



## **Joint village land use planning across administrative boundaries protects shared grazing lands and water points in Tanzania. Lessons learned from fifteen years of development and policy influencing**

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### **Introduction - Context**

Land use conflicts are increasing as land pressures grow due to population increase, existing land degradation and access to previously restricted lands is opened. This is particularly the case in pastoral areas often assumed to be ‘free lands’ and where pastoralists are poorly equipped to protect their lands from sale or encroachment with poor tenure security. Where land is taken by government for infrastructural or agricultural schemes, rarely is compensation provided. Appropriate land use planning at different levels – local to national – that considers the needs, interests and priorities of different land users including normally marginalized groups such as pastoralists is needed.

### **Participatory Land Use Planning in Tanzania**

In Tanzania where land and land use planning policy and legislation is relatively progressive, local (village) level, participatory land use planning is formalised through the *1999 Village Land Act No. 5* and the *2007 Land Use Planning Act No. 6*. However, due to a lack of resources and capacity, undertaking VLUP has been slow: in 2016 only 1,640 villages out of a registered 12,788 villages had undergone land use planning (Massey 2016). Where VLUP has taken place, it may not have been done in an adequately consultative way, and particularly when connected to large-scale land investments (Engstrom et al., 2022; Kayera, 2024). Strong gaps and concerns exist in pastoral areas and where land-use conflicts occur, and individual VLUP can fragment shared grazing lands and block movement of livestock between villages (Flintan, 2013; Flintan, 2021).

In 2010 the Sustainable Rangeland Management Project was established (Flintan et al., 2022) originally focused on supporting individual village land use plans, but it soon became clear that where grazing lands were shared across village boundaries a different approach was needed. A review of policy and legislation revealed that the Land Use Planning Act No. 6/2007 (Section 33 (1)(b)) states that where such resources are shared a “resource management sector plan” should be established with bylaws for the continued sharing of resources. To facilitate this plan, the Project supported the development of joint village land use planning, later taken up by ILRI and the CGIAR Livestock and Climate Initiative as part of a bundle of approaches to improve participatory land use planning in pastoral areas (Flintan et al., 2022).

Over the next fifteen years ILRI and partners developed the approach with an independent evaluation (Sulle, 2021) appreciating the support provided to the Tanzania government and a second evaluation highlighting benefits for communities (Waweru et al., 2021).

Today, ILRI and partners are supporting JVLUP across more than 400,000 hectares of village land, which includes approximately 166,000 hectares designated for grazing. This not only benefits village livestock keepers and pastoralists, but also the 100,000 residents gaining from reduced conflicts. In 2024 the JVLUP approach was incorporated into the National Land Use Planning Commission's guidelines on participatory land use planning. This article describes the impact pathways leading to these outcomes.

### **Outcome impact pathways**

#### **i) Developing and piloting JVLUP**

Piloting started in four clusters of villages in Kiteto District, Manyara region enabled by a strong international and national partnership. National, regional and district land officers were strongly involved, together with those responsible for grazing lands in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. Ensuring that the process followed government guidance was vital for its success, and for holding up to later scrutiny. JVLUP is an integrated approach bringing together neighboring villages to jointly agree on use of land, based on current land use and land potential. The final plan is a legal document valid for ten years, after which renewal is required.

A clear joint vision and incentives is important to bring together different stakeholders i.e. government and communities want reduced land use conflicts. A sense of collective was established that has held to this day assisted by the shared grazing lands being made up of the names of the villages involves – and led to names such as OLENGAPA (the first grazing land secured) (Amos and Flintan, 2019) becoming 'household' names. Other important factors included ensuring a steady flow of resources through the process (stalling cost us dearly) and working around local and national elections as land (and even the JVLUP process) is an emotive topic and could be used for political persuasions.

In 2022 JVLUP was successfully carried out in two new clusters of villages in Chalinze district, Coastal region. Though the area of these lands was relatively small (totalling under 1000 ha) they now provide a strategic anchor or foothold for pastoralists in the area experiencing increasing land pressures. ILRI and partners are now supporting the application of JVLUP in areas where individual village land use planning has taken place, to explore options for joining up what have become fragmented parcels of grazing lands.

#### **ii) Building capacities to implement JVLUP**

The development of JVLUP has been a joint capacity building process for all involved. Trainings were undertaken with and for different stakeholders ranging from conflict resolutions through to necessary financial reporting supported by manuals, learning routes and films. Additionally, community members capacity to protect their lands and defend them in the courts (e.g. in the case of farmer encroachment) has been supported, together with their exposure to decision making forum such as national Livestock Keepers Association meetings (Flintan et al., 2021).

JVLUP was grounded in principles of good governance and gender equity from its inception (Daley et al., 2017) incorporating CGIAR innovations such as community conversations (Bullock, 2024) and women's leadership forums (Dungumaro and Amos, 2019). These strategies have led to significant outcomes, such as over 30% participation of women in decision-making bodies for JVLUP and women's assertive collective actions (Flintan, 2024a).

#### **iii) Influencing the policy environment**

The continued success of JVLUP requires an enduring enabling policy environment and has required ongoing engagement with policy actors (Kalenzi, 2016). A key strategy in this regard was supporting engagement and joint learning between land use planners in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia including their joint attendance at international conferences.

In 2022 an MOU Was established between ILRI and the NLUPC. USAID (US\$464,487) and the EU (US\$450,000) supported the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum to expand the approach. And in 2024 a national guideline on joint village land use planning was launched, with the validation workshop officiated by the Deputy Minister of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development Hon. Geoffrey Pinda (Flintan, 2024b).

## Conclusions

Influencing policy through the technical development of an innovation that serves the interests of multiple stakeholders across a nation is challenging, takes time and needs a strong cross-sectoral partnership. It took a decade and a half from the initial joint village land use planning innovation idea, to then being piloted, validated and finally incorporated into the national guidelines. The final challenge, and the biggest one we face now is implementing the approach at scale, with continued limited government allocation of resources to the approach despite increasing land use conflicts.

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