Forging viable partnerships for implementation of National Forest Programmes has resulted into notable contributions to development of the sector and its provision for livelihoods and economic development in Uganda. Application of the principle of participation and inclusion dates back from inception of the sector policy reforms in the late 1990s. Now the forest sector presents one of the most advanced Public Private Partnership arrangements in Uganda that brings various key stakeholders to the same platform for value participation in sector appraisal, issues prioritization, planning, complementary implementation of interventions, monitoring and information sharing. However there are still crucial aspects of implementation, including overall governance that threaten this collective initiative and retention, growth of the forest estate, as well as sustained delivery of goods and services for livelihoods. Below is a summary of key stakeholders and their differentiated roles in the NFP process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Involvement in NFP process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD)</strong></td>
<td>Formulates and oversees the appropriate national plans, policies, standards, and legislation for the forestry sector; coordinates and supervise technical support and training to local governments; inspects and monitors local government and the NFA performance in forest sector development; coordinates the National Forest Plan (NFP) and cross-sectoral linkages; mobilizes funds and resources for the forest sector; and promotes public information and advocacy for the forest sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Forest Authority (NFA)</strong></td>
<td>Sustainable management of Central Forest Reserves (CFRs); supply of high quality forest products; supply of improved seed and seedlings; and provision of technical support to stakeholders in the forestry sub-sector on contract. Timber plantations have been established by the NFA at the end of 2008, largely through donor funding, partly to demonstrate good practices in plantation forestry and partly to lay a foundation for future revenues and thus ensure financial sustainability for management of CFRs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>District Forest Services (DFS)</strong></td>
<td>Manage Local Forest Reserves (LFRs); carry out support and quality control of forest extension for private and community forests; develop and enforce by-laws; strengthen forestry in production and environment committees and district development plans; as well as land administration, surveying, and approval of Community forests; among others.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Uganda Forest Working Group (UFWG)- A network of civil society organisations, individuals, academics and research institutions engaged with forestry sector development.</strong></td>
<td>Country-wide consultations during policy reforms, periodic sector performance monitoring promotion of SFM best practices, community capacity building, brokering for collaborative management, piloting alternative models, lobbying for increased allocation to the sector, promoting environmental integrity, collective action to mobilise public support for environmentally friendly forest governance decisions technical support on mainstreaming forestry in National Agriculture Advisory Services and overall development planning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Uganda Forest governance Learning Group – (FGLG), a sub-group of UFWG convened by the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment</strong></td>
<td>FGLG activities range from tackling illegal activities (such as encroachment, illegal felling of trees, illegal dealing in forest products, and illegal forest degazzettment); lowering policy barriers to local people involvement in forest enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Uganda Network of collaborative forest associations (UNETCOFA) - Community Based Organizations (CBOs) participating in Collaborative Forest Management</strong></td>
<td>Peer support on implementing, negotiating or intending to start CFM process to enhance joint learning, information sharing and form a critical mass for lobbying and advocating for policies in relation to Collaborative Forest Management that address issues of especially the forest-adjacent and forest-dependent communities, and on the environmental, economic and social benefits of sustainable forest management.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Makerere University Faculty of Forestry and nature Conservation, Nyabyeya Forestry College, NAFFORI</strong></td>
<td>Forestry education, research and outreach. Host of Annual Forestry day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>International NGOs</strong></td>
<td>Working with parks and people to reduce human-wildlife conflicts, initiate mutually beneficial institutional arrangements, supporting collaborative management initiatives</td>
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<td>Youth education initiatives – tree talk - Young generation NGO with child friendly approaches to forestry awareness</td>
<td>Key collaboration within education sector and private sector for awareness on benefits of forests and trees and promoting child participation in planting tens of thousands of indigenous tree species</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private sector – commercial oriented non-state actors. Of this the tree planting group is now organised as Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA). Others include Furniture manufacturers, seed suppliers, Pit sawyers, Timber dealers etc</td>
<td>Private sector is participating through long term(50 years) licenses to land in the Central Forest Reserves(CFRs) for establishment of timber plantations: About 22,015 ha of timber plantations had been established by the private sector of about 2,342 persons with varying sizes of land.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Forest owners and other forest dependent communities owning/accessing forestry on private land</td>
<td>Forest owners / users participate in clarifying value of forests to livelihoods of the poor, impact of forest degradation, they are taking initiative to reduce biomass energy utilisation through application of energy saving technologies (stoves), they participate in piloting SFM alternatives including sound forest based enterprises based on the MA&amp;D FAO model with support from Ford Foundation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donors/Development partners</td>
<td>Provide funding and selective technical support. Facilities such as the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) funded by the European Union (EU) have been created to promote private sector participation in timber growing in Uganda. Others include , NORAD, World bank, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Environmental Journalists</td>
<td>Media publicity of process and issues, mobilisation</td>
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**Experiences with stakeholder participation in the nfp process (2 pages)**

A range of differentiated experiences with stakeholder participation exist. Description of the specific experiences made with stakeholder participation in the country, for example:

**Ministry OF Water and Environment: Forest Sector Support Department**

Staff of the forestry sub-sector were very instrumental in advising, piloting alternatives and advocating for a paradigm shift in forestry management from an autocratic character to participatory forestry management. Actions and commitments had strong support from non state actors who invested in pilots to demonstrate some of the proposed policy options and soon after policy commission even led the process for developing a PFM Manual with support from FAO. They have since become the champions for PFM in Uganda and have become lead facilitators for the country-wide shift. They have also supported the restructuring of institutions and continue to be resourceful to the sector. On the other hand the department attracts complementary support through this partnership for instance in operationalisation of the District Forest services, policy awareness and other fields.

**Uganda Forest Working Group**

Uganda forest Working Group made an early partnership inception with the Ministry of water and Environment through the Forest Sector Support Department (previously forestry department) in 2004. This followed their active and committed participation in the first phase of the forestry policy reforms that resulted the Forest Policy 2001, the Forest and Tree Planting Act 2003 and the corresponding guidelines. Participation was characterised by undertaking public/community consultations, undertaking studies and developies inventories of issues to inform policy formulation. Having identified a critical gap in operationalising the District Forest Services the two parties agreed to apply for the FAO NFP catalytic support since the Government of Uganda had taken the initiative to implement objective 3 of the National Forest Plan. The overall management and technical advice function for implementation of the facility in Uganda is held by the Multi-stakeholder steering Committee (MSSC). The facility is hosted by an NGO, Environmental Alert which holds a host institution agreement as Secretariat of UFWG. The MSSC is chaired by the Commissioner for Forestry who is also the National Focal Person for the NFP Facility. The committee currently holds a membership of twelve people representing different categories of stakeholders. This platform for participation enhanced the quality of the NFP processes and products due to the rich, diverse and professional input but also provides a mechanism for public consultation.

**UNECOFA**

Forest Management in Uganda had earlier been characterized by state control without involvement of the local communities over the years2 until the commissioning of the 2001 forest policy which made provision for collaborative and Community Forestry Management

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as another viable option to manage Forestry resources. Well guided collaborative forest management initiatives have been facilitated through a mix of Eastern Africa capacity building events, field facilitation and negotiated arrangements supported by CARE International and others in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. As a result tens of negotiated CFM agreements were in place by 2007 and some processes for negotiation are still ongoing. In addition strong networks of collaborative forest associations in each country emerged, in Uganda the network of collaborative forest Associations formed by participating community based organisations in 2006. UNETCOFA is now set to to enhance joint learning, information sharing and form a critical mass (5,0073 network members) for lobbying and advocating for policies in relation to Collaborative Forest Management that address issues of especially the forest-adjacent and forest-dependent communities, and on the environmental, economic and social benefits of sustainable forest management.

Associations of Private Forest Owners

With support from Ford Foundation and Environmental Alert have developed demonstration sites and community enterprise initiatives based on the FFAO model that within 3 years have proven potential to transform household livelihood challenges and significantly reduce deforestation and degradation. Over 500 respondents from selected project sites where such experiences are drawn have participated in county prioritisation of issues for priority attention in the forest sector, 2008, from which the second FAO Facility support draws its justification. Several other community groups have been involved in implementation of this Forest Based Enterprise model facilitated by BOCODO; A local NGO.

Benefits and risks of participation in NFP process

Even though the benefits are significant there is still much to be done to harness the potential participation should deliver. Some of the key benefits include:

- Ownership, improved quality of output based on consensus and enrichment from alternative views and experiences, momentum of CSOs rendering drive to NFP processes, CSOs can work outside departmental bureaucracies which sometimes hinder appropriate and timely implementation and realisation.
- Sector coordination for synergy and cost effectiveness and overall momentum of sector development improves
- Understanding of actors and interests and devising win win arrangements and complementing each other’s work. It also enhances understanding and appreciation of the case advanced by forest sector proponents

Risks

Our initial assumption regarding the power of consensus with technical officers the expectations and mutually agreed targets have sometimes been undermined by absence of political blessing or blessing is characterised by lip service thus causing disillusionment. Potential fall out based on fundamental issues presents as a breach of trust that undermines any future productive collaboration and puts the sector gains at stake.

Furthermore, a vibrant civil society involving the media and local NGOs sometimes is viewed as a threat by government officials. In actual fact some non-state actors may not be resilient to purposeful or potential co-option.

Precise points, where participation influences the different phases of nfp.

The process is cyclic from gap analysis, setting change objectives, commissioning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- Studies to inform the process during policy development or review
- Country strategy review such as PEAP, and now NDP 2009-13
- Annual Joint sector reviews influence implementation plans and sometimes policy statements
- Uncontested programme outcomes challenge decision makers and trigger desired commitments at different stages
- The competitive advantage of working with CSOs to apply tested and working community feedback mechanisms and products is a basis for their secured role in implementation of policies and programmes
- Media (print and electronic) is playing a very important role by informing citizens the process, their role, the good and bad activities in the sector etc which is inevitable in all phases of the NFP.

Challenges, the organisations had to face and how they dealt with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The emerging vibrant civil society involving the media and local NGO’s is</td>
<td>Improved articulation of strategy and advocacy messages as well as depoliticising issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes viewed as a threat by government officials, in particular where they have been insistent on accountability and transparency.</td>
<td>Seeking audience for clarification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frustration over what seems like gross negligence on the part of government and selected government entities. Even the most strategic priorities have failed to realise prioritisation for budget allocation inspite of several technical papers.</td>
<td>Targeted lobbying of politicians and technocrats in central and local governments; Productive participation in government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 On average 7 people per member household equivalent to 35,000 beneficiaries
evidence based cases and demonstration of value of investment in the sector, and the cost of not investing. In particular financing DFS.

Political support does not match commitment to policy reforms. Hard nosed lobbying and direct negotiation including tabling alternative budgets and shadow reports.

Reform assumed that changes would work if everything is in place but this was not the case. Advocated for revision of the NFP to recontextualise actions as well as their revision to current operating context.

Undervaluing of contribution of forests and woodland to annual household incomes in rural areas which leads to less political support from the governments(local and central).

Undertaking studies and popularising the findings.

Increasing population is straining the forest resources leading to accelerated deforestation and degradation. Still to be addressed.

Forest users and owners have limited skills to develop viable forest based enterprises. Capacity Building characterised by experiential learning.

Participatory processes and multi-stakeholder participation takes time and is costly, yet necessary to keep up the momentum of stakeholder involvement, in particular to maintain inevitable comradeship, effective sector coordination and mutual support. Patience, tolerance, enhanced communication, improved listening and celebrating process gains and strengthening partnership incentives/servicing.

Our key challenges
1. Sector stakeholders still need to craft a solution to respond to overwhelming demands for forest goods and services, and in particular to market forestry as a viable economic asset and attract both public and private investment.
2. Within the context of the current demands forest extension staff, CSOs, private forest owners and other forest users have limited skills and knowledge to develop viable forest based enterprises and respond to current demands as opportunities for household, Local Government, and national revenue.

Participation adds value to decision making processes
Uganda sector stakeholders acknowledge that participation adds value. Participation in the policy development process gave the whole sector policy framework a new shape with inclusion of elements addressing gender, entrenching participation, providing for collaborative management and others. Several stakeholder categories participated in this process.

Even as the government-CSO partnership was ongoing, UFWG was at the forefront in the campaign against the earlier decision to degazette part of the Mabira Forest (Jinja district). The GoU had proposed to give part of the Mabira Forest to investors- a sugar factory to grow more sugarcane and increase on its production capacity. As a result of this campaign the government decision was halted and now a master plan for retaining and enhancing the forest is being developed. The successful execution of this campaign was a test to the Government – CSO partnership whose implementing institutions carried through without undermining the partnership objective. The targets of the NFP would have been undermined.

Stakeholders played different roles in their individual, collective and institutional capacities. Among these: Field Technical Support, Small Grants management, Research and products development, Awareness creation, Piloting alternatives, Media publicity of issues and policy processes, Public debate, Advocacy and legislative lobbying, Budget analysis and advocacy.

The catalytic grant facility matters
One would think that this partnership could have happened anyway, but the facilitant for it was the FAO NFP Facility which has not been a simple catalytic input but an inspiration for productive engagement that transcends generic project arrangements. Facility staff have provided information and links for collaboration with others creating opportunities for broader engagement. Key information source has been shared with Uganda partners and perhaps more recently the exposure to the funding database was an eye-opener to opportunities that we were not aware of before. The facility and supported initiation of linkages at regional and subregional levels. The facility grant enabled partners to come together periodically to share lessons as well as for networking purposes.

Our Future Perspectives (Short and medium term)
- A Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee which collectively oversees implementation of the partnership and facility support will be strengthened and will support country processes linking forestry to climate change concerns and steering stakeholder participation in a similar and even better way.
- Multi-stakeholder ranking of priority issues in the forestry sector around which stakeholders can focus within the context of their respective mandates (See priority issues – publication 2009) will continue as part of the annual stakeholder feedback and review.
initiative. Revitalising the annual stakeholders forum as well as creating and strengthening issues based sub-groups for sustained and supportive dialogue and action by issue groups.

- We have committed to improve stakeholder inclusion for marginalised sub-regions within the country by obligating active members to extend support for instance to northern Uganda (3 districts from Northern Uganda will be included in the portfolio for facility support).
- Improving coordination by the secretariat to keep stakeholders updated, facilitate knowledge exchange and collective resource mobilisation. Networking beyond the national boundaries at subregional, continental and global levels.
- Close collaboration with other sectors to negotiate for stronger public support, due political support, green accounting among corporate entities, increased investment in the sector and more equitable benefit sharing.
- Evolving partnership principles and improving mutual support and documenting the forest sector partnership and participation as a best practice to popularise government partnership with non state actors across all sectors, thus enhancing governments own implementation desire for the Public Private partnership initiative.

Contacts for further information

Environmental Alert
Secretariat for Uganda Forest Working Group
Secretariat for Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee for the NFP catalytic support

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