STRENGTHENING THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF MBORORO PASTORALISTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PASTORAL RESOURCES IN THE NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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<td>MBOSCUDA</td>
<td>Mbororo social and cultural development association</td>
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<td>MINEPIA</td>
<td>Ministry of livestock Fisheries and Animal husbandry</td>
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Thanks

This project has been successfully implemented thanks to the direct and indirect contributions and collaboration of a large number of persons and institutions. It is just not possible to mention them all here, but we are particularly thankful to the following for their invaluable contributions to the design and implementation of the project:

- The European Union (EU) for funding the project through the civil society strengthening programme (PASC);
- The Programme Manager and staff of PASC for their advice and close backup throughout the project period, which were very useful in ensuring the effectiveness of the project and enhancing learning and capacity building for MBOSCU DA staff especially as concerns accounting procedures and reporting;
- The Coordinator and staff of Rural Development Consultancy (RDC) for their professionalism in providing technical expertise for the implementation of some of the activities of the project;
- The leaders of the Mbororo community based organizations (CBOs) for not only participating, but taking the lead in the implementation of activities in the field;
• The local administrative authorities, notably the Divisional Officers (DOs) of Ndop, Wum, Fundong, Mbengwi, Kumbo, Nkambe and Bamenda for authorizing the activities in their respective areas of coverage, and for collaborating with MBOSCUDA to ensure that the associations are working in conformity with the regulations in force in Cameroon;

• Heads of relevant technical services, notably the Divisional Delegates in charge of livestock for their close technical support and advice;
Introduction

About MBOSCUDA

The Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA) is a membership-based association of the Mbororo pastoralists of Cameroon. It was created in 1992 and is committed to empowering Mbororo people to achieve sustainable and equitable development and to secure their human, social, cultural and economic rights as valued active citizens of the Republic of Cameroon. To advance its mission, MBOSCUDA has implemented various initiatives including advocacy actions aimed at averting the marginalization of Mbororo people, Human Rights and civic education, paralegal extension, micro-credit schemes and adult literacy for Mbororo women, support to agro-pastoral activities, and various programs aimed at promoting school attendance by Mbororo boys and girls. The association is organized into autonomous regional chapters that design and implement projects and programmes aimed at addressing specific problems faced by Mbororo people within the respective regions.

About PASC

The Civil Society Strengthening Programme (PASC) is an EU funded initiative that aims to contribute to the improvement of responsible and participatory political, economic and social governance in Cameroon through better information and involvement of CSOs in the
definition, programming, implementation, monitoring and assessment of development programmes and policies. The specific objectives of the programme are:

- To develop and disseminate information and knowledge on civil society and improve access to information for CSOs.
- To strengthen the role of CSOs in governance initiatives both at the national and regional levels in order to sustain these initiatives.
- To contribute to the building of the organizational, technical and institutional capacity of CSOs.

About this Document

MBOSCUDA North West has just completed the implementation of a project titled “Strengthening the collective voice of Mbororo Pastoralists for the promotion of local governance in the management of pastoral resources in the North West Region of Cameroon” with funding and advisory support from PASC. This publication aims to highlight the high points of the implementation of this project and to offer an avenue for experience sharing among stakeholders and other organizations working on similar issues. It showcases the approaches used by MBOSCUDA to meet the objectives and ensure sustainability and appropriation of the outcomes of the project by the target population. The document also aims to share MBOSCUDA’s experiences and learning from the project in order to facilitate its replication in other parts of the country, especially for the benefit of indigenous communities.

The document is organized into three sections:
Section 1: Background and Objectives of the Project
This section presents the background of the project, highlighting its justification and context. It also presents the objectives as well as the expected results and target population of the project. This section ends with a description of the general approach and methodology used to ensure the effective completion as well as the sustainability of the project.

Section 2: Activities of the Project
Here, the various activities implemented in view of attaining the objectives of the project are described, including their specific objectives and methodology.

Section 3: Outcomes and Achievements of the Project
This section highlights the main outcomes resulting from the implementation of the project. It includes the impacts or impact trends ensuing from the implementation of the project.

Section 4: Challenges, Lessons and Future Perspectives
This section highlights the challenges faced during the implementation of the project and draws lessons for improvement. It also presents the future perspectives in the light of the challenges and lessons.
Section 1: Background and Objectives of the Project

1.1 Background and Justification of the Project

In response to the first call for proposals issued by PASC in 2013, MBOSCUDA submitted a proposal titled “Strengthening the collective voice of Mbororo Pastoralists for the promotion of local governance in the management of pastoral resources in the North West Region of Cameroon”, which was approved in December 2013. This project was initiated from two previous projects carried out by MBOSCUDA, which aimed to stimulate and strengthen community-based organizations of the Mbororo pastoralists of the North West Region in view of ensuring their effective and efficient representation on public policy and decision-making arenas. These two past projects benefited respectively from funding from the EU within the Civil Society Support Programme (PASOC), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF). These previous projects effectively stimulated community-based organizations of the Mbororo pastoralists of the North West Region who are now organized into divisional associations, which have also come together to form a regional federation known as the North West Association of Cattle Breeders (NOWEACAB). Prior to these projects, municipal councillors from the 34 councils of the region who are members of the Mbororo community had created an association which aims to facilitate
experience sharing and joint initiatives to ensure that the decisions and actions of the councils and other public decision-making structures are responsive to the needs of the Mbororo people of the region.

While acknowledging the increased institutional and organizational capacities of these emerging Mbororo pastoralist organizations resulting from the various initiatives carried out by MBOSCUDA and other actors, it was realized that there is the need to further strengthen the capacity of the leaders of these CBOs to effectively and efficiently animate the internal dynamics of their organizations thereby increasing their advocacy leverage in public decision-making arenas.

Considering that these CBOs represent the voice of the Mbororo pastoralists of the region, strengthening them is expected to give these pastoralists a stronger voice and lead to their emancipation and effective participation in public policy and decision-making processes.

As concerns the representatives of Mbororo pastoralists in public decision-making arenas such as the local councils, their quantitative participation has been estimated to 2.5%. Considering that the population of these pastoralists is well over 5% of the total population of the region, this percentage of their quantitative representation is very low. In addition to this low quantitative representation, the quality of their participation is also very poor considering that many of the representatives have a low level of
education and often lack the capacity to efficiently defend the interest of the Mbororo pastoralists in those structures.

This project was therefore justified by the need to further strengthen the capacity of the CBOs of the Mbororo pastoralists of the North West Region of Cameroon to organize and act in order to effectively address the needs and interests of their members and to influence public decisions at local and regional levels to be more responsive to these needs and interests.

1.2 Objectives and Expected Results of the Project

This project therefore aimed to strengthen the collective voice of the Mbororo pastoralists through the improvement of the organizational capacity of the CBOs as well as their capacity to efficiently plan and carry out advocacy actions. Its specific objectives were:

- To strengthen the organizational/institutional capacities of Mbororo CBOs in the Region, and
- To strengthen the capacity of Mbororo community leaders in lobbying, advocacy and representation in public governance forums.

It was expected that by the end of the project, the following results would be achieved:

- The CBOs created and run by the Mbororo pastoralists of the North West Region are restructured
thereby ensuring that they are more functional and better animated internally;

✓ The leaders of the CBOs of Mbororo pastoralists of the North West Region are trained on group dynamics and leadership, and are able to effectively and efficiently animate the internal life of these associations;

✓ The leaders of the CBOs of Mbororo pastoralists of the region have better knowledge and skills in the area of resource mobilisation, and are mobilizing resources internally and externally to carry out planned activities for the benefit of their members;

✓ Mbororo councillors are trained on lobbying and advocacy, thereby rendering them more effective and efficient in influencing public decisions to be more responsive to the needs and interests of the Mbororo communities they are representing.

1.3 Target Population

The main target group for this project was mainly the Mbororo pastoralists of the North West Region of Cameroon. These people form part of the large Fulani ethnic group that is spread over many countries especially in West and Central Africa. Their population is estimated at about 100,000. They are essentially nomadic and when they settle, they usually occupy the outskirts of villages inhabited by crop farmers as a strategy to improve their access to pastoral resources. In addition to its economic utility, pastoral livestock occupies a central position in their life, reason for which they sell their animals with a lot of reluctance.
These pastoralists have been targeted with this action based on their marginalized situation and the fact that they are not yet used to association live.

The target public decision makers include local and regional technical services, administrative, council and traditional authorities, who all play a direct role in the management of agro-pastoral resources (especially land, water, pastures etc) and related conflicts.

1.4 General Approach and Methodology

The project was implemented using a combination of gender-sensitive participatory tools. This means that in selecting participants for project activities, consultations were carried out with Mbororo community leaders, officials of government technical services and other main actors to ensure that the Mbororo community of the region is appropriately represented in terms of gender and leadership roles within the communities. Measures were taken to ensure that women, youth and men are appropriately represented during the implementation of project activities. In working with the CBOs, the representation of women was expressly ensured not only in meetings organized within the framework of the project, but also in the management committees of the CBOs that resulted from the restructuring done as part of this action.

In order to ensure appropriation of the project outcomes by the target group, the project also ensured that the pastoralist CBO leaders effectively led project activities. For example, the meetings to restructure the CBOs were chaired by their leaders. MBOSCUDA mainly played a support and
backstopping role to ensure that the target population took the lead and owned project outcomes.

As concerns the capacity-building workshops in particular, adult learning principles and methods were applied to ensure effective acquisition of knowledge and skills. Main training tools used included plenary discussions, brainstorming, group work and plenary presentations. All the outcomes of the discussion (both in plenary and in groups) were visualized to facilitate reference. The language used during the workshops was Pidgin English, considering that all the participants understand and express themselves more freely in this language.

Each training workshop ended with an action plan for the implementation of the capacities acquired and a general evaluation of the workshop.

The capacity building workshops were facilitated by Rural Development Consultancy (RDC), a local service provider with extensive experience in group dynamics, resource mobilization and advocacy. RDC was selected following a competitive tender procedure. A call for tenders was issued to this effect and a canvass committee put in place to select on the basis of the quality of the technical proposal and the financial offer. The facilitation services from RDC were provided within the framework of a service contract signed between RDC and MBOSCUDA.

It should be noted that prior to each activity, there was thorough preparation of both logistics and technical content to ensure the smooth running of the activities. Also, a project orientation meeting was organized at the beginning of the project to set out
the whole project. During the project implementation period, monthly planning meetings as well as quarterly review meetings were organized to ensure proper use of monitoring information to adjust project activities towards the effective attainment of the envisaged outcomes.
Section 2: Activities of the Project

In order to attain the objectives of the project, four main activities were carried out as follows:

Activity 1: Stimulate and accompany the restructuring of emerging Mbororo pastoralist CBOs

During previous work with these CBOs, it was observed that all 07 associations as well as the regional federation were functioning with difficulties as a result of structural challenges among other reasons. The objective of this activity was to accompany the associations and the regional federation to restructure their organs in order to better respond to the functional exigencies they were facing.

Working sessions were organized with the leaders of each of the seven divisional associations to assess the structural gaps and discuss the need for restructuring. Based on the identified structural gaps and the expressed needs for restructuring, the associations were assisted to organize extra-ordinary general assemblies to restructure their various organs in view of closing the identified gaps. This activity was carried out with the technical support of an expert in organizational capacity building who was recruited on a consultancy basis. The role of this expert was limited to facilitation and advice as the process was fully led by the leaders of the CBOs.
Activity 2: Train leaders of Mbororo pastoralist CBOs on group management

This activity was justified by the fact that these CBOs are still very young and most of their leaders are heading such associations for the first time in their lives. Also, Mbororo pastoralists are just beginning to adopt the associative lifestyle, thus the need for even stronger leaders who can understand and effectively animate the internal dynamics of the emerging associations.

The activity consisted of the organization of a training workshop of three days for leaders of the seven divisional associations and the regional federation on group dynamics and leadership. The workshop brought together a total of 18 participants. Considering the level of education and inexperience of some of the participants in group dynamics, the training was delivered mainly through interactive
learning activities such as case studies, role plays, group work, brainstorming and plenary discussions. The role of the facilitators consisted mainly of helping participants to exchange experiences, acquire new knowledge and skills and develop their own strategies for the implementation of the acquired knowledge and skills.

At the end of the workshop, participants elaborated action plans for the implementation of their newly acquired knowledge and skills. During the rest of the project period, MBOSCUDA carried out follow up and support for the proper management of the associations on the basis of these action plans. This follow-up consisted of visits to associations to discuss the challenges faced in implementing the new knowledge and skills, and to propose solutions to these challenges.

**Activity 3. Train leaders of Mbororo pastoralist CBOs on Resource Mobilisation**

For any organization to effectively play its role in a sustainable manner, its leaders must have the capacity not only to animate its internal life, but also to mobilize the necessary human, material and financial resources to act in an autonomous manner. Considering that the Mbororo pastoralists have not been very used to the associative live and consequently may not readily contribute to the functioning of their associations, it was necessary to build the capacity of the leaders of these associations to mobilize resources both internally and from external sources.
This activity consisted of a three-day training workshop on resource mobilization for the leaders of the CBOs. 21 CBO leaders effectively took part in the workshop. These participants were carefully selected to ensure that they are those who will be in charge of resource mobilisation in their respective associations.

The training was delivered in simple language considering that many of them have a low level of education and consequently a poor understanding of the English language. Emphasis was laid on practical ways of enhancing internal incomes and making good use of existing funding opportunities at local, national and even international levels.

The training began with an assessment of the resource needs of the associations in the light of their mission and activities. Potential internal as well as external sources for the resources needed were then assessed and strategies to mobilize from these sources discussed. At the end of the workshop, participants elaborated action plans for the effective implementation of the resource mobilization strategies learnt during the workshop. MBOSCUDA also planned follow up activities based on these action plans.
Activity 4. Train Mbororo councillors on Lobbying and Advocacy techniques

The specific objective of this activity was to ensure that the interests and needs of the Mbororo pastoralists of the region are effectively taken into account in public decisions at local and regional levels. The activity is justified by the fact that in the past, the representatives of pastoralists in the various governance structures who are too few to influence public decisions and policies due to poor leverage also lack the capacity to carry out effective lobbying and advocacy. This has led to a situation where the interests of the pastoralists are hardly considered during public decision-making and policy implementation.

The activity therefore consisted of the organization of a three-day workshop for Mbororo councillors on lobbying and advocacy techniques. The workshop started with an identification of issues concerning Mbororo pastoralists that require advocacy at local level to be addressed, including the public decision makers for each issue identified. The entire training was based on the issues identified and aimed to endow participants with the necessary advocacy knowledge and techniques for addressing the said issues. At the end of the workshop, participants were accompanied to elaborate advocacy action plans, and are being supported technically to implement these plans.
Section 3: Outcomes of the Project

It is too early to talk about impacts considering that the project has just ended, but positive trends can already be observed at the level of the organization and functioning of the beneficiary CBOs as well as MBOSCUDA’s capacity to organize and deliver bespoke services to its target population. In addition to these impact trends related to the organizational and technical capacities of MBOSCUDA and the contact groups, there are changes in terms of the visibility of the actions of both MBOSCUDA and the CBOs.

3.1 Outcomes at the level of the CBOs

The main changes and impact trends identified at the level of the CBOs are as follows:

- Through the restructuring that was supported at the start of the project, coupled with continuous advice and coaching of their leaders, the CBOs are now better organized, with a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities. The restructuring process also helped the CBOs to review their actions and refocus on those that are directly related to their mission. In some cases (such as in Donga Mantung, Boyo and Bui Divisions), the executive positions were revised to suit the kind of actions they intend to be involved in. With this restructuring and refocus of actions, the CBOs are now meeting more regularly and implementing actions that are of general interest.
to the Mbororo pastoralists of the area. In Boyo, Bui and Donga Mantung, the CBOs are more active in the dialogue platforms of pastoral resource stakeholders which are promoting amicable settlement and farmer-grazer alliances as alternative solutions to farmer-grazer conflicts.

- The training on group dynamics and leadership is reported to have effectively improved not only on the capacity of the leaders to manage the affairs of their groups, but also on their understanding of their leadership role within their respective CBOs. The associations of Boyo, Momo, Bui and Donga Mantung have reported an improvement in the quality of their activities as a result of the improved capacity of their trained leaders to animate meetings and lead other activities. During field work on another project that MBOSCUDA is implementing, it was realized that the leaders of the divisional associations are more involved in discussions with local administrative, municipal and traditional authorities on the pastoralists’ access to pastoral resources (case of Donga Mantung and the water projects supported by MBOSCUDA).

- One of the main difficulties encountered by the CBOs has been insufficient resources to carry out their activities. Through the training on resource mobilization, it is expected that they will be able to
mobilize more financial, material and human resources from both internal and external sources. The training on resource mobilization took place just a few months ago, reason for which we cannot yet talk of impact in terms of the amount of resources mobilized. However, it is clear that the beneficiaries of the training are more aware of potential sources of resources that they neglected in the past. For example, one of the activities they are planning to carry out is capacity building on animal health issues, animal feeding and pasture improvement. Through the training, they were able to identify resource persons among their members and have planned to use them instead of relying on external resource persons for all their planned training. They are also more aware of some of the reasons why members are not contributing resources as expected, and are now better equipped to motivate the members of their respective associations to contribute resources for the functioning of their groups.

- The training on lobbying and advocacy particularly targeted Mbororo councilors of the 34 councils of the region. This was the last training carried out within this project, and impacts can obviously be identified only after some time. The main change identified in this area is the increased awareness on the part of the councilors of the advocacy issues they can work on. It is expected that with proper coaching
and advisory support, these councilors will be able to be more strategic in their effort to influence local decision makers especially municipal authorities to be more responsive to the needs of the Mbororo pastoralists of their respective council areas.

- As concerns visibility, there is more recognition of the CBOs by local stakeholders, especially administrative and traditional authorities and relevant technical services. This has been evidenced through the increased invitation of the CBO leaders to meetings organized by these actors especially in Boyo, Bui and Donga Mantung. This positive trend is a result of the fact that these authorities were invited to all the activities carried out within their respective areas of jurisdiction, and the increased efficiency of the leaders of the CBOs. Also, the placing of banners at strategic positions during the various workshops was useful in improving the visibility of the CBOs.

3.2 Outcomes at the level of MBOSCUDA

At MBOSCUDA’s level, the implementation of this project has added value to the organizations capacity to organize and deliver relevant services to its contact groups. The following specific positive trends at MBOSCUDA as an institution, resulting from the implementation of this action, have been identified:
• The procedures for the selection of service providers introduced by PASC are a new concept within MBOSCUDA. Through these procedures, MBOSCUDA has been able to identify new competent providers within the region. MBOSCUDA’s Board of Directors has considered the adoption of these procedures as part of the strategy to ensure transparency and access the best service providers in view of improving the quality of MBOSCUDA’s work.

• Another trend has been identified in the area of accounting. The procedure for disbursement and justification of funds introduced by PASC is an innovation, and has improved on the capacity of MBOSCUDA’s accounting service to ensure proper expenditure tracking. MBOSCUDA is presently considering the best way to integrate elements of the procedures introduced by PASC into its accounting system.

• With the equipment that MBOSCUDA was assisted to acquire, some aspects of the organization’s work such as meetings and workshops have been remarkably improved. The projector purchased within the framework of the project has motivated the staff of MBOSCUDA to learn more on how to present using PowerPoint, and has effectively
improved on their presentations even during events organized by other organizations.

- In the area of visibility, the implementation of this project has increased the visibility of MBOSCUDA and its actions. During all the workshops, which were organized in different parts of the region, the administrative authorities of the host divisions were invited to preside at the official opening sessions. This brought MBOSCUDA closer to these authorities thereby increasing their understanding MBOSCUDA’s activities. The placing of banners at strategic positions during the workshops also contributed to the improvement of MBOSCUDA’s visibility.

It is expected that an assessment of this project a few years from now is likely to show remarkable impact at the level of both MBOSCUDA and the beneficiary CBOs.
Section 4: Challenges, Lessons and Future Perspectives

4.1 Challenges

Despite the remarkable achievements of this project, MBOSCUDA and the other actors who participated in its implementation faced the following key challenges:

- The procedures for the engagement and justification of expenses put in place by PASC was new and largely more exigent than the traditional procedures used by MBOSCUDA in terms of the types and number of justification documents required for each transaction. The staff involved in the implementation of the project found these procedures too cumbersome and time-consuming.

- MBOSCUDA found it difficult to complete the project within the envisaged timeframe mainly as a result of the fact that funds were not disbursed timely. This challenge can be linked to the difficulty of justifying expenses according to the procedures considering that disbursements from PASC were conditioned by the justification of previous disbursements.

- The direct target group for this action included the Menchum Cattle Breeders’ Association, but activities
with this particular CBO did not run smoothly as due to some internal wrangles that divided the group. Attempts to cause the restructuring of this association turned out to be lengthy, requiring several visits and meetings that added to the cost of the project.

4.2 Lessons Learnt

Four main lessons can be derived from the implementation of this project:

- Every effort to build the capacity of a CBO must pay attention to the accompanying the CBOs to restructure and refocus their activities was useful in ensuring the success of the capacity building aspects of the project. In the divisions where restructuring was effective, the capacity building component was equally very successful. On the contrary, the failure to restructure the association in Menchum Division negatively affected efforts to build the capacity of the leaders of this association.

- Relying too much on external sources for resources to implement activities renders the efforts of CBOs unsustainable. During the training on resource mobilization, it was realized that leaders of the CBOs were not aware of all the potential internal sources of resources, and trying to mobilize resources for their associations from external sources always led to failure leading to frustration.
Ensuring the visibility of CBOs and their activities at local level is useful in strengthening their leverage thereby improving their capacity to successfully influence local public decision makers to be more responsive to the needs of their members. Those CBOs that are now more visible to local administrative, technical and traditional authorities are being involved in public decision-making, and this is an opportunity for them to influence public decisions.

Allowing the leaders of the CBOs to lead project activities ensures ownership leading to greater sustainability. During the implementation of the project, the leaders of the CBOs were guided to choose and mobilize participants for meetings and workshops. They were also responsible for logistics arrangements. This led to greater appropriation of the activities and outcomes, which is necessary for sustainability.

4.3 Future Perspectives

In order to consolidate and even strengthen some of the achievements of this action, it is important to continue to accompany and guide the leaders of the target CBOs towards greater effectiveness and efficiency in delivering services to their members. Though the project has phased out, MBOSCUDA intends to continue to accompany the CBOs to act as a veritable voice for the Mbororo
pastoralists of the North West Region. Future perspectives in relation to this action are therefore as follows:

- After the restructuring and training of the leaders of the CBOs in group dynamics and resource mobilization, we look forward to stronger associations that are able to organize and act on behalf of their members in an autonomous manner. To achieve this, MBOSCUDA and its partners will accompany these CBOs to effectively implement the action plans that were elaborated during the three training workshops. This accompaniment will be incorporated into MBOSCUDA’s routine activities in order to ensure cost effectiveness and sustainability. Particular attention will be paid to the mobilization of resources internally in order to ensure greater ownership of the actions and outcomes by the CBO members.

- The association of Mbororo councilors is an emerging CBO with a lot of potentials to defend the interests of the Mbororo pastoralists of the region, especially within the present context of decentralization. MBOSCUDA will work with various partners to help this association clarify its advocacy objectives and act at local level to ensure that the interests of the Mbororo pastoralists are taken into consideration at the level of the councils and other decision-making arenas. Working with this
association, sensitization will be done, targeting potential Mbororo councilors, in view of stepping up the number of Mbororo councilors thereby strengthening its leverage as an advocacy group.

- Considering that the Mbororo pastoralists of the region are not very used to the associative life, there is the need for very strong leadership in their emerging groups. Apart from capacity building, there is the need to coach these leaders as they assume responsibilities that they are not familiar with. MBOSCUDA therefore envisages a coaching initiative that will complement the various capacity building initiatives.