

# Technologies and Conditions for Participation and Empowerment of Rural Communities in Restoring Degraded Sites in Mabira Forest Reserve, Central Uganda

<sup>1</sup>Eilu, G., <sup>1</sup>Galabuzi, C., <sup>1</sup>Mulugo, L., <sup>1</sup>Kakudidi, E. <sup>1</sup>Tabuti, J.R.S. & <sup>2</sup>Sibelet, N.

<sup>1</sup>Makerere University, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda, <sup>2</sup>CIRAD, UMR Innovation 34398 Montpellier, France.

**1.0 Introduction:** Forests and related tree based resources contribute to > 90% of the livelihoods of neighbouring communities (FAO, 1981). These resources are often degraded because the user local people are not empowered to rehabilitate them. The technologies to employ and conditions for local participation are often not clear. This study was conducted to i) identify the technologies that can be locally promoted to restore degraded forest sites; and ii) determine the conditions for empowering the local people to participate in forest restoration.

**2.0 Study area and methods:** The study was conducted in Mabira Forest Reserve (MFR) located between 0° 24' to 0° 35' N and 32° 52' to 33° 07' E. The forest is 56 km to the east of Kampala the capital city of Uganda (Figure 1). The local people are multi-ethnic with a population of over 120,000 people. They cultivate agricultural crops, work in sugarcane plantations and extract various forest resources. Data were collected using 250 individual interviews and 8 focus group discussions.

**3.0 Results: Technologies.** Seven major technologies (Figure 2) were identified. The most important include i) on farm tree planting (Photo 1); ii) tree nurseries of indigenous species (Photo 2); iii) forest enrichment planting (Photo 3); iv) invasive species control; and v) soil erosion control.

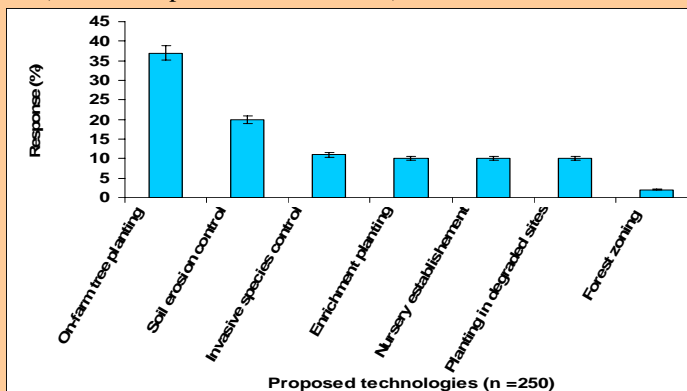
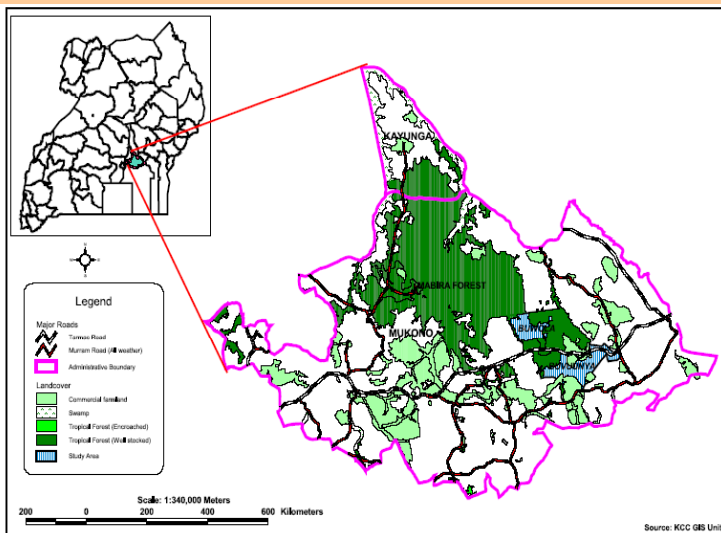


Figure 2: Technologies for restoring degraded sites in MFR

**Conditions for participation and empowerment.** In order to participate in restoration, the local people need: i) supply of basic inputs; ii) coordination among research institutions; and iii) equal sharing of benefits from MFR.

To be empowered they require i) training; ii) feedback of research findings (Photo 4); iii) sensitization; iv) clear tenure of benefits; and v) periodic monitoring / evaluation of recommended technologies by protected area managers.

Figure 1. Location of Mabira Forest Reserve



Photos 1: Indigenous tree species planted on farm; 2: Tree nurseries for supplying planting materials, 3: Enrichment planting in the forest 4: Sharing research findings and experiences with local people for their empowerment.

**4.0 Conclusion:** The local people are willing to apply technologies that contribute directly to their livelihoods. This approach should enable the local people to voluntarily restore degraded forests and tree resources. The conditions for participation and empowerment of local people should focus on local knowledge gaps and needs.

**Reference:**FAO, 1981. Forestry and Rural Development in Africa. FAO, Rome.

Contact galabuzi@forest.mak.ac.ug <http://foreaim.cirad.fr> for information

2<sup>nd</sup> World Agroforestry Congress, 23<sup>rd</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> August 2009, Nairobi, Kenya.

