



Rangeland
Stewardship
Council

Facilitator Guide

RSC Standard Consultation – Pastoralist Workshops

About These Workshops

These workshops are about listening to pastoralists and people who live and work on rangelands. The aim is to learn from their knowledge and experience so that future efforts to support rangelands are grounded in real life.

The RSC Standard¹ is being developed to recognise good stewardship, strengthen pastoral livelihoods and improve understanding of pastoral systems. Participants do not need to understand standards or certification - this is a listening process, not a training session.

A simple explanation is enough. For example:

“We are exploring how to recognise and support people who care for rangelands well. We cannot do this without learning from pastoralists themselves.”

Your Role as a Facilitator

Your role is to create a safe and respectful space where people feel comfortable sharing their experiences. You are there to listen, not to teach, persuade or defend the project.

It helps to:

- Use simple language
- Avoid technical terms
- Encourage participation from everyone
- Respect local knowledge and perspectives
- Record what people say accurately

You do not need to have expert knowledge. The participants are the experts in their own landscapes.

Conversations may move naturally between topics, and this is completely fine. It is more important to follow the discussion and listen carefully than to keep sections separate or ask every question.

¹ The RSC Standard was previously referred to as the Global Rangelands Standard (GRS) and has been renamed to avoid confusion with other uses of the acronym.

Starting the Conversation

Begin with introductions in whatever way feels culturally appropriate. People can share their names, communities, and livelihoods if they are comfortable.

It often works well to start with discussion about the land itself before introducing the RSC Standard. For example:

- *What makes this land important to you?*
- *How has it changed over time?*
- *What challenges are you facing?*

This helps build trust and connection before moving into the main topics.

Exploring Stewardship, Challenges and Opportunities

A key part of the workshop is understanding what good stewardship means in the local context. Encourage participants to describe practices, knowledge and experiences in their own words. Stories and examples are often more useful than abstract answers.

The questions below are examples. Facilitators can choose those most relevant and allow the conversation to flow naturally.

You might ask:

- *What does good rangeland management look like here?*
- *How do you recognise healthy land?*
- *What practices help maintain the land?*

It is also important to understand what pastoralists feel should be recognised and what they feel still needs improvement. For example:

- *What are you proud of in how you manage your land and animals?*
- *What would you like others to better understand about your work?*
- *What areas do you think still need improvement?*

Discussions can then explore support needs and barriers. Participants may raise issues such as climate variability, land access, markets or policy constraints. These insights help reveal what support pastoralists actually need.

You can ask:

- *What makes it difficult to follow good practices?*
- *What kinds of support would help you most?*
- *What barriers prevent people from improving land or animal management?*

It is also useful to understand the kinds of organisations and groups that exist locally, both formal and informal. These might include herder cooperatives, pasture user groups, community associations or traditional governance systems.

For example:

- *What kinds of groups or organisations exist here?*
- *How do people work together to manage land or resources?*
- *Who makes decisions about grazing or land use?*

Many pastoralists have also experienced outside projects before, so it is important to make space for concerns. You can ask:

- *What has worked well in past programmes?*
- *What has not worked?*
- *Do you have concerns about new initiatives?*

Concerns should be welcomed and recorded without judgement.

Discussions can then move toward recognition, incentives and opportunities. Recognition and rewards may be different things in different places, so it is helpful to explore this openly.

You might ask:

- *What kind of recognition would matter to you?*
- *What would make you feel your work is valued?*
- *What kinds of benefits or incentives would help pastoralists most?*
- *What would encourage people to improve practices?*

Understanding Animal Health and Welfare Perspectives

Different cultures and production systems may see animal health and welfare priorities differently. This consultation is an opportunity to understand pastoralists' own perspectives and priorities.

You might ask:

- *What are the main challenges affecting animal health here?*
- *What causes animals the most suffering or loss?*
- *What practices help keep animals healthy?*
- *What support would improve animal wellbeing?*

It may be helpful to remember that some concerns that are important in industrial livestock systems (for example, painful procedures) may not be the main issues in pastoral systems. The aim is to understand local realities rather than impose outside views.

Insights from these discussions will help shape how animal health and welfare are addressed in the RSC Standard.

Encouraging Participation

Where possible, try to include a diversity of voices, including women, youth and people with different roles or experiences within the community.

Try to ensure everyone has a chance to speak. Some people may talk more than others, while some may hesitate. You can gently invite others in by saying things like:

Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet.

Small group discussions can also help quieter participants feel more comfortable.

Using local language wherever possible is important, and interpreters may be needed in some contexts.

Managing Expectations

Participants may ask what benefits they will receive. It is important to be honest and avoid making promises.

You can say:

This is an early stage. We are trying to design something that could support pastoralists in the future. Your input will help shape that work, but we cannot promise specific benefits yet.

Do not promise funding, projects, certification opportunities or market access.

Respect and Ethics

Participation should always be voluntary. People should feel free not to answer questions if they prefer.

Respect cultural norms and ask permission before taking photographs or recordings. Local knowledge belongs to the community and should be treated with respect.

Data collection and reporting

Please refer to the RSC Standard **Consultation Reporting Guide** and the **Workshop Data Reporting Template** for how to record, translate and summarise insights from the pastoralist workshops.

Closing the Workshop

At the end, it is helpful to ask participants:

- *Is there anything important we have missed?*
- *What do you most want decision-makers to understand?*
- *Who else should we speak to?*

This reinforces that their voices matter.

Participants should also be told what will happen next — that their input will contribute to the development of the RSC Standard and to wider global discussions, including those leading up to COP17.

If possible, sharing feedback or results later can strengthen trust.

Tone to Aim For

The most important thing is the overall approach. A good facilitator is:

- Warm
- Respectful
- Curious
- Humble
- Patient

You can remind participants that pastoralists are experts in their own landscapes, and that their knowledge is essential to shaping future efforts to support rangelands.

Suggested Workshop Length and Structure

The topics covered in this consultation are important and may require time for discussion. Facilitators also do not need to ask every question included in this guide – choose the questions that feel most relevant to your context and allow the conversation to develop naturally.

A **half-day workshop** (approximately 3.5- 4 hours including breaks) is recommended where possible, as this allows participants to share experiences in depth.

However, **condensed sessions** (2–2.5 hours) can still be valuable. In these cases, facilitators may wish to prioritise the most relevant topics rather than trying to cover everything.

Short listening sessions (60–90 minutes) may also be appropriate in some contexts, such as community meetings or existing gatherings. These should focus mainly on listening and capturing key insights rather than detailed discussion of all topics.

The agendas below provide examples of how sessions could be structured. Facilitators should feel free to adapt them based on the local context, participant needs, and how conversations unfold. It is more important to create space for meaningful discussion than to follow a fixed schedule.

Half-day Workshop Example Agenda (3.5 – 4 hours)

Time	Activity
15 min	Welcome & introductions
30-45 min	Discussion about land and changes over time
50 min	Stewardship & challenges
40 min	Support, barriers, organisations
Break (15 min)	
40 min	Recognition, incentives and opportunities
25 min	Animal health & welfare
15 min	Closing reflections

Condensed Workshop Example Agenda (~2.5 hours)

Time	Activity
10-15 min	Welcome & introductions
15 min	Discussion about land and changes over time
35 min	Stewardship & challenges
25 min	Support needs, organisations and collaboration
Break (10 min)	
25 min	Recognition, incentives and opportunities
15 min	Animal health & welfare
10-15 min	Closing reflections

Facilitator Support

The RSC team will support facilitators throughout the consultation process. This will include online calls to connect with facilitators, discuss potential workshop opportunities and help tailor the consultation approach to each local context.

The RSC can also provide clarification on the consultation objectives, facilitation approach and guidance on documentation and reporting where needed. Facilitators are encouraged to stay in contact with the RSC team to share updates, ask questions and discuss emerging insights.

The aim is to ensure the consultation process is collaborative, context-appropriate and effectively captures pastoralist perspectives to inform the development of the RSC Standard.

For more information, questions, or to discuss potential workshop opportunities, please contact the RSC team at: consultation@rangelandstewardship.org