



Reviving nomadic pastoralism in Iran

Facilitating sustainability of biodiversity and livelihoods—
A learning by doing project

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15 January, 2003
Revised 21 March 2003

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Background

Nomadic Pastoralism and Rangeland Management in Iran

Pastoral communities have always played an important role in Iran and the greater ethno-ecological region of which it is a part by developing creative and sustainable systems for the use of scarce natural resources. Migration is a common cornerstone of their strategies; their mobility ensures that natural resources are not used to the point of exhaustion and eventual extermination. In addition, their herds browse the vegetation, stomp the soil, transport seeds of wild species, and fertilise the land, all of which benefit the rangeland and the maintenance of its biological diversity. Nomadic pastoralists have learned to conserve rangelands through sophisticated techniques embedded in complex social and cultural institutions.

More than ninety percent of Iran's surface area of 1.6 million km² is made up of arid and semi-arid lands. Most of this consists of rangelands, largely inhabited, cared for and used sustainably by the nomadic pastoralists of the country until recent government and other external influences began to upset their equilibrium with the natural resources on which they depend.

After some eight decades of top-down policies that have sought to limit the pastoralists at best—and destroy them at worst—the sense of despair in pastoral communities is palpable. For instance, during a recent field trip by CENESTA workers, accompanied by officers of the Organisation for Nomadic Pastoralists' Affairs, Qashqai nomadic communities in the south of the country overwhelmingly admitted that under present conditions they would eventually be forced to give up their traditions and livelihoods, much to their regret and enormous cultural and material loss to the country.

Although social cohesion has been on the decline, there is still a very significant sense of community and identity. Research by CENESTA has highlighted the fundamental desire of nomadic communities to keep their identity and mobile way of life so long as the political-economic space needed to achieve a sustainable livelihood exists.

One major problem faced by the pastoralists of Iran is the issue of land tenure related to rangelands. The pre-1963 land reform pastoralist communities used common property management systems. The land reform programme of the Shah brought about the nationalisation of all natural resources, including rangelands, forests, water and wildlife, and alienated the pastoralists from their common property land and customary rights. Rangelands became state property governed by an old school of range management.¹ Individuals were hence granted use of land based on a specific short-term grazing licensing system. This system has further marginalised the pastoralist communities by not only fragmenting and

¹ Under the ex-Shah of Iran each public sector was given to an overseas—usually US consulting corporation or university to manage. Natural resources were given over lock, stock and barrel to Utah State University, a bastion of conservative, old school thinking about natural resource management. A clear objective of the public sector reform group organised by the Development and Resources Corporation, charged with reform policies for the public sectors in Iran was "the elimination of the small producers, including in villages and nomadic pastoral areas." (Personal communication to M T Farvar by the leader of the team, 1976)

destroying their summer and winter pastures, but also impeding on their migratory routes. Sedentarisation and the encroachment of the outside world have forced the pastoralist communities to abandon the ecological needs of the land. Consequently, the nationalisation of land has destroyed the incentives of proper management and sustainable use of the land. Nationalised rangelands were turned over to agriculture or to a national system of protected areas both of which resulted in environmental degradation. High-grade rangelands have currently fallen to 9.3 million hectares, less than half the 1963 figure.

Over the past 40-50 years unsustainable government policies have favoured the intrusion of market-oriented production systems that are frequently out of the control of the pastoralists. Consequently, emphasis is placed on short-term gains rather than optimisation of sustainable use. For example, the flock composition has changed in that there is now a tendency toward meat rather than dairy producing varieties of livestock.

Yet there is cause for hope. The pastoral communities of Iran currently comprise some 2% of the total population (1.3 million people) and although the ratio of pastoralists to the entire population has dropped from some 25-50% in previous centuries, the absolute total population levels have remained roughly constant, and in fact seem to have increased some over the past 10 years despite intensive attempts at their sedentarisation. Notwithstanding existing economic difficulties, pastoral communities are producing about 1/3 of the country's need in livestock products. International studies have calculated that mobile, extensive, pastoral systems in dry lands produce 2-10 times more economic gains per hectare than sedentary ranching production systems.

Finally, there is the conviction in many circles, including at the highest levels of the Department of the Environment, that the nomadic pastoralists, including the Qashqai tribe, have been the guardians of the biodiversity of the rangelands and not their destroyers, as most pervasive myths of rangeland degradation and desertification purport.

Managing Rangelands

Under the ex-Shah of Iran the range scientists trained at Utah State University, a bastion of conservative, old-school thinking about natural resource management, helped the government apply a model of rangeland management that assumed an ecosystem in equilibrium, and a sedentary use regime, as in Western USA. However, recent advances in the understanding of dry land functioning support the appropriateness of mobile pastoral systems since they are now understood to be non-equilibrium ecosystems (meaning that a stable equilibrium, including in patterns of rainfall, cannot be defined for them).

The latest scientific findings also indicate that the idea that overgrazing is a cause of ecological damage is a myth. In fact, serious land degradation and desertification are mostly evident around permanent settlements and water points, where livestock mobility is reduced, but much less so in open rangelands. If anything, over-cultivation is the single most serious threat to dry lands and rangelands throughout the world.

In conclusion, research is re-discovering that ecosystems that feature uncertainty, spatial variability and complex non-equilibrium ecological dynamics require a special management style which is based on flexible responses, mobility, and local level adaptive resource management. In such management paradigms local users of agricultural biodiversity are central actors in analysis, planning, negotiations and action.

An Opportune Time

The range of interests in mobile pastoralism is growing internationally and there is a corresponding interest within Iran to re-examine the decades-old policies of elimination of pastoral livelihoods from this land. It is therefore an opportune time to consider a project focused on empowering pastoralist communities. The factors contributing to this growing interest include:

- The support for protection of mobile peoples, particularly by civil society;
 - The international conference on mobile peoples and conservation held in Dana Nature Reserve, Jordan in 2002, resulted in the Dana Declaration on Mobile Peoples and Conservation (See www.danadeclaration.org). See also IUCN-CEESP. *Policy Matters*, No. 10, August-September 2002, prepared as a special issue for the Johannesburg Earth Summit.
 - Workshops held at the NGO Forum for Food Sovereignty (the parallel civil society event to the World Food Summit: *five years later* in Rome 2002) on animal genetic resources and pastoralism emphasised the need to find viable options for continuing nomadic pastoralism;
- The growing momentum in challenging the myths of rangeland degradation and empowering pastoralists to conserve ecosystems;
 - A Global Dry Lands Partnership Challenge Paper on Pastoralism, has been prepared with the participation of CENESTA that will be discussed at the UNCCD COP 6;²
 - The World Parks Congress, to be held in September 2003, will have as a key theme Community Conserved Areas, including discussions of land tenure, co-management of natural resources, with several special session on mobile people and conservation, sponsored by IUCN-CEESP/WCPA, UNDP-GEF and others;
 - Recent advances in the sciences of institutions and environmental economics have shown that common property management is viable, and have given us the tools with which to improve this form of land tenure regime;
 - GEF is interested in supporting a Small Grant project in the immediate future on mobile pastoralists and sustainable livelihoods with the conservation of biodiversity resources, and a large-scale GEF project for the Central Zagros range in Iran is currently devising ways of involving local pastoral communities in the conservation of biological diversity including collaborative management of national parks and other protected areas in their migratory landscape;

² The Sixth Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be held in 2004 in Cuba.

- The recent spontaneous revival of transhumance in Southern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States underscores the need to recognise the viability of mobile pastoral systems throughout the world;
- The increasing international interest in preserving the role of local communities in small-scale food production;
 - Growing momentum of social movements globally opposing the introduction of agriculture into global trading systems such as the WTO and calling for Peoples' Food Sovereignty;
 - Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity emphasised the importance of local communities preserving agricultural biodiversity as a prerequisite for achieving food security, securing livelihoods and maintaining the natural environment ;
- The international interest in animal genetic resources;
 - Support for an international treaty on animal genetic resources growing;
 - FAO is currently working on a Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, which would include the diversity of animal breeds among pastoralists;³
 - The need for *in situ* conservation of genetic resources is recognised by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the United Nations FAO;
- The positive developments within Iran;
 - The new Director of the Organisation for Nomadic Pastoral Affairs (ONPA) in Iran is highly supportive of the initiative in this project and has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with CENESTA at both the central and provincial levels to operationalise it;
 - Nomadic Councils in Iran are starting to be set up in addition to village-level Islamic Councils;—they are foreseen in a law currently completing its final stages of approval in the national Parliament;
 - There is wide-spread public concern in Iran about un-safe imported meat and desire for more natural products with better taste;
 - Despite the emergence of individualistic behaviours, most pastoral groups continue to share a very strong sense of community. Their social capital— indigenous knowledge, customary social organisations and leadership patterns, reciprocity and interdependence rules, political alliances, social “symbiotic” relationships and conflict resolution mechanisms— is very high. Such social capital contributes to powerful adaptive rangeland management strategies, which still have to be fully recognised in their role for sustainable land management;

³ See the CENESTA publication with Maryam Rahmanian and Taghi Farvar interviewing tribal elders on indigenous breeds of pastoralists, "Pastoral Life in Iran: a Changing Landscape." *Seedling*, January 2003.

- A "side event" organised by UNDP/GEF/FAO/IUCN-CEESP and a number of NGOs including CENESTA and Sahel Défi, outlined a strategy for arriving at enabling policies for mobile pastoralism.
- The drylands programme of IIED which has produced, with the support of other partners, a book on the new science and art of non-equilibrium range ecology and management. Interest in this approach has gone so far as the substitution of concepts of non-equilibrium ecosystems for the old school based on equilibrium and climax models;
- A number of international forums on pastoralism, including co-sponsoring with ONPA and CENESTA FAO has sponsored the 1992 International Conference on Nomadism and Development, which had a final declaration in favour of mobile pastoralism;
- Three of IUCN-CEESP's Working Groups—those on Sustainable Livelihoods; on Collaborative Management; and on Indigenous & Local Communities, Equity & Protected Areas have been keenly interested from their respective perspectives in issues of nomadic pastoralism;
- An update of the classical volume, *The Careless Technology—Ecology and International Development* is in preparation which further reviews the evolution of pastoralism in the world over the last 3.5 decades.

Overall Goal of the Project

Preserving, strengthening, and revitalising mobile nomadic life in Iran and the greater geo-cultural region, with a particular focus on achieving sustainable livelihoods, preserving and revitalising its cultural strengths and models of conservation and sustainable use of nature, is a social and ecological necessity. This project therefore aims to empower migratory nomadic pastoral communities in this region—including the mountain regions of Anatolia through Iran and Afghanistan to Central Asia and China's western Turkish-speaking provinces—to identify the most appropriate models for sustaining livelihoods and agro-biodiversity, taking into consideration their unique culture, present status, strengths and limitations, sharing experiences and visions for the future.

The Project

Guiding Principles

These principles were discussed and formulated by the Council of Elders of the 14 clans of the Kuhi sub-tribe of the Qashqai Confederation of Tribes during a recent workshop with support from CENESTA:

1. Equity and justice
 - a. Benefit to the entire community (individual benefits within the framework of collective benefit);
 - b. Priority will be given to the weaker and more deprived parts of the community;
2. Participation

- a. Consultation with the various camps of the clans and taking into account their views, if possible before taking any decisions;
 - b. Reporting on performance, decisions, actions, and the results to every single camp as soon as possible;
- 3. Accountability
 - a. All the actors should be accountable to each other;
 - b. Transparency in planning, design and implementation;
- 4. Sustainability
 - a. Economic and financial (using the income— rather than the capital— of economic activities and producing wealth and not just income);
 - b. Social and cultural (developments should emerge from their own culture and not blindly imitating models from other countries and conditions);
 - c. Environmental and ecological (using environmentally appropriate technology, conserving nature and prevention of pollution);
 - d. Legal, policy, structural and institutional (support from both government and national and international organisations and ensuring that the community-based organisations are modelled after the traditional social organisation of the tribe);

In addition, CENESTA has adopted the following principles to govern its own work with local communities:

1. Outside institutions (e.g. government agencies, private sector firms, NGOs) should be acting in a supportive, enabling and empowering role for community decisions and facilitate better decision-making among the community;
2. Externally introduced concepts (such as modern co-operatives) will be avoided in preference to structures and mechanisms that are deeply rooted in the local culture; the local community is represented by councils based on traditional community structures and models which should be rehabilitated and empowered if necessary;
3. Any initiatives must respond to the needs of the local communities as defined by them through their own analytical processes;
4. Communities define their own approach based on the unique needs and conditions of their environment and society. Therefore, “rolling” designs and planning mechanisms are preferred to pre-set methods of project implementation. Goals, milestones and activities proposed are continually revisited, re-discussed and reconstructed on the ground by the local communities and their agents;
5. Gender issues will be addressed within the greater context of community and cultural issues. Experience in traditional Muslim societies has shown that this often entails employing creative and sometimes counter-intuitive approaches and working at the pace of the community, for example by involving only men during the initial phases of a project until trust has been built between the community and the project team and women can be included with the support of the entire community;
6. Funds will be used largely for investment and re-investment purposes, and much less for services.

Lessons learnt from previous participatory sustainable livelihoods initiatives

Many of the lessons CENESTA colleagues have learnt from their experiences in three decades of implementing participatory sustainable livelihoods projects have been incorporated into our operating principles mentioned above. In addition to these, there are some lessons which are particularly relevant to funding and administrative aspects of the project:

- A greater portion of funds available will be required in the initial phase of the project in order to ensure the establishment of a sound foundation; furthermore, without initial adequate funding to cover human resources and other costs for the projects of the community-based organisations (CBOs), momentum, trust and enthusiasm may be lost. Additionally, it is imperative to be flexible and have the autonomy to spend money at discretion to take decisions with the local community as needed; appropriate.
- The NGO (CENESTA) should be actively involved and supportive of the project well beyond the initial arrangements to offer further support and assistance. As the system develops with the initial management unit, the facilitation efforts of CENESTA will shift to assist in the process of adaptive replication; and quality control.
- The amount of time (human resources) and financial resources (including autonomy over the use of those resources) dedicated to the project cannot be compromised without risking the success of the project itself.
- It is necessary to identify and build the capacity of committed and capable personnel at all levels, from the community through their leaders to the facilitators of the process, and selected government officials with a proven track record of dedication to the cause.
- Documenting every step of the project, using a variety of media such as reports, photographs, video productions, etc.

Strategies

1. Empowering local communities to take charge of their own processes of analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation. This will include supporting mobility in nomadic pastoral communities;
2. Strengthening and, where necessary, rehabilitating, indigenous social structures, social cohesiveness, and cultural integrity;
3. Fostering multi-sectoral collaboration to promote dialogue between communities and external governmental and non-governmental sectors;
4. Promoting networking and exchange of expertise among actors from different tribes, countries and regions;
5. Examining the impact of national and international policies on pastoralists and taking the necessary local and national actions to protect them;
6. Supporting simultaneously sustainable livelihoods for local communities and the conservation of natural resources on which they depend;

7. Appropriate participatory research and development to find appropriate solutions to local problems, while empowering the local communities to handle as much of their own research as feasible.

Objectives

1. Re-establish mobility as a legitimate approach for conservation and livelihoods;
2. Revive and strengthen traditional social organisations of the tribe;
3. Strengthen indigenous identity and pride through the arts (music, dancing, handicrafts, language, poetry and literature and games);
4. Reverse the setbacks, such as land grabs and legislation, that have destroyed common property systems and re-establish common property rather than state or private ownership and management;
5. Give the nomadic community a voice in decision-making regarding policies, plans and projects that affect them, including through methodologies such as citizens juries (e.g. Prajateerpu);
6. Re-establish a dynamic equilibrium between pastoralism, agriculture and human settlements, and processing and service industries;
7. Rehabilitate, strengthen and propagate an authentic nomadic pastoral model for the conservation of nature and biodiversity; and,
8. Integrate mobile services and improved content for these services (health, education, veterinary, marketing and training services).

Outputs and Activities

Note: these could change as the project progresses depending on the needs of local communities. What we have here is based on several workshops we have already held with them.

A number of potential project sites were identified following consultations with the Organisation for Nomadic Pastoralists' Affairs (ONPA) of the Province of Fars. The final project site was identified following a week-long field visit in January 2003 during which consultations were held with members of the local community and the government. The site corresponds with the summer and winter pastures and migration routes of the Kuhi Sub-tribe of the Shish Bayli (in Persian, Shesh Boluki) Tribe. The summer pastures are located to the north of Shiraz, the capital of Fars province, and their winter pastures located to its south.

Output 1. Functioning Council of Elders of the 14 clans

This output has already been achieved during a series of 3 workshops that have taken place with community members. The Council of Elders of the 14 clans was re-established, composed of community elders from the *bonkus* (clans) of the Kuhi *tireh* (subtribe). One elder who is trusted by all the clans was chosen to act as the focal point between CENESTA and other outside organisations and the sub-tribe. The Council will act as an advisory and, as needed, decision making board and will facilitate social mobilisation. This structure existed historically and was re-affirmed by the existing constituencies of the *tireh* (subtribe). The preliminary workshops with key representatives of each clan sought to achieve the following goals:

- Introduction of self, organisation, and goals of visit;
- Building trust and familiarity between team and community members; and,
- Collection of basic information about the sub-tribe using methods that contribute to community empowerment by strengthening analytical capacity.

Output 2. Needs of the Sub-tribe prioritised

The workshops already held also resulted in the definition of the clan's priority problems/needs. The priorities were defined in general by the subtribe but each clan was given the opportunity to refine their own list.

The next step is to hold further workshops to address the following issues:

- *What are ways that these problems might be solved?*
- *What resources (material and human) are locally available?*
- *How could the sub-tribe begin taking the first initiative in proposing solutions to their own problems?*
- *What mechanisms could ensure that they are engaged in a process of regular consultation with their constituents?*

Output 3. Plan of Action formulated by the Council of Elders

The assessment of priorities will lead to a process of defining solutions and formulating a plan of action which could include a variety of projects to address the priorities/needs. The Council will govern all projects included in the plan of action, but it can delegate tasks and responsibilities to individuals or organisations within or outside the community.

The projects could involve:

- Mechanisms for sustainable community investment and proposals for sustainable livelihoods projects;
- Research (e.g. on rangeland management);
- Analysis of existing policies and legislation and proposal of new ones;
- Training programmes; and,
- Improved services and facilities (e.g. education, health, etc.) and enhanced accessibility to them.

With the strong involvement and help of the Council members, the community will write up a proposal for the project or projects that have been chosen for implementation, including participatory mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. This proposal should include a clear definition of the external resources (such as training, funding, etc.) needed and the person or organisation that should provide them (some of the training described below might be relevant and necessary). The proposal should also define the investments that will be made by the community as well as the methods that will be used for monitoring and evaluating the effects of the project on the beneficiary populations and environments.

Feasibility Studies

For each project, feasibility studies will be conducted to ensure that the project abides by the principles defined by the subtribe (see above). For example, each activity could be rated for raw materials required, initial start-up costs, potential profit, potential risk, etc. Based upon this analysis, the community can then decide which activities would be most feasible and profitable for them.

Output 4. Increased capacity of the Council of Elders

Initial training

Capacity-building workshops will be held for members of the Council based on the needs assessment, above. In general they will aim to increase their capacities in planning, implementing and evaluating initiatives, as well as management skills.

Topics could include:

- *Needs Identification and Analysis.* Participants will be trained to identify local needs and analyse them, using participatory approaches, in terms of priorities, cost, expertise required, length of time required, etc.;
- *Participatory Attitudes, Behaviours, and Techniques.* This training will emphasise the importance of including all units of the community in providing information and making decisions about issues that will affect them. Participants will then be trained in a variety of techniques (PRA, PAR, etc.) that will help them involve all community members no matter what their age, gender, level of education, etc.;
- *The Positive and Negative Outcomes of Development.* Participants will be asked to review different development activities that they have witnessed and to determine the positive and negative effects on their communities. The development process will be discussed and how it could be changed to be more sustainable, effective and relevant to community needs;
- *Project Planning.* The various stages of project planning will be reviewed: definition of what is to be done, consideration of the stakeholders involved, consideration of the resources needed from within and without the community, planning for the different stages of project implementation, budgeting of project, etc. By the end of this training, participants will have begun initial project plans for a need identified in his/her community;
- *Management, Group Dynamics and Motivation.* Community elders and animators will need to develop their management skills in order to be effective leaders. A basic understanding of group dynamics and motivation will also help them in their work;
- *Participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques.* These could include determining locally the criteria on which to base the indicators for monitoring.

- *Feasibility studies for wealth-generating activities.* This will involve improving the skills of the local actors while using, where needed, outside expertise and experience.

Later training

Additional workshops and/or training seminars will be conducted on an as-needed basis and may involve other members of the community in addition to the Elders. Needs will be assessed in the context of initiatives that the community will decide to take (see Outcome 3, above). This could include training for economic and financial activities such as production and marketing of goods like handicrafts, medicinal plants, natural dyes, livestock, dairy and agricultural products, etc.

Output 5. Community sustainable livelihoods investment fund established

The community will set up a *sandug* (community sustainable investment fund) to initiate economic activities.

Determination of mechanisms

Members of the community will meet to discuss:

- *How the sandug profits will be distributed;*
- *Agree on a set of bylaws for the sandug; and,*
- *Adaptive replication of the sandug in other subtribes.*

Registration as NGOs

As the *sandugs* which are essentially run as Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) become operational and begin growing, they may register as grassroots NGOs with the ability to collaborate more formally in the promotion of further projects and their adaptive replication. Though it is important for local CBOs to be officially recognized it is not a pre-requisite.

Output 6. Wealth-generating activities initiated

Following the community identification and prioritisation of needs, the Council of the Subtribe will divide itself into interest groups along the lines of the prioritised categories of problems. Each group will learn project planning techniques and prepare a number of proposals for funding by the *sandug*. Each project proposal will first be submitted to the scrutiny and assessment of the Council following the criteria identified in the "Principles of Operation" as approved by the Council. These include feasibility in terms of the sustainability of the project and their impact; equity considerations, etc.

The ones that survive this scrutiny will further be subject to technical assessment by invited experts from the outside where necessary.

The income from the wealth generating activities will be disbursed in accordance with a formula to be agreed by the Elders, following the same principles. This will include, for example, the largest share going to further investment in wealth generating activities, another portion going for community-approved activities whether or not they are income or wealth generating, and another portion for further investment through higher level *sandug* unions.⁴

Output 7. Policies, plans, programmes and legal instruments for sustainable development formulated

In addition to the economic activities of the *sandugs*, mentioned above, the community is likely to include projects related to the assessment and formulation of policies, laws, guidelines and methodologies in their plan of action.

Possible topics

The following items give an indication of the topics that may appear on the final plan of action.

- Develop (or adapt) a Participatory Assessment Methodology for assessing relevant issues and policies by nomadic pastoral communities;
- Conduct participatory action research/assessments on key themes:
 - Impact of existing government policies, laws and regulations;
 - Customary laws, tenure and resource rights;
 - The increasingly important relationship between regional, national and international economies and institutions and their impact on their livelihoods;
 - Sustainable use and management of non-equilibrium eco-systems such as rangelands;
 - Assessment of values of pastoral mobility (particularly environmental and economic);
 - Adaptability of various rangeland management systems and their ability to adjust to change;
 - Key national and international policies and events and their effects on adaptive management of genetic, species, ecosystem and landscape diversity;
 - Population dynamics, family planning and population control policies and practices, and their impact (positive or negative) on the pastoralist communities;
 - Educational curricula and their impact on nomadic societies;

⁴ In previous experiences, local communities have typically agreed on a 60%-20%-20% division of the benefit among the mentioned classes of investment.

- Capacity building and needs assessment of relevant organisations; and,
- Identifying forms of governance that can sustain pastoral biodiversity and livelihoods.

Possible avenues for influencing policy

- Development of guidelines for rangeland management;
- Preparing inputs into the Fourth Development Plan of the Government of Iran;
- Establishment of a legal research and counselling service for pastoral nomads;
- Working with the national parliament (*Majlis*) and ONPA to introduce new laws;
- Discussion of research findings and their implementation in the Support & Learning Groups;
- Convening national workshops where the policy implications of the research are reviewed with key national decision-makers, the Support & Learning Groups, civil society and representatives of the subtribe; and,
- Help the Qashqais achieve recognition as Indigenous Peoples under international institutions (such as the United Nations Committee on Indigenous Peoples)

Possible research methods

- Participatory GIS mapping;
- PRA/RRA;PAR
- Adaptation of Farmers Field Schools to rangelands; and,
- New Participatory Assessment Methodology approaches such as Prajateerpu (citizens' juries on development scenarios)

Output 8. Support & Learning Groups established

Local, provincial and national Support & Learning Groups, composed of key members of the community and organisations from outside the community, will be established to support and enable the process of community empowerment. The groups will aim to enhance inter-sectoral co-operation and co-ordination to achieve the goals of the community. The groups will act as catalysts for organisational learning and lateral spread of innovations and change and provide a suitable forum for policy formation and implementation. Any government schemes that will affect the subclan will be discussed in the groups. The learning groups could also be involved in participatory research, monitoring and evaluation of the project in a learning by doing mode.

The groups will draw on a wide variety of individuals and representatives of organisations for membership and will be built up based on identification of suitable and supportive individuals, rather than acting as a steering committee. Some individuals may be invited to join the group on a needs basis, or as temporary advisors. The provincial and national Support & Learning Groups may include some of the following groups:

- Members of the Council of Elders;
- CENESTA;
- Academics and researchers;
- Parliamentarians;
- Policy makers and government staff which could include staff of the following departments and ministries: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Organisation for Nomadic Pastoralists Affairs; Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Management Organisation; Department of Extension and Farming Systems; Veterinary Organisation); Department of the Environment; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education (Office of Tribal Education); Ministry of Interior (Governor Generals of Provinces, Governors of Districts, Sub-Districts and the Local Tribal Councils); Management and Planning Organisation; Administrative Councils at the level of province and district; and, (chaired by the relevant Governor)
- Any other relevant and influential members of society.

Output 9. Project outputs documented

The project outputs, including regular reports, best practices, policy documents, and methodologies will be published and disseminated among local, regional and international governmental and non-governmental organisations. The outputs will be documented in a variety of media as appropriate, such as written reports, videos, audio, websites, databases, etc.

Output 10. Networking and extension of the programme to other areas

Council members and CENESTA team members will plan for a training course that will help them extend the programme to nearby subtribes. They will follow a similar process as that described in this project, but with the Council members, rather than CENESTA workers, acting as facilitators.

Networks will be established to encourage communication between neighbouring subtribes and also other relevant actors. In-person exchanges (workshops, conferences, etc.) will be arranged to share experiences and expertise. International networking will be encouraged where possible. In particular, CBOs will be encouraged to network with other CBOs involved in the IIED collaborative research project entitled Sustaining Local Food Systems, Agricultural Biodiversity and Livelihoods on topics of mutual interest. Community members will receive training to use this system for networking, access to relevant information, and maintenance of accountability and transparency. Indicative topics of collaboration and transfer of experience are given further down in the proposal.

Administrative Structure

Collaborating institutions

The sustainable livelihoods approach and community control of development processes are issues that need to be developed carefully before their implementation can be generalised across society. For this reason, this demonstration project in the Qashqai area, which will be

carried out by the local communities concerned, will be implemented by civil society actors, principally the local pastoral formations and the NGO CENESTA which is a specialised and experienced NGO in this realm, with the support of the Working Group on Sustainable Livelihoods (WGSL) of the IUCN⁵ Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP).⁶ Various government departments will provide a crucial function of support, provision of tactically important services in community health, education, specialised training, and welfare, as well as in-kind support needed to get the process underway. Public institutions also need to be involved in applying the lessons learned from the demonstration project to other pastoral/tribal zones and formations, and to the country as a whole. For these reasons, they will be included as a part of the Support/Learning Groups at the provincial/local and national levels.

Among government institutions the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD),⁷ especially the Organisation for Nomadic Pastoralists Affairs (ONPA),⁸ as a main counterpart to CENESTA is of great importance. The primary role of this Ministry will be played by the General Directorate of ONPA in the Province of Fars, and in later phases in other provinces concerned. The management of natural resources, especially rangelands, including the associated woodlands, water sources and wildlife, is central to nomadic pastoralism; therefore the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Management Organisation (FRAWMO) of MARD will also be engaged in elaborating more innovative and learning-based approaches to the rangelands. The Department of Extension and Farming Systems (DEXFAS), and the Veterinary Organisation (VO) of the same Ministry will also be engaged in developing suitable methods and means of improving the livelihoods of the pastoralists. These groups will be involved in supporting the approach and its extension to other areas. Every attempt will be made to work with the Ministry of Education and its units of tribal education (mobile tent schools) to elaborate more locally relevant curricula and the learning of life skills. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education will also be among the government counterparts in the implementation of the project, given the experience in providing basic health services offered to mobile pastoralists. The Social Welfare Organisation and the Management and Planning Organisation will also be approached to cooperate in their respective fields. The Ministry of Interior will be involved through its various offices in the province, including the offices of the Provincial Governor General (*Ostandar*), District Governor (*Farmandar*), and Sub-District Governor (*Bakhshdar*).

In line with the already existing "village councils" the national Parliament has just passed a new law providing for tribal councils in the pastoralist formations. The law is undergoing its last stages of ratification and once approved, the "tribal councils" will be incorporated in the structure of the community based organisations emerging from project initiatives.⁹

The international support organisations, particularly CEESP/IUCN, FAO, and IIED, and eventually UNDP/GEF will be involved through support for specific segments of the work, consultations in all phases of the project, and by supporting exchange of experiences with

⁵ IUCN=World Conservation Union

⁶ CEESP is one of six international Commissions of IUCN. Mandated by the World Conservation Congress, the Commissions work in close cooperation with, and independently of, the Secretariat of IUCN.

⁷ Vezarat-e Jahad-e Keshavarzi

⁸ Sazeman-e Umur-e Ashayer

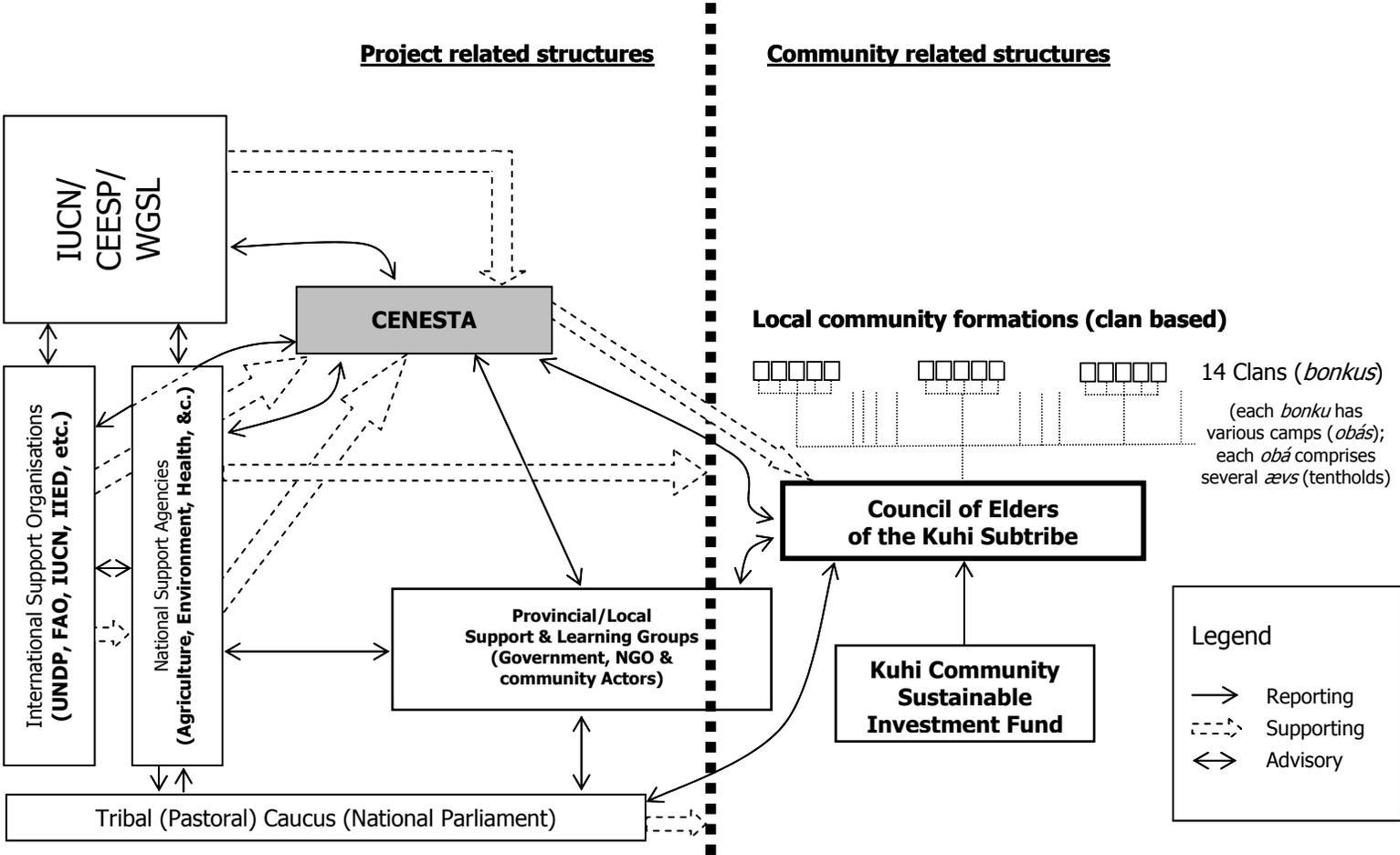
⁹ A similar experience in the context of the Area Based Project of CENESTA/UNICEF/Ministry of Health in three regions of the country succeeded in this integration.

similar groups in other countries. Links will also be maintained with the elected members of parliament from pastoral/tribal regions of the country.

While these links, consultations and support structures are extremely important, the key role in planning, implementation, evaluation and adaptive replication of the project will be played by the informal and formal structures of the pastoral communities themselves. The role of all agencies external to the local community will be one of support and learning. Decisions that require external agencies will be taken using the approaches of collaborative management.

The essence of this adaptive management strategy is presented in the chart below.

Mobile Pastoralists Sustainable Livelihoods and Biodiversity Project Support Structures



These organisations may additionally be involved in specific activity areas depending upon their own interests and abilities. Some will be represented in the Support & Learning Groups at the national and provincial levels. A table of potential activities for different sectors follows:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Areas of interest</i>
MARD (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation for Nomadic Pastoralist Affairs (ONPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall project counterpart in government • Collaboration in national policy formulation • Co-funding as needed • In-kind support including transport & hospitality • Support to workshops, meetings, conferences
MARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Extension and Farming Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and learning for pastoral extension services with participatory approaches • Marketing of pastoral products • Official recognition of community based organisations of the pastoralists (including the Community Investment Funds) • Strengthening the role of women in development
MARD—Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Management Organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal Point for Desertification; • Department of Rangeland Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community-based initiatives for the sustainable use of natural resources • Research and development of indigenous technologies for desertification control • Sand dune fixation • Granting of long-term communal grazing rights over rangelands
MARD—Veterinary Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training tribal veterinary assistants; surveying and monitoring zoonoses and epizootics, and distribution of veterinary drugs
MARD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing aqua-culture activities along streams
Agricultural Development Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing grants and loans to be managed by the Kuhi Community Investment Fund
Ministry of Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fars Provincial University of Medical Education—Vice-Rectorate for Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting health surveys • Providing education and training on issues such as family planning, environmental hygiene, and school health • Delivering local health services to women and children through PHCs (Primary Health Centres and CHVs (Community Health Volunteers) • Linking the community to the national healthcare network • Participatory monitoring and evaluation of improvements in community health, and the health of women and children over the life of the Project

Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to address educational disparities between males and females • Developing innovative curricula and methods relevant to local needs, lifestyles and timetables • Developing literacy programmes • Ensuring the access of every child to basic relevant education
Office of the President of the Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of the Environment—Director of Biodiversity & Natural Habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community mechanisms for community conserved areas (CCAs), environmental protection and sustainable development • Supporting elaboration of pastoralist models for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use • Supporting collaborative management of natural resources • Supporting declaration of CCAs, including IUCN Category V protected landscapes for the entire migratory domain (summering & wintering grounds and access routes) of pastoralists
Ministry of Interior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor-General of Fars and relevant Districts and Sub-districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging village councils and government agencies to honour the traditional rangeland domain of pastoralists • Channelling development funds and projects for planning and execution by the local communities and <i>sanduqs</i> • Helping to elaborate models for local community management of development activities • Supporting formation of tribal councils along traditional social organisations
Local Councils—for nomadic pastoral zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with the informal traditional councils • Incorporation in the <i>sandug</i> committees • Mutual legitimisation
Organisation for Planning and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding projects emanating from the Community Sanduqs and Tribal Councils • Ensuring local consultation and approval for all projects affecting the nomadic tribes

Arrangements with these (and other relevant) organisations will be made, as needed, with appropriate letters of agreement being signed where appropriate.

International collaborating institutions

The main collaborating organisations will be the FAO, IIED, UNDP-GEF and IUCN-CEESP (including through the Christensen Fund). CEESP will seek technical and financial support for the project through its network of experts and associated institutions, as well as funding agencies including international foundations. Workshops may be held

at which representatives of these organisations will join CENESTA and the Community Elders in defining multi-sectoral goals and the collaborative procedures needed to attain them. Training seminars will also be conducted and further occasions will be provided for special training and awareness building through participation in on-going community-based training and planning programs.

Collaborative research projects (IIED)

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has a research project on "Sustaining Local Food Systems, Agricultural Biodiversity and Livelihoods" which has been running in three other countries (India, Indonesia and Peru). The present pastoral project will constitute the fourth participant in that project. More information on the IIED project, supported by The Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation (DGIS) and the MacArthur Foundation, can be found at www.iied.org/sarl/research/projects/t5proj01.html.

The following is an *indicative* list of the capacities that could be exchanged/contributed among the four community groups of this project:

Peru → Iran: Establishing community conserved areas and parks (e.g., the Potato Park); spiritual values of nature (including mountains); formal recognition of indigenous peoples; promoting women's role in development.

India → Iran: Citizens' juries for development scenarios and policies; promoting women's role in development; community digital video production; community biodiversity registers.

Indonesia → Iran: Turning livelihood projects into mass movements; promoting women's role in development.

Iran → other projects: Building on the traditional ("natural") social organisation of local communities for project success; setting up sustainable community investment funds; value of indigenous animal breeds; promoting the role of community elders in development.

Monitoring and evaluation

Indicators for assessing the project will be developed by the community under the leadership of the Council of Elders of the 14 clans, facilitated by members of the project team early during the life cycle of the project. The indicators may be qualitative or quantitative and will seek to assess the outputs of the project as well as the processes that were followed. They will also work out structures for regular monitoring and participatory evaluation, in a "learning by doing" mode.

Inputs and budget