

ECOTRUST

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2022 -2026

Building Climate Resilient Communities &
Sustainable Landscapes

Living in Harmony With Nature



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FROM THE CHAIR



As the incoming Chairman of the ECOTRUST Board of Trustees, I have the privilege of steering the organization through this period of tremendous growth, that has concretized our position as **a leading Ugandan NGO in designing and implementing market-based conservation incentives promoting landscape restoration as a business.** We deliver conservation finance “**where it matters most**” – to thousands of smallholders undertaking landscape restoration as a business in rural communities. We deploy conservation incentives in ways that enable ECOTRUST to consider investments that others can't.

ECOTRUST provides a platform, a programme of activities, **through which different community - led actions are aggregated to achieve scale in a cost effective manner** that enables **US6\$** out of every **US10\$** committed for climate action to reach the intended beneficiary in form of direct cash transfers. ECOTRUST uses a “**blended financing**” approach - **private, public, internal revenue and community contributions to achieve conservation outcomes.**

ECOTRUST has **built a very strong working relationship with key international agencies and National NGOs.** ECOTRUST is now well recognised internationally and is a voting member of the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a member of IUCN-ESARO (Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office), a member of the GEF CSO Network, and a member of UNEA CSO Network.

ECOTRUST is **strategically positioned as an organization of preference** in the thematic, operational, and future spaces. ECOTRUST is a rapidly growing organization with a dynamic and complex business model.

nf. **Mr. Isaac Kapalaga**
Chairman, Board of Trustees



With gratitude and humility, I say thank you to our partners right from grassroots communities to government agencies for the support and goodwill accorded to us in the past five years. You have given us an opportunity to develop into the leading NGO in the valued niche of conservation financing delivered through Market-Based Incentives for promoting landscape restoration as a business in Uganda.

We have been able to develop Community Engagement models through which multiple landowners' have set aside land for ecosystem restoration based on free and prior informed consent. We have developed incentive Models and rewards for various environmental outcomes based on the concept of equitable benefit sharing – for communities participating in landscape restoration, balancing conservation and livelihoods goals

Our innovative approaches have resulted into a State of the Art Aggregation Model for environmental services from community initiatives, enabling us to achieve commercially viable scale for marketing and sale of environmental services. By technically specifying the conservation initiatives, we have been able to quantify the environmental services in a manner that meets international certification standards.

Our financial Intermediation Model builds public, private and community business partnerships and has resulted into a blended financing model, through which public funding is used to leverage private and community investments. This has enabled us to mobilise up to **USD 10.835 million** in private sector foreign direct investments in smallholder-led conservation initiatives.

We are now building on these lessons to further strengthen our aggregation model by augmenting it with digital and satellite based MRV models. This will be supported with the adoption of Gender Action and Learning System (GALS) Methodology - for joint visioning and planning at household and community level. *We will continue to invest in initiatives that De-risk* smallholder afforestation investments, linked to landscape and corridor wide restoration. Alongside this will be the building of partnerships to grow the Land Trust Investment model and the development of co-management investment models for Protected Areas. *By capitalizing* the trust fund, we will ensure longterm sustainability and financial resilience for the organization.

Pauline Nantongo Kalunda
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

Our vision is “Climate Resilient **Communities** and Sustainable **Landscapes**”.
Our mission is to “conserve biological diversity and enhance social welfare by promoting innovative and sustainable environmental management”.

We undertake **value-based development**. The work we do is driven by **a set of core values**. We honor them in our decisions, express them in our relationships, and act consistently with them in our work. We state them in the present because values are lived not legislated.



Accountability

We are accountable to ourselves, to the organization, and to the people we work with at all levels. We are stewards of all resources entrusted to us. We plan for and manage them responsibly



Transparency

We value people, and our success is based on building TRUST with all the key stakeholders. We are transparent in all our dealings, and because of this, we have built business relationships of trust that guarantee the meeting of expectations of all our core stakeholders



Integrity

We are people of high integrity. Our word is as good as a contract. We operate in such a way that when people think about character, honesty, and integrity – they think about ECOTRUST. We are dependable and reliable.



Excellence

We strive for excellence in everything we do – recognizing that excellence is about doing our very best in everything. We are always critical of ourselves and looking for ways to do and be better. We are committed to being creative, innovative, dynamic, and resourceful; and to use our knowledge and experience to make a difference



Teamwork

We are a matrix organization. We recognize that Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM). We embrace diversity and build upon everyone's unique abilities. We reward the team while also rewarding individual excellence.

1999
STORY STARTED

MODEL & KEY STRATEGIES

THE TRIPLE WIN MODEL

We commit ourselves to becoming the number one partner of choice in **attaining the nexus between biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation/adaptation and livelihoods improvement**. We will contribute to the delivery of the following;

Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with specific focus on Spatial Protection, resource mobilization, sustainable use & biodiversity economy targets,

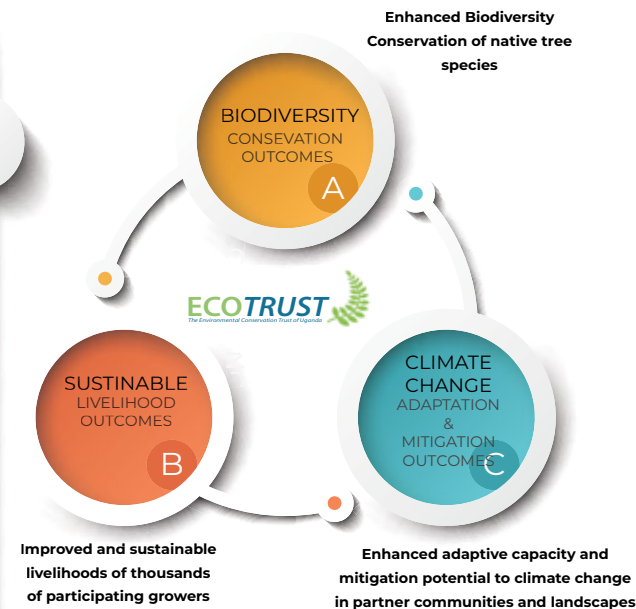
- Fostering engagements that will result into the **scaling up of finance** for biodiversity from all sources – public and private – to meet the CBD post2020- biodiversity objectives
- Creativity and innovation in **mobilizing and delivering money where it matters** at the right scale, aligned with the CBD post2020- biodiversity
- Through our **land trust programme**, support the creation of Other Effective area - based Conservation Measures
- Promote Sustainable Use, through the **Co-management investment models**

Uganda's Nationally Determined Contribution

Under UNFCCC, by mobilizing private sector support to smallholder – led mitigation & adaptation initiatives

Sustainable Development Goals

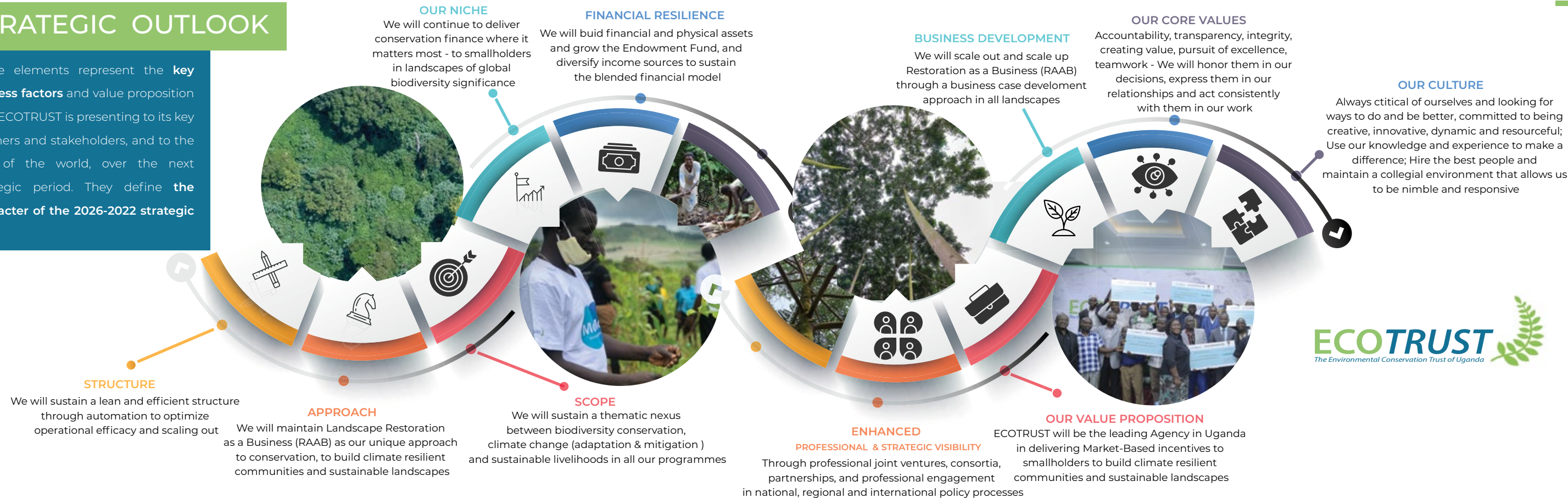
Throughout ECOTRUST's conservation & development programmes.



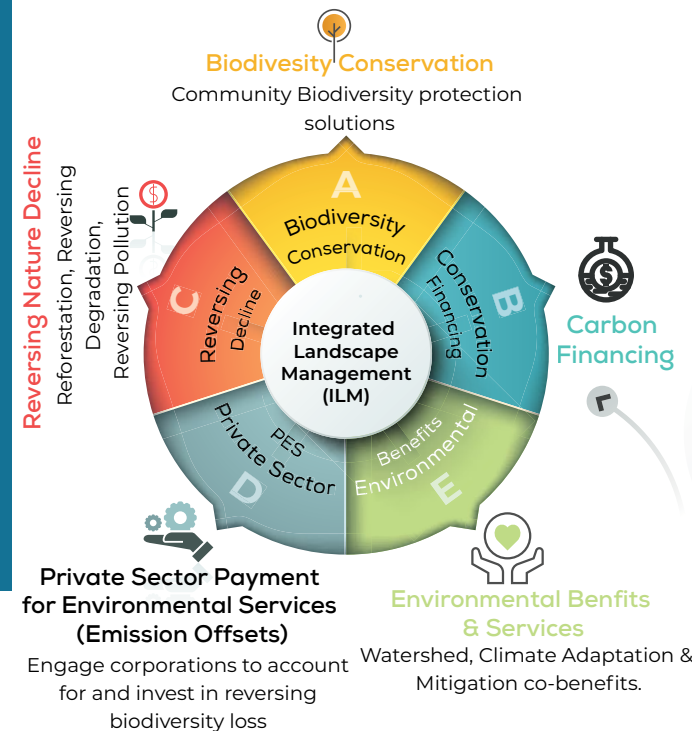
Thematic Nexus: The Triple-Win Program model delivering biodiversity, climate change and sustainable livelihood outcomes as a single package.

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

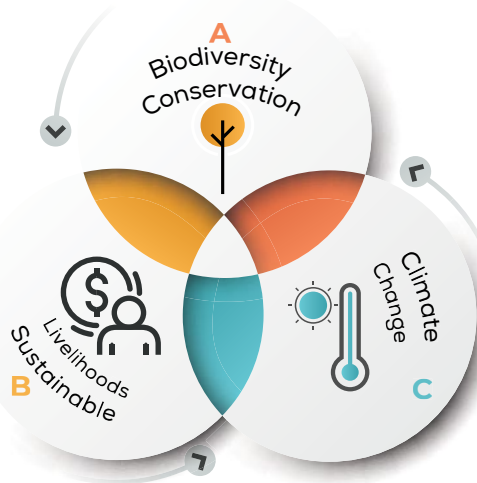
These elements represent the **key success factors** and value proposition that ECOTRUST is presenting to its key partners and stakeholders, and to the rest of the world, over the next strategic period. They define **the character of the 2026-2022 strategic plan.**



OUR STRATEGIC POSITION



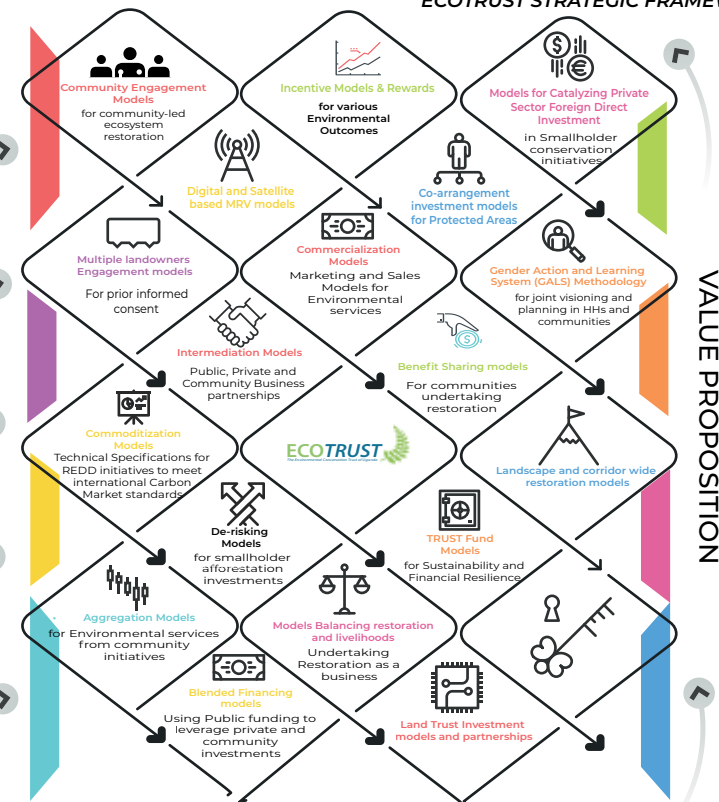
THEMATIC SPACE: THE NEXUS



IMPACT PATHWAYS



OPERATIONAL SPACE



VALUE PROPOSITION

FUTURE SPACE

OUR STRATEGIC INTENT

MARKET-BASED INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE SMALLHOLDER-LED FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION (FLR) AS A BUSINESS (RAAB) DELIVERED

- Key Result Area 1: Land Acquisition interventions
- Key Result Area 2: Ecosystem Restoration
- Key Result Area 3: Conservation Investments for resilience
- Key Result Area 4: Smallholder Business Case Development

BUILD A STRONG, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION OF CHOICE IN DELIVERING A TRIPLE-WIN BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS' OUTCOME "WHERE IT MATTERS MOST"

- Key Result Area 1: Build financial resilience and sustainability
- Key Result Area 2: Grow the project portfolio and staff compliment
- Key Result Area 3: Automation of systems for enhanced efficacy
- Key Result Area 4: Institutional growth and development



INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE FOREST OWNERS, GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE PROTECTION OF FUNCTIONAL HABITAT CONNECTIVITY AND CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

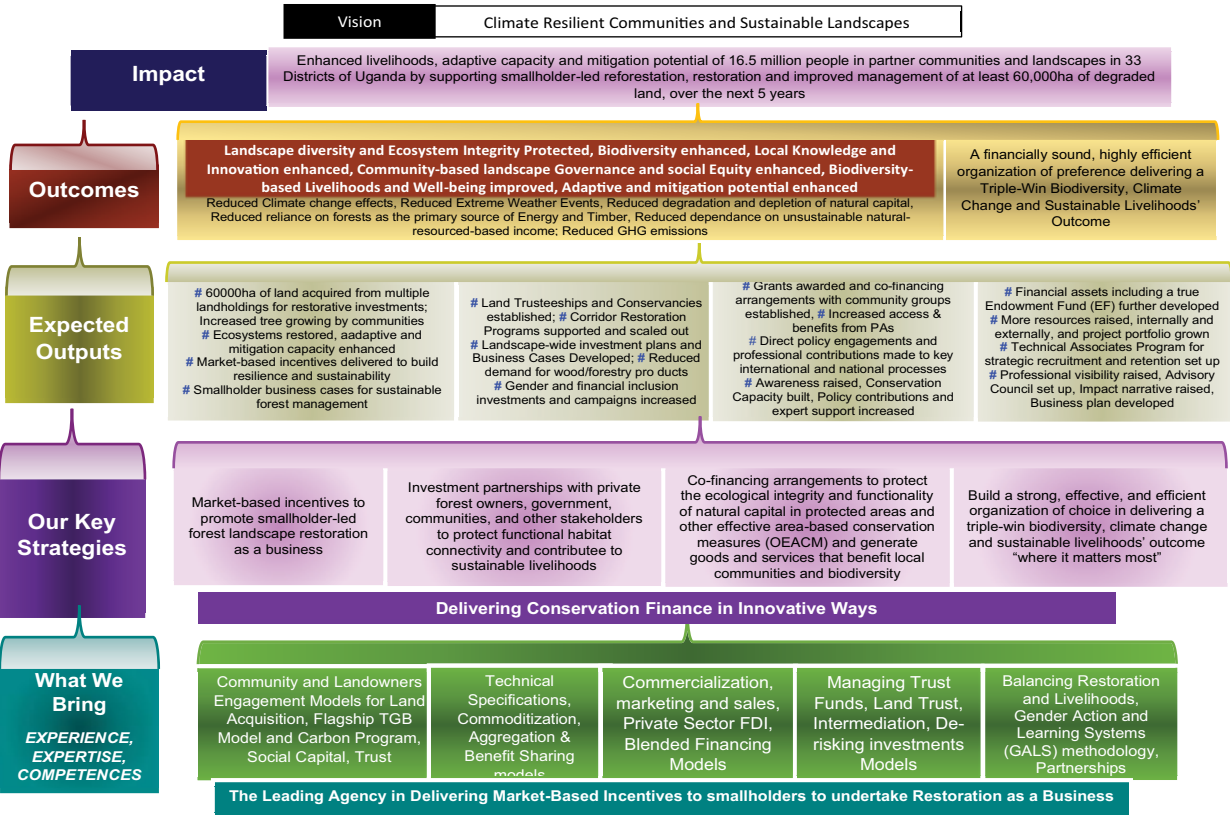
- Key Result Area 1: Land Trusteeships and Conservancies
- Key Result Area 2: Corridor Establishment Programs
- Key Result Area 3: Landscape-wide Business Case Development
- Key Result Area 4: Gender and financial inclusion

CO-FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY AND FUNCTIONALITY OF NATURAL CAPITAL IN PROTECTED AREAS AND OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMS) TO GENERATE GOODS AND SERVICES THAT BENEFIT LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND BIODIVERSITY

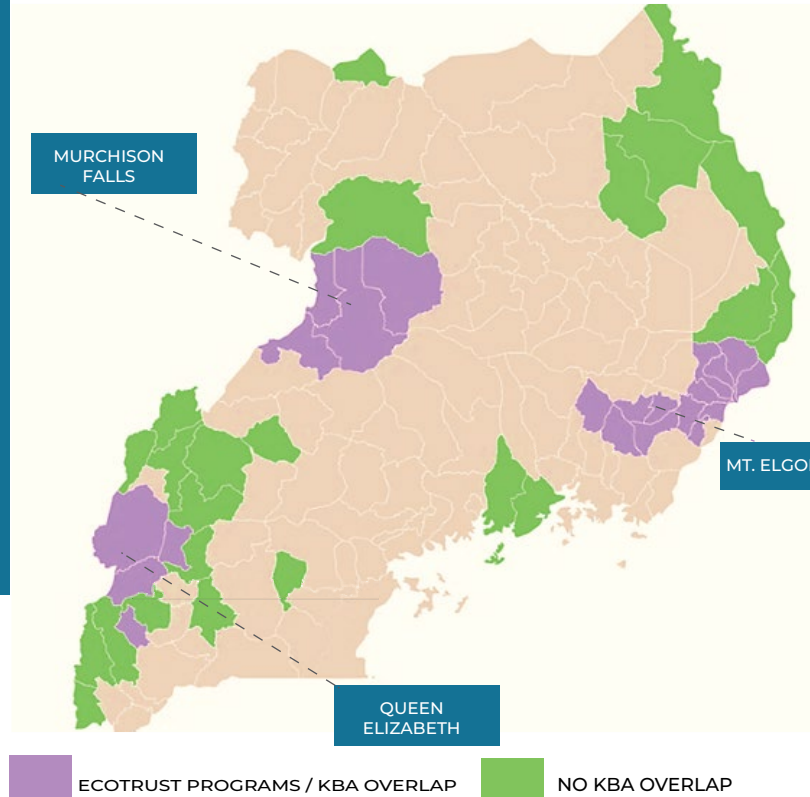
- Key result area 1: Grants and Co-financing arrangements
- Key Result Area 2: Policy Engagement and Advocacy
- Key Result Area 3: Capacity building, communication and awareness interventions



THEORY OF CHANGE



PROGRAM LOCATIONS



CURRENT CONTEXT

ECOTRUST operates across Uganda with a focus on three main landscapes: **Queen Elizabeth National Park landscape** and **Murchison-Semliki landscape** in the Albertine region of South-Western Uganda, and the **Mount Elgon Landscape** in Eastern Uganda. These are all landscapes of global biodiversity significance, but they are also hot spots for climate change induced disasters – especially floods, mud slides and changing weather patterns that result in frequent and unexpected droughts and changes in rainy seasons.

The map shows the spatial coverage of ECOTRUST vis-à-vis the key biodiversity areas in Uganda. ECOTRUST programs in these areas are currently supporting **12,000ha** of land under improved forest management by approximately **10,000 smallholders** linked to the voluntary carbon market.

Over the next -5 year strategic period (2026-2022), we would like to scale out our programs to the **Northern Region (15,000ha)**, **Lake Victoria Basin (15,000ha)**, **South Kigezi Sub-region (15,000ha)** and **Eastern Region (15,000ha)** – a total of **60,000ha over 5 years**. Expansion to Mpologoma landscape in Eastern Uganda is already underway.

KEY COMPETENCIES



01

Land purchase

ECOTRUST draws its mandate to purchase and own land from the TRUST DEED that established it. ECOTRUST has over 15 years' experience in land purchase in Uganda. ECOTRUST purchased and holds in trust 35ha of land in the Rwenzori Mountain Gateway; Purchased and owns Office Premises in Nakiwogo, Entebbe in Uganda; Purchased and owns current National Head office Premises in Lubowa, Kampala. The current Executive Director, Pauline Nantongo Kalunda has overseen and negotiated these purchases; and brings 17 years of technical experience as Head of ECOTRUST operations in Uganda.

03

Income generation for conservation

ECOTRUST has established a niche in conservation finance and undertakes restoration as a business – aimed at balancing restoration and livelihoods. The ECOTRUST Business model is based on blended finance: Public finance (Donor grants/Projects); Private Sector Finance (Foreign Direct Investment through PES and CSR); Internal Revenue (Endowment Fund and Investments in Equity; and Property); and Community Contributions (Carbon Community Fund). All operations are aligned to either of the 8 ECOTRUST Business lines: Carbon Trade, Donor Portfolio/Projects; Renewable Energy, CSR, Grants Management (Disbursements); Land Trust and Ecotourism; Consultancy; and TRUST Funds. ECOTRUST has established an Endowment Fund of about US\$ 4million.

02

Research and Monitoring

Research and monitoring – ECOTRUST undertakes both primary and secondary research in collaboration with various centers of excellence. ECOTRUST has undertaken primary research to develop Maesopsis Eminii as the original specification applied under TGB until 2015. Mixed Native Species specification was developed and approved in 2016. This caters for Boundary Planting, Dispersed Planting and Woodlots under TGB. ECOTRUST has undertaken various GIS remote sensing studies under the SRJS Corridor programme to generate corridor maps and biodiversity data. ECOTRUST has undertaken joint studies with ICRAF a CGIAR center, University of Edinburgh in Scotland; and Makerere University, Kampala. Published a TGB case study with Tropenbos Netherlands (2021). ECOTRUST has developed strong outcome harvesting tools for M&E in collaboration with IUCN Netherlands. ECOTRUST has developed a robust digital monitoring system for all farmers and trees under TGB; and is in the process of acquiring the latest Farm Trace Digital Monitoring system.

04

Community engagement and livelihood development

Community engagement and livelihood development – Community engagement for developing Community Visions and land-use plans is the very first step as well as the central approach in ECOTRUST conservation efforts. The community vision for a sustainable landscape and livelihoods drives the desire to develop household level land-use visions and plans that then become the basis and business plan for their recruitment into the Trees for Global Benefit Program. Quarterly feedback meetings have been institutionalized in all partner communities to provide a regular platform for dialogue and stakeholder feedback. In marginalized communities, community engagement has resulted in the formation and registration of Community Land Associations (CLAs) by the District Land Board - giving the communities rights to manage and secure their community forests. In communities surrounding forest reserves ECOTRUST has facilitated the formation of Collaborative Forest Management groups with the National Forest Authority (NFA) based on 4Rs: Rights, Responsibilities, Roles and Returns.

05

Corridor Establishment and reserve management

Corridor Establishment and reserve management –From 2020-2016 ECOTRUST implemented the Shared Resources Joint Resources (SRJS) Corridor Restoration Programme in collaboration with IUCN Netherlands and conducted intensive studies to establish the baseline biodiversity and land cover conditions of the wildlife corridor between Bugoma and Budongo Forest Reserves in the Murchison Semliki landscape. Barely 30 years ago these two reserves were interconnected but the connectivity has been lost due to agricultural degradation and oil exploitation. ECOTRUST is leading the process restoring the integrity of this corridor and has identified 7 critical linkages that need complete reforestation to restore connectivity. A sister project, SRJS Advocacy, led a joint evidence-based advocacy for the recovery of over 6000ha of the Bugoma Forest Reserve that have been leased to Hoima Sugar Company for commercial Sugarcane growing. SRJS Advocacy has also been leading a joint evidence-based advocacy campaign for Biodiversity conservation for the entire Murchison-Semliki landscape in the context current oil & gas development in the landscape.

06

Ecosystem Restoration

This is ECOTRUST's core business. ECOTRUST has, over the last 17 years, established a niche in undertaking ecosystem restoration as a business. Under the flagship Trees for Global Benefit (TGB) – ECOTRUST has developed technical specifications for agroforestry (woodlots); reafforestation (indigenous mixed species under CFMs); assisted natural regeneration (under CLAs) and Natural Regeneration (Rwenzori Gateway). The specifications under TGB have enabled the aggregation tCO2 from over 10000 smallholders under Plan Vivo standard that have been sold through ECOTRUST to national and international level buyers in the voluntary carbon for the last 17 years. Payments are designed as incentives for performance-based premium environmental outcomes including soil and water conservation, watershed protection services, carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation. The PES payments are linked to performance-based targets set out in individual or group conservation contracts signed with the participating smallholders. The contracting system is such that the growers are able to receive early-stage payments from the planting point (ex-ante) as a demonstration of commitment and then on-going periodic payments up to when they can start earning from the trees through other tree-based micro-enterprises like apiary, medicines and fruits' value chains. The PES contracts may also serve as collateral for the smallholder growers to access additional finance from local financing institutions for other green propositions. Ultimately the PES scheme presents restoration as a sustainable

PROGRAM EXPERIENCE & CAPACITY

Land acquisition

ECOTRUST, through its Trees for Global Benefits (TGB) programme has, for the last 17 years, been involved in voluntary land acquisition from multiple land holders and thousands of smallholder farmers for reforestation and restoration. Land for reforestation is acquired through strong participatory community engagement and sensitization for prior informed consent before recruitment. Over 10,000ha of land is currently held under woodlots voluntarily by over 10,000 smallholders. ECOTRUST also holds the entire Ngamba Chimpanzee Island in TRUST. ECOTRUST currently holds in TRUST 300acres of the Kibuuka family in perpetuity.

07

Partnerships with International & National NGOs

ECOTRUST is well recognized internationally and is a voting member of the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a member of the GEF CSO Network, a member of UNEA CSO Network. ECOTRUST's Trees for Global Benefit (TGB) won the 2013 UN Seed Award. ECOTRUST has worked closely with UNDP in Ethiopia and Uganda. ECOTRUST has undertaken consultancy with Winrock International US. The ECOTRUST Executive Director sits on the PLAN VIVO UK board. ECOTRUST has established strong customer relations and contracts with a broad range of international private sector buyers in the voluntary carbon market for the last 15 years. ECOTRUST is a member of UNFCCC CSO Network and has attended several COP meetings. ECOTRUST is currently leading the policy unit of the Africa CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) under the umbrella of African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) in engagement with the Post2020- CBD framework

08

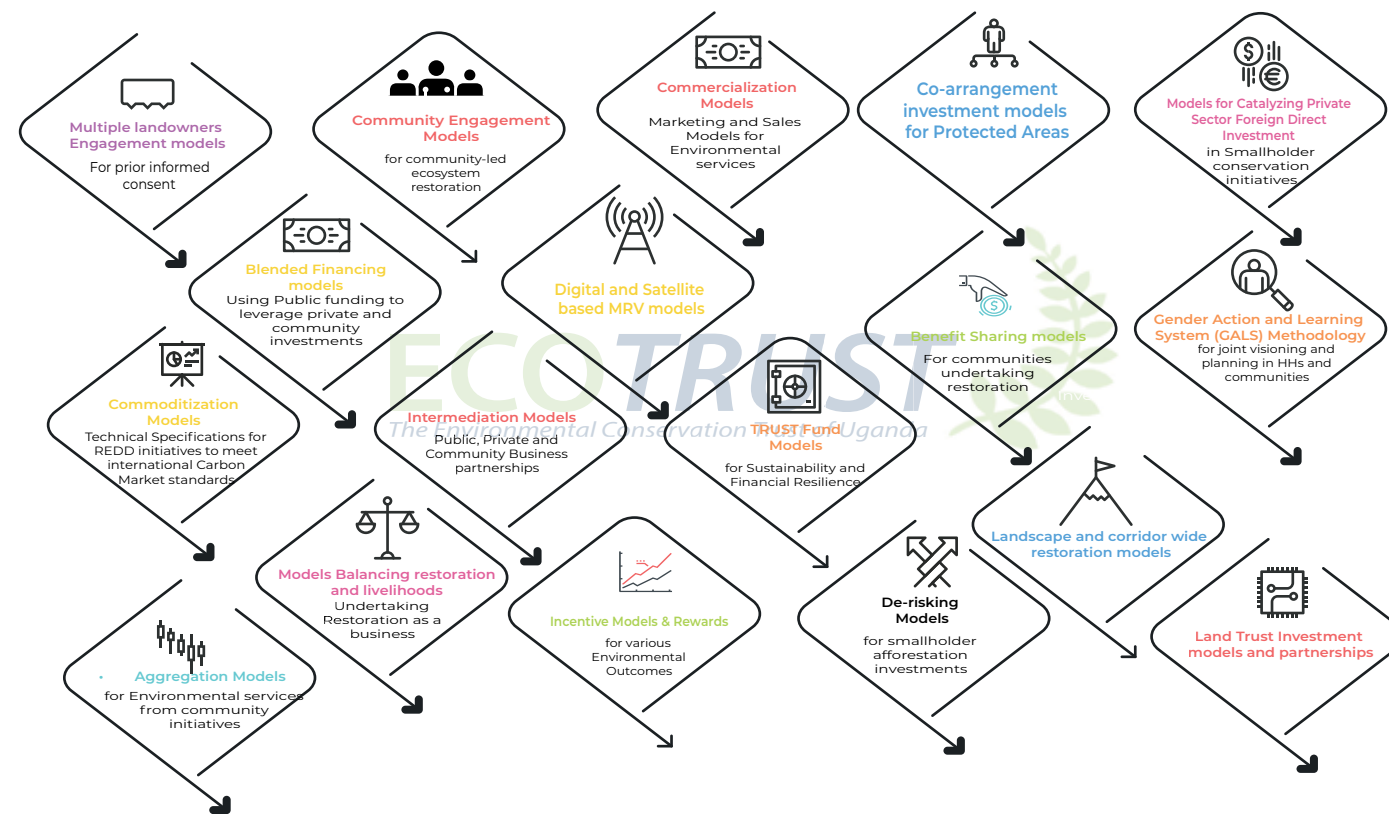
Partnerships with Regional and local Governments

ECOTRUST is a member of IUCN-ESARO (Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office); a member of the Northern Albertine Regional Conservation Groups of CSOs (NARC-G); a member of the Kiiha Catchment Partnership bringing together Government of Uganda (Ministry of Water and Environment); District Local Governments of Masindi, Hoima, Kikuube, Buliisa, Kyenjonjo; and CSOs in the catchment including ECOTRUST; a member of the national Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) CSO Coalition.

Partnership with Community groups: The ECOTRUST Trees for Global Benefit (TGB) programme brings together a community-based farmer network of over 10,000 smallholder growers linked through various farmer groups, CBOs and associations to aggregate PES and carbon credits. ECOTRUST is working with 10 Community Land Associations in Masindi that have been able to register and obtain certificates for their community forests. ECOTRUST has supported the establishment of over 10 Collaborate Forest Management (CFM) groups across the different landscapes in collaboration with the National Forest Authority (NFA).

09

IMPLEMENTATION MODEL



INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK



OVERALL GOVERNANCE

ECOTRUST is **governed by a Board of Trustees**. These will continue to lead the organization over the next strategic period. The Board is **guided by a Board Manual**. An Advisory Council – provided for in the manual as the Apex body – is in the process of being constituted. Once fully constituted **the Advisory Council will be the top-most governance body**. The Advisory Council will become operational over the new strategic period. The roles and duties of the Advisory Council are described in the Board Manual.



Mr. Isaac Kapalaga
Incoming Board Chair



Dr. Robert Nabanyumya
Outgoing Board Chair



Ms. Pauline Nantongo
Board Secretary



Dr. Panta Kasoma
Board Member



Ms. Christine Oryem Lalobo
Board Member



Mr. Keith Kalyegira
Board Treasurer



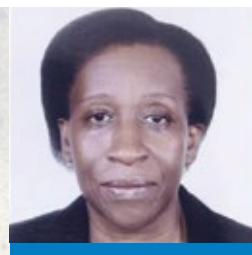
Ms. Juliet Musoke
Board Member



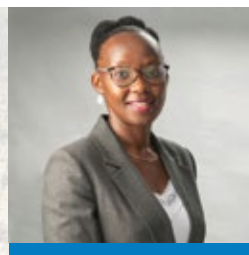
Dr. John Kabogozza
Board Member



Mr. Mark Mwine
Board Member



Mary Kusambiza
Board Member



Judith Namugenyi
Board Member



Ms. Pauline Nantongo
Executive Director



Ivy Kagere
Admin Officer



Margaret Kalema
Financial Accountant



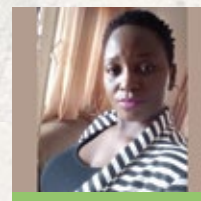
Vincent Namisi
Mount Elgon PA



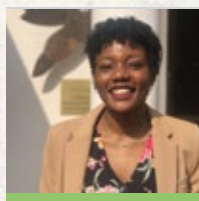
Judith Nyiramugisha
Mpologoma PO



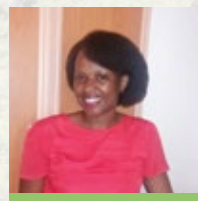
Gladys Tumwebaze
Masindi Admin Officer



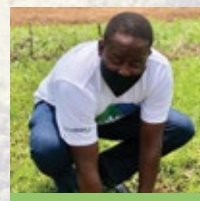
Jane Nambuya
Projects Accountant



Nairah Mayanja
Risk & Compliance Officer



Vivianne Ssebale
TGB Management Accountant



Dr. Peter Apell
Head of Programmes



Freddie Kalibwani
Head of Business Development



Proscovia Kisembo
Murchison Landscape PC



Innocent Byamukama
Rubirizi PA



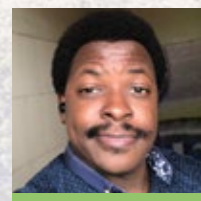
Apollo Kugonza
Rwenzori Landscape PC



Winnie Namirya
Kasese PA



Miriam Kajumba
Kasese Admin Officer



Jonah Butsatsa
Communications & PR



Lilian Kiguli
Documentation Manager



Priscilla Nabuyemba
Project Officer Renewable Officer



Lydia Kuganyirwa
TGB Project Coordinator



Sheila Katushabe
M&E Officer



Farouk Muyiga
Transport & Logistics Officer



Brian Mukalazi
Office Assistant



Kenneth Tusabe
Office Assistant



Bisobolwa Johnson
Hoima, Kikuube PA

FINANCING

OUR SUPPORTERS



FINANCING PLAN

Objectives

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Total

Objective 1:

Market-based incentives to restore 60000ha through smallholder-led forest landscape restoration as a business

\$ 2,004,000

\$2,204,400

\$2,645,280

\$3,174,336

\$2,856,903

\$12,884,919

Objective 2

Investment partnerships with private forest owners, government, communities, and other stakeholders to protect functional habitat connectivity and contribute to sustainable livelihoods

\$ 601,200

\$651,200

\$761,400

\$793,584

\$714,226

\$3,521,610

Objective 3

Co-arrangements to protect the ecological integrity and functionality of natural capital in protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures

\$ 501,000

\$551,000

\$661,200

\$793,440

\$634,752

\$3,141,392

Objective 4

Build a strong, effective, and efficient organization of choice in delivering a triple-win

\$ 931,860

\$1,021,980

\$1,220,364

\$1,428,408

\$1,261,764

\$5,864,376

Grand Total

\$4,038,060

\$4,428,580

\$5,288,244

\$6,189,768

\$5,467,645

\$25,412,297

KEY BUSINESS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key Revenue Sources

Private Sector through Payment for Environmental Services

Endowment Fund Revenue

Public Funds (Donor Projects)

Current Status

\$ 1,200,000

\$ 300,000

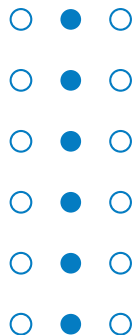
\$ 500,000 - \$700,000

Annual Growth Target

\$2,000,000

\$500,000

\$2,000,000



Building Partnerships for Conservation

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