



Community of Practice for Pro-poor Livestock Development (CoP-PPLD). Strategic Framework.

1. About the Community

The concept of Community of Practice (CoP) has emerged within development communities to strengthen connections among like-minded people seeking to improve, through joint action and collaboration, both knowledge and practice.

The CoP for Pro-poor Livestock Development (CoP-PPLD) is designed as a global and inclusive partnership of practitioners, managers, researchers and other actors involved in livestock development who want to exchange experiences, manage relevant knowledge, and support learning across countries and institutions as a means of achieving better results.

Its main purpose is to identify key problems and priorities, together with opportunities for developing collective strategies, in order to promote livestock as an asset in poverty reduction and to empower poor livestock keepers in such a way that they can actively participate in decision-making processes and in the management of their livelihoods.

The CoP-PPLD uses an innovative and demand-driven international approach. It aims to learn from the livestock community and to give them a voice, thus helping to optimize the potential of livestock development as a poverty reduction tool. In addition, the CoP-PPLD plans to facilitate the provision of technical advisory services by strengthening strategic partnerships and collaboration with in-country and international organizations at all levels, from livestock keepers' organizations to national and international development practitioners and decision makers.

2. Key features of the CoPs

- **Continuous and dynamic interaction** is facilitated among like-minded researchers, practitioners and policymakers from different backgrounds to generate, share, disseminate and validate knowledge (including tacit knowledge), offering clear and relevant gains to the CoP-PPLD members and promoting a culture of mutual learning.
- **An informal multistakeholder approach** is used rather than the traditional 'division of labour' between public sector, private sector, NGOs, academic and grassroots organizations so that each can benefit and learn from the others' comparative advantages;
- **Convergence towards common objectives** is fostered through the merging of ideas, values and approaches.
- **Flexibility and adaptability** allow evolving needs to be met.

3. Values

- **Being innovative and effective.** The Community aims at catalyzing processes with innovative approaches and organizational activities, rather than providing services. It works directly with pro-poor organizations and local communities as effective leaders of their own development process. It seeks to conduct a concomitant evaluation of knowledge/theory and of practice, favouring neither one nor the other.
- **Respecting diversity and differences of opinion.** Within the framework of broader shared objectives and concerns, the Community plans to include actions to address inequalities and to give voice to the poorest. It will thus work towards building and strengthening collaborative activities that reaffirm the importance of South-North and South-South dialogue and exchange.
- **Being people and poverty focussed** demonstrating that a sustainable equilibrium among livelihoods and natural resources is possible and is one way to alleviate poverty.. Supporting women, in particular, as livestock owners, processors and users of livestock products, and as decision makers in this sector, is essential to their economic and social empowerment and, consequently, is a means of enabling rural women to break the cycle of poverty.

4. Strategies and objectives

The **overall goal** of the Community is:

To strengthen connections among likeminded persons seeking to gather, develop and share information and knowledge, and promote policies which have a positive impact at least on a given number of livestock keepers and their families.

The **specific objectives** are:

- Enhance the capacity of CoP-PPLD members to acquire, assess and share knowledge and innovations relating to PPLD interventions and their “proven” impact.
- Promote an intersectoral approach to PPLD.
- Support research, extension, advocacy and evaluation of PPLD to improve the effectiveness of existing practices, advance the state of the art in applications for PPLD and extend their effectiveness.
- Raise the understanding – at various levels, including government, professional organizations and the general public – of the benefits of PPLD and of any challenges and potential solutions.

5. Activities

To achieve its goal and objectives, the Community, through its members, will undertake the following activities:

- Launch a pilot phase to address the initial challenge: “How can livestock insurance reduce the vulnerability of poor smallholder livestock producers?”
- Distil, capture, generate and disseminate knowledge and innovations for PPLD to lessen the vulnerability and enhance the livelihoods of poor smallholder farmers, with an emphasis on lessons learned and good practices.
- Advocate for PPLD; engage in policy dialogue with decision-makers.

- Develop a virtual knowledge network to allow dynamic interactions of the CoP-PPLD members and meet their knowledge management needs.
- Maintain a register of professionals and practitioners willing to provide knowledge and support for PPLD initiatives at the international, national, regional and local levels.

6. Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was established by participants at the inception workshop to assist in the implementation of the pilot phase. It represents all stakeholder groups and acts on their behalf according to the operation modalities agreed upon by the CoP-PPLD members.

The activities of the pilot phase of this CoP are coordinated by Antonio Rota (IFAD), with the assistance of: Ranjita Puskur (International Livestock Research Institution), Michael Kibue (Heifer International – private sector), Ahmed Sidahmed (University of California, Davis), Wyn Richards (NR International) and David Ward (Consultant). (Other CoP-PPLD members are welcome to join the Steering Committee.)

7. Knowledge Management and Knowledge Sharing Tools

A multifunctional electronic platform – initially maintained by IFAD – is under development (www.cop-ppld.net). It will provide information on PPLD, and support interactive information flows and consultations among CoP participants. It will also host a common repository/knowledge base, a roster of thematic experts and other knowledge sharing tools such as a discussion forum, wiki area, ask&answer, etc.

8. Sustainability

The following four key issues are crucial to the sustainability and effectiveness of the CoP-PPLD:

- Internal structure. The CoP will be taken forward by its members, and its structure should be lean and flexible so that it can adapt to changing needs.
- Communication and knowledge sharing commitment. The CoP will be effective only if all members contribute readily to the sharing of knowledge and documents. However, it should not become an additional burden in our busy schedule. The communication style should be brief and should add value when scouting for innovation, sharing experiences, engaging in debates and other activities. One of the guiding principles is tolerance and respect for all views.
- Funding. Following the results of the pilot phase, a project proposal for CoP funding will be submitted to donors. However, in the spirit of the CoP, ordinary activities will be self-funded by its members.
- Coordination and Secretariat. IFAD will host the CoP Secretariat, which will be coordinated by Antonio Rota. All other members are invited to contribute to the internal organization of the CoP and its activities.

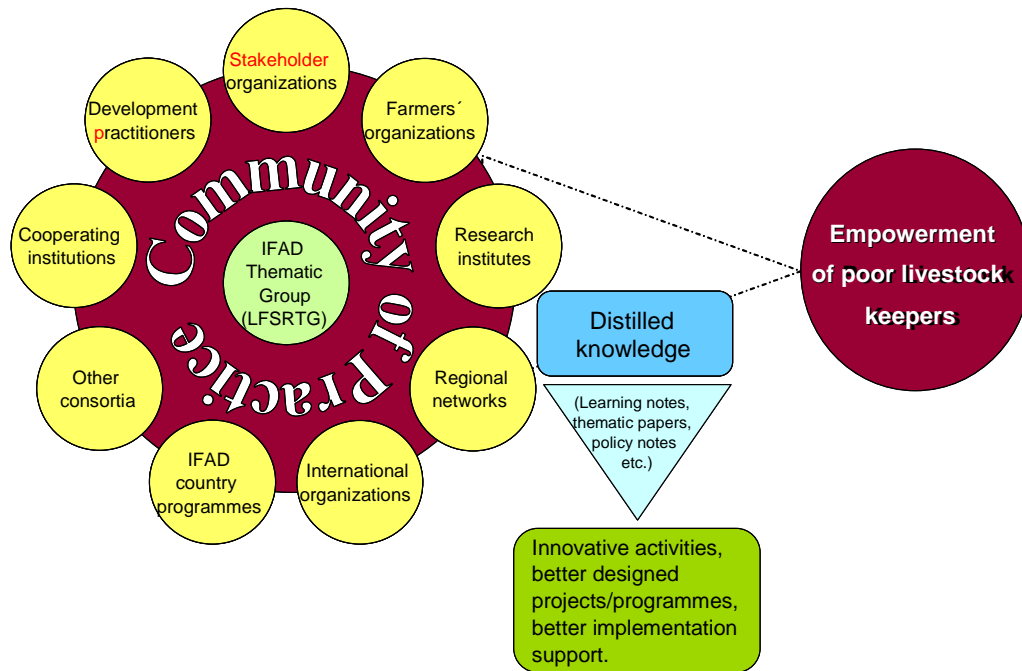


Figure 1 - The CoP for Pro-poor Livestock Development

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