



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

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Trip Report: Uganda and Kenya 1st-7th April, 2006

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Purpose

The purpose of the trip was to launch the project in both Kenya and Uganda. This involved reiterating project goals, objectives and methods with partners, most of whom we had met with in June last year and had made substantial inputs into the research proposal. In addition, the teams were to select research sites for 2006, a National project Advisory Team and also identify issues/areas required clarification.

Activities and outcomes

Research sites were selected to include cross border sites as well as in country sites of socio-ecological and biodiversity significance. In Uganda the first years i.e. 2006 sites include Bunyomya and Mabira forests. The later can be used to draw comparisons with Kakamega forest in Kenya. In Kenya, Aberdares forest and Mt. Elgon will be the sites visited in 2006. Mt. Elgon straddles the Kenya-Uganda border and will be used to draw comparisons.

National advisory teams, whose purpose is to provide some guidance to the research and to ensure that research results are disseminated to policy makers and communities in an appropriate and timely way, were elected. Finally, both Kenya and Uganda teams held a coordination meeting to brainstorm, discuss and raise queries on the key issues, challenges and constraints they may face as they implement the research project.

Contacts made included: Kenya Forestry Research Institute and Makerere University in Uganda. These are the National Institutes leading the SANREM research. Dr. Paul Ongugo (KEFRI) and Dr. William Gombya-Ssembajjwe (Makerere University) are the lead researchers for the Kenya and Uganda teams, respectively.

Other contacts, who will also be part of the research projects national advisory team include:



In Kenya:

Forest Department
Kenya Forests Working Group
Kenya Land Alliance
IUCN (absent with apology)
Moi University (recommended by meeting)
USAID (recommended by meeting)

In Uganda:

Forestry Inspection Division
CARE-Uganda
Center for Basic Research.
Makerere University
USAID.
National Forest Authority
Uganda's Forestry Research Institute

The advisory teams agreed to meet regularly with the lead National Institutes to provide direction and importantly to explore ways of feeding back research results to the policy process. Teams suggested that forest sector decentralization is in its infancy and there is ample scope to inform policy. For example in both Kenya and Uganda, the forest authorities are yet to undertake the writing of specific regulations that will help translate the new Forest Acts into practice. This is a potential entry point. Apart from the continuous process of informing decisions research results can create demand for good practice, which in itself is an important basis for policy.

During the Kenya meeting, a number of participants indicated that one of the sites selected (i.e. Aberdares) has generated a lot of interest nationally because it is a recognized watershed that provides water for consumption in Nairobi, the capital city. Consequently, the World Bank, the Green Belt movement and ICRAF already have plans to undertake various interventions that would enhance community participation in forest conservation. SANREM team in Kenya planned to hold a coordination meeting with these three organizations.

In sum, the SANREM project was well received both by government officials, universities and NGOs. The national advisory teams acknowledged the timeliness and usefulness of this study in both Kenya and Uganda, which are both struggling with decentralizing the forestry sector. The comparative nature of the broader study (which included Bolivia and Mexico) was recognized as especially important in providing opportunity for sharing lessons and experiences.

