

NATURE BASED COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES PROGRAMME (NBCEs)



1. BACKGROUND

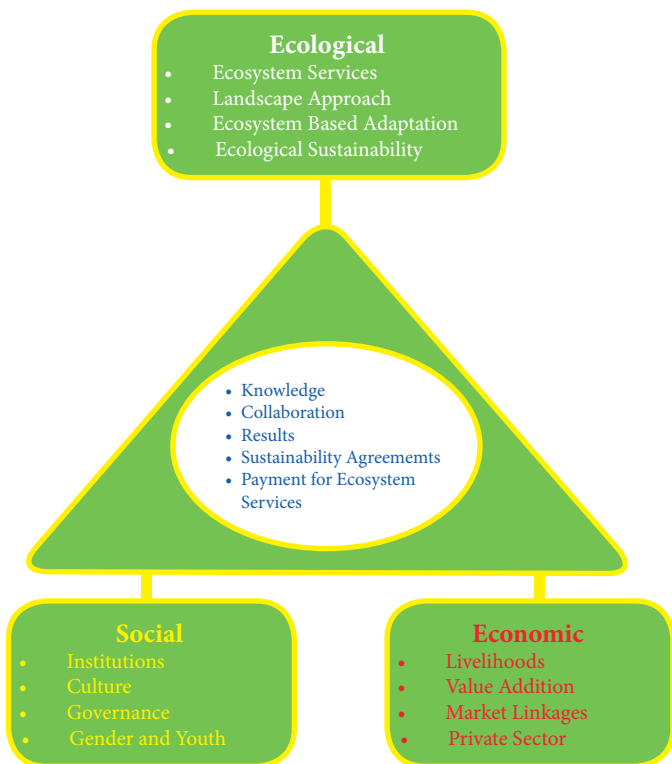
Founded in 1995, ARCOS is a regional conservation organization with the mission to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, in the Albertine Rift region, African Great Lakes region and in African mountains ecosystems, through the promotion of collaborative action for nature and people.

The Nature Based Community Enterprises Programme (NBCEs Programme) is one of the programmes through which ARCOS channels its collaborative actions with various stakeholders to achieve its goals. The overall goal of this programme is to promote sustainable development through empowering community-based enterprises and enhancing sound management of environment.

2. NBCEs PROGRAMME

2.1. NBCEs PILLARS

The NBCEs Programme takes roots from three pillars of sustainable development (ecological, economic and social capital) as described in the following figure:



2.2. OVERALL GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Through our leading line of “Partnering for improved livelihoods and environmental sustainability”, the overall goal of this programme is to sustain community development at household and community organization level through supporting their engagement in sound environmental management while strengthening their nature based enterprises and building networks with other communities to exchange knowledge and experiences.

The specific objectives of the NBCEs Programme are:

- To develop the spirit of ownership and sense of responsibility among communities towards sustainable environmental management;
- To support community investments through Nature Based Community Fund (NBCF), a strategy established to strengthen community business enterprises through small grants and community loans, as well as to ensure financial sustainability.
- To build sustainable community business enterprises and support Nature Based Villages (NBVs)
- To build socio-cultural landscapes sharing the values of harmony between nature and people.

3. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

As embedded in our ARCOS’ “collaborative Action for Nature and People”, collaborative action is a key element towards sustainability. In this regard, ARCOS engages different stakeholders, namely: community, private sector, civil society, governmental agencies and international organisations to understand and act on important issues concerning environmental management and development.

Through participatory approach, ARCOS facilitates a Sustainability Agreement (SA), a negotiated performance and benefits-based contract between ARCOS, its partner communities and local government authorities, with the aim to integrate sustainable actions and enhance environmental resilience, as well as to promote community development through the empowerment of community business enterprises and building the experience-sharing networks between different community groups, building on ARCOS rich network.

The unit of on-ground interventions is a geographically defined village, where efforts in community development, sound environmental management and improvement of socio-cultural landscapes that foster the harmony between nature and people are concentrated. Through a four steps process involving feasibility analysis, intervention negotiations and design, implementation of on-ground activities and monitoring and evaluation, ARCOS

works with communities (potential cooperatives/ community associations) and local government in the selected landscapes and selected villages.

The SAs signed clearly define each party's contribution in promoting business enterprises of the partner NBCEs, as well as in supporting common benefits and environmental resilience actions in the targeted villages. These villages are supported with the aim to serve as model of transformational and inspirational change toward sustainable development.

3.1. BEST APPROACH

Through this programme, ARCOS focuses on four key areas that constitute its "BEST" approach:

- **B**: Building leadership and sustainable institutions
- **E**: Enhancing environmental resilience
- **S**: Sustainability business solutions
- **T**: Transforming and inspiring others

EXAMPLE OF ACTIVITIES

The implementation of on-ground activities builds on four key areas of this Programme through BEST approach:

(B) Building leadership and sustainable institutions

The activities implemented under this area are among others: Capacity building in leadership, cooperative management, setting targets and business plan, supporting gender balance and youth involvement in community based organizations, etc.



(E) Enhancing environmental resilience

The activities implemented to enhance environmental resilience and Community Based Adaptation through: Promoting sustainable agriculture technologies, enhancement and protection of soil and water ecosystems and biodiversity, forest landscape restoration, Ecosystem Based Adaptation, promotion of green energy technologies (energy saving cooking stoves, biogas and solar energy), etc.



(S) Sustainable business solutions

Sustainable business practices include: assisting NBCEs in business planning, value addition, private sector engagement, market linkages, quality certification and the premium payment on certified products, etc.



(T) Transforming and Inspiring others

In order to sustainably build capacity of communities, we use Nature Based Villages (NBVs), which serve as demonstration sites in incorporating community development, sound environmental management and resilience to climate change, therefore, sustainable villages. We support community enterprises and NBVs through community loans and Nature Based Community Fund (NBCF). Since we have stakeholders and interventions in different African countries, the knowledge and experience sharing is expanded beyond the village level at local, national and international levels through training workshops, exhibitions and exchange visits where communities learn and share by doing.



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