

JOINING FORCES

to Turn Environmental Challenges into Socio-Economic Benefits

October 2019

In an effort of intra-GIZ cooperation, the Livelihoods Improvement Project (LIP) in Somalia organised an exchange with the Bush Control and Biomass Utilisation Project (BCBU) in Namibia. The two projects explored how a best practice example of animal fodder production can be replicated in order to achieve tangible socio-economic benefits for rural communities in both African countries.

Namibia currently faces its worst drought of the past 100 years. The shortage of rain and its increasingly unpredictable and very cryptic nature for the past years has exacerbated the drought dilemma faced by Namibian farmers. The results are plains of land with little or no grass at all for livestock and the manifestation of bushes which thrive well under such environmental stress. However, innovative farmers successfully make use of the invasive alien plant species and indigenous encroacher species, processing it into crude fibre for animal feed.

With the aim to support the Namibian government in combating the bush encroachment problem, the De-bushing Advisory Service (DAS) conducted trainings across the country with a focus on bush encroached areas to assist livestock producers to utilise the bush resources for animal feed production.

DAS is a national information platform and focal point for all bush encroachment related topics as well as a capacity development hub in the emerging bush biomass industry. It addresses knowledge and information needs of farmers interested in sustainable bush control and



Prosopis, an invader species that affects most of the Sahil Region in Somalia. It is jeopardising the productivity of agricultural land, spate irrigation systems and the course of permanent or temporary rivers and indigenous plant species. Photo © Ideal X/ Dagmar Honsbein

biomass utilisation on their farmland and connects them with service providers, such as equipment suppliers and financial institutions.

"Farmers can diversify their income and sustainably contribute to tackling bush encroachment. They can ensure a more productive use of their land. We see a big opportunity for our farming community and for land users in this value chain," says Progress Kashandula, General Manager of DAS.

Also, the Saaxil Region of Somalia is affected by an invasive species called *Prosopis juliflora* which jeopardises the productivity of agricultural land, spate irrigation systems, the course of permanent or temporary rivers and the indigenous plant biodiversity. At the end of 2016, the LIP

From Namibia to Somalia. DAS together with LIP visited the community in Somalia to assess the opportunities of biomass of *Prosopis* for animal feeding, present the DAS approach on de-bushing and its experiences in Namibia and provide technical advice on how to upscale the development opportunities of animal feed from *Prosopis*. Photo © DAS



Solution to the problem of biomass transportation.

In Somalia, the community make use of traditional transport such as donkey carts to transport their biomass materials. Photo © GIZ LIP/ Erik Fritzsche

started with an assessment of opportunities on how to use Prosopis in a country with rather limited natural resources. Particularly, the GIZ LIP supports efforts to modernise livestock husbandry, the dairy value chain and agriculture so that settled farmers and nomadic pastoralists are better protected from potential crises such as droughts with the aim to improve the livelihoods and increase the resilience of the supported population.

As a next step the LIP explored whether the biomass of the Prosopis plants, mainly leaves and young branches, are suitable to be harvested and used as animal feed. LIP took up contact with GIZ BCBU through DAS to explore synergies on animal feed with the aim of information exchange and collaboration in upscaling development opportunities of this innovative value chain.

"This just shows you that drought is not only strife in Namibia, but other regions are also affected by drought and looking for alternative fodder to sustain their animals" says Kashandula.

From 21 September until 1 October 2019, DAS accompanied by Dagmar Honsbein, a consultant supporting DAS with animal feed trainings, joined LIP in Somalia. During the one-week visit, DAS presented sustainable bush control approaches and experiences in Namibia and provided technical advice in finding the potential uses of Prosopis. Additionally, DAS had an opportunity to network and

forge new relations with other stakeholders through the Somalia national workshop on Prosopis on 28 September 2019, and the DREAM Conference in Semera, Ethiopia on 29 and 30 September 2019.

The results of the mission are indeed promising. The discussions have forged a new path in dealing with this issue. Though the invader species is often regarded as a curse, both projects are focused on turning that curse into a blessing that will benefit the respective communities.

With the Somalia community acknowledging the potential of Prosopis, DAS will continue to share its knowledge to help the country move forward. The GIZ LIP and BCBU projects have proven that only through joining forces will we be able to mitigate the challenges of environmental changes and create a better world to live in.



Information exchange. DAS had an opportunity to network and forge new relations with other stakeholders through the Somalia national workshop on Prosopis on 28 September 2019, and the DREAM Conference in Semera, Ethiopia on 29 and 30 September 2019.

Photo © DAS