



MEETING LAND TENURE NEEDS OF PASTORALISTS KEY TO RESTORING RANGELANDS

#GLFAfrica

This white paper is based on:
Wählhammar, Rickard Allreke. 2020. *The Linkage Between Land Tenure and Rangeland Restoration: Pastoral Practices in Socio-Ecological Rangelands System*. Manuscript.



Halting degradation and promoting restoration of rangelands could benefit hundreds of millions of people globally. Promoting land tenure arrangements that fit local realities is critical.

Approximately 54 percent of the earth's surface consists of rangelands, which are home to some of its most precious habitats and support the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people. Between 15 percent and 73 percent of rangelands globally are undergoing degradation (Cherlet et al., 2018; Gabathuler et al., 2009). Land use practices such as agricultural expansion, overgrazing and exploitative water use are key drivers. Meanwhile, biophysical pressures from global phenomena, especially climate change, exacerbate social pressures that foster unsustainable practices, and further intensify degradation.

In all landscapes, land tenure, land use practices and restoration progress are closely interlinked. Unique facets of rangeland ecosystems mean there are distinctions between what factors behind tenure matter most for promoting restorative practices (see Box 1).

Tenure arrangements that center on mobility needs and local knowledge promote restoration and help pastoralist communities thrive in rangeland ecosystems.

Rangelands can be vast, due to the nature of the land and the livestock production system. This makes mobility essential for herds, and by extension for pastoralists.

This has a number of distinct consequences on sustainable land-use governance in rangelands:

- Use rights in rangelands have significantly greater influence over practices, such as grazing patterns; compared to possession rights, which are the predominant focus of most states' legal frameworks.
- Mobility needs mean that rangelands governance usually favors informal institutions through which communities can negotiate flexible and reciprocal land use arrangements. The inherent need for flexibility in these arrangements often makes formalizing them a challenge from the perspective of national governments and legal structures.

Box 1. Five factors of the land tenure framework (adapted from Wählhammar, 2020)

- 1. Source of tenure** describes the origin of the tenure. Tenure can be formal, such as codified in national law; or informal, such as embedded in norms and customs.
- 2. Type of tenure.** The four types of land tenure recognized and as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are: *private*, *communal*, *open access*, and *public* (FAO, 2003).
- 3. Tenure for who?** Both private and public actors can have tenure rights, and multiple actors can have overlapping and/or circumstance-dependent rights.
- 4. Type of tenure right** describes what actors are permitted to do with the land in question. Key rights include rights to use, control, and transfer.
- 5. Level of tenure security** is determined by elements including: how complete is the range of various rights which holders can enjoy; how long holders know they will have rights; and the level of awareness, acceptance, and enforcement of these rights. The legal status of tenure security is not always consistent with how people perceive rights and what rights look like in practice.

- The vastness of rangelands, each with its own unique and complex ecosystem, has also presented challenges to many efforts led by non-local actors to collect substantial data on the extent and value of these ecosystems. This makes local ecological knowledge, often accumulated over many generations of close interaction with local landscapes and embedded in traditional governance institutions, particularly crucial to sustainable rangelands governance.

As a result, tenure arrangements that fail to accommodate collective arrangements and traditional institutions to which local knowledge is often closely connected are often linked to rangeland degradation. Fully open access land, without structures to facilitate coordination across user groups, can lead to a type of ‘tragedy of the commons’, in which traditional institutions break down and overgrazing degrades the land. This has occurred in recent decades in Jordan and Kyrgyzstan, for example (IFAD, 2019: 23; IUCN, 2011 1). Meanwhile, privatization and leasing systems are prone to causing fragmentation. Given the expanse of continuous land needed for sustainable grazing practices, fragmentation often results in land grabbing and/or overgrazing (Beyene, 2010; IFAD, 2014).

Three examples of promising efforts to support restoration, pastoralist-friendly tenure arrangements across Africa

- 1. Joint village land use planning (JVLUP) in Tanzania:** Under the Sustainable Rangeland Management Project (SRMP) led by the Government of Tanzania and supported by ILRI, local partners, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Land Coalition (ILC), the development of JVLUPs, establishing land use agreements between villages, was facilitated. Such land use agreements were able to build on local knowledge, account for climate variability, and consider mobility; for example, by adjusting the stringency of management according to different parts of

grazing areas (Mwita et al., 2017; Kalenzi, 2016: 52) and provide the foundation and incentives for communities to invest in restoration processes and practices.

2. Participatory rangeland management (PRM) in Ethiopia:

Development organizations have developed and worked with participatory rangeland management (PRM). The introduction of PRM “greatly relied upon the legitimacy and the effectiveness of...customary institutions” (Flintan et al., 2019: 12). These institutions “track and utilize... distributed water and other rangeland resources” following “an ecosystem approach” depending “on the seasonal availability of pasture and water”. These institutions are eligible to get legal recognition through the creation of Rangeland Management Councils (RMCs). These councils are “responsible for deciding use and management of the resources” and “will mobilize communities...and take up opportunities for securing land and resource rights” (Awgachew et al., 2016: 12).

3. Linking rangeland management with community

institutions in Tunisia: The Programme de Développement Agropastoral et de Promotion des Initiatives Locales du Sud-Est Tunisien (PRODESUD), funded by IFAD, has the aim of reviving the local “Gdel” system. In systems like Tunisia’s Gdel system, pastoral land is allocated to local ethnic groups, which promotes environmental planning and management practices based on traditional knowledge (Haddad, 2014). This allocation is achieved through democratic community institutions called Groupement de développement agricole (GDAs) that manage communal resources (Werner et al., 2018). The GDAs regulate resting, encourage other land use practices and manage climate variability based on local knowledge.

Pastoralist Providing Supplementary Feed To Sheep, Medinine, Tunisia.

Photo © Marco Buemi/ILRI



This white paper provides useful background for the GLF Africa Digital Conference: Restoring Africa's Drylands, "Rangelands Atlas: Bringing an essential, globally neglected ecosystem into focus". This session will introduce the new global Rangelands Atlas, and will highlight how rangeland restoration and improvement of data on rangelands must be made priorities in UN conventions and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, if drylands and dryland communities are to strengthen their resilience to climate change and other stresses and shocks. The new data from this atlas' first-of-its-kind maps can equip policymakers to better manage rangelands, with major benefits for pastoralists, nature, and climate.

To learn more, visit the Rangelands Atlas website:
<http://www.rangelandsdata.org/atlas>

To download the Atlas:
<https://www.rangelandsdata.org/atlas/sites/default/files/2021-05/Rangelands%20Atlas.pdf>



Maasai from srmp villages celebrations for the securing of their lands.

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