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INNOVATIVE LIVESTOCK FARMING IN THE ARID AREAS OF CHAD, NIGER AND KENYA



The SDC is supporting the construction of 100 wells in Chad, which helps to free women and children from the burden of fetching water. © SDC

Livestock breeding is the predominant economic activity and most widely spread way of life in the Sahel-Sahara region of Niger, Chad, and the arid and semi-arid areas of north-eastern Kenya. This traditional way of life is currently facing huge challenges, both natural and human-made. Through its projects, the SDC is seeking to help pastoralist communities cope with these new challenges.

CHAD

Northern Chad is affected by low, irregular rainfall and extreme water scarcity which can, to some extent, be attributed to the country's lack of infrastructure. Vast expanses of grazing land remain unused. If herders cross over into the agricultural areas in the south at the wrong time, looking for water points and pastureland for their cattle, the risk of conflict with the farmers increases.

In the Batha, Wadi Fira and Ennedi regions, the SDC is funding a consortium headed by CA17 International (Consultancy services in sustainable rural and agricultural development). The aim of the organisation is to increase the resilience of transhumance by ensuring mobility, to improve access to water, pastureland and veterinary services, and to enhance local governance in sector-specific areas.

Grazing corridors and dialogue

Thanks to the creation of grazing corridors spanning 500km and the support of pastoralist organisations, cattle are able to move safely along the grazing paths and in the adjacent pastures used by the herders. This has led to a sharp reduction in conflicts in the area and improvements in resource management.

The nomadic herders are members of organisations that defend their economic and social interests and represent them effectively in dialogue and consultation processes. Regular access to high-quality veterinary services and products, as well as animal feed, enables the livestock owners to improve the productivity of their cattle. Supporting pasture farming also helps young people stay at home on the farm and in the region, rather than leaving or possibly becoming involved in criminal activities.

One hundred wells and ten ponds

Another element of the project is the creation of 100 wells and ten ponds, which helps to free women and children from the burden of fetching water.

Thus in addition to the project's economic aspects, it also acts as a factor for social stability and contributes to security by encouraging settlement in northern Chad's extensive arid areas.

→ [Programme to strengthen pasture farming \(fr\)](#)

→ [Programme for rural development in Wadi Fira \(fr\)](#)

→ [Association for rural development in Batha \(fr\)](#)

NIGER

The predominant form of agriculture in Niger is a mixture of farming and livestock breeding, which made it possible to maintain a delicate balance between the environment, humans and cattle for many years. But four major drought periods in 1969, 1974, 1984 and 2004, coupled with a more intensive use of the farmland and grazing areas, have shown how fragile this tradition is. Dwindling resources and fighting over their distribution have led to conflicts between the nomadic herders and sedentary farmers.

Together with local partners, the SDC is helping pastoralists adapt their way of life to the changing ecological, social and political realities in Niger with the PASEL programme to support livestock farming.

Transferring know-how and creating transit corridors

The project aims to increase production from agriculture, forestry and pasture farming and fosters peaceful coexistence between the pastoralists and farmers. In concrete terms, both groups receive the know-how they need to apply methods that will allow them to achieve better yields in farming, manage the land and use grazing areas sustainably, and improve animal husbandry.

Since 1998, transit corridors spanning a total of 3,000km have been created and marked out. This allows the nomads to move through farming areas with their cattle without causing damage to the crops. Transit zones and grazing areas have been demarcated and cleaned up with the participation of all the local players.

Developing and implementing the "Code rural", a law enforcement on land rights in rural areas

As a parallel measure to the PASEL project, the SDC supports and assists the appointment of local law enforcement authorities in the area of land rights. Drawing on the experiences of the project, a "Code Rural" to prevent conflicts in rural areas has been developed, which has led to a real dynamic in terms of dialogue and consultation.

Local land committees help prevent or settle conflicts between pastoralists and farmers. After the PASEL project has come to an end, there will still be work for the committees: nomads will continue to keep cattle and farmers will continue to cultivate their fields as before.

The PASEL project is helping to build up recognised expertise in Niger on ensuring mobility for nomadic groups – know-how that is gaining currency throughout the country.

→ [Programme to support livestock farming \(fr\)](#)

KENYA

The nomadic pastoralist communities in the arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya are greatly affected by periods of drought which have become increasingly frequent and severe in recent years. During the 2011 drought most of the livestock died as the animals were no longer able to cover the increasing distances between water points. There are, however, effective solutions based on traditional methods to ensure the supply of water for both people and cattle.

Guaranteeing access to water and grazing areas

The SDC is funding a project aimed at increasing the resilience of nomadic communities in north-eastern Kenya to cope with periods of drought. It is being carried out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) together with the Kenya Red Cross Society and Adeso Technical Consultants. The project has three goals:

- guaranteeing access to water and grazing areas for the herds
- disseminating sustainable practices in using water and pastureland at the regional and national levels
- promoting the regeneration of groundwater reserves in the Merti area

The nomadic populations in the region are putting a lot of hope into the project, which began in 2013.

→ [Water for Livestock in Garissa and Isiolo Counties, Northern Kenya](#)

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