



Regional IYRP Support Group (RISG) Eastern & Southern Africa (ESA)

Update May 2024

RISG–ESA meetings

Since January 2024, the RISG–ESA held three Zoom meetings to give the members updates on progress at national, regional and global levels concerning the IYRP 2026 and to discuss ongoing initiatives or activities that are critical for pastoralists in preparing for the IYRP ahead of 2026. After deciding on focus themes, the RISG is developing an action plan for the ESA region to be aligned with country-level action planning: each country needs to develop its action plan and priorities aligned with the ESA regional action plan. The subgroup in South Africa has started developing its action plan, in order to have something concrete to take to a broader audience in the country.

Several members of the RISG–ESA are active in global IYRP Working Groups (WGs), especially those working on issues related to the RISG–ESA's objectives such as access to land, now that the global IYRP Working Group on Land Rights has been formed.

In the latest meeting of the RISG–ESA in March 2024, specific roles and responsibilities were allocated within the group. Membership in the global IYRP Working Groups (WGs) was also agreed to make a constant and collective contribution by the RISG to global initiatives and to support inter-regional collaboration.

Some of the priority areas of focus identified by the RISG–ESA members include land rights, biodiversity and gender, and some RISG members agreed to join the respective global WGs to be able to contribute effectively to them and to ensure that ESA regional priorities are defined and addressed ahead of the IYRP 2026.

Updates on activities and ongoing initiatives

- **South Africa IYRP Support Group:** The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is spearheading the initiation of the SA IYRP Support Group, comprising diverse stakeholders including researchers, practitioners, specialist journalists, livestock farmers and youth. The primary objective of the SA IYRP Support Group is to explore and advance critical themes within the IYRP framework. Four themes have been selected from the 12 IYRP monthly themes to guide the focus in SA: i) Understanding rangelands and pastoralists, ii) Significance of indigenous knowledge and culture, iii) Promoting sustainable livestock production, and iv) Enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services. Climate Change and Resilience were selected as an overarching theme, while gender inclusivity focussed on empowering women and youth in livestock farming cuts across all these themes. To ensure a more focused approach, the IYRP Support Group in SA will dedicate each quarter to one of the selected themes, when action plans attached to it will be tackled.
- **One Health project:** A concept note was submitted to Capacitating One Health in East and Southern Africa (COHESA) to support the RISG–ESA activities leading up to 2026. COHESA agreed to fund the outlined activities. Efforts were made to engage COHESA member countries (Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia), seeking their endorsement of the concept and their participation in the upcoming initiatives. If a positive response is received from at least four of these countries, this would be sufficient to proceed with the planned activities.
- **Drylands Transform Annual Workshop:** This was held in Moroto, Uganda, on 6–10 November 2023. DT is a 5-year research project led by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), Linnaeus University, Makerere University,

Umeå University, University of Gothenburg, University of Nairobi and World Agroforestry (ICRAF). It seeks to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the East African drylands through transformation of landscapes, livestock and livelihoods, and works in the Karamoja Cluster and Kenya (Turkana & West Pokot). RISG-ESA members ACC (Ateker Cultural Center) and KADP (Karamoja Agricultural Pastoral Development Programme) joined the workshop.

- The **Restore4More research project** addresses the problem of land degradation in the drylands of East Africa through “Livestock Cafés”: knowledge-sharing hubs with experimental plots and demonstrations of innovative rangeland-restoration and water-management practices for socio-ecological sustainability in the Karamoja border region of Kenya and Uganda. In April 2024, the University of Nairobi, University of Makerere, SLU and RISG–ESA members in Uganda (ACC and KADP) jointly developed the project “Sustainable rangeland restoration: building inclusive knowledge hubs (Livestock Cafés) for resilient pastoral livelihoods and rangeland restoration in the Eastern African drylands”.
- **Review of rangeland policy in Uganda:** On 5 March 2024, rangeland and pastoralist actors, including several RISG–ESA members in Uganda, attended a workshop focused on reviewing Uganda’s rangeland policy, aligning legislation, integrating technical expertise and engaging civil society and political leaders. The event was officiated by Uganda’s Minister of Agriculture Animal Husbandry and Fisheries.
- **Women’s land rights:** The RISG–ESA member from ACC is coordinating a campaign to advance women’s land rights in Karamoja: “Stand for Her Land” (S4HL) as part of an international campaign led by civil society with a mission to strengthen women’s land rights through collective advocacy aiming to close the implementation gap between law and practice. It is being carried out in six countries: Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Senegal, Bangladesh and Colombia. In Uganda, the Uganda Community-Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) coordinates this campaign under the auspices of the Ugandan National Land Coalition. This is an advocacy platform under the International Land Coalition (ILC), which promotes people-centred land governance through change in policy and practice. Links with the IYRP WGs on Land Rights and on Gender will be sought.
- **East and Horn of Africa Pastoralist Symposium:** In collaboration with IGAD, Ethiopia’s Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands (MILLs) hosted a one-week Horn of Africa Pastoralism Expo, ushered in by a Pastoral Day on 26 January 2024. The Expo highlighted the challenges and opportunities of expanding collaboration among IGAD countries and programmes to promote lasting resilience in their borderlands. It engaged stakeholders and proposed actionable strategies to foster resilience and sustainable development in the region. The event celebrated the rich culture of pastoralism and sought to bridge the past, present, and future of pastoralism. Several RISG–ESA were involved, including RECONCILE, DADO, DT, COPACSO (Coalition of Pastoralist Civil Society Organizations), Arid Landscape Initiative and Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia. Link to final report: <https://icpald.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Regional-Expo-Report.pdf>
- **Regional Inter-Ministerial Policy Meeting on Livestock Development in the IGAD region:** The main objective of this public policy dialogue at ministerial level held on 25–26 January 2024 was to present the findings of the study “Political-economy analysis of livestock sector in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of the IGAD region”, funded by AFD (France). A consultancy firm had collected views from public and private sectors in all IGAD member states. The meeting sought policy support on how to address gaps as well as to build on achievements. The RISG–ESA members in COPACSO represented pastoralists in this meeting.
- **World Pastoralists Forum Climate Change & Livestock Dialogue:** In March 2024, the World Pastoralist Forum, COPACSO and Ugandan members of the RISG–ESA co-organised a Climate

Change and Livestock Dialogue that brought together experts from ILRI, World Bank, Tufts University and SLU. Link to the report https://evfitzgriff.substack.com/p/climate-and-livestock-dialogue?r=fnuj4&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&triedRedirect=true. Unfortunately, mention of IYRP was forgotten, although RISG–ESA members co-organised the forum.

- **Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC):** In March 2024 in Zimbabwe, the APAC brought together diverse and influential participants to foster collaboration and strategic partnerships to address challenges faced in African protected and conserved areas. It engaged African Protected Area Directors, government representatives, youth, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), civil society, private sector and international NGOs. Participants had in-depth discussions on pressing issues related to protected and conserved areas, community-based conservation and sustainable financing. They agreed on a set of actions for Africa’s protected and conserved areas authorities and IPLCs to implement as part of attaining the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The conference was key for all pastoralists dealing with conservancies set up on pastoral land in Africa. Several RISG–ESA members took part. See <https://www.resourceafrica.net/africa-protected-areas-congress/>

Future plans

- A regional annual symposium on pastoral tenure rights is planned. A small group working on technical topics such as the Customary Land Tenure Working Group and other emerging advocacy opportunities will be formed. The regional conference on customary tenure rights held in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2023 served as an example. From this meeting, RISG–ESA members saw a critical need to translate key messages into different languages that can be understood across the region, if possible into local languages.
- RECONCILE is also engaging the RISG–ESA team to share experiences on past and ongoing initiatives for documentation and for learning and knowledge exchange and to identify key advocacy priority areas for engagement across the region.
- RECONCILE, through the Africa Rangelands and Pastoralist Platform coordinated by RECONCILE for members of the ILC, scheduled dialogue with members to dig deeper into their priorities as outlined per region to support advocacy ahead of the IYRP 2026. The dialogue will look into information, mapping and data on pastoral areas and pastoral mobility and transhumance.
- The ARC’s Range and Forage Science Team will host a Bush Encroachment Colloquium on 18–20 June 2024, aimed at exploring the dual aspects of bush encroachment: its ecological implications and restoration guidelines, and its agricultural benefits, focusing on the forage value and anti-parasitic properties it offers for livestock. By exploring innovative approaches to managing bush encroachment while harnessing its agricultural potential, this event will facilitate a dialogue between scientists, farmers, extension officers and other key stakeholders. The programme will include keynote addresses, scientific presentations, farmers’ day and discussions. The farmers’ day in particular will be a hands-on event where practical techniques for utilising encroaching trees in feed production for livestock will be demonstrated. This, in turn, will empower farmers with knowledge and skills to capitalise on this resource. The outcomes of this meeting will be shared with relevant IYRP Working Groups, e.g. the one on biodiversity.
- Further events which RISG–ESA members will either be organising or hope to attend are:
 - Tobonge Lore Cultural Festival to be held in August 2024 in Turkana, Kenya
 - Karamoja Cultural Event to be held in September 2024 in Karamoja, Uganda
 - FAO COFO / IYRP Dryland Summer School to be held in September 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya
 - Ateker Peace Caravan: Pastoralist Youth and Leadership Conference to be held in November 2024 in Kapoeta, South Sudan.