



Study to Assess the Status of Environmental Justice in West Nile and Karamoja, Uganda

Call for Proposals

1. Introduction

The [Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment \(ACODE\)](#) is a public policy research and advocacy think tank that promotes accountable governance, sustainable development, and inclusive public policy processes in Uganda and the East African region. As part of their mandate to promote environmental governance, ACODE and partners seek to undertake a study to assess the status of environmental justice in the West Nile and Karamoja sub-regions. This study is intended to generate evidence to inform policies that enhance environmental justice, ensure equitable management of natural resources, and promote inclusive development.

2. Background to Environmental Justice

Environmental justice in Uganda is gaining traction as a key component of sustainable development and human rights. It encompasses the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, active public participation in environmental decision-making, and equal access to environmental information and legal redress¹. It explores the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens amongst privileged and marginalised groups, including their recognition and inclusion in decision-making processes². The 1995 Constitution of Uganda provides a strong foundation by guaranteeing every citizen the right to a clean and healthy environment (Article 39) and placing a duty on the state to protect natural resources (Article 245). Complementary laws such as the National Environment Act (2019)³ and the Climate Change Act (2021)⁴ emphasize principles of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in environmental governance (Republic of Uganda, 2019; 2021). In Uganda, environmental and natural resource management is decentralized and has been the responsibility of local districts since 1996. This environmental management arrangement was part of a broader decentralization process and was intended to increase local ownership and improve environmental policy⁵.

Despite these legal and policy frameworks, the actual implementation of environmental justice remains limited. Challenges such as weak institutional enforcement capacity, corruption, limited public awareness, and lack of access to justice for affected communities

¹ Méndez-Barrientos, L. E., Shah, S. H., Roque, A. D., MacClements, V., & Stern, A. K. (2024). Assessing environmental justice contributions in research and public policy: an applied framework and methodology. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 26(2), 188–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2024.2321183>

² Schlosberg, D. (2004). Reconceiving environmental justice: Global movements and political theories. *Environmental Politics*, 13(3), 517–540. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0964401042000229025>

³ Republic of Uganda (2019). *National Environment Act*, 2019.

⁴ Republic of Uganda (2021). *Climate Change Act*, 2021.

⁵ Oosterveer, P., Bas Van Vliet (2016). Environmental Systems and Local Actors: Decentralizing Environmental Policy in Uganda.

continue to undermine progress⁶. Institutions such as the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the Ministry of Water and Environment, and the Uganda Human Rights Commission are mandated to promote environmental protection. However, many of these institutions are underfunded and overburdened, leading to regulatory gaps, especially at the local government level (NEMA, 2022). Uganda's legal framework, particularly through Article 39 of the Constitution and environmental laws such as the National Environmental Act and Climate Change Act, provides a foundational recognition of environmental rights. However, weak enforcement mechanisms, inadequate public awareness, and economic priorities often undermine the effectiveness of these legal provisions. Additionally, fragmented institutional responsibilities and limited funding have hindered comprehensive environmental governance⁷.

In the sub-regions of Karamoja and West Nile, the situation is more acute due to intersecting issues of poverty, conflict, environmental degradation, and weak governance. Karamoja, for example, has experienced environmental injustices associated with large-scale land acquisitions for mining and commercial agriculture, often without meaningful community consultation or consent⁸. These actions have led to the displacement of pastoralist communities, loss of grazing land, and reduced access to water. In West Nile, population pressure, refugee settlements, deforestation, and wetland encroachment have intensified environmental degradation, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth⁹.

Nonetheless, opportunities exist to enhance environmental justice in Uganda. These include legal empowerment initiatives to increase public awareness of environmental rights, strengthening community-based natural resource management systems, and leveraging decentralized governance structures to improve local oversight and participation (Kameri-Mbote & Odote, 2019)¹⁰. Additionally, increased partnerships between government, civil society, and academia can support evidence-based advocacy, while innovations such as digital platforms and community radios can facilitate access to environmental information, early warning systems, and grievance redress mechanisms.

Persistent gaps, however, must be addressed. These include limited integration of environmental justice principles in local government planning, inadequate data on environmental injustices, and weak coordination among institutions. Vulnerable populations—especially women, youth, and Indigenous communities—often lack the capacity and platforms to engage meaningfully in environmental decision-making¹¹. This study aims to assess the state of environmental justice in Karamoja and West Nile, document existing practices and challenges, and recommend strategies to strengthen environmental governance and promote inclusive, rights-based natural resource management in Uganda. The Study will assess the various environmental policies, laws,

⁶ NAPE (2020). *Environmental Justice and the Right to a Healthy Environment in Uganda: A Civil Society Perspective*. National Association of Professional Environmentalists.

⁷ Aidonjje, Paul & Aidonjje, Esther & Ekpenisi, Collins & Ayuba, David & Antai, Godswill. (2025). Constitutional and Legislative Frameworks for Green and Sustainable Environmental Governance in Uganda. 1. 1-20.

⁸ Human Rights Watch (2014). *"How Can We Survive Here?": The Impact of Mining on Human Rights in Karamoja, Uganda*.

⁹ NEMA (2021). *State of the Environment Report for Uganda 2020/21*. National Environment Management Authority.

¹⁰ Kameri-Mbote, P., & Odote, C. (2019). *Environmental Justice in Africa: Realities and Prospects*. University of Nairobi Law Journal.

¹¹ Nyangabyaki (2006). *Environmental Governance in Africa: Decentralization, Politics and Environment in Uganda*. Institutions and Governance Program. World Resources Institute

regulations, programs, practices, and activities, establishing whether they promote fairness and equity or act against them during their implementation.

Therefore, ACODE and Partners would like to call for proposals from interested consultants, and firms to undertake this study.

3. Objectives of the Assignment

The overall objective of the assignment is to assess the status of environmental justice in West Nile and Karamoja sub regions in Uganda. Specifically, the study aims to:

- a) Analyze the legal and institutional frameworks governing environmental protection and community participation in West Nile and Karamoja.
- b) Assess how the implementation of different environmental policies, laws, regulations, procedures, practices, and plans, and projects impact equity and fairness among people and the whole ecosystem.
- c) Document case studies and experiences of environmental justice or injustices (social, economic, human rights, ecological, cultural) in Karamoja and West Nile
- d) Identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities in promoting environmental justice.
- e) Recommend legal, institutional, and policy interventions to strengthen environmental justice at the local and national levels.

4. Major Activities for the Consultant

The consultant will be expected to undertake the following activities:

- a) Conduct a desk review of existing laws, regulations, and policies related to environmental governance and justice in Uganda to identify opportunities and gaps for environmental justice
- b) Analyze the institutional mandates and capacity of key agencies (Ministries, Agencies, and Local Governments) involved in environmental management in West Nile and Karamoja and establish institutional overlaps, duplication, and conflict of roles.
- c) Undertake field visits and stakeholder consultations to gather qualitative and quantitative data on the environmental justice and injustice practices, opportunities and challenges
- d) The consultant will identify and document (un)just, (un)fair, or (in)equitable circumstances arising from implementing policies, laws, regulations, plans, programs, projects, and activities in West Nile and Karamoja
- e) Document case studies and community experiences regarding environmental justice and injustice in Karamoja and West Nile Sub-regions
- f) Identify key challenges and opportunities in the implementation of environmental justice principles.
- g) Develop actionable institution-specific policy recommendations based on findings.
- h) Produce and present a comprehensive study report.

5. Scope of the Assignment

The scope of this assignment covers both the substantive content and geographical focus of the study. Content-wise, the study will examine the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks governing environmental protection and justice in Uganda, with particular attention to how these frameworks are implemented at the local level in West Nile and Karamoja. It will assess the extent to which laws such as the National Environment Act,

Climate Change Act, and the Constitution of Uganda are operationalized to promote public participation, access to environmental information, and legal redress. The study will also explore the role of local government structures, environmental institutions, and traditional governance systems in environmental decision-making.

For instance, it is important to establish the impact of gazetted spaces as wildlife sanctuaries and implementation of programs, projects, regulations, or practices that displace human settlements, cases prevalent in both sub-regions. The indicators of fairness and equity for the human side might include whether the displaced individuals receive distributive justice in compensation, whether their culture and traditional practices are preserved, whether their voices are recognised, whether their basic needs are met, and whether comparable facilities and opportunities are provided at the new resettlement sites. On the ecological side, it is critical to establish whether the displacement of human settlements due to various interventions effectively supports wildlife recovery, the environmental impact on the newly resettled areas, and whether critical habitats have been restored or destroyed elsewhere.

Case studies will be documented to illustrate experiences of environmental injustice and community-led efforts toward environmental protection and resilience.

Geographically, the assignment will focus on selected districts in the Karamoja and West Nile sub-regions—two of Uganda’s most environmentally vulnerable and socio-economically marginalised areas. In Karamoja, the study will target districts such as Moroto, Kotido, Kaabong, and Amudat, which are affected by land degradation, mining activities, and resource-based conflicts. In West Nile, key districts will include Arua, Yumbe, Moyo, Madi Okollo and Nebbi, where population pressure, deforestation, and refugee-related environmental stressors are prominent. Fieldwork in these regions will involve consultations with UWA and NFA/MWE officials, local government technical officials and political leaders, civil society actors, community leaders, and affected populations to gather insights and ground the study in lived experiences.

6. Duration of the Assignment

The assignment is expected to take **25 working days** from the date of contract signing. A detailed work plan will be agreed upon at the inception of the assignment.

7. Qualification and Experience Requirements of the Consultant

The ideal consultant (individual or firm) should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- a) At least a Master’s degree in Environmental Law, Environmental Governance, Natural Resources Management, Public Policy, or related fields.
- b) Proven experience in environmental governance, policy research, and legal analysis in Uganda or similar contexts.
- c) Demonstrated understanding of environmental justice concepts and community-based environmental management.
- d) Strong qualitative and quantitative research skills, including stakeholder engagement and participatory methodologies.
- e) Excellent analytical, writing, and communication skills.
- f) Familiarity with the West Nile and Karamoja regions will be an added advantage.

8. Evaluation Criteria

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria, with a total score of 100 points. The **Technical Proposal** will account for **70%**, and the **Financial Proposal** will account for **30%** of the overall evaluation score.

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Maximum Score
Technical Proposal (70%)		
Understanding of the assignment & methodology	Clarity, relevance, and feasibility of proposed approach	25
Relevant experience and qualifications	Educational background, sector experience, past assignments	20
Work plan and deliverables schedule	Realistic timeline, clear outputs	10
Quality of previous similar work	Quality and relevance of samples provided	10
Stakeholder engagement strategy	Inclusiveness and effectiveness of proposed engagement	5
Subtotal – Technical Proposal		70
Financial Proposal (30%)		
Cost-effectiveness and budget clarity	Value for money and transparency of financial breakdown	30
Subtotal – Financial Proposal		30
Total		100

9. Application Process and Reporting

Interested consultants should submit:

- A technical proposal detailing understanding of the assignment, methodology, work plan, and experience, and proposed consulting team
- A financial proposal with a clear budget breakdown.
- Curriculum Vitae(s) of key personnel.
- At least two examples of previous similar assignments.
- Two references for previous assignments

The technical and financial proposals in PDF format should be sent by e-mail to: procurement@acode-u.org by 17:00 hrs on April May 15, 2025. The successful consultant will report to the Project Manager at ACODE and provide regular updates throughout the assignment.