



Graceful Chameleon

Annual Report

"Sustainability, a Must !"

2024





Eastern Chimpanzee in Itoya

Content

About Ecological Trends Alliance	3	Our Organisation	15
Facts and Figures	4	Growth of the organisation	15
Message from the Chairman	5	Mentorship / human resource	15
Message from the Executive Director	6	Funding	18
Our Programs	7	Income source	18
1. Research	7	Expenditure	19
a. Published Publications	7	Partnerships and Appreciation	20
b. Documentary	7		
c. Publications	7		
d. News and Views	7		
2. Capacity Building	8		
3. Community Development / Livelihood	9		
4. Conservation	12		

About

Ecological Trends Alliance

Ecological Trends Alliance (ETA) is a registered National Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Uganda registered with the National Bureau for Non-Governmental Organisations as required by the NGO Act 2016. We hold registration number INDR13723747 and permit number INDP000747NB.

Our vision

The vision is to contribute to sustainable development through knowledge and evidence-based options for humanity.

Our Mission

To secure solutions to biodiversity and development challenges through providing biologically diverse and proven alternatives.

Our Core Values

Honesty: We are committed to a clean and quality job with respect for all humanity through integrity and ethical considerations in all our actions and operations.

Safety: We promote a sound Healthy, Safe and Clean Environment culture in our engagements.

Creativity: We encourage innovativeness in our work while exploring new heights by setting higher goals for continuous improvement.

Adaptability: It is a fact that change is rapid and we therefore embrace dynamism.

<http://www.ecotrendsalliance.org/>

Biodiversity surveys in Bugoma Landscape



Facts and Figures



4 Publications

Produced 4 impactful publications.



1B +

Ugx 1 Billion + amount of grants received



7 Groups

7 Community groups worked with.



1 Print Media

1 Print Media articles published in New Vision



4 Districts

We collaborated with four districts in Western Uganda.



15 Staff

15 full-time and part-time staff members.



5 Projects

ETA Successfully implemented 5 projects: GLA, WL, Diamonds, PEA, and ESS.



4 CFM Supported

ETA provided support to 4 Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) groups in implementing their CFM agreements.



17K + Trees

17000 Trees planted on 38.253 acres by IPLC's.

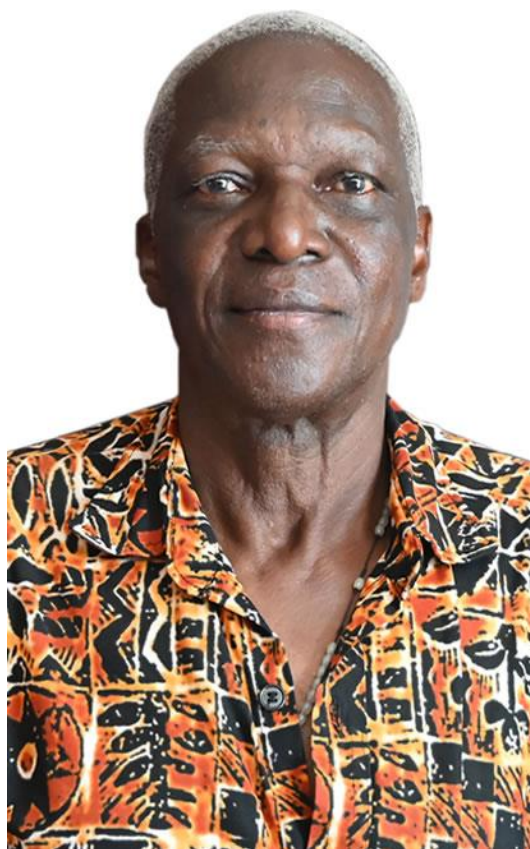
Chairman's Message

The Ecological Trends Alliance Board is the governing body for the Organisation tasked with the main responsibility of offering strategic policy guidance for overall growth of the organisation and ensuring that the organisation delivers on its mission and goals.

This year has seen the organization make big strides towards securing solutions to biodiversity and development challenges through providing biologically diverse and proven alternatives.

One of the biggest achievements of the organization of the year 2024 was the formulation of the Wildfire Management Strategy for the Budongo-Bugoma Landscape, a biodiversity rich and an economically burgeoning area. Our coexistence with fires dates back to the earliest man and the role it plays; lighting, cooking, agriculture (slash and burn), grazing, charcoal burning etc.

These have however escalated into wildfires leading to biodiversity loss, loss of livelihoods and economic losses thus getting our attention. The process for the development of the strategy involved participation of



stakeholders from a broad spectrum of private sector, government agencies, local government and the local communities. I would like to congratulate the team on work well done and invite you to read our annual report.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'T. Mayega'.

Thomas Mayega Kiwanuka
Chairman, Board

Message from Executive Director

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to share our progress towards achieving our mission of securing solutions to biodiversity and development challenges. We owe this to the generous support from Tropenbos International, and the European Union. We made significant strides in areas spanning from research to capacity development, community engagement and conservation programmes.

We successfully implemented two main projects; Wildfires Project and Green Livelihoods Alliance 2 (GLA2) in Budongo-Bugoma landscape. A notable outcome of the wildfires project was the Wildfire Management Strategy for the Budongo-Bugoma Landscapes, a first of its kind and will play a big role in informing the National Wildfire Management Strategy.

Additionally, we negotiated and signed a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the management of St Joseph's Vocational Institute Munteme, the custodians of Itohya Forest. The MoU will be instrumental in sustainable management of Itohya forest, the biggest privately owned natural forest in the landscape with a big tourism potential due to the presence of globally threatened species such as the Common Chimpanzee. We continue to engage six community groups within the Budongo-Bugoma



Landscape through building capacity, raising awareness and implementing livelihood projects such as apiary and agro-forestry.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, with special appreciation to our esteemed board for their guidance.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Opige'.

Michael Opige
Executive Director



Our programs

1. Research

Publications

With a vision to contribute to sustainable development through knowledge and evidence based options for humanity, research forms one of the biggest pillars of the organization.

The studies on the status of wildfires and risk assessment of wildfires in the Budongo-Bugoma Landscape informed the Wildfire Management Strategy for the Landscape whose vision is “a wildfire free landscape that sustains natural resources for posterity”. The Wildfire Management Strategy for Budongo-Bugoma Landscape has been printed and will be circulated to the stakeholders within the landscape.

Biodiversity inventory (birds, mammals, plants and reptiles) was done for Itohya Forest, Kikuube and these will be key in the development of forest management plan and a business plan for the forest which is a potential for eco-tourism development.

Published Papers

ETA (2024). The Wildfire Management Strategy for the Budongo-Bugoma Landscape 2025-2030.

ETA (2024). Conflict Redress mechanisms for Human-Wildlife Conflict in Itohya Forest.

ETA and Masiga M.(2024) Ecological foot print of oil and gas industry to the indigenous people and local communities(IPLCs) and Ecosystem in Bugoma Landscape.

ETA and Masiga M. (2024).Feasibility of small holder conservation for IPLCs in Bugoma Landscape.

Documentary

A video on wildfire awareness & management within Budongo-Bugoma Landscape was done between 19-22nd Feb, 2024 and published on ETA and TBI websites as well as YouTube. [A landscape approach to fire management - Uganda: wildfire, a shared enemy - YouTube](#)

Print Media

One article on Forest patrols titled “Women take up the lead to reduce illegality in Wambabya forest” [published in New Vision](#)

News and Reviews

Explore the latest updates and insightful reviews featured on our website, highlighting our journey and achievements throughout the year.

CBD COP 16 Event (16th October 2024): [Youth it or lose it!](#)

GLA2 Project (9th July 2024.) [98 Farmers in Kikuube Receive Specialized Training in Sustainable Agriculture.](#)

Forest Wildfire Project (27th June 2024.) [Validation of the Wildfire Strategy on the Bugoma-Budongo Landscape](#)

A landscape approach to fire management - (27th June 2024).[Wildfire, a shared enemy in Uganda](#)



Nursery Bed maintenance in Kaseeta

2. Capacity Building

Collaborative Forest and Natural Resources Management (CFM Groups)

Local communities supported with alternative sources of livelihoods through giving 40 Bee-hives to BWAFOCODA and MCODA, 80 Bee-hives to FICCA and FIFC, 5 members of BWAFOCODA and MCODA were given goats and also youth engaged in making fuel saving stoves.

ETA works with 7 community groups in Kikuube District to ensure sustainable utilization and management of forest resources and these include;

- Bugambe-Wambabya Forest Conservation and Development Association (BWAFOCODA) with a membership of 228 members.
- Wambabya Forest Conservation and Development Association (WAFOCODA) with 99 members.
- Mpanga Conservation and Development Association (MCODA) with 60 members
- Kaseeta Tugende Omumaiso Association (KATOA) with 55 members
- Friends of Itohya Community Conservation Association (FICCA) with 100 members
- Friends of Itohya Forest Club (FIFC) with 50 members.
- Abetereine Tree Growers and Nature Conservation Association (ATGANCA) with 30 members.



TBI projects coordinator Humberto Gomez visits members of BWFOCODA in Kikuube

3. Community Development / Livelihood

40 Members trained in Apiary

20 members of MCODA and 20 members BWAFOCODA trained in apiary.



130 Youth trained in waste Mgt

130 youth, women and men trained in making tree shelters from plastic bottles as a way of repurposing waste. 90 members from the local community (20 MCODA, 50 FIFC, 20 WAFOCODA) and 110 students from Shine Africa Primary (60) and STJVTI (50) trained in repurposing waste through making tree shelters from plastic bottles.

123 Members trained in agroforestry

123 members of KATOA (20 females and 103 men including 59 youth) trained in agroforestry by Ecological Trends Alliance together with District Agricultural Office and the Extension officer of Kyangwari Sub County. 2 farmers supported in Kyakatamba as models to provide practical learning for other members

97 Youths trained in climate Change mitigation.

97 youths trained in making fuel-efficient stoves (27 Shine Africa Primary School, 20 WAFOCODA and 50 KATOA)

2 School conservation clubs formed

Facilitated formation of Friends of Itohya Forest Club (FIFC) comprising of 50 youths and Leadership (10 men and 5 women) Training conducted to strengthen the club. Supported FICCA to formally register with her own constitution and it was recognized by the Kikuube District Local Government.

Community Development / Livelihood continued...

Nursery bed enrichment

We boosted the ATGANCA plant nursery bed to produce over 270,000 seedlings and supply to Ecological Trends Alliance and other organisation's restoration works



Michael and Sadic carry out a biodiversity inventory in Itohya forest



Omond Denis at COP16 at Cali, Columbia



Forest Patrol Team equipped with PPEs

5. Conservation

5.1 Forest Protection, Restoration, and Sustainability Efforts in 2024

- 20 Patrol members (at least 8 women) from Kyakatamba and Wambabya CFMs selected and equipped with PPEs (rain jackets and gumboots) to carry out forest patrols and report illegalities.
- 8000 trees (715 indigenous trees, 3222 coffee, 450 cocoa and 360 woodlots) were planted by KATO A and 9000 indigenous tree seedlings used for restoration of River Hohwa by KATO A
- 100 households (25 males and 25 females and 50 youths) around Itohya forest sensitised on human-wildlife conflicts and coexistence with wildlife.
- WAFOCODA visited the Bugoma task force and educated them on sustainable use of forest resources.
- 130 youths educated on proper waste management through making of tree shelters from plastic bottles.
- Validation workshop for the wildfire management strategy for Budongo - Bugoma workshop held and was attended by 68 people (47 men and 21 women) from the Private sector, Local Government, Government agencies, Bunyoro Kingdom and farmers.
- Wildfires Occurrence and Management Awareness was done with NEMA, Bwendero Sugar Ltd, Masindi Sugarcane out growers Association Ltd and as such Bwendero Sugar has included wildfire management in her Health Safety and Environment policies.



Richard trains a forest ranger in biodiversity monitoring in Itohya forest

5.2 Exploring the Economic prospects of Itohya Forest, the ignored “Gem”

Itohya Forest, is the largest privately owned natural forest reserve measuring at least 800 acres in Kikuube District. It is owned by St. Josephs Vocational and Training Institute, Munteme under the Catholic Diocese of Hoima. The forest is dominated with numerous indigenous tree species such as mahogany species, (*Milicia excelsa*), and others attracting a diverse number of mammals such as the Eastern Chimpanzee, Vervet monkeys, Red-tailed monkeys, Black-and-White colobus, Grey-cheeked Mangabey and Olive Baboon. It boasts of an impressive checklist of bird species such as the Grey Parrots and range restricted species e.g Uganda Woodland Warbler.

This forest like many others in the North Albertine is faced with various threats stemming from the influx of refugees

in the region, encroachment, land degradation just to mention but a few.

Much of the biodiversity in this hotspot remains unknown. ETA set out in October to establish a baseline for the biodiversity (mammals, plants, reptiles, amphibians and birds) which will play a great deal in developing both a management plan and a business plan for Itohya to ensure its sustainable utilization. A record of 118 bird species was made and we hope to carry out another survey in 2025.



*Brown-chested Alethe (*Chamaetylas poliocephala*)*



Omondi Denis on panel discussion at COP16 in Cali, Colombia

Success story

5.3 Amplifying Indigenous Knowledge at COP16

At the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Cali, Colombia, our organization proudly contributed to the global dialogue on biodiversity. Represented by Denis Omondi, we showcased the rich cultural heritage of the Baganda people through a presentation on **Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission**.

Denis's presentation highlighted how the Baganda's practices of clans and totems foster a harmonious relationship with nature, offering valuable lessons for modern conservation efforts.

This unique perspective demonstrated the power of integrating indigenous knowledge with contemporary environmental strategies to address biodiversity loss.

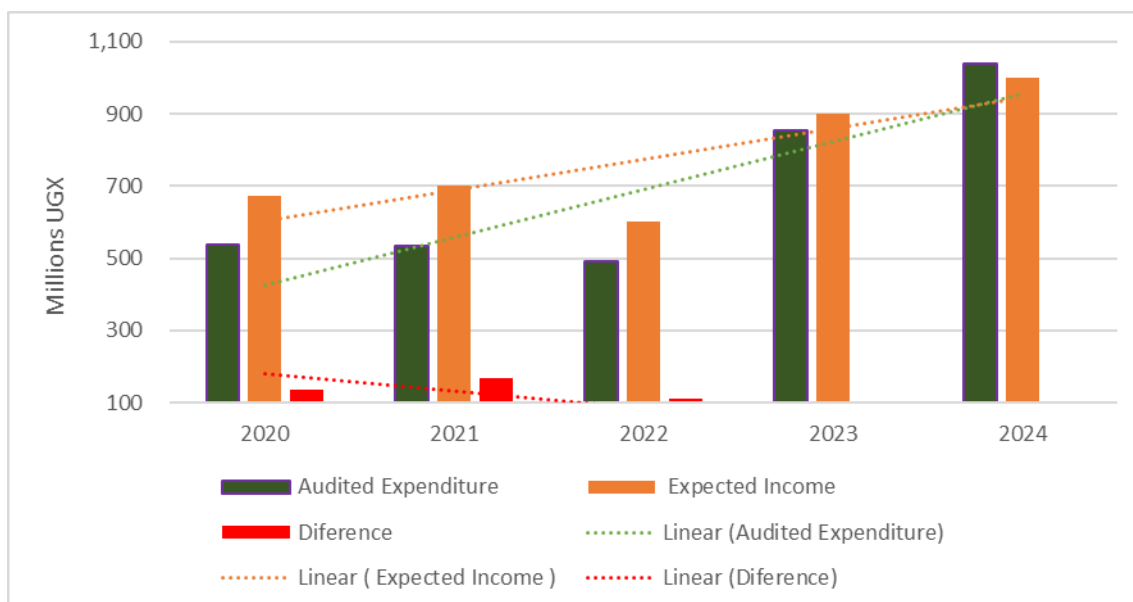
The recognition of our work at COP16 reflects the strength of our conservation and mentorship programs, inspiring us to continue championing innovative, culturally rooted solutions for a sustainable future.



The Organisation

1. Growth of the Organisation

The chart below presents a comparison of income and expenditure over the past five years (2020–2024).



- a) **Functional board:** The board started their second term in 2023 and one online and one physical meeting was held this year
- b) **Annual audits:** Quarterly financial reports documented and financial status reports to the board provided.
- c) **Building working relations with local governments** is a continuous process and ongoing. This year we have worked closely with Hoima, Kikuube, Masindi and Buliisa local governments.
- d) **Collaborations with Authorities:** Our organisation maintained good working relationships with National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and National Forestry Authority (NFA) who have constantly aided us with technical backup and their resources are the bases of our work. This is in addition to various Local governments and the natural resources under their jurisdiction. We are working on an MOU with NFA to support them in restoration of Wambambya and Bugoma central forest reserves.

- e) **Networks and coalitions:** We have been working in partnership with other like- minded Organisations and Networks: Northern Albertine Rift Coordination – Group (NARC-G), Civil Society Organisation Environment and Natural Resources Network (CSO-ENR Network) and other pressure groups such as The Save Bugoma Campaign.

f) **Membership/ Human Resource**

- Two new staff recruited; Judith Mirembe as the Programs Coordinator and Rakisha Sharon as the Accountant and Administration Officer.
- Denis Omondi, a staff of ETA based at the Hoima office attended the COP16 in Cali, Colombia whose theme was “ Peace with nature”
- At least 4 staff underwent capacity building sessions by TBI and these included; Political Economy Analysis, Conflict Diamonds, Integrity and Compliance, Exit and Sustainability Strategy, Ethics and Economics in Organic Agriculture, Digital Communications, etc.
- Knowledge exchange seminar hosted by Friends of Zoka and attended by ETA, Action for Rural Women’s Empowerment (ARUWE) and Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO)
- Shared ETAs performance indicators and contribution to environmental conservation within the ENR-CSO Network.

e). **Communications and Outreach: Amplifying Our Impact**

Social media continues to play a pivotal role in sharing our story and engaging with diverse stakeholders. In 2024, we achieved the following milestones:

- **Audience Growth:** Our platforms grew with new followers on LinkedIn
- **Program Highlights:** Shared 7 posts on key initiatives, attracting visitors from 49 countries.

We also enhanced our online presence through **Google SEO** strategies, resulting in significant improvements in website traffic and engagement. Key outcomes included:

- **Improved Search Rankings:** Optimized key content, boosting visibility and connecting us with a wider audience.
- Our website visitors came mostly from Uganda, Kenya and Netherlands.

f). Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness

Staff Annual Review Meeting

As part of our commitment to organizational growth and excellence, we held our Staff Annual Review Meeting in November 2024. This meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on our achievements over the past year, assess our progress toward program targets, and set ambitious goals for the upcoming year 2025.

Key highlights included:

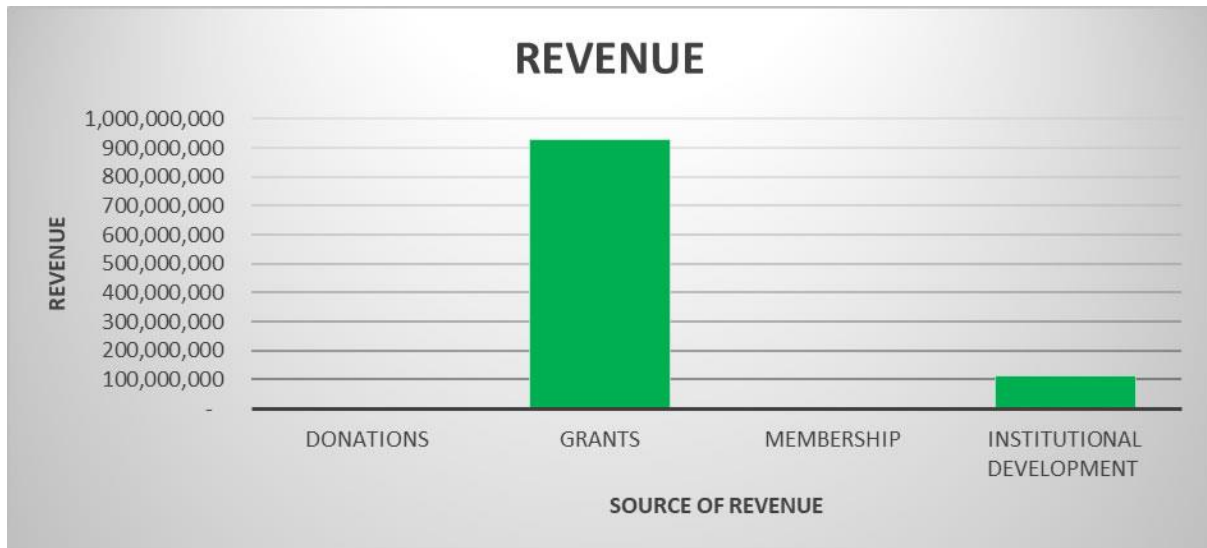
- **Targets Achieved:** Celebrating milestones across our programs.
- **Future Planning:** Identifying strategic priorities and actionable steps for 2025 to enhance impact and efficiency.
- **Team Development:** Strengthening collaboration and fostering a culture of accountability and continuous learning.

g). Partnerships

1. MoU signed with St. Joseph's Vocational and Training Institute, Munteme the custodians of Itohya forest, the biggest privately owned natural forest.
2. Working on the MOU with National Forestry Authority (NFA) for the restoration of Wambabya and Bugoma central forest reserves

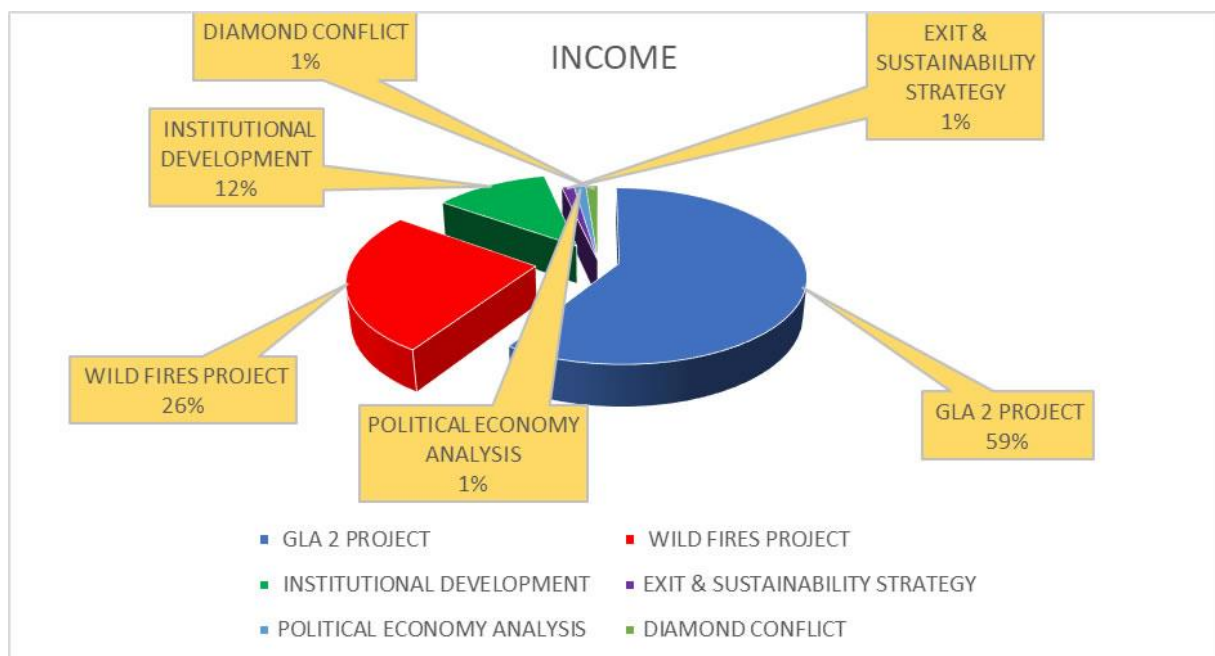
2. Funding

2.1 Income Source



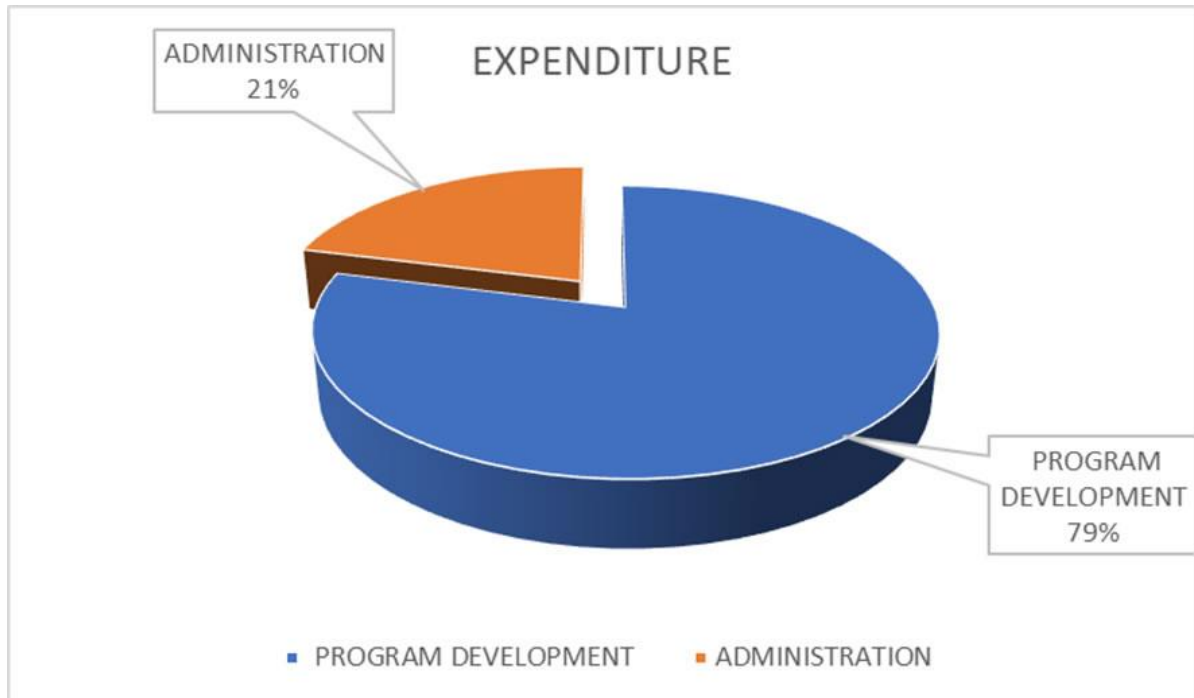
We implemented programs amounting to 1,040,353,242UgX with the largest contribution from grants

2.2 Contribution from different projects

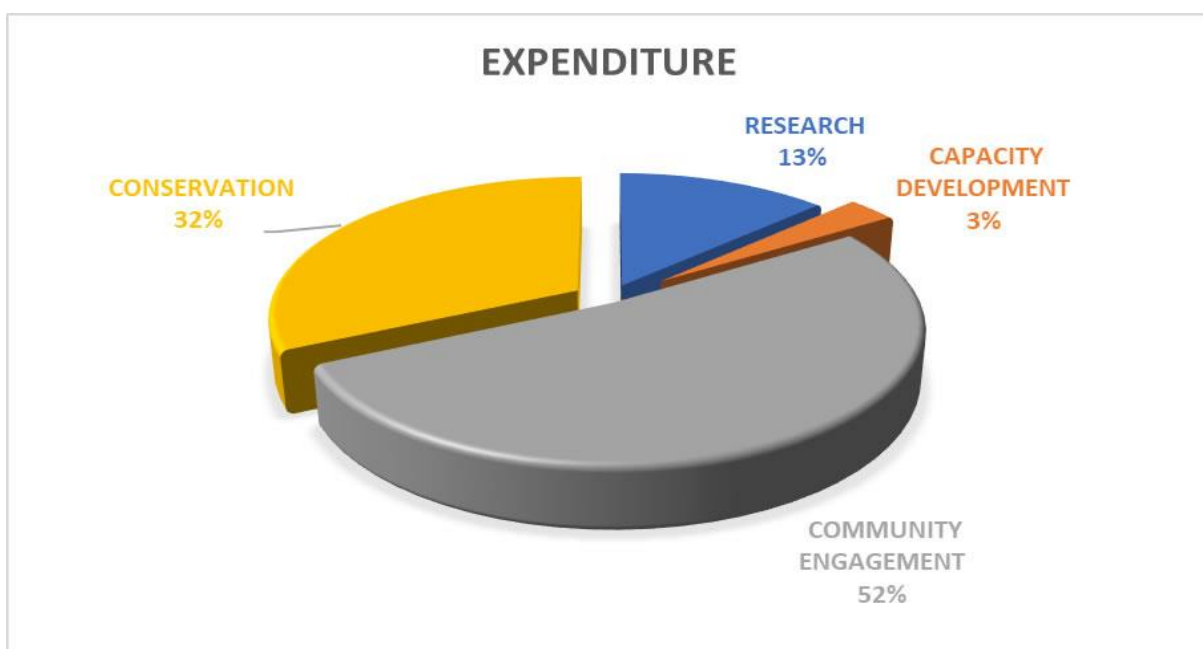


The financial support came from two major projects; Green Livelihoods Alliance 2, Wildfires and three small grants to ensure the smooth running of these projects and aid institutional development of Ecological Trends Alliance.

2.3 Expenditure



Based on our program priorities, 13 % went to research, 3% Capacity development, 32% to Conservation and 52% to Community engagement.



3. Partner and Appreciation

We extend our appreciation to the partners below for their unwavering trust, financial, and technical support without whom we would not have achieved the goals we set.



Government of
the Netherlands



Tree Talk Plus
"Empowering Communities"

ENR Africa Center





...“enhancing environmental conservation and knowledge for the benefit of the people and sustainable national development”...

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