PASSAGE PROJECT NEWSLETTER QUARTER 4 2025 Oct – Dec

Q4 2025 highlights

- **ICPALD, SPARC & Jameel Observatory Conference**
- **PASSAGE Project Students Review Meeting**
- **PASSAGE 2nd Annual Project Planning Meeting**
- **Sussex-NDMA-RCMRD Python Training for Geospatial Analysis**

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Item 1: ICPALD, SPARC & Jameel Observatory Conference

ICPALD, SPARC and Jameel Observatory held a policy and practice dialogue focusing on the sustainable development of drylands. Co-convened by the three institutions, the event took place on October 1st & 2nd, 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.

In opening, H.E. Mohamed Abdi Ware, IGAD Deputy Executive Secretary, said, "There needs to be a change in narrative from drylands being problematic areas to a narrative of drylands being dynamic, resilient, productive, with resourceful people managing their lives under difficult circumstances."

"This is an opportunity to share our narratives and policies, providing insight from different experiences" added Dr. Dereje Wakjira, ICPALD Director.

The conference brought together development partners and investors, NGOs, INGOs, Financial Institutions, Governments, Civil Society Actors, Pastoral Associations, Policy and Research Organizations, Researchers, Policy Makers. They examined what investment in resilience and development looks like in some of the world's most fragile and hard-to-reach places, and how to realize the dynamism of pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and smallholder farmers in drylands.

The dialogue offered opportunities to reframe narratives and policies around pastoralism as pathways to prosperity, calling for actions that better reflect these communities' dynamism and resilience, in the face of complex challenges such as drought, insecurity and climate change.

Discussions shed light on valuable insights into pastoralism in view of upcoming regional and global milestones, such as the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP17.

Participation at the conference was funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) /Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through the PASSAGE Project.

Item 2: PASSAGE Project Students Review Meeting

On 3rd October, PASSAGE Project brought together a transdisciplinary team of academic and technical partners for a one-day post-graduate research dissemination and progress review meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.

"From this forum we can gauge what can be of actionable benefit from the student's work and also provide them with meaningful feedback", said Dr. Dereje Wakjira ICPALD Director.

PhD and MSc students from the universities of Nairobi, Makerere and Jigjiga, supported by the project, discussed their research progress which is critical in generating context-relevant knowledge and tools that can inform local, national, and regional action.

PASSAGE partners collaboratively deliver a holistic approach to anticipatory action, integrating science, policy and practice. This is achieved by co-developing risk narratives and anticipatory

action plans informed by predictive, multi-hazard early warning systems that can effectively build the resilience of pastoral communities.

Item 3: PASSAGE 2nd Annual Project Planning Meeting

ICPALD convened the annual PASSAGE Project meeting with 12 collaborative partners, including policy developers, practitioners and academic institutions for the project's second annual planning meeting on 4-7 November 2025 in Diani, Kenya.

At the opening session, the team leaders from institutions co-implementing the project said: "We are in a region that is vulnerable to drought therefore continued research and refined efforts enhance anticipatory action. Information needs to be accessible, packaged and disseminated where it is needed in order to prepare for adverse events." -Dr. Dereje Wakjira ICPALD Director.

"It is essential for us to be collectively telling the story of the work that is being done and track how /where the research is being used." -Dr. Bruce Currie-Alder, CLARE Program Leader.

"We assert commitment to the success of this program. Cross-border collaboration is necessary to impact communities by making use of our durable solutions as opposed to focusing solely on emergency response." -Pierre Kremer, Deputy Regional Director IFRC.

During the four-day meeting, participants planned for the next 14 months of the project cycle; translated existing research evidence into actionable outputs; strengthened work package coordination and accountability for joint delivery of results; aligned work plans, budgets and timelines.

In the small group sessions, discussions centered on specific changes in behavior, relationships, actions and policies that PASSAGE project collaborators would like to influence through project activities. The fruitful discussions highlighted the need to:

- Influence relevant policies for change
- Focus on partnerships that are practical at the root of things
- Report on achievements, insights and future planning
- Integrate cross-cutting themes into project work: Research for impact (R41); Monitoring, evaluation, learning (MEL); Gender, equality, inclusivity (GEI)
- Assign tasks and timelines for accountability

The meeting consolidated a clear and combined direction for the final year of PASSAGE, strengthening coherence across work packages and sharpening the focus on deliverable outputs. Partners refined their evidence and narrative approaches, improved alignment with institutional adoption pathways, and agreed on fully costed workplans for 2026.

Item 4: Sussex-NDMA-RCMRD Python Training for Geo-Spatial Analysis

The second round of Python training which focused on introducing the coding language Python, for geospatial analysis of satellite data in a drought monitoring pipeline, took place on 10th-14th November 2025 in Naivasha, Kenya. Carried out under the PASSAGE project the training saw 13 attendees, predominantly NDMA officers from headquarters and county drought officers, successfully complete the training. Other participants came from RCMRD, ICHA and ICPALD. The University of Sussex delivered the Python training and the RCMRD delegates delivered a conceptual session on remote sensing.