



Agro-forestry should be promoted to contribute to forestry landscape restoration...

According to the Joint Water and Environment Sector Review Report 2017, ***the major challenge for forest management in Uganda is de-forestation which is demonstrated by the decline of forest cover from 24% in 1990 to 11% in 2015. Forest coverage in the country is now at 9% only.*** Over the past decades, trees have been cut down at a concerning rate. They are usually cut down to develop infrastructure or to sell for purposes such as charcoal, furniture and paper. The loss of trees and other vegetation can cause climate change with change in the rain seasons both in terms of quantity and timing of rain, food insecurity has increased due to declining yields and higher costs of production., desertification, soil erosion, fewer crops, flooding, increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and a host of problems for indigenous people.

Deforestation occurs for a number of reasons among which include: *farming; and logging, for materials and development.* There have been a number of international and local movements that have been created to restore Uganda's forest cover. However, there needs to be more action taken from different actors (sides) to ensure the remaining forests in the country are protected, and that there are more tree planting initiatives.

Environmental Alert in collaboration with **Trac FM** carried out a 2 months Campaign from July to September 2017 with the aim of engaging citizens in an interactive radio debate with the intention of getting their voices out to policy makers on tangible advocacy matters, and in this case - afforestation and deforestation. The campaign was carried out through public debate in interactive radio talk-shows using Trac FM software platform where radio listeners provide feedback on radio polls, and the poll results are analyzed and portrayed graphically.

The Trac FM network comprises of 8 partner radio stations which are *Mega FM, Pacis FM, Nenah FM, Delta FM, Simba FM, Radio WA, Hits FM, and Hunter FM.* The campaign ran for two months with 3 poll questions per campaign. 3 talk shows were organized on 8 radio stations during the campaign, which are planned bi-weekly. Relevant guests (including duty bearers in the forestry sub sector) who are well conversant with the topic participated in talk shows to increase the understanding of the issue for the listeners. After the end of 3 polls, expert discussion was carried out through online chat session based on the poll results, and relevant duty-bearers, experts, opinion leaders and representatives of partner organizations were identified and involved. In the expert discussion, a deeper understanding on the views of leaders was found and a promise, pledge or action was advocated for. Trac FM developed attractive info-graphics based on poll results and campaign progress. These info-graphics were disseminated by sharing widely on social media and other reports.

According to the poll carried out to find out whether participants knew why trees are important, 54% of 3325 respondents said that forests contribute to rain formation, and 17% of 3325 responded that trees help to restore soil fertility and provide shade. But on the other hand 24% of the 3325 respondents who have interfaced with the forests articulated that they generate income through charcoal, Timber, fruits and herbs. 5% of 3325 respondents believed that the forests are not important and would rather use the land for agriculture. This poll survey carried out had a total of 3325 respondents, with a participation of 78% males and 22% females.

When the second poll question was posed on what was their biggest barrier to them not to practice agroforestry, 39% of the 2770 respondents said that they lacked seedlings, tool, and equipment. 29% of 2770 respondents said that they lacked knowledge and skills to do agroforestry. 21% of 2770 respondents said that it takes a long time before income can be generated. 11% of 2770 respondents said that growing crops like maize is more profitable.

On analyzing the two poll results, 39% out of 2770 respondents in the second poll who wanted to practice afforestation were limited by lack of seedlings, tools, knowledge and skills, and equipment.

In this context therefore, Environmental Alert based on the key results from this advocacy campaign is suggesting the following recommendations to further advance implementation of agro-forestry practices with forest landscapes¹ across the country:

The government of Uganda and Civil Society Organizations, and other stakeholders to contribute and distribute tree seedlings to the farmers, tools, equipment, and also educate them on how to do afforestation.

The Government through the Forest Sector Support Department, District Forest Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the Civil Society Organizations should provide structured and targeted support (e.g. training, extension services, access to inputs) to advance application of agroforestry practices at all levels;

The Forest Sector Support Department in collaboration with key stakeholders (such as NAFORRI, Academic Institutions and Civil Society) should conduct studies to generate information on cost-benefit analysis for various agroforestry species and technologies to inform decision making for application of such practices and technologies at different scales;

The policy and decision makers at different levels (i.e. village, local and national) should appreciate the potential and power of multiplier effect. For example, what is the impact in the landscape if each of the Uganda's 2,000,000 smallholder farmers grew at least 50 trees on their farms? Such strategic options and others are better thought through and applied through development and implementation of an agroforestry strategy. The Forest Sector Support Department should lead and coordinate this through involvement of

1. The classified landscapes include Western mid-altitude farmlands, Lake Victoria Crescent, Karamoja, South Kyoga floodplains, Afro-montane high altitude, North Moist farmlands, and South west rangelands. For details visit <https://goo.gl/AbGJGa>

several key stakeholders who make equally important contributions in promoting agro-forestry such as MAAIF, Uganda Farmers Federation, Local Governments, Research and development institutions, Private sector, Media and Civil society organization;

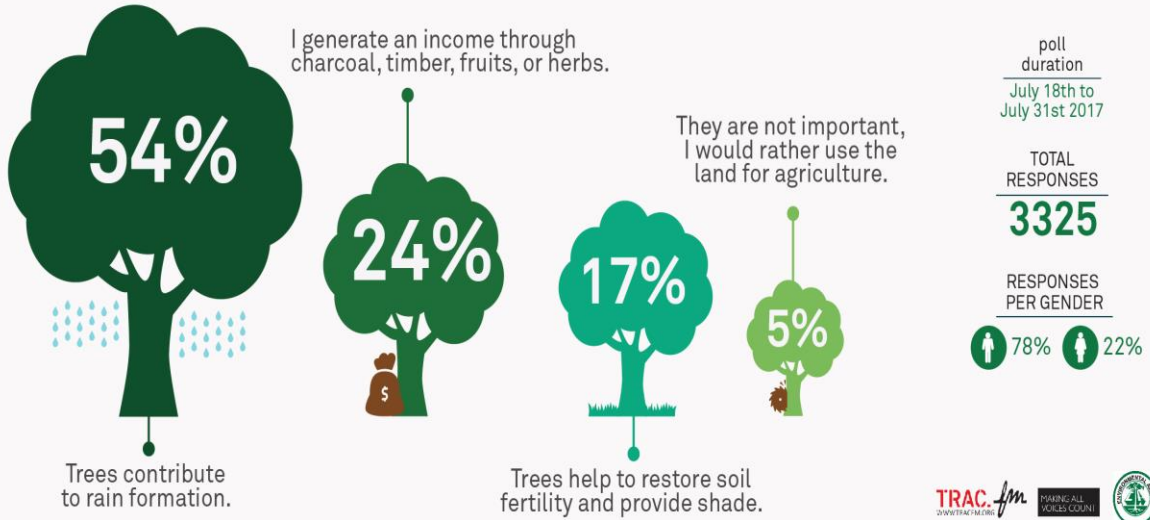
CSO's coordination should be enhanced for value adding and structured issue based lobbying and advocacy aimed at influencing policies and decisions for promoting agroforestry at different levels and scales.

In addition to that the Environment and Natural Resources Civil Society Organizations (ENR-CSOs) position paper on the performance of Environment and Natural Resources sub-sector in financial year 2016/17 presented ahead of the 9th Annual Water and Environment Joint Sector Review 2016/2017 recommended the following:

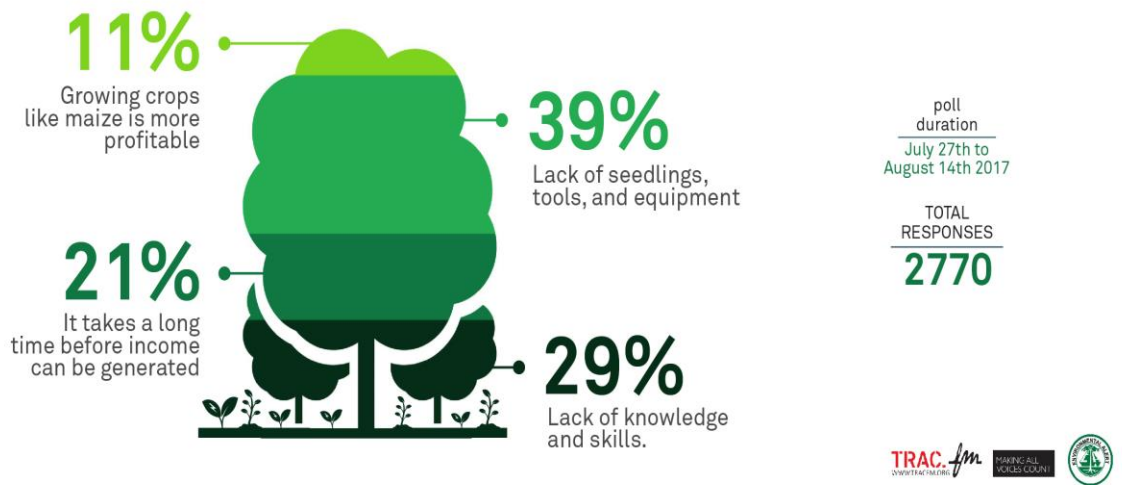
- i. MWE should harmonize the land cadaster to avoid future titling of land in Forest Reserves but also guide the cancellation of existing land titles in the gazetted areas;
- ii. Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) spearheads legal reforms to enhance forest justice, enlist more forest crimes, and increase penalties for forest crimes;
- iii. MWE, National Environment Management Authority and National Forest Authority (NFA) fast track work on demarcation of forest reserve boundaries; the National Forestry Research Institute undertakes research and recommend options to reduce the pests and diseases affecting forest plantations;
- iv. MWE through FSSD should develop and implement the strategy for advancing agro-forestry to contribute towards forest restoration on farm and in forest landscapes across the country;
- v. NFA should be transparent when issuing tree planting permits by involving external and independent partners and considering the 5% allocate on to local communities and women.

Environmental Alert has therefore embarked on a leading role as a secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources Organizations (ENR-CSOs), and working with other Stakeholders in promoting agroforestry activities in the country. Environmental Alert believes that agroforestry is among the possible solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change. By promoting the conservation and plantation of trees, farmers and the country in general, will benefit greatly.

Qn: Which of the following best describes why trees are important to you?



Qn: What is the biggest barrier for you to not practice agroforestry?



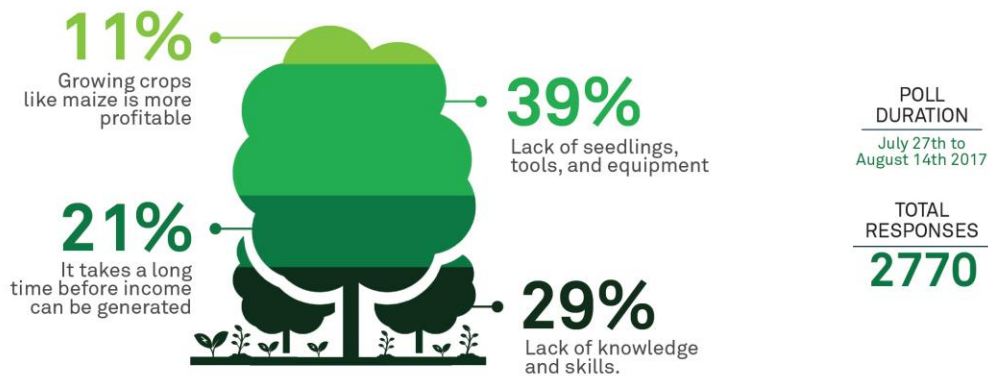
POLL QUESTION TWO:

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST BARRIER FOR YOU TO NOT PRACTICE AGROFORESTRY?

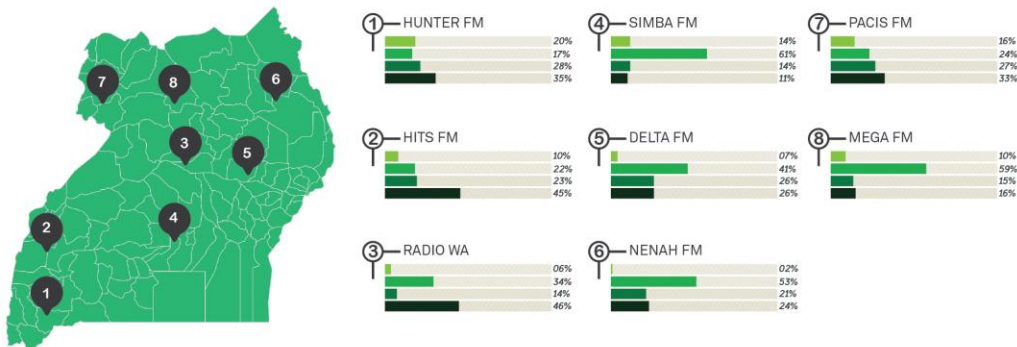
BACKGROUND

The purpose of agroforestry is to combine agriculture and planting of trees and forests that reduce the effects of climate change. Trees play a crucial role in the regulation of rains and temperature, on a local and larger scale. The current pace of tree cutting disrupts traditional raining seasons and increases temperatures. Agroforestry activities are seen as a solution to combat this change in climate. Examples are planting fruit trees, shade trees that contribute to the growth of other crops, and small forests that contribute to soil fertility and rain. Still, more than half of the Ugandan population is not yet implementing these activities.

OVERALL RESULTS



RESULTS PER RADIO STATION



ABOUT TRACFM & COMMON MATTERS

Trac FM promotes Transparency and Accountability through high quality public debate in interactive radio talk-shows. Common Matters is Trac FM's newest program, supported by Making All Voices Count (MAVC). Trac FM is working with selected CSOs and activist groups and 9 radio stations in Uganda to boost 5 advocacy campaigns in 1 year.

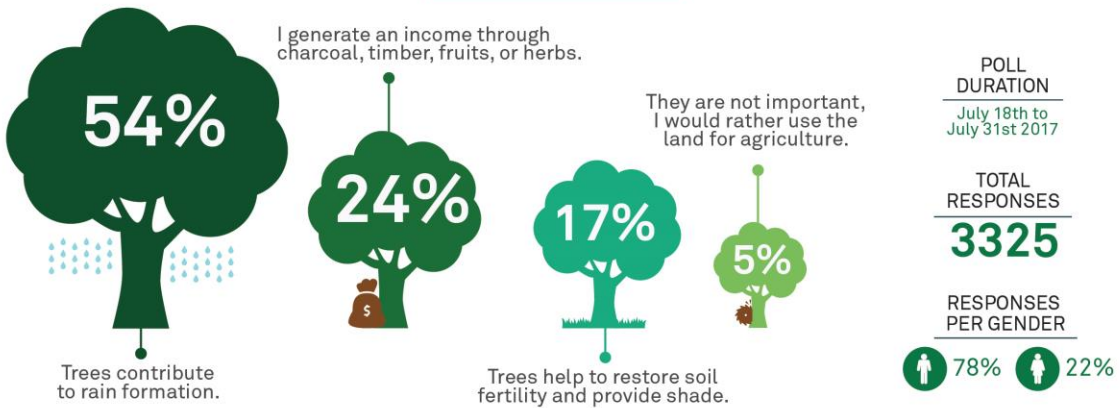
POLL QUESTION ONE:

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES WHY TREES ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

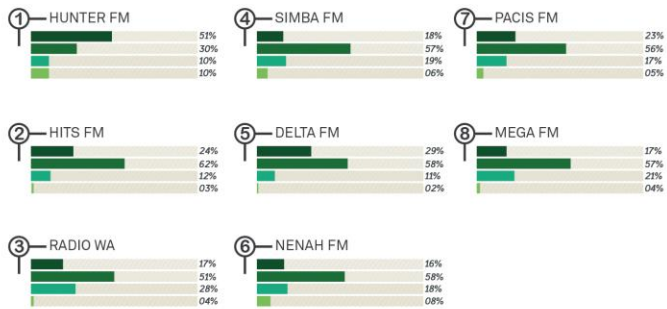
BACKGROUND

Trees are an important component of our environment. People benefit from trees in various ways: one can get bi-products for own consumption, or earn money from the tree and its products, and so on. However, development trends all over the world have caused cutting of forests and trees on a high pace, to create more space for human settlement and agriculture - often without restoring the trees.

OVERALL RESULTS



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For more Details <http://envalert.org/>, <https://goo.gl/XczEEH> (Track FM), <https://goo.gl/J5KiLM>

Box 1. About Environmental Alert

Environmental Alert (EA) was founded in 1988 and has developed and transitioned into a National Non-Governmental organization contributing to an enabling policy environment for sustainable agriculture and sound environment and natural resources management at community, local, national and international levels. EA is officially registered with the NGO Board as a Ugandan non-governmental organization (NGO), incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. EA is governed by an Independent Board that is responsible for providing strategic oversight of the organization including ensuring its integrity as a voluntary service organization.

EA is a 1st prize winner of the Energy globe award for environmental sustainability-2005 under the category, earth.

EA is a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and a Member of The IUCN National Committee for Uganda.

EA envisions, *'Resilient and dignified communities, managing their environment and natural resources sustainably.'*

EA's mission is to, *'Contribute to improved livelihoods of vulnerable communities by enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainable natural resources management'*

Program and institutional Components:

1. Environment and Natural resources management;
2. Food security and Nutrition;
3. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene;
4. Finance and Administration;
5. Resource mobilization and Investment.

Scale of Implementation:

EA operates in selected districts for generation of evidence to inform policy engagements on agriculture, environment and natural resources at National and International levels. Currently EA's operations are in 20 districts across the country. EA undertakes area wide targeted awareness on selected issues in agriculture, environment and natural resources engagements

EA is a Secretariat for following networks:

- a. The Network for Civil Society Organizations in Environment & Natural Resources Sector (ENR-CSO Network);
- b. Uganda Forestry Working Group;
- c. The Standards Development Group; and
- d. Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resources management (PROLINNOVA-Uganda Network).