ELECTRONIC PASTURE COMMITTEE (EPC) INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN KYRGYZSTAN

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Country: Kyrgyzstan   **Principal Organisation:** Kyrgyz Jayity

ABSTRACT

Kyrgyz Jayity has created an electronic pasture committee (EPC) software for effective and decentralised management and monitoring of the status of national pastures. Pasture User Unions (PUUs) are able to access all the necessary information about pasture users, livestock and pasture land conditions, infrastructure and vaccination activities in each village. Through the tool, the PUUs can carry out an inventory of pastures, a geo-botanical survey of pastures and develop plans for pasturing cattle while considering the corridor for migration of wild animals.

ILC COMMITMENTS

DIVERSE TENURE SYSTEMS

LOCALLY-MANAGED ECOSYSTEMS

EFFECTIVE ACTIONS AGAINST LAND GRABBING

INTERNATIONAL LAND COALITION

Kyrgyz Jayity

COMPETENCIES

AREAS	SKILLS
RURAL LAND GOVERNANCE	**LAND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**
CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS	**LAND MONITORING, INDICATORS AND ALTERNATIVE REPORTING**
TRANSPARENCY AND CORRUPTION	**MAPPING AND LAND REGISTRATION**
	KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

The enactment of the 2009 Law on Pastures was a great step towards sustainable pasture management in the Kyrgyz Republic. The law brings a more transparent, efficient and decentralised pastureland management system that allows community-led PUUs to manage pastures. Kyrgyz Jayity has worked with pasture committees to adopt the electronic pasture committee (EPC) information management system for pastureland management. 454 pasture users unions (PUUs) created by Kyrgyz Jayity have worked to improve the condition of pasturelands in Kyrgyzstan by implementing the EPC information system.

THE CHALLENGE

Kyrgyzstan's agricultural lands are composed of 85% pasturelands. Most rural families are pastoralists, whose livelihoods depend on the health of the pasture lands. As pasture lands continued to deteriorate, the importance of better management of the national pasturelands became apparent.

The main challenges were:

1 Low capacity of pasture users to sustainably manage the pasture lands,
2 Frequent changes in leadership in pasture committees, and
3 The high price of the software.
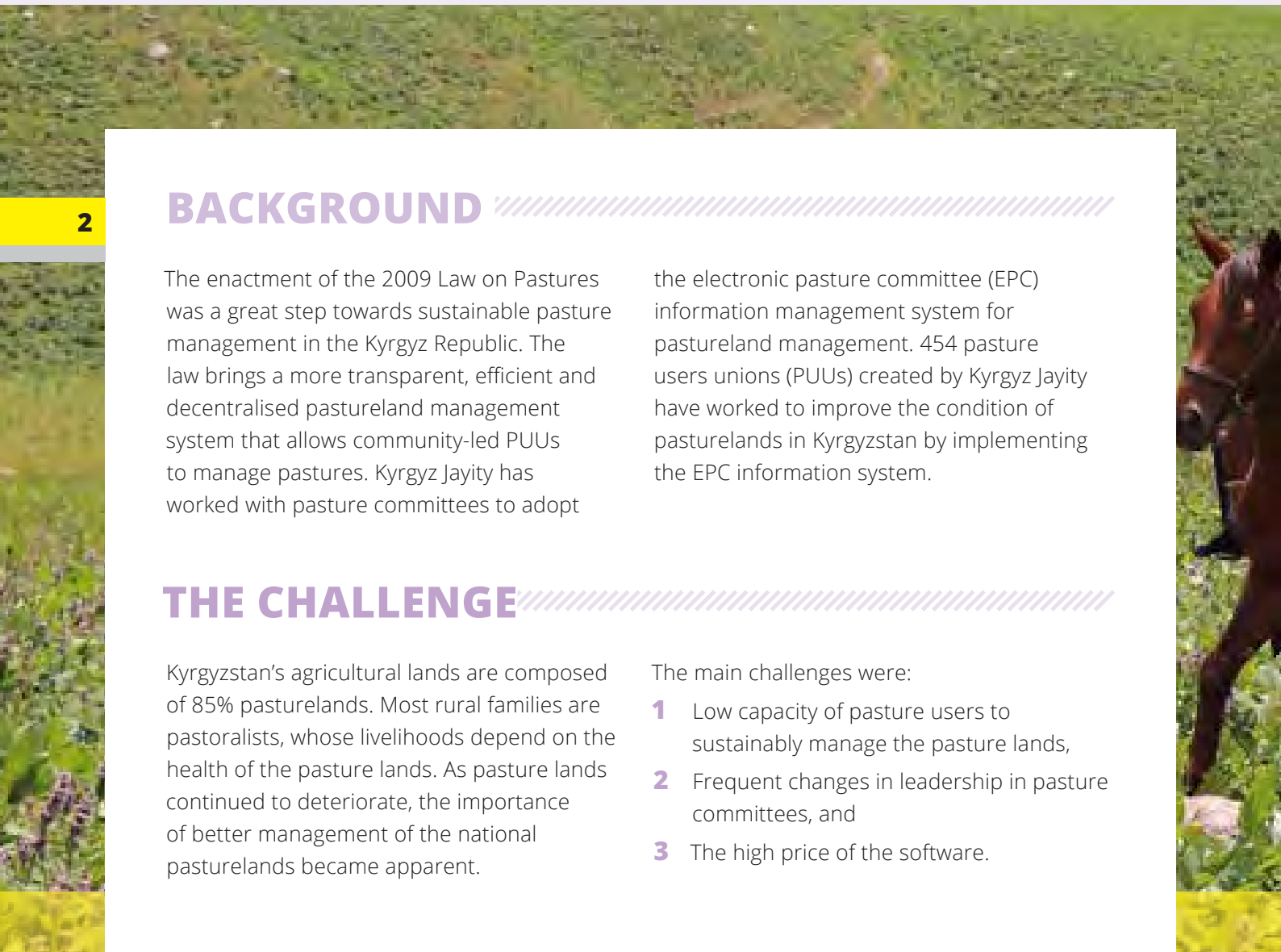
OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE ///////////

Pasture Users' Unions from eleven districts in three regions in the Suusamyr Valley have participated in the implementation of the EPC tool, which is a decentralised system for operational management and monitoring of the status of pastures. The EPC information management system promotes the formation of an equitable and socially acceptable system for distributing pastures, resolving conflicts, and ensuring transparency, thereby improving the pasture management system at the local level.

Based on lessons learned from the pilot test, Kyrgyz Jayity and partners are using the EPC tool to create geo-botanical and pasture inventories, and to develop a plan for pasturing cattle, taking into account the corridor for the migration of wild animals. Kyrgyz Jayity has prioritised training the PUUs on the implementation of the tool, and giving them all the information necessary for effective management of pastures: specifically information about pasture users, livestock and pastureland conditions, infrastructure, and vaccination activities in each village.

At present, the EPC is being implemented by pasture committees of 11 districts in the Suusamyr Valley.

MOVING TOWARDS
PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE

1   As a result of the trainings and implementation of the tool, community leaders and members have noted the importance of the electronic modules on the automated EPC information system. *The tool has made it much easier for the PUUs to work with local communities and leaders*. In particular, they have noted improved reporting procedures, the possibility to monitor vaccination processes, systematised accounting for the livestock population, transfer of livestock, and planned grazing systems.

2   *Pasture users have increased their capacity to manage their pasturelands* through the use of the software. Trainings, capacity building activities and exchange visits have been instrumental to strengthening the capacity of the pasture users. The capacity building exercises have also assisted to reduce pasture committee members' turnover.

3   As a result of this effort, *sustainable community management of pasturelands has become possible*. Communities are restoring and rehabilitating pasturelands and infrastructure, improving productivity and efficiency in the use of natural resources.

THE GOOD PRACTICE IN FIVE SIMPLE STEPS

1

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

A team of experts in pasture management, geo-botanic research, veterinary services, IT and programme management came together to develop a well-adapted software for community-led management of pasturelands. The software is easy to use, clear and very informative, combining insights from ecology, science, and socio-economics. Kyrgyz Jayity and its partners led discussions on the use of the tool, pilot testing, recording of lessons learned, developing the final version, and ensuring that the final version was approved.

2

PASTURE INVENTORY

The process included comprehensive research in the field, accounting for different geological and botanic information. With the support of local communities, state agencies and external experts, it was possible to create an inventory of the pasturelands and collect primary data for the system. Pasture User Unions now have access to essential information about pasture users; livestock and livestock conditions, infrastructure and vaccination activities in each village.

3

ECONOMICAL ASSESSMENT

An economic assessment is a vital step in developing this tool as it allows for the enumeration of potential costs and anticipated benefits of a proposed programme, policy or regulatory initiative. Through the economic assessment, Kyrgyz Jayity and partners were able to reflect on trade-offs and alternatives.

CREATING PASTURE MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR COMMUNITIES

4

Creating adapted pasture management plans is an essential yet challenging task that Kyrgyz Jayity had to undertake. All the aspects of good pasture management are integrated into community pastureland management plans. All the concerns of the local villages are taken into consideration in the planning phase. At the end, the adapted pastureland management plans are realistic, taking into consideration the social, ecological and economic aspects for each village.

IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PILOT AREAS

5

In each pilot project, Kyrgyz Jayity and its partners were involved in the implementation, and supported the pasture committee by providing capacity building activities and technical support for the correct use of the tool. Thanks the effectiveness of the team, community members were also taught how to use the tool. As a result, community members and the pasture committees have accepted, adapted, effectively used the system and developed independent approaches.

KEY FACTORS
OF SUCCESS FOR REPLICABILITY AND ADAPTABILITY PURPOSES

From implementation of the project, it quickly became apparent that success of this tool hinged on the following:

1. A comprehensive *team of experts* with knowledge in pasture management, IT, planning and project implementation.

2. *Enough finance* - the support of international funds in the first stages of the project to cover technical and travel expenses are essential.

3. *Mobilising support* from the local communities and local experts is essential for the success of the project. The local communities' readiness and active participation assists the experts working on the project to collect data, monitor the pasturelands, and identify community priorities.

LESSONS LEARNED //

1 Kyrgyz Jayity has worked in one region of Kyrgyzstan, where the EPC system has been tested and implemented by 20 pilot pasture committees, working under different geological and ecological pasture conditions. As such, it is essential to take into consideration these differences, and created *a methodology capable of being adapted to suit the local circumstances of each area*.

2 The main idea was to *collect community data* relating to pastures, pasture users, livestock and climate in a single database; then use the information to create a software for the management of national pasturelands. This made it possible to analyse the state of national pastures and create community management plans to deal with the local context.

3 The high *price of the software* has been prohibitive in other contexts: Kyrgyz Jayity and partners are working to find solutions for the reduction of costs associated with the tool.

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