It is anticipated that a combination of these steps/strategies will eventually lead to a more enabling policy and legislative environment for PRM and its ultimate goal of improving the security of local access to rangeland resources.

### **III. WAY FORWARD**

With the process well worked out, PRIME is rolling-out the approach at an impressive speed – currently interventions cover twenty-four rangeland systems and an estimated area of eight million hectares of land. Local rangeland management systems are mapped by communities and the information transferred to

GIS. This is then complemented by such as hazard mapping and scenario planning for the incorporation of climate adaptation activities.

The PRM approach has been publically accepted by then State Ministry of Livestock (now the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries MoLF) and more specifically the Pastoral Directorate as an approach that should be scaled-up and mainstreamed. Steps are underway to provide training for all government staff working on the large donor-funded resilience projects being implemented by the MoL. There is general agreement amongst development actors that a PRM approach is beneficial, for the reasons provided above. Some of the MoLF's resilience-focused projects are regional including ones funded by the WB and AfDB – and as such there is the opportunity to take the experiences of PRM to neighbouring countries such as Kenya.

PRM was developed with both objectives for management and the securing of rights to resources in mind. Based on the experiences of and following the same key steps as PFM, PRM seeks to formalise the management of rangelands resources and secure them through an Agreement between a group of local rangeland users and local government. This process has enabled communities to take steps forward in getting their land use formally recognised and protected – however, there have been a number of constraints and challenges to the process including its acceptance by local and regional governments. Not least the government has not agreed to signing such an agreement with customary institutions. Even if an agreement had been signed, it does not replace a more secure land-holding certificate. Though not formalised pastoralists already have usufruct rights to the rangelands (i.e. it is a different context to forest users trying to claim back rights from state forests). In addition, the quite narrow approach of the approach focusing almost entirely on one particular set of land users may not be appropriate for the multi-dimensional environments (with multi-stakeholder interests) that rangelands are today.

The overall conclusion is that though the process can contribute to management objectives and to a degree appears to offer some security of rights, PRM alone is probably too narrow an approach to encompass all that is required of an effective communal land tenure system. Pastoralists are demanding their land use rights be registered and certified akin to farmers' rights in the highlands for whom it has been completed. With this in mind, PRIME is working with the USAID-funded LAND project and national and regional governments to develop a communal land tenure system for pastoral areas. The lessons from the PRM experience are important inputs to these developments.

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