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KYRGYZSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Community Makes Their Voice Heard

USAID provided border Communities with tools to voice their concerns



Ak-Tatyr community members work to mark various interests and agreements related to their pastureland. Photo: RDF

A USAID project helped a rural community adopt a simple and versatile tool for pasture use planning, conflict prevention, protecting community interests, and conveying important messages to policy makers.

A USAID project empowered Ak-Tatyr community to create a tool that protected their land-related interests and helped avoid conflicts with neighbors.

Ak-Tatyr Village District in Batken Province is situated in one of the most remote areas in Kyrgyzstan, right along the border with Tajikistan. Land is scarce in this mountainous area. “As the number of livestock in the community increases, the use of the land tends to cause more and more conflicts among the neighbors,” says land planning specialist Mamatisa Matmuratov who handles complaints from the villagers on land use issues.

Last year, the USAID project, implemented by Rural Development Institute (RDI) and Rural Development Fund (RDF), offered the Ak-Tatyr community to help develop a transparent and clear means for managing the use of their pastureland. The project trained community representatives to conduct field research, record interests over the rangeland, and reach consensus with other members of their community. The USAID project also helped the community mark these findings on a map of the area. It wasn’t too long before the community was able to put this new tool to use.

The chief Kyrgyz authority over the pasture management, the Pasture Department, decided to lease some pastureland to Tajik Government, including 150 hectares in Ak Tatyr area. To elicit community’s opinions about this plan, the Pasture Department, together with the USAID project, organized consultations with the communities to be affected by the decision.

Using the map of their rangelands and the research findings, Ak-Tatyr representatives informed the Pastureland Department that the land in question was not only actively used by Kyrgyz shepherds, but that Tajik and Kyrgyz livestock owners also had a long-standing arrangement on the use of this land. Community’s presentation convinced the Pasture Department that the planned lease can cause disagreements between the current and the new users of the land. As a result, government officials agreed to reflect the needs of the local communities, as well as the existing traditional arrangements for pasture use, in their land lease arrangement. Thus, Ak-Tatyr community was able to protect their rights and to prevent potential conflicts between multiple pasture users.

“We are keen to explore other uses of the community mapping to ensure that when the project ends we will be able to utilize this tool independently,” says Matmuratov.