

Sustainable River Catchment Management

What is the main green economy issue that you have been working on?

The restoration of the degraded River Rwizi in South Western Uganda that is part of the Nile Basin.

*You should let us also survive,
we do not study as we failed to get school fees and we are here struggling to survive.*

*When you chase us away from the river where shall we go?"
- A sand Miner*



Some of the Rwizi Catchment Dependent Stakeholders

River Rwizi was once a mighty beautiful river that navigates through the proposed city of Mbarara in South Western Uganda and is a major source of water and livelihood to people across the region. Economic activities in the catchment area include mainly subsistence and commercial crop agriculture, livestock rearing, fish farming, brickmaking, sand mining, among others. In recent years, River Rwizi has featured prominently in the news as a river on the brink of extinction due to climate change, human encroachment and unsustainable economics. The rapid population growth in the Mbarara district, as well as plans to upgrade Mbarara town into a 'city status' in July 2020, have significantly increased pollution and untreated effluent discharge into the river. There has also been increased demand for water for domestic and animal use causing the river to dry up; Poor land management on the rivers banks has degraded its catchment area, making droughts and flooding more frequent.



What is the role and status of MSMEs (both green and not green) in Uganda green economy transition?

MSMEs in Uganda are increasingly playing a strategic role in economic growth and development through their contribution to the creation of wealth, employment, and income generation; SMEs are therefore engines that sustain growth for long term development. Access to finance, skills, culture and fear of the unknown has been identified key factors in determining the survival and growth of MSMEs in Uganda; MSMEs in Uganda are severely hampered by poor institutional infrastructure to support green businesses

What work have you done with MSMEs, and what is happening as a result?

- Capacity Building of green MSMEs surrounding the River Rwizi catchment eg sand miners, brick makers, fishermen and farmers to identify other sources of livelihood
- ACODE spearheading the completion of long standing River Rwizi Catchment Plan that has stalled for years. ACODE has been instrumental in building a coalition comprising 1 private sector, community based organizations, Uganda Peoples Defence Forces and the ministry
- ACODE has increase policy engagement at national and international levels thru GEC to attract attention to green economy issues



Work ACODE has Done to Restore Rwizi River

ACODE has signed MOUs with Ministry of Water and Environment, UPDF. GEC Network has amplified voices of key stakeholders of MSMEs;

ACODE has signed MOU with Ministry of Local government which provides opportunities to champion issues of green MSMEs;

ACODE concluding MOU with Local Government Finance Commission to lobby for increased financing of local governments in so doing changing financing of MSMEs in local governments.

What policy changes and investments do MSMEs seek in your country?

Influence budget architecture; Engage policy makers in charge of the national budget appreciate the role of the green economy to our economy and urgent need to transition to green economy. The budget architecture should be skewed towards investing more resources in the green economy specifically green SMEs; ACODE recently signed MOU with Ministry of Finance which provides an opportunity to change budget architecture in favor of green economy;

Media Strategy; ACODE has created awareness among the policy community and local communities about the degradation of River Rwizi and the entire country through our feature stories that were aired on national television;

Prioritization of natural resources and environment high on the agenda.

Advocate for Climate Change Fund where governments and development partners establishes a funding mechanism for SMEs and other stakeholders would access affordable financial resources. A study has been commissioned with Ministry of Water and Environment and will be discussed in cabinet for approval;

Strategic partnerships to be created and strengthened at all levels; Private Public Partnerships(PPPs), partnerships with Civil society organizations and partnerships with communities; partnerships between developing and developed countries and the academia;

This will create mechanisms for dialogue and synergies with green SMEs, academia, policymakers, faith based institutions and traditional institutions. Impact of climate change manifested through prolonged droughts leading to food insecurity causing forced migration of people and ethnic tension; Under this project ACODE will work with the Ministry of Water and Environment and green SMEs to undertake massive tree planting around River Rwizi catchment area.