MWE, P4F Strengthen Forestry Governance in Manafwa District

The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), through the Partnering for Forests Development (P4F) Project, has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening forestry governance and promoting community participation in forest restoration in Manafwa District.

During a pre-restoration sensitization mission, the P4F team met with the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Emunyu William, District Natural Resources Officer David Wabwire, and the District Forestry Officer. The team also visited Bubulo and Busumbu Local Forest Reserves (LFRs) to assess restoration preparedness and identify boundary opening requirements.

At Busumbu LFR, the team established that outstanding boundary-opening work must be completed, subject to confirmation of approved boundary information. Although surrounding communities appeared cooperative, officials agreed that further sensitization was necessary before physical restoration activities begin.

“P4F is committed to supporting district officials through capacity building and technical assistance to strengthen forestry governance and improve forest management,” said George Kaija, the project’s technical support officer.

At Bubulo LFR, the team observed that the surveyed reserve borders a road and a school in Manafwa town. This, officials noted, calls for careful planning, clear boundary demarcation, and sustained community engagement to prevent future encroachment and conflicts.

The district also highlighted its need for transport, tree seedlings, and technical equipment to effectively implement forestry activities.

Walukamba Aldon, P4F Programme Outreach Officer, pledged to deepen engagement with grassroots communities to ensure local ownership of the restoration agenda.

“We shall work closely with communities to ensure they understand and actively participate in achieving the objectives of P4F,” walukamba said.

The mission is intended to build local ownership, clarify forest boundaries, and prepare communities for sustainable forest restoration and management. Community involvement is a central pillar of P4F, which seeks to address drivers of degradation such as encroachment, unclear boundaries, illegal logging, and limited livelihood opportunities.

The P4F Project is a five-year initiative that began in 2024, with a total budget of 40 million Euros. It is implemented by MWE alongside the European Union, the Italian Cooperation Agency (AICS), the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and the embassy of Demark.

Under the project, MWE will provide seedlings to restore 1,600 hectares of forest and install 1,500 pillars to demarcate 275 kilometres of forest boundaries. Local residents will be contracted to plant trees and undertake apiary and other income-generating activities linked to forestry, creating livelihood opportunities while supporting conservation.

In the Elgon sub-region, Manafwa is among the districts benefiting from the project, alongside Sironko, Mbale, and Bududa. The initiative forms part of broader efforts across Eastern Uganda to restore degraded forests, improve governance, and increase community benefits from sustainably managed forest resources.

The Manafwa mission marks an important step toward translating P4F's restoration goals into practical action on the ground. By strengthening district capacity, clarifying forest boundaries, and involving communities from the outset, MWE and its partners are laying a foundation for sustainable forest management that benefits both people and the environment. If the planned restoration, boundary demarcation, and livelihood activities are implemented effectively, Manafwa could serve as a model for community driven forestry governance across the sub region