



The Way Forward

Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029

**MAASAI PASTORALIST DEVELOPEMNT ORGANIZATION-
(MPDO – LARETO)**



CONTACTS

Executive Director,

MPDO-LARETO

P. O. Box 13987

Arusha

Mobile: +255 787 975196

+255 754 9751 96

Email : lebarakalaizer2@yahoo.com

: mpopdlareto2005@yahoo.com

www.mpdolareto.blogspot.com

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Acronyms:

ARVs	Antiretroviral drugs
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender -Based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired immunodeficiency Syndrome
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LHRC	Legal and Human Rights Centre
MPDO- LARETO	Maasai Pastoralists Development Organization- Self Help
MPs	Members of Parliament
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
NSGRP II	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty II
PINGOs FORUM	Pastoralist Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations Forum
PLWHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (of the UN)
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises

Message from the Board of Directors

The Way Forward is our new Strategic Plan for the period 2024 to 2028. The Board of Directors and Management of MPDO-LARETO strongly believe that it outlines a pathway that will help to lead the Arusha region towards greater prosperity and sustainability, particularly among agro-pastoral communities. We have extraordinary natural assets, human resources and diverse economic opportunity that will support a growing role for the region as we move collectively down this path. However, there is increasing and competing pressure on our resources and we expect to be particularly impacted by climate change which could place one of Tanzania's most significant natural assets and agricultural regions at risk.

Our strategic plan considers these risks along with our shared strengths in building an environment for opportunities and growth that support pastoralists people and their communities, with attention given to those who may be considered marginalized. Our efforts to move towards improved livelihoods, healthier communities and a more sustainable environment, are part of an aspirational and practical strategy that seeks to be a catalyst for bold action. There are already many exciting economic and environmental activities taking place throughout our community. However, we also need to be prepared to respond to changing and sometimes adverse conditions. Our collective success will depend on how well we are able to harness and focus our efforts to building a sustainable future.



1.0 Introduction

This is a five-year **Strategic Plan** for Maasai Pastoralists Development Organization (MPDO – LARETO). The plan has been developed to help the organization prepare for the future by providing a guiding tool of MPDO – LARETO, showing its direction in a period of five years from 2024 to 2028. This plan also outlines the scope of its operations in line with priorities and strategies for effective administration, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of programmes and project activities. This plan also serves as a framework to guide regular decision-making regarding programme design, execution and relationship with communities, donors and other partners.



2.0 Background and Context

Maasai Pastoralists Development Organization (MPDO – LARETO) is a Non-governmental Organization formed in 2002 and formally registered in 2005 under the Ministry of Home Affairs with registration No. 13284. More recently there has

been an updated registration compliance No.01NGO/0008829. The organization was formed with the objective of facilitating community development initiatives through capacity building and awareness creation in all sectors of development within the Arusha region (both at the district and village level). LARETO is a Maasai word which means “**community self-help**”. The organization was formed after the realization that Maasai agro-pastoral communities were lagging behind and were often marginalized with respect to socio, economic, cultural and political factors when compared to other groups in Tanzania.

The organization focuses mainly on all the villagers and community members as the primary target group, with attention given to pastoralists who often are considered marginalized. Pastoralists are people who have traditionally relied on livestock as the main source of their livelihood. Pastoralism however depends on having access to pastures for grazing and water to support their livestock throughout the year. This has become increasingly challenging because of a variety of factors including drastic changes in patterns of land ownership. By example, the alienation of large tracts of land over the last century either for exclusive use by wildlife or for large-scale agriculture, and growing tourism investments have denied pastoralists access to an adequate supply and quality of land needed for the grazing and watering of their livestock.

Further, a lack of attention and funding has meant that livestock infrastructure is not developed in agro-pastoral areas as well as basic social services. In addition, the constant and increasing adverse impacts of climate change is a double sword to these communities. As a result, agro-pastoral production systems are impaired or failing and many families are living at subsistence levels, a situation which needs serious attention.



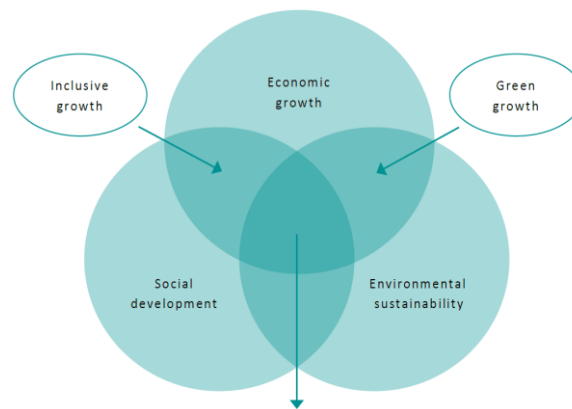
STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Social Inclusion and Gender Rights – Social inclusion focuses on ensuring that all citizens have a place in an economy, to actively engage and make decisions that affect their livelihoods. They should have the ability to obtain knowledge, training and skills necessary to support their families and communities through livelihoods that contribute to their health and well-being for societal growth and economic development. Special attention should be given to marginalized groups such as women and youth. Furthermore, everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. In this context, gender inequalities is another area to focus upon as customarily

women and girls are not given priority in accessing social and economic opportunities in agro-pastoral communities. Traditions and customs are still disadvantaging women in terms of land acquisition and ownership, while their role in the community is concentrated on activities like fetching fuel wood and water, taking care of the family, and tending livestock etc. It is also common that girl child education is traditionally constrained at the advantage of male children.

Human Rights – Human rights are considered to be most fundamental rights every person on earth can have. These rights are said to cover the basic necessities of human existence and include such matters as economic, social, political, civil and cultural rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

Climate Change – As noted earlier, climate change is significant phenomenon threatening pastoralists' livelihood through increased variability of seasons which leads to the death of livestock by decreasing the amount of grazing land, reducing water resources as well as increasing livestock diseases. It is imperative that pastoralist communities understand the causes and effects of climate change and develop coping/mitigation strategies and actions necessary in addressing such impacts through a variety of interventions.



Sustainable Development - The concept of sustainable development is based upon the goal of finding a balance between economic development, environmental protection and social wellbeing. The desired result is where living conditions and the use of natural resources meet human needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural system. In this regard, it is important to commit to the promotion and support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were adopted by the United Nations in 2015. This means that agro-pastoral communities must use their natural resources wisely and sustainably so that they remain available for future generations. Equally, these same principles will support and guide efforts with respect to the development of eco and cultural tourism opportunities. We also understand that acting environmentally means that we must shift and promote the use of cleaner energy sources that are renewable. It is clear that renewable energy initiatives have demonstrated that they can directly contribute to poverty alleviation by

providing the energy needed for creating economic opportunities.

Human Health and Well-being – It is also important that we recognize and support efforts to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages (SDGs Goal 3). In fact, there are considered to be basic human rights to health and well-being. Efforts need to include consideration of basic health needs such as disease, hygiene and malnutrition. Further, HIV/AIDS continues to wreak havoc across the region. HIV causes pains and sufferings to patients and their families, it imposes a heavy financial and social burden of caring for the sick, and it leaves the misery and poverty in its wake. HIV/AIDS, therefore, has serious implications for households, and for national social and economic development. This can be particularly true in agro-pastoral communities where awareness may be limited and the disease may be hidden by traditional and cultural practices and beliefs.



3.0 Our Values

Our approach to the work that we do is guided by a set of values that we all share:

- *Integrity* - We conduct our work and engage with others with honesty and mutual respect.
- *Quality* - We make every effort to provide excellent products and services to those that we serve.
- *Empowerment* - We empower the people and communities that we work with to take control of their lives and claim their rights.
- *Equity and inclusion* - We strongly believe that everyone deserves the chance to achieve their full potential including marginalized groups such as women and youth.
- *Education* – We recognize and value education as a core approach to learning and capacity development as it empowers individuals and communities to reach their full potential.



4.0 Our Strategic Framework

VISION STATEMENT

We envision thriving and sustainable agro-pastoral communities with sustainable management of resources and improved socio-economic conditions.

MISSION STATEMENT

Assisting agro-pastoral communities through effective capacity development, empowerment, education, and natural resource management.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To reduce poverty and diversify means of livelihoods of agro-pastoral communities through education, building skills, empowerment and interventions.
2. To provide education and training on natural resource management, environmental protection, as well as on adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

3. To enhance, develop, and promote sustainable agriculture, land use practices and associated rights among agro-pastoral communities.
4. To promote the preservation of pastoralists' culture while supporting the advancement of the rights and needs of marginalized women and youth.
5. To create and support strong and mutually beneficial partnerships among communities, governments and organizations with our shared interests.
6. To respect, utilize and build upon traditional knowledge that has been developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within the community.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

This strategic plan has involved the revision and updating of our organizational Vision, Mission, and Objectives. In keeping with these directions and our ultimate mandate, we have identified and developed a variety of strategic focus areas and associated activities that we believe would help us to successfully achieve the long-term goals that we have set for ourselves. It is important to appreciate that these activities have been identified based upon our review of the environment in which we work, our own implementation experience and the input of others. However, we also understand that there may be new developments and new opportunities that arise during the implementation of the

strategic plan. Therefore, it is also important that we remain dynamic and responsive to these changes and be prepared to shift our activities to meet such opportunities provided that they continue to align with the strategic directions that we have established. It is also important to state that the indicators that we use to assess our progress must include a measure of the actions that were undertaken along with an assessment of what the impact has been on the community. We are confident that the following activities will support our strategic plan and that once the organisation addresses them adequately in the next five years there will be successes both to the organisation and communities. The challenges and opportunities mentioned above helped us to focus on the following three strategic focus areas.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1	SUSTAINABLE LAND USE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Community Impact	Improved Land Use and Natural Resource Management Approaches and Practices
Activity	Indicators of Progress (short and medium term)
Initiatives to adapt to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of initiatives started, # completed ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)
Environmental conservation efforts and establishment of tree nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of trees planted, growth rate, survival rate ● # of nurseries established, productivity rates
Projects and promotion of pastoralists’ grazing rotation in rangelands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of projects started and # completed ● # of community participants ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2	ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOODS
Community Impact	Increased Wealth and Life Expectancy
Activity	Indicators of Progress (short and medium term)
Engagement of agro-pastoral women & youth in eco-cultural tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of income generating activities started by women and youth, # completed ● # of community participants ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)
Promoting gender equality on resources use and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of engagements with community participants ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)
Alternative income generating activities for agro-pastoral communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of new initiatives started, # completed ● # of community participants ● # of women owning properties and other assets ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3	EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY
Community Impact	Demonstrated Ability of Agro-pastoral Communities to Initiate and Manage Change
Activity	Indicators of Progress (short and medium term)
Training on land use and rights, and land management approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of training sessions with communities ● # of community participants ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)
School infrastructure improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of community projects started, # completed ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)
Reproductive health & nutrition training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of engagements with community participants ● # of community participants ● # of health groups (clubs) established, # continuing ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)
Promotion of cooperation on human rights issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of engagements with community participants ● # of community participants ● Assessment of impact (changes, improvements)

5.0 Building Our Internal Capacity

To ensure that we are able to effectively and efficiently meet our strategic directions and deliver our services in a timely and effective manner, it is important that we build our own internal capacity in a variety of ways.

Sustained Funding – We understand that it is imperative to have adequate resources (financial, human and capital) to be able to fulfil the commitments that are set out in this strategic plan. It is not sufficient to plan and hope that the resources will arrive. Action must be undertaken to ensure that we have exhausted all opportunities to sustain our funding and gain support from others. In this regard, a concerted effort will be made to:

- Create and develop partnerships
- Involve our key stakeholders
- Regularly evaluate our projects, activities and directions
- Build capacity of staff and volunteers
- Develop and deliver marketing and communication approaches
- Diversify our funding base
- Stay focused on the job at hand and avoid mission drift



Organizational Development – We also understand that we need to maximize the capacity, potential, and effectiveness of both our organization and our people. There are opportunities to improve the way we conduct and support our work and we will diligently strive to ensure that our organization builds greater accountability, increases our coordination among all the players, enhances our financial management systems and does a better job around transformational leadership.

Staff Development – We are committed to supporting and developing our staff as we know that a high performing team will lead to success for the organization and the communities that we serve. In this regard we will take steps and efforts to ensure our staff are appropriately trained, provided with career development opportunities and empowered to perform to the best of their abilities.

6.0 Implementing, Monitoring & Reporting for Success

The monitoring and evaluation of our strategies by using economic, environmental and social indicators is paramount to assessing progress towards the vision of this strategic plan and adjusting as required.

Monitoring and Reporting

In terms of the organization structure, the Board of Directors sits quarterly and are responsible for approving and overseeing the organization plans and budgets while the General Assembly is the supreme organ of the organization. This strategic plan has been developed with a clear set of indicators that will help in the regular assessment of progress made towards our strategic directions. Annual narrative and financial reports will be prepared and be open to the target group, donors and other partners who may be interested. Internal evaluations and auditing will form part of the implementation, but external evaluation will also be conducted after a period of five years of implementation of all activities to assess results and the impact of the organization's interventions.

Staff of the organization ensures that there is continuous monitoring of activity progress and reporting after every activity is implemented. Quarterly reports also will be prepared and assessment done to ensure that execution of project activities is in line with plan, and if problems arise then this is shared with all staff team members. Feedback will also be sought from beneficiaries of the activities to ensure their interests are appropriately and respectively addressed.

Sustainability

We understand that sustainability of the results of our efforts requires long term planning to ensure diverse donor engagement and for improving institutional capacity of the people and communities that we serve. To that end, we plan to:

- Build lasting capacity among the people and communities that we serve.
- Respect and build upon current systems that are already in place wherever possible.
- Maintain attention to our long-term vision and build sustainability components into everything that we do.
- Turn over capital investments to the appropriate authorities that have the capacity for long-term care and maintenance.
- Build strong, durable relationships with our partners, donors and communities.
- Diversify our funding sources and partnerships.

Risks and Mitigation Measures

The risk management matrix table below identifies a number of risks that may occur as we implement this plan, along with the actions that can be taken to minimise them.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions to Reduce Risk
Community marginalization, intimidation and threats	Medium	High	MPDO-LARETO will engage into mobilization campaigns

of eviction from own lands			
Target communities might not let gender stereotypes go (e.g. FGM, early marriages and pregnancies, equitable gender roles and property ownerships, Gender based violence etc.)	High	High	Engage traditional leadership to change the undesired cultural practices. Influence change from within given the complexity of working with P&H-G and their culture
General lack of government and public understanding and support for pastoralist concerns	Medium	High	MPDO-LARETO to support campaigns from pastoralist CSOs to generate understanding
Conflicting legislation and misinterpretation of laws pertaining to land, conservation and pastoralist interests	High	High	Through networks, lobby Government to address inconsistencies and mobilize communities to participate into the review process of laws, policies and regulations.
Threats by government to Human Rights activists, CSOs and the Media working to protect pastoralists' community interests.	High	High	Train activists, CSOs and Media on new tactics and tools on security protection for human rights defenders and use media to publicize emerging threats

MPDO LARETO – A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

