



**Project Name:** Building Resilient Communities, Wetland Ecosystems and Associated Catchments in Uganda.

***Community Meeting to officially handover the inputs for promotion of selected no-Regret alternative Livelihood Enterprises targeting identified communities living adjacent and within selected wetlands and associated catchments in Bushenyi, Mitooma & Sheema districts.***

*Remarks by Dr. Joshua Zake (PhD), Executive Director, Environmental Alert.*

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This initiative is implemented with financial support from the **Government of Uganda, United Nations Development program and the Global Climate Fund.**

## A. Background

The **Government of Uganda** in Partnership with the **United Nations Development Program** and the **Green Climate Fund** initiated the process of restoring wetlands starting with the most affected areas of Eastern and South-Western in September, 2017, under the project: '**Building Resilient Communities, Wetland Ecosystems and Associated Catchments in Uganda.**' This is an **8 years project** aiming at delivering on the following outcomes across **20 districts (i.e. 10 in Eastern and 10 in South Western) in Uganda:**

- a) *Restoration and management of wetland hydrology and associated catchments;*
- b) *Improved agricultural practices and alternative livelihoods in wetland catchments;*
- c) *Strengthening access to climate and early warning information to farmers and other target communities.*

As a **Responsible Party** on this Initiative, **Environmental Alert** implemented a study on, '*Market, Livelihoods, Gender and Gender Based Violence analysis in 3 districts of Bushenyi, Mitooma and Shema in the South Western Uganda.*' The study identified gaps, employment needs and income streams that are resilient to climate change and map on-going initiatives and supported implementation of identified pilot activities. Results from the study showed the need for livelihood interventions for the wetland dependent communities if restoration is to be achieved. This study contributes to the *project output 2.2 'Economically viable and sustainable agri-based livelihood and income generating interventions introduced, promoted and supported in the wetland and immediate catchment.'* Furthermore, Environmental Alert conducted a **No-regret Enterprises<sup>1</sup> training for 6 groups** in Bushenyi, Mitooma and Sheema (*i.e. 2 beneficiary groups in each district*). These groups (including: *Siima Community Driven Development Initiative – SCODDI; Nshenga Abateganda Association; Masheruka Environmental Restored Monitoring Committee and Disaster Group; Matsyoro Parish Hotspot Restored micro-catchment; Nyaruzinga Community Wetlands Conservation Association; and Bumbaire Fish Farmers Association*) were equipped with skills of management, record keeping and sustainability of selected No-regret alternative livelihood enterprises. This process was highly participatory and consultative, thus it involved key stakeholders including: *communities living adjacent and with the selected wetland and associated catchments; local leaders (both political and technical); and Technocrats from the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries.*

Each of the beneficiary group was advised to select a member to host this support on behalf of the group who must ensure that being custodians of this support they are ready to take lead in managing the enterprise to realize the project objectives. Follow-up engagements were done to assess the preparedness of these host beneficiary farmers from each beneficiary group for the support prior to the delivery of the inputs. The assessment was satisfactory for the benefiting member (host beneficiary farmer) to receive this support on behalf of the group. Due diligence for the prequalified suppliers was conducted to ensure that the suppliers for the inputs are competent and have the capacity to supply quality items. Supply of input was done in the week of **18<sup>th</sup> –22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2019**, as guided by Environmental Alert, to the various beneficiary sites in the project district.

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<sup>1</sup> No-regret interventions in this context refers to enterprises which are plausible, thus have already been tested, associated with less risk and can be up-scaled. It can also include situations where interventions are bridging gaps in already existing enterprises being implemented by the communities. Thus, the implementation of these no-regret enterprises should be ongoing and largely owned by the user group.

It is against this background that Environmental Alert decided to organize an official joint handover community based ceremony in each district of Bushenyi, Mitooma and Sheema to flag-off the full implementation No-Regret alternative livelihood enterprises. The overall objective for promoting implementation of the selected No-Regret enterprises (i.e. e.g. *apiary/bee keeping, piggery, fish-farming*) is to, *'improved household incomes and community livelihoods thereby reducing pressure on the wetlands and associated catchments for building long term restoration, conservation and sustainable management of these resources for continued benefits of products and ecosystem services there-in.'* As part of implementation of the subsequent project interventions, it's envisaged that these enterprises will be up and out scaled for the benefit of more wetland communities living adjacent and within the selected wetlands and associated catchments in south western Uganda and across the all country.

## **B. Meeting objectives**

*i) To officially handover the inputs (i.e. improved pig breeds, bees hives, animal feeds, fish fingerings) for promotion of the selected No-Regret alternative livelihood enterprises (such as: piggery, apiary, aquaculture) to the beneficiary groups in Bushenyi, Mitooma and Sheema districts.*

As project beneficiaries, this meeting is very important since it provides an opportunity to witness the handover of these inputs for transparency and accountability. However, we are all encouraged to provide the necessary support as per the group agreement to ensure that all group members benefit and also effectively deliver on the indented project objectives and outcomes.

## **C. Acknowledgement**

The financial and technical support and backstopping from the **Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries, the Bushenyi, Mitooma and Sheema District Local Governments** is very much appreciated in the implementation of this assignment. Furthermore, the active participation of the beneficiary communities and other community development stakeholders in a noble ingredient for the success of this initiative.

## **D. About Environmental Alert**

Environmental Alert was founded in **1988** and in **2018** marked **30 years** of contribution to improved livelihoods and development in Uganda through several interventions in sustainable agriculture, environment and natural resources management. Environmental Alert is officially registered with the Non-Government Organizations Bureau as a Ugandan Indigenous non-governmental organization. Environmental Alert is also incorporated as a company limited by guarantee by the Registrar of Companies. Environmental Alert 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.

**Vision-** *'Resilient and dignified communities, managing the environment and natural resources sustainably.'*

**Mission** –*'Environmental Alert exists to advocate for an enabling environment, sustainable natural resources management and food security for targeted communities through empowerment and policy engagement.'*

Thank you for listening, Wish you all the best. For God and my country!!!

**Dr. Joshua Zake (PhD) - Executive Director, Environmental Alert.**