

Securing tenure rights to communal forests in Masindi district, Uganda

Lessons from Participatory Prospective Analysis (PPA)

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Key messages

- The Participatory Prospective Analysis process in Masindi district, Uganda, brought together government, private sector, NGO and local communities stakeholders to collectively reflect on factors affecting local tenure rights, forecast future scenarios and propose actionable plans for securing forest tenure rights.
- Participants identified several factors threatening local forest tenure rights: lack of land ownership documentation; inadequate implementation and enforcement of forest policies, laws and programs; land use changes; gender bias against women; political interference; lack of community awareness of forest tenure rights; and inadequate financial and human resources to effectively protect local people's rights to forests and land.
- To identify potential barriers and drivers, three workshops were organized. With both forestry and agricultural sectors being male-dominated, a women-only workshop was organized to capture women's perspectives and compare findings with those of the mixed gender group.
- Four 'key driving forces' impacting forest tenure security were identified by both groups: (1) community participation in forest tenure reform implementation, particularly that of women; (2) access to financial resources to implement forest tenure reform activities; (3) the importance of outside organizations having an awareness of community, cultural and institutional norms and beliefs regarding forest tenure rights; (4) the role played by local and national government agencies and politicians in coordinating and promoting progress towards forest tenure reforms.
- Women stakeholders emphasized the importance of access to land for forestry activities as critical to securing their rights; they also identified that supportive men and domestic relationships can impact on women's rights to forest land. Mixed group stakeholders identified the role of oil, gas and other industrial activities as a key threat to local forest tenure security.
- Participants developed four scenarios to anticipate potential future situations impacting on local forest tenure rights. Desirable scenarios depicted a well-governed, well-financed forestry sector characterized by gender equality and participative forest management. Undesirable scenarios were characterized by a dominant oil and gas sector undermining forest sustainability and forest rights; a weak, underfunded and poorly-managed forest sector; forest conversion to other uses; government failure to recognize community rights and integrate communities in forest management; and disappointed, disempowered communities collectively destroying forests for survival instead of managing them sustainably.
- Several actions were identified to secure local forest tenure rights: (a) making district-level government more responsive to local needs and aspirations around community forest tenure reforms; (b) increasing the number of well-trained district government officers and providing adequate financial resources; (c) facilitating a faster, affordable process for community forest registration, including community incentives; (d) equipping communities with knowledge, skills and resources to enhance their participation in forest tenure reform implementation; (e) promoting environmentally and socially responsible investments to mobilize resources for protecting local people's forest tenure rights.

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Introduction

With the adoption of Uganda's new constitution in the 1990s, the country ushered in several reforms to forest and land tenure systems, characterized by a return to the recognition of kingdom land, and an expanded scope of forest-dependent people's rights. To implement and achieve these reforms, the Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) and National Forestry Authority (NFA) were established and respectively tasked with policy-making and implementation. Since the early 2000s, technical and financial support from national and international NGOs has enabled the government to implement diverse forest management approaches, with the intention of expanding local communities' (and other actors) rights to use and manage forests; increasing their stake in forests aims to encourage more sustainable use and management. Despite this political and financial impetus, numerous challenges prevent significant progress being made in community forest tenure security.

In this context, a multi-stakeholder consultative process known as Participatory Prospective Analysis (PPA) was undertaken, as part of the CIFOR-led Global Comparative Study on Forest Tenure Reforms and Forest Dependent Communities (implemented in partnership with Makerere University and the Association of Ugandan Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment). This infobrief details the process undertaken, as well as identified threats to forest tenure security, potential future scenarios and proposed actions to secure tenure rights for local forest-dependent communities in Masindi district (hereinafter referred to as Masindi).

Methodology- The PPA process

Participatory Prospective Analysis (PPA) workshops were used to facilitate a multi-stakeholder participatory identification of forest tenure security scenarios and to elaborate a series of actions in response to the scenarios identified. The PPA process comprises of five steps:

- 1. Defining the system**
Stakeholders begin by clarifying four dimensions of the issue to be addressed: what, where, how long and who? These four dimensions define what is called a 'system'.
- 2. Detecting and defining forces of change**
Stakeholders identify and define forces of change, which could be a program, factor, policy, law, management practice, issue or activity.
- 3. Identifying and selecting driving forces**
Stakeholders prioritize the forces of change, selecting driving forces that they can focus on within the constraints of time, technical, financial and other resources. The driving forces have the highest capacity to transform the system, in whichever direction.

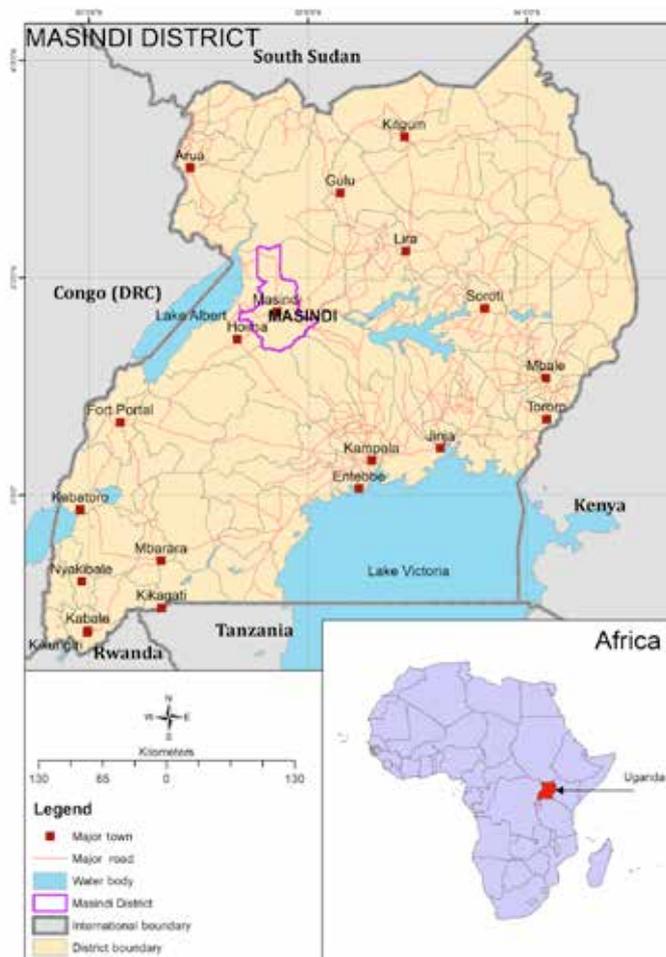


Figure 1. Location of Masindi district, Uganda

Source: Dennis Ojwang 2017

- 4. Building scenarios**
Rather than a prediction or a forecast, a scenario is an anticipation of a possible future transformation, through the exploration of alternative paths that the driving forces could take. Scenarios are categorized into desirable and undesirable.
- 5. Elaborating a foresight-based action plan**
Participants elaborate an action plan based on the desired scenario, identifying relevant actions for attaining the desired scenario, and discussing proposed actions.

In Masindi, the PPA process was conducted in two three-day workshops, with a third one-day workshop to validate findings and agree on action plans. The first workshop covering steps 1-2 above was held between 21st-23rd September 2015; the second focused on steps 3-5 and was held between 10th-12th November 2015. A total of 24 participants (21 men, 3 women) attended the workshops, with the feedback workshop attracting 28 participants (22 men, 6 women). Women's participation was very low due to the forestry sector being male-dominated. To ensure women's perspectives and interests were considered,

a women-only workshop covering steps 1–2 was organized for three days between 16th–18th August 2016 and was attended by 15 women.

Participants represented a cross-section of local government stakeholders (District Forest Services (DFS), National Forestry Authority (NFA), Departments of Natural Resources, Culture and Community Development); other participants included political leaders, NGOs/Community-based Organizations (CBOs), teachers, community members, cultural leaders, religious leaders, police, students and media.

Outcomes of the PPA process

Defining the system

In defining the issue to be addressed (the ‘system’), stakeholders considered local people’s rights under different district-wide forest management systems. The forest tenure systems implemented in Masindi include Customary Forests, Collaborative Forest Management, Public Forests (central government forest reserves), Private Forest Management, and Community Forest Management.

Mixed group stakeholders defined the ‘system’ as ‘forest tenure security for the people of Masindi district until 2025, but with a review after five years’. Forest tenure security was defined as local people’s forest and land tenure rights being well-protected into the foreseeable future. Ten years was the agreed timeframe to consider both feasibility for action and the ability to foresee changes.

Women stakeholders agreed on a different definition, choosing instead to define the ‘system’ as ‘forest tenure security for women in Masindi within the next five years and upheld for forty years’.

This reflects a difference in expectation from the mixed group, with women desiring forest tenure security to be achieved in half the timeframe, and expressing expectation that tenure rights should also be guaranteed for future generations. Both groups agreed on periodic reviews of five years.

Forces of change

The mixed group identified 32 forces of change while the women-only workshop identified 35; these were categorized into internal and external forces. Internal forces arise from the context within the district, over which stakeholders have more control. External forces are those arising from outside the district, over which stakeholders have little or no influence (e.g. climate change or natural catastrophes). Internal forces of change were further grouped into social forces (e.g. cultural norms on land inheritance), technical forces (e.g. boundary demarcation), economic forces (e.g. financial resources for forest tenure reform implementation), and policy factors (e.g. political influence). The PPA process adopts definitions agreed by participants based on local context, rather than basing them on text-book or scholarly definitions.

Driving forces

Stakeholders identify 5–8 key driving forces that will be used in developing scenarios in the next step.

To identify key driving forces from the forces of change already identified, participants used a computer-assisted systematic evaluation of mutual influences between respective forces. This evaluation produces a graph (see Figure 2 below), which distributes the forces of change according to their level of influence and dependence on other factors.

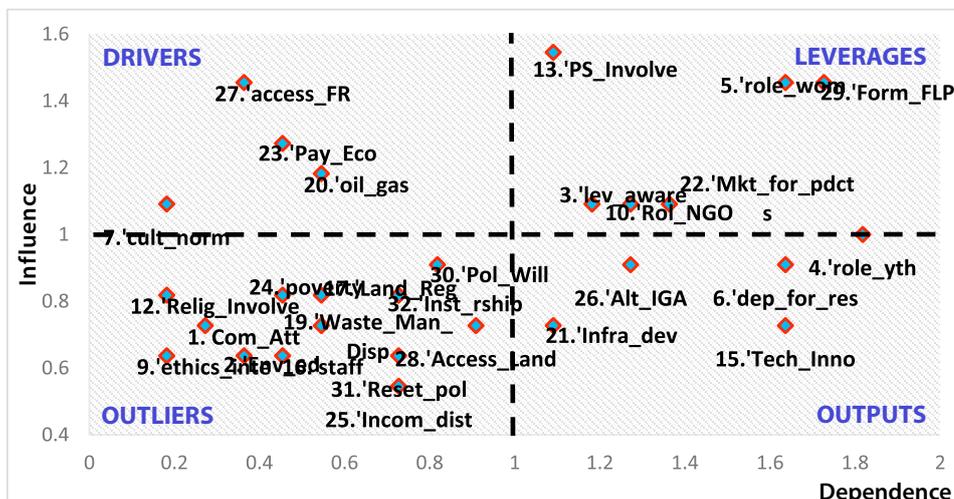


Figure 2. Graph of direct influences

Note: See Table 1 for descriptions of selected drivers.

Table 1. Selected key driving forces

No	Driving force	Definition
1	Role of government agencies (RolGov)	The government is the lead agency in implementing or enforcing policies, laws and programs related to forest tenure security.
2	Community participation in forest management including the role of women (Com_part) (Role_wom)	The level of community involvement in planning, implementing, decision making, and monitoring decisions related to forest tenure security of forest-dependent communities; including the knowledge, attitudes, and role of women in forestry management.
3	Oil and Gas and other industrial activities (Oil_gas)	The nature and impact of oil, gas and other industrial activities on the environment, forest tenure security and peoples' livelihoods; including the role of private sector in forest tenure security.
4	Access to financial resources (Access_FR)	Availability of funds accessible to communities and forest agencies for forest tenure reform implementation and payment for ecosystem services (incentives/economic value attached to forest conservation e.g. carbon trading).
5	Cultural institutions, norms, beliefs and practices (Cult_norm) (Cul_Invol)	Individual and collective views relating to forest tenure security, based on customs and practices. The role played by cultural institutions in forest tenure security.

To aid the selection of driving forces, the graph is divided into four sections:

- **Drivers:** High influence on other forces of change, but less dependent on other forces.
- **Leverages:** Influence on other forces, but also equally influenced by other forces.
- **Outliers:** Low influence, and also less influenced by other forces.
- **Outputs:** Highly dependent on other forces, and with little influence on other forces.

Mixed group stakeholders identified five key driving forces while the women-only stakeholders identified eight key driving forces. The two groups shared four common key driving forces, while the mixed group had one unique key driving force, and the women identified three unique key driving forces.

The shared driving forces were: (1) community participation in forest tenure reform implementation, paying special attention to women's skills and involvement in planning and implementing activities aimed at securing forest tenure rights; (2) access to financial resources for implementing forest tenure reform activities (like registration); (3) community awareness of their tenure rights and the role of cultural institutions, norms and beliefs in securing forest tenure rights; (4) the role of (local, district and national) government agencies and politicians in coordinating and promoting progress in forest tenure reforms.

Women stakeholders emphasized the importance of their access to land for forestry activities as a crucial factor in securing their forest rights. They also identified supportive men and domestic relationships as critical for women's tenure rights. The mixed group identified the role of oil, gas and other industrial activities as a key driving force impacting forest tenure security in Masindi.

Scenarios of the future

Descriptions of how forest tenure security in Masindi may unfold in future were outlined, according to a set of assumptions about the 'states' of the key driving forces. The state of a driving force refers to how that it will evolve in future: either becoming a supporting or limiting factor for forest tenure security. Participants deduced states for all five selected driving forces and considered those which were more and less desirable, before developing three desirable (1, 2 and 4) and one undesirable (3) scenarios.

The four scenarios above illustrate stakeholders' aspirations with regards to securing local tenure rights and illuminate some of the main elements impacting tenure security. The scenarios also capture stakeholders' concerns about the future with regards to securing tenure rights. Scenario 1 represents an ideal; it envisions a well-governed forestry sector characterized by stakeholder participation, provisions of incentives for sustainable forest management, adequate budgets for tenure reform implementation, organized communities and women's involvement in decision making and leadership, with substantial support from cultural institutions who enforce their inheritance and land ownership rights.

The rest of the scenarios diverge from this ideal in profound ways that are rooted in current realities. For example, Scenario 2 envisions a dominant oil and gas sector, which stimulates broader economic development but also supports sustainable forest and land management. A dominant oil and gas sector however leaves forestry weak, underfunded and subject to corruption. Conversion of forests to other land uses, and failure to recognize community rights, results in communities collectively destroying forests rather than managing them sustainably. In contrast with scenario 2, the forestry sector is strong and capable in scenario 3, but instead of recognizing and strengthening community rights it leaves communities out of policy planning. The forestry sector instead oversees implementation of policies that, like scenario 2,

result in forest allocation to other sectors, especially oil and gas companies and other private investors. Reforms that have potential for securing tenure rights of communities are not prioritized, and there is recentralization of forest management

authority. Cultural institutions are also extinguished. As with scenario 2, the management authority loses legitimacy, and communities have no incentive to sustainably manage forests so instead destroy forests.

Scenario 1. Forestry sector governance paradise

This scenario envisions a corruption-free, well-funded and coordinated forestry sector that effectively involves all state and non-state stakeholders in forest tenure reform implementation, whilst properly allocating sufficient budgets to activities aimed at securing local communities' forest tenure rights. This scenario sees:

- Increased funding for the forestry sector from government, donors, private sector and other innovative financing mechanisms.
- Good coordination between different sectors and government departments, all working towards attaining forest tenure security for local people.
- A responsible private sector that compensates for the environmental impact of their investments in an adequate and timely manner.
- Government support for Masindi District Biodiversity Fund and Tree Fund initiatives to increase forest cover.
- Existence of clear forest/land use policies, laws and plans, which are fully implemented and monitored.
- Recruitment of more forestry staff trained on forest tenure reform implementation, and particularly on working with communities.
- Registration of Private and Community Forests completed.
- Organized community groups managing forestry resources and sharing benefits equitably.
- Empowered women participating in decision making and taking up 60% of leadership positions on local organizations and institutions working on forest tenure security issues.
- A supportive cultural institution actively working with other stakeholders to promote and secure tenure rights of local people.

Scenario 2. Supportive private sector under unsupportive public sector

This scenario envisions a responsible private sector willing to fund forest tenure reform implementation and cooperate with government, cultural leaders, local people and civil society, but whose actions are undermined by an unsupportive public sector, resulting in failure to realize forest tenure security. The scenario is characterized by:

- Industries undertaking deliberate actions to green the Albertine region through tree planting.
- Industries implementing socially and environmentally responsible policies including infrastructural development with minimal impacts on forests and communities, financing the government's Tree Fund and creating local employment opportunities.
- Industries giving 30% of their revenues to communities to reduce pressure on the forests, contributing to sustainable forest management.
- Unsupportive public sector as evidenced by non-prioritization of forest sector, political interference, misappropriation of funds, change of land use allowing for forest-destructive uses, poor delivery of support services to communities for attaining forest tenure security, resulting in environmental degradation, forest destruction, and extinction of indigenous tree species.
- Limited community participation in planning and implementing forest tenure reform activities as a result of government failure to facilitate and empower participation.
- Supportive cultural institutions willing to work with other stakeholders to help secure locals' forest tenure rights, but discouraged by government actions.

Scenario 3. Business-as-usual - forest tenure security at risk

This business-as-usual situation sees government developing and implementing policies that do not secure forest-dependent communities' tenure rights. Policies are developed and implemented without meaningful consultation with affected communities, NGOs, the private sector and other actors, and fail to recognize community ownership of forests. Policies continue to exclude women and youth from forestry management and benefits. Forest conversion to commercial agriculture and mass-destruction of forests is commonplace. As a result:

- Communities continue to encroach and destroy forests for farmland and settlement expansion, and overharvest for firewood, building poles, timber, medicinal and other products.
- Government makes and implements new policies favoring large-scale land-based investments in the district, particularly oil and gas extraction, leading to community land being reallocated to oil and gas companies and other investors.
- Local people are displaced from forested areas, losing their rights over forests.
- Unplanned changes in land use systems see forests being cleared for sugarcane, tobacco, ranching, industrial and infrastructural development.
- Forest tenure reform implementation is led exclusively by the National Forest Authority (NFA), without coordination with lower-level actors (District Forest Services (DFS), Private Forest Owners (PFOs), Communal Land Associations (CLAs), and Cultural Institutions (CIs)).
- Donors and government reduce funding to forestry sector programs involving local people because it is a low priority area; there are no alternative financial resources to support forest tenure reform implementation.
- CIs are abolished, with government taking back control of all kingdom's forests.

Scenario 4. Government fails but the involvement of women saves the day

This scenario envisions a situation whereby failure by government and other forestry sector adversely and disproportionately affects the tenure rights of women and other marginalized groups in the district, prompting their proactive intervention. This scenario sees:

- Uncoordinated laws and policies that do not account for local forest tenure or the need for secure tenure.
- NFA as the only agency mandated to manage forest resources, without input from responsible bodies like DFS, PFOs, CLAs and CIs, leading to forest destruction at scale.
- Limited forestry sector funding from donors and government, with mismanagement of meager financial resources by forest agencies.
- Existence of CIs supporting women's inheritance and ownership of land.
- Empowered women who know their rights and roles in forest tenure reform implementation, with adequate management capabilities, actively involved in forest governance.
- Supportive men from household to national level, who ensure that women's rights and responsibilities in forest tenure issues are protected.

Scenario 4 envisions government failure to secure tenure rights of local people, consequently prompting women to actively participate in tenure reform implementation. Women's forest tenure rights and their involvement in reform implementation is supported by cultural institutions which allow women to inherit and own land. Likewise, women are empowered and knowledgeable about their rights. They are fully involved in governance at all levels, and supported by men who ensure their rights are protected. As a result, women also benefit from forestry through an application of equitable benefit-sharing arrangements amongst members of the community.

Taken together, these scenarios illustrate the stakeholders' perspectives on tenure security and forest tenure reform implementation. The scenarios suggest the dominance of oil and gas is associated with a weakening of the forestry sector, forests allocation for oil, gas and other commercial activities, and overall insecure community tenure rights. Benefits from forest resources such as income from selling forest products and incentive mechanisms are seen to be key in securing the forest tenure rights of communities. Within communities, women's tenure rights merit particular attention; cultural institutions are central to the exercise and securitization of women's rights. The scenarios also suggest that a well-resourced forestry agency, with adequate budgets and staff to enforce rights, is necessary for local tenure security. Finally, the scenarios seem to point to the necessity of involving multiple actors at different levels of governance, as well as community and cultural institutions, in order for local community rights to be secure. Indeed, they indicate that recentralization and vesting authority in one actor, whilst excluding others, is likely to result in negative outcomes.

Action plan

Participants in the PPA exercise proposed, debated and decided on action plans that would advance the desired scenarios and mitigate the undesired scenario. The strategies presented are organized in the table below, and correspond to key driving forces impacting local forest tenure security. The proposed action plans include specific actions, as well as people or organizations responsible for implementation.

Conclusion

The Participatory Prospective Analysis process brought together multiple stakeholders to consider the future forest tenure security of local communities in Masindi district, resulting in an action plan to tackle identified driving forces over the next ten years.

Stakeholders identified a number of threats to forest tenure rights, including the uncontrolled expansion of the oil and gas sector and other industries (sugar and alcohol). Inadequate financial resources for the forestry sector and a lack of community involvement in forest management (particularly that of women) were highlighted as signs of limited governmental effectiveness. Lastly, it was noted that cultural institutions have significant influence in ensuring tenure security, especially where cultural norms and beliefs are concerned.

Stakeholders devised responses to these challenges: making local government agencies more responsive to community interests; mobilizing human and financial resources; promoting more environmentally-friendly investments; strengthening community participation in forest management through involvement in activity planning, implementation and monitoring, as well as law enforcement; and encouraging the participation of women and cultural institutions.

Stakeholders proposed to integrate actions into the District Development Plan and use this to source funding for implementation, whilst regular activities, such as raising community awareness of forest tenure rights, would be undertaken by both government and non-government agencies. Community differentiation dictates that special attention is paid to women's tenure rights; cultural institutions have a key role to play in this. Multi-actor collaboration and cooperation, rather than centralized, exclusive mandates, are essential to securing local tenure rights.

Table 2. Proposed actions for promoting forest tenure security in Masindi district, Uganda.

Driving force	Proposed actions	Responsible agency
Role of government agencies	<p>Making local government agencies more responsive to community interests by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training local government agents on their roles in forest tenure reform implementation, particularly how to effectively serve communities • Empower communities to demand accountability by raising awareness of their rights and roles in forest tenure reform implementation • Popularize policies and laws related to forest/land tenure reforms and the rights of local communities, by developing and disseminating public-friendly versions, using print and electronic media 	<p>Chief Administrative Office District Forest Office Community Development Office Sub County Chiefs</p> <p>District Forest Office Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) Community Development Office District Forest Office Community Development Office NGOs Sub County Chiefs</p>
Access to financial resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human and financial resource mobilization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for increased government budget allocation towards forest tenure reform, particularly reforms that recognize forest-dependent communities' rights 2. Operationalize alternative funding sources to support forest tenure reform implementation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tree Fund and Masindi Biodiversity Conservation Fund • Payment for ecosystem service schemes • Polluter pays principle whereby all investors will be required to compensate for their pollution • Promote establishment of commercial tree nurseries 3. Institute a requirement that private investors remit a certain percentage of revenues to support communities and the forestry sector in the district 	<p>District Natural Resources Office District Forest Office District Council NGOs</p> <p>District Planning Office District Natural Resources Office District Forest Office National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) NGOs</p> <p>District Council District Finance Department</p>
Roles and effects of oil, gas and other industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote more environmentally responsible investments in the district, including establishing a tree-planting policy for industries • Promote public-private partnerships for supporting tenure reform implementation • Carry out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) before infrastructural development 	<p>District Council</p> <p>Chief Administrative Office District Commercial Office (NEMA) District Environment Office</p>
Community participation in forest management (including women)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empower communities to demand for accountability 2. Involve communities in local government (planning process, petitions speaker) 3. Involve the whole community, including women and young people, in forest management 4. Empower women and young people to take up leadership positions at community and lower government levels with regards to tenure reform implementation 	<p>District Non-Government Forum Community Development Office NGOs</p> <p>District Forest Office Community Development Office NGOs</p>
Cultural institutions, norms and beliefs	<p>Sensitize community to ignore outdated cultural norms, such as barring women from inheriting land and trees, and encourage the community to embrace modernity</p>	<p>Bunyoro Kingdom District Community Development office NGOs</p>

Table 3. In addition to the collectively-agreed action plans above, those below resulted from the women-only PPA workshop

Driving force	Proposed actions	Responsible agency
Supportive men and domestic relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize men on the benefits and value of supporting women in forest ownership, management and use • Encourage increased male participation in securing women's tenure rights • Encourage good relationships in homes and between relatives (clans) with help of religious and cultural leaders • Encourage mixed-gender village development groups and also recognize model homes and family projects 	<p>District Community Development Office District Forest Office Religious and cultural leaders District/Sub County Community Development Office NGOs and CBOs</p>

continued on next page

Table 3. Continued

Driving force	Proposed actions	Responsible agency
Technical skills for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip more women with natural resources management skills e.g. training on tree nursery establishment and management, planting of trees and sustainable use of forests. Make forest and conservation training institutions and schools more gender sensitive 	District Forest Officer NGOs Forestry training institutes
Access to finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitize and raise awareness of women to form savings and credit groups. Encourage NGOs to support women in forestry management 	District Community Development (Gender) Office NGOs
Access to land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a lobbying platform for women to own parental land Government institutions at parish, sub-county and district level to allocate plots to women by communities NFA to give women plots to plant boundary trees 	District Community Development (Gender) Office NGOs Local councils at all levels National Forest Authority

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