

NATURAL FOREST RESTORATION POTENTIAL ON PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY LAND IN WESTERN UGANDA



Scope of work for an analysis

D3

WCS

April 2021

Context

WCS in Uganda

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a US-based non-governmental organization founded in 1895 that protects wildlife and wilderness by understanding critical issues, creating science-based solutions and promoting conservation actions that benefit nature and the humanity.

WCS has been supporting conservation in Uganda since 1957 and has supported conservation projects almost every year since this time. Currently, WCS focuses on three key landscapes in Uganda which are critical for conservation: [Greater Virunga Landscape](#), [Murchison-Semliki Landscape](#) and the [Kidepo Landscape](#). WCS is developing an integrated landscape-scale forest restoration project in the Murchison-Semliki Landscape, which is part of the Albert Water Management Zone jurisdiction of the Ministry of Water and Environment.

REDD+ feasibility within Albert Water Management Zone

WCS has been an active partner in Uganda's REDD+ development since 2010. In 2020 WCS secured funding from a large volume credit purchaser to initiate the development of a carbon project within the region of the Albert Water Zone. WCS is proposing to develop, with government and other stakeholders, an integrated landscape-scale forest conservation and restoration project. The project would combine efforts to **reduce deforestation** with a range of approaches to **forest landscape restoration**, providing significant biodiversity and community co-benefits.

Forest Landscape Restoration in the Albert Water Management Zone

As part of the proposed landscape scale REDD+ programme, WCS is currently evaluating the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of different restoration and reforestation approaches. These are:

- Restoration of government forest land (within gazetted forest reserves)
- The promotion of tree planting with communities near government forests to provide alternative sources of wood
- The restoration of natural forest on private and community lands

The third of these three approaches (The restoration of natural forest on private and community land) remains to be evaluated in detail, and WCS seeks to conduct a study of the potential options, better to understand the scale-up potential, cost effectiveness and likely implementation challenges related to the creation of forests on private lands.

It has been agreed that natural forest restoration should be focused on areas in/around potential **wildlife corridors** between government forest reserves (including those areas identified by WCS, and

Lamprey 2015¹). The land in these forest corridor areas is predominantly privately owned, and some is active farmland, but experience has shown that landowners in the region may be interested in re-establishing tree cover on all or part of their lands in return for incentive payments. Incentive models may be those that cover the cost of tree seedlings and establishment costs, while allowing the landowner to benefit from the harvest of some timber when the trees are mature, other non-timber forest products and carbon revenues.

Description of the services

WCS seeks to establish a programme of **natural forest** restoration on **private and community lands** in the Albert Water Management Zone (AWMZ) that will be certifiable under the Verified Carbon Standard, VCS. This programme will compliment ongoing efforts to reduce deforestation in government forest reserves and restore areas of those reserves that have been deforested in past years.

This study will identify the lessons that can be drawn from existing programmes in the region that work with private landowners, and/or 'trees on farms' models. It will evaluate the **potential implementation models** and the likely **carbon gains** from different approaches. It will also provide insights into landowner willingness to take up different/proposed models, and use this to estimate the **scale potential** of different approaches when promoted across the AWMZ.

The study will include the following activities:

Lessons from experiences in the region

The study will review the experiences of similar projects and initiatives within the region where organisations have built support for restoration and the planting of trees on farmland, and where all or part of such programmes is funded with carbon credit revenues. The review should include at least the experiences of the work of TIST Uganda, and the ECOTRUST Trees for Global Benefits programme, and may include other examples from elsewhere in East Africa.

The review should draw lessons from the different types of tree planting models currently practised in the landscape (i.e. agroforestry, mixed species woodlots, boundary planting, stream/river-side planting etc). It should analyse how these models respond to local farmers' socio-economic needs, and how they contribute to biodiversity and conservation. It should also present an indicative comparison of interventions in terms of carbon storage potential per intervention type per hectare.

Design potential implementation models

The study will present options for the design of the reforestation/restoration programme that will meet WCS's conservation objectives. That is, the intervention will support only the planting/regrowing of **native trees**, and/or the restoration of **natural woodlands** and forests on private lands, with the objective to increase the available habitat for wildlife by increasing connectivity between natural forest areas.

The study will present suggestions for **revenue sharing** processes, including recommendations on the way benefits flow to participants. Potential implementation models should be based on the

¹ Lamprey R (2015) A scoping study and action plan for protecting and restoring two forest connections on community land in the Albertine Rift, Western Uganda. Flora and Fauna International.

assumption that **all** costs for running the programme need to be covered by revenues from carbon credit sales, (assuming that all credits generated will be sold, and allowing for forward sales based on ex-ante estimates of carbon sequestration). As such, the assessment should provide a rough assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the recommended designs.

Design recommendations should be developed for different types of land ownership (e.g. individual, communal) with clearly stated assumptions about the long term use of the reforested land (e.g. Agro-forestry approach, selective harvesting (including for timber, poles, firewood), and no harvest). It should consider the need to obtain clear evidence of land tenure, and present recommendations for the design of the intervention that flow from this consideration.

Finally, the assessment should consider the implications of working with several thousand individual land owners and community forests (where applicable), and present recommendations for the formation of landowner groups or other structures that could streamline the monitoring of the programme over the long term, manage grievances and ensure adequate participation of stakeholders.

Scale up potential

Based on the lessons from existing projects and the recommendations for implementation models, the study will estimate the scale-up potential for the programme considering all the costs. The assessment of scale potential shall consider land owners stated and observed priorities, and make informed assumptions about landowners' willingness to engage, and the extent of private/ community land that might be available for forest restoration.

The assessment of scale up potential should also consider the long term changes in land owner priorities and make informed assumptions about attrition, or the loss of participants over time, when land owner, or community forest use priorities change.

Deliverables

The consultant will provide a draft report/synthesis of the above assessment for review by WCS, and participate in a discussion meeting to debate the initial findings. Following the discussion meeting, WCS will provide written feedback and comments on the draft report. The consultant will finalise the report, in light of comments and requests for clarification...

Timeline

Draft report: 2-months from contract signature to delivery of draft report

Final report: 1 month from receipt of comments on draft report

Modus operandi

The contract will be established on fixed term basis with WCS Uganda.

Costed proposals (**Maximum 5 pages**) should be submitted to Dr. Simon Nampindo, WCS Country Director snampindo@wcs.org, with a copy/ies to Paul Hatanga, Project Manager, phatanga@wcs.org by May 5th, 2021