THE NEED
African pastoralists (livestock herders) have been an invaluable part of the economic security and biodiversity of Africa’s drylands for generations. Seasonal migration to secure adequate pasture and water for livestock is critical for their survival and is central to sustainable rangeland management across the continent and globally. In East Africa alone, pastoralism directly supports an estimated 20 million people. Pastoralists migrate their livestock during dry seasons using traditional methods (such as word of mouth) that have inherent limitations and increasing unreliability due to climate shocks and land use changes. The consequences of not finding adequate pasture and water can be devastating. In areas targeted by PCI in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania, pastoralists are on average losing one third of their herds every year.

OVERVIEW
Recognizing the limitations pastoralists face in identifying pasture and water necessary for the survival of their herds, PCI sought to develop a comprehensive solution which merges traditional knowledge and practices with the accuracy of satellite imagery. In 2013, with support from USAID and Google, PCI brought communities in Ethiopia together to map traditional grazing areas and overlay these maps with satellite-derived vegetation data, effectively launching “AfriScout”. The maps were shared with pastoralists and quickly surpassed other forms of information for decision making, with over three-fourths of pastoralists stating that the maps had become their most important information source. Seeking to take the innovation to scale, PCI, with support from Google, developed the AfriScout mobile app. The app was launched in Kenya in 2018 and currently has nearly over 12,000 registered users across Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

THE AFRISCOUT SOLUTION
AfriScout is the first application designed for pastoralists with pastoralists. The AfriScout app was created to integrate with, and enhance, existing traditional practices related to herd mobility – i.e. scouting, information sharing, and application of indigenous knowledge for migration decision-making. Using satellite data, the app displays current vegetation and surface water conditions, as well as crowd-sourced alerts within traditional grazing maps, enabling pastoralists to make more precise and cost-effective migration decisions.

AfriScout acts as the “shepherds’ eye in the sky,” helping to improve climate-smart management of drylands and the lives of the people and livestock that rely on them.

Over 538,000 square kilometers of rangeland have been mapped by AfriScout in Eastern Africa, including 429,000km² in Kenya alone.
SCALING AFRISCOUT

AfriScout has already reached an estimated 696,000 people through its 10,967 registered users. Every registered user shares the app with approximately seven other families who do not own smartphones, thus leading to a significant multiplier effect. User fees, at approximately $20 USD per year – are critical to the long-term sustainability of AfriScout and yield a return on investment of about $67 in improved value per "livestock unit", or $600 for the typical household.

An estimated 270 million pastoralists and agro-pastoralists live in Africa’s drylands, spanning more than 29 countries. Recurrent droughts and prolonged dry spells have taken their toll on the continent’s livestock, which play a critical role in the food security of millions of families. The AfriScout innovation offers a sustainable solution to this food security crisis at a fraction of the cost of providing emergency food aid to families in need. By 2023, PCI expects to register an additional 23,600 users, pushing AfriScout’s cumulative reach to 2.2 million beneficiaries.

ABOUT PCI

PCI (Project Concern International), a Global Communities Partner, is a global development organization that drives innovation from the ground up to enhance health, end hunger, overcome hardship, and advance women and girls —resulting in meaningful and measurable change in people’s lives. Founded in 1961, PCI impacted more than 21 million lives in fiscal year 2019 through programs in 13 countries spanning Asia, Africa and the Americas.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
5151 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320
San Diego, CA 92123
ph: (858) 279-9690

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
1140 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036
ph: (202) 223-0088

PCI/KENYA
Jennifer Waugaman
AfriScout Managing Director
jwaugaman@pciglobal.org

--- Impact ---

A 3-year study by Fordham University found multiple benefits for thousands of map users, including improved herd condition, better capacity to manage pasture, reduced conflict and an estimated $4,862 increase in herd value between map users and non-map users based on relative changes in herd condition, holdings, and time spent scouting.

From Their Perspective:

69% said that the maps improved their ability to manage grazing areas

42% said that using the maps reduced conflict related to pasture

76% said the maps are now their most important tool for decision-making

www.PCIGlobal.org