

Capitalisation of (livestock) Experiences

Knowledge won practically by acting and observing is experience. Converting experiences into retrievable forms is experience documentation. Transformation of experiences into new outputs is experience capitalization (*Manual Flury, 2005*).

This article examines how CALPI (a programme of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Intercooperation) facilitated capitalisation of experiences to address current and emerging issues of livestock farmers through a process intensive, multi-stakeholder oriented participatory approach.



CALPI (Capitalisation of Livestock Programme Experiences India) is one of the new SDC-IC programmes envisaged to capitalize SDC-IC's long experience in the livestock sector in India. The programme was started in 2002 and entered its second phase in August 2006.

The Swiss involvement in the livestock sector in India over many years has enabled to make significant contribution to poverty reduction. It also resulted in a pool of valuable experiences. An experience documentation exercise called 'CAPEX' carried out in India in the year 2000 was the backdrop of the CALPI programme wherein the lessons learnt became a 'fertile seed bed' for addressing emerging issues of the poor and the environment. Though CALPI was initially intended to capitalize 'SDC-IC's past experiences the focus slowly shifted to addressing current and emerging needs in the sector with the past experience used as a learning platform. Thus the programme gradually enlarged its role with a 'forward looking' agenda.

The experience capitalization process in CALPI was carried out in the following ways though not strictly in a sequential order:

Step 1: Exploring 'investment arena'. An example is the 'livestock service delivery reforms' project supported by CALPI in Andhra Pradesh. The backdrop of this project was the SDC supported IIM-World Bank study conducted earlier in 2000 before the formation of CALPI. The study revealed that 'farmers do not receive quality and timely health & breeding services at their doorsteps'. CALPI, after a detailed analysis decided to capitalize the past experience on the above to address the future and emerging needs. (see subsequent steps to know how capitalization has been done).

Another example is the project on 'livestock environment interactions'. A desk study conducted by SDC-IC in association with FAO showed that livestock, if not properly managed can produce detrimental environmental implications. CALPI believes that 'sustainable environment is a pre-requisite for sustainable livelihood'. So during the course of its work, CALPI decided to forge multi stakeholder partnerships to bring this issue to the central attention of policy makers and planners through a participatory research in five watersheds to assess the relationship between Livestock and NRM.

A third example is 'livestock policy development' in Chhattisgarh, which is one of India's most tribal and rural states wherein the Government of Chhattisgarh invited CALPI to facilitate livestock policy development process in their State realising the role played by SDC-IC in the development of national livestock policy perspective and their experience in policy development in the states of Orissa and Sikkim. CALPI undertook this assignment and further built upon its policy experience by converging lessons from the Sikkim Programme (which revealed that proper capacities need to be built within stakeholders to absorb futuristic policy frames) and lessons from the National Policy perspective (which revealed that a participatory process involving all stakeholders greatly enhances the effectiveness of a policy).

Step 2: Acquiring and energizing the capital. Mobilizing and energizing the capital (experiences) is the next step. It involved collating experiences (past, present, SDC-IC, non-SDC-IC) and identification of knowledge holders relevant to the issues concerned. This is made possible through review of documented experiences (past and current) and consultation with individuals and institutions involved in the past SDC-IC livestock /NRM projects, which include staff members in the SDC Coordination office,

Intercooperation head office, Swiss College of Agriculture, ongoing SDC-IC projects in India, local institutions (like Kerala Livestock Development Board, State Management Institute for Livestock Development Association, Veterinary Officers Training Institute and North Kerala Dairy Project). Experience was also shared by individuals who were actively involved in the past Indo Swiss projects.

It is realized that a systematic mapping and profiling of the knowledge holders and 'keeping them in touch' is a pre-requisite of any capitalization programme. Human capital is the most valuable source of experience that can be reinvested in this process. CALPI attempted to keep this valuable capital together by facilitating the setting up of a Community of Practice wherever possible. Development of a livestock-livelihood resource center that aims to assimilate all of SDC-IC's current and past experiences in a web enabled platform also supported the process.

Step 3: Investing the 'Capital'. The experience thus profiled is used to address current and emerging issues. Various platforms are organized where the stakeholder groups could interact with the identified knowledge holders. The stakeholders were then given opportunity to put the experience in the right context considering the farmer interests and the interests of the state as a whole. In this process always plurality of viewpoints was promoted and neutral learning was ensured. CALPI acted as a neutral facilitator but with a poverty reduction and environmental protection mandate.

A dynamic example is the setting up of a network of watershed NGOs involved in the LEAD (Livestock Environment and Development) project supported by CALPI in association with FAO. A network (called Lead Advocacy Network) formed as 'follow up' of the project undertakes activities related to policy advocacy and communication for development after intense discussion among stakeholders, experts and 'knowledge holders'.

Outcome /Outputs: The objective of CALPI programme is to influence frame conditions in favour of the poor. The CAPEX and experience of erstwhile Indo-Swiss programmes helped CALPI to create a 'pro-poor', 'pro-environment orientation' and empowered it to steadfastly work with key stakeholders to influence frame conditions to address the emerging issues of the sector. The process approach resulted in process outcomes such as capacity building, awareness creation, rapport building, networking, positive mental attitude and ultimately an enabling environment for policy change. CALPI's process intensive interventions in "improving veterinary and animal husbandry education" in Andhra Pradesh and "action research on informal milk marketing" are gaining increased attention at different (policy, implementation) levels. These have the potential to bring about a sea of changes in the sector.

The capitalization process dovetailed by CALPI, apart from the above process outcomes already brought about the following specific tangible outputs (many are yet to come):

- Livestock sector policy has been accepted by the Ministry in Chhattisgarh.
- Four policies related to service delivery (definition of minor vet. services, disease prevention & control strategy, policy on paravets & paravet workers and service delivery reforms) are developed in association with the government in AP and the govt. has already issued the policy on minor veterinary services.
- The new watershed (Neeranchal) guidelines strongly suggested to effectively integrate livestock in watershed programmes, bring in synergy between watershed and livestock departments and provide priority for the landless and women in micro planning
- Govt. of India's proposal to Economic Finance Committee earmarked more than 6500 million INR for small ruminant development.

The recent invitation to CALPI by the Planning Commission of Government of India to become members in three of the working groups (dairy, public-private partnerships and livestock-environment interaction) to develop the next five year plan proposal for the country is a clear indication of government's appreciation of the capitalization work being carried out by CALPI. The planning commission for the first time included "Livestock and its environmental implications" as one of the working group themes for developing proposal for the next five year plan. Government's invitation to CALPI to help them in facilitating development of a small ruminant development policy for India is another signal showing the credibility of CALPI acquired during its work over a short period of just three years.

CAPITALISATION OF LIVESTOCK PROGRAMME EXPERIENCES INDIA

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