



Albertine Rift Conservation Society

Collaborative action for nature and people



ANNUAL REPORT, 2014

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ARCOS Mission and Governance Structure

ARCOS Mission:

ARCOS was established in 1995 with the mission to “enhance biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources of the Albertine Rift region through the promotion of collaborative conservation action for Nature and People in the region.” Today, ARCOS has programmes extending beyond the Albertine Rift, including the Great Lakes region and the African Mountains.

Objectives:

The objectives of ARCOS as articulated in its constitution are the following:

- To enhance the knowledge of biodiversity and natural resources in the Albertine Rift region;
- To promote awareness raising and conservation action for better sustainable use of fragile natural resources of the Albertine Rift region;
- To enhance the conservation and protection of key biodiversity features of the Albertine Rift region for the regional ecosystem integrity and future generations;
- To promote capacity building, networking, regional collaboration and information exchange for better conservation action in the Albertine Rift region and other mountain ecosystems in Africa.

Legal status:

ARCOS is registered in the UK as a Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. It is also registered in Uganda and Rwanda, and has offices in Kampala, Kigali and Bujumbura. ARCOS has a Board of Directors and Trustees comprised of appointed Board members. These board members include representatives from the Albertine Rift region, the UK and other international experts. Within the Board of Directors, a ‘Management Committee’ is responsible for overseeing and reviewing ARCOS progress. The Management Committee is comprised of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and the Executive Director.

ARCOS Board



Prof Lars Kristoferson(Chair)



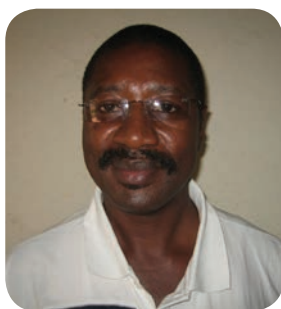
Prof Beth Kaplin(Vice-Chair)



Mr Jean Gapusi(Treasurer)



Mrs Wivine Ntamubano



Dr Katcho Karume



Dr Musonda Mumba



Mr Paul Mafabi



Mr Nick King



Dr Sam Kanyamibwa
(Executive Director and Secretary
to the Board)

Message from the Chairman and Executive Director



During 2014, ARCOS continued to build enabling conditions in the Albertine Rift region and beyond through capacity building, information sharing and networking to better address its core programme priority areas: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Climate Change, Governance and Threat Mitigation. From its local activities supporting Nature Based Community Enterprises (NBCEs) through



Community Conservation Agreements (CCAs) to national and international policy influencing, ARCOS' Collaborative Actions for Nature and People continue to spread, not only in the Albertine Rift, but also beyond the region in the Great Lakes and African Mountains.

We believe that local actions can bring change. In 2014, ARCOS provided support to 7 NBCEs, a model based on partnership with community groups in sustainable local business activities and practices to maintain lasting benefits from ecosystem services. One example of such initiative is a partnership with Conservation International promoting coffee certification through Conservation Agreements in Rwanda.

Working with different partners, ARCOS was engaged in various policy processes, including the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the World Mountain Forum and Climate Change COP20 in Lima, Peru. . In October 2014, ARCOS organized the first Africa Regional Mountains Forum, bringing together over 120 delegates and facilitated dialogue among different stakeholders interested in the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystems.

ARCOS Portal (ARCOS Biodiversity Information Management System – ARBMIS) was launched in October 2014 and provides a platform for information to guide decision-making within and outside the Albertine Rift region. One of the major collaborative activities has been the work to build capacity of NGOs and networking to promote effective Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in the Central Albertine Rift, through a regional network of Albertine Rift Environmental Assessment Leadership Alliance (AREALA) with support from Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

We value the good working relationships we have developed with our staff, ARCOS members and various partners, and all this work would not have been possible without the funding support from our various funding partners, particularly the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation in promoting sustainable mountain development in Africa, the MacArthur Foundation for the Great Lakes, JRS Biodiversity Foundation for the Regional Portal and CEPF for the EIA.

Prof Lars Kristoferson
Chairman

Dr Sam Kanyamibwa
Executive Director



ARCOS is a collaborative and networking organization and all its activities are centered around its motto: “collaborative action for nature and people”. During the year 2014, ARCOS worked with different partners and stakeholders from local community groups to high level decision-makers at national and international level.

At local level, ARCOS has worked hand in hand with seven NBCEs around Kibira-Rusizi Landscapes in Burundi, Mukura Forest in Rwanda and Echuya Forest landscape in Uganda. Two (2) cooperatives in Mukura (Beekeeping cooperative-KOTEREM, and a cooperative of women-Jyamberemunyarwandakazi) were supported in sustainable practices as highlighted In the Nature Based Community Enterprises section below.

In partnership with UNEP-WCM, ARCOS co-organized the MacArthur Great Lakes workshop on “Scenario-guided policy

analysis on the future of development, food security and the environment in East Africa”, which took place in Uganda. The workshop gathered about 40 participants from sectors of environment, agriculture, planning and finance, civil society and academia from Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and a delegation of regional experts.

As host of the African Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership, ARCOS has been engaged in several activities in 2014 to promote the mountain agenda. Under the section below on Mountains, we share the success of this event, as well as the side event organized during the 20th Conference of Parties (COP20) held in Lima Peru in December 2014. We particularly salute the good spirit of partnership that has made this programme reach where it is today. (see below)

Finally, 2014 ARCOS membership programme was marked by stability with a full staff in charge of membership in place and for the first time, ARCOS Members met together in Kigali for an Annual General Meeting, held on 11th June 2015.

Enhancing Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services



The year 2014 marked the closing of the MacArthur funded project on “Building Civil Society Leadership and Enhancing Ecosystem Services Resilience and Sustainable Benefits to Local Communities in the Albertine Rift region” commonly called “ESLOC”. One of the successful activities under this project has been the establishment of Nature Based Community Enterprises (see section above and separate section below) and the Total Economic Valuation (TEV) for the three project landscapes (Echuya in Uganda, Mukura in Rwanda and Kibira-Rusizi in Burundi). The TEV reports have been shared with different stakeholders, particularly communities and relevant authorities in each country (Rwanda Natural Resources Authorities -RNRA in Rwanda, National Forest Authority -NFA in Uganda and “Office Burundais pour la Protection de l’Environnement (OBPE)” in Burundi).

ARCOS is now continuing its efforts in each landscape in terms of undertaking Integrated Landscape Assessment and Monitoring (ILAM) model, developed by ARCOS to monitor the status and trends of biodiversity, ecosystem services and socio-economic status in each landscape. After the baseline studies and the implementation of fast track activities to address threats affecting these focal landscapes, a selected number of community groups are being supported as part of the Nature Based Community Enterprises (NBCEs) Programme (see below). Finally, in collaboration with Conservation International, a feasibility study for the development of market-based solutions was done in two agro-ecosystems in Rwanda. Finally, a final draft report on biodiversity assessment of Rugezi was produced.



Building Nature Based Community Enterprises



ARCOS' Nature Based Community Enterprises (NBCEs) Programme is based on the principle of promoting the payment of ecosystem services at community level. We provide support to communities but they commit to do something in return which form the basis for an agreement. The PES is not based on payment of money but of community services and behavioral change.

In 2014 ARCOS supported 7 NBCEs: 2 cooperatives in Mukura (a beekeeping cooperative-KOTEREM, with 72 members and a cooperative of women; Jyamberemunyarwandakazi which is composed of 320 women) were supported in modern and environmentally friendly beekeeping, energy saving stoves and agriculture; 2 groups in Kibira-Rusizi (a women association: DUKINGIRIKIBIRA composed of 350 members and the group of indigenous people "Batwa" called Tubehonkabandi composed of former hunters in Kibira National Park and who committed to practicing environmentally friendly activities) were also supported to improve their livelihood; an ecological toilet and energy saving stoves were built for the women association and a handcraft kiosk and ecological toilet were built for Batwa group. In Echuya Forest, Uganda, ARCOS supported the bamboo processing group and a group of women in energy saving stoves.

In partnership with Conservation International (CI), ARCOS is implementing a program to support best agricultural practices and market competitiveness through improved products and certification opportunities through Conservation Agreements (CAs). The program started within two landscapes in Rwanda (Sholi in Muhanga and Kitabi at the edge of Nyungwe forest). Each conservation agreement process requires a long consultation process accompanied with participatory studies and analysis and planning. ARCOS signed a Conservation Agreement with Sholi cooperative (Coffee growers) and the cooperative received a grant and more than 20,000 trees were planted. In addition cooperative members received training in sustainable agriculture as preparation to get the Rainforest Alliance Certificate in May 2015.



A Handcraft kiosk built for Batwa communities around Kibira National Park.

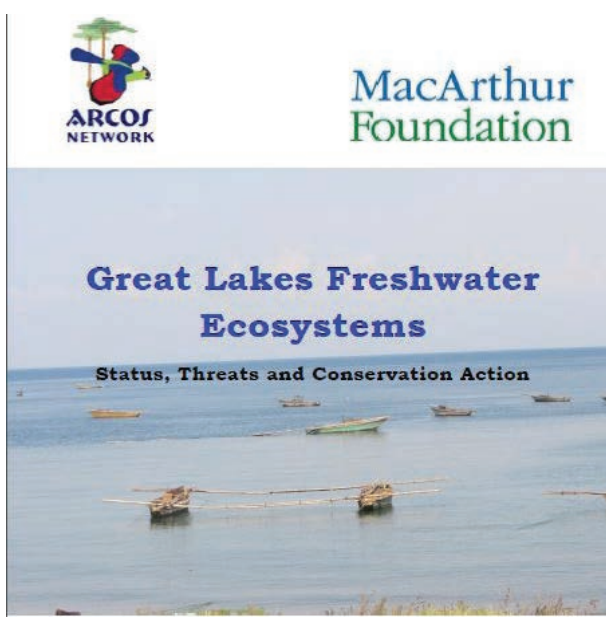
Supporting Integrated Freshwater Ecosystems Management



Building on the previous year achievements, ARCOS continued its efforts of “Stakeholders Engagement for Informed Decision Making, Threats Mitigation and Sustainable Freshwater Services Management in the Great Lakes Region of East and Central Africa”, a programme supported by MacArthur Foundation. The project compiled information on freshwater ecosystem status, threats and conservation actions towards the production of the “Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Status Report”, with input from the members of the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystems Forum (The report to be finalized in 2015) As part of the Great Lakes Programme, ARCOS provided small grants to 4 local NGOs to support collaborative conservation actions addressing major issues affecting the Great Lakes ecosystems. Following NGOs were selected and supported:

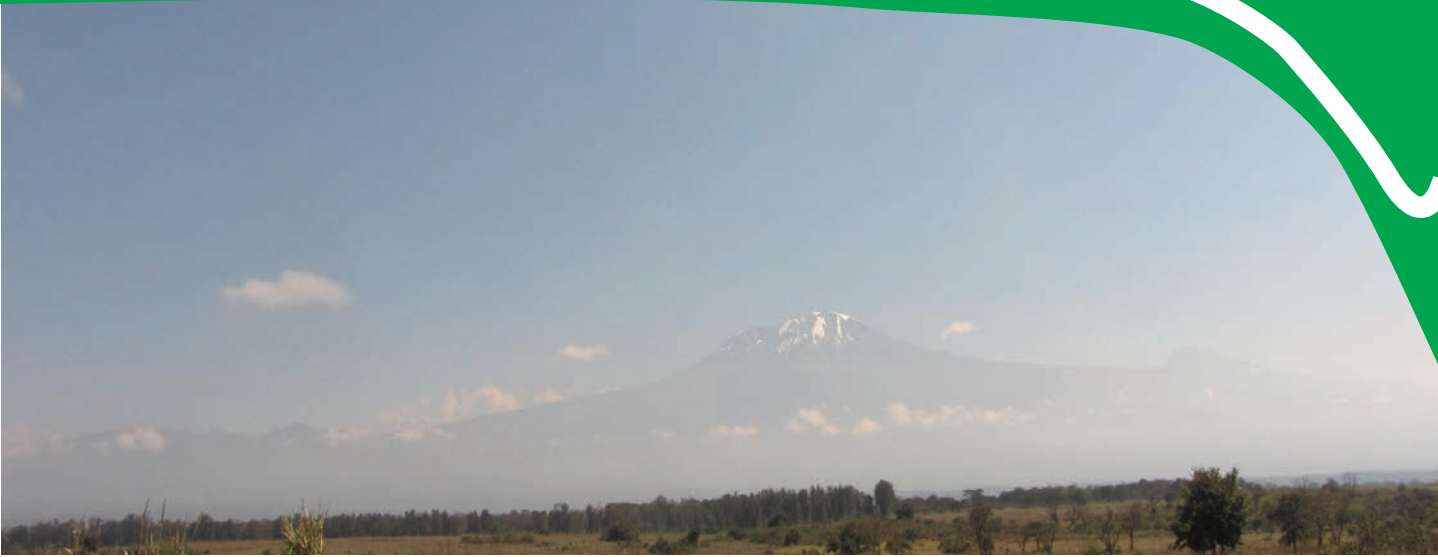
- a) Tanzania Agricultural Modernization Association (TAMA), Tanzania.
- b) Navigators of Development Association (NAVODA), Uganda: The project “River Wambaya Climate Change Adaptation and Community Livelihoods Improvement”
- c) L’Association des Agriculteurs Sans Frontières (AASF), DRC for a project to promote awareness raising, information sharing and to bring together local government and other stakeholders to formulate a local legislation for the management and conservation of freshwater and wetlands in South Kivu Province.
- d) Governance Links Tanzania: The project to

establish a “multi stakeholder partnership” for sustainable biodiversity conservation along the course of Kagera River in Tanzania through an innovative public-private partnership model. In addition, following the decision of the Steering Committee, the project provided support to the RAMSAR Centre for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA), for building a website that will serve as a platform for awareness raising, exchange and learning for wetland managers across the East African region.



With input from the members of the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystems Forum, information on freshwater ecosystem status, threats and conservation actions were compiled into “Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Status Report”.

Catalysing Africa's Sustainable Mountain Development



The peak of the program was the hosting of the African Regional Mountains Forum (ARMF14) held on 22-24th October 2014 in Arusha, Tanzania, and ARCOS is now operationalising the outcomes of the Forum known as “Arusha Outcomes”.

Other key activities of this programme included the production of synthetic reports awareness materials, a regional Newsletter, African “Mountains’ Echo” (3 issues produced and shared), trainings, small grants for community initiatives and engagement in policy process on African mountains.



Participants from the African Regional Mountains Forum (ARMF14) held on 22-24th October 2014 in Arusha, Tanzania

ARCOS was engaged in the UNFCCC COP20 held in Lima, Peru. ARCOS in partnership with the government of Uganda, AMCEN, UNEP, EAC, Swiss Agency for Development

and Cooperation (SDC), Austrian Agency for Cooperation (ADC) and the Mountain Partnership, organized a successful side event on African Mountains. The objectives of the event were to highlight recent efforts in promoting sustainable mountain development in Africa based particularly on the ARMF14 outcomes; to discuss on-going national and sub-regional efforts in building climate resilience and sustainability in African mountains and to call for further support for Africa’s Sustainable Mountain Development agenda. The final report of the event was produced and shared. Additionally to international events, important documents were produced under SMD program: Policy brief on Environmental Impact Assessment and Sustainable Mountain Development in African Mountains, the African Mountain Status Report; and SMD4GC poster.



Influencing Sustainable Environment-Development Nexus



One of the key areas of focus during 2014 has been the implementation of the second phase of the project “Civil Society Alliance for Enhanced Implementation of EIAs in Key Biodiversity Areas of Albertine Rift Region”, funded by CEPF. The project aims at minimizing the adverse impacts of development activities affecting Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) of the central Albertine Rift through enhanced Civil Society participation in EIA process, experience sharing and encouraging synergies in the EIA process. A regional Albertine Rift Environmental Assessment Alliance (AREALA) has been established to advocate for transparent EIA and a regional Newsletter “AREALA News” was produced and shared with our network. Under that project, ARCOS organized an EIA regional training workshop in Bujumbura in November 2014. Other trainings will be organized in Rwanda and DRC in 2015.

ARCOS was engaged in international negotiations to advocate for Climate change resilience. Some activities were spread over different projects aimed at promoting understanding of climate change impact on biodiversity, ecosystems and livelihoods, promoting sustainable actions to increase climate resilience and community adaptation, and engage in national and international processes (NAPAs, UNFCCC) to advocate for climate resilient policies. ARCOS was invited to COP20 that took place in December 2014 in Lima/Peru where we organized a successful side event on African Mountains and

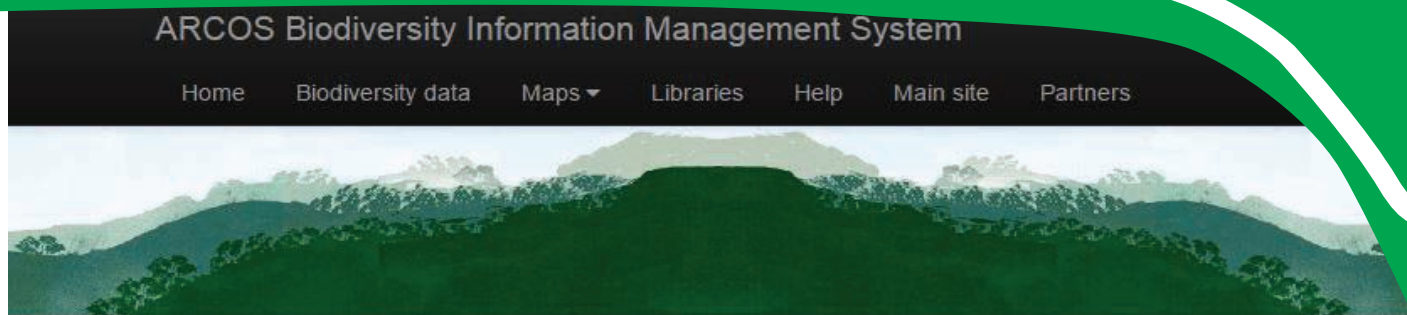
climate change. One of ARCOS key messages in the event was to highlight the importance of integrating sustainable mountain agenda in the post 2015 climate change arrangement and new sustainable development goals

Under its small grant program, ARCOS supported community adaptation activities with focus on climate change in freshwater ecosystems. One of the supported activities is to improve climate change adaptation and community livelihoods around river Wambaya in Uganda.



In the framework to build the capacity of civil society in effective participation in EIA processes, an EIA regional training workshop was organized in Bujumbura in November, 2014





ARCOS Biodiversity Information Management System

Last year, ARCOS's Regional information System was to implement a key project on the development of Regional Portal which has been extended to a bigger initiative of ARCOS Biodiversity Information Management System (ARBIMS, www.arbmis.arcosnetwork.org), with support from the JRS Biodiversity Foundation. The Portal was officially launched by the Minister of Natural Resources of Tanzania during the Africa Regional Mountains Forum and it includes three main geographical components and four themes namely: 1) Landscapes, Nature and People; 2) African Mountains and Global Change; 3) Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystems and 4) Development, Policy and Environmental Impact Assessment

To maintain the portal alive, a series of various manuals for users, administrators was prepared.

Parallel to the operationalization of the portal, the data mobilization process also was kept alive where the two data mobilization sub-grants under the JRS Portal project yielded more than 60,000 records of biodiversity occurrence data and published onto the portal. An effort was also made to keep policing the platform to different groups of the portal was presented to a group of CHM focal persons in Rwanda and EIA practitioners and stakeholders in Burundi. ARCOS' outreach programme continues to expand through the website and with 5 regular newsletters produced on various areas of work including the leading newsletter Backbone/Le Pilier, Touraco Note Newsletter for ARCOS Members, Great Lakes Waves for the Great Lakes Region, African Mountains' Echo for the African Mountains, and AREALA News for EIA practices; not forgetting our social media.



NGO Development, Networking and Advocacy



ARCOS NGO Network includes both national and local NGOs/CBOs as well as Nature Based Community Enterprises (NBCEs). Since its establishment, ARCOS has invested a lot of work in the development and networking with NGOs in the Albertine Rift region. This constitutes an important landmark that needs to be maintained and build on to save that legacy. NGO development and networking is a crosscutting program as the NGO Network is involved in most project activities implemented by ARCOS. ARCOS is now extending this effort to other regions of the programme (in the Great Lakes region and African Mountains).

The regional NGO Network plays a big role in influencing change by contributing articles to various ARCOS' newsletters and website, by participating in various regional meetings organized by ARCOS, such as the Regional Great Lakes Forum and the Africa Regional Mountains

Forum. The NGO Network contributes also to addressing conservation and development issues on the ground, through ARCOS Small Grants Programme, implemented with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Five NGOs Grantees benefited from this scheme in 2014.

The NGO Network is specifically involved in a project funded by CEPF on “Building Civil Society leadership for effective EIA in the Albertine Rift region”, aimed at influencing EIA practices in the region. In 2014, a regional Alliance on EIA (the Albertine Rift Environmental Assessment Leadership Alliance – AREALA) was established and one national NGO training workshop was organized in Bujumbura and a national branch of AREALA established.



Members of Sholi Cooperative (in Rwanda), one of our NGO network, planting trees on the slope of sholi hills.



The year 2015 is a special year as ARCOS celebrates its 20th Anniversary of collaborative actions for nature and people. The year 2015 will also constitute the last year of ARCOS five year Strategy 2011-2015, we will therefore conduct the review of the ending strategy and develop a new strategy 2016-2020.

Working with our different partners at community, national and international level, we aim to continue building sustainable natural resource management solutions in our focal priority landscapes, supporting community enterprises and climate resilience. As part of our regional programmes on African Mountains and Great Lakes. We will pursue our drive of influencing the mainstreaming of the environment in sustainable development and address immediate threats affecting ecosystem integrity and human livelihoods. We will support local dialogue and build the capacity of stakeholders, particularly local NGOs and support grassroot actions through ARCOS Small Grants, to address together

conservation and development issues we face. The actions above will be supported by our core programme approaches: information system, NGO development and Networking and Collaborative Action. As such, ARCOS plans to strengthen its NGO Network and engage different stakeholders to use and benefit from the ARCOS Portal. We will strengthen our collaboration with different partners in the Great Lakes and African to organize a regional dialogue on issues affecting the Great Lakes ecosystems and a build a regional network of ambassadors to promote sustainable mountain agenda. A special focus will be put on climate change, as the international community puts its eyes to the new agreement on Sustainable Development goals and the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris. ARCOS will finally continue to consolidate its relationships with existing partners such as Conservation International and International Crane Foundation, UNEP and various governments, and strengthening more collaboration with our new partners such as the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

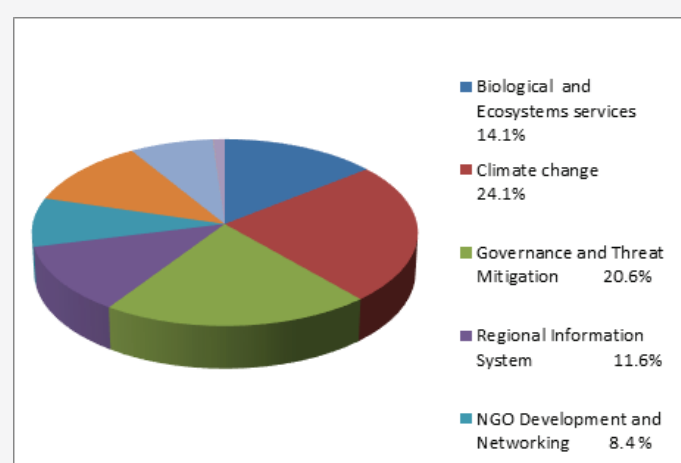


ARCOS Funding 2014

The total income for 2014 was US\$ US \$ 870,820.34 with special thanks to the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, MacArthur Foundation, JRS Biodiversity Foundation and CEPF as top supporters

Income (US\$)	
Balance brought forward:	36,907.16
Grants	906,331.40
Interest and exchange gain	1,396.10
Total Income	870,820.34
Expenditure (US\$)	
Biological and Ecosystem Services	88,974.65
Climate Change	151,891.91
Governance and Threat Mitigation	129,737.92
Regional Information System	73,092.66
NGO Development and Networking	52,791.27
Collaborative Actions	72,850.44
Administration, Management, M&E and Development	47,843.4
Staff costs	6,509.80
Total Expenditure	629,410.02
Balance carried forward	241,410.30

2014 Annual Expenditure distribution:



2014 Annual Audit Report

The financial audit for the period January – December 2014 was carried out by Grand & Noble Certified Public Accountants of P.O. Box 35066, Kampala, Uganda, and Financial Statements compiled by Chartered Accountants in the UK (Peters Elworthy & Moore, Cambridge, UK).

JOIN ARCOS NETWORK AND HELP IN PROMOTING COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE

We take this opportunity to thank ARCOS Team and our collaborators, supporters and donors, especially Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, JRS Biodiversity Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for their valuable support during this year.



You can also get involved in supporting ARCOS in different ways:

- **Become ARCOS Member** (Full or special individual membership, CBOs and NGOs membership, Research/Education institutional membership or ARCOS Corporate Platform)
- **Make a donation and help fund one or more of our projects or programmes,**
- **Sign-up for the ARCOS regional bilingual Newsletter “Backbone/Le Pilier”** and receive regional conservation news in the region or
- **Join our Network as Partner Organization** if interested in biodiversity conservation in the Albertine Rift region, Great Lakes region and African Mountains. Contact ARCOS for more details.

Albertine Rift Conservation Society

Collaborative Action for Nature and People



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