

# A livelihoods approach to redesign of forestry services in Uganda

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## 1. Background

The Forest Sector Umbrella Programme of the Government of Uganda takes a pro-poor, livelihoods approach to the redesign of forestry support services. It combines bottom-up participatory planning (asset- and opportunity-based), meso level institutional reform (redefining the roles of service providers), macro level policy change (new policy and contracting frameworks) and revised funding modalities.

In response to the need for a sector-wide forestry strategy, the Forest Sector Umbrella Programme (FSUP) was developed by the Government of Uganda in 1997/8 with donor support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), and others.

The purpose of FSUP is to create a positive, effective and sustainable policy and institutional environment for the forest sector in Uganda. The programme began in 1999 and runs until 2003, implemented by the Forest Sector Co-ordination Secretariat under the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment. It is led by the Government of Uganda with a sector-wide focus and multi-donor support. It places private and public sector reforms at its centre, set out in the National Forest Plan.

## 2. Government Policy Framework

The policy framework for forestry in Uganda is established along four axes:

- Poverty Eradication Action Programme (1997).  
This apex policy has 4 pillars: economic growth, governance, incomes and quality of life
- Public Sector Reform Programme.  
The Forestry Department is to be divested and the National Forestry Authority is to be self-financing with management freedoms outside civil service
- Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture (2000).  
This includes a farmer-centred prioritisation of public spending on productive activities and the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS) by which producers contract advisory services from private service providers. It also outlines development of research and technology, rural finance, processing and marketing, education and sustainable management of resources
- Local Government Reform.  
Reforms include the decentralisation of budgets and most services to local governments and an incentives framework for local development planning to reflect local priorities, accountability through improved financial systems and transparency of allocation decisions.

Recent reforms in the forest sector include a new **Forestry Policy** (approved in March 2001), a National Forest Plan, a Forestry Act and the creation of a National Forest Authority, and the

rethinking of service delivery. The new Forestry Policy redefines roles and partnerships in governance including central government, local government, the private sector, local communities and NGOs/CBOs.

In practice this means a focus on poverty reduction, an environment favouring decentralised delivery, with key roles for local governments and producers purchasing advisory services through NAADS. Forests and trees are recognised as being very important to people's livelihoods but the role of forestry extension is not well developed, including the question of how to maximise livelihood opportunities in this environment.

In general forestry extension is not working due to low funding and incentives in the Forestry Department, lack of a holistic livelihoods perspective and appropriate skills, and an over-centralised service. In order to re-think service delivery there was a need to understand how forestry contributes to rural livelihoods, what opportunities there are for forestry to contribute to poverty eradication and what services are needed to realise these opportunities. There was also a need to develop new planning approaches and new service delivery arrangements.

### **3. Livelihoods Study**

In response to these constraints the Forest Sector Co-ordination Secretariat, with support from Khanya - mrc, undertook a livelihoods study to underpin new structures and processes for effective community-based planning and responsive service delivery that aimed to improve rural livelihoods through forestry development opportunities.

#### ***3.1 Study Process***

- The study involved a livelihoods analysis in indicative communities from 9 districts in Uganda with a range of social and ecological conditions. It focussed on identifying different social groups, the importance of forestry to these groups, and the opportunities and services that could improve their livelihoods through forestry. Roles, responsibilities and capacity were examined at five institutional levels: community, service providers, district, National Forest Authority, MWLE.
- An innovative methodology was developed for the livelihood and institutional analysis in sample parishes, focussing on client-focused service design. The methodology was developed with Forestry Department staff and NGO partners from 9 districts, working through the methodology as a training exercise in one district, then following up with studies in eight other districts.
- A synthesis was prepared of opportunities and services required, findings were validated and communicated at two national workshops, and the results reflected in the NFP (with a follow-up planned to contribute to NAADS learning).

#### ***3.2 Study Findings***

- A wide range of social groups was identified: landless, married women, widows, elders, farmers, unemployed youth etc. Wealth ranking tended to come up with 3-4 categories, ranging from rich to very poor. The poorest tended to be widows (who do not own property), labourers, the landless, and sometimes the youth.

- A range of livelihoods was identified, with livelihood outcomes and livelihood strategies differing by social group. For example, married women in Luwero District wanted increased food security from better agricultural production. Some livelihood strategies were clearly identified with poor groups, for example the youth in Nakasongola District wish to raise income from charcoal burning. Forestry is particularly important for women, such as those in Tororo District, who use natural forests for feeding small livestock and in seasonal food gaps.
- The importance of forestry in livelihood strategies was clear. For example as firewood (for domestic use, lime and brick making, tea and tobacco curing, fish smoking, brewing), as timber and poles (creating employment in pit sawing and income from sales, construction, carpentry, boat-building), as non-timber products (charcoal, honey, craft materials, fruit, mushrooms, bark cloth). Environmental benefits of forests were also observed (soil fertility, shade, windbreaks, micro-climate and rain). Forest reserves were also seen to be the source of other products (stones, grazing land).

#### **4. Opportunities and services**

The study helped to identify a range of livelihood opportunities associated with forestry, including:

- tree production;
- collaborative forest management;
- establishment of tree nurseries;
- agroforestry (fruit, coffee, soil fertility, improved crop production);
- non-wood products (honey, crafts, shea nut oil, medicine, hunting);
- improved marketing and trading in forest products;
- improving technology (charcoal, honey, stoves);
- alternative income sources (crops, cotton); and
- forest ecotourism

It also helped identify the kind of services needed to realise these opportunities:

- Public information, communication and advocacy;
- Inclusion of forestry in local government (planning, bye laws);
- Advisory services (organisational, technical, small business development) including development of community extension workers;
- Specialist advice (pathology, land tenure, ecotourism);
- Development of new technologies;
- Support on contractual issues (collaborative forest management arrangements);
- Input supply, including quality tree seeds;
- Accessing rural finance; and
- Marketing support (development of new opportunities, market information, business and marketing support, quality standards).

*Example: Services for developing tree nurseries*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Support required</b>
Local extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational</li> <li>• Technical</li> <li>• Business</li> </ul>	Organisation of group nurseries Skills in nursery production Small business skills
Specialist	Propagation methods for specific species
Land tenure	Advice on tenure, land registration
Input supply	Quality seeds and equipment, seed handling
Marketing	Market information if marketing beyond local area
Finance	Longer term finance (need for MFIs to cover forestry)

## **5. The Way Forward**

Ways to move forward on these opportunities were identified, but challenges remain.

### ***5.1 Local extension support***

Community-based extension workers with specific forestry skills are needed in the community on a regular basis (contracted by communities). These should be backed up by sub-county (or district) based consultants (or NGOs) who provide training and support.

Challenges:

- Limited capacity and reach of service providers - especially in remote areas
- Oversight of quality of services, inconsistency between service providers
- Insufficient mechanisms for ensuring that the poorest benefit. They need to be aware of opportunities and able to take them up and access services
- Service providers often have their own missions which are not demand-driven

### ***5.2 Small business support***

Business support services should be contracted at district level to assist with setting up businesses and developing business plans, accessing market information, tendering, providing marketing advice, obtaining finance and providing aftercare. This could include “community business workers”.

Challenges:

- These services may already be provided by existing programmes (e.g. PSDP, PRIDE), or may need to be developed
- Access to rural finance when MFIs will not lend for forestry
- Development of quality certification systems, e.g. for tree seeds

### ***5.3 Specialist advice and new technology***

Specialist organisational and technical advice could be contracted from consultants in the district (or beyond, for rarely needed skills) e.g. advice on pathologies, land tenure issues, legal agreements on CFM, ecotourism development. The same could apply to support for the development of technology e.g. adapting agro-forestry technologies to local conditions.

Challenges:

- How to get economies of scale. There could be a global contract with an NGO/consultant to cover these occasional inputs, e.g: a service provider contracted to provide 50 days/year to a district (or sub-county) for a range of technical inputs; a pathologist contracted to provide 100 days/year advice anywhere in the country; a NARO contracts with national/district/sub-county farmers forums to help develop appropriate technologies to address a specific problems.

### ***5.4 District role***

A District forester should be responsible for mobilisation and co-ordination or services advocacy for forestry in the district. This would include allocations for forestry in the District Development Plans, monitoring of the development of forestry in the district including the quality control of service providers and promotion of appropriate district / sub-county bye-laws and ordinances.

Challenges:

- Management of the transition from current FD extension staff to new roles in the district or as private NAADS service providers
- Identification of forestry as an investment priority in local government
- Co-ordination of fragmented services, and collaboration between providers

### ***5.5 Central information services***

This would involve a menu of opportunities to identify possible markets, basic production technologies, investment and returns for each opportunity. It would also provide an out-sourced market information service to provide dynamic information on prices, requests for export tender information and information to the business support services in the district.

### ***5.6 National co-ordination and advocacy***

National co-ordination and advocacy is needed to promote the development of forestry-related livelihoods. This would include public information and sensitisation, co-ordination of extension service reforms, promotion of investment in forestry-related activities and promoting sustainable use of forestry resources. This would be provided on contract by e.g. NFA.

### **5.7 Roll Out**

- A 2 year window of opportunity to reposition the sector in Uganda and redefine institutional roles – a programme of pilot initiatives is now under way to learn about the delivery of services identified during the livelihoods studies in the sample Districts.
- These forestry livelihoods pilots will contribute to learning in NAADS and PMA, and demonstrate in practice that forestry can contribute to poverty eradication

### **6. Wider Implications**

This is an innovative approach to analysing livelihoods and institutions to develop services that can exploit forestry opportunities for the poor. The approach involves community-based, district and centrally driven services, from micro to macro and has been applied immediately to deepen the NFP. The pilots initiatives now under way to take these services forward are effectively a form of business process re-engineering which could easily be applied to other sectors.

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