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Management Regimes established for REDD+ and their Adaptability to the Institutional and Ecological Conditions: A case of Ongo Community Forest, Masindi District, Uganda.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BUCODO	Budongo Forests Community Development Organisation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CFR	Central Forest Reserve
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management
CODECA	Community Development Conservation Agency
CLA	Communal Land Associations
DFO	District Forest Officer
ECOTRUST	Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPS	Geographical Position System
LC	Local Council
LFR	Local Forest Reserve
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OC	Officer in Charge
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
TGB	Trees for Global Benefits
THF	Tropical High Forest
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is one of the outputs of the project "Man and forests – an evaluation of management strategies for reduced deforestation" which aimed at evaluating the different management strategies undertaken to obtain reduced deforestation in tropical forests and hence maintain the various ecosystem services delivered. One component of this project focused on characterizing the management regimes established in the REDD+ pilot area and how well the REDD+ regime is adapted to the local institutional and ecological conditions. The site under investigation is a communally owned forest known as Ongo community forest, where the Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda (ECOTRUST), is piloting REDD+ activities. The investigations entailed discussions with the implementing agent the ECOTRUST, local council leaders, forest management committee members, Masindi district technical staff and the local community members.

The key findings indicated that Ongo is a low-stocked Tropical High Forest under the governance of community members, from the four villages surrounding the forest. The forest has continued to face deforestation and degradation with the main drivers including agricultural encroachment and harvesting of poles. With regard to governance and governance structures, there were several organizations and institutions established prior the REDD+ regime including the District and several NGOs. The REDD+ project activities were initiated in 2010 and some of the key achievements to date include the formal registration of Ongo Communal Land Association, initiating the process of acquiring a land title, forest boundary survey and mapping, more community sensitization and awareness about carbon trading and the need for forest conservation; review of the constitution and the forest management plan to fit the current conditions, and community training about benefit sharing.

Some of the challenges encountered included the bureaucratic process of acquiring the land ownership document; allegations of land grabbing by some of the community members, which disrupted several awareness and sensitization sessions; resistance during the boundary survey process and demands for compensation by those individuals who had cultivated along the forest boundary; and the continued illegal activities especially harvesting of poles and cultivating along the forest frontier. With regard to adaptability to the ecological conditions, the forest characteristics including topography, species composition, soil characteristics and accessibility make it very vulnerable to access and resource use pressures which are likely to continue posing challenges from the governance perspective. Further, the location of the forest makes it very open and accessible by any community member from the four villages.

With regard to adaptability to the institutional conditions, ECOTRUST built on the existing initiatives and institutions, and therefore endeavoured to address the existing constraints especially with regard to conflicts between the CLA leadership and the community members. Most of the activities designed for implementation were acceptable to the community, given that a participatory approach was utilized all the time, with only a few instances were resistance was met (boundary survey), but later resolved. In conclusion, it is noted that not until when the forest is gazetted and declared as a community forest, thus empowering the community, the forest will continue to face governance and management challenges. However, the different actors have exhibited complementary efforts and in due consideration of the REDD+ processes in the country, there is great potential for achievement of the REDD+ pilot activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is one of the outputs of the project "Man and forests – an evaluation of management strategies for reduced deforestation", led by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), Norway, in partnership with Makerere University, Uganda Sokoine University, of Agriculture, Tanzania, Fundação Amazonas Sustentável, Brazil, The Woods Hole Research Center, USA and the University of Oslo, Norway. The aim of the project is to evaluate different management strategies undertaken to obtain reduced deforestation in tropical forests and hence maintain the various ecosystem services delivered. One component of this project is aimed at characterizing the management regimes established in the REDD+ pilot area and how well the REDD+ regime is adapted to the local situation regarding institutional and ecological conditions. In this respect, the collaborative team from Makerere University undertook investigations on the above two focal areas. The investigation entailed discussions with the implementing agent the Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda (ECOTRUST), local council leaders, forest management committee members, Masindi district technical staff and community members.

The pilot project under investigation is a communally owned forest known as Ongo community forest, where ECOTRUST is in the process of implementing a REDD+ pilot project[1]. ECOTRUST is a not for profit environmental conservation organization with a valued niche in 'conservation finance'. It is committed to creating and maintaining effective mechanisms to support financing and programming in natural resources and biodiversity conservation.

The report is structured as follows: Section 2 presents an overview of forest management and REDD+ in Uganda; the following section covers the process of introduction REDD+ regime in the pilot site and elaborates the governance and governance structures in the pilot site before and after the introduction of REDD+. Section 4 is devoted to an analysis of how well the REDD+ regime is adapted to existing institutional and ecological conditions. The paper closes with a conclusion summarizing the findings.

[1] According to the implementing agent (Ecotrust), this is not a "REDD+" project in the international meaning of REDD+. But its implementation led to it being earmarked at the National level as a REDD+ -like project since it was the first of the kind, and in a unique forest tenure regime, a communal forest. The experiences from this pilot activity are to a great extent feeding into the National REDD+ Architecture

2. FOREST MANAGEMENT AND REDD+ IN UGANDA

2.1 Forest cover and governance structures in Uganda

According to National Biomass Study (2005), Uganda's natural forest vegetation is categorized into four broad types namely Plantations, Tropical High Forest (THF) well stocked, Tropical High Forest low stocked, and Woodlands. These forests were estimated to cover 3,604,176 ha, approximately 15% of Uganda land surface as of the year 2005.

According to the 2001 National Forestry Policy (MWLE, 2001), about 1.9 million hectares was included in the Permanent Forest Estate (PFE), which includes all Forest Reserve land and all forested areas in the National Parks and Wildlife Reserves (protected by government on behalf of all the citizens). The PFE represents about 9% of the total land area of Uganda. These areas are set aside permanently for the conservation of biodiversity, the protection of environmental services, and the sustainable production of domestic and commercial forest produce. Half of the PFE is made up of the gazetted Central and Local Forest Reserves, land that is held in trust and managed by the Forestry Department (now designated as National Forestry Authority-NFA) and Local Authorities. The other half includes the forested areas of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves, land held in trust and managed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

Of the total forest cover, 17% consist of Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) managed by the National Forestry Authority (NFA), 18% consists of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves (NPs & WRs) managed by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), 0.85% is jointly managed by NFA and UWA, and 0.03% are local forest reserves (LFRs) managed by respective LGs. The rest of the forests (64%) are on private and communal lands, and hence managed by private and local community forest owners (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Forests among Responsible Bodies

Forest Type	**NFA (CFRs)**	**UWA (NPs and WRs)**	**Local Governments (LFR)**	**Joint NFA & UWA**	**Private Land** ***(private and community forests)***	**Total**	***Proportion of Forest cover***
Plantations	18,954	2,482	354	-	11,737	33,527	*1%*
THF-Well stocked	246,860	249,192	123	23,468	81,312	600,955	*17%*
THF- Low Stocked	36,715	1,810	120		153,049	191,694	*5%*
Woodlands	325,422	389,664	614	7,279	2,055,019	2,777,998	*77%*
Total	627,951	643,148	1,211	30,747	2,301,117	**3,604,174**	
% of Forest cover	*17.4%*	*17.8%*	*0.03%*	*0.9%*	*63.8%*		

Source: NFA (2009)

According to the Forestry and Tree Planting Act (MWE, 2004), Central Forest Reserves are managed on behalf of the Ugandan citizens by NFA – a semi-autonomous central government statutory body. Local Forest Reserves are also managed on behalf of the Ugandan citizens by the local governments. Likewise, forests managed as national parks are held in trust by UWA. This form of management introduces the aspect of Trusteeship whereby government and these prescribed institutions act as trustees on behalf of Ugandans. Local communities under formal collaborative management arrangements or other binding arrangements gain have access and user rights in forest reserves. The 2001 National Forestry Policy (MWLE, 2001), the 2004 National Forestry and Tree Planting Act (MWE, 2004), and the 2002 Guidelines for Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) (MWLE, 2002) provide for development of ten-year co-management agreements between a Responsible Body (a government entity like NFA, UWA or other forest owner) and an organized community group. Forests on private land refer to all forests outside the government-protected areas including both private and community forests.

2.2 The state of forests in Uganda

In 1990, the area of natural forests and woodlands was estimated at 4.9 million hectares, representing 24% of the land area (NFP, 2002). However, as of 2005, this area had reduced to just over 3.6 million ha (NFA, 2009). Hence within a period of 15 years, the forest over had reduced by approx. 1.3 million ha, or a loss of 27% (Table 2).

Table 2: Trends in forest cover (1990-2005) for the forests under different management institutions

Forest Type	Forest Area in 1990 (ha)	Forest Area in 2005 (ha)	Loss in forest Area (ha)	% loss in Forest area
NFA (CFRs)	752,143	627,951	124,192	16.5%
UWA (NPs and WRs)	679,724	643,148	36,576	5.4%
Local Governments (LFR)	1,628	1,211	417	25.6%
Joint NFA & UWA	37,560	30,747	6,813	18.1%
Private Land	3,462,923	2,301,117	1,161,806	33.5%
Total	***4,933,978***	***3,604,174***	***1,329,804***	

Source: NFA (2009)

The above changes were estimated by considering Landsat images for 1900 and 2005, accompanied by some level of ground trothing. The highest loss of forest cover was registered in private forests, (a loss of about 33.5% over the 15 years). But even within the protected areas, there was a significant loss, being highest in CFRs (124,000 hectares), followed by the wildlife conservation areas and local forest reserves.

2.3 The introduction of REDD+ in Uganda

Uganda submitted REDD-Preparation Identification Note (R-PIN) to the World Bank/Forests Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF) in June 2008 which served as a formal request for Uganda's participation in the FCPF program. It provided an initial overview of land use patterns and causes of deforestation, stakeholder consultation process, and potential institutional arrangements in addressing REDD-Plus.

In 2009, a scoping exercise for REDD opportunities was undertaken by the Katoomba group to generate information on prospective projects for support by the Katoomba Ecosystem Services incubator. Beyond the identification of high potential project types for the incubator, the study analysed policy, legal and institutional gaps and opportunities and generated recommendations, for creating a conducive environment for the development of REDD projects in Uganda. Several sites were scored and ranked and the potential REDD project types were identified as Low stocked THF under CFM, Private Low stocked THFs, Low stocked THF under CFM by UWA, CFM in Woodland, Private Woodlands and The well-stocked THFs under NFA. In general, the study identified that a significant share of potential REDD projects in Uganda occurred in state-managed forests – mainly under UWA and NFA - with some mechanism of community participation.

On acceptance on this R-PIN in 2010, the country received a financial grant from FCPF through the World Bank to facilitate the preparation of the REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). Additional financial support was provided by the Norwegian Government specifically to facilitate country-wide stakeholder consultations and participation. Several local, national and international organizations provided in-kind support in form of information, time and resources to the R-PP formulation. In terms of administration and documentation, NFA established a 3 - person R-PP Secretariat under the leadership of the National REDD-Plus Focal Point. Several studies were commissioned and carried out by consultants contracted by the National Focal Point and provided information on: i) Land use, forest policies and governance issues *; (*ii) Options for the REDD - Plus Strategies; (iii) REDD -Plus implementation Framework ; (iv) Likely Social and Environmental Impacts (SESA),; and (v) Options for developing Reference Level; (vi) Systems to Measure, Verify and Report (MRV) the effect of REDD-Plus options on sustainable forest management in Uganda*; and (v*ii) Implications of evictions on REDD-Plus implementation in Uganda*.*
During this phase of implementing the R-PP, the focal point has sought funding from different sources including the Government of Uganda, FCPF, Australian Development Cooperation and UN-REDD. Further, the R-PP implementation manual was prepared and submitted to the World Bank for review, and the interim guidelines for implementation of demonstration and or sub-national activities related to REDD-plus have been prepared.

This is to guide preparation and implementation of REDD+ activities at sub-national and national levels. The summary for the process of introducing REDD+ in Uganda is presented in Figure 1.

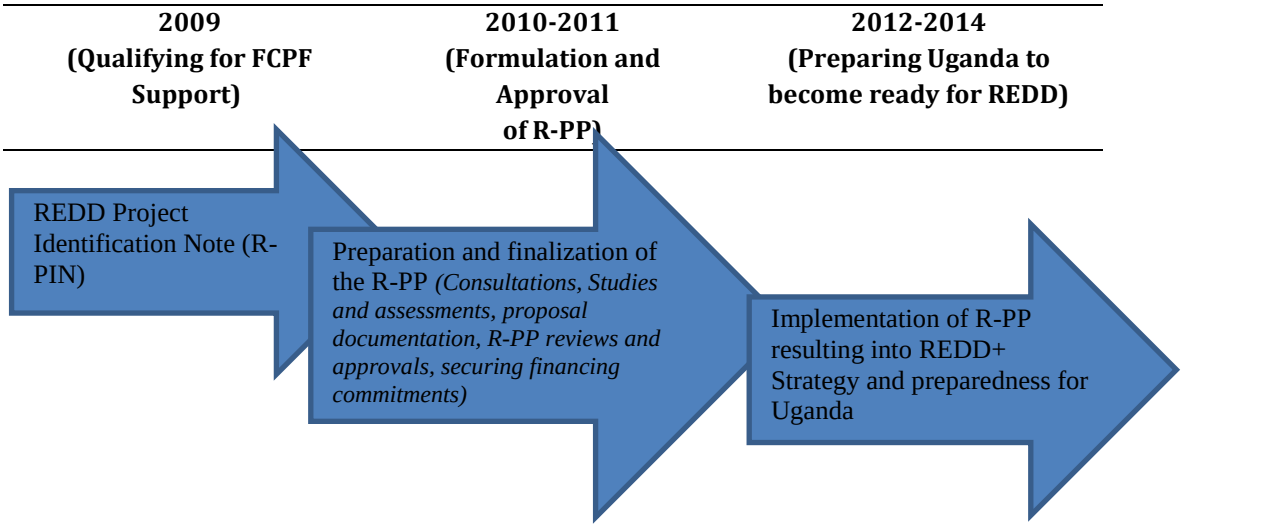


Figure 1: The Process of Introducing REDD-Plus in Uganda
Source: R-PP for Uganda (2012)

With regard to institutional mandates, the REDD-plus process is coordinated by the Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) under the Ministry of Water and Environment, which serves as the REDD Focal Point for Uganda. The coordinating unit collaborates with other government ministries and agencies (responsible for energy, agriculture, livestock, physical planning, land use planning, land administration, environmental management, wildlife, trade, development planning, economic management and local governments), Non-Government Organization (NGOs), Private sector, Academia, Cultural Institutions and Development partners, among others. The overall policy coordination and harmonization with regards to REDD-Plus is a responsibility of the National Policy Committee on Environment under the Office of the Prime Minister. The National Policy Committee on Environment is a legal organ established in 1995 under the National Environment Act of Cap 153 (MWLE, 1995). The Policy Committee provides a forum for coordinating and harmonizing policy issues pertaining to REDD-Plus due to its legality as well as its composition and mandate.

3. INTRODUCING REDD+ IN ONGO COMMUNITY

3.1. The State of Ongo Community forest

3.1.1. Ecological Condition of the Forest

The forest is located in Masindi district, in the south-western part of the country. The forest is located about 54 km from the town of Masindi off Masindi-Butiaba road, covering an approximate area of 180 ha. It is a primary tropical high forest with mosaics of savannah woodlands. About 40% of the forest area is regarded as well stocked, while the remaining parts are either degraded or bushland following previous agricultural encroachment (Figure 2). Ongo community forest is a stretching riverine forest, thus meandering to a great extent over a large area. In terms of drainage, the forest is tilted to drain from the East to the West into river Waki as characterized by the slope of the area. River Nyampunu originating from Budongo Central Forest Reserve is the main channel draining Ongo forest into River Waki. The forest has a network of several other smaller permanent and seasonal streams draining into river Nyampunu including Elio and Twanga among others.

With regard to the status of the forest, a quick assessment of the 2012 and 2015 Landsat images revealed that there has been loss of forest canopy in a mottled pattern resulting into a more open forest (Figure 2 and 3). This is indicative of loss of big trees leaving smaller ones, gaps and undergrowth, which was more evident in the western side of the forest in the villages of Ogadra and Kibali. Interactions with the key informants confirmed that indeed there have been scattered incidents of tree harvesting over this period. The current land cover is characterized by about 40% THF-well stocked, 21 % THF-low stocked, 12% degraded forest and about 27% cultivated.

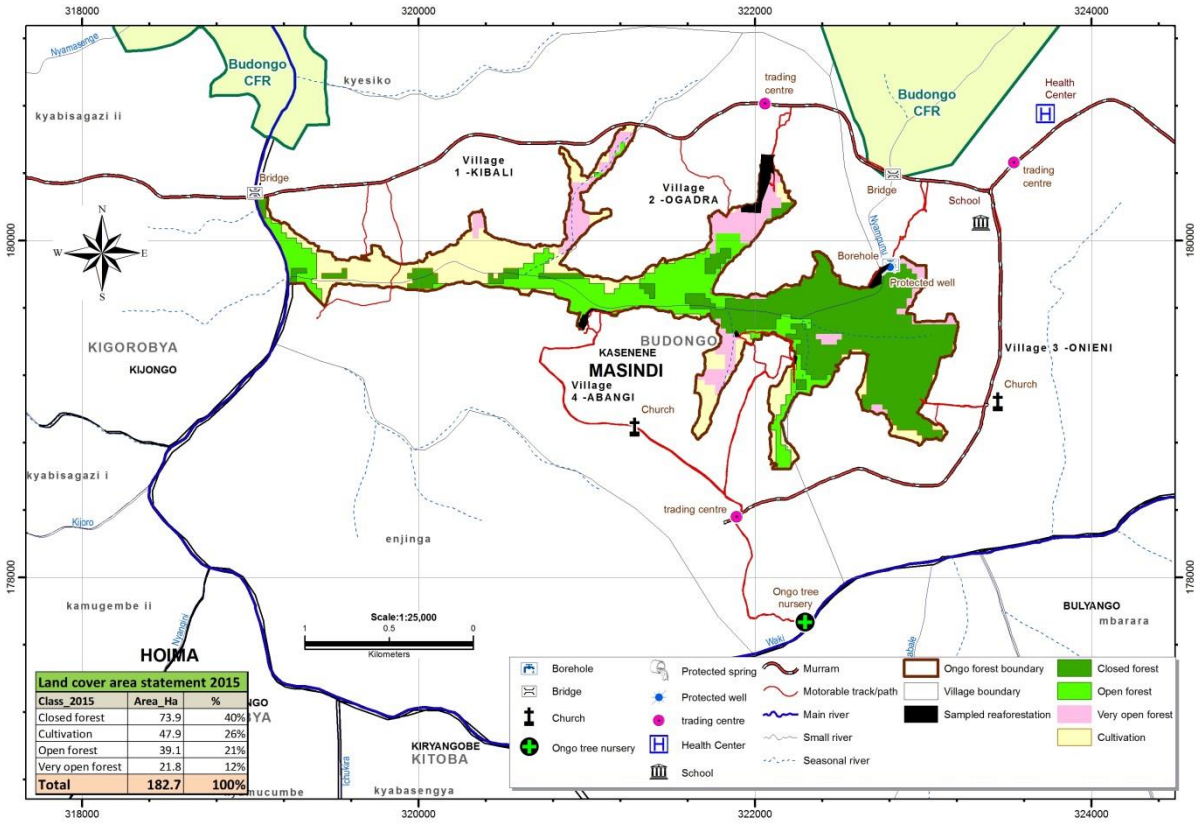


Figure 2: Vegetation Map of Ongo Forest and the Surrounding Villages
Source: *Landsat image for 2015*

Figure 3: Open Canopy in part of Ongo Forest
Source: *Photo taken by Justine Namaalwa, 2015.*

3.1.2. Forest Uses

Out of the six villages surrounding Ongo forest, four villages are regarded to closely interact (and to a great extent in coverage) border with the forest i.e. Abangi, Kibali, Ogadra and Onieni thus forming the Ongo forest community. Over time, the forest has been used mainly for extraction of poles (Figure 4) to be used in the construction of houses and tobacco barns, as well as extraction of firewood. Although extraction of these resources is supposed to be regulated by the Communal Land Association (CLA), there have been reports of illegal incidences especially with regard to harvesting of construction poles.

Figure 4: Poles extracted for construction
Source: Photos taken by Justine Namaalwa, 2015.

In other instances, the forest has continued to be cleared for cultivation, especially along the frontier. The forest boundary was surveyed and mark-stones installed in 2014. However, these mark stones are vulnerable to vices like shifts and removal, while in other cases, individuals have continued to encroach on the forest frontier despite the existence of mark-stones. The boundary mark-stones had either been shifted/removed in the areas where cultivation was taking place, while in some cases, the mark-stones were identified in the gardens, which was evidence of encroachment into the forest area (Figure 5). Nursery beds have continued to be established within the forest, especially in areas close to the water sources.

Figure 5: Agricultural encroachment along the forest frontier
Source: Photos taken by Edward Ssenyonjo, 2015.

On the other hand, given that Ongo is a riverine forest, a number of water access points for the communities exist in the forest, which include many dug up wells, a new protected

spring and a borehole. Thus the forest continues to serve as a water source for the communities.

3.2. Governance and governance structures in Ongo forest before the introduction of REDD+

3.2.1. Actors and Institutions

Prior to 2000, Ongo forest was regarded as public land (owned by the state) close to Budongo Central forest reserve (Block B6), managed by the Masindi District land board. However, the community was unclear about the access and use rights of such a resource. Both the district leaders and community members reported that there was conflict between the community and the forest department because local people were prohibited from harvesting timber from the forest and could only get non-timber products. On the other hand, outsiders were obtaining licenses from the forest department and harvesting indiscriminately using pit saws. In 2000, the community formally expressed interest to the district to take over the management of the forest. This was with the guidance and assistance of the District Forest Officer (DFO) and a local NGO, Budongo Forests Community Organisation (BUCODO). This interest by the communities was prompted by the provisions in the Land Act of 1998: Sect 15-23 (Government of Uganda, 1998), where communities can formally request for management of a forest formally on public land. The community is mandated to form a CLA[2] (registered CBO) clearly stating the managing committee and their roles and responsibilities and mechanisms for dispute resolution. The CLA is also expected to prepare a constitution and a common property management scheme, in this case, a forest management plan

In 2003, BUDOCO in collaboration with the communities undertook forest boundary demarcation and initiated the formation of a Community-Based Organisation (CBO), known as the Ongo Communal Land Association (CLA). This was to be comprised of members from the four villages surrounding the forest. Membership to the CLA is by subscription after payment of the membership and annual subscription fees. The CLA was formed (although informally since registration as a CBO had not been done) and an 8-member committee elected in 2003. The committee consists of the chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, publicity officer, and one representative each for disabled persons, the elderly, women and youth. The committee was the most important actor regarding day-to-day management of the forest prior to REDD and closely worked with the local NGOs and district staff for guidance and technical support. Further, BUCODO initiated the drafting of the constitution and forest management plan and some community members were

[2] A CLA is a legally recognised local arrangement (community-based organisation) which is independent of the political/governance structures in the community. It is often comprised of community members who would like to benefit from a communal resource, and are assigned roles and responsibilities. The individuals often subscribe to the organisation by paying a membership fee.

facilitated to visit other forest management initiatives in Rakai district. The community members were also sensitized about the current and future uses of the forest and the need to manage the forest sustainably.

In 2005, another NGO, the Community Development Conservation Agency (CODECA) joined the community efforts and continued to promote sustainable management of Ongo Forest and the finalization of the constitution and management plan for the forest. In 2007, ECOTRUST began implementing a Prime West/USAID project focusing on forest management, where CFM processes were to be piloted. In the process, communally owned forests including Ongo were identified and community-level associations further promoted. ECOTRUST followed up with the completion of the constitution and the forest management plan. During the process, the Trees for Global Benefit (TGB[3]) carbon project was introduced as a complementary to the activities of sustainable management of Ongo. Several farmers were enrolled and participated in the TGB project which involved planting of indigenous tree species on private land.

According to the 2007 Constitution of the Ongo CLA (Ongo, 2007a), the objectives of the association were stipulated as:

i. To ensure sustainable utilization of the land/forest products and services.
ii. To legalize the ownership of the forest to the community comprised of the 4 villages.
iii. To mobilize members of the association for networking with other relevant stakeholders in conservation and development.
iv. To improve the standards of living of the members through implementation of income generating activities such as bee keeping.
v. To protect the native tree species in the forest.
vi. To conserve the biodiversity for use by present and future generations.
vii. To provide income for the community through non-destructive utilization of the forest.
viii. To provide Environmental services such as protection of the water catchments.
ix. To increase the stocking and planting of more valuable and useful tree species by re-/afforesting the encroached areas.
x. To do anything else that is capable or conducive to the carrying out of the above and any other objective of the association.

Beyond the local communities, CODECA and Ecotrust, the other actors included district technical staff including the Natural Resource Officer (NRO), the environmental officer and the forest officer who overtime were consulted in the process. Political leaders including

[3] Trees for Global Benefit is a cooperative carbon offsetting scheme linking small scale landholder farmers in Uganda to the voluntary carbon market, combining carbon sequestration with rural livelihood improvements through small-scale, farmer-led, agroforestry projects while reducing pressure on natural resources in National Parks and forest reserves

Chief administrative officer (CAO), the resident district commissioner (RDC) and other local leaders were consulted especially during conflict resolution/management.

3.2.2 The regime for the policy making process

According to the provisions of the 1998 Land Act (Government of Uganda, 1998), the CLA is expected to prepare a constitution and a common property management scheme, in this case, a forest management plan. In this regard, the CLA was assisted over time by different players including BUDOCO, CODECA, ECOTRUST and the district staff to develop these documents. The first versions of the Constitution (Ongo, 2007a) and Forest Management Plan (Ongo 2007b) were approved at a general meeting in 2007. According to the constitution, the CLA committee was responsible for offering permits of access for non-timber products such as charcoal, poles and sand to the community and distributing revenue from the permits among the 4 villages. The committee also had to oversee tree planting in the forest and on boundaries, guided meetings and resolved conflicts. In addition, by-laws to guide access to resources were drafted by the CLA committee and approved during the same general meeting in 2007. The rules included; the requirement to obtain written permission with a fee before accessing non-timber products such as sand and poles; women can only gather firewood and vegetables on Wednesday and Saturday; timber harvesting, bush burning, hunting and raising tobacco beds in the forest is prohibited and offenders were to be fined or tried in court. The entire community- including non-CLA members- had rights of access to non-timber products from the forest including vegetables and fibers.

The CLA committee enforced the rules through forest patrols and fining of offenders. In some instances, cases of some offenders were discussed during committee meetings, which were usually attended by elders and local council I (LCI) leaders as well. Minor offences were resolved at the committee meetings or sometimes be taken up by LCI and III (the political leadership for the village and municipal levels respectively). Offences regarded as major were forwarded for further consideration by the DFO in collaboration with the environmental police. However, resolving these cases was always a challenge given that the CLA was an informal arrangement and with no legally defined powers over the forest.

3.3. The changes in governance and governance structures following REDD+

3.3.1. The aim of the REDD+ pilot

In 2010, ECOTRUST initiated the idea of implementing a REDD+ project for Ongo community forest, which necessitated preparation of a Project Design Document (PDD) and identifying a potential funder. The document was prepared through several consultative meetings and later a contract was negotiated with Myclimate, who was the potential funder. Myclimate is a climate protection partnership categorised as a not for profit

international initiative with Swiss origin. Science-based and market-oriented, Myclimate offers a comprehensive package of services for offsetting in accordance with the principles of "avoid – reduce – offset" and "do the best and offset the rest". To implement climate protection measures as effectively and efficiently as possible, Myclimate has established an international network of project partners and representatives who act on behalf of Myclimate in their countries. In this case, ECOTRUST is the project partner expected to implement project activities in Ongo community forest.

The funding for Ongo activities secured in 2012 was termed as Forestry under a project name "Trees for Global Benefits in Uganda". The project sought to reduce emissions from deforestation and improved forest protection through the implementation of community-based forest management plans. The project expected to improve forest protection through reduced threats of fire and illegal activities, support forest rehabilitation through enrichment planting of heavily degraded areas and supporting alternative livelihood activities such as the development of non-destructive forest-based enterprises and capacity building for ecotourism, apiary and crafts through the establishment of a micro-loan system. Further, the project aimed at supporting alternative sources of fuelwood to reduce pressure on the natural forests through the establishment of woodlots/agroforestry systems on private lands.

The Project Design Document (PDD) was developed and the project is following the Plan Vivo standards for monitoring carbon credits. In the process, emission reductions are expected with co-benefits including, income generation, livelihood improvement, biological corridor protection, water conservation and river protection. Currently, Ecotrust achieved 3rd party validation and is in the process of finalizing the technical specifications for the project.

3.3.2. Changes in actor structures

The new management regime followed the existing actor structures and only strengthened the legal status of the CLA. CODECA although relatively silent, remained a core actor especially with regards to consultations on forest management and tree planting activities. In 2011, Makerere University research team on the project theme: "Poverty and Sustainable Development Impacts of REDD+ Architecture: Options for equity, growth and the environment', led by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) joined the list of actors. This team participated in community-level awareness and consultative sessions, undertaking the socio-economic baseline study for the pilot (Nabanoga et al., 2012) and later guided the process of choosing preferred payment formats (Namaalwa and Nabanoga, 2013).

In January 2012, ECOTRUST on behalf of the community, filed two applications to the district. One of the applications was to register and recognize the informal CLA as a CBO, and the second application was to grant the association a freehold title for the forest area. In May 2012, the Masindi district local government granted them a certificate of registration for the CBO under the name "Ongo Community Land Association" to be involved in forest conservation, tree planting, bee keeping and animal husbandry (Figure 6).

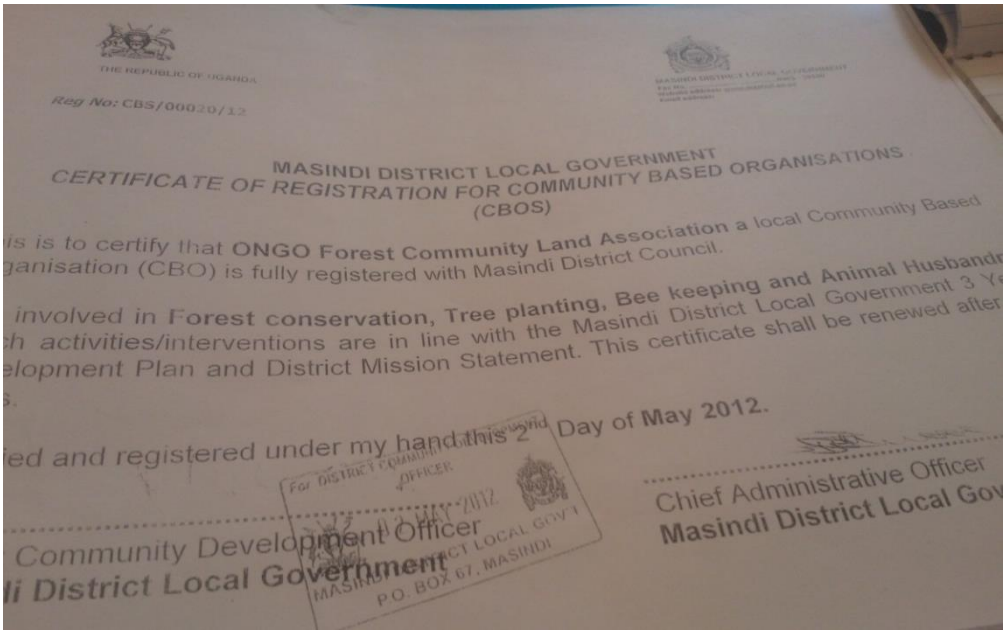
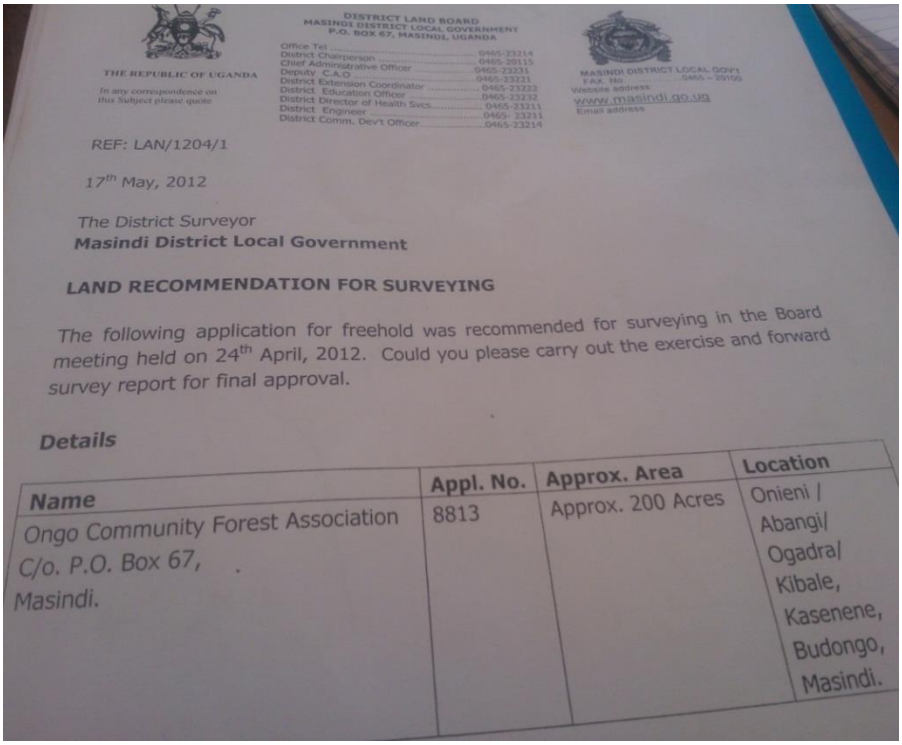


Figure 6: The Certificate of Registration for Ongo Communal Land Association

3.3.3. Changes in the Institutions

3.3.3.1 The Resource Regime: Securing the Resource Tenure

In January 2012, ECOTRUST on behalf of Ongo CLA filed an application to Masindi district for a freehold title for Ongo forest. In May 2012, the district land board recommended for the survey of the forest land (Figure 7), to be undertaken by the district surveyor. The surveyor was expected to undertake a boundary re-opening exercise and prepare a deed plan to facilitate processing the freehold title, as the ownership document for the community.



DISTRICT LAND BOARD
MASINDI DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT
P.O. BOX 67, MASINDI, UGANDA

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

In any correspondence on this Subject please quote

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REF: LAN/1204/1

17th May, 2012

The District Surveyor
Masindi District Local Government

LAND RECOMMENDATION FOR SURVEYING

The following application for freehold was recommended for surveying in the Board meeting held on 24th April, 2012. Could you please carry out the exercise and forward survey report for final approval.

Details

Name	Appl. No.	Approx. Area	Location
Ongo Community Forest Association C/o. P.O. Box 67, Masindi.	8813	Approx. 200 Acres	Onieni / Abangi/ Ogadra/ Kibale, Kasenene, Budongo, Masindi.

Figure 7: Recommendation for the Survey of Ongo Community Forest

The process of surveying commenced in 2013 but was marred in heavy conflict especially from people owning land adjacent to the forest, who complained that part of their plots had been gazzeted as forestland. Most people affected were residents of Kibali and Ogadra villages. Surveying stalled due to this conflict as the CLA leaders were threatened. Complainants also wrote letters of discontent to the LC III leadership. To resolve this conflict, dispute resolution meetings were convened, in which different actors were present including a representative of the CAO, the district forest officer, the environmental police and the claimants. It was explained to the communities that the surveyor was re-opening the forest boundary based on the forest map that was developed after the first boundary marking in 2003. And this implied that whoever was within this boundary was encroaching on forest land. It was resolved that those who were complaining had encroached on the forestland and they were ordered to leave the forest and the survey process continued until completion in early 2014. The surveyor completed his task and forwarded a deed plan to the District land board, which granted an approval letter as the pre-requisite for granting the land title in the names of "Ongo Community Forest".

In the meantime, the district officials have emphasized that while the process of securing the land title has not been completed, Ongo CLA is a recognized entity in charge of managing the forest (Text Box 1)

Text Box 1: Clarification by the District Forestry Officer

Every forest category has a responsible body and no individual should assume ownership of any part of the forest without due consideration of the responsible body. The community forest under consideration is officially managed by the CLA which is a registered CBO. The constitution that was drafted and signed is a binding document and all powers were entrusted in the committee. In the past, the committee was failing to enforce the provisions in the management plan and draft constitution since they were never recognized as a legal entity. Every time an encroacher was arrested and taken to the nearest police station, they were often asked the same question "*what shows that you are the owners of this land and therefore have a right to arrest people as trespassers or illegal users*?" From now on, the committee has the powers to apprehend all the law breakers.

3.3.3.2 Reviewing of the Constitution and Forest Management Plan

Ever since the CLA was formed in 2007, meetings organized by the committee were quite irregular. However, the activity guided by the team from Makerere University focusing on local preferences for payment formats enhanced the community's awareness about the operationalization of REDD+ and most especially the roles, responsibilities and expected benefits (Namaalwa and Nabanoga, 2013). After this exercise, more community members enrolled into the CLA. In addition, the CLA committee realized that there was a need to review the constitution as well as the management plan to accommodate some of the matters arising as a result of the preparatory meetings for the pilot activities. As a result, an annual general meeting of the CLA was convened in June 2013 during which, the chairperson communicated the status of the association in terms of membership, expected activities as well as cash flows (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Consultative meeting to review the Constitution
Source: Photo taken by Gorettie Nabanoga, 2015.

In addition, the constitutional amendments as previously considered by the committee members were presented for the community to further discuss and come to an agreement. Some of the matters of concern included:

a) Allowing for regulated harvesting of forest products to be included among tthe proposed uses of the land (Article 9) Formally, the uses had only included enrichment planting, bee keeping, papyrus growing in the wetland and any other purposes agreed upon in the AGM
b) Amending the by-laws to allow for apprehending and punishing illegal forest users. This had been missing in the constitution.
c) Enhancing transparency and accountability: There was a proposition in the constitutional amendment that access to the institutional funds (in the bank) be changed from 3 signatories to at least any 2 of the listed signatories. The committee members reported that quite often it may not be easy to have all the 3 signatories available. The meeting however rejected the amendment and stated that it should remain as earlier stated in the constitution. There was however, an exception clause included; "In case one of the signatories is absent due to illness or any other reason, any two of the signatories may access the funds with a minute extract from the executive meeting".
d) The leadership period: One of the members highlighted that the constitution clearly specified re-election of leaders after every 4 years and yet the existing committee had served since 2007. The committee members clarified that they had over stayed in power due to the fact that all the previous years 2007 to 2012 had been mainly used for setting up the association legally including drafting the constitution, the forest management plan as well as processing the acquisition of the certificate of incorporation and the land title. When all is done, the constitution would then be fully operationalized.
e) Making provisions to improve engagement of other stakeholders. The roles of district officials such as the DFO, environment Officer, Environmental Protection Unit had not been included. This was important to clearly show partnership and make the management and protection activities of the CLA such as sanctioning of offenders stronger.

In addition to the above mentioned constitutional amendments (Ongo 2013), the newly enrolled CLA members were keen to know the expected benefits from the CLA both in the short and long term. It was clarified by ECOTRUST that the CLA members are now more likely to benefit from the TGB programme as compared to the non-members.

3.3.3.3 Enforcement of Rules and Regulations

Following the formalization of the CLA, the powers to enforce rules and regulations about access to and use of the forest were enshrined in the CLA committee. The committee has been empowered and motivated in the patrol activities as well as arresting encroachers with the support of public actors such as the environmental police. In one of instances, a law enforcement meeting was held which was prompted by a letter written by the CLA committee to the District officials seeking for support in halting illegal activities. Officials in attendance included the District Forest officer, District Environment officer and the Assistant Inspector of Police-Officer in Charge (OC) of Environmental Protection Unit. The heavily encroached sites by cultivators were visited and culprits at the scenes were arrested and some of them (persistent culprits) were charged in the courts of law (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Encroachers arrested and a consultative meeting in session
Source: Photo taken by Owen Sseremba, 2015.

During this meeting, the Officer in Charge (OC) of the Environmental protection unit of Masindi District emphasized the level of empowerment given the CLA committee and committed to support all aspects of law enforcement (Text Box 2).

Text box 2: CLA committee is empowered enforce rules and regulations

Now that the CLA is legally recognized as a CBO and a constitution and management plan governing the use Ongo forest are in existence, they are then obliged to participate in the enforcement exercise. The OC further mentioned that they had received a letter of complaint from the CLA committee with names of the people who were continuously cultivating in the forest. The culprits arrested at the scene were to be taken to Masindi Police station to record statements from them and prepare charge sheets as they were to appear before court.

Several consultative meetings were held in the community addressing the rampant illegal activities which were taking place in the forest. These meetings were prompted by the letter written by the CLA committee to the District officials seeking for support in halting these illegal activities. Officials in attendance included the District Forest officer, District

Environment officer and the Assistant Inspector of Police-Officer in Charge (OC) of Environmental Protection Unit. The heavily encroached sites by cultivators were visited and culprits at the scenes were arrested. These were then brought to the community meeting (Figure 9).

3.4 Restoration Activities

Following the boundary survey and demarcation by the district forest surveyor in 2014, live markers of *Ficus natalensis* were planted by the community members. While in some instances these live markers have survived and continued to grow, in the majority of cases the survival was either poor (mainly due to lack of maintenance e.g. spot weeding) or the planted cuttings were nonexistent. The latter was partially attributed to removal by the individuals interested in continued encroachment on the forest frontier.

With financial support from ECOTRUST, the community members embarked on a forest restoration programme in March 2014, which started with establishing a nursery bed for indigenous tree species mainly *Terminalia* spp and *Maesopsis emnii*. The restoration process started with replanting the degraded parts of the forest frontier. The strategy is to first restore the forest boundary and then embark on the degraded patches within the forest. The performance of the planted seedlings was varying for the different areas (patches bordering different patches) and species. For the species, Terminalia was generally performing better than Measopsis, which was also reported to be the case for the tree planting projects on private land under the Trees for Global Benefit Carbon project. On the other hand, higher survival rates were reported for the patches bordering Abangi village as compared to the other villages. For one of the areas in Kibali (an area formerly planted with tobacco) all the 600 and 500 seedlings of *Terminalia spp* and *Maesopsis spp* respectively that were planted had not survived. This may have been caused by former encroachers of the land. By up-rooting planted seedlings, an opportunity to cultivate more tobacco in the next seasons was created.

4. ADAPTATION OF THE REDD+ REGIME TO INSTITUTIONAL AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Adaptation to Institutional Conditions

It is of interest to investigate what thoughts ECOTRUST have regarding what changes were necessary to make REDD+ work according to the goals – that is, unveiling the intention of ECOTRUST as the implementing agent and the implications of the management regime. Some of the aspects included: (i) how well the REDD+ program was adapted to the

opportunities and constraints that prevailed; (ii) challenges encountered by the establishment of the REDD+ regime including nature and level of conflicts and how these conflicts were managed; (iii) how acceptable these changes were to the community and how they affected people's access to resources; and (iv) if the implementing agent made any mistakes (according to the target community) and how particular aspects could have been done better.

4.1.1 Adapting the REDD+ regime to existing opportunities and challenges

Before the establishment of the REDD+ regime, several opportunities existed which included the activities initiated by CODECA as we have already seen had engaged with the community prior to the REDD+ initiative. CODECA had engaged in activities such as surveying the forest boundary, formation of the communal land association, and drafting of a constitution and a forest management plan, including establishment of rules for forest access and use. The other activities included sensitizing communities about forest conservation, formation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), provision of tree seedlings to plant on private land, boundary mapping of the forestland, patrolling of the forest, training the communities in nursery bed establishment and provision of improved seed for agricultural crops such as sorghum. On the establishment of the new regime, ECOTRUST built on the existing structure of institutions/organizations; mainly the CLA and ongoing activities.

With regard to challenges, the community was struggling to secure tenure for the forest since it was regarded as a forest on public land under the jurisdiction of the District. The lack of ownership by the community had overtime been the main reason for failure to implement bylaws that were stipulated in the forest management plan. On establishment of the REDD+ regime, ECOTRUST embarked on securing the tenure which was initiated by a forest boundary re-opening in 2014 and installing boundary mark stones.

Other challenges related to the perceived reduction in private agricultural land following the boundary re-opening process. That is, for those individuals that had encroached on the forest area, the process of boundary marking was reported as source of conflict in the community. Further, some of the community members reported that the provision of crop seeds (maize and millet) under the government agricultural development programs led to clearing of the forest to create more land for cultivation. On establishment of the REDD+ regime, ECOTRUST embarked on sensitization about the importance and process of boundary survey and marking before the activity was implemented (in a participatory manner) in 2014. During its implementation, each village was requested to set up a 5-person committee to work with the surveyor at the time the activities were implemented in their village.

4.1.2 Challenges encountered during the establishment of the REDD+ regime

4.1.2.1 Conflicting forest boundaries between Masindi and Hoima Districts

Although secure land tenure is a pre-requisite for the operationalization of REDD+ initiatives, it does not seem to come easy in some situations. After the approval of the community's request to acquire a freehold title, the forest map developed in 2003 was retrieved. It was observed that a small arm of the forestland was stretching into Hoima district. ECOTRUST was then advised to consult with the authorities and seemingly relevant communities in Hoima district. This was because there is no legal provision for one district authority to legalize ownership of cross-border resources. Consultations with the communities and Hoima district authorities was undertaken and the seemingly affected communities indicated that Ongo forest was only found in Masindi and R. Waki was the natural boundary marker between the 2 districts. The Masindi District land board resolved that only the part falling in their jurisdiction will be surveyed and documented as the forest part belonging to Ongo CLA. In June 2013, ECOTRUST commissioned the district surveyor to commence with the survey activities.

4.1.2.2 Conflicts during the Forest Boundary Re-opening

Following the resolution by the Masindi land board to have only the part of the forest (almost 90%) lying in Masindi district to be surveyed, ECOTRUST made payments to have the district land surveyor undertake the activities. To start off the activities, the Chairpersons for the different villages were informed about the process, however, the chairperson for one of the villages (Kibali) was off station at this time. The boundary re-opening exercise started in Kibali village and the survey team comprised of the district surveyor and community representatives[4] including CLA chairperson, Vice Chairperson, the Treasurer and 3 local community members who participated in slashing the boundary. At the beginning of the exercise, the surveyor introduced himself to the Kibali village chair person and he was requested to be part of the team. The chairperson declined claiming he was not aware of the exercise and instead one of executive members joined the team.

On declining to join the survey team, the Chairperson and a few individuals (2 other persons[5]) mobilised other community members against the exercise, informing them that the survey process was aiming at grabbing people's land. It was reported that gardens along the forest frontier, or just neighbouring the forest boundary were heavily destroyed. The village chairperson later alleged that this destruction was intended so that private land could be included/marked as part of the forest area. Further, the people in Kibali village were informed that ECOSTRUST was in the process of surveying the forestland such that they could sell it to the "Bazungu" [6] at a price of 50 Million shillings (US $ 20,000). In

[4] The people who were selected from each village to participate in the processes were remunerated. However, all people with land neighbouring the forest were obliged to be on scene at the time the survey team was within proximity

[5] One of the individuals regards himself the Lawyer of the disadvantaged/oppressed people in the community and could easily liaise with top government officials for help

[6] Local statement for foreign investors specifically the white people.

addition, a radio announcement was made by the village chairperson stating that "As Kibali village we understand and appreciate ECOTRUST's work and we need the trees but our worry is that we may lose our land in the ongoing survey. So we request anyone to help us" *Kibali Village chairperson.* There were also a few other complaints (Text Box 3).

Text Box 3: A complaint about land grabbing by a community member

One member from Kibali village had purchased his piece of land in 2000 before the forest boundary establishment in 2003. This land was partially within the forest area. He mentioned that during the exercise of boundary re-opening, part of this land was being included within the forest boundary. And it is on this basis that he had organised other community members against the activity of boundary re-opening. However, further investigations into the matter by the district officials revealed that he had unlawfully purchased part of the forestland and should stop inciting the community about obstructing developmental initiatives that are to stem from proper management of Ongo forest.

Due to these types of complaints, the district authorities halted the process of boundary re-opening and the DFO requested ECOTRUST to further consult with the affected communities/members. A meeting was convened in the affected village to further clarify with the people about the survey process. The meeting was convened, however it was disrupted by one community member who informed the people in the meeting that the CLA committee members were to be put in jail because they were selling people's land. He further mentioned that "although ECOTRUST had told us that the land was to be surveyed in order to acquire a free hold, ECOTRUST has no authority to grant us any land title not even a leasehold. It is a strategy for the CLA committee members to connive with ECOTRUST and the "*Bazungu*" to grab the forest land". The meeting aborted and the LC 1 chairpersons were advised to further consult with the communities and explain the purpose of the boundary re-opening exercise. It was also reported that the local community members who had joined the survey team and participated in the boundary slashing were attacked and beaten by unknown persons who claimed they were punishing them for conniving with the land grabbers. The district personnel were informed about the state of events and another consultative meeting for all the 4 villages was organised. After several consultative meetings, the matter was resolved, the boundary survey process was completed and ECOTRUST is still in the process of securing the land title.

4.1.2.3. Management of funds from forest management activities

Since the inception of the CLA, the community has been managing the income generated from the forest activities and annual subscriptions in an informal manner known as village bank. This entailed keeping the money in a "safe box" which is locked with a padlock and 3 executive members had copies of the key to the padlock. When expenditures are approved by the committee, then the safe box is opened in the presence of at least 3 CLA executive

members in order to access the funds. In Oct 2012, ECOTRUST advised the CLA to open up a bank account in Centenary Bank, which process was initiated in January 2013. However, not much progress has been achieved given the bureaucracies involved, distant location of the bank and lack of facilitation for the committee members to follow the process.

4.2. Adaptation to Ecological Conditions

In order to understand the level of adaptation of the REDD+ regime to the ecological conditions, some key variables were considered including topography, the species composition, soil type and distance (accessibility). These were identified in order to give an indication of the level and nature of pressures as well as being able to identify any specific resource dynamics that may be challenging from a governance perspective

Topography: The highest altitudinal point for Ongo forest is about 1,089m asl located to the East of the forest in Onieni village while the lowest is 1,007m asl at river Waki to the West of the forest in Kibali village. The slope in Ongo forest is generally gentle ranging from flat to gentle slopes ($0\text{-}20^0$). However, steeper slopes not exceeding 30^0 do occur sporadically especially in in the Eastern parts of the forest in Onieni, Ogadra and Abangi villages. The forest is a riverine forest characterized by a drainage into R. Waki, with smaller permanent and seasonal streams draining into R. Nyampunu including Elio, Twanga among others.

Species: Based on the perspective of the resource users, Ongo forest is to a great extent characterised by few and scattered large diameter timber trees such as *Cynometra Alexandrii* (locally known as "*Nyakaimbi*") and *Pseudospondia macrocarpa*. The existence of these species characterise the mottled forest canopy of the forest. The communities reported that these trees are characterised by hard wood which in the past harvested for timber especially by commercial loggers. Due to their big diameters and toughness of the wood, the local people are unable to harvest these trees for timber. The other trees in the forest are often harvested for construction poles (without any specific preference over species), while charcoal production is very limited in extent. The forest is also to some extent characterised by *Alstonia bonei* which is one of the major sources of food for Baboons, and thus vermin was reported as a growing problem for the individuals with farmlands bordering the forest.

Soil Type: The evidence of increasing clearing of the forest frontier for cultivation is evident that the forest soils are more fertile and thus there is a high potential for agricultural encroachment. The past incidences of tobacco cultivation in the forest are evidence of fertile soils given that tobacco is often preferred in fertile soils to minimize on the use of fertilisers to get a high yield.

Distance: Given the location of the forest, being bordered by 4 villages, the forest is greatly accessible by almost 50% of the communities in the surrounding villages. However, the greater extent of the forest boundary is bordered by Abangi village which is the least developed of all the 4 villages given its distant location from social services including schools and health centre. The people in this village were reported to own relatively large pieces of private land for agricultural activities, and thus agricultural encroachment on this side of the forest was low. On the other hand, Onieni, Ogadra and Kibali villages are more peri-urban in nature with better access to markets and other social services. The motivation for cultivation is higher and thus more agricultural encroachment and tobacco nurseries reported on the parts of the forest neighbouring these communities. Further, the extraction of poles for construction of tobacco is therefore more prevalent in Onieni, Ogadra and Kibali.

Given the topography and accessibility of the forest, coupled with the existing fertile forest soils, the REDD+ governance regime may continue to incur high enforcement costs (in terms of time and other resources). Possible adjustments to counter this would be to form village-level task forces (from the CLA members) each of which is tasked to control illegal activities on the forest patches neighbouring their village.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This report aimed at characterizing the management regimes established in the REDD+ pilot area and how well the REDD+ regime adapted to the local situation regarding institutional and ecological conditions. In this respect, the following conclusions can be made;

1. The state of Ongo forest: Ongo is a THF-low stock forest under the governance of community members, from the 4 villages surrounding the forest. As generally indicated for forests owned by private individuals and communities, the forest has continued to face deforestation and degradation. The main drivers identified including agricultural encroachment and harvesting of poles.
2. Governance and Governance structures over time:
    a. There were several organizations and institutions established prior the REDD+ regime. The actors included the District, Ongo Community, BUCODO, CODECA and Ecotrust. Until 2010, the forest was designated as public land under the governance of Masindi district. The community was organized into an association or a CBO in the process of registering them to earn legal recognition from the Government, before entrusting them with the management of the forest. Further, several forest management activities were initiated. However, given that the CLA had not been legally recognized, despite the existence of a constitution and forest management plan, law enforcement remained a challenge. The question often put forward by illegal operators was "*what shows that you are the owners of this land/forest and therefore have a right to arrest people as trespassers or illegal users*?"
    b. The initiation of a REDD-like project by Ecotrust in 2010 came in with some positives as well as negatives (experienced and anticipated). However it is important to note that Ecotrust built on the existing initiatives and institutions, also given that it had participated in the earlier initiatives.
        i. Some of the key achievements were: the formal registration of Ongo CLA; initiating the process of acquiring a land title, and forest boundary survey and mapping (clarifying tenure security/"owner-ship"); more community sensitization and awareness about carbon trading and the need for forest conservation; review of the constitution and the forest management plan to fit the current conditions; and community training about benefit sharing.
        ii. Some of the challenges encountered included: the bureaucratic process of acquiring the land ownership document which has to a great extent delayed the process of implementation; allegations of land grabbing by Ecotrust and "bazungu" (My Climate) by some of the

community members, which disrupted several awareness and sensitization sessions; resistance during the boundary survey process and demands for compensation by those individuals who had cultivated along the forest boundary; and the continued illegal activities especially harvesting of poles and cultivating along the forest frontier

The variations in actors, institutions, roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders are summarized to highlight some explicit differences before and after the establishment of the REDD+ regime.

Attribute	**Before the REDD+ Regime**	**During the REDD+ Regime**
Forest tenure regime	• Forest on Public land, managed by Masindi District Land Board • Attempts by community to take over management of the resource as a community forest	Process ongoing for gazettement of the forest as a community forest
Actors and Institutions	Communities (in the villages of Abangi, Ogadra, Onieni and Kibali), the CLA (informally recognized), BUCODO, CODECA, ECOTRUST, District Forest Office	Communities (in the villages of Abangi, Ogadra, Onieni and Kibali), the CLA (formally recognized as a CBO), CODECA, ECOTRUST, District Forest Office, District lands office, Masindi District Environment Protection Unit, District Political leaders
Rules	• Constitution for Ongo CLA (2007) • Ongo Community Forest Management plan (2007) • Bye-laws drafted in 2007	Constitution for Ongo CLA, 2007 as amended 2013 Revised forest Management Plan *(in the process)*
Roles of the Different Actors		
1. BUCODO	• Sensitizing communities about sustainable forest management in 2000 • Assisted the Ongo Community to file the initial application to take over the management of the forest in 2003 • Forest Boundary Demarcation in 2003 • Initiated the formation of the CLA in 2003	
2. Ongo CLA	• Enforce rules and regulations. Although often challenged by the lack of legal authority over the forest resource • The CLA and the committee members were existing in an informal manner	• Amended the Constitution in 2013 • Revised the Forest Management Plan in 2013 • The powers to enforce rules and regulations about access to and use of the forest were enshrined in the CLA committee • The CLA has the legal powers to enforce the rules and regulations
3. CODECA	• Continued sensitization about sustainable forest management in 2005 • Initiated some income generating activities such as Apiary • Continued drafting of the Constitution and Forest	• Provides technical support for forest restoration activities

	Management Plan	
4. ECOTRUST	• Promoted Sustainable utilization of natural forests in 2007 • Introduced the Trees for Global Benefit Carbon scheme in 2007 • Assisted the communities to finalise the constitution and forest management plan • Continued sensitization about sustainable forest management	• Assisted the community to have the CLA registered as a CBO in 2012 • Funded the re-opening of the forest boundary in 2012, as a pre-requisite for processing a land title for the community • Provided a seed fund for the establishment of a community nursery which provides seedlings for forest restoration • Continued sensitization about sustainable forest management
Makerere University		• Undertook a socio-economic baseline survey in 2012 • Guided the process of choosing preferred payment formats in 2013 • Participates in forest restoration activities by providing technical support
District Technical staff		• Roles and responsibilities clearly stipulated in the amended constitution e.g. Provide technical support and guidance, mediation and dispute resolution
District Environment Protection Unit,		• Roles and responsibilities clearly stipulated in the amended constitution e.g. support law enforcement, mediation and dispute resolution • Participated in Forest Patrols and arresting encroachers

3. Adaptability of the management regime:
   - **a.** With regard to adaptability to the ecological conditions, the forest characteristics including topography, species composition, soil characteristics and accessibility make it very vulnerable to access and resource use pressures which are likely to pose challenges from the governance perspective. This was evident from the reported /or witnessed uses of the forest which included extraction of construction poles and clearing for cultivation. Further, the location of the forest makes it very open and accessible by any community member from the 4 villages.
   - **b.** With regard to adaptability to the institutional conditions, Ecotrust built on the existing initiatives and institutions, and therefore endeavored to address the existing constraints especially with regard to conflicts between the CLA leadership and the community members. Most of the activities designed for implementation were acceptable to the community, given that a participatory approach was utilized all the time, with only a few instances were resistance was met (boundary survey), but later resolved. There are some instances where the community feels that the design and/or implementation process could have been done differently, including the number of people from each

village that participated in the boundary survey process and biophysical assessments, the nature and level of support given to the Community tree nursery activities; and the restriction (within the management) on the number of days for which firewood is to be collected in the forest.

Generally, the governance and governance structures in the pilot area have evolved over time with varying and/or increasing actors with complementary efforts**.** Further, the REDD+ regime has to some extent adapted well to the local situation regarding institutional and ecological conditions.

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