Process case study

Building Back Herds through LEGS: Post-Cyclone Livestock Restocking in Somaliland

In 2019, Cyclone Sagar struck the coastal areas of Somaliland, leaving behind significant devastation to lives, infrastructure, and livelihoods—especially within the pastoralist communities of Saahil region. In response to a national call from the Government of Somaliland, GIZ, through its Livelihood Improvement Project (LIP), initiated a livestock-based emergency response.

The intervention was designed and implemented using the internationally recognized Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) framework. The primary focus was on restocking livestock assets to accelerate recovery and strengthen long-term resilience. This case study reflects how structured, evidence-based responses can effectively restore livelihoods while reinforcing community systems and capacities in the face of climate-related shocks.

Approach

Initial Assessment and Community Participation

In line with Stages 1 and 2 of the LEGS approach to emergency response planning: *Initial Assessment* and *Response Identification*, the project team conducted a rapid yet in-depth needs assessment. This process aimed to determine the role of livestock in household economies, assess the scale of asset loss, and understand the broader policy and operational environment. It revealed that the majority of affected households were purely pastoralist, and the crisis had predominantly impacted sheep and goat populations, which are critical to household food security and income generation.

In alignment with LEGS Principle 2: *Community Participation*, affected community members were fully engaged throughout the assessment phase. Their insights helped validate the extent of loss, contextualize the impact, and shape the design of the response. This participatory approach not only strengthened the accuracy of data collection but also laid the groundwork for community ownership of the intervention.

Provision of Livestock Planning

According to Guidance Note 1 of Standard 1 of Provision of Livestock, the assessment confirmed that livestock, specifically sheep and goats, were the primary livelihood assets in the area. As a result, the project selected three significantly affected villages namely Bulahar, Ceel Sheekh, and Fuguxo as implementation sites. A total of 150 households (50 per village) were targeted for support. Selection was done transparently and inclusively in collaboration with Village Development Committees (VDCs).

Following Guidance Note 1 of Standard 2 of Provision of Livestock, sheep and goats were identified as the most suitable species for restocking. Each household received a distribution package consisting of 12 sheep and 8 goats, resulting in a total of 3,000 shoats distributed. This selection was based on community preferences, environmental suitability, and local feeding capacity.

Out of the two technical options provided in LEGS for Provision of Livestock, the project adopted Option 1: Replacing lost livestock assets, specifically Sub-option 1.1, which involves providing core breeding animals to pastoral households.

Procurement, Quarantine, and Health Management

The procurement strategy emphasized sourcing livestock from local markets to ensure sustainability and adaptability. A reputable local livestock trader was contracted to purchase indigenous breeds from within Somaliland, as these breeds are naturally resilient to the region's harsh climatic conditions and more likely to thrive post-distribution.

In line with Guidance Note 2 of Standard 1 of Provision of Livestock, the purchases were intentionally spread across several local markets to prevent market distortion and inflation, while also stimulating economic activity in multiple communities. This localized approach, consistent with Guidance Note 1 of Standard 2 of Provision of Livestock, minimized logistical challenges, reduced animal stress during transport, and lowered the risk of disease transmission associated with procurement of animals from neighboring areas.

To ensure the health and welfare of the animals, the project enforced a seven-day quarantine period prior to distribution, during which a private veterinarian contracted by the project conducted comprehensive health inspections, deworming, hoof trimming, and treatment of minor conditions, in line with Guidance Note 1 of Standard 4 of Provision of Livestock.

The quarantine sites were equipped with adequate feeding and watering facilities, consistent with Guidance Note 2 of Standard 1 of Provision of Livestock, ensuring that all animals were properly cared for and monitored until they were cleared for release.

Finally, the Ministry of Livestock and Fishery Development (MoLFD) conducted an independent inspection and issued certification for animal health clearance and distribution.

Distribution and Local Collaboration

To prevent disease transmission between villages, the project applied an All-In-All-Out approach—meaning livestock designated for each village were handled, transported and distributed independently. After each distribution, the quarantine areas were thoroughly cleaned and all manure was removed to maintain biosecurity and hygiene standards.

Extensive collaboration with the Village Development Committees (VDCs) ensured proper preparation of the distribution sites. Communities took the lead in organizing fencing, managing crowd control, and coordinating day-of-distribution logistics, which reduced operational costs and strengthened local responsibility. This proactive involvement eliminated the need for external security support and fostered a strong sense of ownership and trust among community members.

In accordance with Guidance Note 2 of Standard 4 of Provision of Livestock, the project re-engaged Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) previously trained from the three target villages and provided them with refresher training on the fundamentals of animal health management. The CAHWs were linked to the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MoLFD) regional office to ensure continued technical support and monitoring. They now serve as the first line of veterinary care and disease surveillance within their communities, thereby extending the project's long-term impact and sustainability.

Lessons Learned

- Community participation significantly improved beneficiary targeting, ensured transparency, and promoted ownership, which translated into smoother implementation.
- Local procurement was not only economically beneficial but also ensured the livestock were climate-resilient and suitable for the region.
- Veterinary protocols and quarantine systems ensured that distributed animals were healthy, reducing the risk of disease and mortality post-distribution.
- Capacity building of local CAHWs proved vital to project sustainability and continuity of animal health services.

- The LEGS framework served as a reliable and structured tool for planning and delivering a high-quality livestock emergency intervention that met humanitarian standards.

Conclusion

The successful implementation of this restocking intervention in response to Cyclone Sagar demonstrates how applying the LEGS framework from assessment to distribution can effectively restore pastoralist livelihoods in a way that is sustainable, participatory and context-sensitive.

Through community engagement, strategic local procurement, and structured veterinary care, GIZ's intervention not only replaced lost livestock assets but also strengthened the foundations for long-term resilience and local capacity. This experience affirms that standards-based interventions such as LEGS are critical for effective, accountable, and sustainable humanitarian response in livestock-based livelihoods.

Source: Abdirahman Mohamed Ali

LEGS case studies demonstrate good practice in livestock emergency response. They cover the six LEGS Technical Intervention areas, the eight LEGS Principles as well as the broader contexts covered in the third edition of the LEGS handbook. **Process case studies** illustrate the application of LEGS guidance and **impact case studies** reflect on the outcomes of LEGS interventions.

- You can access all of the LEGS case studies at livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies
- For more information see the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards Handbook at livestock-emergency.net