

THE UGANDA INVESTING IN FORESTS AND PROTECTED AREAS FOR CLIMATE-SMART DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(P170466)



INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT REPORT

ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT PROCESSES OF DISTRICTS,
REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES

JULY 2022

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ACRONYMS

AWMZ	Albert Water Management Zone.
BIC	Bank Information Center.
BiVA	BioVision Africa.
CFM	Collaborative Forest Management.
CFMG	Collaborative Forest Management Group.
CRM	Collaborative Resource management.
CSO	Civil Society Organization.
DFID	Department for International Development.
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo.
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard.
GoU	Government of Uganda.
IDA	International Development Association.
IEC	Information Education and Communication.
IFPA-CD	Investing in Forest and Protected Areas for Climate Smart Development Project.
IMF	International Monetary Fund.
MTWA	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities.
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment.
NFA	National Forestry Authority.
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations.
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus the Sustainable Management of Forests, and the Conservation and enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks.
SEF	Stakeholder Engagement Framework.
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
US	United States.
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority.

Executive Summary

In April 2020 the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved total financing of US\$148.2 million, to enable the Government of Uganda (GoU) to improve sustainable management of forests and protected areas and increase benefits to forest-dependent communities, including refugees and their host communities (IFPA-CD). The Project was approved by the Ugandan Parliament on April 28, 2021, and formally launched on March 9, 2022. The GoU is co-financing the project, which focuses on the Albertine Region and the refugee-hosting areas in Northern Uganda, with US \$30 million.

In October 2021, Bio Vision Africa agreed with the Bank Information Center (BIC) to: a) conduct thorough reviews and analysis of project documents to identify environmental risks and benefits to forest communities; b) assess and quantify benefits or harms arising from the environmental risk factors identified; c) identify existing gaps around community and civil society engagement that need to be addressed; d) establish direct engagement with Ministry of Water and Environment and other key stakeholders on how the project is being implemented and e) provide a final report on the key findings.

Bio Vision Africa carried out an independent monitoring activity in Rubanda, Kabale, and Ntungamo in the South Western, Hoima and Kikuube districts in the Mid-Western as well as Arua and Terego districts in the West Nile region of Uganda. The team also visited Imvepi Refugee Settlement Camp and Rhino Refugee Settlement Camp in Terego District and interacted with the district leadership there, to assess the levels of community awareness, participation and compliance with World Bank safeguard standards.

The field visits revealed that many of the host communities that we interacted with confessed to not having had knowledge about the IFPA-CD project. In some districts tree planting had successfully started, although the exercise was faced with some challenges such as the late delivery of seedlings (seedlings being delivered off season), and in some places women were not being given the opportunity to plant seedlings on family land because of the traditional nature of land ownership.

In the districts of Rubanda, Kabale, Ntungamo, Hoima, Kikuube, Arua, and Terego, technical staff interviewed had very scant knowledge about the project, even when some of these districts were implementing some activities of the project. In the refugee camps visited, the IFPA-CD project was not known by the camp authorities. The camp authorities were only aware of the World Bank funded multi-regional project called [Development Response to Displacement Impact Project](#) (DRDIP). The project covers four countries within the East African Region.

Achievements of the project thus far include the recruitment of a procurement specialist to facilitate other procurement processes of the project and the recruitment of other project staff in preparation for the commencement of project activities. The project had also procured equipment and tools such as tablets, laptops, printers, vehicles, office furniture, drones, motorcycles, and trucks, among others. However, the recruitment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was yet to happen and was to be supervised by the World Bank.

Based on its monitoring, the team generated the following recommendations:

1. The project should decentralize its awareness activities to target communities and stakeholders in the different participating districts.
2. The Government through the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) should make deliberate efforts to support the effective participation of target districts, including both government and civil society organizations.
3. The project should expeditiously reach out to the refugee communities and host communities to explain project goals, gather their feedback, and enlist their participation.
4. The Bank should work closely with the Government of Uganda to engage the Batwa people to determine how they can best participate in and benefit from the project, and plan activities to achieve that.
5. CSOs with presence or activities in target districts should consider how they may be able to support the project, e.g. through translation of IEC materials or capacity building activities to engage refugees and the host communities on tree planting, assisted natural regeneration, and other forest restoration, maintenance and conservation activities, and what support they may need from the Government to achieve this.

1.0 Introduction

The Investing in Forest and Protected Areas for Climate Smart Development (IFPA-CD) Project, [P170466](#), is a World Bank funded project with the objective of enhancing forest and wildlife conservation for the benefit of local communities and sustenance of their livelihoods and the country's economy. The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved total financing of US\$148.2 million on April 23, 2020, to enable the Government of Uganda to improve sustainable management of forests and protected areas and increase benefits to forest-dependent communities, including refugees and their host communities. US\$78.2 million of this financing is a concessional credit, while US \$70 million is a grant (including from the International Development Association's (IDA18)¹ sub-window for refugees and host communities). The Project², with US \$30 million in co-financing from the Government of Uganda, is planned to run through June 30, 2026 and will focus on the Albertine Region and the refugee-hosting areas in Northern Uganda. The IFPA-CD was approved by Uganda's Cabinet on February 1, 2021 and approved by the Parliament of Uganda on April 28, 2021. The project was declared effective Aug. 18, 2021, initially launched by the Minister of State for Environment Sept. 13, 2021 and fully launched on March 9, 2022.

Uganda, like many other low-income countries, is highly susceptible to climate change and climate variability. People's livelihoods in the country as well as the country's economy largely depend on the natural environment and thus its climate conditions. Anthropogenic climate change in the coming century will most likely have the potential to halt or reverse the country's development trajectory. In particular, climate change is likely to mean increased food insecurity; shifts in the spread of diseases like malaria; soil erosion and land degradation; flood damage to infrastructure, settlements and shifts in the productivity of agricultural and natural resources. It will be the poor and vulnerable who will feel these impacts the hardest, though climate change has serious implications for the nation's economy, for example, a shift in the viability of coffee growing areas potentially wiping out US \$265.8 million or 40% of export revenue. Exacerbating poverty and triggering migration as well as heightened competition over strategic water resources, climate change could lead to regional insecurity.³

Uganda's forests are categorized into four types: Tropical High Forest; well stocked (430,888 ha); Tropical High Forest, degraded (136,280 ha); woodland (1,161,610 ha); and plantation forest (107,608 ha). Natural forest cover reduced from 30% of land area in 1990 to approximately 10% in 2015, an average decline of 1.8% per year⁴, per MWE. However, according to the Global Forest Watch, in

¹World Bank, [Press Release](#), April 23, 2020: World Bank Invests \$148.2 Million to Improve Uganda's Forest Management and Provide Benefits to Communities, including Refugees: World Bank Group, "World Bank Invests \$148.2 Million to Improve Uganda's Forest Management and Provide Benefits to Communities, Including Refugees."(accessed Feb. 2021).

²Ministry of Water and Environment, "[STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK \(SEF\) For the Uganda Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development Project \(IFPA-CD\)](#)."

³LTS International, [Climate Change in Uganda: Understanding the implications and appraising the response](#), Scoping Mission for DFID Uganda, July 2008.

⁴Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), [State of Uganda's Forestry 2016](#)

2010, Uganda had 6.93M ha. of tree cover, extending over 29% of its land area. In 2021, it lost 49.2k ha. of tree cover, equivalent to 23.5Mt of CO₂ emissions⁵. In addition, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics report 2020 states that the total forest land area of Uganda was 4.93 million ha in 1990 however, this decreased by 60 percent to 1.95 million ha in 2015 (NFA 2017, 2019). Woodlands suffered the largest loss (69%), reducing from 3.97 million ha to 1.21 million ha. Well-stocked THF and low-stocked THF reduced by 19 percent and 63 percent, respectively, over the 25-year period, while broadleaved plantations increased by 2.4 times (from 18,682 ha to 44,237 ha) and coniferous plantations by 3.9 times from 16,384 to 63,486 ha (UBOS-Uganda Wood & Forest Resources Accounts Report, 2020)⁶.

Regardless of the dataset, the trend is clear: Uganda's forests (apart from plantations) have continuously faced worsening encroachment, deforestation, and degradation, in addition to conversion of forest to other land uses including agriculture, urbanization, and the rampant felling of trees for timber, firewood, and charcoal on private and government land, as well as rampant fires and livestock damage on forest plantations. On average, only about 7,000 hectares of planted forests have been established on a yearly basis in the last 15 years. This imbalance can partly be attributed to weak institutions, uncoordinated implementation of policies between different sectors of the economy, insufficient funding, and limited capacity at all levels which has undermined effectiveness and efficiency in developing and sustainably managing forestry resources in Uganda (*State of Uganda's Forestry 2016, MWE*). All these exacerbate climate change.

The components of this project are to: (1) improve management of Government- managed forests and wildlife protected areas to facilitate the continued generation and availability of important environmental services; (2) increase revenue and jobs from these forests and wildlife protected areas through targeted investments in tourism and productive forests; (3) encourage establishment of greater tree cover in refugee-hosting landscapes outside protected areas; and (4) support sustainable forest management and landscape resilience on private and customary land⁷.

1.1 Implementation of the IFPA-CD Project:

The Uganda “**Investing in Forest and protected Areas for Climate Smart Development (IFPA-CD)**” project is being implemented by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, **improve sustainable management of forests and protected areas, and increase benefits from forests and protected areas** in the target areas. The project recognizes that reducing forest degradation in Uganda ought to address both protected areas and privately owned forests. The Project's geographical focus is on selected priority areas in western and northwestern Uganda, which includes the Albert Water Management Zone (AWMZ) and West Nile part of Upper Nile

⁵Global Forest Watch, “[Uganda Deforestation Rates & Statistics | GFW](#).”

⁶ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, [Uganda Wood Asset and Forest Resources Account](#)

⁷Ministry of Water and Environment, “[INVESTING IN FORESTS AND PROTECTED AREAS FOR CLIMATE-SMART DEVELOPMENT \(IFPA-CD\): Transforming the Ugandan Forestry Sector and Landscape for Sustainable Growth and Economic and Social Benefits.](#)”

Water Management Zone. Component 3 of the project focuses on issues linked to host communities and refugees and will be implemented in 17 districts, in the Albertine Rift (Hoima, Kagadi, Kakumiro, Kamwenge, Kibaale, Kikuube, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa) and West Nile (Adjumani, Amuru, Arua, Koboko, Lamwo, Madi Okollo, Moyo, Obongi, and Yumbe)⁸. While the implementation of the project is spearheaded by the Ministry of Water and Environment, there are several other implementing agencies including the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) for tourism-related activities, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) for activities in protected wildlife areas, and the National Forestry Authority (NFA) for activities in central forest reserves.

1.2 The National Forest Authority (NFA)

The National Forest Authority (NFA) is one of the core partners under the IFPA-CD project and it is centrally involved in the project focusing on Central Forest Reserves since this is also where its core mandate lies. The mandate of NFA is to “manage all central forest Reserves on a sustainable basis and to supply high quality forestry-related products and services to government, local communities, and the private sector.”⁹ NFA project activities shall have to be consistent with this mandate. According to NFA, the IFPA-CD project will focus on 27 central forest reserves with a combined area of at least 251,999 ha. This excludes Zoka Central Forest Reserve, (1,259ha.), which was initially part of the project but was dropped due to management issues, which, among others, included encroachment on communities for settlement and cultivation, illegal logging, sugar industries, rich men, and some government officials. (Bon Yara, 2020)¹⁰

In accordance with Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10), NFA recognizes the importance of Community and other stakeholders’ participation. According to NFA in 2021, local authorities and technical people in the refugee regional offices were engaged and briefed about the project. NFA notes that community participation will be approached from the angle of the already well-grounded Collaborative Forest Management Groups (CFMGs), which are funded through the national budget allocation to NFA. There is no specific budget allocation for community awareness under the IFPA-CD project. CFMs are part of the normal working structures of NFA in the project.

CFMs meetings have been identified as important platforms for information dissemination among the communities neighboring forest reserves. These meetings involve local leaders and Community Development Officers. In some instances, they also involve District Forest Officers and help to disseminate the information to stakeholders. NFA also has trained CFMGs in Nursery establishment as a component for project implementation.

Commercial Forestry will be part of the project under component 3. According to the IFPA-CD project, there will be establishment of greater tree cover in the refugee hosting landscapes outside protected areas, supporting sustainable forest and landscape resilience on private and customary land. People with

⁸ See map: <https://www.mwe.go.ug/library/map-showing-ifpa-cd-project-areas>.

⁹ Wildlife Conservation Society, “[Extent and Status of the Forests in the Ugandan Albertine Rift.](#)”

¹⁰Nijmegen School of Management at Radboud University Nijmegen, “[Deforestation in Uganda: A Case Study on the Zoka Central Forest Reserve, Adjumani District.](#)”

land in the Project area will be given seedlings to plant and establish forests. The Project will provide support at the household level with trees that will support additions to forest cover through agroforestry and commercial tree planting in the project area. One concern is that large monoculture plantations, especially of alien or invasive species may have negative impacts on other parts of the ecosystem. However, the initial field visits could not establish the effects of this activity on these ecosystems since it had not yet started.

1.2.1 NFA and Batwa community.

According to NFA, their relationship with the Batwa people has been cordial and there have not been pronounced conflicts between the authority and the Batwa. Forests are crucial to the lives of the Batwa and to millions of other Ugandans, especially the rural poor. The Batwa are specifically dependent on forests because they do not have land to cultivate and have not traditionally been farmers. Therefore, the Batwa mainly focuses on the numerous direct forest benefits in the form of food gathering, energy, employment, and incomes. However, the continued dependence on forests by the Batwa people has a high potential of generating conflicts with the forest managers, who often are managing for different benefits (tourism, commercial harvest, carbon credits, etc.).

1.3 The IFPA-CD project and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)

1.3.1 National Parks under the IFPA-CD Project

National parks in Uganda are areas of national importance for nature and landscape conservation, and natural heritage preservation. They are the strictest forms of protected areas. National parks are established to preserve natural or scenic resources while allowing research and controlled tourism. Activities such as livestock management, charcoal burning, collection of firewood, as well as medicines and making of traditional handicrafts may be allowed or granted by UWA¹¹ via special permit. Some forests in Uganda are managed and conserved as national parks and are excluded from any activity that could result in their harm. In a nutshell, sustainable management of national parks and of their forest cover will help to conserve biodiversity and provide vital ecological services, such as food and water protection. The strengthening of park management is thus an appropriate part of the project, but we are not aware of any progress on this objective to date.

The mandate of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is “To conserve, economically develop and sustainably manage the wildlife and protected areas of Uganda in partnership with neighboring communities and other stakeholders for the benefit of the people of Uganda and the global community.” Within the Albertine rift region ranging from Mgahinga National Park to Murchison Falls National Park, there are several protected areas which are part of the project. In addition to the above, the Ajai Wildlife Reserve in Rhino Camp and the Katonga Wildlife Reserve are part of this project because they are impacted in several different ways by refugees. Under the IFPA-CD project, UWA will procure two

¹¹ Bio Vision Africa Interviews conducted with UWA staff , May, 2022.

complete road construction units. National Parks by design have their own internal road networks, the procured road equipment will play a key role in making sure the road networks within the parks are well maintained. Also, an assessment conducted by UWA found out that Ajai Game reserve was suitable for a Rhinos' settlement and there is a plan to re-establish Rhinos in this Game reserve. The current road networks in this area will be interrupted and ring fenced for purposes of this new development, and new road networks connecting Pakwach, Nebbi, Madi-Okollo and Arua will be established.

In terms of communication and awareness about the project, the Community Conservation department of UWA remains engaged with the communities as this is within its mandate. UWA will organize consultative meetings for "hotspot" sub-counties neighboring the parks that are experiencing human-wildlife conflicts. These meetings will include Village Chairpersons, Parish Chiefs, and Sub-County Councilors as part of the project activities. The meeting will discuss hotspot land use plans and seek out stakeholders' input into these plans for better management and community ownership.

From the UWA perspective, one way of community participation is through the Collaborative Resource Management (CRM) platforms and stakeholders' participation in review of the current CRM agreements and establishment of new agreements with communities that didn't have such agreements. UWA notes that the project procurement process started late and is still ongoing for various activities. UWA has identified three firms to offer skilling services which have been asked to submit full proposals after reviewing the concept applications. In addition to the IFPA-CD, UWA has a pilot project which started in 2020 funded by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and implemented through the CRM Groups. This pilot project is looking at how poaching has been impacted by COVID-19. In the groups, trainings are offered in two areas:

- Skilling i.e. training in income-generating activities, such as rearing of rabbits, soap making, provision of beehives for bee keeping, standardization of energy cooking stoves, water harvesting technologies, and technical skills etc.;
- Nursery bed establishment- (and tree seedlings will be given to communities who own land).

After vocational training, the youth are provided with a package of tools to kick-start their careers based on what they have learnt. The main aim of this project is to reduce wildlife poaching by these communities in nearby parks. In order to raise community awareness, training of five CRM groups has started and each group will send 10 participants. They will be trained in different technologies, such as water harvesting technologies. It is important to note that there is no tree nursery establishment program under IFPA-CD project for UWA; that mandate is under NFA.

1.3.2 The Batwa Community and their relationship with UWA

Being one of the most marginalized groups in the IFPA-CD project area, the Batwa Community and their participation in the project continue to raise concerns. However, both the UWA and NFA have been engaging with the Batwa community and other marginalized groups in this project. Deliberate efforts have been made to engage and raise awareness among the Batwa community regarding the project and its interventions and how they can benefit as a community. According to UWA, NFA, and MWE, there is

an ongoing process of engaging a consultant who will develop Vulnerable and Marginalized Group Management Plans for the four Batwa groups (Ichuya, Bwindi, Mgahinga and Semuliki). The consultant will capture site-specific socio-economic activities and design activities for their involvement.¹²

The IFPA-CD project documents recognize and speak to the importance of rights and interests of marginalized groups in accordance with the requirements of World Bank Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 7 (on Indigenous Peoples and Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities in Sub-Saharan Africa), which addresses the needs of distinct, vulnerable, social and cultural groups, such as the Batwa, and the project's responsibility to assess, manage, and monitor environmental and social risks and impacts per ESS1. The project also recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement with project stakeholders as an essential element of good practice, per ESS 10. The beginning has so far not seen meaningful strides being made to facilitate the effective and marginalized groups like the Batwa, women, and the youth. The WB asked for revision of the January 2020 Vulnerable/Marginalized Groups Framework. This has been developed and submitted to WB for review and comments. When this framework is approved by the WB, then project activities will commence in these areas.

1.3.3 Other Issues for the Project to Address

Other issues discussed during our monitoring activity with the Project Coordinator at MWE, the project official contact person at UWA, and the project official contact person at NFA (among others) included:

- Charcoal burning is one of the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, especially in West Nile, and the need for cleaner energy sources and more efficient cook-stoves.
- Refugees in camps not being involved in the project.
- The long-range procurement of seedlings from Kampala rather than at district levels still remains a concern - why doesn't NFA establish tree nurseries at the district level?

The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) has thus far reported significant achievement under the IFPA-CD project, especially in its tree planting exercises which are part of the government's contribution to the project. Government has made significant gain towards forest restoration under the IFPA-CD project and it has so far been able to plant about 2,760,177 seedlings covering 1,988ha (with 80% survival rate)¹³ in 18 districts and in 22 project areas in the districts of Hoima, Kikuube, Kamwenge, Kakumiro, Kagadi, Kibaale, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa, Adjumani, Amuru, Arua, Madi Okollo, Lamwo, Terego, Koboko, Moyo, Obongi, and Yumbe (Bio Vision Africa - MWE Project coordination Unit interviews, Feb, 2022) IFPA-CD will also cover seven national parks of Bwindi, Mgahinga, Queen Elizabeth, Mt Rwenzori, Semuliki, Kibale, and Murchison Falls, as well as four wildlife reserves of Katonga, Ajai, Tooro Semuliki, and Kabwoya¹⁴.

¹² MWE -NGOs and CSOs engagement meeting, June 2022.

¹³ Principal Forest Officer MWE- presentation at a meeting with Civil Society in ENR & CC, February, 2022.

¹⁴ "[GOV'T LAUNCHES MULTI-BILLION CLIMATE-SMART DEVELOPMENT PROJECT](https://mulengeranews.com/govt-launches-multi-billion-climate-smart-development-project/)," MulengeraNews!, March 10, 2022, <https://mulengeranews.com/govt-launches-multi-billion-climate-smart-development-project/>.

2.0 Policy, legal and institutional arrangements

According to the IFPA-CD project:

“Uganda’s aspirations for forestry sector development continue to be undermined by the weaknesses and short-comings in the policy, legal and institutional arrangements and capacities. Current efforts of ensuring better policy performance, sector coordination, and service delivery within the forestry sector continue to face challenges in the form of capacities for coordination within the sector and between the sector and non-sector institutions and mandates, policy implementation and monitoring policy performance, mobilizing and engaging stakeholders, as well as creating enabling environment for private sector contribution to the sector growth and management.”¹⁵

Therefore, addressing the challenges within the forestry sector requires one to consider addressing the policy, legal, and institutional arrangements.

2.1 Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF) and World Bank Standards

Stakeholder participation and disclosure of information are critical for any World Bank funded projects and are provided for under Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10). The IFPA-CD project Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF) defines a process and approach to stakeholder consultations and disclosure. According to the SEF, its scope and level of detail reflect the nature and scale of the IFPA-CD, potential risks and impacts of the project, and the level of concerns of the stakeholders who may be affected by or are interested in the project. Interestingly, the SEF is said to be one aspect that demonstrates the government’s commitment to stakeholder engagement when formulating the IFPA-CD project, including identification of priorities for project investment, as well as issues of concern to diverse stakeholders that the project design and decisions should take into account.

World Bank Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 7 on Indigenous Peoples and Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities in Sub-Saharan Africa addresses the needs of distinct, marginalized, social and cultural groups, such as the Batwa, and requires that their rights be adhered to in accordance with ESS7’s requirements. These include, at a minimum, informed consultation and participation. The project is also under obligation to continually assess, manage, and monitor environmental and social risks and impacts as per ESS1. In addition, the project is required to recognize the importance of open and transparent engagement with project stakeholders as an essential element of good practice, in accordance with ESS10 on Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.

The project’s SEF among other things contains information on:

¹⁵The Republic of Uganda Ministry of Water and Environment, “[Forest Investment Program for Uganda.](#)”

- Stakeholder engagement requirements of national policy and applicable World Bank Standards: While the project is duty bound to comply with ESS10 of the World Bank Social and Environmental Framework.
- Stakeholders that are likely to be affected and those that will influence the project and its activities.
- Approaches and schedules for consultation and engagement with stakeholders during preparation of the SEP's Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) is loosely defined as a working partnership between the key stakeholders in the management of a given forest – key stakeholders being local forest users and state forest departments, as well as parties such as local governments, civic groups, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.
- Processes, structures and timing for sharing project information aiming at ensuring regular, accessible, transparent and appropriate feedback

It also recognizes the fact that privately owned forests offer the greatest opportunity to contribute to community livelihoods. The project further suggests that the project interventions would include addressing aspects of fire management, compliance with management plans of protected areas, and wood and charcoal value chains – allowing for participation of both government and the private sector in these value chains.

3.0 The Independent Monitoring Exercise

This independent monitoring exercise has been carried out by BioVision Africa (BiVA), in collaboration with the Bank Information Center (BIC). The study covers the last quarter (Q4) of 2021, as well as the first quarter (Q1) of 2022. According to MWE's reports, the project has managed to carry out extensive consultations with the key project beneficiaries, including refugees, the participating district authorities, and communities. In this monitoring exercise, we wanted to assess the extent and effectiveness of the consultation and participation processes since stakeholders' participation – not only community awareness, but also engagement in planting and maintenance of seedlings and in ecotourism and conservation – is a key component of this project. The exercise has in effect been carried out to ascertain the levels of community preparedness and participation in tree planting activities under the Project in the districts of Rubanda, Kabale, and Ntungamo in the South Western parts of Uganda, Hoima and Kikuube districts in the Mid-Western areas of Uganda, as well as Arua and Terego in the West Nile region of Uganda. BiVA also assessed the levels of participation of the refugees and their host communities. The focus was on Imvepi and Rhino Refugee Settlement Camps in Terego District.

Seven districts with tree planting activities had taken place or with tree planting activities still ongoing were visited to assess the levels of implementation, involvement of refugee host communities, and the preparation of refugee processes for their effective participation in the activities of the project. During the assessment, efforts were made to assess the perceptions of the project to the district's Environment, district's Natural Resource Officers, and the district's Forestry offices. Furthermore, the assessment looked at whether efforts had been made or were being made to raise community awareness, whether refugee's

were aware, as well as their host communities in the project. The study also tried to find out about the tree species that were being planted, the beneficiaries, and the gender and age category involvement.

4.0 Involvement of Refugees in IFPA-CD

Uganda is one of the largest refugee-hosting nations in the world and it is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa with a population of refugees totaling to over 1,500,000 (1.5m) official refugees, yet the number of asylum seekers in the country has continued to grow. According to Kristalina Georgieva, the Managing Director of the IMF and former Chief Executive Officer of the World Bank, “the key drivers of displacement are conflicts, natural disasters, and climate change.”¹⁶ In the case of Uganda however, the vast influx of refugees is mainly due to political instability and associated economic crisis, as well as war and violence in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Somalia. For example, at the peak of the fighting in South Sudan alone in 2016, Imvepi, Rhino Camp, and Bidibidi Refugee Resettlement Camps received thousands of refugees every day. Uganda has continued to maintain an open-door policy to refugees, resulting in record high numbers.

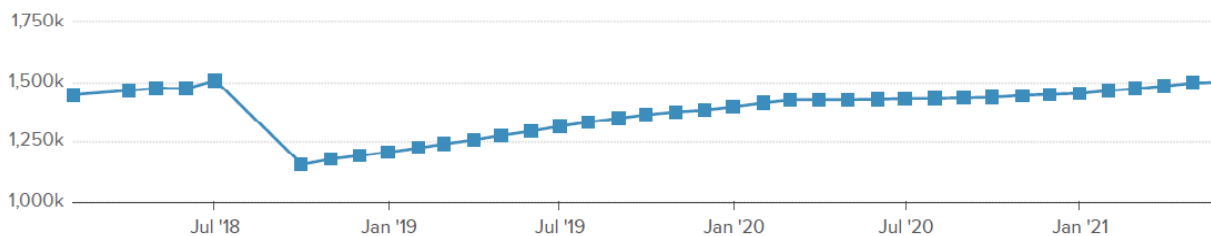
Total refugees

1,573,291

Last updated 31 Dec 2021

Source - Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, Government of Uganda

Total refugees by month



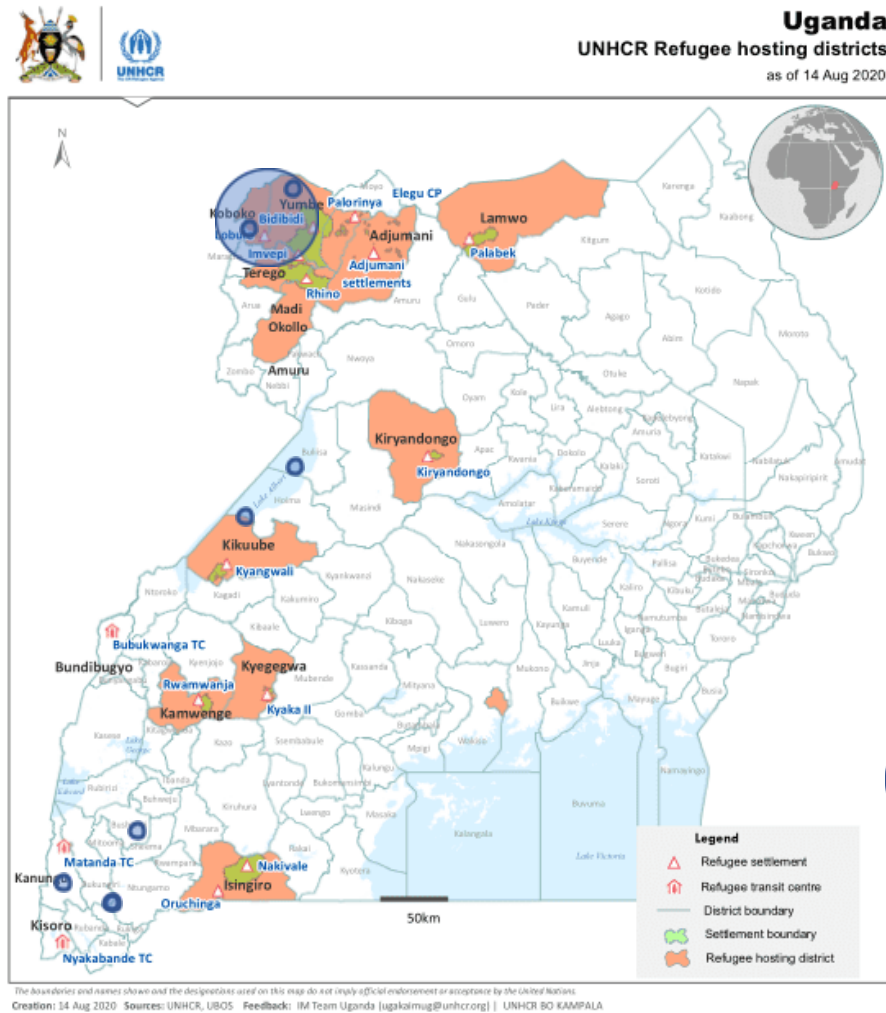
Source - Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, Government of Uganda

Uganda has several refugee camps that are jointly run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The West Nile region, as well as other districts within the Albertine region, host a number of refugees from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi. The Northern region alone is home to five refugee settlement camps including: Achol-Pii Settlement, Imvepi Refugee Settlement (hosts 123,381

¹⁶“Uganda Stands out in Refugees Hospitality,” Africa Renewal, April 5, 2022, <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2018-march-2019/uganda-stands-out-refugees-hospitality>.

refugees), Pagirinya Settlement, Rhino Camp (hosts more than 116,000 refugees), and Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, which hosts over 270,000 South Sudanese refugees fleeing the ongoing violence and was the world's largest refugee settlement camp in 2017. Because of their large numbers, refugees have often negatively impacted the ecosystems surrounding their settlement camps. One of the most worrying situations is the arising deforestation from the high demand for construction materials, wood (for fuel), and the unregulated charcoal burning business.

Map highlighting major refugees in the IFPA Project areas



Refugee Settlements Camps in Uganda:

1. Achol-Pii Settlement
2. Bidi Bidi Settlement
3. Imvepi Refugee Settlement
4. Kampala Settlement
5. Kiryandongo Settlement
6. Kyaka II Settlement
7. Kyangwali Settlement
8. Nakivale Settlement
9. Pagirinya Settlement
10. Rhino Settlement
11. Rwamwanja Settlement

Uganda has relatively ['friendly' policies](#) that provide rights to the refugees, such as rights to education, work, private property, healthcare, and other basic social services, thus, creating a conducive environment for refugee settlement. In addition, the Government of Uganda provides the refugees' community with plots of land so that they can farm, construct shelters, etc. This also empowers the refugees to become economically self-reliant and grants them the same economic [rights](#) as those granted to Ugandan citizens. The Albertine Rift region has been the main region that has over the years been the main host to refugees in Uganda.

4.1 COVID-19 and Refugees

The COVID-19 [pandemic outbreak](#) in Uganda, like elsewhere in the world, greatly affected and disrupted a number of activities. In Uganda, the refugees were identified as one of the high-risk groups, more particularly because of the conditions in which they live. Under **ESS4**, the IFPA-CD project is required to address the health, safety, and security risks and impacts on refugees associated with the project and avoid or minimize such risks and impacts on refugees, because of their vulnerability.

There was fear that if Covid-19 was introduced in densely populated Refugee Settlement Camps, its spread would be high and perhaps uncontrollable. Thereby, the death toll would increase exponentially. In late March 2020, Government of Uganda formally announced that it would suspend the acceptance of refugees and asylum seekers into the country. This came at a time when there was an observed increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country. However, with the current reduction in cases of Covid-19, the situation has changed, the restrictions have been relaxed, leading to an influx of refugees from recent clashes in the DRC. Refugees in camps and settlements also encounter difficulties in accessing reliable and accurate information.

5.0 Findings from Field Visits

5.1 Stakeholder Engagement

This project ought to recognize the fact that the roles of men and women among some of the Indigenous cultures and communities where the project is being implemented may vary from one community to another. Unfortunately, the project seems to have downplayed the cultural diversity in the region where it is being implemented. Furthermore, the implementation of the project requires land and therefore it is essential for the project to look at the different aspects of land and how they affect equity in the participation of men, women, and marginalized groups. In Rubanda district, for example, elements of women being marginalized have already manifested themselves with less clear interventions from the project. This is mainly because, culturally, land ownership in many parts of Uganda is male-dominated and women are prevented from determining what kind of farming activity can be undertaken on a given piece of land. There has not been sufficient outreach efforts to foster women's participation and the project

needs to develop an affirmative action plan for their involvement. This should include measures against possible reprisals for such involvement and against SEA.

5.2 Procurement and Recruitment

The Project's official launch (March 9, 2022) came after more than two years of project-related activities. The initial months of the project were dedicated to procurement activities. The field visits found out that the project had undertaken the recruitment of a procurement specialist to facilitate other procurement processes of the project and the recruitment of other project staff in preparation for the commencement of project activities. The project had also procured equipment and tools such as tablets, laptops, printers, vehicles, office furniture, drones, motorcycles and trucks, among others. However, the recruitment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was yet to happen and was to be supervised by the World Bank.

5.3 The Role of Districts

In the [Forest Investment Program](#) for Uganda, under the section covering the project **Implementation Arrangements and Readiness** and on the part of Institutional capacity, it is clearly stipulated that "Districts have the mandate to manage Local Forest Reserves, forest resources outside forest reserves, and wildlife conservation areas, land, agriculture, community development, and renewable energy Programs and initiatives. In addition, districts function through Districts Technical Planning Committees, whose function, among others, is planning and coordinating implementing multi-sector Programs at district levels."¹⁷ Therefore, the role of districts in the successful implementation of the IFPA-CD project is critical. However, during the field visits it was observed that many districts were not sufficiently aware of the project, even when they were implementing project activities. Rubanda district, for example, had already started implementing the tree planting activity, but lacked knowledge on whether they were implementing the IFPA-CD project (they were). They only linked the project to the Ministry of Water and Environment.

5.4 Tree planting in Kabale District

In Kabale and Ntungamo districts, no tree planting activities were reported as having taken place. It was however found out that the District Environment and Forest officers in Kabale had heard about the World Bank IFPA-CD project, but did not have full knowledge of what the project was doing. They noted that they were supposed to meet a team from the World Bank regarding the project, but this was changed to a later date. Ntungamo district is not part of the 18 districts covered under the IFPA-CD project, however, it was visited to ascertain whether project activities are being implemented in every district as stated by the Minister of Water and Environment during the project's launch.

¹⁷Republic of Uganda Ministry of Water and Environment, "[Forest Investment Program for Uganda \(2017\)](#)"

5.5 Case Study: Tree planting in Rubanda District

Tree planting under the IFPA-CD project in Rubanda district began in 2020. The district has received two batches of seedlings totaling more than 124,000, and supplied to farmers based on their preference for seedling types. Farmer groups apply for what they want to plant and the districts then apply to the suppliers to meet the preference and demand of the groups. According to the district officials, the farmer-driven arrangement is a lesson learned from the previous REDD+ program whereby farmers would be given seedlings without their preference and would sometimes not plant them and leave them to dry.

According to the district officials, the Ministry officials carried out a monitoring and verification exercise to selected farmers in Bufundi, Muko, Ikumba, Hamurwa, and Bubare sub-counties since they could not visit the whole district. We include this district even though it is indicated only as “target for tree farming subsidy” since trees were supposedly supplied by the project, as evidenced by the photos of the delivery notes attached, and based on the engagement of MWE in overseeing this process.

Application form for tree seedlings in Rubanda district.

No	Name	Type	Qty	Price	Total	Remarks
1	Tumukunda Joseph	Pine	1200	0775485220		
2	Mpenderungu Abance	Pine	2000	0781722020		
3	Mpenderungu Abance	Casimira	200			
4	Amafa Cleopatra	Pine	400	0796385200		
5	Namukuru William	Pine	2000	0735295000		
6	Bikomukungu Agatha	Casimira	100	0744355231		
7	Tumukunda Rose	Pine	200	0782602300		
8	Inkiriye Susan	Pine	500			
9	Lyfuka Benjamin	Casimira	300	0798791900		
10	Kamuguni Satorina	Pine	2000	0777464020		
11	Akuzere Pamela	Pine	2000	0753493000		
12	Dubaba Pamela	Pine	300	0785750400		
13	Magezi Susanna	Pine	1000	0782727000		
14	///	Cypress	1000			
15	Bukiriro Susana	Pine	1000	0780738000		
16	///	Casimira	1000			
17	///	Casimira	100			
18	Inkiriye Rasta	Pine	400	0771080200		
19	Zv Fr Maximiano D.	Pine	5000	0792409200		
20	///	Casimira	2000			
21	Tumukunda Patrick	Casimira	200	0773209200		
22	Rugamba John	Pine	900	0738200000		
23	Amba Innocent	Lot 6	1016	0782730000		
24	Emungu Simon	Casimira	200	0722210000		
25	Emungu David	Pine	200			
26	Mpenderungu Lawrence	Pine	5000	0787019000		
27	Mpenderungu Silvana	Pine	2000			
28	Amba Angina Maria	Cypress	200	0750170000		
29	Tumukunda Susana	Casimira	200	0780470000		
30	Tumukunda Susana	Casimira	50			
31	Mpenderungu Theresia	Casimira	100			
32	Mpenderungu Theresia	Pine	14100			
33	Mpenderungu Theresia	Casimira	10			

Lot II-Delivery note of IFPA-CD tree seedlings in Rubanda district.

LOT II: TREE SEEDLINGS DELIVERY FORM TO FARMERS WITHIN THE GREATER ALBERTINE GRABEN ONE AND THE NEIGHBOURING AREAS UNDER IFPA-CD PROJECT, GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA FUNDING.

District: Rubanda Dist
Sub-County: Rubanda TC
Parish: Nyakabingo ward
Village: Murore
Name of Farmer: MUKURDA - Livingston

No	Description / Species	Quantity	Remarks
1.	Eucalyptus	1000	Very good / hardwood
2.	Pinus patula	100	Tender
Total		1100	

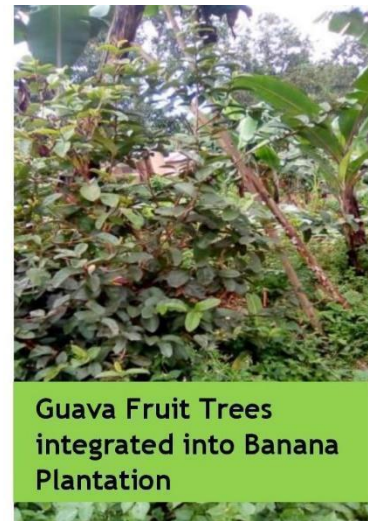
Received By: Mukunda L.
Contact: 077260304 Male Female
Delivered by: [Signature]
Contact: 0777300000
Vehicle Number: 231
Date: 23/06/2020
Witnessed by: [Signature]
Name: M. T. M. M. M. Position: D.F.O.
Contact: 0781461379

The local communities have been planting tree seedlings mainly for income generation, agroforestry, and for medicinal values. For instance, Pinus Patula and Eucalyptus Grandis are mainly grown by men and youths on large scale mainly to generate income from the sale of poles and rafters/ spars, while fruit trees

including Mangoes, Jackfruits, Guavas, and Avocados are mainly planted by both men and women to support agroforestry practices in their farms/ gardens.



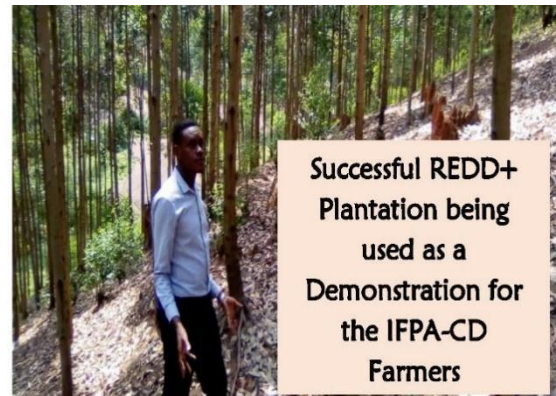
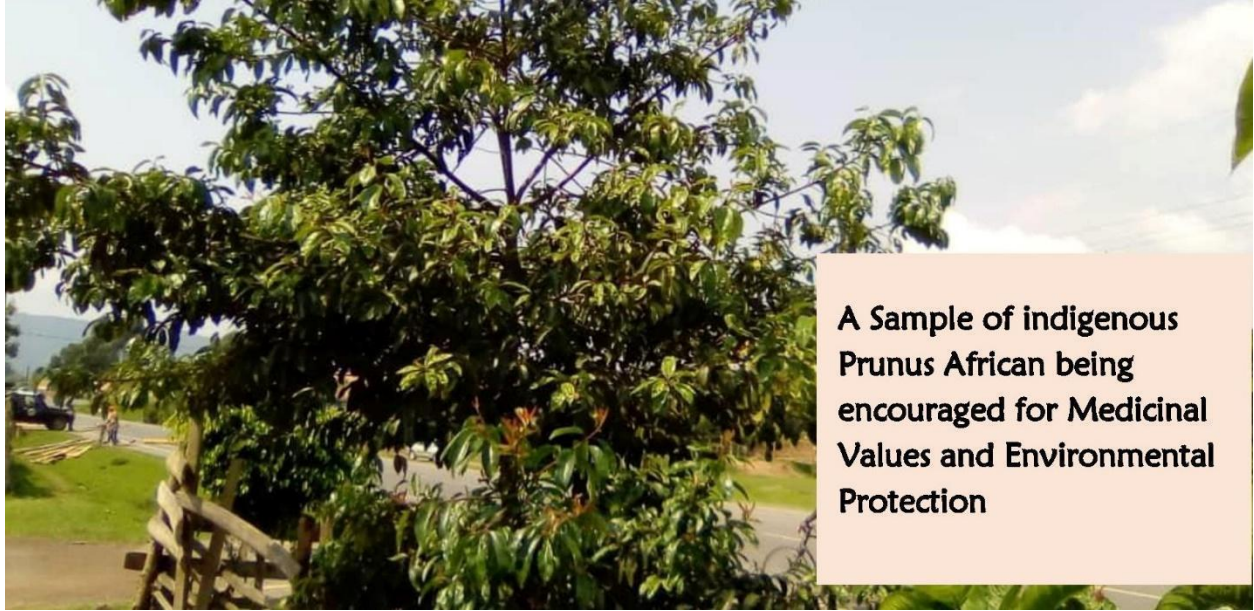
Pinus Patula grown on large scale for income generation



Guava Fruit Trees integrated into Banana Plantation

Bamboo is mainly grown by the Batwa community because the plant has attachment to the forest ecosystem where they originally lived before they were evicted. They use the bamboo plants to make handicrafts. However, the Batwa and a number of community households in Rubanda live on small plots and fragmented land which accommodates only a few trees which makes it difficult for them to benefit fully from the IFPA-CD tree planting program.

People's interest, especially men and the youth, has been attracted to exotic species like Pine and Eucalyptus because of their high economic value and the short time (8-10 years) they take to reach marketable size, unlike the indigenous species like Prunus Africana which takes around 30-40 years. However, the district forest office was sensitizing and encouraging farmers through their farmer groups to also grow Prunus Africana and other indigenous species because of their environmental and medicinal values. Like the bamboo plant, Prunus Africana was also gradually picking up more especially among the Batwa community and among the majority women groups because the bamboo, for example, was sometimes being used as stakes to support climbing bean plants and so was the Prunus Africana tree while still young.



Every year, Rubanda district has two planting seasons, ranging from March to April and September to October. Unfortunately, deliveries of seedlings take a long time from the time they are applied by farmers to seedlings delivery. Deliveries were made almost at the end of the season, making them miss the first season, which keeps farmers' expectations and engagement low. The forest office also didn't have answers for the delays, except for 2021 when the Ministry explained to the district that it didn't have a budget to supply the seedlings because of COVID-19.

The district was faced with high demands for seedlings as farmer groups placed high orders, but the deliveries were low, thus making it difficult to distribute enough seedlings. The district has given priority to farmers who are planting trees for environmental conservation.

Conflict over land, and what to plant on it, is common in Rubanda district. According to the Rubanda district forestry officer, the district planted around 1,200 seedlings as a demonstration site of different

tree species ranging from *Pinus Patula*, *Eucalyptus Grandis*, and *Prunus Africana*, but because of the land scarcity, and the competition between planting trees and other agricultural crops by a section of the district workers, most tree seedlings were uprooted which reduced the survival rate of the seedlings. The seedlings that remained (about 250) are stunted because of continuous disturbance.

5.6 Summary of Field Observations

DISTRICT	OBSERVATIONS/STATUS	Comments
1. Imvepi Refugee Settlement Camp – Terego District	This refugee camp is located in Terego District in the West Nile part of the Northern Region of Uganda. At the time of our visit, the IFPA-CD project was not known to the camp management. The camp authorities were only very conversant with the project Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP). DRDIP is a World Bank funded multi-regional project covering four countries in the East African Region. However, they expressed interest and optimism in participating in the IFPA-CD project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of refugees in the area is very high; access to the area was limited due to the fear of spread of COVID-19. • The project team needs to reach out to the camp and raise awareness. • The area benefits from several other ongoing projects which were successfully being implemented, so IFPA-CD is likely to benefit from such implementation opportunities.
2. Rhino Refugee Settlement Camp – Terego District	The refugee camp is located in the districts of Madi-Okollo and Terego (both formerly part of Arua District) in north-western Uganda). As of March 2022, the IFPA-CD project was not known to the camp management. The camp authorities only knew of the World Bank funded multi-regional project called Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP). The project covers four countries within the East African Region. However, they too expressed interest and optimism in participating in the IFPA-CD project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very high number of refugees in the area, but limited access to the area due to fear of spread of COVID-19. • The project team needs to reach out to the camp and raise awareness through all available channels of communication. • Several projects are successfully up and running in the area, so IFPA-CD is likely to benefit from such implementation opportunities.
3. Arua City	The district officials participated in some of the initial meetings and they were knowledgeable about the project. However, the district officials were uncertain whether Arua district was still part of the project since the district was divided into two, forming the Arua City and Terego District. The refugee community is now located in Terego district. The district had not received the awareness materials and equipment by the time of our visit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project should clarify the status of Arua City in the implementation of the project. • The district should benefit from project materials and equipment if it is part of project • The project needs to facilitate the establishment of a tree nursery and to engage the host communities to prepare them for the implementation of the project.
4. Terego district	This District is new; it was formed after Arua town was elevated to a city status. Terego district is a beneficiary of project equipment and awareness materials including a laptop, posters and notebooks, among others. Unfortunately, being new, apart from the items delivered from the regional headquarters, the district officials had no knowledge about the project and were eagerly waiting for project staff to engage them on the project related activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution of the materials/equipment should be followed by awareness missions to bring the district up to speed on the project. • The refugee and host communities should be engaged regarding the project. • The project should facilitate the establishment of tree nurseries and engage the host communities to

		prepare them for the implementation of the project.
5. Rubanda District	There is lack/inadequate knowledge on the IFPA-CD project (e.g., its funding by the World Bank). There is still some ambiguity about the project scope as some of the districts remain uncertain about involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rubanda district, unlike Terego by the time of visit, had not received any supplies of materials and equipment. ● Awareness meetings, workshops and materials are needed.
	People’s interest, especially men and the youth, has been attracted to exotic species like Pine and Eucalyptus because of their high economic value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project needs to increase awareness on the importance of indigenous species for environment protection and medicinal values.
	There is a problem of land access and ownership on the part of women in most households making it difficult for women to effectively participate in tree planting projects. Even where they are able to participate, they do not have an opportunity to determine what types of trees to plant or not. There have been reports that, due to cultural norms, women do not own land and therefore they at times fall victim to acts of violence for example, some husbands uproot their wives tree seedlings especially when women plant seedlings without their partners’ consent. This leaves women with no other alternative but to abandon tree planting ¹⁸ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project needs to increase awareness on shared roles for both males and their female counterparts so that both genders benefit from the tree planting program. <p>Issues of gender need to be addressed e.g. through creation and execution of a Gender Action Plan, for successful implementation of the project.</p>
	In Rubanda, due to scarcity of agricultural land there is competition between land for tree planting and land for growing agricultural crops. In some instances, this competition has resulted in some tree seedlings being uprooted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project needs to be aware of who are owners of land in allocating seedlings. ● The project needs to raise awareness and demonstrate benefits of agroforestry, so that tree planting serves to complement, not compete with, agricultural crops.
	In Rubanda, the Batwa community were found not to have land for them to effectively benefit from the tree planting program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government needs to provide access and rights to land for tree planting to the Batwa community for them to grow medicinal plants and indigenous tree species which they used before they were evicted from the forests.

¹⁸ Interview with District Forestry Officer, Rubanda district.

	<p>The delivery of seedlings has been low relative to meet the high demand of applicants which makes it a problem to decide on who should get and who should not.</p> <p>Seedlings take long to reach the district and to the farmers which keeps the latter's expectations high and at times the forest office doesn't have answers for the delay.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project needs to accelerate the delivery of tree seedlings to meet the farmers' high demand to keep them motivated. • The project should try establishing community tree nurseries to raise interest in the project. • Tree nursery beds should be decentralized so that districts participate.
	District officials lack transport to extend advisory services and to monitor the progress of the tree planting program since farmers are scattered all over the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project needs to procure transport means (e.g. motorcycles) for forestry/agricultural extension officers.
	Though the ministry representatives were able to carry out monitoring and verification, they were unable to meet most farmers since they are scattered all over the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWE needs to arrange to get to most of the farmers in the entire district if the project is to correctly assess and administer the tree planting program.
6. Kabale District	The district Environment and Forest offices are not aware about the tree planting program under the IFPA-CD project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project needs to include district offices in stakeholder engagements if the district is to benefit from the tree planting program.
7. Ntungamo District	The district Natural resources and Environment offices did not know anything about the IFPA- CD project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project should consider whether Ntungamo district and others that are not among the selected districts where the project will be implemented should at least be informed, since commercial plantations under the project may occur nationwide.
8. Hoima District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district had not received equipment or materials from the project as of March 2022, but acknowledged that they had been consulted. • Farmers were mobilized to plant woodlots/plantations and were ready to participate in the project, but said that they had waited for long without receiving any updates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district needs to receive equipment and materials from the project as a priority. • The project needs to provide regular updates to maintain/restore the farmer's confidence as the project slowly comes on board.

<p>9. Kikuube District</p>	<p>a) IFPA-CD Project staff visited the district although the district officer that was contacted was not aware about the project</p> <p>b) District had not received equipment or materials from the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project needs a decentralized approach to information dissemination - bring all relevant staff up to speed ● District needs to receive equipment and materials from the project
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6.0 Conclusion

One of the five objectives of the project aims at strengthening stakeholders' engagement in policy implementation. In addition, Component 1 of IFPA-CD aims at strengthening Forest governance and institutional capacity. Among other things, it aims to focus on forestry policy implementation, regulation, and sector coordination. Under this component, the project commits to strengthening forest management through the implementation of policy and sector coordination between different stakeholders. It also aims at supporting active participation of NGOs/CSOs, private sector, and Indigenous/forest dependent people in stakeholder platforms in forestry sector national level planning and governance.

While this is happening in limited ways, our findings indicate that a lot more has to be done to effectively cover this aspect. Effective participation of different stakeholders is yet to be achieved and the awareness about the project is inadequate, and yet, it is critical for the much-needed stakeholder participation. The success achieved in soliciting farmers' preferences for seedlings to plant is a positive example to build on. Yet, the ongoing competition between planting trees and other agricultural crops shows that more vigorous engagement is needed to show how these can be complementary. Similarly, the uprooting of trees planted by women shows the need for greater attention to gender roles and rights of marginalized groups more broadly.

Our field visits and meetings also yielded the following specific observations relative to government's execution of the project:

- The visit to MWE revealed that in some districts tree planting with support from the Government of Uganda had started. However, the exercise was faced with some challenges such as late delivery of seedlings (seedlings being received off season),
- The project needs to raise awareness about the project among the refugees, the refugee host communities, and refugee camp management.
- There is limited participation of civil society organizations
- One of the major underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation is the widely spread unsustainable charcoal burning processes to meet demands for community energy in both rural and urban settings.
- The IFPA-CD project is only focusing on 27 central forest reserves and excluding forests like Zoka and Budongo which are faced with imminent threats of deforestation and forest degradation.

We also noted, relative to the World Bank's role:

- Delayed disbursement of project funds by the World Bank – the project was still (in March 2022) in the process of procuring tools and equipment such as tablets, laptops, printers, vehicles, office furniture, Drones, motorcycles and trucks among others. Delays and late release of funds by the World Bank has created delays in the implementation of the project.
- Failure to address the issues of the Batwa and other marginalized groups, pursuant to ESS7.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for the project/government:

- Both increase and decentralize its awareness/engagement activities to target communities and stakeholders, especially farmers and refugees, in the different participating districts. The project should facilitate the establishment and maintenance of tree nurseries and engage the host communities to prepare them for the implementation of the reforestation component of the project.
- Through the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), a decentralized community awareness and mobilization approach targeting communities and stakeholders in the different participating districts should be adopted, and effective participation of civil society organizations, women, and ethnic minorities in the project should be encouraged.
- OPM has to move first (or delegate to MWE) and support CSOs (or others qualified) to translate and disseminate IEC materials and to engage communities, refugees, and their host communities.
- Move faster given that roughly a third of the project period is past (two of six years) and a lot of activities have been delayed already. This acceleration could be achieved in part through decentralization, provided that officials at district level are properly trained and provided resources.
- Develop a better and systemic way of distributing the project materials and equipment to the different project beneficiaries;
- Actively inform and consult with the Batwa on their needs for livelihood restoration and other means of project participation. This includes consulting them on (assisted) natural regeneration and cultivation of tree species, and providing them forest land or forest-adjacent land to enable them to grow/nurture medicinal and other indigenous tree species.
- Address uncertainties and clarify the roles of the different participating districts since the majority of them don't know their status in the project, e.g., Arua City, Terego district, Kabale district, and Rubanda district, among others. Move fast to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of tree nurseries and forests extension services in the districts targeted for tree planting. These should as much as possible be informed by the local community demands for the different varieties of tree species. Relatedly, schedule timely procurement and distribution of tree seedlings in the project, as well as coordination among tree nurseries as needed to promote trees' survival.

- Comprehensively address all underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation in the project areas and develop a strategy for addressing them, with priority to hotspot forests.
- Expeditiously and regularly reach out to the refugee communities and host communities to understand their sources and uses of wood and trees. Explain how the project can improve these, as well as enlist and maintain their participation in tree cultivation, planting, maintenance, and conservation, as needed.
- Study and learn from already existing projects within the refugee settlement camps, notably on the roles that refugees have played in them, to inform the project's design and implementation process in refugee-hosting areas.
- Have project materials translated into, and training conducted in, local languages for the benefit of the local communities, especially for marginalized groups.

7.2 Recommendations for the World Bank:

The Bank should:

- Conduct more regular oversight through field visits and coordination meetings to ensure that project adheres to its Safeguard Policies, especially as regards vulnerable and marginalized groups and information disclosure and stakeholder engagement (ESS7 and ESS 10).
- Support more active efforts by the project to provide for the effective participation of community and civil society organizations and other stakeholders.
- Plan for both short- and long-term empowerment and resettlement demands of the Batwa communities. While the World Bank's efforts in ensuring that the Batwa are involved in the project to date are appreciated, it needs to work more closely with the Government of Uganda and ensure that the Batwa people are effectively informed and consulted about the project, and able to participate in and benefit from it.
- Investigate the conversion of some 6,000 ha. of Bugoma Central Forest Reserve to sugar plantation, and require Government action to prevent further such conversions of any lands which have been designated for conservation of forest restoration as part of the project. This should be integrated with a national strategy for addressing deforestation and forest degradation in threatened forests.
- Improve timely release of project funds to avoid delays in project implementation.

7.3 Recommendations for Local Communities and Civil Society:

- Local communities should work towards the establishment and maintenance of tree nurseries to meet the increasing demand for tree seedlings.
- Civil Society Organizations with field activities in project areas should build their capacities to effectively participate in all project processes relevant to their field work, in coordination with and with support from the relevant project agency.
- CSOs with field activities in project areas should prepare to support the project through translation of IEC materials and training to engage refugees and the host communities on tree planting, maintenance, and sustainable use (e.g. harvesting of non-timber forest products). Such activities should also receive support from and be coordinated with the relevant project agency.