

Environmental Alert Program Report Summary for 2014.

1.0 An overview of Environmental Alert (EA) Program Implementation in 2014

During the implementation period, EA implemented several projects which contributed to achievement of the following strategic objectives:

Specific objective 1.1: Increased multi-stakeholder awareness among 1,200 farmers, 200 CSOs and 50 schools about sustainable environment and natural resources management at local and national levels by 2015;

Specific objective 1.2: Sustainable natural resources management best practices in forestry, wetlands, and environment promoted and up scaled among 1,200 farmers for improved household incomes and livelihoods by 2014;

Specific objective 1.3: Relevant ENR policies and programmes reviewed and lobby actions undertaken targeting 150 local and central government technical and political leaders by 2014;

Specific objective 1.4: 200 Civil Society Organisations coordinated for effective engagement in environment natural resource and climate change policy and planning issues at local and national levels by 2014.

The projects implemented included the following:

- ❖ Strengthening CSOs Networking and Expanding Negotiation Spaces for More Inclusive Management of Forest Resources in the Albertine Rift ENR-CSO FOREST Project;
- ❖ Towards Pro-Poor REDD+ (Phase II): Promoting Pro-Poor REDD+ Principles and Rights-Based Approaches to Strengthen the Conservation, Governance and Sustainable Management of Mt. Elgon and Agoro-Agu Landscapes in Uganda;
- ❖ Civil society capacity building initiatives for increased transparency and good governance in the forest sector through promoting sustainable forest management and forest certification in Uganda coordinated by the Uganda Forest Working Group in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature – Uganda Country Office (WWF-UCO);
- ❖ Establishing a Forest CSO platform for improved governance of forest resources in the Greater Virunga Landscape with financial support from World Wide Fund for Nature – Uganda Country Office (WWF-UCO) through the SIDA Civil society strengthening in the ARLR;
- ❖ Building Community Climate Change Resilience through Improved and Wise Use of Mabamba Wetland System in Wakiso district with financial support from the Ramsar Secretariat;
- ❖ Projects implemented through PROLINNOVA coordination such as CLIC-SR;



❖ Strategic engagements with development partners (such as Bread for the world, Water Aid, McKnight Foundation) for EA program development and fundraising.

The key achievements and emerging issues under each strategic objective as a result of implementation of above projects are presented in the subsequent sections.

Specific objective 1.1: Increased multi-stakeholder awareness among 1,200 farmers, 200 CSOs and 50 schools about sustainable environment and natural resources management at local and national levels by 2015

Achievements

--Forest certification is more pronounced than it previously was among various stakeholders at the national and the local level through targeted engagements such as National Forest Week and World Environment Day celebrations. Through engagements on this, the visibility of the Uganda Forestry Working Group (UFWG) has been enhanced especially at the sub-national level;

--Through stakeholder consultations, thresholds have been discussed and agreed upon for Small, Low Intensity Managed Forests, High Conservation Value (HCV) trees in Uganda and a national legality grid (appropriate national legislations) for forest certification was mapped;

--A second version of the zero draft of the National Forest Stewardship Standard for forest certification in Uganda has been developed. It is pending one final round of consultations with the Standard Development Group and special interest groups;

--An Advocacy Action Plan for advancement of forest certification in Uganda by UFWG was developed and scheduled for discussion with WWF for financial support for its implementation;

--A newspaper article demystifying forest certification was published on March 21st in the New Vision. This was disseminated national wide reaching policy makers, decision makers, stakeholders and the general public;

--At least 6 champion CSOs (i.e. CARE, ACODE, WWF, PANOS, ACCU and EA) were mobilised. They contributed resources and jointly organised the Forest Week celebrations. The Government through the Forestry Sector Support Department was also influenced to embrace the event as a Leader and facilitating partner;

--Private Forest Owners were mapped in the districts of Masindi, Lamwo. These will benefit from the project initiative of forest tenure scheduled for implementation in collaboration with FSSD with financial support from the Food and Agricultural Organization.

Key emerging issues (challenges and opportunities) during implementation

--The SDG still has a lot of work to do in terms of popularizing the National Forest Stewardship Standard. To facilitate the process, there is need to mobilize more



financial resources but also facilitate advocacy initiatives and advancement of FSC-MAP and Group certification among smallholder farmers;

--In December, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) released new guidelines to SIR which should be used to domesticate national standards. SDG Uganda will need to update the draft national FSC standard based on the new SIR guidelines;

--The need to integrate Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade issues in UFWG advocacy engagements on certification since certification is a voluntary approach to sustainable forestry management;

--Media engagement on forest certification at the National level has not been adequate. This will need to be improved going forward;

--Need to bring further engage the Private sector for resource leverage and also given their stake in forestry. These particularly include the Media, Timber processing companies, construction companies;

Specific objective 1.2: Sustainable natural resources management best practices in forestry, wetlands, and environment promoted and up scaled among 1,200 farmers for improved household incomes and livelihoods by 2014.

--Wetland based and adjacent communities trained and supported with alternative livelihood and income generating enterprises as a way of sustainable utilization of wetland resources and strengthening community resilience to climate change impacts in Mabamba wetland Ramsar site catchment. Thus, through their CBO called Mabamba Wetland Eco-ecotourism Association – EA provided a boat engine to strengthen their commercial water transport enterprise from the main land to the islands. This will provide additional income to the CBO, which will be invested in several activities they are implementing for the benefit of the community. Thus, the CBO has over 100 members benefiting from their initiatives.

Specific objective 1.3: Relevant ENR policies and programmes reviewed and lobby actions undertaken targeting 150 local and central government technical and political leaders by 2014

Achievements

--Concerns of ENRCSOs were compiled and submitted consideration to inform the review of National Environment Management Policy and National Development Plan II and Standards Development Group;

--District forest coalitions participated in monitoring and annual assessment of performance of forestry, wetlands, and other sub-sectors. However, assessment reports were done at the national level;

--A baseline of forestry sub-sector for Kiryandongo was conducted. This provides information and facts which will be used by Kiryandongo district forestry coalition engagements on forestry in the district;

--ENRCSOs mini-performance report was submitted to the Ministry of Water and Environment as a requirement for Joint Sector Review (JSR). It was published as



part of the ENR sector report 2013/2014 and raised ENR CSOs contribution to the sector and key recommendations for consideration in the subsequent sector plans and budget. Thus in total 48 CSOs submitted reports which were consolidated into the mini-performance report;

--ENRCSOs position paper compiled and used as an advocacy engagement tool during the JSR. Thus, a quick glance of the JSR 2014 Agreed minutes indicated that some of the ENR CSOs recommendations as reflected in our position were integrated in the key actions and undertakings for the ENR sub-sector 2014/15. For instance, the implementation of the natural resources conditional grants for Local governments from which each sub-sector (forestry, wetlands, Environment and climate change) can draw resources using a vote calculated based on percentage should be expedited; and Establishment of a vote function for Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) to leapfrog its operations.
ENR-CSO website and List serve (google group) developed

Specific objective 1.4: 200 Civil society organisations coordinated for effective engagement in ENR and climate change policy and planning issues at local and national levels by 2014

Achievements

--5 district forest coalitions established. Of these, 4 are already operational i.e. engaging in forestry lobbying and advocacy. They have been trained and equipped with communication equipment. MoUs were signed with the 4 coalitions in Hoima, Kiryandongo, Kabalore, and Masindi. These provide the framework for partnership and engagement on forestry issues in the respective districts. Thus, forestry advocacy engagement work plans were developed and being implemented by the respective coalitions.

--Institutional arrangements and linkages established in 5 districts (i.e. Hoima, Kiryandongo, Kabalore, Masindi and Buliisa). This is with the local government leadership and the ENRCSOs. This enhances the outreach of the ENRCSO Network at the national and local levels.

Key emerging issues (challenges and opportunities) during implementation

--The fourth coming national elections will result in increased pressure on forestry resources and illegal forest activities because the politicians will be compromised so that they can be vote;

--Unfavourable external operational environment for CSOs working on ENR Governance;

--Severe under funding of the ENR agencies and departments thereby further compromising their service delivery;

--The growing Carbon financing mechanisms and information about experiences about Carbon offset projects pilots presents opportunity for development and piloting of carbon offset project for EA farmers and other forest adjacent communities.



Specific objective 1.5: Indigenous local knowledge and innovations promoted among 1,200 farmers for sustainable natural resources management

Achievements

- EA and partners have documented the innovations in Print (7 in Moyo and 4 Nakasongola);
- Farmer innovators have been supported to develop their innovations on climate change adaptation and mitigation. This support is through the technical staff of the districts (Moyo and Nakasongola) and Researchers from MUZARDI (7 innovators) and ABIZARDI (2 innovators);
- The technical and leadership knowledge and skills Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the management and governance of Local Innovation Support Funds was strengthened;
- Experiences on farmer's innovations regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation were shared and disseminated with international stakeholders through exhibitions and online dissemination;
- More awareness about the Participatory Innovation Development approaches was created among the policy makers and other development partners.

Key emerging issues (challenges and opportunities) during implementation

- Ensuring that the issues on farmers led research are included and supported through policy implementation at national and local levels;
- The farmer innovators who are not successful become demoralised;
- Regular monitoring is required to support farmers use the funds according to the applications they made. This should be integrated in the project work plans and budget;
- The CBOs involved in the management of LISFs have very high expectations which cannot be met by the limited innovation support funds.

Key lessons learnt

The following key lessons were learnt during the implementation period:

- Capacity in advocacy at sub-national level is very low and almost non-existent. Consequently, there are limited consistent engagements on forestry issues at the local level. Most of the advocacy in Forestry is at national level;
- To get advocacy started at sub-national level requires mobilization, organisational development, capacity building and provision of the required technical guidance. This is a process which takes time;
- Building on existing initiatives at the local and national levels enhances stakeholder's ownership of the interventions and this is critical towards sustainability of the interventions even after the project end;
- It is impossible to meet all the demands and needs of the district forest coalitions and community based organizations. Therefore, it's important to manage their expectations based on what can be provided by the Forestry project;



--Farmer innovators keep track of the progress of their innovations. Therefore, they should be involved in the monitoring and documentation process during innovation development;

--Joint experimentation for validation and value addition to farmer innovations requires a lot of funds and time;

--There are already existing initiative to secure tenure rights for community forests and for some private forests which have been facilitated by NGOs across the country, which the project will need to build on;

--The process for development of the national forest certification standards is gradual and its timelines are influenced by external process at FSC with regard to the IGIs development;

--Forest certification is likely to cause positive reforms in forest governance in Uganda but will need support from decision makers and the private sector at all levels (international, national, local and village);

--There is no evidence to suggest that awareness creation on forest certification through radio programs has so far had serious influence to the populace, gauging from the questions usually raised by the audience during and after the talk-shows;

--The Forest Week event can be an effective advocacy platform for information sharing and policy discourse but will need more publicity and stakeholder mobilisation.

2.0 Program development

2.1 Resource mobilization

The resources mobilization initiatives and effort during the year resulted in the following successful funded projects:

- Advocacy for enabling Forest Tenure Reforms – FAO;
- West Nile Phase III - Bfdw/EED EUR 400,000 3yrs to June 2017;
- IUCN – Pro- poor REDD+-\$120,000 for 3 years from 2014;
- Water Aid (DL and KASTI);
- WWF – GVL;
- FSC & WWF 2014.

2.2 Challenges faced in year 2014.

- Un-balanced payroll budget, Increased pressure on staff capacity;
- Reduction in donor financing;
- Loss of Equipment & Information early January 2014.

3.0 Conclusion

The implementation of the Environmental Alert program is on course despite the challenges and limitations. The emerging opportunities will be seized as appropriate to inform the development and implementation of subsequent work plan for 2015. Likewise, actions for addressing institutional challenges were developed during the EA annual review and planning re-treat. It is will be implemented in 2015.

