

## Good practice principles and lessons learnt from cross-border DRR programming in the drylands of the Horn of Africa

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### Introduction

Addressing cross border issues for drought management in drylands of the Horn of Africa is critical, since the major livelihood, pastoralism, spans national borders, which often cut across landscapes, watersheds and ethnic groups. Mobility is a crucial drought coping strategy for pastoralist communities as well as being essential for economic and environmental development. Land use planning, livestock health, natural resource management, peacebuilding and marketing interventions all have obvious cross border dimensions in dryland areas. Despite the theory, cross border programming can be challenging both programmatically and administratively. Working across two administrative frameworks with different currencies, support services, legal/regulatory systems and languages is complex and often involves additional costs to already expensive programming in these remote, under-served and often insecure areas. Reluctance from national governments to promote cross-border movement due to concerns over security and contraband also leads to additional obstacles.

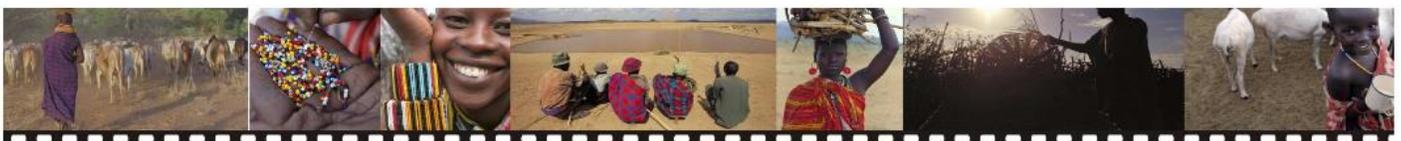
This brief highlights the lessons learnt from ECHO DRR partners in working across the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Somalia, which may be useful for others in the future. It also highlights a particular success of getting local cross border activities recognised at national level with the involvement of the United Nations (UN) and Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) and suggests a process by which this could be done in other types of intervention.

### Approaches to cross border working

Cross border programs, by definition, implement activities across borders, however due to administrative and funding constraints these may be carried out in different ways:

1. **Cross border implementation** where a single activity is implemented with communities on both sides of the border, as if the border was not there e.g. rehabilitation of a water point that is used by both communities where both communities jointly identify, plan, implement and manage the activity.

<sup>1</sup> This brief has drawn on the ideas a culmination of ideas among ECHO and non-ECHO partners through a series of document reviews, meetings, and peer reviews. It was edited by Lisa Baumgartner, Helen de Jode and Vanessa Tilstone.



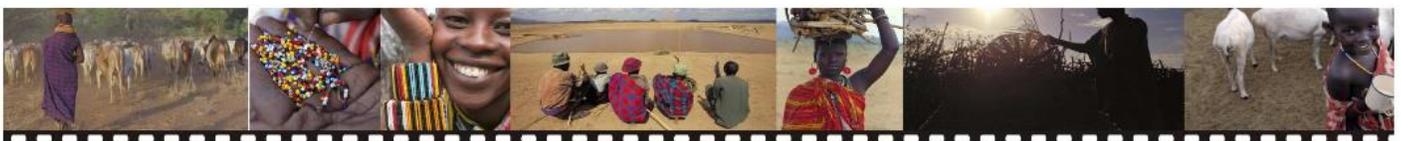
2. **Coordinated/parallel interventions** where interventions are carried out on both sides of the border separately but in parallel or in a co-ordinated manner (e.g. animal or human vaccination campaigns) which have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of interventions carried out on either side.
3. **Cross border visits and trust building** activities that promote cross border linkages, for example by facilitating cross border visits for government or communities for increased understanding and trust building – a fundamental foundation for enhanced cross border collaboration.
4. **Replication of good practices from one side of the border to the other.** Given the socio-economic and ecological similarities successful activities on one side of the border may have potential for success on the other side.

Clearly cross border implementation has the most potential to promote cross border livelihoods, however due to the inherent challenges other approaches may also be useful if implemented well. If an organisation lacks the capacity or funding to implement across borders, partnerships should be considered to fill technical and geographical gaps.

Particular care must be taken when implementing across borders (either ethnic or administrative) not to promote inequalities in services or capacities which may destabilise land use or exacerbate tensions. For example, putting 10 boreholes along a border on one side may exacerbate resource-based tensions. Conflict sensitive approaches and pre-implementation environment and social impact assessments are critical to avoid this.

## Good practice principles and lessons learnt: Programme considerations

1. **Understanding cross-border dynamics:** The first step in a cross-border intervention is to identify issues of common concern on both sides of the border – these can be related to migratory patterns, access to social services, animal health, security, ecosystems/natural resources, market linkages etc. This should also include an in-depth analysis of the social and historical relations and a comprehensive assessment of the multiple risks and vulnerabilities as well as the connectors and dividers affecting the adjacent communities.
2. **Clarifying the objectives of the intervention:** Activities should aim to enhance the cross border livelihoods of communities and minimise negative impacts on any group. It is particularly important that cross-border interventions should aim at the equitable delivery of programs to limit “pull factors” or exacerbate conflict.
3. **Building trust with communities and government:** Initially, development partners should focus on one/a few non-contentious issues in order to build trust as communities or authorities in remote cross border areas may be suspicious of each other or cross border interventions.
4. **The importance of conflict sensitivity:** Border areas are often conflict hot spots, due to the remoteness, lack of formal security systems, tensions created by arbitrary national borders etc. Development partners should thus ensure that their interventions do not exacerbate pre-existing conflicts or put their staff at risk.



5. Once local level, cross border interventions have been successfully established, opportunities for **scale up and reinforcement by higher levels of government** should be explored by engaging with national and regional partners (see case study below).

6. **Evaluate and document impact and lessons learnt:** It is important to monitor, evaluate and assess the impact of interventions, both positive and negative, and ensure lessons learnt are disseminated to others who might consider implementing similar approaches, both as a potential scale up opportunity but also to promote strong and consistent approaches to make implementation more effective. Where governments and donors are sceptical of the value of cross border programming, it is particularly important to illustrate the impact although this will require rigorous and independently evaluated evidence.

## Good practice principles and lessons learnt: Operational considerations

With regards to operations, there are a number of lessons learnt and emerging good practice principles from the DRRAP although, as with programming considerations, these are also relevant for single country programs in remote areas:

**1. Understand the legal and policy frameworks** of the two countries of intervention in order to overcome potential challenges (vehicle movements, labour laws, immigration, import/export of goods etc.).

**2. Decentralised and cross border management structures.** The more decentralised the decision making and the better the understanding by HQ staff (program and administrative) of the realities and challenges of operating in these areas, the more likely that programs can run effectively. Trying to get two offices with different management structures to share resources and co-ordinate is often challenging. Having a single decentralised management structure, preferably at a base near the border, and joint staff can be helpful e.g. ACTED had its cross border coordination office in Mbale, Uganda and the bases in Kapenguria, Kenya and Nakapiripirit, Uganda. Clear responsibilities, strong communication and regular and pre-programmed joint meetings are also critical.

**3. Administration:** In order to reduce the time spent crossing the border, it may be possible to get multiple-entry permits and visas or letters from local officials and local agreements to speed up immigration procedures. From a cash management perspective, it is useful to keep both currencies in as many bases as it is appropriate and ensure to plan for extra time with international bank transfers. Both health and vehicle insurance packages must be evaluated with cross-border implementation in mind.

**4. Communication:** In cross-border regions, where mobile networks from both countries may be available, it is worth investigating the cheapest mode of communication. This may require team members to carry dual sim cards and have guidance on which networks they should be using in different locations. Internet technologies can be helpful to



enhance communication in remote cross-border areas including: email, Skype, and web-based document sharing or collaboration tools and other emerging technologies.

**5. Transport management:** Vehicles are a critical element to any agency operating in a remote area (including cross-border). This calls for strong fleet management systems with adequate budgets, including backup arrangements, in-house mechanics, stocking spare parts, and using flights where appropriate to save time and reduce impact on vehicles.

**6. Budgeting:** Budgeting in remote regions can strain resources, and it is paramount to prepare **realistic budgets** rather than focus on perceived value for money. An under-funded program in a remote area will consistently struggle to operate undermining impact and planned cost effectiveness.

### Case study 1: Cross border animal health agreement between Uganda and Kenya



*Cross-border animal health agreement between Uganda & Kenya, held in Nakiloro market on the border of Karamoja (Uganda) and Turkana (Kenya). The signatories (left to right) are: Director of Veterinary Services (Kenya), Executive Secretary of IGAD, and the Director of Animal Resources (Uganda). The back row includes donor agencies (ECHO, FAO), Members of Parliament, and key ministry officials.*

The cross-border animal health agreement that was signed in April 2013 between Uganda and Kenya represents a success story in collaboration from the DRRAP partners. On 24 April 2013, the Kenyan Director of Veterinary Services and the Ugandan Director of Animal Resources signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to coordinate efforts to improve animal health in their border areas. The MoU was a culmination of two years of engagement with key



veterinary personnel from Uganda and Kenya, led by ACTED and supported by FAO, C&D and DCA with funding from ECHO. There was a need for a cross-border animal health agreement as Uganda and Kenya did not coordinate animal health information sharing, vaccinations and general movements of herds which was becoming problematic due to frequent outbreak of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) for example, brucellosis and foot and mouth disease. The agreement was then signed between the two central governments, with IGAD as the custodian and witness and outlined the commitment of both parties to formulate and implement synchronised joint programmes for the enforcement of animal health laws and policies within the regional and across the common boundary of the two countries. Following this, a Joint Programme Steering Committee (JPSC) and Joint Programme Coordination Management Unit (JPCMU) were established to guide, oversee and regulate activities outlined in the MoU which include Directors in charge of Veterinary Services, local government officials as well as representatives from IGAD, EAC, FAO and a representative from civil society. This approach leveraged the strengths of a variety of development actors working at different levels.

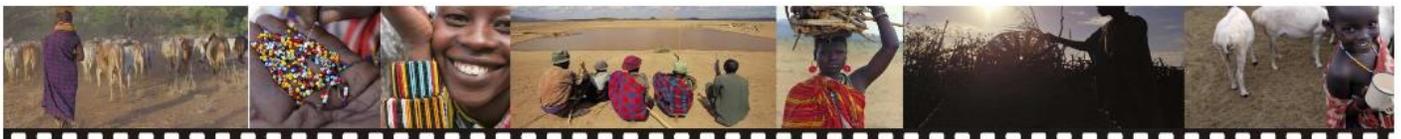
## Case study 2: Reciprocal resource agreements

Cross border resource sharing agreements have been facilitated by a number of DRRAP partners with ECHO funding. These have emerged from different approaches and entry points. For example VSF Germany's program along the Ethiopia-Kenya border, used a conflict sensitive programming<sup>2</sup> approach, while Cordaid and partners in Turbi and ACTED along the Uganda-Kenya border used a Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR)<sup>3</sup> as their entry point. Some reciprocal resource agreements were initiated on one side of the border between two conflicting groups and then expanded to incorporate a third group across the border. In other cases they were the result of collaboration between two agencies working on different sides of the border for example, one agency working in Turkana and another in Pokot where the two agencies each coordinate one of the groups for cross-border dialogue.

Following several years of livelihoods-based engagement with the Pian (Uganda) and Pokot (Kenya) communities, ACTED began to support resource-sharing dialogue in late 2011. ACTED's entry point was through CMDRR interventions: facilitating inter-community learning visits between the Pian and Pokot to enhance trust between the groups and help debunk misconceptions. After a series of meetings dedicated to identifying shared interests, resources and concerns, the rival communities agreed to share previously un-used, yet valuable, grazing areas located between the communities—areas that had not been used due to fear of raiding and insecurity. Elders representing the two communities signed an agreement to share several strategic grazing areas in April 2012. Since then the communities have re-settled onto formerly insecure fertile farming land, and have increased their trade linkages. Through increased access to fertile land, communities have seen an increase in their food production and their incomes, as they have been

<sup>2</sup> See VSF Germany's Technical Brief: How shared resource use management through reciprocal grazing agreements can increase resilience, Obala et al, Nov 2011 [http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/drought/docs/Technical%20brief%20Reciprocal%20resource%20agreements\\_FINAL\\_4th%20Nov.pdf](http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/Technical%20brief%20Reciprocal%20resource%20agreements_FINAL_4th%20Nov.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See Cordaid's Technical Brief: Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction: Safia Abdi, June 2011 [http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user\\_upload/drought/docs/Technical%20brief\\_CMDRR\\_FINAL\\_Sept2011.pdf](http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/Technical%20brief_CMDRR_FINAL_Sept2011.pdf)



able to sell harvested crops to neighbouring communities. In addition, the Pian have introduced the Pokot to the advantages of ox-ploughs, a practice which the Pokot had not previously used, but which has significantly improved the acreage and speed of their farming.

## Roles and responsibilities of different actors

Different types of organisations have different roles in promoting cross border collaboration:

**NGOs** can often identify opportunities for cross border collaboration, particularly in very remote and underserved areas where there may be limited government capacity. However NGOs must try to promote community and government capacities to link across borders as they are by definition temporary actors.

**Local governments** are critical players and should be involved as much as possible. Often trust needs to be built between local governments on either side of the border especially where there is frequent change of staff.

**National government** processes often pay insufficient attention to cross border issues and policies and national systems e.g. early warning, may ignore them. However usually there is a certain amount of latitude allowed at local level and there are several key documents that recognise the importance of cross border issues e.g. the AU Pastoral Policy framework and the ASAL policy in Kenya.

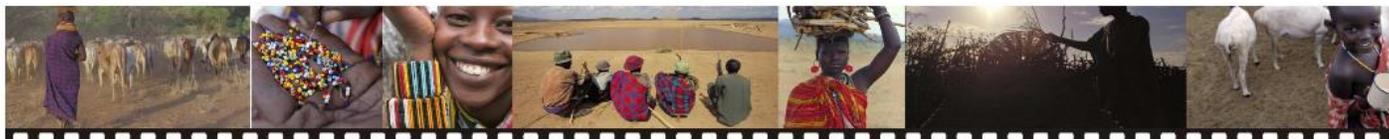
**International organisations:** UN agencies may be able to provide regional support, for example FAO assisting in the signing of the Animal Health MoU mentioned above.

**Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD):** IGAD is an inter-governmental organisation consisting of eight countries in the Greater Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti, Uganda (and Eritrea<sup>4</sup>). IGAD is concerned mainly with regional and cross border issues particularly to promote resilience. It has a number of programmes including IDDRSI, CEWARN, ICPAC, and ICPALD<sup>5</sup>. As a governmental organisation, it has the ability to engage with member states on cross border issues and mediate where necessary. IDDRSI's new focus on knowledge management also provides an opportunity to promote the evidence base for cross border interventions.

**East African Community (EAC):** an intergovernmental organisation comprising five countries in East Africa: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Its mission is to widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments.

<sup>4</sup> Eritrea was suspended from IGAD in 2011

<sup>5</sup> CEWARN Summary Program Performance Report, Jan-Dec 2012



**African Union:** although continent wide, the AU works closely with the RECs on regional and cross border issues – often providing frameworks that the RECs then roll out to member states. The AU has a number of important programmes and frameworks of relevance including:

**African Union Border Program (AUBP):** The mandate of AUBP is the prevention and resolution of border-related disputes and the promotion of regional and continental integration, which constitutes a tool in the structural prevention of conflicts in Africa.

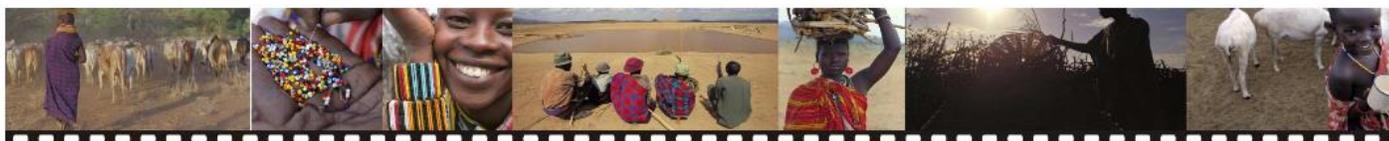
**African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) based in Nairobi:** Its mandate is to support and coordinate the utilization of animals (livestock, fisheries and wildlife) as a resource for human wellbeing in the Member States, and to contribute to economic development, particularly in rural areas.

## Conclusion

Cross-border approaches are critical in the drylands of the Horn of Africa, given the cross border nature of livelihoods and the shared ecosystems, watersheds and cultural ties. Even though mobility may be reducing, increased communication networks, infrastructure developments and economic integration mean that cross border planning and implementation is increasingly important. However, working across borders poses a number of programmatic and administrative challenges beyond those that are inherent when working in these remote and underserved areas. The DRRAP partners experience has led to a number of potential good practices and lessons learnt for overcoming those obstacles.

Coordination and collaboration with different types of organisations is essential to ensure that cross border collaboration is institutionalised and sustained. Inter-governmental organisations e.g. the AU and IGAD can provide policy frameworks or promote high level collaboration supported by UN agencies. Regional organisations can share good practice and approaches, and NGOs can identify critical needs and promote local level collaboration that provides the basis for more formal agreements.

This brief highlights two areas where, through the support of the ECHO DRRAP, progress has been made in cross border programming i.e. animal health and reciprocal resource sharing. However, there are many other areas where progress has been limited in drought preparedness. Despite this, donor funding for cross border programming is reducing not increasing, ECHO's regional decision was the last in the line of several programs to address cross border issues. Whether emerging programs e.g. the World Bank's regional pastoral program, FAO's RISPA and IGAD's IDDRSI will take on these issues with the same intensity at local level remains to be seen, however at the time of writing as the ECHO DRRAP closes, support to much promising cross border work is ending and the relationships and institutional knowledge are being lost.





Humanitarian Aid  
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