FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT

ENVIRONMENT AND LIVELIHOODS INTERVENTIONS IN BIDIBIDI AND RHINO CAMP REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS

ECOLOGICAL CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION
AND MALTESER INTERNATIONAL

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1.0 Purpose, objectives and use

Rationale

The government of Uganda with support of development partners has developed the Refugee Host Population empowerment framework (ReHoPE)[1], the Social Transformative Agenda[2] (STA) and the Refugee Response Program (RRP). Whereas these initiatives are in place, the actual implementation of activities recommended therein has been very limited and yet the refugee crises continue to grow. Empirical evidence from available literature points to the fact that if no action is put in place, the impact of refugees and the local communities on the integrity of the environment is likely to escalate with devastating effects on natural, economic and social capitals. There is clear evidence that settlements such as Bidibidi will not have any usable biomass in the next four years if the current rate of deforestation and degradation continues unabated.

It should be noted that refugee settlement planning and management requires a careful consideration of the many challenges in order to provide durable and sustainable long term solutions. Therefore, as key stakeholders, we recognized that quantifying risk and seeking participatory generated solutions with affected persons was the most ideal step in a bid to address the enormous environmental and social challenges that the refugee crisis presents especially in a changing climate and resource constrained country. A feasibility study will contribute to the design and structuring of viable environment management plans, policies and actual actions on the ground.

On this basis, Malteser International (MI) and Ecological Christian Organization (ECO) undertook a feasibility study to inform their decision making and come up with a set of viable and durable long term environmental solutions for refugee settlements in West Nile.

Objectives of the feasibility study

The main objective of the feasibility study was to collect up-to-date and sufficient information to facilitate and inform decision making for Malteser International and Ecological Christian Organization on most appropriate interventions for promoting environmental conservation in and around the refugee settlements in West Nile.

[1] A self-reliance and resilience strategic framework targeting refugees and host communities in Uganda's nine refugee hosting districts. It is a five year commitment which recognizes the need for creative durable solutions … has a special focus on self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities alike.

[2] Overall goal is to achieve self reliance and local settlement of refugees and promote social development in refugees and host communities as a durable solution to the refugee problem while protecting local and national interests. Pillars 1, 2 and 5 specifically focus on land, sustainable livelihoods and environment protection respectively

Specifically, the study sought to establish:

1. The current state of the environment particularly focusing on:

- The impact of refugees and host community on biomass resources
- The impact of refugee settlements on biodiversity conservation
- The linkages between environment and livelihoods in refugee settlement areas with particular focus on sustainable shelter management and climate smart agriculture
- The status of ground water conservation in refugee settlement areas
- Key climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures that are suitable for the refugee settlement areas

2. Status of livelihood options for both refugee and host communities

3. Viable and sustainable solutions to address current and emerging environmental and livelihoods challenge in refugee settlement areas in West Nile.

Use of results and their purpose

The primary users of the results will be Malteser International and Ecological Christian Organization, while the secondary users of the results are the district local governments in West Nile, Office of the Prime Minister, Research agencies such as the World Agro-forestry Centre (ICRAF) and NARO, and relevant UN agencies such as the UNHCR and FAO. For the primary users, the results will be used to develop the main proposal (interventions).

Temporal and geographical scope of the feasibility study

The feasibility study was undertaken in a period of one month where the first week involved desk studies, second and third weeks field studies in Kampala and West Nile and the last week writing the final report.

In spatial terms, the study covered two refugee settlements of Bidibidi and Rhino camps in Yumbe and Arua districts respectively for the actual field studies. Initially data had been collected in Kampala that targeted government officials, UN agencies, and German Embassy.

METHODOLOGY

The team deployed qualitative research approaches that included methods such as: Desk review of existing literature, key informant interviews (at national and local level), focus group discussions, transect walks, and workshops and structured interviews. These tools were chosen specifically to gather different sets of data that were used to inform the feasibility report. Each tool had a purpose to fulfill in the feasibility assessment.

After the field mission, data was collated and triangulated to produce a report of major findings and recommendations for action in the main project proposal.

Transect walks

The field team used this tool to gather first hand information from the identified field sites of Bidibidi and Rhino. The ECO and MI team working with the local community (refugee and hosts) moved across selected parts of the camps in order to interact and ask questions, take photographs and further make observation on the existing situation (livelihoods, environment management, sanitation) at the time of visit. This method provided the team with useful information about extent of environmental degradation, nature of settlements, potential livelihood options in the target areas, issues of adaptation to climate change, existing interventions if any, nature of the landscape and general climatic conditions.

Focus group discussions

This tool was very crucial to the team in understanding and appreciating the actual experience and attitudes of the target communities on matters of environmental management. A gendered approach was taken to ensure that issues and voices from the various gender categories are captured. Focus group for youths, women and men were undertaken in all the camps visited. In total 4 FGDs were done involving about 200 participants (each group had on average 50 participants). All these groups provided useful information that helped to unravel key issues for concern in the target project area.

Workshop

This method was very crucial in getting information particularly from the private sector and civil society working in the districts of Arua and Yumbe. It was done purposely to identify potential actors working in the project areas, share their experiences and further capture their advice on the best practices for the planned project. It was also done to map out institutions working in the districts of Arua and Yumbe on environmental restorations.

Previous experiences that can be used for the design of the study

Malteser International has worked in Uganda since 1998 and in the West Nile region since 2014 where we responded to the South Sudan crisis in areas of WASH and Environment Protection, whereas ECO has worked in Karamoja and Lake Victoria region since 2008 facilitating work on environmental restoration and resilience building in highly vulnerable communities. The study therefore picked on this useful resource in addition to the literature review to carefully design tools.

2. 0 Initial situation and problem analysis

A study by the World Bank (2016) indicated that refugees account for about 1.3% of the total population in Uganda, while the Office of the Prime Minister (GOU, 2018) estimates that by the end of 2018, refugees will increase from the existing 1.38 million to 1.8 million bringing the ratio of refuges to the local population at 30:1000. 85% are women out of which children make 61% indicating a highly vulnerable, low social status group with no certain future. This presents a very complex situation for stakeholders involved in providing solutions to the refugee crisis especially with the large numbers that keep growing. It requires a state of the art planning with sufficient data acquisition.

From an environmental perspective, West Nile with more than 1,065,094[3] Sudanese South refugees has suffered a massive degradation and decline of its natural environment capital with forests (natural and plantations) degraded severely, ground water resources reduced due to over pumping, massive soil erosion due to deforestation and poor farming methods. An individual refugee household uses more than 20.5 kg of fuel wood daily and a further 0.95 cubic meters for construction of shelter. In Bidibidi alone, refugees are consuming more than 347,480 metric tonnes of wood fuel annually. It is estimated that by 2020, in a business as usual scenario, Bidibidi and other refugee settlement in West Nile region will have no fuel wood and construction materials, a situation that will create major environment and social crisis. There is clear evidence of decline in woody biomass as observed during the field visit in the settlements to the extent that even the previously established plantations have been cut down and burnt. The UNDP (2017) has estimated that ecosystem loss accounts to approximately USD 90,682,169 annually in public cost distribution to refugee settlements.

From a livelihood perspective, refugee still depend largely on food receipts and small scale farming on their given plots to produce food and vegetables for consumption.

It should be noted that the land allocation in the two camps varies. For Rhino camp, a refugee family is allocated only one plot (30X30 meters) to construct shelter and reserve for farming while in Bididbidi, refugees are given two plots i.e. one plot 30X30 meters for building shelter and another 100X50 meters for farming at another location. However, this additional plot was noted to be very far from the settlements and the refugees complained of insecurity especially of children left behind and long distance to the plots.

[3] As biometrically registered in the Refugee Information Management System (Government - OPM) by June 2018. See https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64731 . Also note that the figure fluctuates depending on conditions in the conflict areas.

The small size of the plots constrains any meaningful conservation efforts in the communities as they are over cultivated reducing productivity with time. In fact, the plots are severely degraded and devoid of trees that could be used for such uses as energy, shelter construction materials, soil erosion control and enhancement of local climate. The immediate effect has been the negative modification of the local climate system as exhibited by high climatic variability which is reinforcing vulnerability of both the refugees and host communities.

Identified problems and their reasons including effects on different groups.

The study team using various tools identified key problems in the two refugee settlements. The main focus was on environment, livelihoods, WASH, institutional coordination and policy. A summary is presented here.

i. Lack of prioritization of environment and climate change issues in refugee response programs.

From the field findings, no single agency had prioritized environment conservation in their response programming owing to the fact that environmental issues are considered very expensive and long term in nature, yet most of the response is short term. This in effect, has turned out to constrain any efforts for both the refugee and host community to build resilient livelihoods as responders don't budget nor implement any environment action. The natural capital has severely been degraded and incapacitated to the extent that recovery will take a very long time and high costs. Loss of biodiversity continues to escalate.

Both the local communities and refugees are suffering a similar fate of increased costs from food insecurity, loss of water resources and the benefits provided by rich biodiversity.

ii. Degradation of forest cover in and around refugee settlements

In the two settlement areas visited, massive deforestation and forest degradation was observed particularly for plantations close to the settlements. According to the district technical staff, intensive deforestation occurred during the high emergency phase of the refugee settlements as they sought materials for building shelter and fuel wood while degradation was largely caused by people hunting for wildlife. The study team established that lack of a proper tree tenure coupled with weak enforcement, increased bush burning and lack of alternatives for shelter construction materials largely contributes to the forest cover decline.

The consequence of the decline in forest cover is being felt by women, elderly and children particularly as they heavily depend on the environment for their livelihood. The continued decline in forest cover means that cases of Sexual gender based violence, malnutrition, school drop outs, community-refugee conflicts, decline of ground water, and degradation of soil will escalate if no viable solution is found.

iii. Limited sources of energy for both refugee and local community households

The study team established that energy for cooking, lighting and production was inadequate and for that which was available, it was of poor quality. The households depend on biomass for cooking and to some extent lighting. The cause of this was lack of appropriate technologies e.g. energy saving stoves, solar cookers and solar lighting technologies, coupled with low skills level of both the refugees and host communities. Another cause identified was the poor market distribution channels coupled with lack of appropriate models for access.

iv. Declining water quantity and quality in and around the refugee settlements

The study team established that ground water resources had started to decline as observed from the time required to fill up reservoirs in all the settlements. Indeed, the Office of the Prime Minister had proposed to start pumping water from river Nile to supply Bidibidi settlement after ground sources declined and trucking became very expensive. The UNHCR (2018)[4] shows a significant number of boreholes closed due to declining ground water.

Lack of water affects entire settlements but more disproportionately women, children and elderly. Small holder refugee farmers (mostly women) are already finding it difficult to get water for irrigation of their small plots during the dry spells. It means that transiting to the durable phase of the response will likely take a longer period of time than anticipated.

v. Low levels of empowerment for both the host and refugee households

From direct interactions and review of literature on socio-economic status of both the refugees and host communities, low levels of empowerment were clearly evident across all the gender groups. And because majority of the refugee population are women and children with low levels of education, empowerment and breaking social barriers are likely to be constrained. Transfer of technology and new knowledge to improve their livelihood will take a long time compared to populations where skills and knowledge exist.

vi. Inadequate integration of early warning mechanisms (climate and weather information) in the refugee response programming by responding partners

The study team established that organizations were not adequately using weather and climate information to guide decision making in the execution of their activities during the response. For example, the participants in the study reported that tree seedlings are in most cases supplied out of season and therefore affecting their survival rates. It was further established that the west Nile region in the last four years has been experiencing high variability in the climate system, which has increased costs of response (logistics). The UNHCR for example noted that due to variable

[4] See UNHCR: 'HOT-OSM – Open- GIS – mapping -Refugee data March 2018

weather, the cost of distributing food, road maintenance has drastically increased in addition to disruption of their budget cycle.

Both the refugees and host community are bearing the impact of climate variability through crop loss/food insecurity, increased health costs and loss of livelihood generally. The women and children suffer disproportionately.

Needs identification

Needs identification was done through a set of approaches that included: key informant interviews with government and non state actors, transect walks, review of most current literature on the refugee challenge in west Nile and focus group discussions that facilitated ranking of the identified needs,. The study team analyzed the findings and in consultation with the refugee and host community selected participants, identified crucial needs for consideration by the proposed program.

The following needs were identified during the feasibility study and include:

They include:

i. Capacity building in areas of environment and climate change for both refugees and host communities

ii. Access to fuel wood and other forest/tree products.

iii. Strengthening forest governance for both government and private actors

iv. Building capacity of both refugees and local communities in new conservation approaches such as Farmer Managed Regeneration (FMNR), soil and water conservation practices, plantation management among others

v. Economic and social empowerment of households in both the host community and refugee settlements e.g. increasing their access to credit, work/employment, information, business raining among others.

vi. Expanding access to appropriate energy services, business and technology for refugees and host communities

vii. Expanding access to weather and climate information services for both refugees and host communities to enable decision making especially on crop and livestock production.

viii. Access to water for production especially during the dry season

Background and logic of intervention

Records on refugee situation in Uganda indicate that the country on average has been host to more 160,000 refugees at any one time in the last 50 years. Currently, Uganda is among the 5 top refugee hosting countries in the world and the first in Africa hosting more than 1.38 million refugees expected to grow to about 1.8 million by end of 2018, bringing the ratio of refugees to the local population at 30:1000 (GOU, 2018). The presence of refugees in the country has enormous bearing on the integrity of the country's natural resources capital. West Nile has suffered in a very short period the worst degradation of its forest and ground water resources to the extent that with business as usual scenario i.e. no energy efficiency measures and no tree planting, the region particularly Yumbe district will have no fuelwood in the next four years. Arua district has equally suffered the degradation of its water catchment to the extent that in the last two years, the only river (River Enyau) supplying Arua town with fresh water has seen a significant decline in both volume and quality. Each refugee individual on average consumes more than 3.5Kgs of fuel per day, and requires 0.95 cubic meters of poles for setting up shelter, 15-20 litres of water per day for domestic use per individual. In Bidibidi settlement alone, refugees consume on average 952 tonnes of wood daily and this figure and that for water are likely to grow with new influx of refugees.

With increased degradation of natural resources, the region is grappling with fuel wood shortages, competition over access to forest and water resources, declining ground water all leading to refugee-host community conflicts and in some cases increased sexual gender based violence especially on women and girl children.

Studies by UNHCR (2017) point the fact that majority of refugees (53.3%) and 31.2% of host communities have low incomes of less than 0.5 million UGX per annum, while 74.8% of refugees suffer food shortages. The same study indicated that 29.4% had no formal education, 66.6% no personal skills and 32.7% not engaged in any activity. This shows a very high level of vulnerability for both the refugee and host community which requires a new way of intervention beyond the protection phase.

Malterser International previously has invested heavily in plantation forestry in the areas of Rhino Camp in Arua where teak plantations were set up to meet both fuel wood and timber needs. With increased numbers of refugees and lack of proper forest governance in the region, these plantations have been degraded severely as both refugees and host communities seek for building and fuelwood materials. Similarly for the current response, Malteser International continues to invest in delivering water and sanitation services to the refugee and host communities. This is however being threatened by declining ground water.

Against this background, MI sought the partnership of ECO who are experienced in environment management to address the complex challenge of environment and climate change in refugee settlements.

3. 0 Project partner in target country (local partner)

Primary country partner

Malteser International identified the Ecological Christian Organization (ECO) as the primary partner in the implementation of the proposed program. ECO is a well established Non Governmental Organization (NGO) with over 12 years of experience working in highly vulnerable communities to build community resilience through ecological restoration and human empowerment. ECO has built capacity for implementing large environment and climate change projects in Uganda. Some of these projects are still on-going.

In terms of financial management capacity, ECO has put in place a strong system with highly qualified staff, undertakes both internal and external audits regularly on donor projects. ECO has previously handled projects worth over 0.5 million US dollars successfully.

Beyond the technical capacity, ECO has demonstrated strength in lobbying and advocacy especially in the extractives sector, climate change and environment working at national and international level through the Climate Action Network International[5], Publish What You Pay and Partners for Resilience. Locally, ECO hosts the Climate Action Network Uganda.

The institution has a strong management board that oversees the technical arm. Their role is to generate policy that guides the technical arm. The board meets regularly to make and direct policy.

Secondary partners

Secondary partners will mainly include the relevant government agencies such as the National Forestry Authority (NFA), Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA) at the Ministry of Water and Environment, National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Office of the Prime Minister and the National Planning Authority. These are expected to play a key role in providing additional technical advisories to the project under a defined mechanism and also political support.

In addition to the secondary government level partners, the team interacted with various partners (non state actors – civil society organizations) based in the districts of Arua and Yumbe. The purpose of the mission was to ascertain their technical capacity, on-ground presence, current and past activities in refugee management, and areas of collaboration. The study team met a number of district-based Nongovernmental Organizations that included: African Development Initiatives,

[5] Currently board member

RICE-WN, Okoro Urban Youths, ACORD, World Action Fund and Integrated Farm Management Consults (private tree nursery). All these organizations are involved in conflict management, Livelihoods support programs such as vegetable oil production, bee keeping, advocacy, conservation of natural resources.

A detailed organizational assessment and management appraisal will be undertaken to get the most suitable organization to collaborate with during the implementation phase.

Measures needed to strengthen the organization and capacities of the local partner

Malteser International advertised for local organizations to participate in the project implementation, and through a competitive partner assessment process identified a local partner who will do the direct implementation of some activities. The partner is based and registered in Arua.

The following measures are required to strengthen the local partner and they include:

- Additional training of the finance management team in line with the management of donor funds for this particular program
- Regular refresher training of the project implementation team to ensure quality management of the project
- Mainstream adaptive learning and flexibility in the implementation of the project
- Regular exposure and experience sharing of ideas and innovations with other actors in the sector

Interest/ownership of local implementation partners

From the field study, the partners met were found to be working very well with the host and refugee community. These organizations are locally based in the districts and provide the project with ease of access to the refugees and local host community. Besides, they are currently involved in implementation of projects in the refugee areas. Of particular interest are the private sector players who are self-driven and could be key in delivering success of the project.

Relationship between local partners and the target group/stakeholders

The local partners are locally based in the region and have built strong linkages with both the local host community and the refugees. Most have been in this region for more than 10 years working with the host communities and refugees. Convergences are in the area of natural resources management and livelihood improvements in their response work. All the partners contacted expressed great interest in working towards building resilience of both local communities and refugees.

The interaction can be improved through:

- Enhanced communication between partners and the target groups i.e. need for strong feedback mechanism
- Putting in place and adhering to accountability and transparence mechanisms that foster interactions
- Ensuring equitable access to project resources and participation of all target groups

4.0 Target groups and stakeholder analysis

a. Target group

Target group and criteria used for the selection process

The primary target groups are the refugee host communities and the refugees themselves in the two camps of Rhino (Arua) and Bidibidi (Yumbe) districts. The secondary target group is the government agencies such as the National Forestry Authority (NFA) who own large tree estates and the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) who have the advantage of high end research in animal and crop production.

Criteria used for selection

Primary target groups

This was based on their willingness to accept the intervention of external actors (captured from focus group interactions with select participants from community and refugees), the level of exposure and sensitivity (vulnerability) of the area to climate change impacts, existing potential for ecological restoration through FMNR, and ease of access to the area. A rapid assessment of the level of vulnerability was done using tools such as the transect line, profiling whose findings were harmonized with secondary data and recommendations from key informants at the district local government, OPM and agencies such as the UNHCR.

The target group here includes: refugees (70%), local communities (30%), district local government, local civil society organizations, and institutions such as the National Forestry Authority.

Secondary target group

These are government agencies (NARO, NFA) and non state actors (UNHCR, GIZ, ICRAF) who have a direct stake in restoration of the local environment. These were selected based on the capacity and expertise, ability to contribute to the project and building of synergies, an research potential necessary for generating useful information.

In terms of nature of impact to the various target groups, the refugee community (particularly women and children) are more impacted due to the fact that they depend on nature for providing livelihoods and energy. The local community too has become vulnerable to the environmental impacts of refugees as a result of over consumption of local resources.

How homogenous or heterogeneous is the target group?

The target group is generally diverse in ethnic composition mainly of South Sudanese origin with some relations with Ugandan ethnic groups of Kakwa, Madi and Lugbara.

The ratios between refugees and hosts currently stand at approximately 1:1 for the case of Yumbe district where refugees are slightly more than local hosts. In terms of gender segregation, women and children make about 85% of the total population in the refugee settlements. Sexual orientation is fully heterosexual due to strong customs in the communities (host and refugee).

From focus group discussions, we established that a minimal level of capacity existed in both the local community and refugees. For example, some of the refugees had some skills such climate smart agriculture practices (run-off gardens), bicycle and phone repairs, and tree planting. These could be tapped and enhanced in our project.

In the project design, we will emphasize the enhancement of rights of women and children and ensure that they fully participate in the activities. This will be made possible through the use of tools such as Gender Action Learning Methodologies (GALs) which take a holistic and inclusive approach in ensuring that no one is left behind in programming.

Needs of the target group

The study team identified the following needs for the target group. They include:

i. Capacity building in areas of environment and climate change

   The project will develop a training manual that will facilitate the training and mentoring of the target group on issues of environment and climate change. Skills and knowledge will be enhanced for both the refugees and host communities. These will include among others: managing natural regeneration of indigenous tree species, plantation management practices, and soil and water conservation, and forest enterprises such as apiculture

ii. Access to fuel wood and other forest/tree products.

   This will be address through enhancing tree cover for both the refugee and host communities through innovative approaches such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, cash for work in plantation development, providing support for distribution of tree seedlings for host communities especially where government is the supplier, encouraging the planting of multipurpose trees and helping access to non timber forest products.

iii. Strengthening forest governance for both government and private actors

   This will be done through facilitating the formulation of local by-laws for forest governance and putting in place incentives especially for local community groups

involved in forestry projects. The project team will work closely with the district natural resources and production departments.

iv. Designing and implementing local empowerment mechanisms for refugees and host communities while prioritizing rights of women and children.

Empowerment mechanism include: increasing access to financial resources through revolving micro loans, business mentoring and training. Other mechanisms will be in promoting the growing of high value crops targeting both the local and external markets. Value added crop products such as sesame oil, processed sorghum, soy bean and cassava flour will be ideal for the region.

v. Expanding access to appropriate energy services, business and technology for refugees and host communities

Access to appropriate energy is very critical and similar to food and water. The project will work with other stakeholders to facilitate local private players to enhance dissemination of improved cook stoves, small solar lighting and phone charging equipments among others. For those who may not afford cash payments, an incentive based mechanism will be put in place for example requesting beneficiaries to voluntarily participate in tree planting or regeneration in exchange for the equipment.

vi. Expanding access to weather and climate information services for refugees and host communities.

Weather and climate information services are important for the wellbeing of both refugee and host communities. The project will collaborate with the Uganda national Meteorological Authority to provide tailored services to the community. Services will include downscaled weather forecast for the region to facilitate decision making for small holders, enable large scale tree planting, and generally help reduce weather related risks.

Role played by the target group in the social context.

The local host community plays a major role in the management of the affairs of the target communities as they own the land through a communal system. We will work closely with the traditional leadership and local government agencies in the area to ensure that trade-offs and expectations are managed. In the design, there will be core target areas with specific activities and peripheral areas with soft activities mainly communication related. These will include: dissemination of environment and climate information, provision of market information, mass media delivered training (radio), exchange and learning visits for selected non project communities.

Conflicts might include: access to the rehabilitated forest estates, water and food resources and ownership of the planted trees and their products. To address this, a conflict and gender sensitivity mechanism will be put in place by the project. This mechanism will outline key intervention areas and strategies to address gender and conflict related issues in the project area. To make it easier for all stakeholders, investment in communication with all actors at various levels will be prioritized.

Existing potentials in the local community

From a livelihoods angle, there is existing potential for production of high value cereals such as sesame, okra, sorghum, tomatoes, cabbages and production of fruit trees such as mangoes. This applies to both the refugees and host community households. Agro-processing and trade in horticultural produce is likely to provide an immediate solution to improving livelihoods for all in the settlements. The proposed project will seek to scale up the production of some of these agricultural enterprises as a key intervention to empower refugees and locals.

Apart from the livelihood resources, the settlements provide a sizeable population of young people who can immensely contribute to the development of the area with their skills and labour. The women especially are crucial to the economic growth of the settlements through their contribution with small scale farming and retail businesses. The project will build on these potentials to deliver service to the beneficiaries.

b. Stakeholder

Important stakeholders

This project has identified key stakeholders who will contribute or collaborate in one way or the other to the success of the project. We will leverage especially technical resources that will be useful to the project for example in areas such as farmer natural managed regeneration, awareness raising, market access and getting the very important political will. The stakeholders will include:

a) Government level

These will include: Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Water and Environment (Directorate of Environment Affairs and NFA), and Ministry of Agriculture (NARO) and the National Planning Authority

b) Non government stakeholders

These will include:

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Germany Development Agency (GIZ) and the Germany Embassy in Uganda, ICRAF, and a select team of local based NGOs.

Relationship of the planned project to the government national development strategy

The government of Uganda has prioritized environment and climate change responses through a number of programs and actions such as the National Development Plans, National long term vision i.e. Vision 2040, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) supported by governance frameworks through creation of Authorities/Agencies mandated to take action. The proposed project will greatly benefit from the existing strategic direction and will also influence how the government and other actors respond to environment and climate issues in emergencies in the short and long term.

This project will contribute to the second National Development Plan as indicated in the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA) pillars I (sustainable land management), pillar 2 (Sustainable livelihoods), pillar 5 (environment protection) and pillar 4 (peaceful co-existence) by addressing the Environment and Natural Resources Development objective of: *promoting and ensuring the rational and sustainable utilization, development and effective management of environment and natural resources for socio-economic development of the country*. The project will contribute to this objective by contributing to addressing sector targets on increasing forest cover from 14% (FY2012/13) to 18% (FY 2019/2020).

The project will further contribute to the specific objectives of the ENR development objective that include: Restoring and maintaining the integrity and functionality of degraded fragile ecosystems, increasing the sustainable use of Environment and Natural Resources, increasing the country‘s resilience to the impacts of climate change, and increasing mitigation and adaptation (afforestation and reforestation and sustainable management) actions.

The project will further contribute to the Refugee Host Community Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) objectives that include: Sustainable livelihoods based on modernized agricultural practices and improved market linkages, market-driven technical skills and small-scale enterprise, and Community and system resilience based on dialogue and peaceful co-existence and preparing refugees for solutions i.e. build knowledge, skills, and capacities.

Interests of stakeholders

From the analysis, various stakeholders had well intended interests. The government particularly MWE/NFA were interested in restoring forest cover and developing catchment plans, while the UN agencies and counterparts are interested in delivering sustainable settlement options. Research agencies such as NARO and ICRAF are interested in promoting indigenous tree species as a cheap option for restoring the ecosystem services. The local organizations largely follow the direction offered by the funding partners and as such may not have concrete interests other than contributing to the overall response strategy. Key debate issues are mainly on water for production and size and nature of farming land allocated to refugees. In Bidibidi for example, refugees want to be allocated farming land close to the settlements whereas the office of the

OPM has insisted on allocating land far away from the settlements. For the case of water, the OPM prefers transferring water from river Nile to the camps whereas NGOs question the cost and instead prefer to use ground water resources that are cheaper.

There are potential synergies especially on the innovations around environmental restoration. The ICRAF for example is promoting FMNR which the project team equally found feasible in restoring the degraded ecosystems. The NFA, is involved in restoration of Uganda's degraded forest estate through partnerships and expressed willingness to work together with the project. The project team will consider these positive indications in the design of the project.

Stakeholder understanding of the problem and objective of the project

The project team interacted with various stakeholders i.e. government agencies, UN agencies, Ministries and Departments, local government officials, local community representatives and refugee community. It became apparent that they all understood the scale of environmental degradation in the refugee settlement areas and the need to get it restored. It should be noted that the district local government understood the problem from an environmental angle, whereas the community understood it from a livelihoods angle given their immediate basic needs.

At the local government level, Arua district had undertaken and environment impact assessment of refugee settlements. This assessment provided them with the understanding of the scale of the problem and how to respond to them. Some of the stakeholders like ICRAF, UNHCR and NARO were actively involved in research on appropriate intervention measures for restoring the ecosystem services and addressing human needs.

Support of the different stakeholders

The different stakeholders have a strong support for this project as expressed by their willing to either collaborate or contribute directly to the achievement of set objectives as observed during the stakeholder consultations. The local governments could potentially influence on where and how to implement the project since they have power over the local communities. Another potential influential stakeholder is the OPM who are the overall government arm response for implementing the Refugee Response Program. They could influence through use of policy and guidelines on how the project proceeds.

There are no legal agreements at the moment with any of the stakeholders. Agreements will be done with those stakeholders that formally participate in the project and after a detailed assessment.

5.0 Evaluation of the planned project according to OECD/DAC Criteria

a) Will the planned project be adequate?

The project addresses a critical development objective of promoting and ensuring the rational and sustainable utilization, development and effective management of environment and natural resources for socio-economic development of the country as identified in the 2nd National Development Plan (NDPII). Specifically, the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA) pillars 1, 2, 4 and 5 facilitate the realization of this development objective. The need to build the resilience of natural resources in order to provide critical livelihood and environment benefits is emphasized here. Uganda's economy largely depends on the well being of its natural resources including the favorable climate system.

The project is designed based on critical social, economic and environment needs of the target group that include: provision of fuel wood, shelter materials, medicinal plants, economic empowerment, business development services for youths and women, skilling, clean energy business and restoration of natural environment.

The planned project is designed to complement other existing efforts in the target areas and takes great care to avoid duplication of interventions and maximization of resources. Discussions have been held with the major actors (UNHCR, government and local NGOs) to assess their level of intervention and nature of activities. An open communication and regular engagement with all stakeholders will be highly emphasized for the on-ground implementing partners. Of particular interest will be to build consciousness around environmental stewardship amongst the refugees and host community populations. Other interventions will be on strengthening property ownership rights especially for host communities where some interventions will take place. For example, where large forestry projects take place, land tenure or land ownership shall be clarified to all actors to avoid what has happened to existing efforts where plantations had no known ownership and therefore severely degraded.

In terms of change, the project will lead to: improvement in the management of the environment and natural resources of West Nile; increased self reliance and resilience of both the host community and refugees; and increased access to appropriate energy for all. Generally, the long term change will manifest in the increased adaptive capacity and resilience of both the refugees and host community.

We further anticipate the scale up of successful pilot projects with best practices to create more impact both in the project area and beyond. These will be evaluated and enhanced to before scale up.

b) Effectiveness of the project

The approach used in the project is based on principles of inclusive green growth which requires increased participation of the local people especially women and youth, efficiency and productivity in use of resources, enhancing ecosystems services as a pathway towards community resilience, and building strong partnerships with government, civil society and donor community.

The measures used in the project have been carefully considered using criteria based on their cost effectiveness[6], ease of adoption, scalability and sustainability. Measures such as farmer managed natural regeneration, skills and knowledge development, business approaches to energy access and rehabilitation of existing forest estates and targeted planting of dedicated biomass plantations make the intervention more effective within the resource limit.

In the design of the project, synergies have been sought with other actors in the refugee response program. For example, the UNHCR, GIZ, FAO, Oxfam, ICRAF, World Vision among others have some elements of environment interventions in their programming. In the implementation of the FMNR approach, the project will seek the expertise of ICRAF, World Vision, and FAO who have worked with this technique before. Other actors such as CARE International have developed the VSLA and this project will benchmark on their design and implementation.

[6] Cost effectiveness was measured by comparing the costs and effectiveness of alternatives – in this case comparing conventional tree planting and natural regeneration under specific conditions such as a changing climate. The natural regeneration is approximately 10 times cheaper and more effective than conventional tree planting that is costly, riskier and could have less social and ecological benefits.

Effect Logic/Impact hypothesis

Project description	Baseline	Target	Indicators	Source of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective.			% increase in forest cover	GIS mapping	
To promote rational and sustainable use, development and effective management of environment and natural resources for enhanced resilience of refugee and host community settlements in West Nile.			Increase in resilience	Final Project reports	
Purpose/Outcome:					
Environment and natural resources managed effectively and sustainably in the selected settlements			% of land rehabilitated with tree planting	M&E reports	Enabling environment promoted and sustained by the government
Self-reliance and resilience of both host community and refugees enhanced			% increase in refugee households that are self-reliant		
Increased access to appropriate energy sources for refugees and host community			% of households with appropriate energy sources		
Strategies:					
Apply sound environment management practices (e.g. Sustainably managed energy plantations, FMNR and CSA)			# of sound environment practices being implemented		

Expand livelihood options (through the Integrated and Graduation Programming, Skills development, Private sector partnerships & cash for work programs)			Number of livelihood options availed to the beneficiaries		
Expand options for sustainable energy access			Number of energy options availed to beneficiaries		
Outputs					
a). Environment:					
Roadside water demonstrated for micro irrigation	0	50	Number of road side water facilities established	Monitoring record	Local community willingness to adopt the practices promoted
2 Micro catchment plans developed for Bidibidi and Rhino camps	0	2	Number of micro catchment plans developed	Actual plans developed	Local governments cooperate with the project team
New plantation with fast growing tree species established at Bidibidi camp and 2 teak plantation at Rhino Camp rehabilitated	0	2	Number of plantations established	Monitoring records	Local governments laws work to ensure proper resource governance
Indigenous fruit trees planted in select households in both refugee and host community (Rhino & Bidibidi) - #seedlings	0	100,000	Number of fruit tree seedlings planted	Planting records, delivery notes	By-laws on tree management are implemented by the local authorities

Local project partners and local government officials trained on good environment and climate change adaptation practices	0	60	Number of tree nurseries established in the settlements	Training attendance lists	
Tree cover on refugee farm plots restored through Farmer Managed Natural Restoration (FMNR) - # plots with atleast 5 trees	0	20,000	Number of farms practicing FMNR	Monitoring records	Land size allocated is not changed by the government
vii. Private tree nurseries established in the settlements	0	10	Number of private nurseries established in the settlements	Monitoring records	Private sector actors willing to establish nurseries in or near the settlements
viii. National level dialogues held on refugees and environment planning	0	6	Number of dialogues held	Attendance lists and workshop reports	
b. Livelihoods					
Refugees and local host communities add value to crops for market consumption	0		Number of households adding value to crops	Monitoring reports	
High value, low cost enterprises developed (Mushroom and local poultry birds production)	0	20	Number of households operating low cost intensive agricultural enterprises	Monitoring and registration lists	Market for value added crops is available
10 Group farms for horticulture produce (Green House farming) established	0	10	Number of greenhouses established	Project reports	
Youths and women oriented business in Rhino and Bidibidi camps established	0	5,000	Number of youths and women trained in business skills	Attendance lists	

10 demonstration Fish farms promoted in low flood prone areas for refugees and host communities	0	10	Number of households adopting fish farming	Monitoring reports	
Local SACCOs and VSLAs capacity built to increase their competitiveness	0	30	Number of SACCOs and VSLAs trained	Monthly or and quarterly Project repo	
Youths and women participating in cash-for-work on tree plantations	0	5,000	Number of youths and women engaged in cash-for-work	Payment lists	
c. Energy:					
Fuel wood saving stoves business promoted by youths and women in the camps	0	10,000	Number of youths and women promoting fuel wood saving stoves	Business record reports submitted	
Small solar lighting and charging business promoted by youths and women groups	0	2,000	Number of youths and women promoting solar lights	Same as above	

6.0 Project Monitoring

The impacts of the project will be monitored systematically by the two primary partners i.e. ECO and MI, district local government, and select beneficiary representatives on a monthly basis during implementation. A monitoring schedule will be designed together with the beneficiaries.

c. Efficiency

Financial, structural and personnel resources required

In terms of structure, the project will comprise of the two primary proponents ECO and MI (Overall project management, design, supervision, and donor reporting), District Local governments (to provide supervision and political support), research agencies (to provide technical information), and local NGO partners (actual execution on the ground).

The project will require a project implementation unit comprised of expertise on: environment and climate change, forestry/agro-forestry, livelihoods and business development, sociology, M&E, and financial management personnel.

In terms of resource efficiency, the approaches taken are sufficient to achieve the results within the budget limits. The project management team will minimize transaction costs, procure most inputs from local areas, use efficient technologies, and adopt low cost approaches such as farmer managed natural regeneration which is a low input-high output approach. With these approaches, the project activities will be achieved.

d. Significance/development impacts: Does the planned project contribute to achieving superior development al impacts?

The planned project contributes to the country's development needs through the promotion of rational and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources as a pathway towards overall economy wide resilience especially in the case of managing high impact emergency challenges like the current refugee problem.

The following objectives are derived from the needs analysis and include:

i. To promote the sustainable management and rational use of natural resources and environment in refugee settlements in West Nile

ii. To improve the livelihoods of refugees and local community hosts in West Nile.

iii. To enhance access to clean and appropriate energy services for both refugees and host communities in west Nile

iv. To enhance access to and use of tailored weather and climate information services as a measure to reduce risk in refugee settlements West Nile

In terms of structuring of the project, care has been taken to adopt a multi-level approach where actors at the national level work closely with the on-ground partners. The structure of the project includes: MI and ECO (as project promoters), research agencies (to provide research and technical information), Office of the Prime Minister, Select Government Agencies, and District Local Governments (to provide supervision and political support) and the local implementing partners (comprised of NGOs and private sector actors linking to the target group). With this structure, the significance and effective of the project will be realized. Each of these have specific roles and synergies that they bring on board.

Gender, inclusiveness, culture and conflict sensitive and human rights based approaches

This project takes cognizance of the role of gender and conflict sensitivity considerations as well as culture and human rights based approaches in the design of the proposed project noting that interventions that fail to consider gender sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, human rights and inclusiveness could easily generate or exacerbate new grievances including missing opportunities to promote gender equality further perpetuating inequality and violence. The current statistics from UNHCR indicate that women and girls comprise of 81% of the refugee population in West Nile while children take up 61% of this number. This coupled with high diversity of ethnicities in the settlements requires a well developed approach to addressing gender, conflict and human rights issues especially on rights of women and children. The statistics further point to the issue of addressing cultural issues in project design and implementation and the need to address entrenched cultural barriers that hinder socio-economic progress.

Generally, from the project management unit, we will prioritize deep understanding of the context and the two-way interaction between program activities and the context and act to minimize negative impact and maximize positive impacts. We will make considerations for an adaptable, flexible and innovative approach to programming especially integrating adaptive learning while noting the impact it may have on the overall planning and execution of the project.

Noting the importance of gender, conflict management and human rights approaches, the proposed project will address these issues by:

- Building capacity of key stakeholders i.e. project staff and project partner institutions in gender, human rights approaches and conflict sensitivity mainstreaming at the start of the project.

- Mainstreaming gender, human rights approaches and conflict sensitivity planning into project design for all grantees and ensuring that their monitoring and evaluation function addresses these issues during reporting.

- Conduct Regular and up-to-date Conflict Analysis and reporting for all stakeholders involved in the project

- Conducting Impact Assessments (Intended and Unintended) during implementation of the project

- Designing programme adjustment strategies (with interaction indicators)

e. Sustainability

Expand this section

Given the nature of the current refugee problem in West Nile and the state of affairs in the two countries of DR Congo and South Sudan, refugees are likely to stay longer in West Nile. Infact some of them have stayed there since the 1980s at the start of the conflict. Therefore, basing on both historical and current political scenarios, the project is designed in line with the long term focus. We have taken care to ensure that the project results and impacts go beyond the project life time through a number of strategies that include:

- Ensuring in the design that people are placed at the centre of all the project investments by involving them in the actual project design, focusing more on improving livelihoods in line with environment resources

- Building the capacity of local actors, the host community and refugees to be self reliant and resilient. Skilling will be emphasized especially for the young persons

- Building in the project empowerment activities that facilitate strengthening of livelihoods for entire households through the GALs methodology.

- Ensuring that local cultural values, norms and practices are considered in the execution of the project

- Adopting well tested conservation approaches such as farmer managed natural regeneration of degraded forest areas in settlement and further putting in place dedicated biomass plantations to serve as fuel wood and shelter source.

- Working with experts to ensure that we plant mostly indigenous tree species in addition to those that provide multiple benefits to the users

- Working with stakeholders at different levels, leveraging resources, skills and capacities

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

Each stakeholder will be assigned a specific role in the project based on set criteria and function. Government (central and local) will mainly work on supervision and monitoring including providing political support while the local civil society partners and project proponents will undertake the actual execution of the project. Additionally, the project will integrate private sector actors to provide services such as market linkages and quality inputs.

Within the design of the project, local structures and processes have been considered as one of the success strategies given their good knowledge of the area, experience and cultural/social acceptance especially in a very diverse cultural setting. The project intends to strengthen governance issues within the local structures including giving them specific roles and responsibilities in the project.

Measures to strengthen local initiatives and participation

There are a number of measures that the project will put in place to strengthen local initiatives and participation. These include among others:

- Building capacity of local NGOs especially on key issues of environment, climate change, livelihoods improvement strategies, human rights and natural resource governance.
- Benchmarking and adopting best practices in other refugee hosting areas in Uganda and if possible in the region
- Integrating some of the local initiatives into the project design or supporting existing initiatives to help scale them up
- Building a strong communication component in the project design to facilitate learning, exchange of information and adoption of new skills

Socio-cultural obstacles

According to our findings from the field, some of the obstacles might include:

- Some members of the local community still look at the forest lands as communal hunting and grazing areas where they practice bush burning to get fresh grass and catch small rodents, a practice that has lead to massive degradation of natural woodlands
- Land is still owned on a communal basis and at women have very limited power over its governance, hence complicating long term resource governance

These obstacles shall be addressed through:

- Putting in place a dialogue with community leaders and refugee representatives on improving resource governance in and around the settlements
- Encouraging and opening participation of the local community and refugees in the execution of the project
- Working with the government structures and local community leadership to develop or implement natural resources governance guidelines, regulations and policy.

Anticipated negative consequences and impacts of the project

The project team through interactions with various stakeholders at national and local level during the field study appreciated that the project might cause some impacts during implementation. Anticipated impacts may include:

- By introduction of tree species that are exotic and likely to cause harm to the natural ecosystem especially when planted as mono crops.
- Giving cash or any form of hand outs instead of creating sustainable empowerment avenues for beneficiaries might cause dependency and market failure particularly for energy products
- Trade-off between tree farming and food production might lead to food insecurity especially if a balance is not emphasized
- In areas where external labor is needed, conflict might arise especially from the local population over the available jobs.

These impacts have been taken care of through:

- Working with experts and local communities to plant trees that are indigenous and offer multiple benefits in the short to long term as a measure to address impacts from forestry
- Using cash for work on projects that require human labor as a measure to avoid dependency and empower beneficiaries
- Balancing food production and tree farming to avoid food insecurity
- Ensuring that there is a balance in employing local people and refugees in projects to avoid conflict over

Anticipated risks during project implementation

The following risks are anticipated and include: .

- In large forestry activities, land owners may not respect the terms of engagement as set out in the memorandum they sign with the project.
- Project staff not working within the set norms and values of the beneficiary community and therefore causing friction that could stall the project
- Poor communication between the project partners and beneficiaries might cause reputational risks where one fails to trust the other
- At the institutional level, the risk might arise out of failure to carefully address trade-offs between investing in one area and not the other without proper justification
- At the contextual level, risks are likely to come from failure to work on building ownership and tenure of resources such as trees and community infrastructure. In addition, some risks could come from land conflicts in the area being that most of the land in the settlements is communally owned or some of it has undefined ownership.

These risks will be addressed through:

- To ensure MOUs stand, the project shall engage local leadership while drafting and consenting to the MOUs signed with project beneficiaries in the specific relevant category.
- Put in place strong and effective communication about the project, sharing results and lessons learned with all the stakeholders regularly.
- Putting in place strong project governance requirements for project partners and regular monitoring of activities including engaging community leaders for feedback
- For misuse of project facilities, use protocols will be clearly laid down for all partners to follow during use of project facilities. Internally we will require all partners to have relevant policies and guidelines on managing facilities
- For trade-offs, we will work with the office of the prime minister, district local governments and national forestry authority on appropriate places for allocation of projects such as forest plantations while for livelihood projects, we will work with established groups or community of refugees willing to participate in the project.

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