



# Forest tenure reform implementation in Uganda

## CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

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### Key messages

This study was carried out in the districts of Kakumiro, Kibaale, Masindi, and Lamwo in Uganda<sup>5</sup>. It focused on district-level government officials involved in the implementation of forest tenure reform in Uganda, but people at the national level who were familiar with forestry and land matters were also interviewed. The study highlighted key challenges and opportunities for future improvements. Analysis of responses shows that:

- As reforms responded to a need for sustainable forest management and livelihood improvements, activities leaned towards forest protection, rather than strengthening and securing community forest tenure rights.
- Progress in tenure reform implementation has been below implementers' expectations, largely due to inadequate funding, onerous processes of registration, declaration and management of Private Natural Forests and Community Forests, or in the case of Collaborative Forest Management, negotiation of rights with Responsible Bodies.
- The main economic, social and political challenges that government officials face in implementing reforms were budgetary limitations, as well as some realities that can also affect rates of change, namely poverty levels in forest-adjacent communities, migration and socio-cultural norms. Research respondents also noted that often, politicians impeded rather than supported reform implementation processes. Some of them derived political capital out of exerting pressure on technical staff to engage in, as well as protect, illegal activities.
- The study revealed a number of technical problems that constrained the implementation of forest tenure reforms. These included the tedious processes involved in getting the rights formalized, community inability to protect and safeguard forest tenure rights, and the entrenched issue of inadequate benefits accruing to communities involved in forest management activities.
- There was no agreement among the respondents about who is responsible for safeguarding community forest tenure rights. Development partners and civil society organizations (CSOs) also undertake activities to support the securing of local tenure rights, such as capacity building, resource mobilization, awareness raising and conflict resolution. However, such support is often short-lived and localized. Although government and CSOs are both involved in reform implementation, there is limited formal coordination between them.

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5 One of the districts, Kibaale, was divided into two districts (Kibaale and Kakumiro) midway through the project.

## Introduction

Uganda's forest cover is 62% woodland, 21% tropical moist forest, and 17% forest plantation (MWE 2016). In 1990, forests covered an estimated 4.9 million hectares (ha), or 24% of the country's total land area. By 2015, this had declined to 2.4 million ha, about 12% of total land area. In just a quarter of a century, Uganda had lost 50% of its forest cover.

In terms of tenure regimes, national parks managed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority make up 1,985,400 ha, central forest reserves managed by the National Forest Authority (NFA) cover 1,117,300 ha, local forest reserves managed by local government constitute 5,000 ha, and forests on private and customary lands cover 826,000 ha.

The annual rate of deforestation and forest degradation was about 3.7% between 1990 and 2000. Most of this occurred on private lands or land with customary forests outside the protected area network, which includes central and local forest reserves, national parks and wildlife reserves.

Facing such dramatic losses of forested land, Ugandan policy-makers argued that improved land and tree tenure would act as an incentive for individuals and communities to invest in forestry, as well as stem the rate of deforestation (Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, 2001). In response, the 2003 *National Forestry and Tree Planting Act* (NFTPA) and its subsidiary legislation were introduced, to strengthen ownership and management of forests on private land (including community and customary forests), and community participation in forest management. The Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) also prepared national guidelines for implementing Collaborative Forest Management, and formation, registration and management of Community Forests and Private Natural Forests.

Since the the adoption of the NFTPA, a number of studies have been undertaken to assess forest tenure, especially with respect to community based forestry issues (Tumusiime 2016; Turyomurugyendo 2016; Turyomurugyendo 2016a). This study complements the work that has been done by exploring the historical context, the wider objectives of the reforms, and assessing the extent to which they have been achieved. It was designed to understand the process of implementation of reforms since the NFTPA came into force in 2003, with the aim of gaining insight into potential improvements that could be made for future implementation.

The study, which focused on national and sub-national government officials involved in implementation, sought to answer the following questions:

- I. What were the main objectives of forest tenure reforms?
- II. What institutional arrangements were put in place to implement forest tenure reforms?
- III. What activities were carried out to implement reforms?
- IV. What factors affected reform implementation?

## Methodology

The NFTPA provided legislation on collective management of forest resources, although the "bundles of rights" allocated to forest resource users varied, depending on the type of tenure regime (Table 1). This study focused on Community Forests on former public and customary land in Masindi and Lamwo districts respectively; Private Forest Owner (PFO) associations in Kibaale district; and Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) in all three districts.

**Table 1. Description of forest tenure reforms introduced by NFTPA (2003).**

RIGHTS BROUGHT ABOUT BY NFTPA 2003	TENURE REGIME		
	PRIVATE FORESTS	COMMUNITY FORESTS ON FORMER PUBLIC LAND AND ON CUSTOMARY LAND	COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT
Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon registration with the District Land Board, the PFO is legally recognized as a Responsible Body, at the same level as NFA</li> <li>PFOs may group together to form a legally-recognized association of PFOs</li> <li>A PFO association may become a Responsible Body if their individual forests are registered as one forest with multiple management units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following declaration by the Minister, the forest is legally owned by the community</li> <li>A "community" can be a village or a clan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No ownership rights given to communities</li> </ul>
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A PFO has a right to allow or limit access to his/her property in accordance with the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities can access the forest in line with procedures they have established</li> <li>The legally-constituted organization controls access on behalf of the community</li> <li>Certain public rights are reserved for government (e.g. roads/paths connecting villages, streams for domestic use, and wetlands for the public good)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities can access the forests in central and local forest reserves in accordance with the negotiated CFM agreement</li> </ul>

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**Table 1.** Continued

RIGHTS BROUGHT ABOUT BY NFTP A 2003	TENURE REGIME		
	PRIVATE FORESTS	COMMUNITY FORESTS ON FORMER PUBLIC LAND AND ON CUSTOMARY LAND	COLLABORATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT
Withdraw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PFO can harvest or license other entities to harvest and process forestry resources on their forest(s) in line with the Forest Management Plan (FMP) and the NFTP A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities can harvest forest produce in accordance with the approved FMP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community rights to withdraw forestry resources are negotiated with the Responsible Body and entrenched in a CFM agreement and CFM Plan</li> </ul>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PFO can make management decisions in line with approved FMP</li> <li>PFOs may cede some or all of the management rights to the PFO association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon declaration, the Minister appoints a community institution with legal standing to manage and control the forest on behalf of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local community has rights to manage forestry resources together with the Responsible Body; community management activities are negotiated and entrenched in a CFM agreement and CFM plan</li> </ul>
Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PFO can exclude outsiders</li> <li>PFO can issue licenses as a Responsible Body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community has a right to exclude outsiders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities assist Responsible Bodies to exclude outsiders or illegal harvesting through regular patrolling</li> </ul>
Alienation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PFO can transfer their interests to another party e.g. mortgage or sell the forest with district council approval</li> <li>The new owner cannot change land use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In accordance with Community Forest registration and declaration guidelines, the community has a right to alienate their interests in the forest (e.g. use the certificate of ownership to put up their forest as collateral to get loans from banks)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities have no right to sell or mortgage the forest</li> </ul>

## Data collection

Central and local government officials in Kibaale, Masindi and Lamwo districts were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. In total 31 officials were interviewed; nine at national level, 18 district-level technical officials, and four district-level politicians. There is a gender imbalance of staff implementing tenure reforms, which is reflected in the numbers of male interviewees (87%) and female interviewees (13%). Interviews were designed to collect information

that would provide an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of implementing officials, the challenges they faced during implementation, and their priorities and capabilities, including in integrating excluded groups and individuals such as women. We also examined the institutional arrangements used to implement reforms, including the extent of coordination and collaboration among relevant actors.



## Results

### What were the objectives of the tenure reform?

When asked what the objectives of forest tenure reform were, over 90% of respondents reported that reforms responded to the need to promote responsible forest management and conservation, including restoration of degraded forests, and 60% mentioned improving local people's livelihoods. Only 37% considered securing forest tenure rights as a key objective, with 27% considering improved community access to forestry as key (Figure 1).

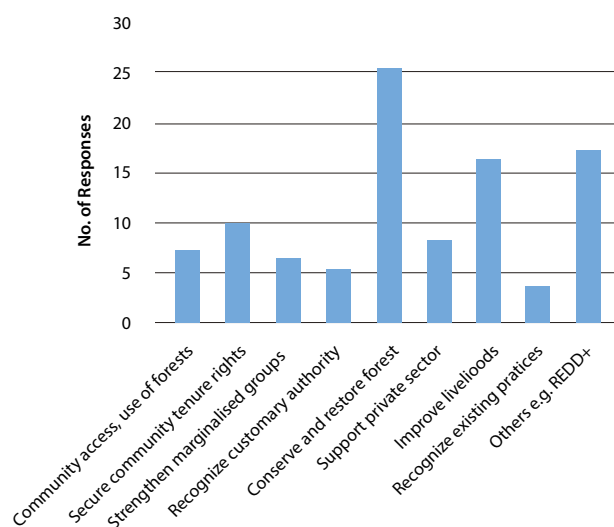


Figure 1. Objectives of forest tenure reforms.

### What activities were carried out to implement forest tenure reforms?

When asked what specific activities they conducted to implement forest tenure reforms, the majority (58%) reported involvement in initiating and facilitating reform processes. The main processes they supported included Collaborative Forest Management and declaring/registering Community and Private/Family Forests (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of activities done by government officials to implement forest tenure reforms.

ACTIVITY	No. OF RESPONSES	%
Initiate and facilitate reform processes	41	58.6
Capacity building (training)	8	11.4
Resource mobilization (funds and materials)	7	10.0
Awareness and sensitization	6	8.6
Support implementation	6	8.6
Conflict resolution	2	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>

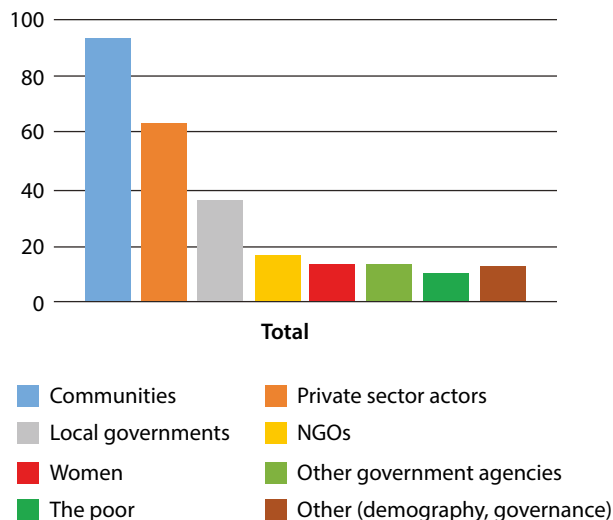


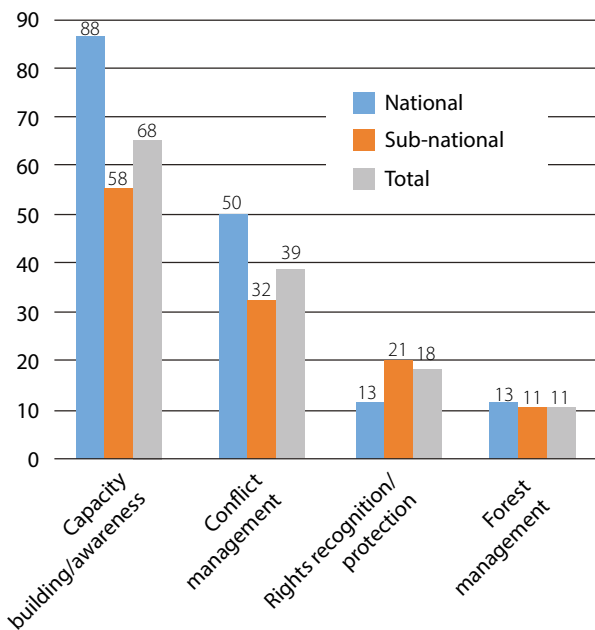
Figure 2. Beneficiaries of forest tenure reforms.

Less than 10% reported involvement in critical activities for securing tenure, such as resource mobilization, awareness creation, sensitization, conflict resolution and community support in securing and safeguarding forest tenure. This corresponds with the findings of Turyahabwe et al. (2015) that bureaucrats involved in local-level reform implementation are mostly involved in forest reserve protection and seeking to optimise revenue collected from them. Activities empowering communities to demand tenure rights and security were easily overlooked, despite Uganda's Forest Policy (2001) indicating that securing and strengthening forest tenure would incentivize communities to sustainably manage forestry resources.

Most respondents (93%) said that reforms targeted local communities, with 63% saying private sector actors were targeted (Figure 2). However, national and district-level respondents differed greatly in their responses on the targeting private sector actors (89% and 55% respectively).

Just 13% of national and 10% of district-level respondents said the reforms targeted women and poor people, indicating that implementers did not see women and the poor as important target groups of reform implementation. This suggests that most implementation activities target local communities in general, with negligible focus specifically on women and the poor.

Conversely, 68% of respondents mentioned training / capacity-building / awareness-raising as the most common kind of community support provided by implementing agencies. This response, given by 88% of national and 58% of district-level respondents, indicates a tendency for national programs to go for easier aspects of implementation, rather than more demanding aspects, such as conflict resolution, rights recognition, forest protection and management (Figure 3). Training / capacity-building / awareness-raising was also the favoured activity provided to support Private Forest Owners (according to 68% of all respondents, 75% of national-level

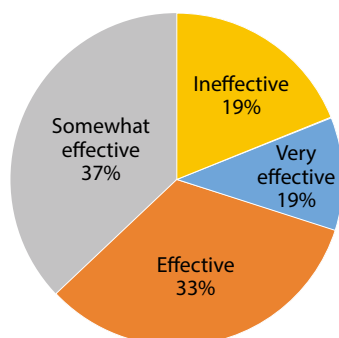


**Figure 3.** Support provided to communities by reform implementers.

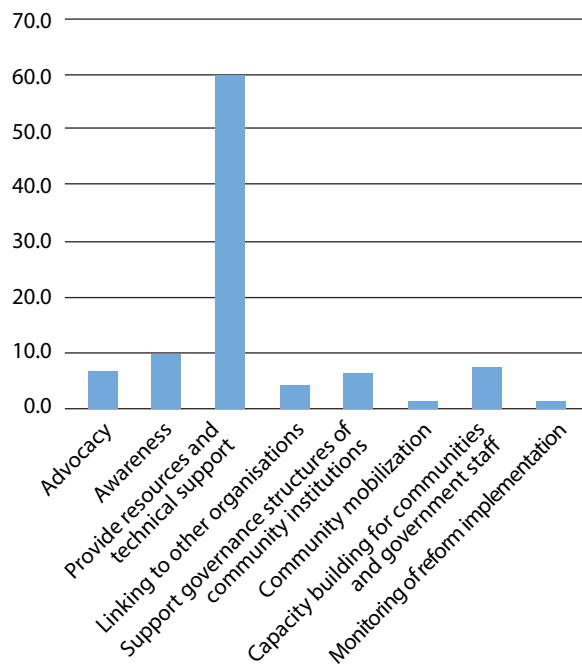
respondents, and 64% of district-level respondents). A minority (19%) of respondents said implementation activities were ineffective, 37% of interviewees believed they were somewhat effective, and 44.4% said they were effective/very effective (Figure 4).

Those who believed reforms were ineffective cited reasons as the failure to complete registration / declaration processes (resulting in limited numbers of CFM agreements), increased illegal harvesting and conversion of forest land to other uses, and limited improvement in the livelihoods of forest-adjacent communities. Those believing reform implementation to be effective stated their reasons as community institutions being built and registered, women’s participation being guaranteed by regulations and guidelines, and some degraded natural forests being restored.

Although government activities were not as effective as expected, respondents reported that CSOs and development partners were actively involved in reform implementation. Such organizations provided financial and technical support to establish Community Forests,



**Figure 4.** Effectiveness of tenure reform implementation activities.

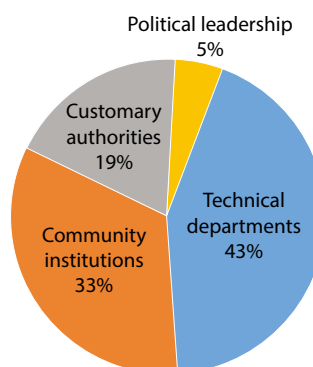


**Figure 5.** Main activities carried out by CSOs in forest tenure reform implementation.

form PFO associations, support income-generating activities for participating communities, support PFOs in Natural Forest restoration, prepare forest management plans, maintain forest boundaries, and help communities improve governance systems. A majority of interviewees (60%) reported that successes in forest tenure reform implementation were due to CSO participation. Activities attributed to CSOs are shown in Figure 5.

### Who is responsible for safeguarding community forest tenure rights?

Forest tenure security relies on rights being safeguarded once they are granted. Yet there was no agreement among respondents as to who was responsible for safeguarding community forest tenure rights. More than 40% reported it to be the responsibility of technical departments such as the National Forest Authority (NFA) and District Forest Service (DFS) (Figure 6), over a third of respondents believed community institutions were responsible, and just 5% believed political leaders were key.



**Figure 6.** Responsibility for safeguarding community forest tenure rights.

Respondents believed the NFA and DFS safeguarded Community Forest tenure rights mainly by educating communities on their rights, clarifying forest boundaries through consultations and mapping, and arbitrating conflicts (Table 4). Other activities they mentioned that are undertaken by the NFA and DFS included ensuring that women, youth and other marginalized groups were included in decision-making, linking communities to government programs such as REDD+, supporting local people to obtain land titles, and working closely with customary / traditional leaders in forest tenure administration.

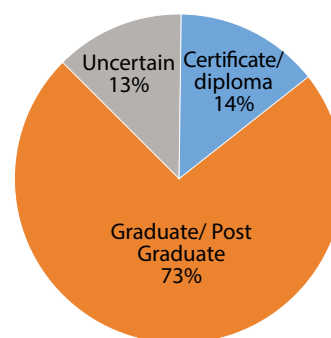
**Table 4. What implementers have been doing to safeguard community rights**

ACTIONS TO SAFEGUARD COMMUNITY RIGHTS	No OF RESPONSES	%
Educate/inform communities, on their rights under the law, and formal channels to be followed to register their interests	18	40.0
Clarify boundaries through consultation and mapping	9	20.0
Law enforcement, using police	6	19.4
Arbitrate conflicts in a timely, fair and just manner	6	13.3
Ensure that women, youth and other marginalized groups are included in decision-making	3	6.7
Coordinating with other sectors (such as agriculture, land) to minimize threats	3	6.7
Support local people to obtain land titles	2	6.5
Link communities to government programs such as REDD+	2	6.5
Assist communities in negotiating agreements with Responsible Bodies	2	6.5
Work closely with customary/ traditional leaders in forest tenure administration	2	4.4
Provide just & fair compensation for any rights governments take compulsorily	1	2.2

## What were the main factors influencing reform implementation?

### Implementing agent capacity

Most government officials implementing tenure reforms were in senior positions which, according to the rules of the Ugandan public service, must be held by university graduates (Figure 7). A slight majority (57%) of respondents were forestry / environmental science graduates, while 30% were district-level administrators / politicians, also holding university degrees. Almost all respondents (97%) had undertaken short-term training in conservation, administration, community development, law, forestry, land and forest tenure, gender, GIS and mapping, landscape design, project planning and management, conflict resolution, and financial management. Most courses included gender and community participation in natural resources management. Therefore, it can be concluded that government officials had the necessary knowledge and skills to implement reforms, and that a lack of educational capacity was not acting as a negative influence.



**Figure 7. Education level of respondents.**

### Economic factors

Respondents did report a number of economic, social and political factors that had affected tenure reform implementation. Most important were economic factors negatively impacting implementation; a third of respondents indicated that insufficient funds meant there was only limited investment in community capacity building, sensitization, monitoring and rule enforcement. An equal number reported that inadequate livelihood opportunities in forest-adjacent communities resulted in illegal logging and cultivation in forests and this, in turn, increased the cost of protecting tenure rights, discouraging households from participating in sustainable forest management. A tenth of respondents reported that migration and migrant settlement in forested land were a major challenge for securing forest tenure, especially in Kibaale and Masindi. Figure 8 shows how participants responded to questions of what economic factors affect implementation.

Officials had various approaches to dealing with inadequate budgets and poverty. These included



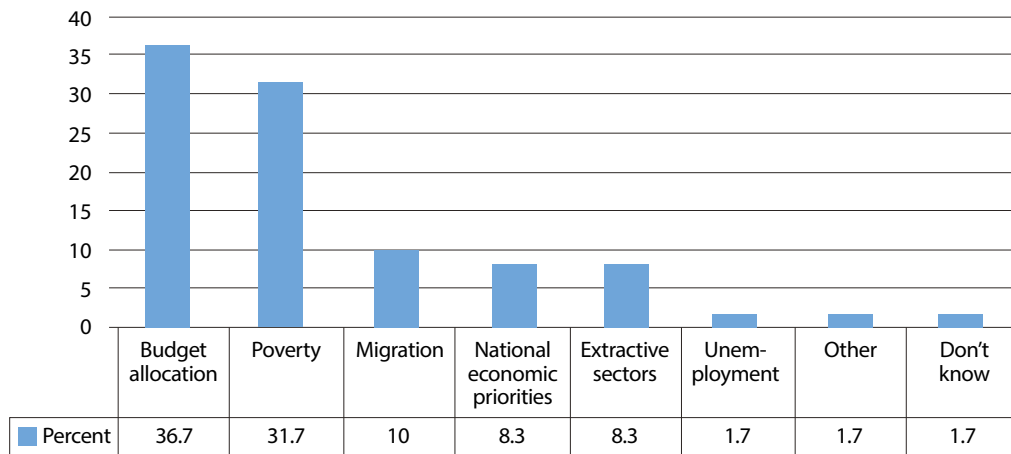


Figure 8. Economic factors affecting forest tenure reform implementation.

integrating reform implementation activities into bilaterally-funded national projects, such as REDD+, the Farm Income Enhancement and Forest Conservation Project, and the Green Climate Fund. To address community poverty, activities such as beekeeping and village saving and loan schemes were undertaken to enhance household incomes and reduce dependence on extractive forest harvesting.

### Social factors

Social status, ethnicity and gender norms were reported to be major social factors affecting reform implementation (Figure 9). Social status issues are often evident when wealth is socially divisive, and, culturally, different rights are afforded to men and women within families and communities. Private Forest Owners (PFOs) and wealthy, politically-connected and educated elites are able to secure and protect their property rights by obtaining land titles and seeking legal redress whenever their rights are violated. Conversely, the poor and other marginalized groups find securing tenure rights challenging, as they lack the power to influence that wealth and status bring. All respondents reported that reform implementation activities took gender into consideration. Equally,

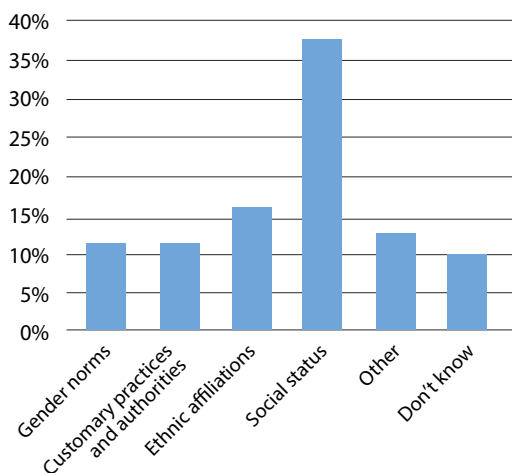


Figure 9. Social factors affecting reforms implementation.

gender considerations are emphasized in CFM guidelines, and 30% of the executive committee positions in community institutions are reserved for disadvantaged social groups. However, while women were purposely included in reform implementation activities, young people, elderly persons, and low-income groups were not always deliberately included.

### Political factors

Almost a third of respondents reported that politicians interfered more than they supported the process of reform implementation (Figure 10); some politicians exerted pressure on technical staff to engage in, as well as protect, illegal activities. Divergent and conflicting government policies and priorities were also reported to negatively influence forest tenure reform implementation.

Sixty percent of respondents said their work involved resolving conflicts within and between communities, and between communities and government agencies,

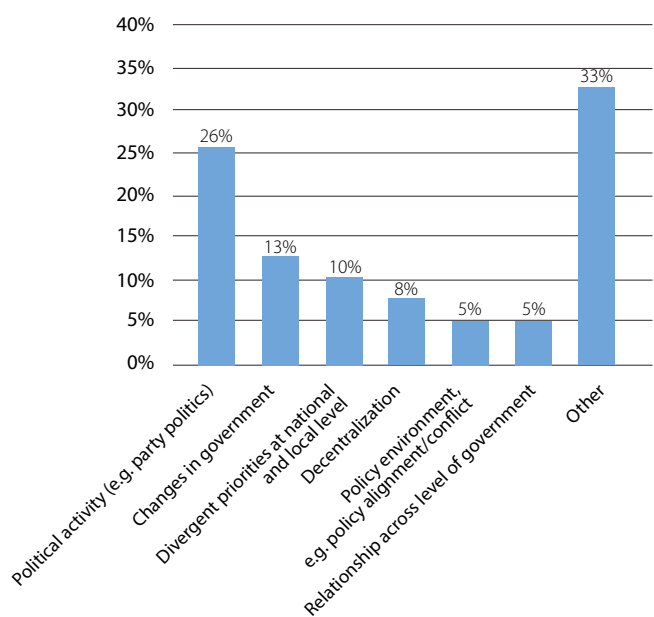


Figure 10. Political factors influencing reforms.

**Table 5. Ranking of the top four tenure-related needs and problems in Uganda**

RANKING	TENURE-RELATED NEEDS AND PROBLEMS FACING COMMUNITIES
1	Too many conflicts over boundaries between communities
2	Illegal cultivation in forests
3	Illegal harvesting of timber
4	Limited access to finance

if conflicts affected implementation. Conflicts within and between communities ranked highest among the top four tenure-related needs and problems in Uganda (Table 5).

Principal causes of conflict relating to forest tenure included: illegal activities (cultivation, charcoal burning, settlements, issuing of land titles within forest reserves); conflicting government policies; poor governance within implementing community-based organizations (CBOs); unclear forest reserve boundaries; and problem animals (wildlife). Less than half (45%) of respondents indicated that conflicts have either increased in magnitude or stayed the same, while the same percentage said the magnitude of conflicts has decreased since the introduction of reforms. Persistent conflict undermines implementation, thus more effort is required to minimize land and forest tenure conflicts.

### Technical factors

The study revealed numerous technical problems constraining effective reform implementation, including: tedious processes to formalize rights; communities' inability to protect and safeguard forest tenure rights; and inadequate benefits for communities managing forests.

Registration processes for Community and Private Forests are lengthy and expensive, as is negotiation of CFM agreements, which partly explains that the limited progress of these. Although presumably all 826,000 ha of forest on private and customary land could become registered Private or Community Forest, registration is at the discretion of individual landowners; it is thus impossible to know how much will eventually be registered.

A project being implemented by the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO) has supported some forest owners (Community and Private/family) in preparing for registration of their forests, in line with the provisions of the *National Forestry and Tree Planting Act*. In the process, the project helped put in place procedures to register their forests that can be followed by other forest owners. Project data show that by mid-2017, 50 Private Forests, covering 593 ha in Masindi, Bushenyi, Rubirizi, and Mitooma, were ready for registration, with six Community Forests, covering 535 ha in Lamwo and Masindi, ready for Minister declaration (Council Dickson

Langoya, personal communication). By 2015, 49 CFM agreements had been signed, covering 63,700 ha in 20 Central Forest Reserves (CFRs), representing 23% of the area covered by the CFRs with CFMs; 132 community groups have been licensed to grow trees in CFRs, covering 1,600 ha (Turyomurugyendo 2016). Equally, the Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) of the Ministry of Water and Environment estimated smallholder forest plantation coverage in Uganda to be over 70,000 ha. These are only in forest reserves where individuals and communities have been licensed to grow trees.

Of the 826,000 ha of forests on private and customary lands therefore, only 1,128 ha are ready for registration as private forests or declaration as community forests; this constitutes only 0.14% of the forests that can potentially be registered or declared.

### What institutional arrangements were put in place to implement forest tenure reforms?

The NFTP provided for several Responsible Bodies to manage forestry resources in Uganda; NFA was established to manage CFRs, while local governments were given authority to manage local forest reserves and supervise forests outside the protected areas network. Owners of registered Private Forests were recognized as Responsible Bodies in their own right, and community organizations were designated Responsible Bodies for Community Forests. The FSSD was mandated to supervise Responsible Bodies, formulate policies and laws, provide technical guidance, mobilize finance, and ensure sustainability of forest resources. The majority (80%) of respondents reported that in addition to Responsible Bodies, other key national-level agencies were involved in implementing reforms. The institutions most frequently mentioned were the Ministries of: Land (eight times); Gender (five); Finance (three); Agriculture and Animal Resources (three); and Trade and Tourism (three). At district level, respondents indicated the following offices as important for effective reform implementation: Community Development Offices (four responses); Production Departments (four responses); the Sub-Counties (three responses); and the Office of the Resident District Commissioner, representing the President's Office (three responses).

The above-mentioned agencies occasionally collaborate with communities, NGOs, the private sector and government agencies to implement forest tenure reforms. Reasons given for collaboration were: that it is a requirement to do so (nine responses); to improve organizational outcomes (15 responses); and to meet community needs (ten responses).

When respondents were asked how effective the above-mentioned institutions were in implementing reforms, only 24% of respondents rated them as effective / very effective, 23% rated them as ineffective, while 50% rated them as somewhat effective.



The majority (57%) indicated that no formal coordination existed among organizations, while 23% believed there were formal arrangements, and 19% reported that existing coordination arrangements were somewhat effective / effective. Some coordination mechanisms reported by respondents included CFM guidelines, memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed between community institutions and reform implementers, and financing and technical cooperation agreements, which provided coordination arrangements. With limited formal coordination, those implementing reform often worked through informal networks.

The majority of respondents (67%) said that they frequently met with people outside their organizations to coordinate activities around the process of forest tenure implementation. Most meetings, with funding and technical cooperation agencies, involved planning for field activities, information exchange, and community outreach/awareness raising.

On the effectiveness of existing coordination arrangements, only six of 31 respondents said arrangements were somewhat effective or effective. The rest did not respond. Those who did respond said their reason for this response was because although not yet fully gazetted, some Community and Private Forests had been established, and although respondents held reservations on community benefits, some CFM agreements had been signed.

The majority (63%) of implementers believed that overall forest tenure reform implementation in Uganda was not being implemented well; only 17% responded that reform implementation was proceeding very well overall. This is not surprising given the long, difficult and time-consuming process involved in registering Private Forests and declaring Community Forests (Kiyingi, 2016).

## Conclusions

Forest tenure reforms that were ushered in by the 2003 *National Forestry and Tree Planting Act* emerged to address the extensive forest degradation and deforestation that was occurring at the time. Securing and safeguarding forest tenure rights for local communities was one of the ways in which this was expected to be achieved. However, during implementation, the government did not prioritize activities critical for securing Community Forest tenure rights, but focused instead on investing in activities for protection of CFRs. CSOs and development partners funded activities to support the securing of forest tenure, providing the financial and technical support required to establish Community Forests, form PFO associations, help communities undertake income-generating activities, and support PFOs to restore Natural Forests and prepare forest management plans. Support was often short-lived, however, with implementation processes stalling at the end of such projects. These projects are all supported by donors, with no government support, casting doubt on

their long-term sustainability.

The study reveals that in tenure reform activities, little attention is given to gender, nor to impoverished people; beyond mandatory slots for women in CFM and Community Forest establishment procedures, very few activities target these segments of local communities. Gender-focused studies also reflect this (Mukasa et al. 2016; Mukasa et al. 2012; Banana et al. 2012).

As major challenges affecting the implementation of tenure reform, respondents cited budgetary limitations of the NFA and District Forestry Office, high poverty levels in forest-adjacent communities, limited political support, and technical issues. High poverty levels have also led to increased illegal harvesting and forest encroachment, resulting in internal conflicts both within CBOs and between CBOs and the NFA, with mistrust slowing down implementation. The lengthy and costly process of securing land titles and registering CFMs also discourages many communities and Private Forest Owners from demanding forest tenure improvements.

Although the FSSD is mandated to coordinate forest tenure reforms within the sector, most respondents said formal coordination of actors in the sector was limited, again due to restricted funding. As such, individual bureaucrats implementing reforms frequently work through informal networks, facilitated by CSOs and development partners.

Government funding for forestry is unlikely to increase greatly in the near future, in view of the fact that government is currently prioritizing infrastructure development. To provide the sector with long-term sustainable funding, the government established a National Tree Fund in 2003; 15 years later, the Fund was not yet operational, for reasons unknown. However, this still provides potential future funding for tenure-related activities of NFA and DFS, and for those promoting sustainable forest management. It is important that this Fund be made operational, and some of its funds be ring-fenced for the securing and safeguarding of forest tenure rights. Equally, establishment of a scheme, similar to Uganda's Sawlog Production Grant Scheme that supports private entities to establish timber plantations, would provide a monetary incentive for Private Natural Forest owners and communities to register forests and keep their land forested.

## Acknowledgements

CIFOR's "Global Comparative Study on Forest Tenure Reform" is funded by the European Commission and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) with technical support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO). We would also like to thank FAO for their helpful reviews and comments on earlier versions. This study forms part of the Program on Policies, Institutions

and Markets (PIM), led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); and the CGIAR Research Program on Forest, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA), led by CIFOR. This flyer has not gone through IFPRI's standard peer-review procedure. The opinions expressed here represent the analysis of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IFPRI, CIFOR, CGIAR or the financial sponsors.

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FTA's work is supported by the CGIAR Trust Fund: [cgiar.org/funders/](http://cgiar.org/funders/)



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