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A new approach to elicit and aggregate stakeholders' preferences towards rangelands policies : a case study of Lar rangeland , Iran

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Key words : rangelands policies , rangeland valuation , outranking method , stakeholders intensities of preferences

Introduction Aggregation of stakeholders preferences over a set of environmental decisions has been always a controversial subject in environmental valuation studies (Proctor and Drechsler , 2003 ; Vatn , 2004) . In this study we used an ordinal Multi-Criteria Decision Aid (MCDA) structure to elicit and aggregate stakeholders preferences .

Material and methods In this study the stakeholders first established a list of the alternatives decision on each criterion . To elicit the stakeholders ordinal intensities of preferences the participants are asked to make pairwise comparisons among pairs of the alternatives of the constructed rank order by using 5 qualitative labels (Zendehdel et al . , submitted) . Next , a mathematical procedure is used to construct social intensities of preferences on each single criterion . Finally , an outranking method (ARGUS) is used to construct a consensus rank order of the alternative decisions . The method enabled us to take into account the ordinal intensities of preferences into the final output .

Result We found that the stakeholders can easily follow an ordinal procedure to express their preferences towards the environmental changes . Moreover , incorporating the stakeholders intensities of preferences into the aggregation step increased reliability of the procedure and the acceptability of the final outcome .

Conclusions The results showed that the stakeholders have no conflict with the ordinal procedure . Moreover incorporating the mathematical approach (OSDL) with the ARGUS helped us to bring the intensities of preferences into the consensus rank order of the alternative decisions . In other words , incorporating the stakeholders intensities of preferences into the consensus rank order enables us to take into account the stakeholders reasons to support or oppose a decision . In this regard , policy makers can use efficiently stakeholders input to formulate environmental policies , which in turn brings social supports towards the consensus policy .

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