



A Rangelands Management Framework for Karamoja, 2014-2018

A Handbook for Local Governments and Partners
March 2014



IUCN Landscapes Programme



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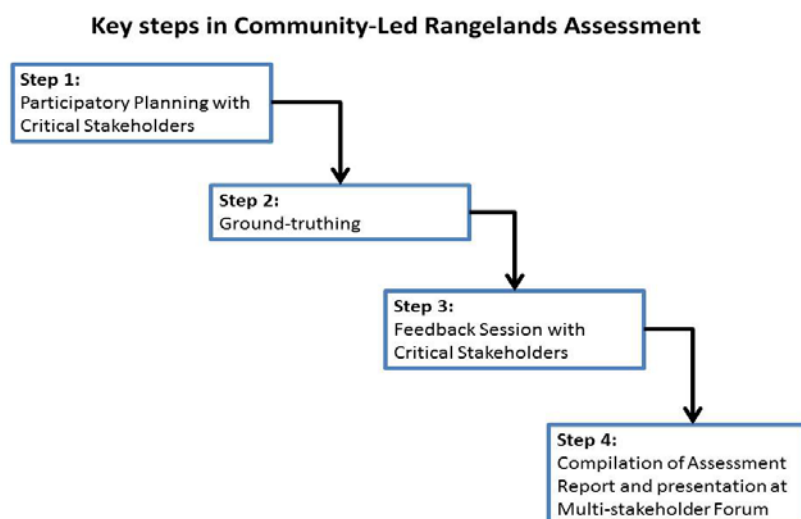
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This rangelands management framework is a product of a rapid pastoralist-led rangeland health assessment that was conducted in three sampled districts of Karamoja; Moroto, Napak and Kotido. With financial support from FAO, IUCN undertook this pilot assessment and mapping using a combination of pastoralist rangeland knowledge and rapid field ground-truthing in line with FAO's strategic Objective V: "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises." The assessment was part of a project whose goal is to improve preparedness and response to agriculture threats and emergencies by promoting the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) to guide planning and management of rangelands resources to support and build resilient pastoral livelihoods in Karamoja. This initiative builds on past and ongoing initiatives of IUCN and FAO collaboration in the Karamoja sub-region.

2 THE RAPID RANGELANDS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS

The assessment and planning team comprised of IUCN staff, district technical and political leaders, and community representatives. In order to integrate indigenous knowledge of pastoralists, the team adopted and worked with elders (*Ngikathikou*) and herders (*Ngikaracuna*) from the Bokora Karimojong of Napak District, the Matheniko Karimojong of Moroto District and the Jie Karimojong of Kotido District. With IUCN technical guidance, each group classified their grazing lands and carried out rangeland health assessments in the sampled districts of Napak, Moroto and Kotido. To guide a systematic process, an assessment methodology was developed and applied (Ref. IUCN 2014: "A field guide to pastoralist-led rangelands health assessment"). The three districts were surveyed simultaneously in February 2014, data collected and analysed, leading to production of a technical assessment report and this management framework. Generally, the pastoralist-led assessment and action planning process involved the following 4 main steps (Adopted from the IUCN field guide, 2014):



The rapid assessment took 4 days in each district, involving teams of at least 10 people in each of the districts. Traditional knowledge and ecological techniques were combined to identify areas of healthy and degraded rangelands at sampled sites. The preliminary results were validated by stakeholders at district level during day-long workshops of about 30 participants each; and subsequently during a dissemination workshop of a wider group of stakeholders (selected herder-scouts, development partners, leaders and decisions makers) drawn from the 3 districts, composed of 48 participants.

3 HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY THREATS TO RANGELAND HEALTH IN KARAMOJA

In Karamoja, pastoralism is still confirmed as a valid and resilient livelihood option which depends on and strategically utilises mobility of livestock. As the area emerges out of its' recent history of high levels of conflict, this land use should be recognised, safeguarded and further developed during the transition from emergency relief into mainstream development. However, during the rangelands assessment exercise conducted in February 2014, a number of issues were observed to threaten the sustainability of rangelands as a source of resilient livelihoods in Karamoja. Key threats include rapid loss of natural vegetation cover and species, soil erosion, overgrazing, uncontrolled bush burning, poor agricultural practices, weak natural resources management institutions and structures, and high poverty levels among the community.

14% of the recorded plant species were decreasing in Moroto and 33% in Napak. The decreasing species are of key concern, and were mainly grasses that are subjected to annual bush burning and tree species that are commonly used for fuel wood, charcoal burning and fencing of homesteads. Vegetation cover has also reduced partly due to over grazing especially in areas where livestock is concentrated around the protected kraals and watering points such as Arecek dam in Napak District. Other declining species were those most affected by grazing and tended to decline across landscapes where past land use has been heavier.

Kotido, on the other hand, was found to be endowed with a relatively healthy diversity and abundance of vegetation life forms, except that these were threatened by uncontrolled bush fires. According to the assessment report, the dry-season burning of most of the patches that were sampled resulted in a fairly high percentage of bare ground (30-40%) over all the landscapes. This also exposes the soils to erosion once the rains come.

Local communities set fires during the dry season so that fresh and young pastures can sprout when the rains come. Bushes are also set on fire to destroy ticks and hunters use it for trapping animals. Sometimes, fires are started accidentally and at times it is used to clear vegetation to be able to see enemies (curb insecurity) and for settlement and also clearing bushes for foot paths. Another cause is for opening up of land for cultivation. Technically, in rangelands ecology, the bush fires are themselves a good management practice because they are an effective and essential part of rangeland regeneration. However, the fire management regimes and practices need to be carefully controlled or else they could exacerbate soil erosion and further environmental degradation.



Above: *Uncontrolled tree cutting & burning to clear land for cultivation along the banks of Nakiloro River in Kakingol, Moroto District*

Due to loss of vegetation cover, soil erosion has become a big challenge especially along the river banks largely because of poor cultivation practices and overgrazing around kraals and watering points. Soil erosion was quite eminent in some sampled patches of the rangelands, as evidenced by gulleys that traversed the landscape. The main effect of soil erosion is degradation of the rangelands specifically by emergence of bare land, poor pastures and low crop yields. Field observations and estimates indicated that, in the Mountain landscape (*Emoru*), 10% of the land was bare in both Moroto and Napak; particularly in the areas of Musupo, Loputuk and Namnam. In Napak, the bare ground was mainly around watering points and in the areas of Nakichumet.

As more sedentary life and crop farming is adopted by the agro-pastoralists, there is a new emerging challenge. The farming methods applied by these communities are quite poor, characterised by clear-cutting and burning of all vegetation on the farm. This exposes the soils to erosion once the rains come, and causes loss of vegetation species that would otherwise be valuable to livestock. If done within the micro-catchments in the landscape, these practices are bound to cause the drying of streams and rivers, further threatening the resilience of livelihoods of the agro-pastoralists.



Above: *Slash and burn agriculture in Loputuk*

Weak natural resources management institutions and structures were identified as another contributing factor to rangeland degradation in the region. Degradation continues to take place in the presence of technical staff and both politically elected and customary institutional arrangements. This is partly associated with insufficient political will and support to enforce existing environmental policies and laws; and the weakening of the traditional institution – the *Akiriket*.

High poverty levels among the community were also identified as another key cause of the recent trends of rangelands degradation in Karamoja. Considering that many youth are unemployed especially after the disarmament exercise, and with inadequate alternative livelihood options, poverty drives them to engage in activities like uncontrolled tree cutting and charcoal burning which have adverse impacts on rangeland health.

In view of the above environmental vulnerabilities and existing traditional NRM institutional framework, the elders and youth herders as well as the District Local Government technical staff developed some strategic actions in order to address these threats and to strengthen the existing traditional NRM institutional arrangements. These strategic actions are given in the matrix below.

4 THE RANGELANDS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR KARAMOJA

Key issues	Root causes	Proposed Actions	Success indicators 2014-2018
Rapid loss of natural vegetation cover and species	Indiscriminate cutting of trees for fencing and building homesteads, commercial sale and commercial production of charcoal.	Individual households (<i>Manyattas</i>) to carry out live fencing of their homesteads e.g. using the thorny Kei apple.	At least a 30% increase in no. of households with live fences.
		Enhance community awareness on the need to start using unburnt bricks for construction of houses in order to reduce tree cutting for house construction.	At least a 30% increase in no. of new houses built using unburnt bricks.
		Individual households (<i>Manyattas</i>) to establish their woodlots for building and cooking	At least a 40% increase in no. of households with woodlots
		Mapping of charcoal burners to identify a process of engaging them in sustainable charcoal production	At least a 30% of charcoal burners adopt sustainable charcoal production practices.
		Providing incentives for the use of mechanical brick makers rather than burnt bricks. E.g. http://www.gumtree.co.za/s-brick+making+machine/v1q0p1	At least a 20% of brick producers use mechanical brick makers
		Conduct periodic and detailed rangelands health assessments to monitor changes	At least 2 detailed rangelands health assessments conducted (One in 2014 and another in 2018)
Over grazing within some patches of the rangelands	Over-concentration of livestock around watering points, riverbanks and within protected kraals; Water scarcity and reduction of water in dams	De-silting and rehabilitation of existing dams and ponds to spread the watering points over a wide area.	At least 40% of dams and ponds in the area are rehabilitated/ de-silted
		Construct watering points at village/parish level in order to decongest the current watering points	At least 30% increase in coverage of watering points
		Communities to plant indigenous trees around dams and other watering points to re-vegetate and protect the water sources.	At least 50% of livestock watering points protected and re-vegetated

		Demarcate riverbank areas for rehabilitation and carry out active and natural regeneration in demarcated areas.	At least 30% of riverbanks demarcated and are under natural re-vegetation
		Work with kraal leaders and security forces to encourage mobility, and develop possible avenues of improving the disposition of protected kraals and rehabilitation of the degraded kraal areas.	At least 50% of degraded lands around protected kraals rehabilitated
		Water Departments to step up operation and maintenance of cattle troughs especially those at the dams such as Kobebe in Moroto and Arechek in Napak	O&M mechanisms set up at 50% of watering points/ troughs
		MWE to strictly regulate multiple use of the available dam waters for other purposes such as irrigation and proposed supply to urban centers	A regulatory mechanism in place for access and use of water at 100% of the dams
		Develop community rangeland management plans for the Karamoja rangelands to address issues above (i.e. integrating proper grazing movement practices, and identifying and addressing poorly located/managed water points and creating new water points where necessary, rehabilitating degraded patches of land, etc.)	At least 30% of the Karamoja rangelands falls under community rangeland management plans.
Uncontrolled bush burning	Traditionally done to control ticks, ease hunting and allow tender pasture to rejuvenate during dry spells	Enhance community awareness on early burning practices and regimes in order to reduce biomass during bush burning.	Awareness enhanced among at least 50% of community members
		Rehabilitate dips in the cattle corridors especially near dams for tick control	At least 50% of cattle dips in key areas rehabilitated.
		Integrate proper & regulated bush burning practices into community rangeland management plans	At least 30% of the Karamoja rangelands falls under community rangeland management plans.
Poor agricultural practices especially on	Limited skills and inadequate awareness on best practices and of the dangers of environmental destruction	Conduct exchange visits for community leaders, agricultural extension staff and leaders to areas where sustainable agriculture has been successfully implemented	At least 50% of technical staff have attended a training and/or awareness raising session on proper agricultural practices

hilly slopes and mountains such as Mt. Moroto and Napak		Strengthen extension services to farmers on sustainable agricultural practices	At least 30% of farmers have better access to relevant extension services
		Conduct practical evidence oriented on farm hands-on training for farmers on soil conservation and agroforestry practices.	At least 30% of farmers are involved in and/or access demonstration sites
		Communities to plant/retain indigenous tree species along the boundaries/ within their gardens in order to control soil erosion and meet future wood & fodder demands	At least 30% of farms are involved in related agro-forestry/soil erosion control activities
Weak natural resources management institutions and structures	Weak implementation of environmental policies and laws by line government departments.	Line departments to adopt & integrate good traditional practices that conserve the environment and enact bye-laws based on them.	At least 50% of relevant departmental staff have adopted & integrated good traditional practices that conserve the environment and enact bye-laws based on them.
		Build capacity of traditional/kraal leaders and <i>Akiriket</i> to enforce bye-laws and statutory laws regarding environmental conservation	At least 50% of traditional/kraal leaders and <i>Akiriket</i> have attended a training and awareness raising on environmental conservation related laws
	Lack of political will to enforce environmental policies and laws	Local councils to enact ENR bye-laws and work with traditional leaders & statutory enforcement officers to enforce the bye-laws	At least 50% of local political leadership have attended a training and awareness raising on environmental conservation related laws. At least 20% Local Governments have enacted ENR by-laws/ ordinances
High poverty levels among the community	Massive unemployment amongst the unskilled youth & women especially after the disarmament exercise	Train youth and women in enterprise development and management skills	At least 20% of youth and women have attended an enterprise development and management training course
	Inadequate alternative livelihood options	Provision of communities with alternative livelihood options and financing mechanisms, e.g. the revolving Community Environment Conservation Fund (CECF) ¹	At least 20% of the community have access to the CECF and other forms of micro-credit
		Encourage adoption of nature-friendly alternative livelihood activities	At least 20% of the community have adopted nature-friendly alternative livelihood activities

¹ This is a revolving fund introduced and tested by IUCN in various regions of Uganda, including parts of Karamoja, to catalyze environmental conservation while providing micro-financing the livelihood needs of households. Based on lessons learnt, guidelines for establishing the fund have been prepared and can be found at www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/water/resources/wp_resources_reports/

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pastoralism is still a valid and resilient livelihood option in Karamoja. However, its sustainability largely depends on the productivity of the rangelands. Therefore, any activities that threaten rangelands health will obviously threaten livelihood resilience, especially in the wake of climate change risks. Rangeland degradation threatens the ecological, social and economic resilience of Karamoja's people. It is therefore of utmost importance and urgency that the identified threats be addressed by all partners in the sub-region. The following are therefore recommended:

- a. This management framework is a broad guide. Partners are encouraged to implement the proposed management actions on ground, commencing with more site-specific community consultations on feasibility of the proposed actions herein. Implementing partners are urged to **extend and deepen community engagement** over a period of 12-18 months with involvement of academic institutions and researchers in order to: expand the geographical scope and improve ground trothing; build a greater understanding of how pastoralist knowledge supports resilience of the landscape and livelihoods; improve joint problem identification; better understand the pastoralist institutional arrangement and understand how pastoralist cultural practices have shaped the current landscapes.
- b. The local governments are also urged to **integrate these actions into their development plans**, with the aim to seek financing from partners, and further enhance local ownership and sustainability.
- c. **Partners should integrate science-based assessments and research including** remote sensing data sets and research outputs in order to: increase the scientific integrity of the assessment and plans; and increase confidence limits; increase work to a wider range of indicators; carry out a Karamoja-specific ecosystem assessment classified under IUCNs Red List of Ecosystems; provide a robust examination of the health and degradation of rangeland ecosystems and an indication of the multiple services that the ecosystems deliver.
- d. **Capacity building for natural resources management planning and development engagement** to help pastoralist communities and government staff to better engage with each other; including building a common platform for linking elders and range-scouts with government staff in order to: strengthen ongoing range monitoring by pastoralist para-ecologists and support pastoralist planning, negotiation, and engagement with development actors. Key outputs in this should include: development of a pastoralist, government and NGO tool box for capacity building for pastoralist-based rangeland assessment and planning; Sub-catchment Rangeland Management Plans based on pastoralist knowledge and vision but integrating government development objectives. The management plans will further guide district level development in relation to rangelands. The plans will allow the identification of critical rangeland resources and assets which are critical to retain resilient livestock based livelihoods and should not be compromised in the development process. The management plans will also give integrated guidance to policy direction.
- e. **Development of** an investment screening and decision-making tool to help make decisions on pastoralist livelihood development projects taking into account; land tenure and mobility issues; traditional management institutions; unsustainable use of resources in order to increase socio-ecological resilience.



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