

Report of the Visit by the Members of the Environmental Alert Board to the Environmental Alert Agribusiness Incubation EA-ABIC (EA-ABIC).

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Prepared by

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1.0 Introduction

Environmental Alert (EA) (see box 2) has a 10 acres piece of land at Kyevunze village in Wobulenzi in Luweero district off Bombo road(see box 1). As Environmental Alert is in her 5th year of implementing 10 year strategic plan, is establishing an Agribusiness and Incubation Center on that land with the objective of supporting the Organization to become a self-sustaining entity while demonstrating appropriate environment and natural resources management technologies, innovations and practices to the community and the wider public. Currently, plans to build an administration Block are under way that will ease development/establishment of the EA-ABIC.

Once the Block is completed, a number of projects will be established to generate income to the Organization.

The development of the EA-ABIC, has for long been discussed but less progress achieved. On this effect, during the last Board meeting held on July 3,2020 at Environmental Alert Board Room, EA-ABIC was discussed and showed the need to expose the board to the EA-ABIC to enable them provide concrete advise and recommendations. On this note, the meeting resolved that board members should visit the EA-ABIC on August 6, 2020.Its therefore, against this background that the secretariat organized a visit on August 6, 2020 for Board members to get them exposed to the status of the EA-ABIC that will enable them provide guided recommendations.

1.1 Objective of the Visit

The main objective of the visit was to get the Board members exposed to the EA-ABIC so that they can appreciate the strategic direction for ABIC, current challenges and ongoing operations.

Environmental Alert vision and mission statements:

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'



Figure 1 Construction of Staff quarters

1.2 Methods and approaches used during the visit

This was a one (1) day visit at EA-ABIC majorly comprised of EA Board of Advisors. A participatory and practical approach was employed during the visit to encourage active participation of all participants. A transect walk around the EA-ABIC was done each transect with a guide. Focus group discussions were also used where a brief report about the ongoing activities and underlying challenges about the EA-ABIC was presented that guided the discussions.

Time	Activity	Responsible person
8:30 Am	Departure from Environmental Alert	All
10:20 AM	Arrival at EA-ABIC	All
10:25AM	Transect walk at the Centre	All lead By Abdul
10:50 AM	Presentation of the brief report	Abdul
11:10AM	Plenary Discussion	All
11:40AM	Way forward	Chair
12:00PM	Closure and departure	All

2.0 Proceedings

On August 6, 2020 all board members and some Environmental Alert staff went to Environmental Alert Agribusiness EA-ABIC (EA-ABIC) to appreciate what was being done at the EA-ABIC. The visit took Nine (9) participants that is seven Board Members and two Environment Alert staff both men and women (4 male and 5 female).



Figure 2 Participants walking around ABIC land.

It was an interactive session that involved a transect walk on the EA-ABIC to appreciate the activities taking place. The participants were so happy with the developments especially eucalyptus trees which they looked at as an income generating activity to support further developments of the EA-ABIC.

This was followed by focus group discussion, where Mr. Kiryowa made a presentation on the genesis of ABIC and where it was going. In his presentation, he mentioned that, the organization was constructing staff quarters and sanitary facilities which had reached the wall plate, clearing the land following the settlement of the staff near the EA-ABIC. He further mentioned that, the EA-ABIC had no income generating activities at the time due to pending arrangements that had to be completed first. They included;

- a. Lack of administration block/staff quarters to settle a staff at the EA-ABIC
- b. Security of the projects and other assets
- c. Limited resources both human and financial resources
- d. Lack of a physical and business plan



Figure 3. Participants during focus group

On this note however, he highlighted that both physical and business plan were in draft form yet to be approved and that by September 2020 staff quarters shall be ready to accommodate staff at the EA-ABIC.

Lastly, he concluded thanking Board of Directors for the continued support to the EA-ABIC and for finding time to visit the EA-ABIC which gives morale to the workers at the EA-ABIC.

3.0 Key results from this visit

- Environmental Alert Board members were exposed to reality of EA-ABIC and came to appreciate work done at the EA-ABIC
- Strategic plan for the EA-ABIC was drawn basing on the current status of the EA-ABIC and
- Lastly recommendations were provided on how to move forward as far as development of the EA-ABIC was concerned

4.0 Conclusions, Resolutions/actions and way forward

4.1 Conclusions

The visit turned to be a productive one that if possible, should be done every now and then. This is because it provided a clear picture of the EA-ABIC that helped in focusing recommendations and guidance provided by Board which has been usually done on a folded face.

4.2 Recommendations

The member of the Environmental Alert Board who participated in the visit at ABIC suggested the following resolutions/action for implementation by EA Management as efforts towards full operationalization of ABIC are being pursued:

- a. Construction of the staff quarters at ABIC should be first tracked to have it occupied by early September 2020
- b. Some of the eucalyptus trees at ABIC should be cut and used for roofing.
- c. Physical plan should be out as soon as possible to guide farm projects
- d. At least 1 acre of tomatoes should be established at the onset of the rainy season as one of the targets for income generation at the EA-ABIC;
- e. A live fence in the form of indigenous high value trees should be planted along the boundary of the EA-ABIC;
- f. Pursue strategies for resolving land boundary disputes immediately to avoid further conflicts

4.3 Way forward

The visit resolved/agreed on a number of this that must be followed up. They included;

- i. Secretariat to have staff quarters completed and settle manager by 1st week of September
- ii. Secretariat to contract two casual workers to assist with Farm activities.
- iii. Fencing of the EA-ABIC boundaries
- iv. Development of the physical plan

Box 1. About EA-ABIC.

Background.

EA-ABIC is a 9.33-acre farm land located at Kyevunze village in Wobulenzi in Luweero district off Bombo road. Currently the EA-ABIC has various crop enterprises including: *eucalyptus*, *bananas*, and *coffee*. EA is interested in further developing this farm as an **Agribusiness and Incubation Center** that is self-sustaining while generating income and demonstrating appropriate environment and natural resources management technologies, innovations and practices.

Objective of EA-ABIC

The overall target of Environmental Alert Agri-business and Incubation EA-ABIC at Kyevunze to enhance the intellectual life and professional development of graduate students and the surrounding communities through practical Agri-entrepreneurship skills development in Uganda. Furthermore, the center will also support capacity building for students so that when they graduate, they have the skills to empower and transform their communities. Currently the center has various crop enterprises including: *eucalyptus*, *bananas*, and *coffee*.

The target groups are students, interns and youths of the neighbouring communities. Graduates will undergo a 12 months practical training by managing and running the enterprises at the incubation EA-ABIC as businesses and thereafter, they will graduate and will be expected to upscale the businesses. This will be done through strategic partnerships with Universities and colleges among others. On this note, Environmental Alert signed Memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bukalasa Agricultural College (BAC) to pursue shared interest and goals in this respect. This facilitated the recruitment of a graduate intern from BAC by the EA administration to support the establishment of the EA-ABIC.

Expected outcomes

- a) Agri-entrepreneurs with requisite practical skills and knowledge, thus are more employable and or can create employment opportunities;
- b) Reduction in poverty:

Box 2. 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:

- a. Environment and Natural resources management;
- b. Food security and Nutrition;
- c. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene;
- d. Finance and Administration;
- e. 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 40 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>;
- e. The Renewable Energy CSO Network.

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