

**Activity report for the Validation meeting for the reviewed NFA Guidelines for Land Allocation
for private tree planting in central forest reserves, 2017.**

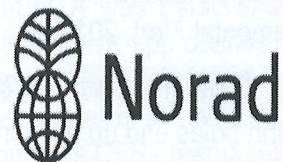
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Chapter One: introduction, background and purpose of the meeting

1.1 introduction

This report highlights the proceedings of the validation meeting for the reviewed NFA Guidelines for Land Allocation for private tree planting in central forest reserves, 2017 conducted on **17th December, 2020** via zoom platform. The meeting targeted participation from renewable energy CSOs and Networks, private sector, MDAs, Local Governments, private consultants in ENR, Academia, & Development Partners. The overall purpose of the meeting was to validate the reviewed land allocation guidelines for private tree planting in the central forest reserves.

1.2 Background

The Energy sector is dominated by biomass that contributes nearly 96% of the total primary energy consumed. This includes firewood and charcoal supplying about 78.6 and 5.6% respectively (MEMD, 2012). Furthermore, the energy demand is growing between 10-15% posing more stress on the biomass resource partly as a result of the growing population currently which is estimated at about 46 million and with an annual growth rate of about 3.2%. It's projected to reach 93.4 million in the next 30 years (UBOS, 2017). Over 95% of the population especially in the rural areas depend on firewood for domestic energy. The influx of about 1.4 million refugees to Uganda further increases the demand on biomass energy. This is against inadequate supply of biomass coupled with unsustainable production will still be a major source of energy given the increasing demands for energy by the growing population (Environmental Alert, 2019)

The National Forestry Authority (NFA) is mandated to manage government central forest reserves as the lead agency. It manages 506 CFRs with a total area of 1.2 million hectares constituting 15% of the forest estate in Uganda. In 2004 NFA developed and launched guidelines on land allocation to enable the public gain access to land in forest reserves or tree planting. These guidelines were revised in 2017 in line with the lessons learnt and emerging issues. To date, a total of 196,882 ha has been allocated and 82,709 ha of this land have been planted; Land is allocated for specific purposes which include: industrial wood production, production of pole and fuel wood, restoration of forest cover, and biomass production. The biggest part of the allocation goes for industrial wood production (172,281 ha) and poles and fuel wood (12,051 ha), Restoration (9,350 ha) and biomass production (3,200 ha) take the least allocation (Environmental Alert, 2019).

It's worth noting that NFA has licensed land in CFRs for production of timber and poles and part of this timber and poles end up as biomass energy as by-products of the timber processing or after its primary use; thus, the current land tenure system limits investment in biomass energy production because it threatens tree tenure. This can be addressed by harmonizing land tenure and tree tenure and balancing the land allocation based on all needs of plantation investments—timber, biodiversity and biomass energy.

Basing on this background, Environmental Alert is commissioned a technical person to conduct desk review of these guidelines and suggest recommendations as appropriate for consideration into the revised guidelines. This engagement was implemented within the framework of the project titled, 'Increasing access to sustainable and Renewable energy alternatives in the Albertine Graben.' The project is implemented in partnership with World Wildlife Fund-Uganda Country Office with financial support from Norwegian Agency for Development.

It is against this background that Environmental Alert organised the validation meeting for the reviewed guidelines in terms of gaps analysed and recommendations suggested.

1.3 Purpose of the meeting

The overall purpose of the meeting was to validate the reviewed land allocation guidelines for private tree planting in the central forest reserves.

Chapter Two: Methodology, outputs and proceedings of the meeting.

2.1 Methods/approaches used

The meeting was conducted via zoom platforms. Power point presentations were used during the meeting. Participatory and interactive approaches to engage members during the workshop through encouraging feedback and comments from the presentations made.

2.2 Outputs of the meeting

Reviewed land allocation guidelines for private tree planting in the central forest reserves validated.

2.3 Proceedings of the meeting

2.3.1 Contextual setting- Objective of the workshop.

This was conducted by Dr. Joshua Zake who welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for sparing time to attend engagements organised by EA. He thanked NFA for their technical support to the assignment but also working relationship with EA. He informed members about the importance of biomass energy at the country level and regional level. He indicated that about 95% of Ugandans depend on biomass for their energy needs. He indicated many studies have revealed that the demand for biomass is exceeding the production; the latest study being for EA last year which aimed at exploring potentials for private sector investment in sustainable biomass production. He said that NFA is better placed to address these issues because it manages all CFRs on behalf of the government. He said that NFA conducts land allocation in CFRs biomass production which is guided by land allocation guidelines which were last reviewed in 2017. These guidelines were not clearly structured to address the deficit of biomass energy and thus necessitating the review 2020. He ended by wishing participants good deliberations.

2.3.2 Presentation of the reviewed land allocation guidelines.

This was conducted by Mr. Paul Buyerah from NFA. He indicated that NFA was Established under Section 52 of NFTP 2003: Develop and manage all CFRs; Promote innovative approaches for local community participation; Establish procedures for the sustainable utilisation of Uganda's forest resources by and for the benefit of the people of Uganda with Vision: A world-class, leader in sustainable forestry management; and Mission: "To sustainably manage and develop the country's CFRs resources, and to provide quality forestry products and services for socio-economic development of Uganda. He indicated that: In CFRs and LFRs, the drivers of deforestation are illegal charcoal burning, unsustainable charcoal production and firewood cutting, Major charcoal production areas are the cattle corridor and savannah woodlands of the Northern region, Charcoal is mainly consumed in urban areas while firewood is mostly used in rural areas.

In terms of principles of land allocation, Paul highlighted the including:

1. Land allocation will be subject to the zoning of the CFRs;
2. External boundaries will be opened;
3. Land will be advertised Forest Reserve by Reserve;
4. Land will be allocated to local communities to establish plantations or manage existing woodlands;
5. Gender, youth, social and environmental will be considered.
6. Forest adjacent local communities and stakeholder's participation will participate decision-making.

7. To enforce biomass wood fuel laws and regulations along the value chain - producers, traders, and consumers.

In terms of procedures for processing and allocation, Paul highlighted the following:

- a) NFA to prioritize areas in CFRs for fuelwood and charcoal production;
- b) Inventory and surveys to quantify the available biomass.
- c) Land Management Unit will identify areas for biomass wood fuel plantations or woodlands.
- d) NFA will prepare and/or revise the FMP to cater biomass energy
- e) Executive Director will oversee land allocation.
- f) Legal team shall prepare the license agreements with terms and conditions.

in terms of evaluation, criteria and procedure for allocation, Paul highlighted the following:

Land allocation scales small 20ha, medium 21-100ha and large above 100ha.

1. **Technical Evaluation Criteria (70%)** – Experience, technical capacity, sources of seeds/seedlings.
2. **Financial Evaluation Criteria (30%)**. Sufficient funds, Source of funding and evidence of availability of funds
3. **Further Consideration**. 5% of the land area will be reserved for forest adjacent communities depending on demand.

in terms of licenses and payment of annual land license fees, Paul highlighted the following:

1. **Category A: UGX 50,000/ha/year**: CFRs within a distance of about 15 Km from Kampala City.
2. **Category B: UGX 30,000/ha/year**: CFRs within a distance of 15-50 Km from Kampala City.
3. **Category C: UGX 22,000/ha/year**: This covers CFRs within a distance of 50-150 Km from Kampala City.
4. **Category D: UGX 15,000/ha/year**: This includes CFRs that fall beyond a distance of 150 Km from Kampala

With regards to the application process, Paul highlighted the following:

1. NFA will advertise earmarked areas in each CFR.
2. PDU will issue and compile Land Application Forms with clear instructions
3. Applicants will pay a non-refundable fee of **UGX 100,000** to purchase the application form.

With regards to monitoring license performance, Paul highlighted the following:

- a) Develop performance-monitoring indicators.
- b) Maintain database on licensees.
- c) Monitor performance against indicators and standards
- d) Report progress annually.
- e) Enforce compliance with license terms and conditions
- f) Contravention the license condition will face sanctions.

2.3.2.1 Comments on the reviewed NFA land allocation guidelines generated from the validation meeting conducted on 17th December, 2020.

- I. How do we address the illegality on the market that would disadvantage the legal biomass growers?
- II. What is the time for the execution of the guidelines?
- III. Add the principle that give priority to large consumers as an incentive for ensuring efficient investment.
- IV. Include the principle of efficiency
- V. ESSF should be used to address some of the challenges that NFA has been facing
- VI. How do we address the issues of economics in respect to wood for biomass energy?
- VII. How will you address the capacity (training, land mgt) of those acquiring land in respect to biomass growing?
- VIII. How do you address Environmental risks associated with land allocation?
- IX. How do you intend to address the issues of M&E especially the means of verification?
- X. Evaluation process for the award of land should be linked to the capability to use efficient technology to avoid issue wastage.
- XI. Determine the rotation basing on the purpose of the plantation e.g., some trees take long to produce good charcoal and others take short to produce firewood.
- XII. With respect to the affordability by the youth and women, include a special micro-level scale of allocation like 10ha.
- XIII. Can you circulate the Word Doc of the guidelines? I have specific comments to be inserted into the doc.
- XIV. The SPGS guidelines recommends as well growing of indigenous e.g., Markhaemia lutea. As was highlighted before our restrictions on indigenous species comes with their long rotation period, for a viable biomass business you cannot invest in species that will take many years to yield.
- XV. I think the indigenous trees can be encouraged through putting a condition in the licence ...say a given percentage of land for indigenous trees.
- XVI. Can the small-scale land allocation be up to 50ha and medium can start from 51-100ha?
- XVII. At the time of harvest, how will NFA enforce the purpose, what if the grower opts to sell biomass as poles or timber?
- XVIII. Thank you, Paul, in fact people will get the licence for biomass but will grow trees for timber and poles. Charcoal/fire wood will come from the offcuts. How do we guarantee that license will be actually be for biomass?
- XIX. Thanks for the presentation Paul. are there any restrictions on the tree species for biomass? How best do u think we can promote indigenous species?
- XX. How do we ensure that the crop established for biomass is not changed for other products?
- XXI. Thanks for the presentation. How are you going to make sure that the plantation is really harvested for biomass? Are you going to limit the licence to a single rotation?
- XXII. in the current situation, am sure farmers would find it more viable to plant Eucs for transmission poles rather than charcoal or fuelwood.
- XXIII. Can Paul say something about the time line/framework for the execution of this?
- XXIV. It is also vital that NFA starts to establish demonstration plantations for biomass on specific parts of the country

3.4 Closure

This was conducted by Dr. Joshua Zake who thanked them for sparing time to attend engagements organised by EA. He informed members that their comments will be compiled and shared with Paul for integration. Then the final document will be shared with NFA management for approval. He informed members that these guidelines are a starting point to address the issue of biomass energy and called upon them to participate in others engagements of similar intentions.