

Concept Paper



Kuchi Service Centres Pilot Project

**Concept under the
Agricultural Production and Productivity Programme
National Agriculture Development Framework**

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock

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Concept Paper - Pilot Project

Kuchi Service Centre

1. Background

In the eight years since the fall of the Taliban and the start of the flow of foreign aid to Afghanistan, very little support has targeted the kuchi people. The kuchi have suffered equally, if not more, from the effects of war, drought and ethnic conflict.

The Kuchi Support Sub-Program considers two categories of kuchi as the target population:

1. Migratory livelihood, with a mostly livestock-based economy
 - a. long range migration, kuchi, crossing province boundaries
 - b. short range migration, kuchi, stay within the province
2. Partially migratory livelihood or semi-settled livelihood, more broad-based economy

This separation is rather artificial, and should rather be seen as different sides of a spectrum. Nonetheless, differences between the livelihood characteristics, the main impediments to sustainability of the livelihood, and the potential ways to strengthen these livelihoods are substantial. Different strategies may be required depending on livelihood patterns, and programmes need to build in sufficient flexibility to be able to cope with these differences.

The main reason for these vast differences in livelihood characteristics is the tendency among kuchi to adapt to prevailing conditions. Differences in geography, climate and employment opportunities have led to varied and ever-changing portfolios of livelihood strategies. The prevailing trend, particularly in the east, the west and the north of the country is towards a system of more partial migration or even towards semi-settlement. Pastoralism is increasingly becoming a specialization, which is still the backbone of the economy, but sits in a more broad-based economy.

Problems to be addressed

The Kuchi livelihood is an amalgamation of different livelihood components which the kuchi combine and switch between according to the circumstances. A problem analysis of the kuchi livelihood must therefore consider the constraints encountered in each of these main components. The main constraints encountered by the kuchi can hence be categorized under three different headings:

System of Pastoralism

- Non-fit with the current administrative systems
- Insecurity and conflict over access to resources (mostly in summer areas)
- Insecurity and conflict over residential rights (mostly in winter areas)
- Sub-optimal livestock productivity
- Sub-optimal access to animal health care

Diversification of Livelihoods

- Insecurity and conflict over residential rights
- Low skill levels
- Lack of income generating opportunities (remoteness from markets)
- Lack of access to credit and business support services

Shift towards more sedentary livelihoods

- Lack of residential security in economically active zones
- Low skill levels
- Lack of access to credit and business support services

Concept

In order to meet the challenges identified above this concept note propose to establish a Kuchi Service Centre pilot project that will create and support opportunities for the kuchi to diversify and strengthen their livelihood. Through these the Kuchi communities, households and individuals can choose the specific components that will strengthen their particular livelihood portfolio.

These service centres will be tailored to the needs of the Kuchi communities, and they will be operated and managed by members of the Kuchi communities themselves. A Kuchi Service Centre Program will consist of a building with basic utilities (power, water). Depending on the priorities of the community the Kuchi Service Centre Program will house a number of service facilities. A Kuchi Community Council will be established to represent the community, prioritize needs and wishes, and provide guidance to program implementation in their community.

2. Project Overall Goal and Specific Objectives

Overall Goal

To create opportunities for strengthening the pastoralist livelihood and diversifying the income base for the kuchi, through provision of training and increased access to services.

Specific Objectives

1. increased access to animal health care
2. increased livestock productivity
3. increased value addition to livestock and livestock products
4. increased skills development to enable Kuchis to take advantage of opportunities for additional income generation

3. Project Outputs and Activities

a. Kuchi Service Centres established, operated and Maintained

The precise location of the Kuchi Service Centre will be determined by the following factors:

- high density of kuchi population
- relative accessibility (both for kuchi communities and traders)
- availability of water
- economic sustainability of private sector businesses to be established in/around the centre (veterinary field unit, livestock feed mill, etc)

The exact location will be agreed upon by program staff, kuchi shura leaders and the private sector.

A community management committee will be established that will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Kuchi Service Centre. This community management committee will have representation from all the migratory units within the geographical area, and will include women.

The establishment of the type, scale and scope of the facilities under the Kuchi Service Centre umbrella will depend on the priorities of the kuchi community. It is envisaged that the starting point will be veterinary services.

b. Kuchi Community Councils established and capacity built

Kuchi Community Councils will be established around each Kuchi Service Centre. Its capacity will be built to identify the needs and priorities and to identify solutions by the kuchi communities. The Kuchi Community Council will also be provided with basic project management and administration tools.

This capacity building component will be strengthened with a conflict resolution component, which will equip the kuchi community with the skills to solve or mediate conflicts when they occur. Additional capacity building will revolve around risk management and emergency preparedness, and will deal with mechanisms that kuchi can apply to reduce vulnerability to common shocks (drought, disease, etc).

c. Kuchi paravets and BVWs trained and VFUs established

Paravets and BVW will be trained from the kuchi communities. It is the aim to have one kuchi paravet per each on the geographical kuchi concentration area, and one Basic Veterinary Worker per migratory unit.

However, the veterinary service coverage assessment to be conducted by the MAIL Monitoring, Evaluation and Coordination department may recommend different ratios, which will then be adopted.

Each paravet will be supported to establish his own Veterinary Field Unit (VFU), as the first module of a Kuchi Service Centre. The delivery of veterinary services by the VFUs will be purely private sector-based, according to MAIL policy, with full cost-recovery. Initial investment support will be provided, as per MAIL policy.

Depending on the migration patterns of the kuchi, the VFU may either be fully mobile, have a mobile component, or may remain in the winter areas. Basic Veterinary Workers (BVWs) may be trained to form the mobile arm of the veterinary service and linked to a VFU. The specific migration patterns will determine the appropriate combination of BVWs and VFUs.

In addition, the Kuchi migration routes will be analyzed in relation to existing service providers along these routes. The kuchi will be informed about the existence of these VFUs and the services they provide.

d. Kuchi gain access to livestock productivity extension outreach

The extension outreach to the kuchi will be expanded to create more awareness of modern animal husbandry techniques, such as the importance and economic rationale of increasing investment in preventive animal health care, and the impact of the nutritional status of livestock on production and reproduction.

Extension material will be prepared for the VFUs. This extension can be carried out through a public-private partnership between MAIL and the VFUs and the Basic Veterinary Workers.

VFUs will identify key livestock keepers, who are likely to become early adopters of modern animal husbandry techniques. Pilots will be conducted with these key livestock keepers, which may initially be subsidized through the project. In return, these key livestock keepers will spread the word about the usefulness of these techniques to other farmers. Animal health planning sessions can be held between the kuchi communities and the VFUs for effective investment in the health of their livestock. For instance animal health investment packages could be developed, covering the costs of all necessary preventive treatment for a year.

e. Increased access to supplementary feed

To increase access to supplementary feed community storage facilities could be set up, which would allow the community to purchase livestock feed when the costs is low, after the harvest. Producer's cooperatives could be established, which would buy the feed in bulk, store it, and sell it back to their members during the winter. The cooperatives may be supported with initial investment costs, training and access to credit for working capital (refer below: business support services)

In addition, the more settled kuchi could establish agri-businesses for livestock feed production, which they could then supply to the more extensive kuchi producers. Interested entrepreneurial individuals could be supported to manufacture or trade in livestock feeds, such as mixed feed production based upon local feed sources; urea treatment of straw; concentrate; and any other.

These kuchi entrepreneurs could be supported through technical advice on the methods and formulas, with financial support towards the establishment of the basic infrastructure required, and through access to credit. (refer below: business support services)

f. Increased skills, facilities and marketing linkages for value addition to livestock products

Linking migratory, extensive producers with partially migratory or semi-settled kuchi will increase economic profitability for both the sedentary and the migratory communities, by providing opportunities for

value addition to livestock and livestock products. Livestock products to be considered for value addition are wool, cashmere, dairy products and fattening of lambs.

Training on processing of wool and cashmere processing (sorting, grading, washing and spinning of wool; hand-dehairing and sorting of cashmere) can be conducted at the Kuchi Service Centre. Training on processing of dairy products for the market can also be conducted at the Kuchi Service Centre.

Storage facilities can be established at the Kuchi Service Centres, which can be used for wool and cashmere, and also for dairy products. The storage facility will be managed by the Kuchi community management committee. Prior to the establishment, agreement will be reached within the community on how the storage facility will be managed, how the products will be sold and how profits will be distributed.

The Kuchi Service Centre can serve as the link between the kuchi community and the market. Linkages with traders will be established. Traders will be encouraged to purchase livestock products from the Kuchi service centre and/or the Kuchi community management committee will take the goods to the market.

In addition, the business support services described below can also support the establishment of individual entrepreneurial businesses related to value addition.

g. Increased vocational skill levels for additional income generation

Non-traditional income generating activities can be introduced into the kuchi communities, in particular to those households with excess and or access to labour. Emphasis will be on women in this component of the program. Income generating activities that may be considered under this program are poultry and turkey keeping, bee-keeping, handicrafts and others.

Initially, feasibility studies will be conducted to ensure the viability and profitability of these ventures. When the feasibility has been proven, training will be provided to self-selected members of the kuchi communities. Storage / working space can be provided in the Kuchi Service Centre. This program component will be closely linked with the business support services component described below.

h. Increased access to credit and business support services

Business Development Services will be made available through the Kuchi Service Centre. Linkages will be sought with Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) operating in the province or region.

Feasibility studies will be conducted on potential businesses of interest to the Kuchi, such as manufacture or trade in livestock feed, livestock trade, fattening of lambs, or others.

Specific loan products will be designed for these businesses and others as they emerge, and loan application procedures will be developed. Business support packages will be designed to support the kuchi in establishing and managing these businesses. These business support packages will include materials on: Business plan preparation; simple profitability analysis tools, loan application support, and simple business management tools.

The business support package will be delivered to the kuchi by a member of their community who is trained to be a Kuchi Enterprise Support worker. The Kuchi Enterprise Support worker will receive training on the various business support packages and will receive continuous counselling from the MFI loan officer designated to the kuchi. The Kuchi Enterprise Support worker will monitor the business management practices during the life of the program.

4. Proposed Implementation Strategy

Mode of implementation

Using information derived from community land use patterns, *geographical kuchi concentration areas* will be defined; e.g. geographical areas with high density of kuchi. Each geographical kuchi concentration

area may accommodate one or more *migratory units*. Migratory units are defined as 'communities which share a common winter area and a common summer area'. These migratory units may be constituted by a combination of fully and partially migratory households. Ideally, these migratory units are formed along traditional, tribal lines, but groupings of sub-tribes may be necessary.

Kuchi Service Centres will be established in these geographical kuchi concentration areas, on a modular basis. Basic utility facilities will be established around the Kuchi Service Centre, such as a small office for the Management Committee, some storage space, and a water source. Depending on the priorities of the kuchi communities different service modules may be added to the Kuchi Service Centre. It is envisaged that the starting point will be veterinary services, and other modules will be tagged on as per the priorities of the Kuchi Community Council.

The number and location of Kuchi Service Centres will depend on the geographical spread of the 'geographical kuchi concentration areas', and the population figures within these. The exact location of the Kuchi Service Centre will be agreed upon by program staff, kuchi shura leaders and the private sector service providers, and will be affected by the following factors; high density of kuchi population, relative accessibility (both for kuchi communities and traders), availability of drinking water, and the economic sustainability of private sector businesses to be established in/around the centre.

A Kuchi Community Council will be established that will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Kuchi Service Centre. This community management committee will have representation from all the migratory units within the geographical area, and will include women. Mechanisms for operation and maintenance for the different modules of the Kuchi Service Centre will be discussed and agreed upon in detail; e.g. costs of operation and maintenance.

This project will initially be implemented in provinces with high number of Kuchi, and where conditions allow for a high degree of success. Suggested provinces are Nangarhar or Laghman in the east, Balkh in the north, Paktya or Paktika in the southeast.

The timeframe of the project is three years, after which the Kuchi Service Centres are expected to function independently. Lessons will be learnt through the implementation of this pilot project, which will be incorporated into the project design for future roll-out of this project.

Project Management

A Kuchi Service Centre Project Management Unit will be established in the Agriculture Production and Productivity Programme Area. The Kuchi Service Centre Project Management Unit will work closely with the Independent Kuchi commission in the provinces.

The Kuchi Service Centre Project will be implemented by Facilitating Partners, which will be identified through a competitive process. Selection will take place on the basis of their skills and experience in: working in the field of livestock production, in these specific provinces of operation, and in working with kuchi.

The Facilitating Partner will enter into a contractual agreement with the MAIL. The Kuchi Project Management Unit will oversee the implementation of the program, and will conduct performance monitoring and evaluation.

5. Inputs required

Budget Project	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total (US\$)
Staff	201,600	201,600	201,600	604,800
Training	660,000	165,000	165,000	990,000
Equipment	680,000	-	-	680,000
Travel	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
Operational costs	105,000	105,000	105,000	315,000
Total	1,541,600	366,600	366,600	2,274,800

Note: This budget excludes any overhead costs charged by the Facilitating Partner