

# Pastoralists and farmers: negotiating resources

New claims on land are increasing competition for resources between pastoralists and farmers in Eastern Africa. In Tanzania, ESAPP established participatory processes to map and assess land use conflicts. Project activities brought herding and farming communities together, fostering mutual understanding and enabling them to engage in joint participatory land use planning.

## Sustainable development challenge

Pastoral grazing lands in many Eastern African countries have become the target of large-scale land acquisitions. The surging competition for land and pastures among local, national, and international stakeholders threatens to deprive local communities of their control over resources (UCRT 2010). This development is of particular concern to pastoralists because they graze their animals across large areas based on traditional land access rights that are in conflict with modern land tenure concepts. Restricted access to grazing lands means restricted mobility of herds, which in turn leads to overgrazing, triggers conflicts with farming communities, and marginalizes a production system that is otherwise well adapted to the local environment.

In the 1970s, pastoralists in Tanzania began to use the Usangu wetlands for seasonal grazing. But towards the 1990s, water levels in the nearby reservoirs were found to decline. A scientific study claimed that this was due to livestock grazing (Kikula et al. 1996). Ten years later, other researchers attributed the decreasing water levels to intensive irrigated farming in the area (Walsh 2006). In spite of these new scientific insights, the Government of Tanzania forcibly evicted a large number of pastoralists from the wetlands in 2007 and relocated them to the south of the country. This has led to several, sometimes violent, conflicts between the evicted pastoralists and the resident farming communities.

## ESAPP's response

ESAPP addressed issues of large-scale investments in land from a sustainable development perspective, combining two complementary approaches. On the one hand, ESAPP created cartographic overviews and assessments of land transactions and competing claims on land and natural resources. These provided a basis for awareness creation, planning, and policymaking. On the other hand, ESAPP set up local exchange platforms and fostered the advocacy of marginalized communities as a basis for local conflict mitigation.

In southern Tanzania, ESAPP's main objective was to create a common exchange and negotiation platform for local stakeholders. These stakeholders included representatives of the conflicting parties – farmers and pastoralists – as well as government officials at national and subnational levels, and local non-governmental organizations. Participants met regularly to assess ongoing conflicts, identify stakeholder perceptions and competing claims on resources, and to make decisions about land use planning that are agreeable to both parties. Thus, ESAPP focused on fostering a participatory planning process in which all stakeholders agree on a common solution during each step of the process.



## Main messages

- Independent but participatory assessments of conflict situations must be the starting point for developing solutions to mitigate resource conflicts.
- Conflicts in the pastoralist sector are often viewed as conflicts between pastoralists and farmers. In fact, social conflicts between communities are a symptom of larger-scale conflicts between two key economic sectors. Discussions at the policy level tend to focus on these symptoms rather than addressing the causes.
- The agricultural sector receives better services than the pastoral sector and is therefore more flexible, better informed, and better organized. Projects need to address and overcome these inequalities in a participatory process before community-based development and conflict mitigation can become effective.



Livestock herding is a major economic activity in Tanzania. Pastoralist communities' livestock produces 90 per cent of the meat and 72 per cent of the milk traded in the country. But despite its economic significance, the pastoral livestock sector receives far less government support than the farming sector. (Photo: Udo Höggel)



## The project story

The pastoral and agro-pastoral livestock production systems are the dominant livestock production systems in Tanzania. Their ecological footprints are small and their integration into the ecosystem is almost perfect. Both production systems produce 90 per cent of the meat and 72 per cent of the milk consumed in the country with almost no external input of protein or fossil energy (Mwambene et al. 2010). Nevertheless, when other stakeholders lay claim to grazing lands, pastoralists are often evicted from their ancestral pastures and sent to other parts of the country, where they come into conflict with resident farming communities. These conflicts centre on access rights to pasture and water, and often develop into violence. Pastoralism has thus become a national political issue.

ESAPP's stakeholder platform project was initiated to address these tensions and to assess the consequences of forced livestock movements on pastoral and farming communities. The project focused on two areas where conflicts were severe: the Kilwa and Lindi districts in Lindi region and the Tunduru and Songea districts in Ruvuma region, both in southern Tanzania.

Coping with a considerable influx of livestock herds into farming areas was a new challenge for all stakeholders, and therefore largely undocumented. The ESAPP project broke new ground by supporting communities in managing this unusual and challenging situation. ESAPP researchers conducted assessments in the project areas by interviewing representatives of each community in cooperation with the relevant government offices. They found that a major reason for hostility between the communities was a lack of communication and information. To overcome this problem, the project convened exchange and negotiation platforms between conflicting communities. In addition, it offered information and practical help to support effective land use planning, as well as advice on how to obtain government livestock extension services, including access to marketing infrastructure and information and veterinary services.

The various project activities brought communities together and provided a platform for discussion. Pastoralists and farmers began to share their fears and expectations and work towards a common vision of the future. This enabled them to draft land use plans in a more participatory and hence more sustainable way. Based on this experience, they will be able to handle future conflicts in a more participatory and self-determined manner as well. Overall, the project helped to end an atmosphere of hostile silence between the communities.

**Top:** The ESAPP project initiated a participatory land use planning process in areas experiencing conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. This process was preceded by the preparation of detailed cartographic overviews and assessments and intensive coordination with the Government of Tanzania. The process included various stages of sketching and consensus building to create local ownership of the resulting land use plan. (Photo: Udo Höggel)

**Bottom:** A facilitator of the ESAPP project is talking with members of the pastoralist community in Lindi region. In situations of serious conflict, talks were first held separately with each community, before organizing encounters between the communities to try and sort out differences and eventually work towards a consensus based on commonly agreed land use modalities. (Photo: Udo Höggel)



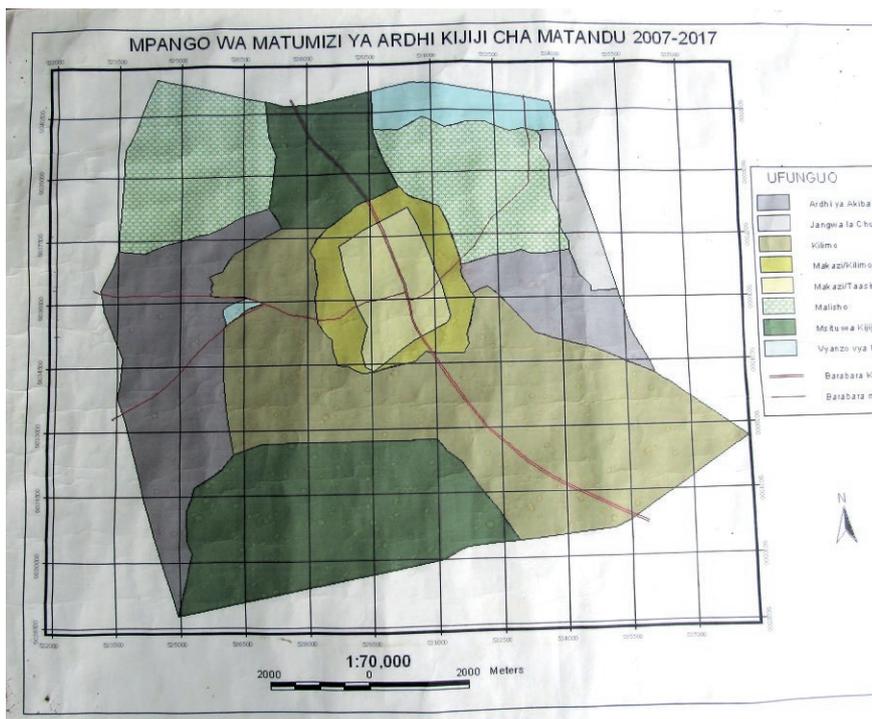
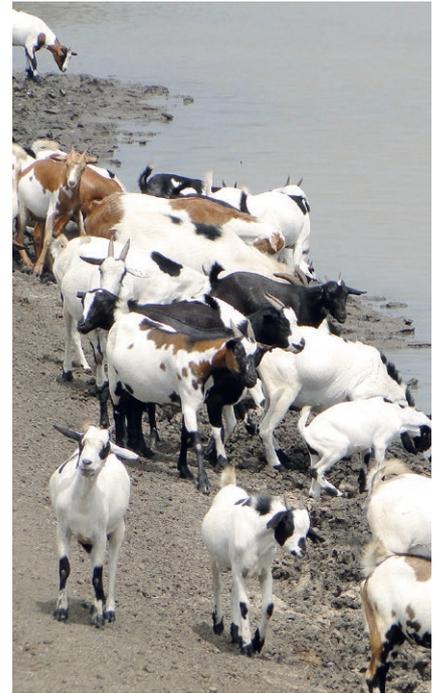
## Innovation and relevance

Fostering a participatory process in a situation of conflict was the most important innovation of this project. Participation in government-led land use planning processes in Tanzania is usually weak; research has shown that the overly interventionist nature of these processes can lead to various problems such as a very low level of stakeholder participation and, consequently, low acceptance of the land use plan (Walsh 2007).

The project also introduced the step of creating detailed cartographic overviews and assessments prior to actual land use planning. Given the highly politicized context of the pastoralism debate in many Eastern African countries, a lack of detailed and sound information about the situation on the ground can easily lead to a vicious circle of mutual blaming. Sound assessments in the field are therefore an important basis for participatory land use planning in accordance with existing government guidelines.

Pastoralism contributes significantly to food security in Tanzania. Nevertheless, it is neglected in terms of sector policies, services, and market development compared to the agricultural sector, which ranks high on the national development agenda. Furthermore, there is no concept for the integrated development of the two sectors. Amid these challenges, the project successfully addressed conflicts between these two important sectors of the Tanzanian economy. Lessons learned suggest that similar processes in other parts of Tanzania and other countries in Eastern Africa could address some of the most frequent causes of violent conflict while significantly improving local populations' food security.

Effective participatory approaches to land use planning in conflict situations, although frequently discussed, did not exist in the project area prior to the project interventions. ESAPP promoted such participatory approaches at a time when government-led land use planning processes were largely prescriptive and community members hardly had an opportunity to participate. In many villages, communication and exchange platforms promoted by the project grew into broader development platforms that were used for conflict mitigation and land use planning beyond the end of the project. This fact demonstrates the relevance of the project's approach.



**Top:** Competing claims on natural resources between farming and herding communities are not restricted to land. Access to government or private-sector services is an important issue as well, especially access to water for irrigation, domestic use, and watering of animals. Pastoralists frequently have to cross farmland to reach places where they can water their animals, thus creating disturbances to the farmers. (Photo: Udo Höggel)

**Bottom:** Land use planning at the level of villages in Tanzania is coordinated by the national land use planning commission. While guidelines prescribe community participation, the commission admits that the quality of planning is deficient in many instances, particularly with regard to participation. This land use plan, for example, does not include seasonal changes in resource availability and access to water – aspects that are crucial to pastoralist livestock management. (Photo: Udo Höggel)



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## Highlight profile

This highlight is based on the achievements of 4 ESAPP priority action projects.

**Implemented during:**  
2007–2014

**Total funds contributed by ESAPP:**  
CHF 161,000

**Implemented by:**  
Southern Highlands Livestock Development  
Association (SHILDA), Iringa, Tanzania

**In collaboration with:**  
The Government of Tanzania, Regional  
Livestock Development Offices of Lindi and  
Mtwara Regions, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania;  
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**With support from:**  
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(CDE), University of Bern, Switzerland

**Main beneficiaries:**  
Farmers and pastoralists in the area around  
Lake Rukwa Basin in the Southern Highlands  
of Tanzania as well as in Lindi and Ruvuma  
regions, in southern Tanzania

## References and further reading

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### This highlight

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## What is ESAPP?

The Eastern and Southern Africa Partnership Programme (ESAPP) is a research implementation programme funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), coordinated by the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern, Switzerland, and implemented jointly by CDE and a network of partner institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa. Launched in 1999 and completed in 2015, ESAPP implemented over 300 priority action projects in the programme region, which included Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Madagascar.

## What are ESAPP Highlights?

ESAPP Highlights are a series of 24 project descriptions providing insights into ESAPP's research and implementation partnerships. Each Highlight describes a succession of demand-driven priority action projects addressing local and regional sustainability issues. The 24 Highlights are collected in a publication that includes additional background information on ESAPP (see citation above). The individual Highlights and the entire publication are also available for download on CDE's website: [www.cde.unibe.ch](http://www.cde.unibe.ch) (keyword search: "ESAPP").

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