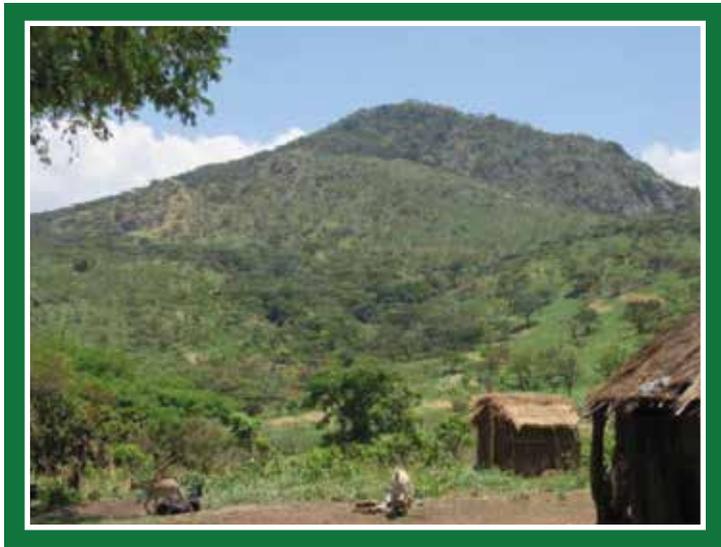


**INTEGRATING PRO-POOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES
IN COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT PROCESSES;
A CASE STUDY OF AGORO-AGU FOREST LANDSCAPE CFM PROCESS,
NOVEMBER 2017.**

BY ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT.



About the Case study

This case study is among the outputs of the project (as described in sub-section 2.4) implemented in Uganda called, 'Towards pro-poor REDD+: Phase II: Promoting pro-poor REDD+ principles and rights based approaches, to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of landscapes.' Implemented by Environmental Alert in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature – Uganda Country Office and financial support by DANIDA.

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List of Acronyms and abbreviations

AIMI	Agoro International Vocational Institute
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CDO	Community Development Officer
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CFR	Central Forest Reserve
DLG	District Local Government
DNRO	District Natural Resources Resource Officer
EA	Environmental Alert
IUCN	International union for Conservation of Nature
LC	Local Council
NFA	National Forest Authority
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)
UFWG	Uganda Forestry Working Group
ENR	Environment and Natural Resources

1.0 Introduction

This case study presents *key experiences, lessons, policy and practice recommendations* for integrating Human Rights Based Approaches and the Pro-Poor REDD+ principles (IUCN, 2014) into Collaborative Forest Management arrangements. These co-management arrangements were promoted between the National Forest Authority (NFA) and Forest adjacent communities for Lalak and Agoro-Agu CFRs. This resulted in the signing of two CFM plans and agreements for Katum and Mar-yen forest adjacent communities on *23rd and 24th August 2017*, respectively. These are among the *1st* CFM plans and agreements in Northern Uganda.



Figure 1. Members of Katum CFM Group raise up their hands in presence of key stakeholders as a gesture of commitment to the contents in the CFM plan and agreement before its endorsement by both the representatives of the National Forest Authority and Katum CFM Group . Photo by Environmental Alert.

It was compiled through application of various methods and approaches ranging from review of relevant literature and synthesis, to interactive methods during which views and feedback was obtained from key stakeholders including: *Agoro-Agu and Lalak CFRs forest adjacent communities (i.e. Mar-yen and Katum respectively) and members of members of Agoro-Agu forest landscape platform steering committee.*

The expectation is that the key duty bearers would reflect on the usual approaches in promoting CFM and seize opportunities for strengthening adherence to *HRBA and pro-poor REDD+ principles*. The case study provides recommendations for policy and practice change in this respect for consideration by duty bearers including relevant Ministries (*Ministry of Water and Environment and Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities*); Departments, and Agencies (i.e. *the National Forest Authority, Uganda Wildlife Authority*); Local Governments, Private sector and Civil Society Organizations.

2.0 Background

2.1 General ENR degradation and implications

Uganda's forestry cover reduces by 122,000 Ha annually (Ministry of Water and Environment, 2016). A large proportion of the forest loss and degradation occurs within forests on private land, which constitute about 64% of Uganda's forest cover. Some of the key causes of forest loss include: *conversion to agriculture, charcoal burning, urbanization*. At this rate of deforestation, *without interventions with ambitious targets, Uganda's current forest cover of 3,594,462 Ha will be no more in about 29 years (i.e. by 2046) if ambitious and commensurate efforts in terms of restoration, afforestation, agroforestry, conservation and sustainable management are not pursued within the forest landscapes across the country*. Thus, Uganda's current population of 35 million people presents high pressure on the environment and natural resources including forests through demand for food, water, fibre, fuel, timber and living spaces. Furthermore, Uganda's population growing a very fast rate, and is projected at 130 million people by 2050. The high population growth as projected by 2050 will further exacerbate forest loss, resulting from increased demand for forest products and services if no ambitious actions and targets are implemented to restore trees and forest cover within the landscapes (ENR-CSO Network, 2016).

2.2 Why Collaborative Forest Management (CFM)?

CFM is one of the strategies provided for in the National Forestry Policy, 2001 and the National Forestry and Tree planting act, 2003 to contribute towards sustainable forest conservation and management through co-management arrangements between the National Forestry Authority/District Forest Services as a responsible bodies, and the forest adjacent communities. *Hence, policy statement 5 in the National Forestry Policy, (2001) which focuses on CFM commits the Government to promote innovative approaches to community participation in forest management.* The policy emphasizes that the participation of stakeholders shall depend on clearly defined rights, roles, responsibilities and equitable sharing of returns to address the problems of command and control approach to forest management while avoiding the dangers of open access to forest resources (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2003).

These policy provisions are cemented by the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 in section 15 of the Act which provides for a responsible body to enter into Collaborative Forest Management with a local community or forest user group in accordance with regulations or guidelines issued by the Minister. According to Carter and Gronow, (2005), CFM refers to a working partnership between the key stakeholders in the management of a given forest. In this case the key stakeholders include the local forest users and state forest departments, as well as parties such as local governments, civic groups and nongovernmental organisations, and the private sector. On another note, the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (2003) defined CFM as a, *'mutually beneficial arrangement in which a local community or forest user group and a responsible body share roles, responsibilities and benefits in a forest reserve or part of it.'*

CFM is an outcome of a process of sharing information, negotiating an agreement, clarifying rights and sharing roles, responsibilities and benefits from forest management and utilization with key stakeholders. Hence, a mutually enforceable agreement and plan for the management and use of the whole forest or part of the forest are the key outcomes from the process (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2003). According to the Ministry of Water and Environment (2016), Uganda's forests are highly recognized, for

they play a major role in providing a variety of goods and services for a broad range of interest groups and stakeholders at different scales. Thus, globally forests are the sources of livelihoods for over 1.6 billion people who depend on them for firewood, medicine, timber, craft materials, honey, building poles and fibre, among other uses (Chao, 2012). On the other hand, the forests are important as global stores of carbon and biodiversity. Despite this, there is growing demand on these resources resulting in conflicts over their use and management. Responsible bodies such as the NFA cannot meet all the challenges of forestry management and conservation single handed. They must involve all stakeholders at different scales for the conservation and sustainable management of the forestry resources in the country.

The Government of Uganda already responded towards addressing this challenge by providing for co-management of forestry resources as stipulated in the National Forestry Policy (2001) and the National Forestry and Tree planting act, (2003). The Guidelines for implementing collaborative forest management in Uganda (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2003) outline the following as the main reasons for using collaborative forest management approaches such as CFM:

- i. A recognition that a Forest Reserve can only be adequately managed if co-operation of the forest adjacent communities is obtained;*
- ii. A desire to overcome conflicts with neighbouring communities;*
- iii. A desire to create opportunities for local people to contribute towards protection and rehabilitation of Forest resources and thus reduce the costs of management;*
- iv. A philosophical commitment to human rights and thus to fair and equitable treatment of communities living around the Central and Local Forest Reserves (CFRs & LFRs) who have traditionally used forest resources;*
- v. A mechanism for supporting sustainable forest-based livelihoods in poor rural communities;*
- vi. An awareness that forest reserves are decreasing while the human population is increasing;*
- vii. A move towards participatory approaches and decentralized governance in natural resource management.*

2.3 Why the integration of HBRA and pro-poor REDD+ principles into the CFM?

Box 1. Basic guiding principles of CFM

- a. *A process approach based on learning by doing;*
- b. *Meaningful participation and shared analysis;*
- c. *Based on negotiation and consensus building;*
- d. *Appropriate representation and responsibilities;*
- e. *A supportive legal and policy framework;*
- f. *Building capacity for change;*
- g. *Long term Perspective;*
- h. *Transparent Communication to attract marginalized stakeholders.*

Source: *Guideline for implementing collaborative forest management in Uganda (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2003).*

The guiding principles for CFM as described in the guidelines for implementing CFM in Uganda are largely in line with the human rights based approaches (**see Box 1**).

The Human Rights Based Approach (HBRA) to natural resources management provides the opportunity for mapping and active participation of key stakeholders in the management of the resources based on their roles, responsibilities and mandates as duty bearers and rights holders. It involves balancing the varied interest of the different stakeholders to deliver on both the aspirations of natural resource

conservation, improved livelihoods and development without compromising the fundamental human rights of natural resources adjacent communities who derive their livelihoods and wellbeing directly from the natural resources.

This implies working with the poor to integrate rights, norms, standards and principles into conservation policy, planning, implementation, and evaluation. It helps in ensuring that conservation practice respects rights and actions to make human rights, poverty alleviation and conservation mutually and positively reinforcing pursuits.

Human Rights Based Approach to development means that human rights standards govern project design, planning, implementation and outcomes and is a means of equitable redistribution/sharing and development (DANIDA, 2013).

HRBA helps to promote inclusion, transparency, accountability, equity, and fairness by ensuring that each party fulfills its obligations as well as bridging the gap between duty bearers and rights-holders. This approach is about using tools that help rights holders hold duty bearers accountable, thus in the process both parties should be empowered to have the right attitudes and mindsets for delivery of their respective roles and responsibilities (UNHR, 2017). The definition for the key terms used in HBRA are presented in **Box 2**.

Box 2. Key definitions

Human rights - are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status (UNHR, 2017).

Duty bearers – are primarily state actors including all the organs of the state such as parliaments, ministries, local authorities, judges and justice authorities, police, teachers or extension workers and non-state entities such civil society among others (DANIDA, 2013).

Rights holders - All individuals are entitled to the same rights regardless of sex, colour, and religion. Every right holder has a responsibility to respect the rights of others. Right holders must have the capacity to exercise their rights, seek redress and hold duty bearers accountable (DANIDA, 2013).

Pro-poor REDD + principles

CFM is among various approaches to addressing deforestation and forest degradation. The 7 Pro-poor REDD+ principles were developed and published by the IUCN in 2014. Thus, during the IUCN World Congress held in South Korea in September 2012, these principles were discussed and further refined by a self-selected group of delegates from 29 countries.

They target to have the interests of forest dependent people and the need for REDD+ not to harm vulnerable groups but instead to strengthen their rights and improve their livelihoods. Particular importance is given to the interests of women, indigenous peoples and other local communities (IUCN, 2014a). CFM being one of the key approaches to sustainable forest management and conservation, should adhere to the 7 pro-poor REDD+ principles (IUCN, 2014a).

Each of the principles is linked to specific theme presented in **Box 4**.

Box 3. Key definitions

REDD refers to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

REDD+ is, 'an international framework to provide positive incentives to developing countries to contribute to Climate Change mitigation through activities in the Forestry and Land use sectors. REDD+ offers countries and opportunity to invest in low carbon pathways to sustainable development, and to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

The '+' in REDD signifies additional initiatives to be undertaken in order to:

- a) Conserve forest carbon stocks;
- b) Sustainably manage forests; and
- c) Enhance forest carbon stocks.

Source: Uganda REDD+ Secretariat (2017).

Box 4. The 7 principles to guide equitable REDD+ Implementation.

Principles		Themes
1. Ensure vulnerable groups are informed, consulted and participate in decision making at all levels and phases of the REDD+ process, in an enabling environment. 2. Guarantee rights and access to information about processes and outcomes of REDD+ including the positive and negative impacts on the environment and livelihoods of communities.		Stakeholder Engagement Access to Information
3. Ensure equitable and transparent sharing of benefits and responsibilities vertically and horizontally, with specific attention to vulnerable groups.		Equitable Benefit Sharing
4. Clarify and secure the rights (of access, use and control) to resources (land/tree/forest/carbon) of vulnerable groups. 5. Recognize and integrate customary practices and values in the design and implementation of REDD+ activities.		Rights to resources Customary practices
6. Establish and address the nature and scope of forest dependency, particularly among vulnerable groups.		Forest dependency
7. Enhance resilience of vulnerable livelihoods through conserving and restoring natural ecosystem functions, including biodiversity.		Livelihood and Ecosystem Resilience

Source: IUCN (2014).

2.4 Contributions by the project interventions in promotion of CFM in Agoro-Agu central forest landscape

Environmental Alert¹ in collaboration with the IUCN and ECOTRUST implemented a project titled, *'Towards pro-poor REDD+: Phase II: Promoting pro-poor REDD+ principles and rights based approaches, to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of landscapes,' since 2014 to 2017. In Uganda, the project interventions were implemented in Agoro-Agu forest landscape in Northern Uganda and the mountain Elgon landscape in eastern Uganda, with landscape level interventions led by Environmental Alert and ECOTRUST, respectively.*

The project aimed, *'at promoting the adoption of "pro-poor" principles and rights-based approaches, to strengthen the conservation, governance and sustainable management of forest landscapes at local, national and global scales.'* It was based on the recognition that local land tenure security enforced through democratic governance systems supports sustainable land use and reduced forest deforestation and degradation. In other words, the project supported the development and testing of responsive REDD+ social safeguard systems that also reduce forest deforestation and degradation.

Box 5. Expected outputs of the project

- i. A Pro-Poor REDD+ benefit sharing scheme incorporating multiple benefits & incentives to the poor is agreed upon, demonstrated and applied;
- ii. Capacities of decision makers at national & sub national levels, CSOs, private sector and grass root communities to incorporate HRB & Pro-Poor principles in REDD+ processes enhanced.
- iii. International REDD+ and other CC processes benefit from experiences generated here.

Source: IUCN, 2014b.

It was based on the rationale that whereas *"forest dependent people's livelihoods strategies"* have been viewed as one of the major drivers of deforestation and degradation, addressing REDD+ should not compromise their livelihoods. It should instead, enable the clarification and security of their

¹ See **Box 7** for more information about Environmental Alert.

tenure and natural resources rights. It should lead to the removal of imperatives that underlie “destructive” socio-economic strategies that expose people and forests to degradation. Therefore, REDD+ should not risk but enhance security of vulnerable people’s livelihoods. In essence, the project aimed at supporting the development and testing of responsive REDD+ social safeguard systems that also reduce forest degradation. These safeguard systems have to emanate from the local, and be integrated in the national and global REDD+ design. The expected project results are presented in **Box 5**.

3.0 The entire CFM process in Agoro-Agu central forest reserve landscape and how it was conducted

Box 6. The 9 steps of CFM

- Step 1-** *Initiating the process;*
- Step 2-** *Preparation of the application for CFM;*
- Step 3-** *Official meeting between Applicant and Responsible Body;*
- Step 4-** *Participatory situation analysis;*
- Step 5-** *Negotiating and drafting a CFM plan;*
- Step 6-** *Establishment and registration of a community institution;*
- Step 7-** *Negotiating and drafting the CFM agreement and plan;*
- Step 8-** *Final consultative meeting between the applicant and responsible body to review, finalize, sign and launch the CFM plan and agreement;*
- Step 9-** *Implementation of the CFM agreement and plan.*

Source: *Guideline for implementing collaborative forest management in Uganda (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2003).*

The CFM processes as rolled out involved all the key stakeholders including: *forest adjacent communities of Mar-yen and Katum, Sector and Range Manager at NFA, Lamwo Local Government technical and political leaders at sub county and district levels, Agoro-Agu forest landscape platform members, and IUCN-UCO.* Environmental Alert played the role of facilitator and/or playing the intermediary role whereas NFA spearheaded the process as the responsible body and as stipulated in

the CFM guidelines, (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2003).

Collaborative Forest Management process followed the 9 steps as stipulated in the guidelines **(see Box 6)**. The respective activity reports that provide further details on the proceedings for the CFM steps include: *The CFM launch/initiation events with the communities; Participatory situation analysis report (Mugenyi, 2017); Resource mapping report (Ariani, 2017); Negotiation and development of the CFM plans and agreements (Mugenyi, 2017); and Report for signing of the 2 agreements involving the representatives of the 2 forest adjacent communities and the NFA as witnessed by the key stakeholders in the Agoro-Agu forest landscape (Environmental Alert, 2017).*

3.1 Unique considerations in the approach and methods used that enhanced integration of the human rights based and pro-poor REDD+ principles in the CFM process

- a. Creating opportunities for forest adjacent communities to benefit from the initiative even before endorsement of the CFM plan and agreements. Hence, some of the benefits accrued to the forest adjacent communities of Mar-yen and Katum were:*
 - i. Access and use some of the resources (firewood, herbs) from the forest reserve;*
 - ii. Allowing communities to access and hung their bee hives inside the forest reserve as a livelihood enterprise for Katum CFM group through support from the IUCN;*
 - iii. Accessing agricultural inputs from Government programs such as Operation Wealth Creation, and Youth livelihood improvement) with support from Agoro sub county;*
 - iii. Establishment of the tree nursery bed within the community in Mar-yen.*



Figure 3. Members of Mar-yen CFM group actively participating in the resource mapping exercise by application of the GPS. Photo by Environmental Alert.

This demonstrated the pro-activeness of the duty bearers involved in the CFM process and certainly responded to the requirements of HBRA and pro-poor REDD+ principles as described in **sub-Section 2.3** of this case study. According to Nekesa Esther, the NFA Sector manager, this is a unique case because in the conventional CFM process, agreements have to be signed before any implementation can take place.

b. The willingness of the Responsible Body - NFA, and the CFM groups to resolve potential conflicts as part of the CFM process.

At the inception of the project, there was some disagreements between the forest adjacent communities and the NFA and Lamwo district Local Government stakeholders regarding the boundary for Agoro-Agu central forest reserve and the location of the community enclave, school and Prison. There was contention from the duty bearers that the community enclave, school and the prison were inside the forest reserve boundary. On the other hand, the forest adjacent community insisted that these were outside the forest reserve boundary. This contention was later resolved during participatory resource

mapping engagement as part of the CFM process that involved all the key stakeholders. The GIS mapping for the forest reserve boundary revealed and confirmed that community enclave, school and Prison are outside the forest reserve boundary. A detailed report for participatory resource mapping (Ariani, 2017) is available and it generated key information used in the development of the signed CFM plans and agreements. This largely attributed to the good listenership by NFA and willingness to further investment the contention in a transparent manner involving all stakeholders.

- c. *The balanced constitution and representation on the Project's Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the Director of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Water and Environment.* The committee was constituted with representation of relevant Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Project Implementing Partners including: Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development; Forestry Sector Support Department, the National REDD+ Secretariat; National Forestry Authority, National Environment Management Authority; the Chief Administrative Officers from project targeted districts, Ministry of Labour, Gender and Social development, Uganda Wildlife Authority, and Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries. The implementing partners (International Union for Conservation of Nature, Environmental Alert and ECOTRUST) were co-opted members to the PSC. This arrangement provided for equal representations and discussion of issues, interest and concerns for integration into the process for development of the CFM management plans and the agreements. Furthermore, technical support from these stakeholders to support the CFM process was easily solicited through this committee.
- d. *The enhanced knowledge and skills of Agoro-Agu forest landscape stakeholders in respect to application of human rights based approaches and pro-poor REDD+ principles.*

This was achieved through the targeted training conducted for implementing partners and Agoro-Agu forest landscape stakeholders by the IUCN and Environmental Alert, respectively during the inception phase of the project. Thus, the knowledge and skills obtained by the stakeholders involved was

timely and applied by the stakeholders to make the required and expected decisions during the 9 steps of the CFM process as described in Box 5.

- e. *The establishment of Agoro-Agu Forest Landscape Platform provided a stakeholder's forum for information exchange, joint planning and engagement to achieve the shared goals of conservation, sustainable management of natural resources, improved livelihoods and development within the landscape. The platform ensured even and balanced representation of various stakeholders including: civil society organizations & community based organizations, representatives of forest adjacent communities, cultural and religious institutions, National Forestry Authority, Lamwo district local government and representative of the Uganda Forestry Uganda Forest Working Group (UFWG² Northern Uganda regional Node. This provided for presentation and discussion of the different stakeholder's issues, interests, views and concerns to come up with shared actions on how to address them, but also tapping into the rich knowledge and experiences of the various stakeholders operating in the*



Figure 2. Community meeting on Participatory situation analysis that involved members of Mar-yen CFM group. Photo by Environmental Alert.

2 UFWG is a platform with a broad spectrum of stakeholders who play different yet complementary roles in their individual, collective and institutional capacities. These include field technical support, small grants management, research and products development, awareness creation, piloting alternatives, media publicity of issues and policy processes, public debate, advocacy and legislative lobbying, budget analysis and advocacy as well as independently monitor the implementation of the Forest Policy commitments. Environmental Alert is the Secretariat of the UFWG.

Besides, the promotion of CFM was as well earmarked as one of the strategies to restore tree and forest cover within the Agoro-Agu Forest Landscape. Thus, the presence of the platform and the active involvement of its members in the CFM process in the way empowered the CFM groups because their issues, interests and concerns were presented, heard and discussed.

The members of the steering committee for platform also supported in mobilizing CFM groups and local leaders, ensuring particular representation of women and other vulnerable groups during CFM process. This in-turn reduced incidences of 'elite capture' which favours groups or applicants of all social capacities.

The presence and participation of the NFA and Lamwo district Local Government staff as ex-official members on the platform hastened the process for development of the CFM plan and agreements with the 2 forest adjacent communities.

- f. Ensuring fair gender composition and representation within the CFM group members and during participation in the CFM process.* Thus, fair representation of women, youth, elderly, and people with disabilities as key gender categories to solicit their views and concerns in the process. Further considerations were made to promote the participation of women in the CFM process, for instance the location and timing for the meeting was agreed with the CFM groups through participatory consultations.
- g. Flexibility of the Responsible Body to combine the some of the 9 CFM steps as appropriate without compromising the expected outputs as opposed to following the chronological order as presented in the guideline*

This consideration even when not provided for in the guideline depicted the flexibility of the Responsible Body in responding to the operational context, thus the project had limited time towards completion. Besides, it further hastened the process towards completion of the process, thus the 2 CFM agreements were endorsed by the Responsible Body and the CFM groups within a record time of less than a year.

Furthermore, it minimised community fatigue and reduced on the costs because of the several meetings and associated costs, respectively which must be held if the process is followed through 9 steps chronologically.

4.0 Key lessons learnt

The key lessons learnt from the initiative are enlisted as follows:

- a. The contribution by the members of the CFM groups through provision of some food items and providing labour and time to prepare the meals creates ownership and transparency in the process;
- b. It is very important to directly engage key partners and stakeholders at the onset of the CFM processes for ownership and sustainability. This also helps in leveraging their interests and concerns thereby soliciting their support for building on existing initiatives, enhance synergies and avoid unnecessary duplication;
- c. CFM alone as an independent intervention may not sustain livelihood, thus the need to seek other livelihood enhancing options to complement community efforts in forestry resource conservation;
- d. The implementation of the 9 CFM steps should not be a linear process. The steps can be implemented concurrently and this fastens community buy in and ownership of the process, but also minimises community fatigue because of the large number of meetings. Reviews and discussions with key district, technical and political as well as responsible body, indications are that the process was the fastest on record in the landscape in terms of time spent in establishment of CFM process.

5.0 Emerging issues

5.1 Key opportunities

- a. The existence of Agoro-Agu forest landscape platform that provides a stakeholder's forum for information exchange, joint planning and engagement to achieve the shared goals of conservation, sustainable management of natural resources, improved livelihoods and development within the landscape. It as well contributes to enhanced coordination of initiatives implemented by the various stakeholders in the landscape thereby building on synergies and avoidance of duplication. The platform's Secretariat is hosted by Agoro International Vocational Institute and has a steering committee, which provides strategic guidance for implementation of the platforms engagement plan.
- b. The landscape is huge with several forest tenures including central forest reserves, community forests, local forest reserves that must be conserved and sustainably managed. Hence there is immense potential for scale up of CFM within the landscape.
- c. Enhanced collaboration between the NFA and Lamwo District Local Government, thus the Local Government both at district and sub-county levels is committed to support implementation of the CFM plans and agreements through the ongoing development programs such Operation Wealth Creation; Community Driven Development; Farm Income Enhancement Program II; and Third Northern Uganda Social Action Fund.
- d. Existence of several other civil society organizations implementing various development and livelihood initiatives within the landscape such as Lutheran World Federation, MERCY CORPS/ TECHNOSERVE, Kitgum Women Peace Initiative, Lamwo Framers and Environmental Conservation Association; (IUCN, 2015) provides opportunities for synergies towards addressing needs of the community and complimenting the CFM process.

5.2 Key challenges

- a. Encroachment into the forest reserve through illegal agricultural activities by neighbouring communities and illegal timber and charcoal trade remain outstanding challenges to the landscape with regard to advancing conservation and pro-poor REDD+ initiatives;
- b. The high expectations of communities which arise from the need to provide for urgent household needs. This requires provision of alternative livelihood options within the landscape to advance household food security and incomes as a way of reducing over dependence on the natural resources;
- c. The communities within the landscape are very much used to being given hand outs with minimum own contributions. This is not by surprise because they were used to this given the long period they spent in the camps as internally displaced communities during the insurgency in Northern Uganda;
- d. Much as targeted awareness and training on human rights based approaches and the pro-poor REDD+ principles was conducted for the key stakeholders, they are still at different levels of knowledge and understanding given that they have different capabilities to comprehend and apply these in their work. Therefore, continuous awareness and training targeting stakeholders in the landscape is necessary to support up scaling and out scaling of CFM with effective integration of human rights based approaches and the pro-poor REDD+ principles.

6.0 Major conclusions

CFM is a plausible approach for co-management of forest resources between forest adjacent communities and the responsible bodies such as NFA. However, the aspirations and intentions of both the Responsible Body and the forest adjacent communities as stipulated in the CFM plan and agreements as endorsed can only be achieved if either parties effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

Pro-poor and HRB Approaches are cost effective and promote the sustainability of the interventions since key stakeholder's participation will lead to benefits continuing to accrue beyond the project life-span, e.g. Local income from nature based enterprises (bee hives and nursery bed). This is largely because they tap into community participation and ownership which in turn reduces cost burden for the project interventions such as labor. Additionally, HRBA is able to support communities in steering their own development agenda for both current and future needs of the beneficiaries. For example, tree planting which leads to reduced future cost on fuel-wood, timber, and poles if promoted alongside CFM will help communities appreciate the immediate and long term values of these resources.

Notable is that, there has been enhanced visibility and awareness for the Agoro Agu platform and CFM group initiatives at the Sub County, district and at national level which gives the community higher chances to benefit from nature conservation and other livelihood projects being implemented at district and sub county levels.

7.0 Key recommendations for policy and practice change to advance CFM using the HBRA and pro-poor REDD+ principles

The following key recommendations are suggested to inform policy and practice change to contribute towards conservation & sustainable management of natural resources within Agoro-Agu forest landscape while delivering livelihood benefits to the communities:

- a. *The duty bearers, particularly the NFA, Lamwo District Local Government, Civil Society Organizations and the Agoro-Agu forest land scape platform members and Development Partners* should consider supporting the establishment of alternative livelihood enterprises (such as the apiary, tree Nursery, agroforestry) among forest adjacent communities intending to engage in co-management of gazetted forests through the CFM arrangements. This is necessary and should be done in the early stages of the CFM process, so as to motivate and sustain community interest in CFM process. Capacity building for the CFM groups to sustainably manage the livelihood enterprises should be part and parcel of this support.
- b. *The other duty bearers especially the Lamwo District Local Government, Civil Society Organizations, and the Agoro-Agu forest land scape platform members and Development Partners* should support NFA and the CFM groups in the implementation and monitoring of the signed CFM plans and agreements. For instance, Lamwo District Local Government should integrate the CFM plans in the rolling district development plan so that funds can be allocated for implementation of the earmarked activities. Besides, the other departments within the Local Government (such as health, sanitation, production, education and infrastructure) should be brought on board to deliver on the other community needs beyond forest and natural resources management.

On the other hand, *the Civil Society Organizations and the Agoro-Agu forest land scape platform members* should incorporate the CFM plans into their strategic development plans and annual work plans so that activities earmarked in the CFM plans are implemented.

- c. The CFM plans and agreements should be monitored on a regular basis to assess the performance and achievements against the set goals and aspirations. The process should involve all the *key stakeholders in the Agoro-Agu Forest landscape as spearheaded by an Independent Institution such as the Forest Sector Support Department*.
- d. *The Pro-Poor REDD+ and Human Rights-Based approaches and principles should be adapted and integrated in the on-going policy preparation and reviews, implementation and Development Plans at the local and national levels* as working approaches and principles by all development players within the landscape. This requires continuous targeted awareness and training targeting stakeholders within the landscape. Thus, it is through application of these approaches and principles that the concerns of the poor and vulnerable groups such as women and youth will be addressed in all stages of program development and implementation within the landscape.
- e. The duty bearers, *particularly the NFA, Lamwo District Local Government and Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners* should support investments for up scaling of development of CFM plans and agreements targeting other interested forest adjacent communities within the Agoro-Agu forest landscape. The Lamwo district Local Government should reach out to other civil society organisations and development partners to scale up CFM for others Central and local Forest Reserves, as a way of slowing down the on-going forest degradation and deforestation.
- f. The linkages of *Agoro-Agu forest landscape platform with national networks on environment and natural resources including the Uganda Forest Working Group and the Environment and Natural Resources CSOs (ENR-CSO)³ Network* should be maintained and strengthened to ensure that the issues and concerns in Agoro-Agu forest landscape are presented, discussed and addressed in the policy making and decision making spaces at the local and national levels.

³ *The ENR-CSO Network in Uganda was founded in 2009 as a loose network with a diverse membership of CSOs in environment and natural resources operating at national and sub-national levels. Since then the Secretariat of the ENR-CSO Network is hosted at Environmental Alert.*

8.0 References

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Box 7. 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) - <http://enr-cso.org/>;
- b) Uganda Forestry Working Group - <http://ufwg.entalert.org/>;
- c) The Standards Development Group (for promotion of Sustainable Forest Management in Uganda); and
- d) Promoting Local Innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resources management (PROLINNOVA-Uganda Network) - <http://www.prolinnova.net/uganda>.

Further information about Environmental Alert is available at: <http://entalert.org/>



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