



Judith and Richard

Annual Report "Sustainability, a Must"

2025





Bugoma Landscape

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About Ecological Trends

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/>

Facts and Figures



2 Publications

Produced 2 impactful publications.



1 Billion +

Ugx 1 Billion+ amount of grants received.



7 Groups

7 Community groups worked with.



2 Print Media

2 Print Media articles published in New Vision



6 Districts

We collaborated with six districts in Western Uganda.



15 Staff

15 full-time and part-time staff members.



4 Projects Done

We successfully implemented 4 projects: GLA2, Wildfires, **Conservation of the Shoebill and Rhino Conservation**



4 CFM Supported

We supported 4 Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) groups in implementing their CFM agreements.



7K + Trees

More than 7,000 indigenous tree species used to gap fill 45% Of unviable seedlings

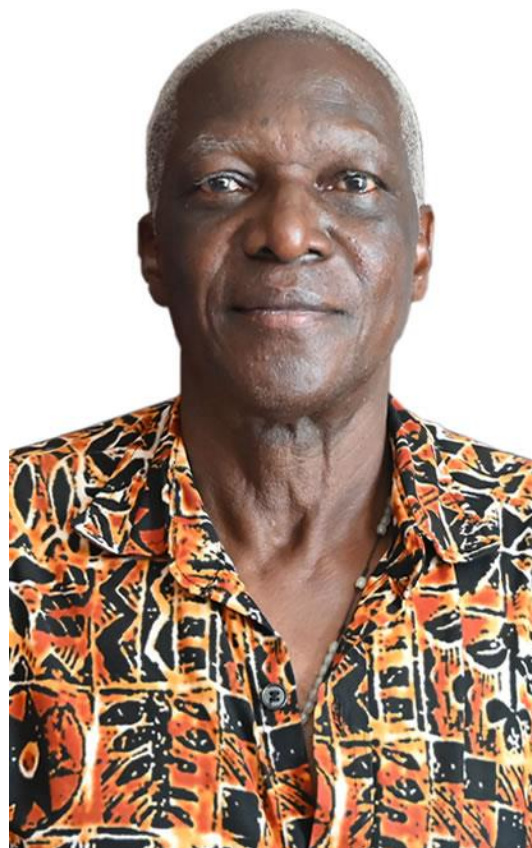
Chairman's Message

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.

We were privileged to host the YouthIt or Loselt Africa Regional conference (YIOLI) at Miika Eco-Resort, Hoima District with support and partnership from Tropenbos International (TBI). We hosted youths from Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia and DR Congo.

The initiative aims at empowering young people to lead transformation of their landscapes through building skills, amplifying voices and driving policy advocacy thus creating sustainable livelihoods, restoring ecosystems, and championing inclusive change.



Youths form the biggest population globally and this would ensure widespread take up of the environment conservation.

I thank you all

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

Thomas Mayega Kiwanuka

Chairman, Board

Message from Executive

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, youths engagement and conservation programmes.

We successfully completed our main Green Livelihoods Alliance 2 (GLA2) in Budongo-Bugoma landscape. The GLA2 project started in 2021 and during the 5 years of tenure, we have realized a number of milestones, among which are the collaboration with local communities within the Budongo-Bugoma Landscape.

We established collaboration 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 forest in the landscape with a big tourism potential due to the presence of globally threatened species such as the Common Chimpanzee.



On the side of wildfire project, we launched the Wildfire Management Strategy for Budongo-Bugoma landscape, a first of its kind and forms a baseline for the National Wildfire Management Strategy. This project received a two year extension which will give us the opportunity to scale up nationally.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, with special appreciation to our esteemed board for their guidance. Together, we are making meaningful impact on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Thank you.

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

Michael Opige
Executive Director



Our Interventions

1. Research

A. Publications

With a vision to contribute to sustainable development through knowledge and experience based options for humanity, research forms one of the biggest pillars of the organization. Following the biodiversity inventory (birds, mammals, plants and heperetiles) done for Itohya Forest, Kikuube District, a business development plan for Itohya has been designed to better position the forest as a tourist destination and this would make a conservation case for the forest.

B. Research Reports

1. ETA (2025). The Biodiversity of Itohya Forest, Kikuube District.
2. ETA (2025). The Business Development Plan for Itohya Forest Reserve, Kikuube District.

C. Print Media

1. An article in New Vision highlighting our work in Queen Elizabeth National Park “Lion Queens and Kings” aimed at empowering local pastoralists as custodians against lion persecution was published on 22nd May, 2025. The article highlighted need to involve all stakeholders in the protection of flagship species. It raised the importance of habitat protection, species importance to tourism and economy and above all need to manage human wildlife conflicts.
2. Another article on how ecotourism is saving Bunyoro was published on 20th October, 2025 in the New Vision. This was to highlight how local communities can position themselves to benefit from the existing Itohya Forest Reserve. This article focused on Chimpanzee as flagship species in Bunyoro and a key selling point for tourism. The new Vision has production of over 30,000 copies and readership of over 950,000 people across the country

D. News and Reviews

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

- ❖ Regional Conference (12th – 19th October 2025): [Youth It or Lose It](#)
- ❖ Enhancing Conservation of the Shoebill in Uganda (25th Nov 2026): [View full news](#)
- ❖ GLA2 Project (11th Nov 2025): [GLA-Forests for a Just Future Report](#)
- ❖ New Approach Pushed to Build Fire-Resilient Landscapes (10th – Nov 2025): [Read more](#)
- ❖ Effective Rhino Conservation in Uganda: [View full news](#)



From waste to value. Omondi trains communities to transform plastic bottles into useful products while promoting recycling and green livelihoods.

2. Capacity Building

Collaborative Forest and Natural Resources Management (CFM Groups)

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.

Our Impact in Capacity Development

- ❖ 50 members of FIFC, 143 members of FICCA, 20 members of MCODA and 20 members BWAFOCODA skills consolidated in forest-based enterprises such as apiary
- ❖ 123 members of KATOA (20 females and 103 men including 59 youth) skills consolidated in agroforestry by District Agricultural Office and the Extension officer of Kyangwari Sub County
- ❖ 130 youth, women and men skills consolidated in making tree shelters from plastic bottles as a way of repurposing waste.
- ❖ 7 youth from the landscape trained in digital data collection in Kobo Tool box to conduct research on celebratory resilient landscapes.
- ❖ 50 members of ATGANCA, 20 members of FICCA trained and support in fuel Efficient Stoves making.
- ❖ 8 intergroup exchange visit between MCODA, FICCA, ATGANCA, WAFOCODA, KATOA to facilitate mutual learning



Empower wildlife rangers with modern technology for effective Rhino Conservation in Uganda.

As part of its commitment to strengthening conservation capacity, Ecological Trends Alliance (ETA) conducted a five-day technical training for wildlife rangers at **Ziwa Rhino and Wildlife Sanctuary** from 5–9 October 2025. The training brought together rangers and technical staff from the Research and Monitoring, Tourism, Law Enforcement, Crime Investigations, and Sanctuary Management departments.

The programme focused on enhancing participants' knowledge and practical skills in the use of modern conservation technologies, including **Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, camera traps, and drones**. Through classroom sessions and field-based practical exercises, participants gained hands-on experience in wildlife monitoring, geospatial data collection, habitat assessment, and digital surveillance techniques that support evidence-based conservation.

The training strengthened the capacity of frontline conservation personnel to improve wildlife monitoring, enhance anti-poaching efforts, and support informed decision-making for biodiversity conservation.

It also promoted collaboration among different departments, reinforcing an integrated approach to protecting Uganda's wildlife and natural ecosystems.

By investing in the professional development of wildlife rangers, ETA continues to advance its mission of building resilient conservation institutions through innovation, technology, and strategic partnerships. The knowledge and skills acquired will contribute to more effective management of protected areas and the long-term conservation of Uganda's iconic wildlife, including the country's recovering rhino population.



Staff Capacity Development

- ❖ **Joshua Ongom (IT and Communication Officer):** Strengthened his professional capacity by completing a one-month short course in Digital Marketing. He also successfully completed a three-month online training program with the *I Change the Game Academy*, supported by **Tropenbos International**, enhancing his skills in digital communication, storytelling, and online engagement to better support the organization's visibility and outreach.
- ❖ **Derrick Kamugisha (Project Coordinator Wildfires):** completed his university programme leading to the award for bachelors' in organic agriculture. He also participated in various capacity development programmes through **Tropenbos International Networks webinars**.
- ❖ **Judith Mirembe (Programme Coordinators) and Michael Opige (ED):** Both participated in online capacity building in Political Economic Analysis (PEA) organised by **Tropenbos International**.
- ❖ **Denis Omondi (Project Officer, GLA2) and Richard Ssemenda (Director Programmes and Operations):** Both participated in online capacity building on Gender and Youth organized by **Tropenbos International**.
- ❖ **Ouma Paul. (Accounts and Administration):** He participated online trainings on financial management and accounting organized by **Tropenbos International**.





3. Community Engagement / Livelihoods

- 500,000 ATGANCA seedling capacity relocated along Kyenjojo-Hoima road to increase visibility, accessibility and sales
- 80 Bee-hives given to members of FICCA and FIFC
- At least 6,750 tree seedlings of shade coffee given to Munteme FICCA farmers. We focused on Agroforestry to deliver our conservation programme. Agroforestry easily entices farmers to plant trees. Instead of viewing trees as a threat to their harvests, farmers readily adopt them when shown how intercropping can boost yields, enrich soil, and generate long-term income.

6750

Tree seedlings
Of shade
coffee



210

Youths
educated on
gender
inclusiveness



- At least 190 FES constructed in Kaseeta and Munteme, which will be a source of livelihoods.
- 40 members of KATOA (22 men and 18 women) participated in restoration of 7,000 indigenous tree species used to gap fill 45% of unviable seeding along river Hohwa.

- 210 youths from ATGANCA, FICCA, WAFOCODA and KATOA educated on gender inclusiveness in environmental conservation. This was done together with ARUWE.
- Budongo – Bugoma Wildfire management strategy was completed and launched. The next step will be to solicit funds for its implementation.

4. Conservation

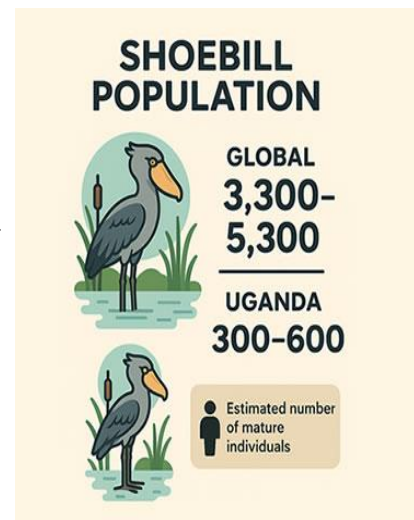
4.1 Enhancing Conservation of the Shoebill in Uganda



Ssemanda Richard preparing the shoebill for tagging (Telemetry).

The Shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*) remains one of Africa's most iconic and threatened bird species. Listed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List and **Endangered** on Uganda's National Red List, the global population is estimated at only 3,300–5,300 **mature individuals**, with numbers continuing to decline due to habitat degradation and human-related threats.

During the reporting period, ETA, with support from **The Rufford Foundation**, the **Swiss Ornithological Institute**, **Friday for Birds**, **Worthwild Africa**, and conservation partners, advanced research and monitoring efforts in **Mabamba Wetland**, one of Uganda's most important Shoebill breeding sites and a renowned ecotourism destination on the shores of Lake Victoria.



The project focuses on addressing critical knowledge gaps in Shoebill conservation by studying juvenile dispersal, movement patterns, breeding ecology, and nesting requirements. Using modern conservation technologies—including **satellite telemetry**, **trail cameras**, and **community knowledge**—the initiative is generating evidence to inform long-term conservation strategies and reduce threats such as habitat disturbance, illegal wildlife trade, hunting, and nest destruction.

The findings will contribute to the implementation of the **International Single Species Action Plan for the Shoebill**, while strengthening wetland conservation.

4.2 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.
- 6750 trees (6125 indigenous trees, 625 coffee) were planted by FICCA
- Over 10.000 people sensitized by ETA, AFIEGO, NEMA, and WAFOCODA over the radio talk show emphasizing sustainable conservation practices.
- A couple from WAFOCODA visited other CFMs and educated them on sustainable use of forest resources.
- 210 youths from ATGANCA, FICCA, WAFOCODA and KATOA educated on gender inclusiveness in environmental conservation together with ARUWE.
- Wildfire management strategy launched
- 7,000 indigenous tree species used to gap fill, 45% Of unviable seedlings along river Hohwa.

Success story

4.2 Youth It or Lose It Africa



Youths form the biggest proportion across Africa and have many commonalities shared across e.g cultural values and practices many of them inclined to conservation of environment such as totems among many cultures.

There is an increased awareness and involvement in conservation by many youths across the world. Additionally, youths are faced with common problems such as intergenerational stereotypes, discrimination, limited access to funding, education, political instability, bureaucracy and gender blind approaches.

After the realization of these commonalities within similar landscapes, the youths in Africa came together between 12-19th October, 2025 at the Miika Resort in Hoima under a YouthIt or Loselt Africa Initiative. We hosted youths from Ghana, Ethiopia, Congo and Uganda.

The initiative aims to empower Africa's youths to lead restoration of people and nature through advocacy, leadership and collaboration, building vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities for generations to come.



Success story cont...



4.2.1 Pillars

Bridging generations: Fostering intergenerational dialogue between youth and elders to revitalize traditional knowledge and strengthen cultural identity.

Capacity Development: Providing tailored learning tracks to enhance youth agency and action-readiness.

Youth-led Action: Funding and on territorial management, biodiversity conservation, climate, cultural preservation, and local economies, positioning youth as designers and implementers of change.

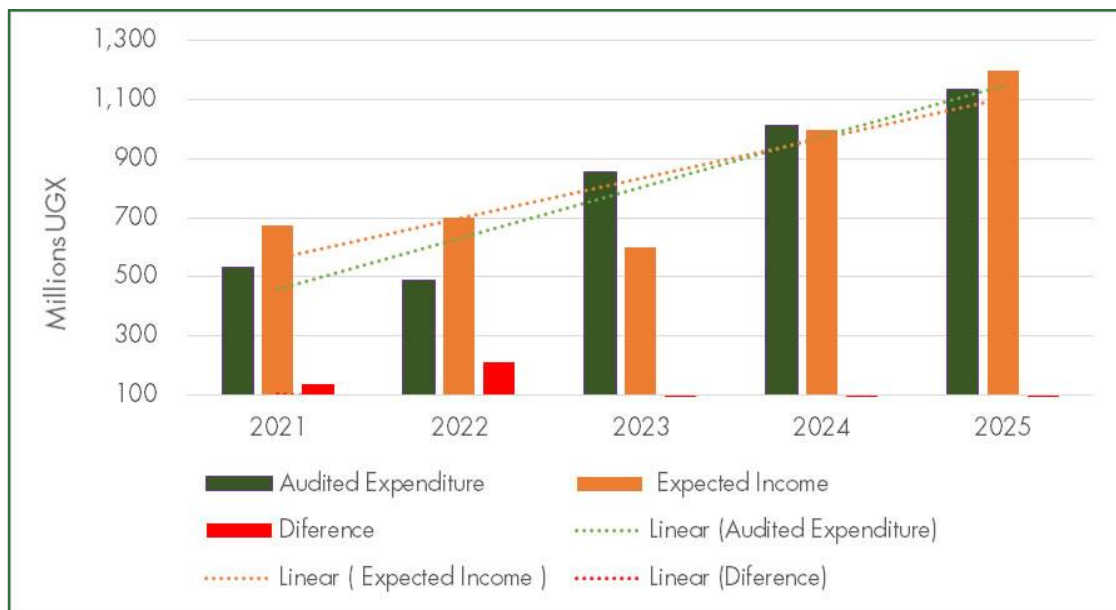
Communities of Practice: Establishing regional learning hubs and peer networks to amplify collective impact, foster innovation, and scale solidarity-based youth engagement.



The Organisation

A. Growth of the Organisation

- a) **Increasing Incomes:** The chart below presents a comparison of income and expenditure over the past five years (2021–2025).



- b) **Functional board:** The board started their second term in 2024 and one physical meeting was held this year in addition to online updates.
- c) **Annual audits:** Quarterly financial status and reports were done as part of internal monitoring of performance.
- d) **Annual work plan:** The annual work plan was done and it is what is used to guide implementation.
- e) **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.
- f) **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.

- g) **Networks and coalitions:** We have been working in partnership with other like-minded Organisations and Networks: Northern Albertine Rift Coordination – Group (NARC-G), Uganda Conservation Foundation, African Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO), Chimpanzee Trust, Bulindi Community Chimpanzee Project, Uganda Conservation Foundation and Civil Society Organisation Environment and Natural Resources Network (CSO-ENR Network) and other pressure groups such as The Save Bugoma Campaign.
- h) We also worked with Friends of Zoka, ARUWE and AFIEGO in knowledge exchange visits and seminars.

B. Mentorship / Human Resource

- Atleast 4 staff underwent capacity building sessions by TBI and these included; Political Economy Analysis, Conflict Diamonds, Integrity and Compliance, Exit Sustainability Strategy, Ethics and Economics in Organic Agriculture, Digital Communications.
- Knowledge exchange seminar hosted by Friends of Zoka and attended by ETA, African Rural Women Empowerment (ARUWE) and Africa Institute for Energy and Governance (AFIEGO).
- Shared ETAs performance indicators and contribution to environmental conservation within the ENR-CSO Network

C. Communications and Outreach

Social media continues to play a pivotal role in sharing our story and engaging with diverse stakeholders. In 2025, we achieved the following milestones:

- **Audience Growth:** Our platforms grew with new followers on LinkedIn
- **Program Highlights:** Shared 14 posts on key initiatives, attracting visitors from 49 countries.

We also strengthened our online presence by implementing Google SEO strategies, resulting in significant improvements in website visibility, traffic, and user 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, United Kingdom, Canada and Netherlands.

D. Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness

Staff Annual Review Meeting

As part of our commitment to organizational excellence, our Staff Annual Review Meeting, held in November 2024, served as an important platform to reflect on achievements, assess organizational performance, and draw lessons that informed the successful implementation of our programmes and strategic priorities during 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.

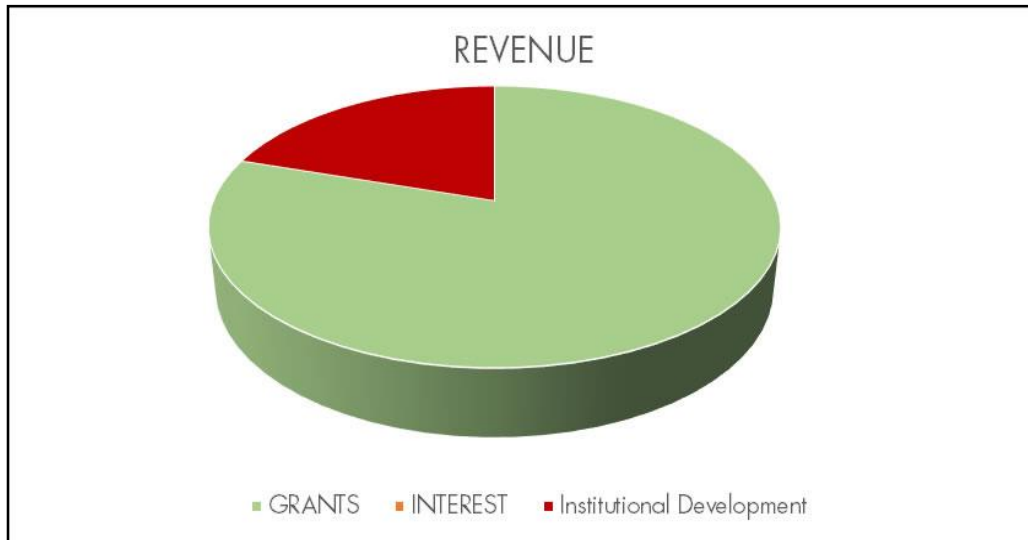
E. Partnerships

1. We successfully started a partnership with Bingo Environmental Foundation and Regenerative Africa Safaris to implement a project to train rangers in modern technologies for conservation of White Rhinos at Ziwa Wildlife Sanctuary.
2. The MOU with National Forestry Authority (NFA) for the restoration of Wambabya and Bugoma central forest reserves was not finalized due to effects that came with the merger of NFA with the Ministry of Water and Environment.



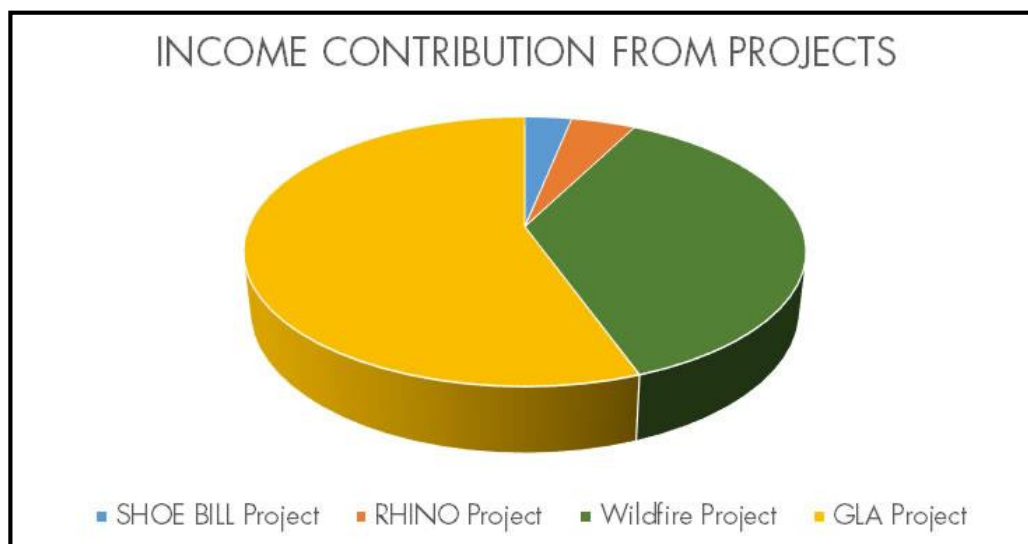
Funding and Use of Funds

A. Income Source



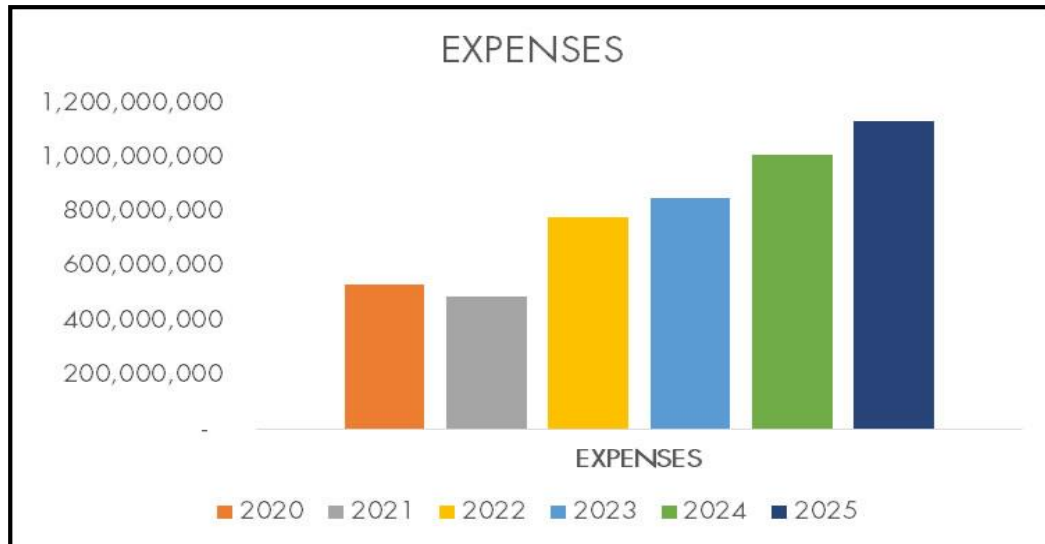
We implemented programs amounting to **over one billion** with the largest contribution from grants.

B. Contribution from different projects

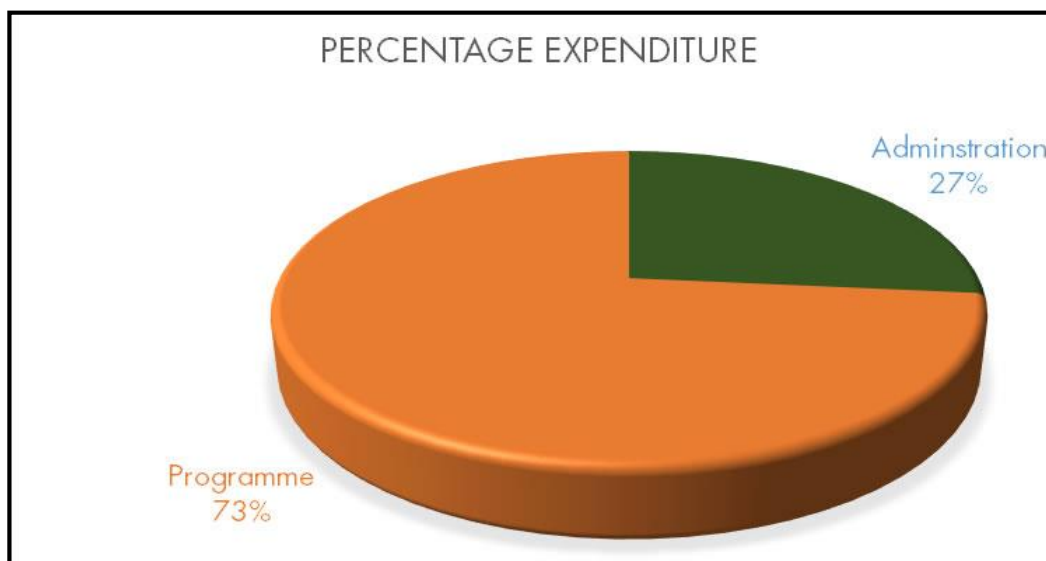


The financial support came from two major projects; Green Livelihoods Alliance 2 and Wildfires to ensure the smooth running of these projects and aid institutional development of Ecological Trends Alliance.

C. Expenditure

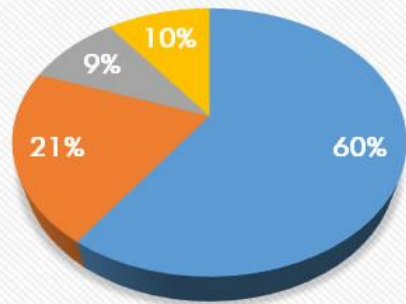


As the income grows likewise our expenses grows because each project comes with its own planned activities.



Our programme to administration ratio fluctuates based on technical staff involved in the implementation and equipment used to execute the project. This year our administration percentage stood at 27% while the expenditure to program stood at 73%.

Expenditure according to ETA strategic Objectives



■ Community Engagements ■ Conservation
■ Research ■ Capacity development

Based on our program priorities, 9 % went to research, 10% to Capacity development, 21% to Conservation and 60% to Community engagement.



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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