

Chapter 2

Empowering Communities in Livestock Resource Planning and Decision-making: A Suggested Participatory Policy Framework

The regional workshop concluded that present planning processes do not fully explore the positive contribution of livestock to mountain households. Since local communities remain on the periphery of the process, their extensive knowledge and skills have not been sufficiently incorporated into livestock resource planning and management. This calls for development of a new participatory framework that could empower local communities in planning and decision-making for their livestock resources in the context of natural resource management. When local communities are empowered, they will be able to exploit systematically the positive potentialities of livestock resources for improvement of mountain livelihoods.

The workshop was convinced that local communities play a decisive role in managing their local resources and allocating them judiciously. Therefore, a bottom-up approach with full community participation is critical for development of a resource-related policy and institutional programme at the grassroots level. Such an approach can provide a sustainable framework for communities to make efficient and productive use of local resources. The workshop further believed that the development of a participatory policy framework is essential for empowerment of local communities in their livestock resource planning and decision-making. Improved and effective participation of local communities in planning can be expected to improve livestock productivity, and thus contribute to higher economic returns from livestock-raising. The framework can be used to improve livestock production resource use as part of overall natural resource management, including better understanding of its livestock linkages. Successful implementation of the framework would reduce rural poverty, and improve the livelihoods of mountain people in the Hindu Kush–Himalayas.

Goal of the framework

The workshop's final plenary session agreed that the goal of the new planning framework should be defined as follows.

- To empower farming communities so that they can plan and manage local livestock resources in order to improve mountain livelihoods in a sustainable manner.

Local communities extensive knowledge and skills have not been sufficiently incorporated into livestock resource planning and management

Local communities play a decisive role in managing their local resources and allocating them judiciously

Objectives of the framework for community empowerment

The following objectives were agreed.

- Build capacity of communities to support empowerment and ownership of livestock resource planning and management
- Ensure maximum participation of women farmers in all stages of planning and implementing of livestock resource development
- Emphasise an integrated approach to natural resource management for livestock resource development
- Improve income generation by promoting value addition, product diversification and marketing development

Participatory policy framework

The conceptual framework incorporates four pillars of development for win-win situations. Figure 1 shows the positive outcomes, such as environmental safety, human health and safety, social equality, and people's livelihood improvements, that occur as a consequence. The details worked out by the stakeholders during the workshop are provided in the Annex.

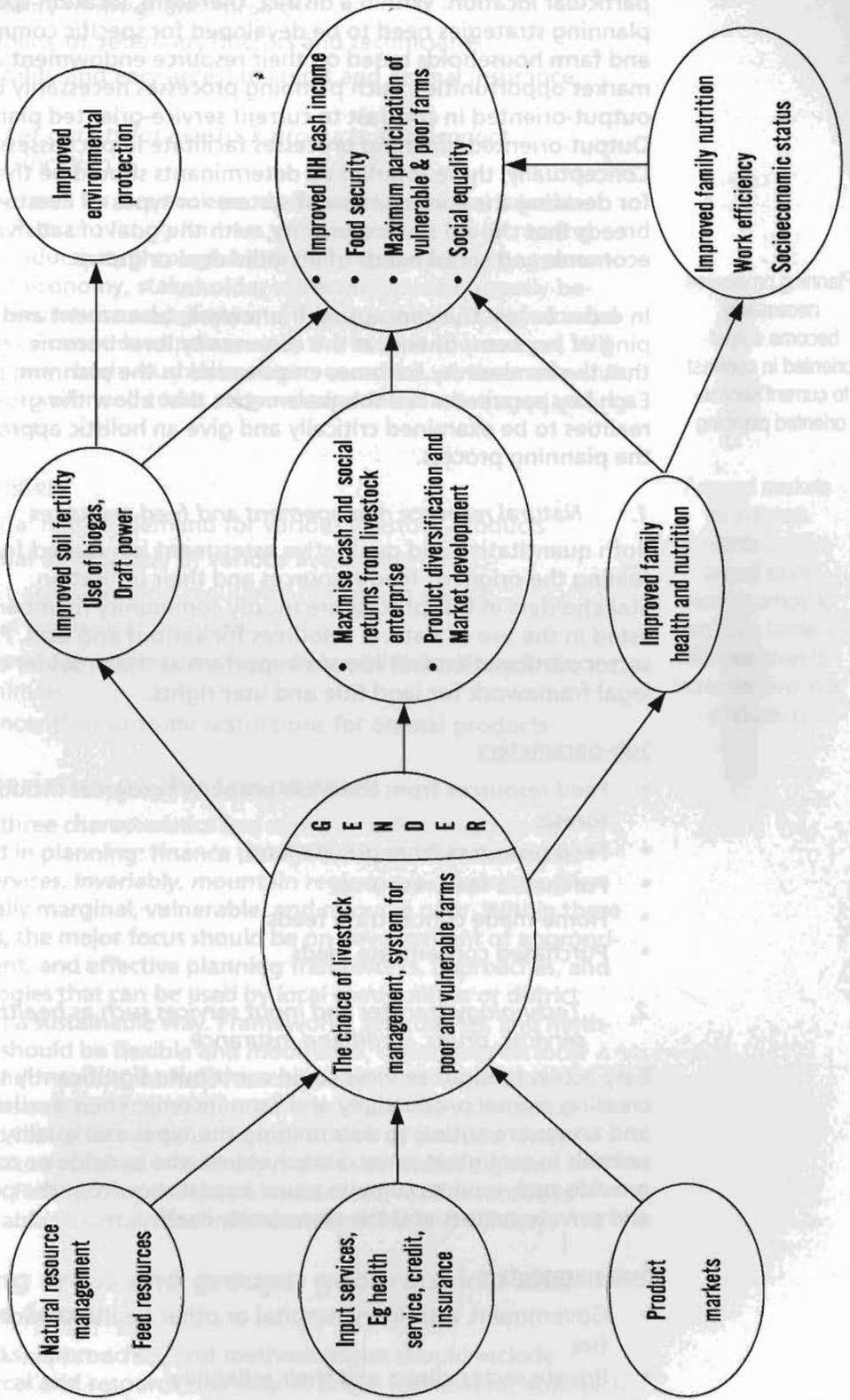
There are three critical technical and institutional dimensions: natural resource management, technology transfer and input supply services, and markets for animal products

In this policy framework, there are three critical technical and institutional dimensions: natural resource management, particularly use of animal feed resources; technology transfer and input supply services such as animal health services, farmer extension/training, animals, drugs, tools, credit, and insurance; and markets for animal products. Within these three dimensions, communities should have an equitable role with other private and public stakeholders to determine the optimal mix of social and economic roles of livestock as an integral component of farming and livelihood systems in poor and vulnerable areas. This is expected to have three ripple-off social and environmental benefits. Firstly, there can be efficient nutrient recycling by feeding manure through household biogas plants before using it as fertiliser. Methane gas can be used as an energy source for cooking. This reduces women's workloads as they no longer need to collect fuelwood. Secondly, less fuelwood collection means less pressure on forests; thus, assisting environmental protection. Thirdly, there can be improvements in human nutrition. Efficient livestock production systems result in more animal protein in family diets. This can contribute to greater work efficiency with positive implications for agricultural productivity. In addition, improved nutrition can increase a family's social status.

Key indicators for planning and decision-making

As shown in Figure 1, there are three major interlinked determinants that influence a farmer's choice of livestock farming system, and the types and breeds of livestock that he/she will raise in a

Figure 1: Participatory policy framework: pro-poor livestock policy and institutional programme development for community empowerment



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particular location. Within a district, therefore, location-specific planning strategies need to be developed for specific communities and farm households based on their resource endowment and market opportunities. Such planning processes necessarily become output-oriented in contrast to current service-oriented planning. Output-oriented planning processes facilitate impact assessment. Conceptually, these interlinked determinants should be the basis for deciding the combination of systems or types of livestock and breeds that should receive priority, with the goal of satisfying the economic and social needs of an individual or group.

In order to test the conceptual framework, assessment and mapping of key components at the community level become critical so that the community becomes empowered in the planning process. Each key parameter has sub-parameters that allow the ground realities to be examined critically and give an holistic approach to the planning process.

1. *Natural resource management and feed resources*

Both quantitative and qualitative assessment is required for ascertaining the origin of feed resources and their utilisation. Stakeholders in this process are mostly community members interested in the use of natural resources for various end uses. Public sector participation will remain important as the provider of the legal framework for land title and user rights.

Sub-parameters

- Feed resources from common property resources including forests
- Feed resources from private land
- Purchased feed resources
- Home-made concentrate feeds
- Purchased concentrate feeds

2. *Technology transfer and input services such as health services, drugs, credit and insurance*

Easy access to input services could contribute significantly to increasing animal productivity and farm income. Their availability and access are critical to determining the types and quality of animals in mountain areas. Stakeholders who provide or could provide such services come in equal importance from the public and private sectors and the community itself.

Sub-parameters

- Government veterinary hospital or other health service facilities
- Private sector clinics and their reliability

- Availability of drugs and vaccines
- Availability of veterinary doctors and technicians
- Availability and easy access to credit and animal insurance

3. *Market outlets for livestock products and product diversification*

Assured markets for livestock products and live animal sales become critical to providing farmers with incentives for increasing livestock productivity through better farm resource management. In a market economy, stakeholder agreements are normally between communities and private marketing companies or informal middlemen. Government presence in the market is, however, still strong in many Hindu Kush-Himalayan countries, so their role and participation will need to be acknowledged in marketing planning and decisions.

Sub-parameters

- Potential market demand for various livestock products
- Potential farm supply of various livestock products
- Market assurance and regularity of product supply
- Product diversification opportunities
- Economic gains or returns from sales of livestock products or live animals
- Price incentives or trade restrictions for animal products

Assured markets for livestock products and live animal sales become critical to providing farmers with incentives for increasing livestock productivity

Characteristics of the framework

There are three characteristics and constraints that need to be considered in planning: finance (budget), human resources, and support services. Invariably, mountain regions are diverse, fragile, economically marginal, vulnerable, and resource poor. Within these limitations, the major focus should be on development of appropriate, efficient, and effective planning frameworks, approaches, and methodologies that can be used by local communities or district planners in a sustainable way. Frameworks, approaches, and methodologies should be flexible and modifiable, depending on local resource endowments, human resources (technical expertise), budget constraints, and access to infrastructure. They should be simple and cost effective (economical) as well as practical. They should be accomplished in a timely manner or within a given timeframe. Finally, they should be sustainable; local institutions should be able to sustain them for development and delivery.

Targeting areas and groups: geographical and resource focus

Frameworks, approaches, and methodologies should include geographical and resource diversity. A single framework, approach,

and methodology cannot be applicable to the diverse conditions of mountain areas. In order to simplify, mountain areas can be classified into two categories from a market point-of-view: accessible and inaccessible.

Support services (social and physical infrastructures, and the private sector) should be considered to be determining factors for new interventions or technological packages in livestock sector development. Micro-level communities or farmers should be categorised in terms of their resource base. Therefore, within each geographical area, two types of farmers or communities can be targeted: relatively resource-rich and relatively resource-poor.

Operationalisation of participatory policy framework

Results of operationalisation of the institutional and policy framework for community empowerment will need further analysis through field-testing and verification. The four pillars of the new development paradigm are environmental safety, food safety and security, social equity, and people's livelihoods. Successful testing and validation will have implications for the wider applicability of the framework in mostly poor, marginal, and vulnerable areas in developing countries. Future analysis and operationalisation of the framework is proposed under the premise that it will be critical for policy and decision-makers to understand that joint action by rural communities will have positive impacts on the environment, economic growth, and social equity, both nationally and internationally.

While implementing mountain policies and plans, empowerment of local communities and traditional institutions is critical. There is a need for social mobilisation; this could be done by making use of indigenous knowledge and skills of local people. Local communities should be empowered in the formulation and implementation of mountain policies and plans. Various stakeholders, including government line agencies and I/NGOs working at grassroots levels, can act as catalysts or facilitators. It is worth noting that plans and decisions should be completely prepared and implemented by communities themselves. In addition, such policies, plans and programmes need to have institutional flexibility depending on the availability of local technical and managerial expertise, finances, and access to infrastructure. Moreover, they should be simple, practical, cost effective, and achievable within a realistic timeframe.

Operationalisation of the new institutional and policy framework can be adopted widely in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and elsewhere. Improved and effective involvement of local communities in planning of natural resource management would contribute to

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improved livestock productivity, and also result in higher economic returns from crop-livestock farming and market supply systems, and better understanding of linkages within natural resource management. This will ultimately contribute to the major goal of reducing rural poverty and improving the livelihoods of mountain people in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas.

Meeting of stakeholders

A stakeholders' workshop to discuss operational issues of the framework, in which key policy-makers, planners, community leaders, farmers, and input-output agents (local traders) will participate, has been planned. The main objective of this meeting will be for government policy/decision-makers and other participants to agree on the locations and scope of pilot schemes. The intention is to carry out field tests in selected pilot sites, including those already used for household case studies. The meeting will also draw up technical details of field-testing and verification procedures, and agree participatory planning and implementation procedures. The output of the workshop will be a project proposal and documentation of agreed procedures for local stakeholder empowerment. Draft technical process outlines will be developed for the workshop so that implementation arrangements between stakeholders can be discussed and finalised.

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