



Country: South Africa
Sector: Agriculture
Project: Meat Naturally Initiative: Embedding Sustainability in South Africa's Emerging Red Meat Sector
Grantee: Conservation South Africa (CSA)
Partner: Biodiversity and Red Meat Cooperative

Acknowledgements

The SWITCH Africa Green programme was developed by the European Commission to support African countries in their transition to an inclusive green economy, the main objective being to promote sustainable development. This is based on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty.

This impact sheet on Embedding Sustainability in South Africa's Emerging Red Meat Sector provides a snapshot of results and achievements of this project under the Green Business Development Component of Phase I (2014-2019) of the SWITCH Africa Green Programme. This component supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to apply and adopt SCP practices in their business operations.

The project was implemented by Conservation South Africa (CSA) in partnership with Biodiversity and Red Meat Cooperative with the support of the SWITCH Africa Green National Focal point Jenitha Badul, Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and National Coordinator Wakhile Mkhonza, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), South Africa. The grants were managed by United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and coordinated by Celia Marquez with support from Mercy Gatobu.

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BACKGROUND

South Africa has some of the most diverse ecosystems in the world with 70% of the country being suitable for grazing. The South African livestock sector produces an estimate of 900,000 tons of red meat annually and about 50% of the country's total livestock is owned by subsistence or emerging farmers. Traditional grazing mechanisms in the rural rangelands have led to degradation of ecosystems, extensive soil erosion from run off and poor quality of pasture.

Currently, there is a growing momentum from policymakers to green the country's livestock sector in a manner that generates modernized skills for farmers and promotes food security and poverty alleviation.

Conservation South Africa is an NGO, working with the Department of Environmental Affairs and a broad spectrum of partners in the private sector to transform the production of red meat and building regional market capacity at every level to enhance environmental and social resilience to climate

change. To curb challenges in the sector, Conservation South Africa demonstrated that livestock production enabled the restoration and maintenance of a healthy ecosystem for a long-term benefit and climate resilience for the communities and nature. Additionally, the grantee was able to demonstrate a holistic model by addressing implementation strategies under landscape demonstrations, sustainable market and industry engagement and amplification as part of a single green economic development project.

OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the project was to support red meat production in South Africa focusing on the restoration and maintenance of a healthy ecosystem for long-term benefits of green economic development and climate resilience for the communities and nature.

The South African livestock sector produces an estimate of 900,000 tons of red meat annually and about 50% of the country's total livestock is owned by subsistence or emerging farmers.

Specific objectives of the project were to:

- Build market readiness for sustainable red meat production in communal rangelands.
- Engage key market players and consumers to support sustainable livestock production from communal farmers through costing, pricing and marketing.
- Distill, consolidate and share knowledge from the project implementation process and the broader Meat Naturally Initiative for replication in South Africa and beyond.



- Give recommendations of policies and programs that would enhance sustainable and pro-poor red meat value chains.

BENEFICIARIES

The project engaged eco-rangers and local farmers in understanding, implementing and verifying good grazing practices that provided traceability and led to better market prices.

The project supported 5 farming groups with over 998 farmers from three rangelands in the Matatiele municipality in the North-Eastern Cape of South Africa. The rangelands are located within the regions prioritized by the national government as important areas for waters security and biodiversity conservation.

OUTPUTS

Improved institutional coordination on economic, business and environmental policies

Institutional coordination mechanisms established

Development of Cooperatives: Through SWITCH Africa Green Programme, 5 cooperatives covering the pilot region were established. The cooperatives established are: Biodiversity and Red Meat Cooperative, Steinkopf Bulletrap Cooperative, Nhlanganani Cooperative Utah, Shikotixi Fodder Supply and Rivalelo. Members of the cooperatives received training on effective governance structures and how to set up formal businesses. One of the cooperatives, Steinkopf Bulletrap,

was awarded a sub-grant to put in place a platform for continuous development of business plans, new marketing strategies and record keeping techniques.

Increased networking among green businesses

Market linkages created

Community farmers were linked to new market opportunities through Meat Naturally a social market enterprise that promotes sustainable farming and rejuvenation of rangelands.

Improved capacities of workers in green sectors

Training on SCP practices

Capacity building on Climate Smart livestock rearing: The farmers were trained on using animal genetics to enhance productivity through crossbreeding techniques to increase resistance to diseases and improved fitness and animal reproductive traits. Other skills imparted include vaccination as a preventive measure for controlling diseases as well as other measures of controlling diseases such as good hygiene, stamping-out policy, dip tank governance, primary animal health care and quarantine of the infected animals.

Training on Sustainable Rangeland Management: The farmers were trained on the techniques of integrating management of land, water, biodiversity and other environmental resources that enabled pastoral households to thrive in the semi-arid and arid rangelands.

Additionally, the grantee trained the farmers and the local communities to plan how they



could access water, food and markets. The farmers were encouraged to use planned grazing skills like rotation so that the same paddocks would not be grazed the same time year after year, to mix grass and legumes to increase the soil nutrients and prevent soil erosion.

Capacity building on business skills: Two (2) entrepreneur businesses were strengthened following training in business plan development, technical capacity and new improved marketing strategies. This resulted in unlocking market access avenues in trading animal skins and good fodder production practices that enabled the entrepreneurs to run their own businesses independently.

Toolkits developed

Toolkit for landscape management and Rangeland

Figure 1: Some of the techniques smallholder farmers received training on



Restoration was developed. The toolkit provided guidelines for rangeland restoration and adaptation of appropriate governance systems to promote existence of rangelands with a sustainable supply of water, food and resilient to impacts of climate change for the long-term benefit of people and environment.

OUTCOMES

Uptake of SCP practices by MSMEs

MSMEs adopted new grazing systems and innovative uses of waste and by-products

The Eco-rangers implemented a rotational grazing management plan which ensured that the animals had enough food during the dry seasons. The farmers adopted the use of modernized planned grazing systems in contrast to using feedlot system

which exerts pressure on the land and does not give it time to regenerate.

One of the beneficiaries, Shikotixi Fodder Supply, started using invasive bushes that had been cleared as a by-product to create fodder, which reduced volume of waste produced. Another enterprise, Rivalelo Enterprise Ltd, was using animal hide to produce carpets and rugs. The enterprises adopted energy efficiency measures which reduced the energy intensity of their production processes.

Improved access to finance for green MSMEs

MSMEs supported to obtain financial services

Conservation South Africa secured additional funding for a three-year investment under "improved rangeland management and job creation" from the Department of

The eco-rangers secured an additional USD 1.8 million investment for 2018-2021 under sustainable red meat production and sustainable rangeland management from the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Environmental Affairs-Natural Resource Management Program.

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IMPACTS

Environmental impacts

Rangeland restoration: An average of 231,980 hectares of rangeland which had been gravely degraded was restored in the North-Eastern Cape of South Africa. The land is critical for enhancing food security and poverty alleviation for smallholder pastoralists.

Prevention of biodiversity loss: Conservation agreements were drawn up between the Department of Environmental Affairs and communal farmers which required that grazing land to be given time to regenerate and to observe legal restrictions prohibiting grazing in environmentally fragile areas such as wetlands. This helped to decrease levels of biodiversity loss and improved the quality of grass the livestock was feeding on.

Reduction in GHG emissions: The rotational grazing enhanced proper maintenance of forage at a relatively earlier growth stage. This improved the quality and digestibility of the forage, improving the productivity of the grazing systems and reduced methane emissions per unit of live weight gain.

Economic impacts

New Markets Secured

Two (2) new markets were secured through this project. Farmers in Namaqualand made revenue amounting to 5,000 USD from the sale of livestock to Nammeat, a mobile abattoir and wholesaler. Additionally, Meat Naturally facilitated innovative methods of linking over 800 livestock farmers to the market by organizing mobile auction and arranging for buyers to come to

the farmers saving the farmers transportation costs they were previously bearing. Through their initiative, Meat Naturally increased their turnover to over USD 1 million during the project duration.

Increased turnover

In the Alfred Nzo District Municipality, farmers engaged in livestock rearing reported an average turnover of more than USD 560 per household, translating to about USD 46,000 in the region.

The grantee supported an average of 95 households that engaged in sustainable production practices consisting of 380 farmers trained in sustainable income generation through livestock keeping, technical capacity and in networking.

The mobile abattoirs introduced through project support created 5 new jobs.

Social impacts

The farmers acquired business management skills following training on sustainable grazing, farm management cooperative development, fundraising, record keeping, business plan development and financial skills.

In the past, planned grazing used to be implemented as a cultural practice in South Africa, re-invigoration of the old-age practices on the communal land brought social cohesion to the community as they negotiated and designed rangeland rest guided by their strong tribal roots and elders in the community.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Through the social market enterprise, the beneficiaries were able to engage key market players and consumers

to support traceable livestock production for the beneficiaries through sourcing policies, pricing, and marketing.

- Increased consumer awareness of sustainable red meat is a driver for green business development in the livestock sector.
- Involving key and strategic stakeholders facilitates uptake of SCP practices as was achieved in the project where restoration of the grazing lands was made possible by engaging 'ecorangers' which in turn led to improved fodder and animal health.
- Collaboration between the grazing associations and the Department of Environmental Affairs - Natural Resources Management Programme, facilitated the created green jobs for the farmers.
- Costs incurred when implementing some SCP practices are paid back once the measures are put in place as shown by the project beneficiaries who recouped the money they invested to install additional water points and fencing when implementing rotational grazing system.

“The rangeland work has not only drawn farmers together but has also engaged people who do not own livestock as members of the grazing associations and have gained green jobs through the association. Therefore, CSA work has united our communities,”

A member of the Ndakeni Community.



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