FP167

Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation

Rwanda

November 2025

Interim Evaluation Report

This report presents the Interim Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF)-funded project "Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation". The evaluation was independently commissioned by the Accredited Entity (AE), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and submitted to GCF. GCF assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the

FP167: Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPA)

Independent Interim Evaluation Report
(2022-2024)

November 2025

Contents

1. Executive Summary 4

1.1. Brief project description 4

1.2. MTR evaluation framework and methodology 4

1.3. Summary of findings 4

1.4. Recommendations 7

2. Introduction 9

2.1. Background of the project 9

2.2. Objectives of the project interim evaluation 11

2.3. Evaluation questions 12

3. Approach and methodology 13

3.1. Description of the conceptual and methodological approach 13

3.1.1. Methodological approach 14

3.1.2. Data collection methods 15

3.2. Evaluation design matrix 16

3.3. Evaluation tools 16

3.4. Evaluation Work Plan 16

3.5. Quality control and independent quality assurance 16

3.5.1. Quality control framework 16

3.5.2. Quality assurance process 17

3.6. Data analysis 18

3.7. Limitations of MTR 18

3.8. Knowledge sharing strategy 19

3.8.1. Capturing and documenting evaluation findings: 19

3.8.2. Sharing and disseminating knowledge 19

3.9. Independence and ethical considerations 19

3.9.1. Competitive and transparent procurement 19

3.9.2. Contractual independence 20

3.9.3. Conflict of interest safeguards 20

3.9.4. Methodological rigor and data triangulation 20
3.10. Stakeholder engagement and governance of the evaluation 20
3.10.1. Oversight and validation 20
3.10.2. Review of the process 20
4. Findings **21**
4.1. Relevance 21
4.2. Coherence 27
4.3. Effectiveness 31
4.4. Efficiency 37
4.5. Learning 38
4.6. Sustainability 41
4.7. Impact Orientation 43
4.8. One Programme Approach 46
4.9. Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth 47
4.10. Science/policy/action interface 49
4. 11. Country ownership of projects and programmes 50
4.12. Innovativeness in result areas 51
4.13. Replication and scalability 52
4.14. Unexpected results, both positive and negative 54
5. Conclusion and recommendations **54**
5.1. Conclusion 54
5.1.1. Relevance 54
5.1.2. Coherence 55
5.1.3. Effectiveness 55
5.1.4. Efficiency 55
5.1.5. Learning 55
5.1.6. Sustainability 56
5.1.7. Impact orientation 56
5.1.8. One Programme Approach 56
5.1.9. Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth 57
5.1.10. Science/policy/action interface 57

5.1.11. Country ownership of projects and programmes 57
5.1.12. Innovativeness in result areas 57
5.1.13. Replication and scalability 58
5.1.14. Unexpected results, both positive and negative 58
5.2. Recommendations 58
5.2.1. Relevance 59
5.2.2. Coherence 60
5.2.3. Effectiveness 61
5.2.4. Efficiency 63
5.2.5. Learning 65
5.2.6. Sustainability 68
5.2.7. Impact orientation 69
5.2.8. One programme approach 71
5.2.9. Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth 73
5.2.10. Science/policy/action interface 76
5.2.11. Country ownership of projects and programmes 80
5.2.12. Innovativeness in result areas 82
5.2.13. Replication and scalability 84
5.2.14. Unexpected results 86
5.3. Management Response to Recommendations ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Annexures **91**
Annex A: Evaluation design matrix: Summary of evaluation data sources 92
Annex B: Informed Consent 104
Annex C: Qualitative Interview Guide 105
Annex D: Work Plan 113
Annex E: Strategic Alignment between TREPA and Executing Entities and Service Providers 114
Annex F: Logical Framework Indicators Performance Report 116
Annex G: Data Sources Reference List 119

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Brief project description

The Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPA) project is a six-year initiative funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and implemented by three Lead Executing Entities (namely Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), ENABEL, and IUCN-Rwanda) and six service providers (RFA, ENABEL, IUCN-Rwanda, ICRAF, CordAid, and World Vision), focusing on restoring degraded landscapes and enhancing community resilience to climate change in Rwanda's Eastern Province. The project aims to shift from degraded, fragile landscapes to restored ecosystems that support livelihoods, food security, and water security. TREPA will restore 60,000 hectares of degraded land, including crop lands, silvo-pastoral lands, woodlots, and public forests. It also promotes clean cooking fuels and technologies for 100,000 households and develops value chains for climate-resilient products.

1.2. MTR evaluation framework and methodology

To learn and reflect about the project performance and results, IUCN-Rwanda, the Accredited Entity (AE) to the GCF for the TREPA project, has commissioned an independent midterm evaluation to develop an evaluation framework (including evaluation design, research methods, data sources, and analytical methods) and provide findings and recommendations to be used to revise the project's approach, activities, and M&EL framework.
The specific objectives of the midterm evaluation are:

- To assess the relevance of TREPA project to achieve a paradigm shift in land management practices in Rwanda's Eastern Province
- To assess the effectiveness of the TREPA project at achieving its objectives and provide clear insights about what has and has not worked so far and why, and assess the extent to which the project is achieving its mid-term targets.
- To assess the efficiency in terms of value for money of the delivery of the TREPA outputs.
- To assess the sustainability of results & approaches, including the scaling mechanisms and potential impacts.

This evaluation was anchored on qualitative methods. The evaluation team will collect and analyze non-numerical data (including documents and transcriptions) to understand concepts, opinions, and experiences. It will also be used to gather in-depth insights into the evaluation questions. The evaluation team will use multiple data collection methods, including document review, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). An Outcome Harvesting Workshop was facilitated to retrospectively identify and reflect on the performance of the TREPA project (including both intended and unintended outcomes).
The KIIs and FGDs were administered in Kinyarwanda and audio recorded. English transcripts were generated directly from the audio recordings by research staff fluent in both languages. The evaluation team developed a codebook a priori, before the team starts coding, based on the FGD and KII guides, and all transcripts were coded using Dedoose software.

1.3. Summary of findings

Relevance

The TREPA project is strongly aligned with its stated objectives of deploying nature-based solutions for climate resilience in Rwanda's Eastern Province. It effectively addresses pressing challenges such as

land degradation, drought, and food insecurity through agroforestry, reforestation, and climate-smart value chains. The project has achieved notable restoration outcomes across over 43,000 ha and demonstrated strong integration of local knowledge and practices. Executing Entities (EEs) and Service Providers (SPs) were generally well aligned with TREPA's goals, although some delays in implementation occurred. The project's Theory of Change remains coherent and adaptable despite changing legal frameworks and assumptions.

Coherence

TREPA is implemented by a diverse consortium including IUCN, RFA, Enabel, CIFOR-ICRAF, World Vision, and Cordaid, ensuring complementary expertise. It aligns well with national strategies and other local projects (e.g., AREECA, COMBIO, One Acre Fund), leveraging synergies while avoiding duplication. Coordination platforms like DPCCs and JADF roundtables ensure harmonization, though inconsistencies in community incentive structures across projects pose a challenge. TREPA contributes meaningfully to low-emission, climate-resilient pathways and supports integration of climate metrics into district development strategies.

Effectiveness

Of all the deliverables of its planned activities, 62 percent were completed by December 2024 (despite the late start of the project implementation), while 49 percent of the total budget had been utilized. Also, by December 2024, the project had met most of its mid-term targets. The TREPA project's modus operandi is well defined and has been effectively executed, despite a few setbacks. The acceleration observed in the uptake and impact TREPA activities is due to TREPA's active involvement of local communities and strong alignment with the national and district's sustainable development plans. The effectiveness of the project is also supported by a well-designed Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework.

Efficiency

TREPA demonstrates strong cost-effectiveness through a consortium model, decentralized management, and community-based implementation that minimizes service provider margins. Strategic planning and adaptive implementation have enabled faster-than-budgeted progress. However, some inefficiencies arose from poorly bundled activities and limited coordination in nursery research. The economic analysis shows a solid return on investment, with an estimated GCF cost per beneficiary at USD 17.59 and benefit per hectare at USD 1,061.

The project is progressing at a faster rate than spending, potentially pointing to the innovative, cost-effective solutions or technologies implemented by the project teams (e.g., through the community approach) that reduce both time and expenses. In general, the relationship between resources and results is appropriate and justifiable.

Learning

The TREPA project offers valuable insights into designing and implementing effective community-based adaptation strategies. Key takeaways include the importance of a holistic approach, local ownership, supporting farmer organizations, and institutional strengthening. TREPA project offers valuable lessons in forest landscape restoration and community development. Key best practices mentioned during KIIs and FGDs include emphasizing community-based approaches to restoration and strengthening local institutional capacity, and coordinating efforts across different sectors for effective climate change adaptation.

The TREPA project, while primarily aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation, has also generated multiple co-benefits, including enhanced public health and education, gender empowerment, social capital formation, and access to social security. The project observed technology spillovers.

However, the project has also experienced delays in starting its activity which pushed for a development and delivery of a fast tracking plan that permitted to reach the mid-term targets.

Sustainability

The TREPA project proposal emphasized a paradigm shift potential, which includes the sustainability of outcomes beyond the project's completion. Some stakeholders strongly believe that the strong community engagement (including the capacity building for block leaders and farmers at large) and the strengthening and empowerment of FFPOs to mobilize savings, access loans (and grants), and develop business plans along the climate-resilient value chains (including in PFMUs and agroforestry) will ensure the sustainability of forest landscape restoration beyond GCF funding. Others argue that the importance of ownership and responsibility for the project's continuation should be established within the relevant institutions, through development planning and capacity development. TREPA has started a phased approach to exiting that involves gradually transferring responsibility and management to local communities and institutions, ensuring the long-term sustainability of restoration efforts.

Impact orientation

The young trees (of about 2-4m tall) are already contributing to soil health and are preventing topsoil loss. The planting of nitrogen-fixing trees and other agroforestry techniques is reducing farmers' dependence on synthetic fertilizers, saving costs and promoting more sustainable farming practices. Livestock manure is becoming a valuable source of nutrients and organic matter, contributing to soil fertility and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers in silvopastoral systems. TREPA interventions are also helping improve forage quality and productivity, reducing the need to purchase or even import expensive, energy-intensive feed for livestock. Thanks to the community approach, TREPA interventions are already improving livelihoods and food security for smallholder farmers and woodlot growers in the province.

One Programme Approach

TREPA leverages on other projects that are implemented by IUCN to achieve its objectives and maximize the benefits for its beneficiaries. TREPA scales up and builds upon the work of the AREECA project to the entire Eastern Province. COMBIO acts as a complementary project to TREPA, focusing on enhancing biodiversity through the introduction of diverse native species in targeted TREPA landscapes. TREPA leverages knowledge generated through DeSIRA research to improve agroforestry practices, increase farm yields, and diversify food production, ultimately contributing to a more climate-resilient agricultural system.

Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth

The TREPA project integrates gender considerations into its implementation and reporting. A Gender Action Plan (GAP) was developed to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of the project. Although the GAP defines and costs additional activities for mainstreaming, it does not have a budget. Also, TREPA is yet to develop youth-specific activities, or youth mainstreaming, and there is no specific framework for targeting the youth. Various annual and quarterly performance reports show that TREPA has been fully compliant with ESS.

Science/policy/action interface

The activities under Component 3 are significantly transforming the policy landscape for forest landscape restoration by influencing policy changes. At the central level, TREPA chairs a national cross-sectoral task force that gathers government institutions, civil society, private sector, and development cooperation agencies with objective to discuss issues and share lessons learned and experiences that could help to enhance the efficiency of forest landscape restoration.

Country ownership of projects and programmes

Since its inception in 2022, TREPA has learnt from the Green Gicumbi project in Northern Rwanda by adopting and adapting its strategies for climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable forest management to the Eastern Province. The FP217 Congo Nile Divide project is learning valuable lessons from the TREPA's success in restoring degraded landscapes, promoting climate-resilient markets, and developing alternative energy sources has informed the CND's efforts to build resilience in vulnerable rural communities. The TREPA project builds on Rwanda's national priorities for low-emission and

climate-resilient development, targets national climate development priorities, and has been designed to align with national strategies and policies.

Innovativeness in result areas

TREPA's innovative solutions are demonstrating the effectiveness of a holistic approach to FLR that integrates coordinated and community-led forest restoration, sustainable livelihood diversification, and strengthened market linkages, access to finance, and an enabling environment for implementing coordinated restoration efforts.

Replication and scalability

Over the course of the TREPA project intervention, the successful measures were documented in various forms (including the landscape restoration plans, research papers, etc), and the knowledge has been shared in communities of practice and policy forums supported by TREPA (e.g., agroforestry conference, joint cross-sectoral taskforce). TREPA is well aligned with national climate strategies, policies, and priorities. Furthermore, the project has actively engaged stakeholders at the central and decentralized levels, including ministries (MoE, MINAGRI, etc) and national institutions (RFA). This ensures interventions are contextually relevant and have the necessary support for long-term sustainability, which is crucial for successful replication and scaling.

Unexpected results, both positive and negative

Inspiring the development a Euro 7,871,402.19 COMBIO project funded by SIDA through which 8,062,285 native trees have been incorporated in TREPA landscapes.

1.4. Recommendations

Relevance

- Increasing the TREPA/GCF's direct support and expanding capacity-building opportunities to enhance the EE/SP's capabilities and ensure they remain fit-for-purpose over time.
- Reviewing the TREPA's theory of change is a learning opportunity.

Coherence

- Working with stakeholders in climate resilience to develop clear and consistent compensation guidelines for all participants in the community approaches. By demonstrating fairness and equity, the stakeholders can foster a more positive and productive environment for community engagement.

Effectiveness

- Extending the project implementation period for at leas one more tree planting season to ensure that maintenance activities and monitoring for GHG emission reduction and biomass production are effectively done.
- Enhancing leading entity's involvement in project activities to foster a culture of shared responsibility and open communication.
- Including co-financed activities in M&E systems to provide a more complete picture of a project's overall progress and impact.
- Formally assessing the project deliverables that have fallen behind schedule to provide the basis for a timely application of a no-cost extension (NCE).
- Reviewing the indicators and their targets will be crucial for project success, as it allows implementation teams to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to ensure the project stays on track and meets its objectives.
- Considering extending TREPA activities under Output 2 to populations that are outside the target zones to address the challenge of indicators that target numbers of individuals/households that are greater than the actual population in the zones earmarked for TREPA's FLR activities (e.g., Adaptation Core Indicator 1-3).
- Upgrading the Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL) system and inclusion of its budget in the PMU allocations.

Efficiency

- Enhancing existing efforts to minimize waste of project resources.

Learning

- Establishing a formal process of reporting and analysing the project successes and failures.
- Actively involving stakeholders outside the project target areas to maximize co-benefits and spillovers.
- Applying for a (no-cost) extension with GCF, given the one-year delay that was observed in starting TREPA's field operations and the untimely exit of Enabel.

Sustainability

- Recognizing the inherent weaknesses in public institutions (including lack of capacity and high staff turnover) is crucial to ensure the long-term sustainability of the TREPA project.

Impact orientation

- Pivoting the focus of TREPA's M&E framework from short-term outputs to outcomes and impacts.

One Programme Approach

- Scaling up cross-learning between TREPA and IUCN projects in the region.

Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth

- Upgrading the Gender Action Plan (GAP) into a "Gender and Youth Action Plan (GYAP)".
- Integrating the upcoming Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (CcGAP) of Rwanda into the revision process for the TREPA's Gender and Youth Action Plan and encouraging other GCF Accredited Entities to do the same.
- Strategically adjusting budget allocation to better address activities under the Gender (and Youth) Action Plan.

Science/policy/action interface

- Bridging the gap between TREPA research (as well as practice) and local schools (especially Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)).
- Seeking government endorsement of TREPA research activities and publications.
- Assigning a dedicated budget line for the implementation of activities under the TREPA annual communication plans.

Country ownership of projects and programmes

- Lobbying for enhanced facilitation of formal knowledge sharing and learning among Green Climate Fund (GCF) projects in Rwanda.

Innovativeness in result areas

- Leveraging the innovativeness of the TREPA project to unlock opportunities for replicating success in other areas of Rwanda or other related fields like sustainable agriculture.

Replication and scalability

- Leveraging GCF's International Financial Institutions status and its authority in climate finance for planning a successor project to TREPA that builds on its successes in forest landscape restoration and livelihoods transformation.

Unexpected results, both positive and negative

- To continue to optimize all co-benefits generated by COMBIO and ensure their proper integration in TREPA MEL System.

2. Introduction

2.1. Background of the project

The agricultural sector in Eastern Province is under significant pressure because of the growing scarcity of land, increased land degradation, and climate risks. A report by the IUCN in 2015, suggested that approximately 37% (374,130 ha) of the territory of the Eastern Province is degraded, and the province alone is responsible for approximately 21% of the soil erosion in the country. Land degradation is a result of a complex chain of direct and indirect drivers including high population density and growth rate, combined with scarcity of land for food production, wood energy supply-demand imbalances, droughts, and over-exploitation of crop residues for energy or animal feed. These drivers lead to loss of soil productivity (both for food and wood), loss of profitability and business opportunities, degradation of socio-economic conditions, an increase of food insecurity and lack of access to wood for cooking, especially for the most vulnerable population. Observed climate change not only exacerbates many of the ongoing land degradation processes of managed ecosystems (such as croplands and pastures) but will become dominant pressure that introduces new degradation pathways in natural and seminatural ecosystems.
A feasibility study commissioned by IUCN[1] identified a set of technical, information, socio-cultural, financial and institutional barriers and risks that can result in less efficient or less effective adaptation, missed opportunities and/or higher costs for future adaptation strategies. These include:

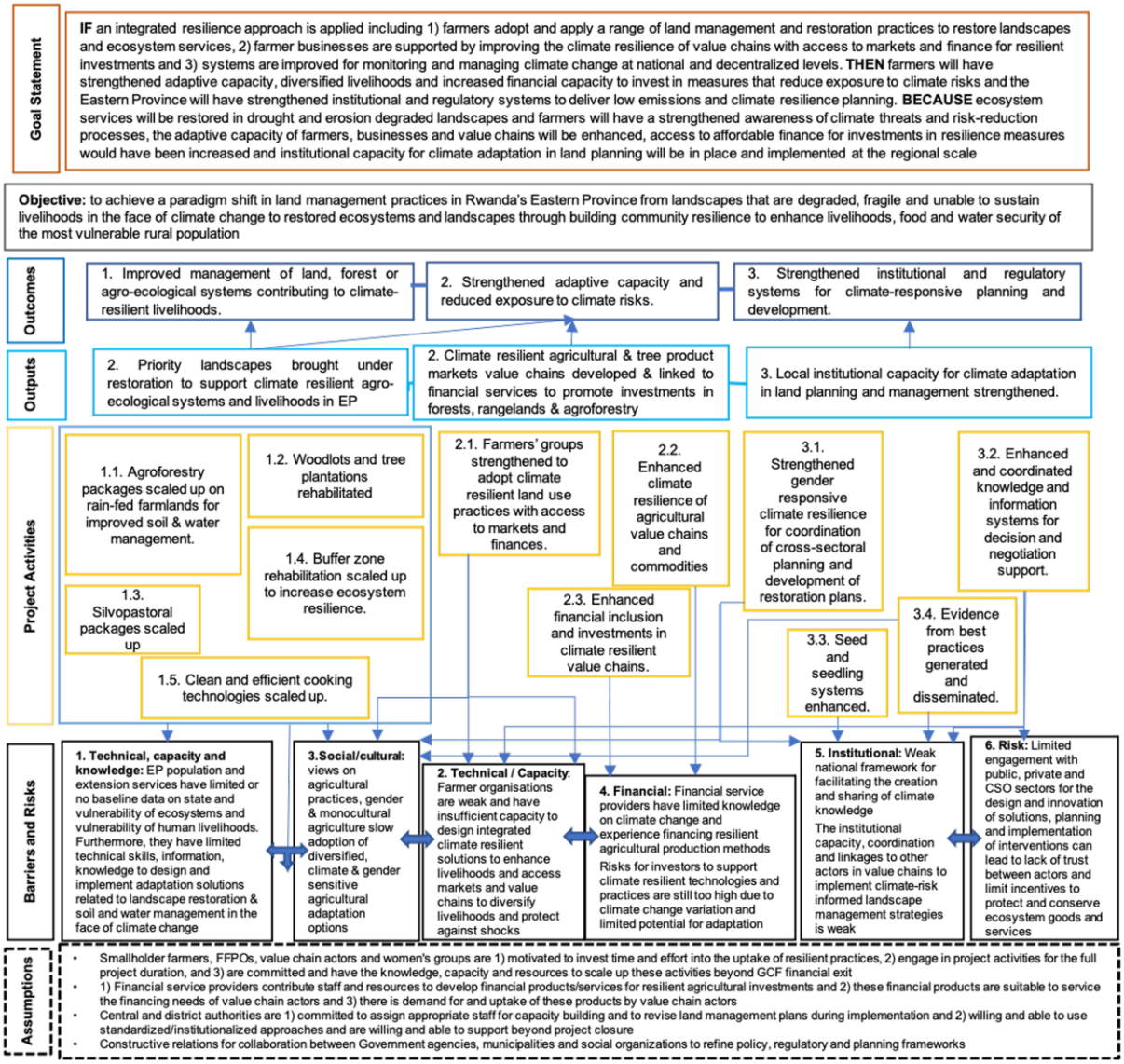
(1) Local population and extension services have limited information, knowledge and skills to design and implement adaptation solutions related to land restoration
(2) Limited or no baseline data on state and vulnerability of ecosystems and vulnerability of human livelihoods.
(3) Local population and extension services have inadequate technical capacity on designing and applying climate resilient management practices for land restoration and in particular soil and water management.
(4) Farmer organisations are weak and have insufficient capacities to design integrated climate resilient solutions to improve local welfare and access markets.
(5) Financial service providers have limited knowledge on climate changes and climate resilient agricultural production methods.
(6) Weak national framework for facilitating the creation and sharing of climate knowledge
(7) The institutional capacity and coordination to implement climate-risk informed landscape management strategies is weak.
(8) Lack of coherent and cross-sectoral policies aligning climate and development
(9) Communities, FFPO and government agencies have constrained financial capacity to meet the incremental costs of adaptation.
(10) Lack of expertise in agricultural finance on the part of Financial Institutions and absence of tailored financial products for the needs of farmers.

To address these challenges and accomplish the overall objective of achieving a paradigm shift from degraded and vulnerable land in the Eastern Province that are unable to sustain livelihoods to a climate-resilient landscape providing development opportunities for smallholder farmers, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), through its Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), has designed the Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPA), a six-year project funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) that intends to deploy innovative nature-

[1] Lili Ilieva, Jacques Peteers, Vincent Nsabuwera, Charles Karangwa, Alain Ndoli, Athanase Mukuralinda, Sammy Carsan, Mariel Minsk, Patrick Binasa, Ben Bartle, Bipin Pokharel (2021) “Making the Eastern Province more resilient to climate change through restoration and enhanced productive landscapes – Feasibility Study”. IUCN, Kigali, Rwanda.

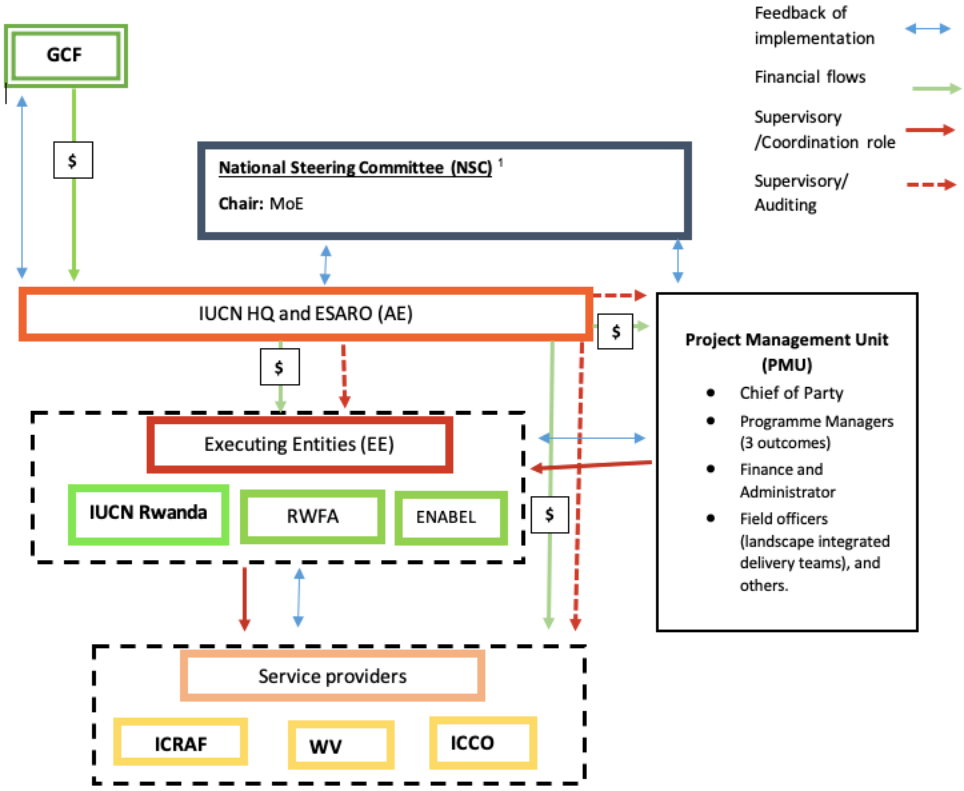
based solutions (NBS) within 100 landscapes in all 7 districts of the Eastern Province of Rwanda (i.e. Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, Ngoma, Kirehe, Kayonza, and Rwamagana) to strengthen climate resilience of forest landscapes, people and markets, and subnational institutions. The project was designed based on the theory of change that links 12 activities (3 outputs) to 3 outcome indicators and 3 high-level impacts (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Diagram of theory of change for TREPA project in Rwanda



The project became effective in November 2021 and received first disbursement in June 2022 leading to activity kick off in in October 2022. These activities are implemented by three Lead Executing Entities (namely Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), ENABEL, and IUCN-Rwanda) and six service providers (RFA, ENABEL, IUCN-Rwanda, ICRAF, CordAid, and World Vision). The implementation arrangement is summarized in the figure below.

Figure 2. institutional arrangements of the TREPA project



2.2. Objectives of the project interim evaluation

To learn and reflect about the project performance and results, IUCN-Rwanda, the Accredited Entity (AE) to the GCF for the TREPA project, has commissioned an independent midterm evaluation to develop an evaluation framework (including evaluation design, research methods, data sources, and analytical methods) and provide findings and recommendations to be used to revise the project's approach, activities, and M&EL framework.

The specific objectives of the midterm evaluation are:

- To assess the relevance of TREPA project to achieve a paradigm shift in land management practices in Rwanda's Eastern Province from landscapes that are degraded, fragile, and unable to sustain livelihoods in the face of climate change to restored ecosystems and landscapes. It will also assess the relevance in terms of project approaches/methodologies and adaptiveness to the needs of stakeholders targeted by the intervention.
- To assess the effectiveness of the TREPA project at achieving its objectives and provide clear insights about what has and has not worked so far and why, and assess the extent to which the project is achieving its mid-term targets.
- To assess the efficiency in terms of value for money of the delivery of the TREPA outputs.
- To assess the sustainability of results & approaches, including the scaling mechanisms and potential impacts; and provide some indication about how the project is progressing towards delivering on its objectives and assess if sustainability measures are being put in place for a future smooth exit. To identify lessons and provide set of actionable recommendations on how the project and the project coordination/management could be adjusted for further improvement and to strengthen delivery of results.

2.3. Evaluation questions

The set of evaluation questions that provides the anchor for the evaluation design is provided in the table below.

Table 1 Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions
Relevance
To what extent does the work of the TREPA project address its objectives and the priority issues?
To what extent have Executing Entities (EEs) and Service Providers (SPs) been fit-for purpose?
How relevant is the TREPA project and, in particular, its outputs and impact achieved so far to the Eastern Province of Rwanda?
Is the project theory of change (TOC) and intervention logic coherent and realistic?
Does the TOC and intervention logic hold, or does it need to be adjusted?
Coherence:
Who are the partners of the project and how strategic are they in terms of capacities and commitment?
Is there coherence and complementarity by the project with other actors for other local climate change interventions?
To what extent has the project complimented other on-going local-level initiatives (by stakeholders, donors, governments) on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?
How has the project contributed to achieving a stronger and more coherent integration of the shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways and/or increased climate-resilient sustainable development (GCF RMF/PMF paradigm shift objectives)? Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.
Effectiveness:
To what extent is the project achieving its targets and objectives?
How effective is the TREPA project's modus operandi? Are the EEs adequately supported from IUCN to deliver on their outputs? How have the problems encountered been resolved?
How effective are the strategies in place in reaching out and influencing the TREPA project's target audiences? What factors have contributed to accelerate or hinder the uptake of the project's recommendations by its target audience(s)?
Is the project achieving its set targets and expected objectives? What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall impacts such as adaptation beneficiaries and improved ecosystem services?
To what extent is the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and tools set up helping to (a) answer key guiding questions, (b) detect any needed programme implementation adjustments for better progress towards results, (c) collect the right kind of data in view of conducting an impact evaluation by the end of the project? What adjustments to the MEL system are recommended to help understand impact of the TREPA project? (d) Are project targets realistic and correct or some need adjustments? (d) Do indicators in the project log frame measure the full suite of results that TREPA is achieving?
Efficiency:
To what extent are the project's outputs in balance with the level of effort, time and resources spent?
Have spending and project delivery progressed according to the planned schedule?
Is the relationship between resources and results appropriate and justifiable?
Are there less costly ways of achieving the same outputs?
Learning:
What can we learn from the way the TREPA project is designed and implemented?

What has and what hasn't worked well so far and what needs to be improved or done differently?
Are there lessons or best practices that can be up-scaled or replicated in similar environments?
Sustainability:
Are the project interventions and benefits likely to continue after the end of GCF funding?
What sustainability measures are in place?
What real difference has TREPA interventions made to the project's target groups (m/f)? How has it changed their lives?
What exit strategy does the project have?
Impact Orientation:
Is the project oriented towards a positive impact on people and nature?
Indications of project positive impact on nature?
Indications of positive impacts on people's lives and livelihoods?
One Programme Approach:
Is the project leveraging the Union to achieve its objectives?
To what extent is TREPA project implemented in accordance with IUCN's One Programme Approach?
To what extent has it engaged with other constituents of the Union to achieve, disseminate, strengthen, scale up or embed its outputs or outcomes?
Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth:
To what extent has the TREPA project's objectives and design promoted and advanced gender equality, gender responsiveness, and/or the needs and priorities of youth?
To what extent has the project monitored its progress with appropriately disaggregated monitoring data and with the participation of women and/or youth?
To what extent is the project compliant to environmental and social safeguards (ESS)?
Science/policy/action interface:
How has the knowledge produced or disseminated by TREPA relevant?
Has it been effective in influencing policy or actions?
Country ownership of projects and programmes:
How is the project contributing to other projects/programmes within the country? are there further commitments, e.g. more co-financing towards the project?
To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of national partners?
Innovativeness in result areas:
To what extent may the project interventions lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways?
Replication and scalability:
Can the project activities be scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries?
Unexpected results, both positive and negative
Has the project foreseen any unexpected results, both positive and negative?

3. Approach and methodology

3.1. Description of the conceptual and methodological approach

In line with the GCF's recommendation, the ToRs for this assignment suggest a **participatory evaluation approach**, i.e., a process through which stakeholders at various levels engage in the

evaluation of the project, share control of the content, the process, and the results, and engage in identifying and taking corrective actions.

3.1.1. Methodological approach

The exploratory nature of the evaluation questions, as well as the participatory approach of this interim evaluation, necessitated a laborious non-experimental design that explores non-numerical cues (as opposed to experimental research, which is appropriate when investigating evaluation questions or hypotheses about causal relationships between two variables). A summary of the methods and procedures used to gather the necessary data to assess the project's performance and results is presented in the following table.

Table 2 Summary of methodological approach.

	Methods	Methodological details
1.	Evaluation design	• **Non-experimental design:** Given that the evaluation questions are broad and exploratory (i.e., looking at how stakeholders experienced the project activities and approach) while others pertain to single variables rather than statistical relationships between variables, this evaluation was anchored on **qualitative methods**.
2.	Research method	**Qualitative research approach:** This evaluation used qualitative data collection and analysis. • **Qualitative research:** The evaluation team collected and analyzed non-numerical data (including documents and transcriptions) to understand concepts, opinions, and experiences. It also gathered in-depth insights into the evaluation questions. • This approach leveraged the strengths of qualitative methods to provide nuanced responses to the evaluation questions.
3.	Data collection method	To implement the qualitative research method proposed above, the evaluation team used multiple data collection methods: • **Document review**: Existing documents (e.g., records, policies, social media posts) and secondary data sources were examined to gain insights into the evaluation questions. • **Key informant interviews (KIIs)** with a Representative of the Ministry of Environment (MoEo) that chairs Project Steering Committee, the IUCN Country Representative, the IUCN Program Manager, the TREPA Chief of Party (CoP), TREPA project managers in the implementing institutions (i.e., RFA, ICRAF, World Vision Rwanda, CordAid, Enabel and IUCN), the representative of the Government of Rwanda at the project, i.e. the Director General of Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), Vice Mayors of Economic Cluster, District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers (DFNRO) of selected Districts in the Eastern Province. • **Focus group discussions (FGDs)** with TREPA direct beneficiaries (including farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain), as well as IUCN Hub Coordinators and Field Officers. • **Outcome Harvesting Workshop** with PMU staff, Project Managers, IUCN M&EL office, IUCN Communications Coordinator, IUCN Finance Manager, and IUCN Hub Coordinators facilitated to retrospectively identify and reflect on the performance of the TREPA project (including both intended and unintended outcomes). It focused on discussing evidence of changes

		that have occurred, allowing participants to determine the project's contribution to those changes.
4.	Sampling	• **Purposive sampling:** Respondents for the qualitative research methods were selected by interest, qualifications, and typicality (they fit a general profile of the types of participants who would be typical beneficiaries of TREPA project's activities).
6.	Data analysis	• **Qualitative data analysis**: The KIIs and FGDs were administered in Kinyarwanda and audio recorded. English transcripts were generated directly from the audio recordings by research staff fluent in both languages. The evaluation team developed a codebook a priori, before the team starts coding, based on the FGD and KII guides, and all transcripts will be coded using Dedoose software. Additional codes were added during the coding process. After coding, the team identified themes and conducted a final re-review of the data, relating the analysis back to the evaluation questions.

3.1.2. Data collection methods

To respond to the various evaluation questions, this evaluation used both standard and innovative data collection methods. Standard qualitative data collection methods include document review (DR), key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The following table describes the number of interviews/meetings conducted to implement each data collection method outlined above.

Table 3 Qualitative methods and sample sizes

Method	Participants	Number
Focus group discussions	Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).	10
	IUCN/TREPA Hub Coordinators and Field Officers	5
Key Informant Interviews	Representative of the MoE (that chairs the Project Steering Committee)	2
	Vice-Mayors for Economic Affairs	2
	District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers (DFNRO)	2
	Director General of Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA)	1
	IUCN Country Representative	1
	IUCN Program Manager	1
	TREPA Chief of Party	1
	TREPA Project Management Unit at IUCN	1
	TREPA Project Manager at IUCN	1
	TREPA Project Manager at RFA	1
	TREPA Project Manager at ICRAF	3
	TREPA Project Manager at World Vision Rwanda	2
	TREPA Project Manager at CordAid	3
	TREPA Project Manager at Enabel	1
	IUCN Communications Coordinator	1
	IUCN Finance Manager	1
	IUCN M&EL Office	2

Outcome Harvesting Workshop	PMU staff, Project Managers, IUCN M&EL office, IUCN Communications Coordinator, IUCN Finance Manager, and IUCN Hub Coordinators	18

The FGDs and KIIs were supplemented with an Outcome Harvesting Workshop, an innovative qualitative investigation approach. The primary goal of the Outcome Harvesting Workshop was to provide a space for participants to collectively identify and reflect on the performance and outcomes of a project, including those that were not initially anticipated. The workshop gave a retrospective evaluation approach, meaning it focused on evidence of change that has already occurred, rather than projecting future outcomes. The OHW method is particularly useful when activity outcomes are emergent or difficult to quantify and may vary across stakeholders. It encouraged participant-led data analysis by project actors who explained and discussed why they think one change is more important than another. The workshop facilitated learning and reflection, helping the IUCN (the Accredited Entity) as well as the Executing Entities (EEs) and Service Providers (SPs) understand their performance and improve future interventions. Outcome harvesting fostered a sense of ownership and accountability among participants, as they collectively identified and reflected on the outcomes of the project.

3.2. Evaluation design matrix

The evaluation design matrix linking each research question to proposed methods and data source is presented in Annex A: Evaluation design matrix: Summary of evaluation data sources.

3.3. Evaluation tools

The consent form, as well as the interview guide for KIIs and FGDs, can be found on this link and in the annex section.

3.4. Evaluation Work Plan

The work plan is presented in Annex D: Work Plan. The timeline in the plan is based on the premises given during the inception workshop. It was subject to revision based on the availability of respondents.

3.5. Quality control and independent quality assurance

3.5.1. Quality control framework

Two main strategies were used to promote the rigor and quality of the evaluation: (i) ensuring the quality or "authenticity" of the data and (ii) the quality or "trustworthiness" of the analysis.
Authenticity of the data refers to the quality of the data and data collection procedures. Elements that were considered include:

- Using appropriately the purposive sampling approach and participant selection technique to enable the evaluation questions to be addressed appropriately and reduce the potential of having a biased sample.
- Leveraging data triangulation, i.e. to using multiple data sources to produce a more comprehensive view of the question being studied, e.g., interviewing both farmers and farmer groups, and conducting farmer IDIs in multiples districts.
- Using a mix of appropriate methods to answer the same evaluation question, considering the nature of the topic being explored (e.g., IDI and FGDs).
- Developing interview guides that are not biased or leading, i.e., that do not ask questions in a way that may lead the participant to answer in a particular manner.
- Reducing evaluation team members' own biases and beliefs relative to the topic under study, e.g., by selecting a neutral “third party” interviewer/moderator.

With regard to the trustworthiness of the analysis, the following elements were considered when assessing the quality of the analysis:

- Clearly describing the analysis process, e.g., the roles of the evaluation team members, what was done, timing, and sequencing; Clarifying how the data codes or categories will be developed; Comparing findings within and among transcripts, and use of memos to record decision points?
- Clearly describing the procedure for resolving differences in findings and among team members.
- Using a qualitative software program (Dedoose).

3.5.2. Quality assurance process

To ensure the highest standards of rigor, accuracy, and credibility, the evaluation implemented a multi-tiered quality assurance process, incorporating both internal and independent external review.

- **Internal quality control by the evaluation team**: As described in Section 3.5.1., the team employed strategies to ensure the authenticity of the data and trustworthiness of the analysis, including data triangulation, unbiased interview guides, and the use of Dedoose software for qualitative analysis.
- **Independent technical review within the consultancy**: The draft evaluation report underwent a formal technical review by a senior evaluation specialist within Research Hub Ltd who was not part of the core data collection and analysis team. This reviewer assessed the report for methodological consistency, logical flow between findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and the overall clarity and robustness of the argumentation.
- **Quality assurance by the Accredited Entity (IUCN):** The draft report was submitted to the IUCN project team for factual verification. This review checked for accuracy in the representation of project data, activities, and context. Furthermore, the report was reviewed by IUCN's regional M&E focal point or designated quality assurance manager, providing an additional layer of institutional oversight independent of the TREPA Project Management Unit.
- **Validation by members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC):** The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the draft report were presented to and discussed with various members of the TREPA Project Steering Committee on December 02, 2025. The PSC, which includes representatives from the Government of Rwanda, senior IUCN officials, and other key stakeholders, provided a final, independent layer of validation and endorsement, ensuring the report's relevance and accuracy from a national and strategic perspective.

This layered quality assurance framework ensured that the final report is not only technically sound and evidence-based but has also been scrutinized and validated by parties independent of the evaluation team, in line with GCF expectations

3.6. Data analysis

The KIIs and FGDs were administered in Kinyarwanda and audio recorded. English transcripts were generated directly from the audio recordings by research staff fluent in both languages. The evaluation team developed a codebook a priori, before the team started coding, based on the FGD and KII guides, and all transcripts were coded using Dedoose software. Additional codes were added during the coding process. After coding, the team identified themes and conducted a final re-review of the data, relating the analysis back to the evaluation questions.

3.7. Limitations of MTR

While the evaluation employed a rigorous qualitative methodology, several limitations are acknowledged, which were mitigated where possible but may still influence the interpretation of the findings.

i) **Sampling bias and representativeness:** The use of purposive sampling for KIIs and FGDs, while necessary to target key informants and specific beneficiary types, means the findings are not statistically representative of the entire beneficiary population. The perspectives captured, though rich and insightful, may over-represent the views of more active, vocal, or accessible community members. To reduce this bias, the evaluation team deliberately sought a diverse range of participants across different districts, value chains (beekeeping, fodder, agroforestry), and roles (farmer leaders, women, cooperative presidents). Data triangulation across different stakeholder groups was used to check for consistency and identify outlier perspectives.

ii) **Data reliability and social desirability bias:** In self-reported data from KIIs and FGDs, there is a potential for social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses they believe the project implementers or officials want to hear, rather than their true opinions. This could lead to an over-reporting of positive outcomes and an under-reporting of challenges or negative effects. The evaluation team ensured anonymity and confidentiality, used neutral and open-ended questioning techniques, and conducted separate FGDs for beneficiaries and project staff to encourage more frank discussions. Furthermore, participant observations and document reviews were used to cross-verify claims made during interviews.

iii) **Access and logistical constraints**: The evaluation was constrained by time and resources, limiting the number of sites and individuals that could be visited. Some remote areas or harder-to-reach beneficiaries may be under-represented. Furthermore, the timing of the evaluation coincided with agricultural seasons, which may have affected the availability of some farmers for FGDs. The work plan was developed in consultation with IUCN hub coordinators to ensure efficient logistical planning and maximize geographical coverage within the constraints. Meetings were scheduled at times convenient for the communities.

iv) **Analytical limitations**: As a qualitative study, the evaluation is inherently stronger at explaining the "how" and "why" of processes and perceptions rather than quantifying the magnitude of change or establishing definitive causal attribution. The young age of many project interventions (e.g., newly planted trees) means that many anticipated ecological and economic impacts (e.g., carbon sequestration, significant income increase) are not yet fully realized or measurable. The analysis focused on tracing contribution rather than claiming strict attribution, using the project's Theory of Change as a framework. The evaluation explicitly acknowledges these emergent outcomes and reports on early indicators of impact (e.g., soil health improvements, livelihood diversification) while noting that longer-term monitoring is required.

v) **Limitation of document review:** The reliance on project-generated reports (APRs, QPRs) for performance data carries the risk of inheriting any reporting biases present in those

documents. Project data was critically examined and triangulated with primary data collected through KIIs and FGDs to identify any discrepancies or gaps.

Despite these limitations, the methodological approach provided a robust and sufficient evidence base to address the evaluation questions and form the conclusions and recommendations presented in this report.

3.8. Knowledge sharing strategy

After this evaluation, knowledge management will focus on using the insights gained to improve future course of the project and organizational learning. This involves capturing, organizing, sharing, and applying the knowledge acquired during the evaluation to enhance decision-making, processes, and overall effectiveness.

3.8.1. Capturing and documenting evaluation findings:

- Systematic documentation: The evaluation team will thoroughly document all evaluation findings, including successes, failures, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- Categorization and organization: The evaluation team will organize the knowledge gained into relevant categories for easy retrieval and future use.
- Identifying knowledge gaps: The evaluation team will determine areas where further knowledge is needed to improve future initiatives.
- Choosing the right tools: The evaluation team will select appropriate knowledge management tools to store and organize the gathered information.

3.8.2. Sharing and disseminating knowledge

- Targeted communication: The evaluation team will share relevant evaluation findings with specific teams, departments, or individuals who can benefit from the knowledge.
- Knowledge sharing platforms: The evaluation team will utilize the existing knowledge sharing platforms (including forums and meetings) to make information accessible to all relevant stakeholders.

3.9. Independence and ethical considerations

This evaluation was conducted by Research Hub Ltd, an independent external consulting firm, under a contract with IUCN. The selection process was designed and executed to ensure the complete independence and objectivity of the evaluation team, in accordance with GCF evaluation standards. The mechanisms put in place to safeguard independence were as follows:

3.9.1. Competitive and transparent procurement

Research Hub Ltd was selected through IUCN's Open Procedure (RFP Section 6.1), a competitive public procurement process advertised on IUCN's website. The selection was based on a transparent evaluation of technical and financial proposals by a panel of three or more evaluators, with the contract awarded to the highest-scoring bidder (RFP Section 6.3). This process ensured the selection was merit-based and free from managerial discretion or influence.

3.9.2. Contractual independence

The contract was established directly between IUCN and Research Hub Ltd as an independent entity. The evaluation team had no prior involvement in the design or day-to-day management of the TREPA project, ensuring a fresh and objective perspective.

3.9.3. Conflict of interest safeguards

As a mandatory condition for participation in the procurement (RFP Section 7.2), Research Hub Ltd submitted a signed Declaration of Undertaking (RFP Section 7.3), formally declaring the absence of any conflicts of interest. This declaration explicitly committed the firm to being free from conflicts and to abide by strict ethical standards, including prohibitions on collusion and any improper exchange with IUCN staff (RFP Section 7.6).

3.9.4. Methodological rigor and data triangulation

The evaluation design employed rigorous qualitative methods, including data triangulation through multiple sources (document review, KIIs, FGDs, outcome harvesting) and with a diverse range of stakeholders (from beneficiaries to senior government officials and implementers). This approach ensured that findings and conclusions are evidence-based and not reliant on any single perspective, thereby mitigating potential bias.
The evaluators affirm that throughout the evaluation process, they operated with full independence and were not subjected to any influence from the project's management or implementing partners regarding the findings, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this report.

3.10. Stakeholder engagement and governance of the evaluation

The evaluation process was designed to be participatory and to ensure validation by national stakeholders. A key aspect of this was the engagement of Rwanda's National Designated Authority (NDA) to the Green Climate Fund, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA).
The specific role of the NDA in this Mid-Term Review is as follows:

3.10.1. Oversight and validation

The NDA (REMA), as a key member of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), is integral to the governance of the evaluation. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this interim evaluation report were formally presented to and discussed with the PSC, which includes REMA, on December 02, 2025. This process provides national-level validation of the evaluation's findings and ensures its recommendations are aligned with Rwanda's climate priorities.

3.10.2. Review of the process

The NDA was kept informed of the MTR process through its representation on the PSC, which was briefed on the evaluation's methodology and timeline.
This structured engagement ensures that the MTR is not an isolated exercise but an integral part of the country's oversight of GCF-funded activities, guaranteeing its relevance and utility for national decision-making.

4. Findings

4.1. Relevance

4.1.1. To what extent does the work of the TREPA project address its objectives and the priority issues?

Analysis of the TREPA project documents shows a strong commitment to achieving the project objectives (deploying innovative nature-based solutions to strengthen climate resilience of forest landscapes, people and markets, and subnational institutions) and addressing priority issues related to climate change adaptation and sustainable development in the Eastern Province.

TREPA directly addresses key challenges that inhibit the Eastern Province from achieving its climate-resilient, sustainable development goals, including land degradation, climate change impacts (droughts and floods), limited opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, and food insecurity. Analysis of the 2024 TREPA Annual Household Survey data revealed the profile of a typical beneficiary household: households with a high dependency ratio of 90% and operating on an average of 1.4 hectares of land, with 64% of farmers subsisting on less than 1 hectare. This context of smallholder agriculture on fragmented lands is compounded by high multidimensional poverty, affecting 97% of households, and moderate food insecurity, affecting 40% of households, with female-headed households (18% of the total) being disproportionately affected.

TREPA directly addresses these intertwined challenges of land degradation, climate vulnerability, and livelihood insecurity. The project's focus on restoring degraded landscapes is critical in a province where the survey indicates high reliance on biomass (96% of households use firewood, with 54% reporting difficulties in accessing it) and where agricultural practices are susceptible to erosion, though 79% of households already employ some control measures. The project brought a transformative natural resource management strategies that are helping local communities to shift away from highly degraded and climate-sensitive agro-ecosystems, which curtails the production potential of their smallholder farming systems, towards a climate-smart agricultural economy that supports the development of climate-resilient production and value chains for tree, fodder and beekeeping products, as well as innovative agricultural finance products and services (DR-TREPA-ProDoc).

TREPA is in its third year of implementation, and the various annual performance reports (APRs) indicate that the project is making significant progress in achieving its objectives. Evaluation reports and project documentation highlight that the project is on track to restore the targeted 60,000 hectares of degraded land. By the end of 2024, 28,801 ha of Agricultural land had been put under restoration through agroforestry, 16,573 ha with woodlots and tree plantations brought under rehabilitation and sustainable management, while 2,453.0 ha of pastoral lands had been brought under climate-resilient silvopastoral packages. In addition, 1,217.7 ha of ecologically sensitive and erosion-prone lands experienced reduced erosion and improved ecological integrity, as measured by reduced soil erosion rates (DR-2024-APR - TREPA). This restoration effort is crucial for mitigating the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods, and improving land productivity. The project's focus on reforestation, agroforestry, and soil erosion control measures is designed to create climate-resilient ecosystems.

Project beneficiaries also believe that the focus on community engagement and capacity building is showing positive results, with enhanced nature-positive thinking and increased participation and

ownership of restoration efforts. The organization of small farm units in identified degraded landscapes into blocks and the training of block leaders within communities foster ownership and responsibility for restoration efforts. The trained leaders play a vital role in mobilizing community participation and overseeing project implementation (FGD-Farmers-01). The phased implementation of a community-based approach in the rehabilitation of private and state-owned woodlots and tree plantations is viewed among the communities and the authorities as an innovative solution for cost-effective service delivery that provides opportunities for skills development and capacity building among residents, empowering them to take ownership of the restoration efforts (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-RFA-DG-01).

Participants in FGDs and KIIs commonly agreed that TREPA acknowledges and respects the existing knowledge and practices of local communities. Cognizant that local knowledge is not evenly distributed and that different communities have unique needs and practices, TREPA adapts its training programs to the specific context of each area. By integrating local knowledge into its approach, TREPA ensures that its interventions are relevant and sustainable (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-RFA-DG). The findings of the 2024 TREPA AHS survey confirm a strong foundation for this, showing high awareness of climate risks (e.g., 95% know of changing weather patterns) and positive attitudes toward remedial actions like reforestation (98%).

Participants in FGDs and KIIs also asserted that TREPA activities are enhancing the livelihoods of local communities by promoting clean cooking fuels and technologies. The 2024 annual performance report suggests that, by the end of 2024, about 7,000 households had adopted clean and efficient cooking energy technologies to reduce reliance on unsustainable energy sources and mitigate deforestation, thanks to TREPA's support to private sector and communities. This addresses a critical need, as the 2024 TREPA AHS shows that while 52% of households use ceramic wood-burning stoves, 43% still rely on highly inefficient three-stone fires. Additionally, the project is developing value chains for climate-resilient agricultural and agroforestry products, providing economic incentives for community participation in restoration activities. The 2024 APR shows that, by the end of 2024, TREPA had assisted 15 businesses/cooperatives to establish and operate viable business plans for climate resilient value chains, and had distributed 104 beehives to 86 coop members who were trained in honey production and value-adding. The project also developed, tested, and piloted 4 innovative financial products to improve access to finance for agriproducts, tree crops, bee products, and fodder value chains (DR-2024-APR).

Through focus group discussions, TREPA project beneficiaries reported that prior to the rollout of TREPA, Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPOs) and Private Forest Management Units (PFMUs) were fewer, smaller in size, dispersed, institutionally weak, and not registered at the Rwanda Cooperative Authority (RCA) (FGD-Farmers-01). Thanks to TREPA, the FFPOs and PFMUs were strengthened through cooperative formation, legal registration, and capacity building in cooperative management (by World Vision), agroforestry and silvopastoral practices (by ICRAF, RFA and IUCN), coupled with the development of climate-resilient value chains (by ICRAF). This intervention has offered numerous benefits for both the environment and the livelihoods of farmers in degraded landscapes. Various KII transcripts indicate that the farmer groups that were legally registered and strengthened (through TREPA activities that strengthened their internal organization and governance structures, including gender mainstreaming and youth engagement) were able to mobilize savings and access loans to invest in their businesses and improve their members' livelihoods (FGD-Farmers-01, KII-CordAid-01; KII-WVR-01). The strengthening of farmer groups through training and support has empowered their members to manage their resources sustainably, adopt climate-smart practices, and improve their livelihoods (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01). Through training on financial education and climate resilience, and the establishment and cohesion of saving groups, the registered and strengthened farmer groups were linked to MFIs, and have mobilized significant members' savings not for share-out but with specific purposes to invest in businesses in TREPA-supported value chains (i.e. beekeeping, fodder and tree value chains) or related sectors (such as tree nursery, irrigation, small stocks, etc) (FGD-Farmers-01, KII-CordAid-01; KII-WVR-01).

During the KIIs, MoE officials and Vice-Mayors appreciated that TREPA is advancing on its agenda on strengthening national and local institutional capacity and cross-sectoral coordination to mainstream climate resilience in land management and planning. The 2024 APR shows that all 7 districts of the eastern province have integrated climate resilient metrics in Landscape Restoration Plans within their district development strategies (DDS). Nearly 100 staff from central government and district authorities are reporting improved capacity to manage information systems and integrate climate-related aspects (KII-IUCN-01). TREPA has also put in place a national breeding program for adapted seed and seedling supply systems and has produced 24 climate resilience-related research publications or knowledge materials (KII-IUCN-01; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-RFA-01).

The interviewed beneficiaries also mentioned that TREPA's emphasis on building local capacity for climate resilience through training block leaders, who then share knowledge and advocate for sustainable practices within their communities, fosters ownership and responsibility, creating a ripple effect of environmental stewardship (KII-VM-01; FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01). The 2024 AHS had indicated room for growth in this area, as only 29% of crop farmers had received formal agroforestry training, a gap TREPA is actively filling.

TREPA is also spurring the mainstreaming of climate resilience in cross-sectoral planning at the district and central levels. Various APRs show that, after signing MoUs with all 7 Districts' mayors and one MoU with the Governor of Eastern Province to allow the establishment of joint planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting mechanism at district level, IUCN facilitated the establishment of District Project Coordination Committee of TREPA Project (DPCCs), a platform that gathers various actors investing in climate actions within district (under the leadership of the Vice-Mayor) to further discuss and agree on the factors of success, with IUCN proving technical backstop of the implementation of this cross sectoral mechanism. By December 2024, all 7 district mayors and technicians had integrated TREPA project activities and targets into the district's annual performance contracts, targets, and action plans. TREPA facilitates JADF roundtables (economic cluster) to explore synergies for FLR with other partners. At the central level, TREPA chairs a national cross-sectoral task force that gathers government institutions, civil society, private sector, and development cooperation agencies with objective to discuss issues and share lessons learned and experiences that could help to enhance the efficiency of forest landscape restoration implementation and support the functioning of the Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Sector Working Groups in implementing the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NST) priorities (KII-IUCN-01; KII-PMU-COP).

In addition to JADF roundtables (economic cluster), monthly coordination meetings are organized between the District Agricultural Department and Project staff at the Hub level. These meetings play a vital role in following up TREPA project activities within district agricultural plans, ensuring continuous dialogue on implementation progress, and fostering joint problem-solving (KII-DFNRO-01, 02; FGD-HubStaff-01).

Furthermore, to assist the districts in their journey to engage communities in climate actions, IUCN developed a community approach guideline document that was discussed and validated and adopted by the majority of FLR actors to guide the restoration work in Rwanda (KII-VM-01, 02; KII-IUCN-01KII-PMU-MEL-01).

4.1.2. To what extent have Executing Entities (EEs) and Service Providers (SPs) been fit-for-purpose?

The TREPA project relies on Executing Entities (EEs) and Service Providers (SPs) to implement its activities. The question of whether EEs and SPs are fit-for-purpose was assessed by examining their alignment with project goals and performance.

The results of the analysis of the alignment of IPs' missions/mandates with the goals of TREPA are presented in Annex E: Strategic Alignment between TREPA and Executing Entities and Service Providers. The evaluation finds that all the project's objectives are well aligned with the implementing partner's core missions and mandates. Analysis of transcripts from KIIs with various TREPA's project

managers suggests that the scope of TREPA's activities fits well into IP's core business, scope of work, including geographic coverage.

Analysis of IPs' performance suggests that, despite the one-year delay in starting the project activities, they were able to deliver on about 62 percent of planned activity deliverables. Table 4 below shows that ICRAF and IUCN account for a larger share of the project activities, followed by RFA. The analysis of progress suggests that implementation progress ranges from 53 percent (CordAid) to 89 percent (World Vision Rwanda). The activities that reported an implementation progress below the 50 percent mark by December 2024 are listed in Table 5 below. The table shows that CordAid had the highest percentage of activities whose implementation progress was below 50 percent as of December 2024. World Vision Rwanda, on the other hand, achieved greater implementation success given that it had most of the upstream activities on which other IPs depended to roll out their activities, specifically the strengthening of farmers' groups to adopt climate-resilient land use practices (output 2.1). For Enabel, two activities could not move at a faster pace like other PFMU-related activities because of their high-quality demanding nature (KII-Enabel-01). Activity 1.5.2 (ICS dissemination) and 1.5.3 (cleaning cooking hubs) have faced issues related to the rationale of the initial conceptualisation vis-à-vis the existing context, pushing the management to put them on hold.

This level of achievement suggests that implementing partners were allocated to the scope of the project that they specialise in.

Table 4. Implementation progress reported by the Implementing Partners

Implementer	Number of activities	Activities scoring <50%	Progress towards LOP targets	Burn rate of the budget
CordAid	8	4	53%	46%
Enabel	8	2	58%	34%
World Vision	4	0	89%	76%
RFA	9	1	63%	49%
ICRAF	19	4	58%	38%
IUCN	16	1	64%	89%

The table below shows that, by December 2024, only 12 activities were yet to reach the 50 percent mark. Out of the 12 activities, three activities are on track (2.2.3, 2.2.5, and 2.2.6), while 2.2.4 and 2.2.7 had no clearly defined MTR target.

Table 5. TREPA project activities for which less than 50 percent of the deliverables have been implemented

Activity	IP	Progress towards LOP targets
1.4.3. Provide technical support to 3 local nurseries in production of selected climate resilient multipurpose trees/shrub seedlings	RFA	25%
1.5.1. Conduct a large scale and intensive awareness campaign across the Eastern Province on ICS and cooking fuel solutions and opportunities	Enabel	20%
1.5.2. Support access to ICSs for over 100,000 rural Households of EP	Enabel	30%
2.2.3. Fodder value chain development	ICRAF	40%
2.2.4. Building local capacity and knowledge for climate resilience in value chains	ICRAF	40%

2.2.5. Establish/Rehabilitate seven rural resource centers and market infrastructures for value chains for climate resilient agricultural and tree products	ICRAF	30%
2.2.6. Trade fairs and business roundtables connecting farmers with other value chains actors for marketing products based on climate-resilient land use	ICRAF	40%
2.2.7. ICT supported climate risk, market information and knowledge products for climate resilience in value chains	ICRAF/IUCN	30%
2.3.5. Evaluate the financial products	CordAid	20%
2.3.6. Implement the roll-out and upscaling plan of financial products developed[2]	CordAid	
2.3.7. Facilitate impact investors to engage in investment for SMEs in the relevant value chains and connect to insurance companies	CordAid	45%
3.3.1. Integrate climate change aspects in policies and strategies for the seed sector and develop business models to promote climate resilient varieties	ICRAF	40%

In addition, all executing entities were involved in the project design phase, where they contributed their core competencies and experience in the Eastern Province. This has allowed them to deliver according to the approved funded activity despite its complexity (KII-PMU-COP). During key informant interviews, the executing entities reported that their capacity has been adapted to the requirements of the project since the inception of the project. They argued that they are able to handle a larger volume of work, either in terms of quantity or complexity, or both. This involves improvements in various areas such as the number of skilled personnel, the efficiency of processes, the availability of resources (like equipment or tools), or the overall organizational structure.

4.1.3. How relevant is the TREPA project and, in particular, its outputs and impact achieved so far to the Eastern Province of Rwanda?

Climate change poses a significant challenge to the sustainable development outlook of Rwanda, a country ranked first among African countries in terms of natural resource dependency. According to the World Bank's 2022 Rwanda Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR), the country has been historically exposed to rises in the mean temperature and most projections suggest higher risks of a hotter climate (with mean annual temperature projected to rise to between 20.64°C and 21.51°C by 2050) and increased frequency of climatic extremes. This challenge is even more pronounced for the Eastern province, where about 38% of the 1.34M Ha of land available for agriculture in the country is located. According to the 5th Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV5, 2016-2017), about 37.4% of the total population lives below the poverty line, and 15.3% are under extreme poverty. About 93% of households in the Eastern Province cultivate crops (on an average land size of 0.7 Ha), and 58.7% of workers in the province are independent farmers (the majority of whom are female), while 20.7% are wage farmers. According to the 2020 Agricultural Household Survey, 68% of agricultural households in the province practice both crop and livestock production.

The impacts of climate change pose a significant threat to the Province's natural ecosystems, such as wetlands, forests, and savannahs, that are already facing the challenges of high population pressures and unsustainable use. The recent Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) reported that 20.2 percent of the 898,414 ha of land in the province are already highly degraded (DR-TREPA-ProDoc). The projected increase in the frequency of climate-induced floods, droughts, and landslides could accelerate the process of natural resource degradation, reduce their capacity to

[2] For the activity 2.3.6, note that the targeted 10 financial products have been developed, 4 are at the piloting stage, and 6 are at the prototype stage.

provide ecosystem services to the local communities, and increase further their vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

Findings from the 2024 TREPA Annual Household Survey vividly illustrate these vulnerabilities and substantiate the need for TREPA's integrated approach. The survey confirms a high dependence on climate-sensitive agriculture, with 99% of households engaged in crop production and 85% in livestock rearing, yet operating on small and often degraded parcels—64% of farmers cultivate less than 1 hectare. While 79% of households adopt some soil erosion control measures, primarily ditches (65%), the low adoption of irrigation (20%) and rainwater harvesting (20% on pastures) highlights a critical gap in climate-resilient water management that TREPA addresses. Agroforestry is widespread (96% of crop farmers integrate trees), but species diversity is limited, and reliance on biomass energy is nearly universal—96% use firewood for cooking, with 43% still relying on inefficient three-stone fires. This heavy dependence exacerbates pressure on forest resources, with 54% of households reporting difficulty obtaining firewood and 43% collecting it from the wild. Socio-economic conditions further underscore the need for intervention: 86% of households are classified as poor, 40% are food insecure, and average incomes are low (~USD 400 over six months), with female-headed households being particularly disadvantaged. Despite high awareness of basic climate risks (e.g., 95% recognize changing weather patterns), significant knowledge gaps persist, and 43% still view climate change as an act of God, indicating a need for the awareness and capacity-building components central to TREPA.

The TREPA project is therefore highly relevant and precisely targeted highly relevant to the Eastern Province of Rwanda, as it directly confronts the interconnected challenges of land degradation, unsustainable biomass reliance, low agricultural productivity, and climate vulnerability that are empirically documented in the 2024 AHS survey. By restoring degraded landscapes, promoting climate-smart agroforestry and silvopastoral systems, introducing clean cooking technologies, and strengthening climate-resilient value chains, TREPA's interventions are not only aligned with provincial needs but are essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and environmental decline (KII-MoE-PS; KII-RFA-DG; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-DFNRO-01, 02; KII-IUCN-PM-01; KII-PMU-COP; FGD-HubStaff-01; FGD-Farmers-01).

4.1.4. Is the project theory of change (TOC) and intervention logic coherent and realistic?

The results of the qualitative interviews with key project personnel suggest that the ToC remains strong, as it clearly outlines how the project's activities are expected to lead to desired outcomes and impacts, including the underlying assumptions and conditions for success.

The results of this evaluation suggest that there is a general belief that the assumptions underlying the ToC about the context, the target population, and the project's effectiveness are supported by evidence, either from previous projects or from pilot/baseline assessments. Interviews with project staff suggest that ToC is robust, given that it involved relevant stakeholders in its development, ensuring that it reflects their perspectives and needs (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

Key stakeholders believe that the TREPA's ToC is logically consistent, with no gaps or inconsistencies in the causal pathways. Furthermore, they believe that the project's activities, as outlined in the intervention logic (as visualized in the log frame), are feasible given the available resources and the context (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

The coherence and realism of TREPA's ToC are strongly vindicated by the 2024 Annual Household Survey data, which validates its core assumptions about community needs, existing practices, and potential for change. The survey confirms the critical starting conditions assumed by the ToC: a population heavily dependent on vulnerable, small-scale agriculture (average landholding 1.4 ha); widespread but rudimentary adoption of erosion control and agroforestry (79% and 96% respectively, yet with limited diversification and technical depth); and an almost universal reliance on biomass energy (96%) under conditions of increasing scarcity (54% report difficulty accessing firewood).

Crucially, the data reveals a population that is aware of climate risks (95% recognize changing weather patterns) and possesses a positive attitude toward remedial actions like reforestation (98% believe it helps), yet faces significant barriers in practice—including limited technical capacity (only 29% of crop farmers received formal agroforestry training), financial constraints (86% in poverty), and persistent reliance on traditional methods (43% use three-stone fires). This precise alignment between the ToC's diagnosis of barriers and the empirical reality captured in the survey confirms that the project's intervention logic—which targets these exact gaps through capacity building, tailored financial products, technology provision, and systemic strengthening—is not only coherent but also deeply grounded in the local context. Furthermore, the survey indicates a foundational level of existing practice and willingness to engage (e.g., high rates of on-farm tree planting), demonstrating that the ToC builds upon, rather than supplants, local knowledge and agency, a key factor for realistic and sustainable impact.
The coherent and realistic attributes of the TREPA project's ToC and intervention logic were crucial for successful project design and implementation by December 2024 (KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

4.1.5. Does the TOC and intervention logic hold, or does it need to be adjusted?

Despite that, from the start, the TREPA has operated within a dynamic policy context, the logic model (chain of input to outcome to impact) remains relevant. All evaluation participants converged to the fact that all three components (outcomes) are synergetic in building adaptive capacity of the Eastern Province at the level of landscape (outcome one), markets and finance (outcome two) and institutions and systems (outcome three). However, some contextual assumptions made during the initial design did not hold true over time but, according to various interviewed stakeholders, regular reviews have helped identify these discrepancies and allowed for adaptive management of some project features, ensuring that TOC remains built on enablers that accurately reflect the current situation. For example, a new Rwandan law on forestry that came after the inception of the project transferred the management and ownership of district forests to the state (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01). This essentially means that all forests previously managed by districts are now under the direct control and responsibility of the central government. In addition, a recent Ministerial Order in Rwanda has formalized the operations of savings and lending groups (Ibimina) (KII-CordAid-01). This and other policy adjustments must be reflected in the TOC.

4.2. Coherence

4.2.1. Who are the partners of the project and how strategic are they in terms of capacities and commitment?

Review of key project documents suggests that the TREPA project is implemented by a consortium of implementing partners that include the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), Enabel, CIFOR-ICRAF, World Vision, and Cordaid. These organizations, along with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), are strategically involved in the project, with each partner playing a specific role in achieving the project's goals. The project also involves the Ministry of Environment as chair of the Project Steering Committee.
The strategic importance of these partners lies in their diverse capacities and commitments. For instance, IUCN brings its expertise in conservation and project management, while RFA provides on-the-ground implementation experience. Enabel's international development experience, along with CIFOR-ICRAF's research capabilities, further strengthens the project. World Vision's community focus and Cordaid's development focus ensure that the project benefits local communities. The Ministry of Environment's oversight ensures alignment with national policies and strategies.

The commitment of these partners is demonstrated through their active participation in the Project Steering Committee, their contributions to the project's work plan, and their dedication to achieving the project's objectives. They are working collaboratively to achieve a shift from degraded landscapes to resilient ones, and from fragile livelihoods to sustainable ones in the Eastern Province of Rwanda.

4.2.2. Is there coherence and complementarity by the project with other actors for other local climate change interventions?

Key local initiatives for climate resilience include projects under the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) that are implemented by Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), such as the Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project (KWIMP), Promoting Smallholder Agro-Export Competitiveness project (PSAC) and the Post-harvest and Agribusiness Support Project (PASP), Rwanda Dairy Development Project (RDDP). Current initiatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations include the agroforestry promotion initiatives under the Tubura (a One Acre Fund's local brand), Mastercard Foundation's Supporting and Enhancing Resilient and Viable Employment Opportunities (SERVE) and KATAZA program, and IUCN's projects such as COMBIO, AREECA project and DeSIRA Agroforestry Research. Climate Finance initiatives include ARCOS Network's Umusave Fund.

Since its inception, TREPA has emphasized ensuring coherence and complementarity between climate change interventions. This has mostly involved coordinating efforts between different actors, such as donor-funded projects, national and district governments, local communities, civil-society organizations, and other stakeholders, to avoid duplication and maximize impact (KII-PMU-COP).

The DPCCs meetings, JADF roundtables, and monthly coordination meetings between the District Agricultural Department and Project staff at the Hub level established a joint planning, coordination, monitoring, and reporting mechanism at the district level (DR-2024-APR). These meetings provide a platform for key stakeholders to align efforts, share progress, and discuss challenges related to agricultural and agroforestry adaptation strategies (KII-VM-01, 02; KII-IUCN-01; FGD-HubStaff-01).

However, participants in the focus group discussions with beneficiaries and Hub Coordinators reported that most donor-funded projects in the climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Eastern Province have inconsistent community engagement strategies (e.g., community approaches with vastly different pay scales across similar roles), which can lead to reduced effectiveness and negative impacts on community trust and participation. This lack of harmonization creates perceptions of unfairness, potentially undermining the credibility of the engagement process and discouraging involvement (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01).

The 2024 TREPA AHS substantiates this risk by revealing a community context where engagement and incentive structures are critically important. The survey showed that 57% of agro-foresters received assistance from organizations to plant trees, with TREPA being a major supporter (41% in intervention areas). However, it also reveals a population under significant economic strain (86% classified as poor, average six-month income ~USD 400) and high dependence on external support for adopting new practices. In such a context, inconsistent compensation or benefit-sharing mechanisms across projects—which the MTR identifies as a coherence challenge—can easily lead to "project shopping," community fatigue, or perceptions of inequity, thereby undermining the collective impact of all interventions. This empirical backdrop underscores the urgency and relevance of TREPA's efforts, through platforms like DPCCs, to harmonize engagement strategies and ensure that the collective work of multiple actors builds sustained trust and equitable community participation, rather than fragmenting it.

4.2.3. To what extent has the project complimented other on-going local-level initiatives (by stakeholders, donors, governments) on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?

KIIs with District Mayors and project managers suggest there has been a strong synergistic relationship between different climate change interventions in the eastern province, which has ensured that the project planners and implementers work together effectively rather than duplicating efforts. This can involve joint initiatives, co-financing, and clear communication to avoid duplication and maximize the overall impact.

The DeSIRA agroforestry research project, through its focus on agroforestry practices, contributes to the TREPA (Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation) project by providing scientific evidence. The DeSIRA project conducts research to understand the ecological, social, and economic impacts of agroforestry practices. This research provides a scientific basis for scaling up agroforestry initiatives, informing policy decisions, and demonstrating the benefits of agroforestry to farmers and other stakeholders (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01).

Under Component 1 TREPA focuses on transforming degraded landscapes by restoring them to climate-resilient agro-ecological systems, while AREECA contributes to this effort by promoting tree-rich landscapes. While TREPA implements broader restoration strategies, including agroforestry, silvopastoral practices, and promoting clean cooking energy, AREECA supports participatory Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) interventions, contributing to TREPA's goals within its targeted areas (KII-IUCN-01; KII-IUCN-CP).

Also, RAB, a key institution in Rwanda's agricultural sector, plays a crucial role in TREPA's implementation by providing technical expertise, facilitating community engagement, and supporting the scaling up of climate-resilient agricultural practices (FGD-HubStaff-01).

One Acre Fund provides a bundle of services to smallholder farmers, including access to quality farm inputs (like seeds and fertilizer), financing, and market access. TREPA plays a key role in this by delivering training on improved farming techniques, helping farmers maximize the benefits of the inputs they receive from One Acre Fund and boosting their overall productivity and resilience (FGD-HubStaff-01).

Under Component 2, the COMBIO's Umusave Fund supports farmer organizations, particularly those involved in green micro-projects and climate-resilient agriculture, within the context of projects like the TREPA project. These farmer organizations, often structured as savings groups, utilize the fund to invest in sustainable farming practices, build resilient communities, and improve livelihoods. CordAid has adapted its intervention to ensure that financial institutions (FIs) supported by TREPA integrate UMUSAVE Funds in their portfolios and COMBIO funds are channelled through those FIs.

This synergy is powerfully reflected in the 2024 AHS data on household finance. The survey shows an active, though largely informal, savings culture, with 90% of households saving in informal groups but only 30% using formal banks/MFIs. Crucially, it reveals that savings groups, while popular, account for smaller average savings (FRW 61,113) compared to formal institutions (FRW 182,855). This landscape validates the complementary roles of different initiatives: TREPA and partners like CordAid work to strengthen and formalize these community savings groups (FFPOs) and link them to tailored financial products, while initiatives like COMBIO's Umusave Fund can provide the catalytic capital that flows through these strengthened channels. By working together, these projects address both the demand side (farmer capacity and organization) and the supply side (adapted financial products and capital) of climate finance, a necessary approach given the survey's finding of widespread poverty as a barrier to investment.

The complementary nature of TREPA's technical training with input-supply programs like One Acre Fund is also evident in the survey. While 99% of households are engaged in crop production, the low rates of formal training in improved practices (29% for agroforestry, 17% for silvopastoralism) highlight a major gap that input programs alone cannot fill. TREPA's focus on capacity building in climate-resilient techniques directly addresses this gap, ensuring that inputs are used more effectively and sustainably. Furthermore, the widespread practice of agroforestry (96%) and the common perception

of reforestation as a key climate action (98%) create a ready foundation upon which TREPA, AREECA, and COMBIO can build in a complementary, rather than duplicative, manner—one providing the framework and species diversity, another the restoration models, and another the biodiversity focus. Component 3 includes the DPCCs meetings, JADF roundtables, and monthly coordination meetings between the District Agricultural Department and Project staff at the Hub level (KII-CordAid-01).

4.2.4. How has the project contributed to achieving a stronger and more coherent integration of the shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways and/or increased climate-resilient sustainable development (GCF RMF/PMF paradigm shift objectives)?

During this evaluation, various stakeholder accounts and APRs suggest that TREPA is working with other stakeholders to spearhead a paradigm shift in sustainable natural resource management away from reliance on degraded, climate-sensitive ecosystems that are limiting the production potential of smallholder farming systems in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. The specific contribution of TREPA towards a stronger and more coherent integration of low-emission and climate-resilient development is by fostering a holistic approach that combines mitigation and adaptation efforts, while also addressing the social, economic, and governance dimensions of sustainability.

During KIIs, TREPA project managers argued that the project is on track to achieve its mid-term emission reduction targets of 131,061 tCO2eq (although by end of 2024, the trees planted were still less than 2 years old, and proper calculation of carbon sequestration using appropriate tools will only be feasible in 2025). The 2024 APR shows that, by December 2025, the volume of finance leveraged by GCF funding, from both public and private investors, has gone far beyond the 2027 target of 15,839,042 USD, standing at 18,554,195.28 USD. The report also shows that, by December 2024, TREPA had reached out to 242,379 direct beneficiaries (47.3 percent of whom are female) against its mid-term target of 278,125 beneficiaries (50 percent female) and 951,614 indirect beneficiaries (47.3 percent of whom are female) against its mid-term target of 602,093 beneficiaries (50 percent female). By December 2024, TREPA activities had restored 43,709 ha of degraded forest landscapes (against the mid-term target of 30,000 ha) under agroforestry (16,800 ha), private forest management units (1,615 ha), pasturelands (5,002.7ha), and areas of ecologically sensitive and erosion prone lands with reduced erosion such as lake/river and roadsides (468 ha).

The 2024 Annual Household Survey provides early evidence of this integrated paradigm shift at the household level, showcasing changes in knowledge, practice, and conditions that align with low-emission, climate-resilient pathways. On the mitigation and energy access front, the survey reveals the critical challenge TREPA addresses: 96% of households rely on firewood for cooking, with 43% still using highly inefficient and polluting three-stone fires. This underscores the transformative potential of TREPA's improved cookstove (ICS) and alternative energy interventions to reduce emissions and indoor air pollution simultaneously. Early signs of uptake are visible, as households in TREPA intervention areas were 8 percentage points more likely to adopt ceramic wood-burning stoves and 11 percentage points more likely to receive an ICS subsidy. On the adaptation and resilience front, the survey documents the existing vulnerability that TREPA's landscape restoration aims to counter: 40% of households are food insecure, and the average household resilience score is moderate (44.5%), constrained by poverty and limited infrastructure. TREPA's integrated approach is designed to tackle these root causes. The higher rates of on-farm tree planting and silvopastoral practice in intervention areas, coupled with 21 percentage points higher attendance in agroforestry training, demonstrate that TREPA is successfully layering technical knowledge onto widespread local practice to enhance systemic resilience. Furthermore, the survey indicates that TREPA's holistic model is influencing the enabling environment: households show high awareness of climate risks (95%) and strong belief in remedial actions like reforestation (98%), creating a social foundation for sustained policy integration. The fact that households in intervention areas are more likely to take specific mitigation actions like

deforestation avoidance and reforestation points to a shift in community practice that aligns with national climate strategies.
The progress on the Fund-level Project/programme Outcome Indicators (PMF) shown in the 2024 APR suggests that all 7 Districts of the Eastern Province received support from TREPA project to Integrate Climate Resilience Metrics into their 5-year District Development Strategies (DDS, 2024-2029). Also, 29,567 households (which is far beyond the mid-term target of 17,333) benefited from enhanced climate resilience of agricultural value chains and commodities like nursery enterprises (2), wood farm cooperatives (2), and beekeeping coops with improved beehives (6). About 811 small entrepreneurs in agriculture value chain got loans from Duterimbere IMF in the framework of the refinancing accessed with the support of TREPA. Through agroforestry demo & related trainings and tree planting interventions, financial trainings, learning event & study tours for new PFMU leaders, and participation to climate risk awareness and climate information trainings, about 169,761 individuals (41 percent of whom are female) (against the target of 70,000 individuals) were made aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses (DR-2024-APR).
These achievements align the project with the national development plans and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted under the Paris Agreement, and ensure that the development pathway of the Eastern Province and Rwanda in general is resilient to climate change impacts while minimizing carbon emissions.

4.3. Effectiveness

4.3.1. To what extent is the project achieving its targets and objectives?

The TREPA project has made substantial progress towards its life-of-project target of restoring 60,000 ha of drought-degraded landscapes, having already restored 43,709 ha (73% of the LoP target) by December 2024 (DR-2024-APR). This exceeds the mid-term target of 30,000 ha by 45.6%, indicating the project is ahead of schedule in its core restoration objective.
Furthermore, an analysis of activity-level deliverables shows that 62% (XX out of YY activities) have been completed, demonstrating efficient implementation despite a delayed start. The activities whose implementation has not yet attained the 50 percent mark are mentioned in Table 4. The reasons behind the delayed implementation are captured in various annual and quarterly performance reports. Some reasons pertain to dependencies among projects. E.g., deliverables under Activity 2.3.5 (Evaluate the financial products) are dependent on completion of Activity 2.3.6 (Implement the roll-out and upscaling plan of financial products developed). Others, however, bringing their deliverables to fruition has simply taken longer than anticipated (OHW).
Nevertheless, assessment of the progress towards achieving the indicator targets (see Annex F: Logical Framework Indicators Performance Report) shows that, by December 2024, most of MTR targets were achieved.

Table 6. Quantitative overview of TREPA's performance against its mid-term targets for a selection of key indicators

Indicator	Mid-Term Target (2024)	Actual Achievement (Dec 2024)	Variance	% of Target Achieved	Key Note
Hectares of land restored	30,000 ha	43,709 ha	+13,709 ha	**146%**	Significantly exceeding target
Direct Beneficiaries	278,125	242,379	-35,746	**87%**	Slightly below target

Female Direct Beneficiaries	50%	47.3%	-2.7%	(94.6% of gender target)	Close to parity target
Volume of Finance Leveraged	$15.8M	$18.6M	+$2.7M	**117%**	Exceeding target
Households with enhanced resilience	17,333	29,567	+12,234	**171%**	Significantly exceeding target

The 2024 Annual Household Survey provides strong complementary evidence of this effectiveness, revealing significant and positive differences in key practices and conditions between TREPA intervention areas and comparison groups. These differences suggest the project's on-the-ground activities are translating into measurable changes at the household level. Crucially, households in TREPA areas show 21 percentage points higher attendance in formal agroforestry training and 16 percentage points higher attendance in silvopastoral training, directly reflecting the project's success in building local capacity (a core objective). This enhanced capacity is coupled with observable differences in practice: intervention areas have slightly higher adoption rates of agroforestry, are more likely to have woodlots in ecologically sensitive areas, and most notably, pastures in TREPA areas are more likely to have water tanks, a key climate adaptation technology. On the energy front, a clear impact is seen, with households in intervention areas being 8 percentage points more likely to adopt improved ceramic wood-burning stoves and 11 percentage points more likely to have received a subsidy for such technologies. While overall income levels are comparable, the economic structure in TREPA areas is shifting, as these households are slightly more likely to earn income from selling forest, livestock, and animal products, indicating early progress in diversifying and commercializing climate-resilient value chains. Furthermore, intervention areas show higher savings and borrowing rates in informal groups and a greater propensity for weekly savings deposits, suggesting TREPA's financial inclusion activities are strengthening community-based financial resilience. This constellation of positive, statistically significant differences across multiple domains—knowledge, technology adoption, resource management, and financial behavior—provides robust household-level validation that the project is not only meeting its output targets but is also beginning to achieve its intended outcomes by changing practices and improving capacities among its direct beneficiaries.

4.3.2. How effective is the TREPA project's modus operandi? Are the EEs adequately supported from IUCN to deliver on their outputs? How have the problems encountered been resolved?

The TREPA project implementors and IUCN signed an MoU clearly defining the institutional arrangement. The project also has an Operational Manual that provides guidelines and procedures for implementing the project, focusing on climate resilience and sustainable land use in Rwanda's Eastern Province. The Manual covers various aspects, including Institutional arrangements (detailing the roles and responsibilities of the various implementing partners and their coordination mechanisms), financial management (specifying financial procedures, including budgeting, reporting, and disbursement of funds, ensuring accountability and transparency), technical guidelines for different project components, monitoring and evaluation framework, risk management, community engagement and sustainability. The manual is a crucial document for all implementing partners, ensuring consistent and effective project execution.

Generally, Project Implementors believe that the TREPA project's modus operandi is well defined and has been effectively executed. It details how resources (financial, human, etc.) are allocated and managed to support project activities (OHW). In its AE capacity, IUCN has operationalised the National Steering Committee, the DPCC, the three integrated delivery team "hubs", all coordinated by the PMU.

This has supported the accelerated progress and led to increased efficiency, better resource allocation, and improved outcomes.
Nevertheless, although the steps, processes, and responsibilities involved in the project are clear, this evaluation has revealed some implementation loopholes that curtail the responsibilities of the output leads vis-à-vis their implementing entities, especially when output leaders have multiple outputs in different components. For example, the RFA leads the agroforestry intervention in component one and the national breeding program development under output 3.3, and in both cases, CIFOR/ICRAF is the service provider, and RFA does not have sufficient resources to support its research division to oversee the CIFOR/ICRAF breeding activities (OWH; KII-PMU-COP; KII-RFA-01). Although the two partners have agreed on a way to share resources for that coordination to happen, Key informant interviews suggest that this has delayed some progress and the timely provision of feedback and guidance from the RFA (OWH).
The hub coordinators, an extension of PMU, play a crucial role in the project's implementation by providing technical leadership and support at the local level. They work to ensure coherence between national and district-level TREPA activities and supervise service providers (FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-PMU-COP). Essentially, they bridge the gap between the project's overall framework and the specific needs and actions within their designated hubs (KII-PMU-COP).
Moreover, the project is steered by the Ministry of Environment, providing a space for the government to not only play its oversight role in the project implementation but also in providing timely political support as well as the ground for the district leadership to provide feedback (KII-MoE-PS; KII-IUCN-CR-01; KII-PMU-COP).

4.3.3. How effective are the strategies in place in reaching out and influencing the TREPA project's target audiences? What factors have contributed to accelerate or hinder the uptake of the project's recommendations by its target audience(s)?

The effectiveness of the TREPA project's outreach and influence strategies was assessed by examining their impact on the target audience's engagement and adoption of the project's objectives.
A key indicator of success examined was the number of people directly and indirectly benefiting from the project and the extent to which they adopt diversified, climate-resilient livelihood options, particularly women. Despite the observed 1-year delay in starting the project activities, TREPA achieved 87 percent of the mid-term target of 278,125 direct beneficiaries and exceeded its target of 602,093 indirect beneficiaries by 58 percent. A significant proportion of these beneficiaries are women (over 47%) adopting diversified, climate-resilient livelihood options. The mid-term target of restoring 30,000 ha of degraded forest landscapes was also exceeded by 45.6 percent (DR-2024-APR).
Analysis of KII and FGD transcripts suggests that the acceleration observed in the uptake and impact TREPA activities is due to an array of factors that pertain to the successful planning and implementation of the project's unique and holistic approach. Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries and hub coordinators, as well as KIIs with Vice-Mayors, suggested that strong stakeholder engagement was the most important aspect of the project. They argued that TREPA's active involvement of local communities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of landscape restoration activities (including the establishment and training of block leaders) was crucial to ensure that projects are tailored to local needs and priorities, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term commitment. They further argued TREPA has strong alignment with the national and district's sustainable development plans and natural resources management policies and supports capacity building and coordination of district and local landscape restoration initiatives, which empowers the local administrative structure to mobilize communities towards achieving a common goal. Other commonly reported driving forces were the incentives provided by the project for establishing and rehabilitating agroforestry and woodlots (including through a community-based approach), the drive to strengthen local FFPOs (including legal registration with RCA, capacity building in cooperative management and business development), the savings mobilization and linkage with local MFIs, the opportunities for alternative

income-generating activities (including the development of climate-resilient value chains). Thus, the involvement of local communities, their leaders through DPCC, cross-sectoral teams of district staff, and different market actors (e.g., MFIs, Restorative enterprises) has been crucial in not only reaching the right audience but also in co-creating solutions that benefit them.

The 2024 Annual Household Survey data provides robust quantitative evidence that vindicates these qualitative insights and confirms the effectiveness of TREPA's strategies. The survey reveals that 41% of agro-foresters in intervention areas received direct support from TREPA to plant trees, demonstrating successful and targeted outreach. The effectiveness of the community engagement and incentive strategy is reflected in the significantly higher participation rates in key activities: households in TREPA areas were 8 percentage points more likely to participate in ICS campaigns and 11 percentage points more likely to receive an ICS subsidy. This suggests that the project's awareness campaigns and supported access models are effectively overcoming barriers. Furthermore, the data confirms that TREPA's capacity-building focus is hitting its mark, with dramatic differences in training attendance: 21 percentage points higher for agroforestry and 16 percentage points higher for silvopastoralism. This successful knowledge transfer is a direct result of the block leader system and tailored training programs cited by stakeholders. The survey also validates the project's alignment with local context and needs—a factor highlighted as key to uptake. The near-universal practice of on-farm tree planting (96%) and the high belief in reforestation as a solution (98%) show TREPA is promoting practices that resonate with existing community knowledge and priorities, thereby accelerating adoption. Finally, the early signs of economic differentiation—with TREPA households more likely to earn income from forest and livestock products—provide tangible proof that the project's value-chain and livelihood diversification strategies are beginning to influence household economies, creating a powerful incentive for sustained engagement.

4.3.4. Is the project achieving its set targets and expected objectives? What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall impacts such as adaptation beneficiaries and improved ecosystem services?

The success of the TREPA project hinges on its ability to meet predetermined goals and objectives. On an annual basis, the TREPA PMU works with project managers to compute the implementation progress against the total number of deliverables of each sub-activity, and compare achievements with the total number of end-of-project deliverables.

The MTR finds that, by December 2024, project implementers had successfully achieved 62 percent of the life-of-project targets (OHW; DR-2024-APR). Yet the project’s activities started with a one-year delay. Activities related to the restoration of priority landscapes (output 1) achieved a relatively higher implementation progress score (63 percent), while those related to strengthening FFPOs, developing climate-resilient value chains, tailoring financial products (output 2), and strengthening local and national institutional capacity for climate adaptation in land planning and management achieved 61 percent of their LOP targets.

With the above performance, TREPA project stakeholders argued that the project is on track to achieve its mid-term emission reduction targets of 131,061 tCO2eq (although by end of 2024, the trees planted were still less than 2 years old, and proper calculation of carbon sequestration using appropriate tools will only be feasible in 2025) (KII-MoE-PS; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-PMU-COP; KII-PMU-MEL-01). The 2024 APR shows that, by December 2024, the volume of finance leveraged by GCF funding, from both public and private investors, has gone far beyond the 2027 target of 15,839,042 USD, standing at 18,554,195.28 USD. The report also shows that, by December 2024, TREPA had reached out to 242,379 direct beneficiaries (47.3 percent of whom are female) against its mid-term target of 278,125 beneficiaries (50 percent female) and 951,614 indirect beneficiaries (47.3 percent of whom are female) against its mid-term target of 602,093 beneficiaries (50 percent female). By December 2024, TREPA activities had restored 43,709 ha of degraded forest landscapes (against the mid-term target of 30,000 ha) under agroforestry (16,800 ha), private forest management units (1,615 ha), pasturelands

(5,002.7ha), and areas of ecologically sensitive and erosion prone lands with reduced erosion such as lake/river and roadsides (468 ha).
The 2024 Annual Household Survey provides critical early-stage evidence of the impact trajectory toward these overarching objectives, moving beyond hectare counts to capture changes in beneficiary conditions, practices, and resilience. On adaptation benefits, the survey indicates TREPA is enhancing the adaptive capacity of its direct beneficiaries. Households in intervention areas show markedly higher adoption of specific adaptive technologies, such as water tanks on pastures, and report greater participation in buffer zone rehabilitation (e.g., riparian restoration). Perhaps most importantly, 89% of trained pastoralists who adopted improved silvopastoral practices reported positive impacts on animal productivity, a direct indicator of improved livelihood resilience. Early signs of ecosystem service benefits are also evident. The significantly higher tree planting support (41% from TREPA) and training in intervention areas is leading to on-the-ground changes in land management, with these households being more likely to have woodlots in ecologically sensitive areas—a practice that directly contributes to erosion control, biodiversity, and watershed protection. Furthermore, the higher uptake of improved cookstoves (8 percentage points higher) represents a tangible reduction in pressure on forest resources for fuelwood, contributing to the project's forest landscape restoration goals. Financially, the survey reveals that TREPA households are engaging more actively with community savings (higher savings/borrowing rates), indicating strengthened financial buffers—a key component of adaptive capacity. While direct measures of food security and income show less differentiation at this early stage, the shifts in productive practices, technology adoption, and financial behavior collectively paint a picture of households on a trajectory toward greater resilience, substantiating the project's reported progress toward its long-term impact goals.
The progress on the Fund-level Project/programme Outcome Indicators (PMF) shown in the 2024 APR suggests that all 7 Districts of the Eastern Province received support from the TREPA project to Integrate Climate Resilience Metrics into their 5-year District Development Strategies (DDS, 2024-2029). Also, 29,567 households (which is far beyond the mid-term target of 17,333) benefited from enhanced climate resilience of agricultural value chains and commodities like nursery enterprises (2), wood farm cooperatives (2), and beekeeping coops with improved beehives (6). About 811 small entrepreneurs in agriculture value chain got loans from Duterimbere IMF in the framework of the refinancing accessed with the support of TREPA. Through agroforestry demo & related trainings and tree planting interventions, financial trainings, learning event & study tours for new PFMU leaders, and participation to climate risk awareness and climate information trainings, about 169,761 individuals (41 percent of whom are female) (against the target of 70,000 individuals) were made aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses.

4.3.5. To what extent is the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and tools set up helping?

TREPA has a well-designed Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework that is crucial for answering key guiding questions about a project's progress and effectiveness. The framework provides a structured approach to data collection, analysis, and reflection, enabling the implementing partners and other key stakeholders to assess whether they are on track, identify areas for improvement, and ultimately make better decisions. Among key monitoring evaluation processes, the project conducts baseline surveys and provides baseline degradation maps in the FMES system. At the PMU level, the M&E processes include quarterly PMCC meetings, as well as quarterly and semi-annual performance reviews (DR-TREPA-ProDoc; DR-LogFrame-Annex-F).
However, the evaluation team observed that, while many indicators are used to track progress toward the goals, some have targets that are not achievable if the project continues to target beneficiaries only in the selected landscape under restoration. E.g., the targeted number of beneficiaries exceeds the number of people living in the landscapes - by the MTR point, most of the people in the landscape had benefited from TREPA, leaving a task to the partners to redesign their workplans in a way that they

reach a greater number of beneficiaries, not necessarily in the physical boundaries of restored areas, especially for markets and finance-related activities (DR-LogFrame-Annex-F; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

Another issue reported by participants in this evaluation concerns the monitoring and reporting of co-financed activities, especially those funded from the government's earmarked budget. They reported that co-financed activities are not included in the PMU's monitoring and supervision activities, nor are they reported in sufficient detail by RFA (KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-RFA-01). This leads to an underestimation of the project's overall reach, effectiveness, and impact. Participants in KIIs noted that excluding co-financed activities provides an incomplete picture of the project's overall progress and outcomes and may falsely suggest underperformance or inefficiency when the project is actually achieving its goals, but through the contributions of co-financers. An example that was given is the co-financing arrangement between TREPA and COMBIO (OHW). This omission/underreporting can also result in missed opportunities for learning.

> "COMBIO has introduced native trees in the PFMUs and agroforestry, which are not counted in the tree density." KII participant.

However, KIIs with project managers and M&EL staff revealed that, despite the impact orientation of the TREPA project, monitoring efforts in the last two years have focused on short-term outputs and data on project outcome indicators that are in the log frame. Participants in this evaluation asserted that monitoring efforts prioritized outputs (and the immediate feedback they provide) because outcomes were yet to be achieved. Nevertheless, IUCN conducted the 2024 TREPA annual household survey that collected key outcome indicators beyond those found in the project log frame (e.g., Household climate adaptive and responsiveness index, Attitude and Practice (KAP) score of climate action).

Interviews with project managers reveal that IPs have attempted to implement independent impact monitoring processes to ensure that their specific activities are relevant and promote ownership of the adaptation process (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01). However, this initiative has faced financial constraints due to the lack of decentralized budget lines dedicated to surveys.

Moreover, KIIs with project managers and IUCN's M&EL office suggest that TREPA should invest in a more robust decision support tool to assist project managers in making informed decisions. Currently, the project uses offline tools, an activity tracker in Google Sheets, including performance monitoring dashboards in Excel, a monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan (MEL plan), an indicator reference sheet, and an indicator tracking table, among other tools that enable project managers to know whether the project is meeting the intended outcome or objectives (KII-PMU-MEL-01). These tools are used during quarterly performance review sessions organized by the PMU for all IPs under PMCC at the national level, and DPCC at the hub levels. Stakeholders asserted that the current Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) system needs to be upgraded to transform it into a one-stop shop data management platform that integrates data collection (surveys), analysis & visualisations, as well as project information (OHW). The digital M&E data management platform will hence facilitate aggregating data for steering, learning, and sharing across different stakeholders (KII-PMU-MEL-01).

4.4. Efficiency

4.4.1. To what extent are the project's outputs in balance with the level of effort, time and resources spent?

TREPA's consortium approach leverages the strengths of different implementing partners, allowing it to tackle complex challenges that might be beyond the scope of a single entity. Only 4.9 percent of the total project is allocated to PMU activities (DR-LogFrame-Annex-F; DR-TREPA-ProDoc). To prevent over-allocation of resources to non-deliverable tasks, most level of effort (LOE) tasks that are crucial for project success but don't directly contribute to the final deliverables (including ongoing activities like administrative support, stakeholder management, or coordination) are efficiently managed by the implementing organization alongside other projects in their portfolios. Such decentralized portfolio management can facilitate the sharing of resources (personnel, equipment, etc.) across their different projects or business units, leveraging economies of scale, reducing the need for duplicate resources, and minimizing idle time, leading to lower overall costs.

The community approach for PFMU establishment and rehabilitation is another hallmark of TREPA's efficiency drive. It leverages existing community assets, such as local manpower, knowledge, skills, and other resources, to enhance service delivery while cutting down the service provider's margin (FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-PMU-COP).

Also, good planning has led to increased efficiency. Some efficiency was achieved through economies of scope, especially under Component 2. For example, using the same budget allocation, World Vision and CordAid reached out to and strengthened a higher-than-anticipated number of FFPOs and PFMUs (KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01). In addition, under Output 2.3, CordAid increased its reach from 4 MFIs to 100 Umurenge SACCOs (KII-CordAid-01). Other planning-related gains originated from avoided sunk costs. For example, under output 1.5, Enabel conducted a feasibility study on the efficient and effective business model to revise the model for establishing cooking fuel and technology hubs. Among other scenarios, Enabel is exploring the option of using a portion of the budget to directly support service providers' marketing and promotion campaigns (KII-Enabel-01).

In the same vein, areas of waste were often related to inadequate planning. Examples include activities that could have been implemented together, such as nursery development and research (KII-PMU-COP). Other inefficiencies observed relate to unjustifiable and costly options used by service providers (FGD-HubStaff-01).

4.4.2. Have spending and project delivery progressed according to the planned schedule?

A comparison between actual progress against the planned schedule and budget (DR-2024-APR) suggests the project is progressing at a faster rate than spending, potentially pointing to the innovative, cost-effective solutions or technologies implemented by the project teams (e.g., the combination of both community approach and service provider that leverages community strengths while utilizing external support when needed) that reduce both time and expenses.

The Evaluation team also observed that, given the delayed start-up in FY2022, the project priority was to fast-track implementation of restoration activities (tree planting and related farmers/enterprise organisations) that are not resource-intensive (DR-2023-APR). In the second half of the project, more resource-intensive activities will be implemented, such as ICS distribution, rainwater harvesting system, maintenance of forest plantation, and construction of market infrastructures (KII-PMU-COP).

4.4.3. Is the relationship between resources and results appropriate and justifiable?

In general, the relationship between resources and results is appropriate and justifiable. Consistent with the argument in the project design, the project is providing large up-front investments to support resilience activities with long lead times. Most of the beneficiaries of the project were income-constrained, but with the creation of climate-resilient value chains, the savings mobilization, the financial education and capacity building, and the development of tailored financial products and services, future land restoration initiatives will be self-sustained.
Interviews with project managers revealed that the key indicators describing the project's efficiency and effectiveness provided during the project design still hold as follows:

- Estimated economic benefit per beneficiary, defined as economic benefit / benefited population over the 6-year implementation period:
    - Total to Finance by Project USD 49,622,797
    - Amount requested from GCF USD 33,783,755
    - Estimated economic benefits USD 104,065,669
    - Number of beneficiaries (people) 1,920,710
    - Estimated GCF cost per beneficiary (e=b/d) USD 17.59
    - Estimated economic benefit per person (f=c/d) USD 54.91
- Estimated economic benefit per hectare, defined as total economic benefit / benefited hectares:
    - Benefited hectares 99,345ha
    - Estimated GCF cost per hectare (h=b/g) USD 340.06
    - Estimated economic benefit per hectare (i=c/g) USD 1,061

Also, the interviewed project managers reported that the economic and financial analysis of the project outputs remains valid (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01).

4.4.4. Are there less costly ways of achieving the same outputs?

The project used a cost management system to identify waste and inefficiencies, identify non-value-added activities, and pinpoint areas for improvement in the TREPA project (KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-IUCN-FIN-01).
One example given above was the sunk cost avoided by conducting a feasibility study on the efficient and effective business model to revise the model for establishing cooking fuel and technology hubs (output 1.5) (KII-Enabel-01; KII-PMU-COP).
For motorcycles used for projects, the decision of whether to rent or buy was based on several factors, including flexibility, lower initial costs, eliminating fuel and maintenance responsibilities, and drivers' salaries (KII-PMU-COP).

4.5. Learning

4.5.1. What can we learn from the way the TREPA project is designed and implemented?

The TREPA project offers valuable insights into designing and implementing effective community-based adaptation strategies. Key takeaways include the importance of a holistic approach, local ownership, and strong institutional access and strengthening.

- **Holistic approach to forest landscape restoration**: TREPA's success stems from its holistic approach, addressing multiple facets of community resilience. It combines landscape restoration, empowering communities and community engagement, and enhancing access to market and finance. This comprehensive strategy tackles interconnected

challenges rather than focusing on isolated issues, leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes.

- **Local ownership and capacity building**: TREPA prioritizes building local capacity by training block leaders and farmers and fostering community ownership of the project. This ensures that the project's benefits are sustained long after the initial implementation phase. By empowering local communities to manage their resources and make decisions, the project promotes long-term sustainability and resilience.
- **Supporting farmer organization and addressing financial inclusion**: TREPA recognizes the importance of financial inclusion in building community resilience. The project supports financial literacy, promotes local entrepreneurship, and provides access to climate-resilient investments. This holistic approach to financial empowerment ensures that communities can adapt to climate change and build sustainable livelihoods.
- **Institutional strengthening**: The project in Rwanda includes institutional strengthening as a key component, focusing on enhancing the capacity of national and local institutions to effectively plan, manage, and monitor climate adaptation outcomes related to land management. This involves strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and mainstreaming climate resilience into land management practices.

The lessons learned from TREPA can be scaled up and replicated in other regions facing similar challenges. The project's focus on local ownership, capacity building, and integrated approaches makes it a model for sustainable community development and climate adaptation initiatives (KII-MoE-PS; KII-RFA-DG; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-DFNRO-01, 02 ; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

However, KIIs with project managers show that lessons learned documentation is sometimes treated as a formality rather than a valuable tool for improvement. Lessons learned are part of the project performance report process. Using the reporting tool, project managers report the lessons learned within the implementation progress description box or as part of the challenges encountered section. Without a specific repository of lessons learned, it can be difficult to ensure lessons are specific, actionable, and relevant to future projects.

4.5.2. What has and what hasn't worked well so far and what needs to be improved or done differently?

Analysis of project performance suggests that the TREPA is on track in its quest to transform the Eastern Province through widespread adoption of climate-resilient landscape restoration activities. The analysis of progress assessment suggested that the project has achieved its targets without budget overruns or any other major setbacks.

The KIIs and FGDs conducted in this evaluation have shown that the project design and implementation were largely successful. In addition to the outcomes and impacts under the logical framework, the following co-benefits were mentioned during the FGDs and KIIs:

- **Public health**: Plantation of fruit trees, increased crop yield, and improved animal productivity have increased access to diverse and nutritious foods, which have helped combat malnutrition, including stunting, in vulnerable populations. Adoption of ICS and water tanks has led to better air and water quality, reducing the incidence of respiratory illnesses and waterborne diseases (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01).
- **Women empowerment**: Reduced time spent collecting fuel and cooking frees up women's time, allowing them to pursue education, income-generating activities, and other opportunities (FGD-Farmers-01; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01).
- **Education:** planting trees and fodder, installing water tanks, and using ICS has released children and women from animal rearing tasks and household chores, increasing their school attendance, reducing being late to school, and increasing time for home reading.

All these factors have improved access to education and educational outcomes of children (FGD-Farmers-01; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01).

- **Social capital**: Community-based agroforestry interventions have involved collaborative decision-making and shared responsibilities, fostering social cohesion and collective action. The TREPA's participatory planning and implementation built trust and strengthened social networks, leading to more robust community structures (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-IUCN-01).
- **Social security**: our KIIs reveal increased rates of contribution to the Community Based Health Insurance (a.k.a. Mutuelle de Santé), a health insurance scheme focused on providing access to healthcare services for all Rwandans, and Ejo Heza, a long-term savings scheme designed to encourage financial security and retirement planning, as a result of TREPA interventions (FGD-Farmers-01; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-DFNRO-01, 02).

Spillover effects: The project has observed technology spillovers, where farmers not directly involved in the project have adopted agroforestry practices after observing the benefits experienced by participating farmers (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-DFNRO-01, 02). This indicates a potential for wider adoption and long-term sustainability.

On the negative side, there was a considerable operational delay in the project implementation caused by a longer-than-expected project inception phase (mainly resulting from the large scale of its operations, and the need to lay a strong foundation for its community engagement strategy) and administrative bottlenecks such as delays in the approval and recruitment of the CoP, delays in signing of the implementation agreement, and delays in disbursement of funds to IPs (KII-PMU-COP; KII-IUCN-01). Activities of the project did not start until 2023 (DR-2023-APR).

Also, in February 2025, Rwanda suspended its development cooperation program with Belgium, ending the partnership and co-financing arrangements between Enabel and TREPA. The unexpected exit of such an important implementation consortium member will significantly hinder project performance in various ways, including delays (in terms of time needed for replacement), loss of expertise and skills, and damage to stakeholder relationships (KII-PMU-COP; KII-IUCN-01).

4.5.3. Are there lessons or best practices that can be up-scaled or replicated in similar environments?

All interviewed stakeholders agree that the TREPA project offers valuable lessons in forest landscape restoration and community development. Key best practices mentioned during KIIs and FGDs include emphasizing community-based approaches to restoration and strengthening local institutional capacity, and coordinating efforts across different sectors for effective climate change adaptation.

- **Community-based restoration**: TREPA emphasizes the active participation of local communities in restoration efforts. This includes involving community members in tree planting, nursery management, and other restoration activities. Community ownership and involvement are crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of restoration projects.
- **Strengthening institutional capacity**: TREPA recognizes the need to strengthen national and local institutions involved in land management and planning. This includes enhancing the capacity of the Rwanda Tree Seed Centre to supply diverse, climate-adapted tree species. Effective coordination between different stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and local communities, is essential.
- **Knowledge sharing and dissemination**: TREPA aims to generate and disseminate knowledge about best practices in agroforestry and land restoration. This includes sharing information on effective techniques, successful case studies, and lessons learned. By documenting and sharing knowledge, TREPA can contribute to the wider adoption of sustainable land management practices.

4.6. Sustainability

4.6.1. Are the project interventions and benefits likely to continue after the end of GCF funding?

It is crucial for the success and impact of the TREPA project that its interventions and benefits continue after the GCF funding period ends. The TREPA project proposal emphasized a paradigm shift potential, which includes the sustainability of outcomes beyond the project's completion (DR-TREPA-ProDoc).
Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries and Hub Coordinators indicate their strong belief that the strong community engagement (including the capacity building for block leaders and farmers at large) and the strengthening and empowerment of FFPOs to mobilize savings, access loans (and grants), and develop business plans along the climate-resilient value chains (including in PFMUs and agroforestry) will ensure the sustainability of forest landscape restoration beyond GCF funding.
On the other hand, KIIs with Vice-Mayors and project implementors argued that the importance of ownership and responsibility for the project's continuation should be established within the relevant institutions, through development planning and capacity development (e.g., development of integration of Landscape Restoration Plans within their district development strategies). They pointed to the foreseen challenge related to the inherent budgetary constraints in local governments, coupled with higher staff turnover in districts, which could hamper the gains achieved under TREPA. Among other examples mentioned during KIIs, some participants believed that monitoring and evaluation of restored areas under protection by district/sector staff is likely to be discontinued if the current technical assistance to the seven districts is phased out.
The 2024 Annual Household Survey provides a nuanced, data-driven perspective that supports both viewpoints and highlights the critical sustainability challenges:

- On one hand, the survey reveals a strong foundation for community-led sustainability: agroforestry is already a near-universal practice (96% of crop farmers), and there is widespread belief in reforestation as a key climate action (98%). This indicates that TREPA's interventions are building upon deeply ingrained local knowledge and values, not introducing alien concepts. Furthermore, the active financial engagement in community groups—with 90% of households saving in informal MFIs—shows an existing mechanism for collective resource mobilization that TREPA's FFPO strengthening can leverage for long-term maintenance and investment.
- On the other hand, the survey starkly outlines the economic and capacity barriers that threaten sustainability. The pervasive poverty (86% of households classified as poor) and low average incomes mean that households have very limited disposable resources to invest in maintenance or new technologies without continued external support or access to credit. The low rates of formal training (29% in agroforestry) prior to TREPA's intervention suggest that deep, self-sustaining technical expertise within communities is not yet the norm and requires prolonged capacity building. Crucially, the heavy dependence on biomass (96% use firewood) and the scarcity of fuelwood reported by 54% of households create a powerful counter-pressure that could lead to the degradation of restored landscapes for energy if alternative livelihoods and energy sources are not firmly entrenched. This data validates the concerns about institutional sustainability; without the technical oversight, enforcement, and support systems that projects like TREPA help establish and that districts struggle to maintain, these economic and resource pressures could easily reverse gains.

4.6.2. What sustainability measures are in place?

The project's sustainability and exit strategy remain founded on the integration of the landscape restoration and management approaches into existing government plans and structures (including the long-term forest landscape restoration plan that put district authorities in the driving seat on the

landscape restoration agenda), as well as within SMEs, agribusinesses, and value chains for climate-resilient tree and fodder and beekeeping products (KII-PMU-COP). This strong assumption was informed by approaches that have been tested and proven to be sustainable in similar socio-economic and environmental conditions (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01). For example, among TREPA interventions, most ICRAF intervention uses an approach that is similar to the Trees for Food Security (T4FS). The t4FS project, particularly its second phase (T4FS-2), demonstrated a strong focus on sustainability through various strategies. These include promoting agroforestry practices, enhancing local capacity, and establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure long-term impact.
Sustainability is also mainstreamed in TREPA's modus operandi through tactical approaches such as:

- Signing MOUs between implementing entities and Districts, as well as an MOU between the Ministry of Agriculture and IUCN Rwanda to strengthen agroforestry and conservation efforts. These MOUs are crucial for coordinating activities and ensuring the project's success in transforming the Eastern Province (KII-PMU-COP).
- Involving elected farmer promoters in the management of the nurseries to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality seedlings in the future, which is essential for successful restoration projects (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01).
- All new financial products and services that TREPA supports SACCOs to develop are approved by their General Assemblies and endorsed by the members, ensuring their sustainability (KII-CordAid-01).
- Not just mobilizing the Community Vigilance Committees (CVCs) to play a vital role in forest restoration by actively monitoring and protecting restored landscapes, but also organizing them into cooperatives which are strengthened and supported to mobilize savings, access financial services and invest in the value chains (KII-CordAid-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-ICRAF-01).
- Under Component 3, the project supports tree seed centres that are owned by the government (KII-IUCN-01).

4.6.3. What real difference has TREPA interventions made to the project's target groups (m/f)? How has it changed their lives?

The TREPA project has demonstrably improved the lives of its target groups, particularly vulnerable women in the Eastern Province of Rwanda, by increasing their resilience to climate change and enhancing their livelihoods. Interviewed stakeholders commonly reported that TREPA's community-based restoration efforts and sustainable land-use practices (Component 1) have led to tangible agro-economic benefits such as improved crop yields and animal health, increased animal productivity, which is widening their community's natural resources base while enhancing food security and opportunities for income diversification (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-DFNRO-01, 02; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).
With access to improved ICS and rainwater harvesting technologies, women in TREPA target areas reported key health, economic, and social benefits, including reduced incidences of respiratory illnesses, reduced fuelwood and charcoal cost, less time and effort spent in collecting firewood and cooking, and saving valuable time for other activities like childcare, income-generating work (FGD-Farmers-01; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-Enabel-01; KII-ICRAF-01).
The empowerment of FFPOs has significantly increased savings mobilization, which has helped locals to develop business plans along the climate-resilient value chains, improving the prospects of their income diversification away from climate-sensitive sectors (KII-WVR-01; KII-CordAid-01).
The 2024 Annual Household Survey provides robust quantitative evidence that validates these reported changes and begins to measure their scale among beneficiary households. The data confirms that TREPA is making a measurable difference in key areas of practice and resilience. Households in TREPA intervention areas show significantly higher adoption of specific adaptive technologies, being more likely to have water tanks on their pastures, a direct contributor to improved animal health and

productivity during dry periods. The project's training and support are translating into enhanced skills, with beneficiaries 21 percentage points more likely to have attended formal agroforestry training and 16 percentage points more likely to have attended silvopastoral training. This knowledge is being applied, as trained pastoralists report overwhelmingly (89%) that adopting improved practices has led to positive impacts on animal productivity. On household energy, a clear impact is seen: TREPA households are 8 percentage points more likely to use improved ceramic wood-burning stoves, which directly reduces fuelwood consumption, indoor air pollution, and time spent collecting fuel—particularly benefiting women and children. Economically, while overall income levels show less differentiation at this early stage, the structure is shifting. TREPA households are slightly more likely to earn income from the sale of forest, livestock, and animal products, indicating a move toward commercializing the very value chains the project promotes. Furthermore, they demonstrate stronger engagement with community finance, showing higher rates of saving and borrowing in informal groups and a greater tendency for weekly savings deposits, which strengthens their financial buffers against shocks. These combined findings—ranging from technology adoption and knowledge gain to early economic shifts and improved financial resilience—provide a data-backed picture of how TREPA interventions are beginning to change lives by building practical capacity, reducing drudgery and health risks, and laying the groundwork for more diversified and climate-resilient livelihoods.

4.6.4. What exit strategy does the project have?

TREPA considers a phased approach to exiting that involves gradually transferring responsibility and management to local communities and institutions, ensuring the long-term sustainability of restoration efforts. This approach includes building the capacity of individuals, FFPOs, and local governance structures, developing value chains and sustainable financing mechanisms, and gradually reducing TREPA support as local communities and institutions become more capable of managing the restored landscape independently (KII-PMU-COP).

TREPA has started to formally hand over responsibilities for the project to local communities and institutions. Interviews with Hub Coordinators and project managers pointed out that most of the project's restoration activities (except maintenance) are planned to be phased out in 2025 and all responsibilities related to DPCC have been transferred to the Districts. The last year of the project (2027) is reserved for monitoring and providing guidance and support to communities and institutions as needed. This gradual reduction of support and the handover of responsibilities for landscape restoration are clearly provided under the MoU signed between TREPA and its beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, the authority to decide the conclusion of activities remains in the hands of the project's Steering committee.

4.7. Impact Orientation

4.7.1. Is the project oriented towards a positive impact on people and nature?

The TREPA project was specifically designed to have a positive impact on both people and the environment. It rolled out nature-based solutions (forest landscape restoration) to address the existential threat of climate change (DR-TREPA-ProDoc). To support a paradigm shift in the way future climate resilience interventions are developed, sustained, and financed in Rwanda and beyond, the project is demonstrating the effectiveness of a holistic approach to FLR that integrates coordinated and community-led forest restoration, sustainable livelihood diversification, and strengthened market linkages, access to finance, and an enabling environment for implementing coordinated restoration efforts. To date, 43,709 hectares were out under restoration trajectory, which directly affects 242,279 individuals (and 951,614 indirect beneficiaries) and different forest, mountain, farm, and pasture ecosystems. In addition, tree, fodder, and beekeeping value chain actors are being impacted by the

market-strengthening activities of TREPA on one hand, and the connection with the forest landscape restoration to which they source their raw materials, on the other hand (DR-2024-APR).
Despite the impact orientation of the TREPA, KIIs with project managers suggest that over the last two years, the existing monitoring and evaluation framework has focused on tracking activities and deliverables, as their outcomes were yet to come to fruition (OWH). Participants in this evaluation argued that the delayed start-up and the length of the project lifetime do not allow them to assess results such as people's and market resilience, landscape resilience (through biomass and productivity, and carbon sequestration) which are only visible after a few years given the nature (FLR) of the project (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

4.7.2. Indications of project positive impact on nature?

Analysis of KII transcripts suggests that Project Managers believe that the young trees (of about 2-4m tall) are already contributing to soil health by improving soil structure, increasing organic matter, and facilitating nutrient cycling, leading to better water retention and nutrient availability for crops. The key informants also report that the trees' root systems are helping to bind the soil, preventing topsoil loss due to wind and water erosion, especially on sloping land (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).
Interviewed farmers report that scaling up agroforestry and silvopastoral practices that utilize nitrogen-fixing trees and other agroforestry techniques is reducing farmers' dependence on synthetic fertilizers, saving costs and promoting more sustainable farming practices.
Rangers also report that livestock manure, a byproduct of grazing animals, is becoming a valuable source of nutrients and organic matter, contributing to soil fertility and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers in silvopastoral systems. In tandem, they report that TREPA interventions are helping them improve forage quality and productivity, reducing the need to purchase or even import expensive, energy-intensive feed for livestock. This, in turn, is reducing the overall environmental impact of livestock production, including the reliance on synthetic fertilizers used in feed production (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).
The 2024 Annual Household Survey provides foundational evidence that the conditions for these positive ecological impacts are being established at scale. While direct measurements of soil organic matter or nutrient cycling require specialized studies, the survey data reveals significant changes in land management practices that are the essential precursors to these impacts. Critically, 96% of crop farmers in the study area integrate trees on their farms, and TREPA's support has been a major driver, with 41% of agro-foresters in intervention areas receiving tree planting support from the project. This massive increase in on-farm tree cover—supported by TREPA's 21 percentage point higher training attendance in agroforestry—is the fundamental first step toward improved soil structure, water retention, and nutrient cycling reported by project managers. Furthermore, the survey indicates that TREPA's interventions are leading to more targeted and ecologically sensitive restoration: households in intervention areas are more likely to have woodlots located in fragile, ecologically sensitive and erosion-prone lands and show greater participation in buffer zone rehabilitation (e.g., along riparian areas), practices that directly prevent topsoil loss and protect waterways. On the silvopastoral front, the higher training attendance (16 percentage points) and the reported productivity gains (89% of trained adopters) suggest the systems being promoted are both viable and beneficial, creating an incentive for maintaining tree-forage-livestock integration that enhances soil fertility through manure.
Finally, a key indicator of reduced pressure on natural ecosystems is evident in the energy sector: households in TREPA areas are 8 percentage points more likely to adopt improved cookstoves, a technology that reduces fuelwood demand. Given that 54% of all households report difficulty obtaining firewood and 43% collect it from the wild, this shift in technology, driven by TREPA's campaigns and subsidies, represents a direct contribution to reducing deforestation and forest degradation, allowing natural and restored landscapes to recover and provide enhanced ecosystem services.

4.7.3. Indications of positive impacts on people's lives and livelihoods?

Although the planted trees are still in their sapling stages, the restoration of drought-degraded landscapes in the Eastern Province to convert them into climate-resilient ecosystems (including the introduction of agroforestry and silvopastoral practices, and the widespread reforestation efforts) using the community-based approach is already improving livelihoods and food security for smallholder farmers and woodlot growers in the province.

Stakeholders in agroforestry systems believe that the introduction of agroforestry practices, which integrate trees (especially fruit trees) and shrubs into agricultural systems, is playing a crucial role in enhancing food security by diversifying food sources and increasing income for farmers (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

The interviewed stakeholders reported that the introduced silvopastoral practices (which integrate trees, forages, and livestock) have offered a pathway to transform livelihoods and enhance food security, simply by improving land productivity, increasing income diversification, and bolstering resilience to climate change. The introduced systems are leading to more efficient resource utilization, higher yields, and greater overall sustainability in agricultural production (FGD-Farmers-01; FGD-HubStaff-01; KII-ICRAF-01). This reported impact is strongly corroborated by survey data, which shows that 89% of trained pastoralists who adopted improved silvopastoral practices report positive impacts on animal productivity, and that TREPA beneficiaries are 16 percentage points more likely to have attended relevant training and more likely to have water tanks on their pastures, directly improving resource efficiency and drought resilience.

A focus group discussion with beneficiaries of improved cookstove (ICS) subsidies suggests that access to ICS allowed communities to use less fuel, helping them to reduce the demand for firewood and charcoal, contributing to the preservation of forests and local ecosystems (FGD-Farmers-01).

Beneficiaries of improved cookstove (ICS) technologies report key health, time, and fuel saving, and social benefits. They report that TREPA's ICS are producing less smoke, leading to a significant reduction in indoor air pollution and incidences of respiratory illnesses, especially among women and children. The adoption of the ICS technology has considerably reduced fuelwood and charcoal consumption. Women and children spend less time and effort collecting firewood or other fuels and incur lower cooking expenses. Moreover, beneficiaries believe that the more efficient burning of fuel in improved cookstoves often leads to faster cooking times, saving valuable time for other activities like childcare, income-generating work, or education (FGD-Farmers-01). These qualitative benefits are reflected in measurable adoption rates, with households in TREPA areas 8 percentage points more likely to use improved ceramic wood-burning stoves and 11 percentage points more likely to have received a subsidy for them, confirming the project's effectiveness in delivering these time- and health-saving technologies.

Most interviewed stakeholders report that, through the community approach, TREPA activities are empowering local communities by actively involving them in identifying needs for building climate resilience, making decisions (including the identification of restoration sites and tree species that are suitable for agroforestry, silvopatureal systems, and private woodlots), implementing solutions, and monitoring their performance to ensure ownership of the project activities. Analysis of various transcripts from FGDs and KIIs suggests that this approach is fostering a sense of ownership and control, leading to more effective and sustainable development outcomes. By leveraging local knowledge and resources, community-based approaches can enhance social networks, build trust, and promote collective action for the betterment of the community.

This empowerment extends to financial resilience, as evidenced by the survey finding that TREPA households show higher rates of saving and borrowing in informal groups and a greater tendency for weekly savings deposits, indicating strengthened community-based financial buffers—a tangible outcome of the strengthened FFPOs and financial inclusion work central to the project's approach.

4.8. One Programme Approach

4.8.1. Is the project leveraging the Union to achieve its objectives?

TRPA leverages on other projects that are implemented by IUCN to achieve its objectives and maximize the benefits for its beneficiaries. Those projects are:

- COMBIO, which stands for "Reducing vulnerability to climate change through enhanced community-based biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Province of Rwanda," is a project funded by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency). The project is implemented by the Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, IUCN, and Enabel. COMBIO aims to enhance community-based biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Province of Rwanda, focusing on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- The AREECA project, which stands for Alliance for Restoration of Forest Landscapes and Ecosystems, is a multi-agency initiative focused on large-scale forest and landscape restoration in Africa that was funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, . Implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in partnership with other organizations like the Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA) and Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI) in Rwanda. AREECA aims to increase socio-economic, ecological, and climate-related benefits through restoration efforts, specifically in the districts of Nyagatare and Kirehe.
- The Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) project, funded by the European Union, aims to enhance farmers' livelihoods by generating knowledge through research that will help to scale up agroforestry in Rwanda.

TREPA builds upon and scales up the work of the AREECA project to the entire Eastern Province. It takes lessons learned from AREECA and applies them to a broader geographical area and a wider range of interventions. COMBIO acts as a complementary project to TREPA, focusing on enhancing biodiversity through the introduction of diverse native species in targeted TREPA landscapes. TREPA leverages knowledge generated through DeSIRA research to improve agroforestry practices, increase farm yields, and diversify food production, ultimately contributing to a more climate-resilient agricultural system (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

4.8.2. To what extent is TREPA project implemented in accordance with IUCN's One Programme Approach?

The TREPA project was designed and is implemented in observance of the by four key principles of the One Programme Charter:

• Practice subsidiarity and use the best-placed entity of the Union – the most appropriate constituent parts of IUCN make decisions, participate in the Programme in line with their capacities, and are assigned responsibilities at the most appropriate level for specific program activities to deliver the intended national, regional or global Programme result

• Cooperate, don't compete – the constituent parts of IUCN work together in a coordinated manner to deliver Programme results and do not compete for resources.

• Link resources to responsibility – resources are allocated to the constituent part of IUCN assigned to deliver a particular Programme activity and result.

• Be transparent and communicate – transparency and good communication is maintained on plans and activities among all constituent parts of IUCN.

The country strategy outlines how the pillars and initiatives meet and the implementation structure (KII-IUCN-PM-01). On a quarterly and annual basis, TREPA PMU reports on IUCN's corporate indicators that are beyond the TREPA indicators. Under the leadership of the IUCN Program Manager,

TREPA PMU works to align the country work program. The work involves selecting the indicators that the project contributes to and establishing an M&E plan (KII-PMU-MEL-01).
For ease of coordination and delivery of activities in each of the landscapes and districts, the project established three landscape coordination offices/hubs. These hubs are located in Ngoma, Gatsibo, and Rwamagana or Kayonza districts.

4.8.3. To what extent has it engaged with other constituents of the Union to achieve, disseminate, strengthen, scale up or embed its outputs or outcomes?

The COMBIO project complements the TREPA project by focusing on biodiversity conservation within the TREPA-targeted landscapes of Rwanda's Eastern Province. Specifically, COMBIO promotes the use of native tree species in restored areas and integrates them into agroforestry and silvopastoral systems (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-PMU-COP).
The TREPA project and AREECA project are both initiatives focused on landscape restoration and climate change adaptation in Rwanda, particularly within the Eastern Province. They work together to achieve a common goal of sustainable land management and improved livelihoods by leveraging community involvement and promoting climate-resilient practices. Both TREPA and AREECA used the degradation assessment using ROAM tools to develop seven District restoration plans. The projects also create synergies by combining their respective strengths and resources to achieve greater impact. For example, AREECA's focus on forest restoration was also integrated into TREPA's overall landscape restoration plans.
The DeSIRA project and TREPA (Transforming Eastern Province of Rwanda's capacity to adapt to climate change through agroforestry and ecosystem restoration) work together to enhance agroforestry and landscape restoration in Rwanda's Eastern Province. The DeSIRA project funds research and knowledge generation related to agroforestry, including climate-smart innovations, efficient biomass use, and diversification of crops and livestock and TREPA utilizes the findings from DeSIRA to implement on-the-ground activities like establishing tree nurseries, planting trees, and managing agroforestry systems. Both projects contribute to building the capacity of farmers, researchers, and other stakeholders in agroforestry practices, promoting sustainable land management and climate resilience.

4.9. Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth

4.9.1. To what extent has the TREPA project's objectives and design promoted and advanced gender equality, gender responsiveness, and/or the needs and priorities of youth?

Women and youth in the Eastern Province are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to a combination of social, economic, and environmental factors that exacerbate their existing inequalities. The NISR's 2024 household living conditions survey (EICV7) suggested that they have limited access to land, credit, technology, and information, all crucial for adapting to climate change. According to the survey, women in the Eastern Province rely more on natural resources for their livelihoods, and often bear the primary responsibility for household tasks like water collection, food preparation, and caring for children and the elderly, which makes them highly vulnerable to climate-related changes in resource availability.
The TREPA project's objectives and design have generally aimed to promote gender equality, gender responsiveness, and the needs of youth, though the extent of their success likely varies across different aspects of the project and different contexts. On youth, a key aspect of TREPA involves strengthening smallholder enterprises and value chains related to tree crops, bee products, and fodder, with a particular focus on youth involvement.

Following the validation of a gender analysis and feasibility study, a Gender Action Plan (GAP) was developed to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of the project, ensuring that both men and women benefit from and participate in the project's activities (KII-PMU-COP). Although the GAP defines and costs additional activities for mainstreaming, it does not have a budget. To implement activities under the GAP, each implementing partner commits to implementing GAP activities that are consistent with those outlined in their annual plans (KII-PMU-COP).
Also, under the GAP, each implementing partner has a gender champion, who is part of the Gender Task Force (KII-PMU-COP). The task force meets regularly with a regional gender specialist. However, TREPA does not have a specific budget line dedicated to the work of the Gender Specialist.
On the youth empowerment front, however, the project is yet to develop youth-specific activities, or youth mainstreaming, and there is no specific framework for targeting the youth.
The last performance report indicates that, by December 2024, TREPA had reached 242,379 direct beneficiaries and 951,14 indirect beneficiaries, of whom 47.3 percent are female (against a mid-term target of 50 percent). For example, on Output 2, Cordaid partnered with Viamo to deliver digital training through interactive Voice Response (IVR) content focused on the topics of climate awareness, financial literacy and climate adaptation. The training reached 34,742 beneficiaries, including 18,032 women and 16,710 men completed digital training. Some legally registered cooperatives are actively working to increase women's participation in leadership positions and enhance their self-confidence.
The 2024 AHS reveals the critical importance of this mainstreaming work but also hints at its challenges. The data shows that female-headed households are more likely to be very poor and have significantly lower average incomes from most economic activities, vindicating the MTR's emphasis on their vulnerability. While the MTR notes TREPA's efforts, the survey reveals a gender gap in participation, as female-headed households were less likely to participate in ICS campaigns and attendance in agroforestry and silvopastoral training was 6 and 8 percentage points lower, respectively, among women. This suggests that despite the GAP, proactive and targeted measures are needed to overcome barriers to women's engagement. The survey also challenges the project's reach regarding youth, as the MTR notes the absence of a specific youth framework; without age-disaggregated data in the AHS, it is difficult to measure or vindicate any specific youth-focused outcomes, highlighting the gap the MTR identifies.

4.9.2. To what extent has the project monitored its progress with appropriately disaggregated monitoring data and with the participation of women and/or youth?

The TREPA project integrates gender considerations into its implementation and reporting (DR-TREPA-ProDoc). The project's monitoring and evaluation framework includes specific indicators to track the participation and empowerment of women and youth.
The performance reporting template has a dedicated section on the implementation of the GAP (Section 4.2). In addition, the data on the progress of project activities is collected and analyzed separately for different demographic groups, allowing for a better understanding of how the project impacts various segments of the population. This approach ensures that the project is inclusive and that its benefits are distributed equitably (KII-PMU-MEL-01).

4.9.3. To what extent is the project compliant to environmental and social safeguards (ESS)?

Various annual and quarterly performance reports show that TREPA has been fully compliant with ESS. A Gender Action Plan was developed and has been used since the start of the project. In addition to the designated Gender Focal Persons for each Implementing Partner, a Gender Officer was hired.
During annual activity planning, all executing entities led by the PMU meet to screen and approve any planned activity to ensure that they do not fall under the environmental and social risk category A KII-

PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP). IUCN also carries out quarterly participatory field monitoring missions during which the environmental and social risks are assessed, discussed and positive recommendations formulated and shared with all IPs and followed up on their adoptions (KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP). All the nurseries constructed were constructed considering the Environmental Impact Assessments (KII-RFA-01). For example, the seedling pots that were used are the approved type by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority. All project activities that were carried out on the private land, voluntary agreements were signed by both parties. Although no indigenous communities were identified in the project areas, efforts were made to engage and inform local communities within the intervention zones prior to the commencement of any project activities. All interventions, as well as the selection of beneficiaries, were carried out in strict accordance with the criteria outlined in the operational manual. Famers and local leaders were involved in project beneficiaries identification and selection of the most vulnerable households guided by the Ubudehe social categorization system and also about the short term jobs created from tree nurseries establishment to the management of planted seedlings, the main focus was on the communities that are registered in the poverty graduation schemes (National strategy for Sustainable Graduation).

4.10. Science/policy/action interface

4. 10.1. How has the knowledge produced or disseminated by TREPA relevant?

The TREPA feasibility studies identified a shortage of institutional technical knowledge and capacity and know-how about proven climate risks and solutions (DR-TREPA-ProDoc). Since its inception, TREPA has appraised and improved existing knowledge and information systems at national and district levels to ensure the integration of climate-related data to contribute to climate-informed decision-making, monitoring, and reporting for different sectors and at all levels in order to inform a scale-up of project results (Output 3.2) (DR-2022-APR; DR-2023-APR). Output 3.4 supports research action that generates new knowledge based on program results and lessons learned (DR-TREPA-ProDoc).

IUCN finalized the ROAM assessment through which degradation, opportunities, and intervention maps were produced and validated, and landscape sites were selected and demarcated for the seven Districts (DR-2023-APR; DR-2024-APR). The project also worked with stakeholders to commonly agree that the RFA Forest Monitoring and Evaluation System (FMES) is the most appropriate for scaling up and has to be used to register, plan and monitor any forest lands that have to be restored by the project (DR-2023-APR).

IUCN has also commissioned research to assess the productivity characteristics of the identified types of agroforestry systems in the Eastern Province and determine the effect of agroforestry trees on biodiversity richness, and estimate the carbon sequestration potential by different agroforestry systems. Another study identified highly nutritious (fruits/nuts/fodder) value chains and characterized at least 4 with high potential for building resilience to the local population (KII-Enabel-01; KII-ICRAF-01).

Enabel worked with Rwanda Standard Board (RSB) to locally test user-friendly improved cooking stoves (ICS) and produce knowledge materials to train local producers and 12 national/district staff and inform best practices. They also commissioned various studies, including an assessment of biomass availability and a survey on biomass consumption and Kitchen Performance Test (KPT) at Household level (KII-Enabel-01).

Also, ICRAF commissioned a Tree Seed Sector Assessment that provides an in-depth analysis of the existing seed sector, identifying gaps and opportunities for integrating climate resilience into seed production, distribution, and management. They also conducted desk study to assess the policy and legal framework for the integration of Climate Adapted and Productive Tree Diversity (CAPTD) into national seed sector policies (KII-ICRAF-01).

4.10.2. Has it been effective in influencing policy or actions?

Interviews with the head of RFA, Vice-Mayors, and IUCN staff suggest that activities under Component 3 are significantly transforming the policy landscape for forest landscape restoration (FLR) by influencing policy changes. Interviewed Vice-Mayors reported that the results of TREPA's ROAM assessment have been widely disseminated and helped ensure that climate resilience considerations are effectively mainstreamed into development planning (e.g., District Development Strategies for 2024–2029) and that TREPA project activities are integrated into District Performance Contracts (Imihigo). The KIIs with IUCN staff show that TREPA's Hub coordinators facilitate monthly roundtables with cross-sectoral teams of district staff in charge of natural resources, and other development partners through the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF). TREPA has also built capacities of districts and other actors in proper climate action planning and climate finance, an initiative that is changing the mindset of some key district officials working as change agents. In addition, IUCN has also facilitated the establishment of District Project Coordination Committee of TREPA Project (DPCCs), a platform that gathers various actors investing in climate actions within each district (under the leadership of the Vice-Mayor) to further discuss and agree on the factors of success, with IUCN providing a technical backstop for the implementation of this cross-sectoral mechanism. By December 2024, all 7 district mayors and technicians had integrated TREPA project activities and targets into the district's annual performance contracts, targets, and action plans. TREPA facilitates JADF roundtables (economic cluster) to explore synergies for FLR with other partners.
At the central level, TREPA chairs a national cross-sectoral task force that gathers government institutions, civil society, private sector, and development cooperation agencies with objective to discuss issues and share lessons learned and experiences that could help to enhance the efficiency of forest landscape restoration implementation and support the functioning of the Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Sector Working Groups in implementing the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NST) priorities (KII-PMU-COP).

4. 11. Country ownership of projects and programmes

4.11.1. How is the project contributing to other projects/programmes within the country? are there further commitments, e.g. more co-financing towards the project?

Since 2022, the GCF project portfolio in Rwanda has grown significantly. Currently, the portfolio includes:

- The Green City Kigali Project (FP245), a groundbreaking initiative addressing environmental and urban challenges through innovative models of green urbanisation
- Building Resilience of Vulnerable Communities to Climate Variability in Rwanda's Congo Nile Divide through Forest and Landscape Restoration (FP217)
- Strengthening Climate Resilience of Rural Communities in Northern Rwanda (FP073)
- Rwanda Green Investment Facility (RGIF) (FP221)

Since its inception in 2022, TREPA has learnt from the Green Gicumbi project in Northern Rwanda by adopting and adapting its strategies for climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable forest management to the Eastern Province. Specifically, TREPA has benefited from Green Gicumbi's experience in implementing climate-smart agricultural practices, such as terracing, and in promoting sustainable forest management through community engagement and the use of biogas and efficient cookstoves. TREPA has significantly leveraged the Green Gicumbi experience through shared chairmanship of the steering Committee (DR-TREPA-ProDoc).
The FP217 Congo Nile Divide project is learning valuable lessons from the TREPA project. TREPA's success in restoring degraded landscapes, promoting climate-resilient markets, and developing

alternative energy sources has informed the CND's efforts to build resilience in vulnerable rural communities.
A key informant mentioned that despite the higher potential for complementarities and synergies, GCF faces challenges in facilitating knowledge sharing and learning between its projects that operate in Rwanda, hindering the effective transfer of best practices and lessons learned. This gap in formal learning pathways also limits the overall impact and efficiency of the fund.

4.11.2. To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of national partners?

The TREPA project builds on Rwanda's national priorities for low-emission and climate-resilient development, and targets national climate development priorities, and has been designed to align with national strategies and policies (DR-TREPA-ProDoc). Despite the policy dynamism observed since the inception of the TREPA project in 2022, Rwanda's policy framework has shown significant consistency in the importance given to building resilience to climate change and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources (KII-MoE-PS).
In June 2023, the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS), a blueprint that guides Rwanda's extensive policy framework in terms of its climate strategy, was revised to align with Vision 2050 and ensure it defines a development pathway for Rwanda that is climate resilient and harnesses green economic innovation. However, sustainable land use and water resource management that results in food security and the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services remains its strategic goal.
The Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) was approved by the Government of Rwanda on August 23, 2024, and under its economic transformation pillar, the country commits to building resilience to climate change and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources.
Also, Rwanda's national strategy for agricultural transformation, embodied in the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA 5), was revised in 2024 to cover the 2024/25-2028/29 period. It aims to build resilient and sustainable agri-food systems to drive Rwanda's continued economic and social progress. Aligned with Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST 2), it focuses on addressing challenges like climate change, enhancing food security, and boosting economic growth.
While TREPA supports the implementation of the GGCRS, the proposed interventions also support the implementation of the NST2 and PSTA 5.

4.12. Innovativeness in result areas

4.12.1. To what extent may the project interventions lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways?

The implementation of the TREPA is supporting a paradigm shift in the way future climate resilience interventions are developed, sustained, and financed in Rwanda and beyond. Its innovative solutions are demonstrating the effectiveness of a holistic approach to FLR that integrates coordinated and community-led forest restoration, sustainable livelihood diversification, and strengthened market linkages, access to finance, and an enabling environment for implementing coordinated restoration efforts.
Under component 1, TREPA used scientific evidence and technical know-how (i.e., the ROAM assessment, ICS efficiency tests) as well as local knowledge and community engagement to successfully implement effective restoration interventions (including the scale up of agroforestry and silvopastural packages and the rehabilitation of private and state owned woodlots) and decrease the demand for firewood and charcoal (through a combination of ICS efficiency tests, awareness campaigns, and

subsidies). As various APRs show, the above efforts have led to considerable reductions in emissions from land use, reforestation, and reduced deforestation (M4.0) and improved resilience of ecosystems and ecosystem services (A4.0). The results of the 2024 TREPA Annual Household Survey also point to a contribution of these project activities towards increasing resilience of health and well-being, and food and water security (A2.0).

To support and sustain these efforts, activities under component 2 supported the development of climate-resilient value chains (trees, fodder and beekeeping) and have empowered individual farmers and FFPOs with capacity building (in climate resilience, cooperative and business and financial management), organizational strengthening (registering the cooperatives with RCA) and access to tailored financial products and services for effective participation in the supported climate resilient value chains and other related business ventures. The interviewed stakeholders (including project managers) believe that this innovative approach is contributing to increasing the resilience and enhanced livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, communities and regions (A1.0) as well as increased resilience of health and well-being, and food and water security (A2.0).

The innovative agenda on strengthening national and local institutional capacity and cross-sectoral coordination to mainstream climate resilience in land management and planning has borne fruit. As the 2024 APR shows that all the 7 districts of the eastern province have integrated climate resilient metrics in Landscape Restoration Plans within their district development strategies (DDS) and are actively involved in the quarterly DPCC meeting and monthly JADF coordinated by TREPA hub offices. Also, TREPA has put in place a national breeding program for adapted seed and seedling supply systems and has produced 24 climate resilience-related research publications or knowledge materials. These efforts are building an enabling environment for implementing coordinated restoration practices to build resilience of landscapes for long-term and sustainable adaptation project results and beyond.

With the above-mentioned results, the TREPA project is leading to a paradigm shift in natural resource management away from reliance on degraded ecosystems that are highly sensitive to climate risks and affect production systems of smallholder farmers.

4.13. Replication and scalability

4.13.1. Can the project activities be scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries?

Replicating and scaling up the TREPA project is generally perceived as a natural choice among all the project's stakeholders, and this is mainly justified by the small but highly effective scale of the current TREPA interventions. Over the course of the TREPA project intervention, the successful measures were documented in various forms (including the landscape restoration plans, research papers, etc), and the knowledge has been shared in communities of practice and policy forums supported by TREPA (e.g., agroforestry conference, joint cross-sectoral taskforce) (KII-PMU-MEL-01). For example, to assist the districts in their journey to engage communities in climate actions, IUCN developed a community approach guideline document that was discussed and validated and adopted by the majority of FLR actors to guide the restoration work in Rwanda. The knowledge gained was also demonstrated through demo plots and in various capacity-building sessions for the district technical staff. IUCN has conducted a gap analysis on Climate Risk Information and Knowledge Sharing for climate resilience building, and has delivered a training needs assessment for different types of climate-related information sharing systems operating in Rwanda. This is meant to support the replication of TREPA activities in areas that are not (currently) targeted by TREPA. Through these channels, the project demonstrated how to scale up landscape restoration practices (KII-PMU-MEL-01).

The interviewed stakeholders argued that TREPA is well aligned with national climate strategies, policies, and priorities. Furthermore, the project has actively engaged stakeholders at the central and decentralized levels, including ministries (MoE, MINAGRI, etc) and national institutions (RFA). This

ensures interventions are contextually relevant and have the necessary support for long-term sustainability, which is crucial for successful replication and scaling (KII-PMU-COP).

Justifying the necessity to replicate and scale up TREPA interventions, policymakers believe that there is still a long way to go to achieve Rwanda's commitment to increasing forest cover to 30% of its total area through FLR and to accelerate climate action (KII-MoE-PS; KII-VM-01, 02; KII-RFA-DG). The multicriteria degradation map generated under the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) identified 182,176 ha of highly degraded land in the eastern province, which is three times bigger compared to the TREPA target areas. The discrepancy was the basis for developing seven landscape restoration plans that delineate TREPA intervention areas and show the potential of different types of restoration for future projects to be integrated into District Development Strategies (2024-2029) (KII-PMU-MEL-01; KII-PMU-COP).

Most project implementing partners commonly argued that a larger area of restored forests translates to a larger carbon sink, enhanced ecological corridors, and larger, interconnected patches of habitat, (leading to greater biodiversity conservation and species movement across the landscape) and improved critical ecosystem services such as water quality and regulation, soil health, and disaster risk reduction (e.g., flood and landslide control). They further argued that a large-scale FLR in the Eastern Province can expand employment opportunities to related sectors like ecotourism (KII-DFNRO-01, 02; KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01).

Other interviewed stakeholders believe that the project should also be scaled up in scope. They noted, as an example, that integrating rainwater harvesting (RWH) in the current forest landscape restoration would offer a synergistic approach to enhance ecological and socio-economic benefits of TREPA (KII-ICRAF-01; KII-Enabel-01; KII-RFA-01; KII-IUCN-01). Techniques like water harvesting bunds, swales, and micro-catchments could capture and retain rainwater, replenishing groundwater and reducing runoff, thereby increasing water availability to support tree growth and overall vegetation cover in restored areas.

Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries also noted that scaling up TREPA project would involve greater community participation, empowering local people to engage in decision-making and sustainable resource management, thereby fostering social cohesion and conflict resolution.

Key informant interviews with TREPA project and IUCN staff argue that such scale-up could leverage the benefits achieved over the last years (e.g., integration of climate resilience in DDS, the availability of tree nurseries across the province, the community awareness and engagement and increased nature-positive thinking) to roll out more cost-effective and efficient interventions that achieves economies of scale and scope, and builds stronger business cases with higher potential for greater impact that are more attractive to private investors (KII-PMU-COP; KII-IUCN-PM-01; KII-IUCN-CR-01).

The transcript from the interview with a Ministry of Environment representative suggests that the Ministry is aware that more investments are needed in Eastern Province to meet the needs of the local communities and farmers through scaling up TREPA. The key informant mentioned that the Ministry has informally expressed interest and requested IUCN to explore the possibility of developing a second phase of the TREPA project with the financing of GCF and/or other donors, based on the impressive results of the project so far.

Policy makers believe that the innovative and holistic restoration approach used by TREPA should be replicated in other regions of Rwanda. Project Managers, however, argued that, to ensure effectiveness and long-term sustainability, exporting the project approach to other regions of Rwanda needs careful consideration of various factors such as the uniqueness of environmental conditions, specific socio-economic context, and other projects/programs operating in the region.

4.14. Unexpected results, both positive and negative

4.14.1. Has the project foreseen any unexpected results, both positive and negative?

The TREPA project, while primarily aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation, may have also generated unintended positive consequences. The evaluation identified one highly significant, positive, and unforeseen result: the catalytic effect TREPA had in inspiring and shaping a major complementary project. The success and strategic gaps identified during TREPA's early implementation directly inspired the design of the COMBIO project ("Reducing vulnerability to climate change through enhanced community-based biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Province of Rwanda").
This was an unexpected outcome that emerged from TREPA's presence and theory of change. COMBIO, funded by SIDA to the tune of Euro 7,871,402, was specifically designed to fill critical biodiversity gaps within TREPA's restoration landscapes. A direct and quantifiable result of this synergy is that 8,062,285 native trees have been incorporated into TREPA intervention areas through COMBIO, significantly enhancing the ecological richness and resilience of the restoration efforts beyond initial project targets. No significant negative unexpected results were reported.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

5.1.1. Relevance

The TREPA project has demonstrated a high degree of relevance to both the specific challenges of Rwanda's Eastern Province and the strategic priorities of its national and international partners. The project's design directly confronts the core drivers of vulnerability in the region, including widespread land degradation affecting approximately 20.2% of the province's land area, climate-induced pressures such as droughts and floods, and resultant food insecurity. Its objectives are strongly aligned with the core mandates and specialized expertise of all its Executing Entities and Service Providers, a strategic alignment that has enabled the completion of 62% of planned activity deliverables by December 2024, despite a significant one-year delay at inception.
The project's interventions have proven highly pertinent to local needs. The community-centric approach, particularly the organization of landscapes into blocks led by trained community leaders, has successfully fostered local ownership and responsibility for restoration efforts. This has been complemented by the strategic empowerment of Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPOs) through legal registration, capacity building, and linkage to financial services, which has unlocked significant member savings and investment in climate-resilient value chains. Furthermore, TREPA has effectively spurred the mainstreaming of climate resilience into cross-sectoral planning at both district and central levels. This is evidenced by the integration of climate resilience metrics into all seven District Development Strategies (DDS) and the establishment of District Project Coordination Committees (DPCCs), ensuring TREPA's activities are embedded within local government frameworks.
The project's Theory of Change (ToC) and intervention logic were confirmed to be coherent, realistic, and crucial for the successful design and implementation observed by December 2024. While the core logic model remains sound, the evaluation noted that a dynamic policy context—including a new forestry law and the formalization of savings and lending groups (Ibimina)—has altered some foundational assumptions. This underscores the need for a scheduled review of the ToC to ensure it continues to accurately reflect the operational environment, thereby maintaining the project's strategic relevance for its remaining duration.

5.1.2. Coherence

TREPA project is implemented by a consortium of implementing partners whose strategic importance lies in their diverse capacities and commitments. The commitment of these partners is demonstrated through their dedication to achieving the project's objectives. Since its inception, TREPA has emphasized ensuring coherence and complementarity between climate change interventions. This has mostly involved coordinating efforts between different actors, such as donor-funded projects, national and district governments, local communities, civil-society organizations, and other stakeholders, to avoid duplication and maximize impact. There has been a strong synergistic relationship between different climate change interventions in the eastern province, which has ensured that the project planners and implementers work together effectively rather than duplicating efforts. The specific contribution of TREPA towards a stronger and more coherent integration of low-emission and climate-resilient development is by fostering a holistic approach that combines mitigation and adaptation efforts, while also addressing the social, economic, and governance dimensions of sustainability.

5.1.3. Effectiveness

The TREPA project is on course to restore 60,000 ha of drought-degraded landscapes into climate-resilient ecosystems through reforestation. Of all the deliverables of its planned activities, 62 percent were completed by December 2024 (despite the late start of the project implementation), while 49 percent of the total budget had been utilized. Also, by December 2024, most MTR indicator targets were achieved. Generally, Project Implementors believe that the TREPA project's modus operandi is well defined and has been effectively executed, despite a few setbacks. The effectiveness of the TREPA project's outreach and influence strategies was assessed by examining their impact on the target audience's engagement and adoption of the project's objectives. The acceleration observed in the uptake and impact TREPA activities is due to TREPA's active involvement of local communities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of landscape restoration activities and strong alignment with the national and district's sustainable development plans and natural resources management policies, and support to capacity building and coordination of district and local landscape restoration initiatives, which empowers the local administrative structure to mobilize communities towards achieving a common goal. The effectiveness of the project is also supported by a well-designed Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework.

5.1.4. Efficiency

TREPA's consortium approach leverages the strengths of different implementing partners, allowing it to tackle complex challenges that might be beyond the scope of a single entity. The project is progressing at a faster rate than spending, potentially pointing to the innovative, cost-effective solutions or technologies implemented by the project teams (e.g. the combination of both community approach and service provider that leverages community strengths while utilizing external support when needed) that reduce both time and expenses. In general, the relationship between resources and results is appropriate and justifiable. The consortium uses a cost management system to identify waste and inefficiencies, identify non-value-added activities, and pinpoint areas for improvement in the TREPA project.

5.1.5. Learning

The TREPA project offers valuable insights into designing and implementing effective community-based adaptation strategies. Key takeaways include the importance of a holistic approach, local ownership, supporting farmer organizations, and institutional strengthening. Analysis of project performance suggests that the TREPA is on track in its quest to transform the Eastern Province through widespread

adoption of climate-resilient landscape restoration activities, without budget overruns or any other major setbacks. TREPA project offers valuable lessons in forest landscape restoration and community development. Key best practices mentioned during KIIs and FGDs include emphasizing community-based approaches to restoration and strengthening local institutional capacity, and coordinating efforts across different sectors for effective climate change adaptation. The TREPA project, while primarily aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation, has also generated co-benefits, including enhanced public health and education, gender empowerment, social capital formation, and access to social security. The project observed technology spillovers, where farmers not directly involved in the project have adopted agroforestry practices after observing the benefits experienced by participating farmers. This indicates a potential for wider adoption and long-term sustainability.

5.1.6. Sustainability

The TREPA project proposal emphasized a paradigm shift potential, which includes the sustainability of outcomes beyond the project's completion. Some stakeholders strongly believe that the strong community engagement (including the capacity building for block leaders and farmers at large) and the strengthening and empowerment of FFPOs to mobilize savings, access loans (and grants), and develop business plans along the climate-resilient value chains (including in PFMUs and agroforestry) will ensure the sustainability of forest landscape restoration beyond GCF funding. Others argue that the importance of ownership and responsibility for the project's continuation should be established within the relevant institutions, through development planning and capacity development. They pointed to the foreseen challenge related to the inherent budgetary constraints in local governments, coupled with higher staff turnover in districts, which could hamper the gains achieved under TREPA. Among other examples mentioned during KIIs, some participants believed that monitoring and evaluation of restored areas under protection by district/sector staff is likely to be discontinued if the current technical assistance to the seven districts is phased out. In spite of these foreseen challenges, TREPA has started a phased approach to exiting that involves gradually transferring responsibility and management to local communities and institutions, ensuring the long-term sustainability of restoration efforts.

5.1.7. Impact orientation

The TREPA project was specifically designed to have a positive impact on both people and the environment. The young trees (of about 2-4m tall) are already contributing to soil health and are preventing topsoil loss. The planting of nitrogen-fixing trees and other agroforestry techniques is reducing farmers' dependence on synthetic fertilizers, saving costs and promoting more sustainable farming practices. Livestock manure is becoming a valuable source of nutrients and organic matter, contributing to soil fertility and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers in silvopastoral systems. TREPA interventions are also helping improve forage quality and productivity, reducing the need to purchase or even import expensive, energy-intensive feed for livestock. Thanks to the community approach, TREPA interventions are already improving livelihoods and food security for smallholder farmers and woodlot growers in the province.

5.1.8. One Programme Approach

TREPA leverages on other projects that are implemented by IUCN to achieve its objectives and maximize the benefits for its beneficiaries. TREPA scales up and builds upon the work of the AREECA project to the entire Eastern Province. It takes lessons learned from AREECA and applies them to a broader geographical area and a wider range of interventions. COMBIO acts as a complementary project to TREPA, focusing on enhancing biodiversity through the introduction of diverse native species in targeted TREPA landscapes. TREPA leverages knowledge generated through DeSIRA research to

improve agroforestry practices, increase farm yields, and diversify food production, ultimately contributing to a more climate-resilient agricultural system.

5.1.9. Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth

Women and youth in the Eastern Province are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to a combination of social, economic, and environmental factors that exacerbate their existing inequalities. The TREPA project's objectives and design have generally aimed to promote gender equality, gender responsiveness, and the needs of youth. The TREPA project integrates gender considerations into its implementation and reporting. A Gender Action Plan (GAP) was developed to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of the project, ensuring that both men and women benefit from and participate in the project's activities. Although the GAP defines and costs additional activities for mainstreaming, it does not have a budget. Also, TREPA is yet to develop youth-specific activities, or youth mainstreaming, and there is no specific framework for targeting the youth. Various annual and quarterly performance reports show that TREPA has been fully compliant with ESS.

5.1.10. Science/policy/action interface

Since its inception, TREPA has appraised and improved existing knowledge and information systems at national and district levels to ensure the integration of climate-related data to contribute to climate-informed decision-making, monitoring and reporting for different sectors and at all levels in order to inform a scale-up of project results (Output 3.2). Output 3.4 supports research action that generates new knowledge based on programs results and lessons learned. The activities under Component 3 are significantly transforming the policy landscape for forest landscape restoration by influencing policy changes. At the central level, TREPA chairs a national cross-sectoral task force that gathers government institutions, civil society, private sector, and development cooperation agencies with objective to discuss issues and share lessons learned and experiences that could help to enhance the efficiency of forest landscape restoration.

5.1.11. Country ownership of projects and programmes

Since 202, the GCF project portfolio has grown significantly. Since its inception in 2022, TREPA has learnt from the Green Gicumbi project in Northern Rwanda by adopting and adapting its strategies for climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable forest management to the Eastern Province. The FP217 Congo Nile Divide project is learning valuable lessons from the TREPA's success in restoring degraded landscapes, promoting climate-resilient markets, and developing alternative energy sources has informed the CND's efforts to build resilience in vulnerable rural communities. The TREPA project builds on Rwanda's national priorities for low-emission and climate-resilient development, and targets national climate development priorities, and has been designed to align with national strategies and policies.

5.1.12. Innovativeness in result areas

The implementation of the TREPA is supporting a paradigm shift in the way future climate resilience interventions are developed, sustained, and financed in Rwanda and beyond. Its innovative solutions are demonstrating the effectiveness of a holistic approach to FLR that integrates coordinated and community-led forest restoration, sustainable livelihood diversification, and strengthened market linkages, access to finance, and an enabling environment for implementing coordinated restoration efforts.

5.1.13. Replication and scalability

Over the course of the TREPA project intervention, the successful measures were documented in various forms (including the landscape restoration plans, research papers, etc), and the knowledge has been shared in communities of practice and policy forums supported by TREPA (e.g., agroforestry conference, joint cross-sectoral taskforce). TREPA is well aligned with national climate strategies, policies, and priorities. Furthermore, the project has actively engaged stakeholders at the central and decentralized levels, including ministries (MoE, MINAGRI, etc) and national institutions (RFA). This ensures interventions are contextually relevant and have the necessary support for long-term sustainability, which is crucial for successful replication and scaling. Justifying the necessity to replicate and scale up TREPA interventions, policymakers believe that there is still a long way to go to achieve Rwanda's commitment to increasing forest cover to 30% of its total area through FLR and to accelerate climate action.

5.1.14. Unexpected results, both positive and negative

The most significant unexpected results of TREPA were the design of COMBIO with a goal of filling the biodiversity gaps, and its subsequent funding on the tune of Euro 7, 871,402 by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). To date, 8,062,285 native trees have been planted in TREPA landscapes.

5.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are structured according to the main evaluation criteria. Each recommendation is derived from the original set and has been made highly specific, actionable, and time-bound to enhance its utility for project management.

5.2.1. Relevance

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
R-01	**Finding (4.1.5):** Contextual assumptions in the ToC (e.g., district forest ownership transferred to the state, formalization of *Ibimina* groups) have changed due to new policies. **Conclusion (5.1.1):** The ToC remains relevant but requires updating to reflect the current policy environment.	Conduct a dedicated, half-day workshop facilitated by the PMU with all EE and SP project managers. The workshop will use a structured template to map each changed policy against relevant ToC assumptions and intervention logic. The output will be a revised ToC and logframe annex, detailing the specific updates, which will be submitted for formal validation by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) no later than Q2 2026.	**PMU** (facilitate and document), **All EEs/SPs** (provide technical input on their components), **PSC** (official validation)	**Q1 2026** (Workshop), **Q2 2026** (PSC Validation)
R-02	**Finding (4.1.2):** EEs/SPs were generally fit-for-purpose but faced implementation delays and some require enhanced capabilities for complex tasks like the national breeding program oversight. **Conclusion (5.1.1):** Ongoing, targeted capacity support is needed to ensure EEs/SPs remain effective for the project's duration.	The PMU, in coordination with IUCN as the AE, will conduct a rapid capacity needs assessment through one-on-one interviews with EE/SP leads. Based on the results, a tailored capacity-building plan will be developed, focusing on 2-3 high-priority areas such as financial reporting for complex grants, advanced M&E data analysis, and adaptive management techniques. This plan will be implemented through a series of three dedicated training sessions scheduled between Q2 and Q3 2026.	**PMU** (coordinate needs assessment and training logistics), **IUCN as AE** (provide technical input and potentially co-facilitate sessions), **External Trainer(s)** (if required for specialized topics)	**Q2 2026** (Needs Assessment), **Q2-Q3 2026** (Training Sessions)

5.2.2. Coherence

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
C-01	**Finding (4.2.2):** Most donor-funded climate change projects in the Eastern Province have inconsistent community engagement strategies, particularly community approaches with vastly different pay scales for similar roles across different projects. This lack of harmonization creates perceptions of unfairness among community members, undermines the credibility of the engagement process, discourages sustained participation, and can lead to "project shopping" where communities prioritize participation based on compensation rather than project objectives. **Conclusion (5.1.2):** Incoherent incentive structures across parallel initiatives represent a significant systemic risk to community trust and the overall effectiveness and equity of climate resilience interventions in the region.**	Lead the development, validation, and formal adoption of a "Harmonized Community Engagement and Compensation Protocol for the Eastern Province" through a structured multi-stakeholder process: 1. **Stakeholder mapping and baseline analysis:** The PMU will first map all major donor-funded projects operating in the TREPA districts (e.g., One Acre Fund, SERVE, other GCF projects) and conduct a rapid baseline analysis of their current daily wage rates and non-monetary incentive structures for various community roles (e.g., casual labor, skilled block leader, meeting participation). 2. **Drafting the protocol:** Based on the baseline, draft a comprehensive protocol document. This document will define standardized daily rate bands for different role categories, specify transparent selection criteria for beneficiaries, outline a code of conduct for community engagement	**IUCN PMU** (Lead the drafting, convening, and monitoring), **DPCCs / Vice Mayors for Economic Affairs** (Chair the validation sessions and champion adoption within their districts), **Key Implementing Partners (World Vision, CordAid, other NGOs)** (Provide input during drafting and formally commit to adoption via MoU)	**Q2 2026** (Stakeholder mapping and draft protocol completed), **Q3 2026** (DPCC validation sessions held and MoU/resolution secured), **Q4 2026** (Final protocol disseminated and monitoring begins)

		to prevent coercion, and include standardized, simple contract templates for different types of work. 3. **Multi-stakeholder validation:** Present the draft protocol at a specially convened session of the District Project Coordination Committees (DPCCs) in the Eastern Province. 4. **Dissemination and monitoring:** Once adopted, widely disseminate the final protocol to all Sector and Cell-level authorities and project field staff. .		

5.2.3. Effectiveness

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Enhanced Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
E-01	**Finding (4.3.1, 4.3.5):** Project started one year late; tree planting is too recent to measure GHG/biomass outcomes. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** An extension is critical for measuring impact.	Prepare and submit a comprehensive No-Cost Extension (NCE) proposal to the GCF for a minimum 12-month period. The proposal will include a detailed justification dossier with: 1) Documented evidence of the 12-month startup delay; 2) A technical note explaining the biological requirement for trees to reach 3-5 years of age for accurate carbon stock assessment using IPCC-	**IUCN (AE & PMU)** (Prepare proposal), **PSC** (Endorse)	**Q1 2026** (Proposal drafted), **Q2 2026** (Submission to GCF)

		compliant methodologies; 3) A revised work plan and budget focusing on maintenance, impact monitoring, and completion of lagging activities. The PSC will provide formal endorsement.		
E-02	**Finding (4.3.2):** Some implementation loopholes curtail responsibilities of output leads vis-à-vis their implementing entities. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** Institutional coordination is an area of weakness.	Organize a focused mediation session between RFA and ICRAF management to review and formally amend their MoU. The session will clarify roles, resources, communication channels, and timeframes for feedback, specifically for coordinating the national breeding program (Output 3.3). Outcomes will be documented in a signed addendum.	**PMU** (Facilitate), **RFA, ICRAF** (Negotiate terms)	**Q2 2026**
E-03	**Finding (4.3.5):** Co-financed activities are not systematically tracked in the M&E system. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** Under-reporting leads to underestimated project reach.	Develop and implement a "Co-financing Tracker" in Excel, requiring all EEs/SPs to quarterly report co-financed activities, financial value, and outputs. The PMU will aggregate this data into a dedicated dashboard for reporting and decision-making.	**PMU (MEL Officer)** (Develop tracker), **All EEs/SPs** (Mandatory reporting)	**Q2 2026** (Launch), **Q3 2026** (First report)
E-04	**Finding (4.3.1):** 12 activities were below 50% progress by Dec 2024. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** Delayed activities need formal assessment.	Conduct a "Deep-Dive Review" for each of the 12 lagging activities. Responsible IP managers will complete a standardized root-cause analysis template. The PMU will consolidate findings into a master recovery plan with corrective actions and milestones.	**PMU** (Lead review), **Relevant IPs** (Provide analysis)	**Q2 2026**

E-05	**Finding (4.3.5):** Some indicator targets are not achievable within current target zones. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** Some indicators and targets need adjustment.	Convene a technical working group to systematically review all project indicators, flagging unrealistic targets. The group will propose specific revisions or a focused Change Request for GCF approval where necessary.	**PMU, MEL Officer, Relevant IPs**	**Q3 2026**
E-06	**Finding (4.3.5):** The population in targeted landscapes is smaller than beneficiary targets for some Output 2 indicators. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** The project design has a geographical constraint.	Execute a two-stage process: 1) Task ICRAF and CordAid to map 3-5 adjacent sectors with high potential for value chain activities; 2) Based on findings, prepare a targeted Change Request for GCF approval to modify specific Output 2 indicators to include new zones.	**PMU** (Coordinate), **ICRAF, CordAid** (Conduct mapping)	**Q2 2026** (Mapping), **Q3 2026** (Change Request)
E-07	**Finding (4.3.5):** The current PMEL system uses offline tools, limiting real-time data analysis. **Conclusion (5.1.3):** The MEL system needs upgrading.	Commission a scoping study to identify and select a suitable cloud-based M&E platform. The study will include a cost-benefit analysis and implementation roadmap for procurement and rollout in 2027.	**IUCN (MEL & PMU)**	**Q3 2026** (Study), **2027** (Implementation)

5.2.4. Efficiency

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Enhanced Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
EF-01	**Finding (4.4.1):** The project demonstrates strong cost-effectiveness through its consortium and community-based models. However, specific inefficiencies were	The PMU will lead a comprehensive "Efficiency and Value-for-Money Audit" focusing on three key areas: 1. **Activity bundling & logistics:** Analyze past and planned activities from all IPs to identify	**PMU** (Lead the audit, develop the plan, and present findings), **All IPs (RFA, ICRAF, CordAid, World**	**Q1 2026** (Data collection and analysis phase),

	identified, including poorly bundled activities (e.g., separate missions for nursery development and related research by RFA and ICRAF leading to duplicated travel and community mobilization costs) and limited coordination in nursery research activities. Some service providers also selected unjustifiably costly technical options for simple tasks. **Conclusion (5.1.4):** While the project is generally efficient and provides good value for money, there are clear, identifiable areas where resource utilization can be significantly optimized to free up funds for other critical activities or to achieve more with the existing budget.	a minimum of opportunities for bundling field missions (e.g., joint RFA-ICRAF nursery support visits, combining CordAid's financial literacy training with World Vision's cooperative strengthening sessions). Create a shared quarterly field mission calendar to facilitate this. 2. **Procurement & technical choices:** Review procurement records for common items (e.g., motorcycle rentals, nursery materials, construction) to identify cost variances between IPs and establish standardized, cost-effective technical specifications and preferred supplier lists for future purchases. 3. **Process optimization:** Map and analyze the workflow for 2-3 of the most repetitive administrative processes (e.g., fund request and disbursement, reporting) to identify bottlenecks and streamline approval chains.	**Vision)** (Mandatory participation: provide activity plans, cost data, and collaborate on joint planning), **IUCN Finance Manager** (Provide analysis on procurement and financial flow data)	**Q2 2026** ("Efficiency Optimization Plan" finalized and presented at PMCC)
EF-02	**Finding (4.4.1, 4.4.4):** A culture of cost-consciousness is not uniformly institutionalized across all implementing partners, leading to instances where less costly alternatives are not proactively sought for achieving the same outputs. The project lacks formal incentives for efficient resource	Implement a multi-faceted "Resource Stewardship Initiative" to embed a culture of efficiency: 1. **Formal recognition:** Establish quarterly "Efficiency Champion" awards to be presented at PMCC meetings, recognizing teams or individuals from any IP who demonstrate innovative cost-saving measures, successful activity bundling, or	**PMU** (Champion the initiative, manage awards and dashboard), **IUCN Communications Coordinator** (Develop messaging and recognition materials), **All IP Leadership** (Promote	**Q2 2026** (Initiative launched, first dashboard circulated), **Q3 2026** (First

	management. **Conclusion (5.1.4):** Promoting responsible behaviour and instilling a shared culture of efficiency is as critical as implementing process changes to ensure long-term value for money.**	significant waste reduction. 2. **Transparency & benchmarking:** Develop and circulate a quarterly "Efficiency Dashboard" among IP managers, which anonymously benchmarks key cost metrics (e.g., cost per hectare restored, cost per beneficiary trained) to foster healthy competition and shared learning. 3. **Incentivization:** Allocate a small, discretionary fund (e.g., $2,000) managed by the PMU to provide small grants or additional resources to teams that propose and implement the most impactful efficiency-saving ideas validated by the audit.	the initiative within their teams and nominate staff for awards)	"Efficiency Champion" awards presented), **Ongoing** (Dashboard and awards continue quarterly)

5.2.5. Learning

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
L-01	**Finding (4.5.1):** Lessons learned documentation is treated as a formality within progress reports without a specific repository, making it difficult to ensure lessons are actionable and relevant to future projects. There is no formal process for analyzing successes and failures. **Conclusion (5.1.5):** Learning is	The PMU will establish a "Structured Learning Cycle" with three core components: 1. **Standardized reporting:** Create a mandatory "Lesson Learned Entry" template to be completed quarterly by all IPs, requiring them to describe a specific challenge or success, its root cause, the adaptation made, and a concrete recommendation for TREPA or future projects.	**PMU** (Develop template, manage the log, facilitate PMCC reviews), **All IPs** (Mandatory completion of template for each quarterly report), **PMCC**	**Q1 2026** (Template and Log launched), **Each Quarterly PMCC** (Formal review and

	occurring organically but is not systematically captured, analyzed, or used for proactive adaptive management.	2. **Dedicated repository:** Launch a centralized, cloud-based "TREPA Lessons Learned Log" (e.g., a dedicated SharePoint list or Google Sheet) where all entries are stored, tagged by component, theme (e.g., community engagement, procurement), and IP for easy retrieval. 3. **Formal analysis & action:** Integrate a standing 30-minute "Learning Review" agenda item into every quarterly PMCC meeting. In this session, the PMU will present 2-3 of the most critical lessons from the log, facilitating a discussion that leads to a formal decision: "Adopt" (change a process), "Adapt" (modify an approach), or "Share" (disseminate more widely).	**Members** (Participate in review and decision-making)	decision cycle)
L-02	**Finding (4.5.2):** The project has generated significant co-benefits (public health, education, women's empowerment) and observed positive technology spillovers where non-participating farmers adopt practices after observing their neighbors. **Conclusion (5.1.5):** The interconnectedness of systems means project benefits can extend beyond direct targets, but these co-benefits and spillovers are not actively maximized or strategically monitored.	Implement a proactive "Spillover and Co-benefit Amplification Strategy": 1. **Strategic engagement:** Identify and map 3-5 key "spillover zones" adjacent to high-impact TREPA sites. The PMU and Hub Coordinators will then organize bi-annual "Open Field Days" in these zones, specifically inviting local leaders and farmers from non-target areas to witness demonstrations and hear testimonials from TREPA beneficiaries. 2. **Knowledge packaging:** Work with IUCN's Communications unit to develop simplified, multi-format knowledge products (e.g., illustrated leaflets, short audio messages in Kinyarwanda) detailing the core agroforestry	**PMU & Hub Coordinators** (Organize field days and mapping), **IUCN Communications Coordinator** (Develop dissemination materials), **District Agriculture Officers (via DPCC)** (Champion integration into public extension services)	**Q2 2026** (First Open Field Day and materials developed), **Q4 2026** (Partnership agreement with districts formalized)

		and ICS practices, designed for easy dissemination by local government extension agents beyond TREPA's formal boundaries. 3. **Partnership for scale:** Formalize a partnership with the District Agriculture Office (via the DPCC) to integrate these TREPA-derived knowledge products and approaches into their standard extension service packages, ensuring sustainability and wider reach.		
L-03	**Finding (4.3.1, 4.5.2):** A one-year delay was observed in starting field operations due to administrative bottlenecks. The untimely exit of Enabel following the suspension of Belgium's development cooperation introduces new risks of delays, loss of expertise, and damaged stakeholder relationships. **Conclusion (5.1.3, 5.1.5):** External shocks and internal startup challenges have directly impacted the project's ability to complete its objectives within the original timeframe, making an extension a prerequisite for learning about long-term impact.	Prepare and submit a robust No-Cost Extension (NCE) proposal based on a comprehensive justification dossier that includes: 1. **Causal evidence:** Documented timeline of the initial 12-month startup delay (from first disbursement in June 2022 to activity kick-off in October 2022). 2. **Risk Impact Assessment:** A formal assessment detailing the specific impacts of Enabel's exit, including a list of delayed activities (e.g., ICS dissemination), the expertise gap created, and steps taken to mitigate stakeholder relationship issues. 3. **Learning Rationale:** A clear argument that the extension is essential not just for completion, but for generating critical learning on long-term outcomes (e.g., carbon sequestration, sustainable value chains) that are only measurable with more time, thereby enhancing the project's contribution to global	**IUCN (AE & PMU)** (Compile the justification dossier and draft the full NCE proposal), **PSC** (Provide formal endorsement of the request based on the documented evidence)	**Q1 2026** (NCE proposal drafted and shared with PSC), **Q2 2026** (Formal submission to GCF Secretariat)

		climate adaptation knowledge. The proposal will be formally endorsed by the PSC before submission to the GCF.		

5.2.6. Sustainability

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
S-01	**Finding (4.6.1):** While strong community engagement and empowered FFPOs are seen as key to sustainability, inherent weaknesses in public institutions—including severe lack of technical and financial capacity, high staff turnover in district and national agencies, and inherent budgetary constraints—pose a severe, systemic risk to the maintenance of restored landscapes, the continued use of climate information systems, and the overall institutionalization of project gains after GCF funding ends. Some district officials believe monitoring of restored areas will likely discontinue without ongoing technical assistance. **Conclusion (5.1.6):** The project's exit strategy relies heavily on institutional	Conduct a proactive "Institutional Sustainability and Transition Assessment" to move from mere recognition of the problem to a managed de-risking strategy. This involves: 1. **Vulnerability mapping:** Work with the Ministry of Public Service and district HR departments to map specific positions at RFA and in the 7 District Directorates for Natural Resources that are most critical for FLR continuity and have the highest historical turnover rates. 2. **Development of "light" protocols:** Collaboratively develop and officially hand over simplified, pictogram-supported Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the 3-5 most critical post-project maintenance tasks (e.g., rapid health assessment of PFMUs, basic erosion control maintenance, accessing the	**PMU** (Lead the assessment and dossier development), **RFA, District DGSPs, Ministry of Environment** (Co-develop SOPs and champion the budget dossier internally), **PSC** (Endorse the overall strategy and the "Sustainability Watch" mechanism)	**Q4 2025 - Q1 2026** (Vulnerability Mapping and SOP development), **Q2-Q3 2026** (Budget Advocacy Dossier finalized and presented to authorities), **Q4 2026** ("Sustainability Watch"

	ownership, but these inherent public sector weaknesses constitute the most significant and foreseeable threat to the long-term sustainability of TREPA's outcomes.	FMES database). These SOPs must be designed for use by non-specialist staff. 3. **Budget advocacy dossier:** Compile a compelling "Investment Case for Continuous Forest Landscape Restoration" dossier for the national and district budget authorities. This dossier will quantify the economic benefits of maintained ecosystems (e.g., water regulation, avoided soil loss) vs. the cost of neglect, proposing a specific, minimal annual budget line for post-TREPA maintenance to be integrated into District Development Strategy (DDS) budgets from 2028 onwards. 4. **Establish a formal follow-up mechanism:** Propose and agree with the PSC on a lightweight, post-2027 "Sustainability Watch" mechanism, possibly under the existing DPCC structure, mandating an annual review of a small set of key sustainability indicators for at least 3 years after project closure, with findings reported to the PSC.		mechanism formally adopted by PSC)

5.2.7. Impact orientation

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline

IO-01	**Finding (4.7.1):** The existing M&E framework has primarily focused on tracking short-term outputs and logframe indicators due to the project's early stage. However, the project was designed with a strong impact orientation, generating multiple co-benefits (public health, education, women's empowerment, social capital) that are not systematically monitored at the outcome level. This prevents a full understanding of the project's true transformative effect on people's lives and well-being. **Conclusion (5.1.7):** The project's design is inherently impact-oriented, but its monitoring system has not yet pivoted to capture the breadth of outcomes being generated, limiting the ability to demonstrate its full contribution to sustainable development.**	Implement a structured "Impact and Co-Benefit Integration Plan" to systematically track the project's broader contributions. This will be achieved through: 1. **Co-Benefit indicator development:** Convene a workshop with all IPs and relevant sector specialists (e.g., from health, education ministries) to define and validate 3-5 robust, quantitative outcome-level indicators for key co-benefit areas. Examples include: - *Health:* % reduction in self-reported respiratory symptoms among primary cooks in households using TREPA-supported ICS. - *Education:* % reduction in school tardiness/absence attributed to reduced water/firewood collection duties for children in beneficiary households. - *Social Capital:* Measured changes in household participation in community savings groups (e.g., *Ibimina*) and collective action projects. 2. **Revised data collection:** Integrate these new indicators as a dedicated module into the 2026 and 2027 Annual Household Surveys. Ensure survey sampling is designed to provide a statistically significant baseline and endline for these specific outcomes. 3. **Dedicated impact analysis:** Task the PMU's M&E Officer, potentially with support from a	**PMU (M&E Officer)** (Lead workshop, integrate indicators, produce report), **All IPs** (Provide input on measurable co-benefits from their activities), **External Survey Firm/IUCN M&E** (Implement revised household survey), **IUCN Communications** (Disseminate findings)	**Q2 2026** (Indicator workshop and finalization of survey module), **Q3-Q4 2026** (Data collection for 2026 Impact Report), **Q1 2027** (First Annual TREPA Co-Benefits and Impact Report published and disseminated)

		dedicated data analyst, with producing an annual "TREPA Co-Benefits and Impact Report" starting in 2026. This report will analyze the data from the new indicators, linking them back to specific project outputs to tell a compelling story of change beyond carbon and hectares. 4. **Communication for influence:** Proactively disseminate the findings of the Impact Report to relevant national ministries (Health, Education, Gender) and development partners to showcase TREPA's multi-sectoral development impact and influence broader policy discussions on integrated programming.		

5.2.8. One programme approach

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
OP-01	**Finding (4.8.3):** TREPA has engaged with other IUCN constituents like COMBIO, AREECA, and DeSIRA, creating synergies (e.g., COMBIO funding native trees in TREPA landscapes, DeSIRA informing agroforestry practices). However, this collaboration is largely operational and could be deepened into a strategic, systematic cross-learning framework to	Establish a formal "IUCN Rwanda FLR Learning Consortium" to transform ad-hoc collaboration into a strategic learning engine. This will be executed through: 1. **Structured learning events:** Move beyond informal exchanges by instituting bi-annual "Deep-Dive Learning Forums." These will be day-long, thematic workshops (e.g., Q2 2026: "Optimizing Native Species Mix in FLR"; Q4 2026:	**IUCN Program Manager** (Charter the Consortium, secure resources), **TREPA PMU** (Lead the operational setup, co-facilitate forums, manage the Knowledge Hub), **Project Managers of**	**Q1 2026** (Consortium Charter & Knowledge Hub established), **Q2 2026** (First Deep-Dive Learning

	accelerate innovation, avoid duplication, and maximize the collective impact of the Union's portfolio in Rwanda. **Conclusion (5.1.8):** The foundational relationships for a One Programme Approach are in place, but the potential for strategic, structured learning and co-creation between projects remains underutilized.**	"Financial Models for Sustainable PFMUs") co-designed and co-facilitated by TREPA, COMBIO, and AREECA teams, with pre-circulated learning briefs and structured facilitation to extract actionable insights. 2. **Creation of a Joint Knowledge Repository:** Develop a centralized, cloud-based "IUCN Rwanda FLR Knowledge Hub" (e.g., on SharePoint) to systematically archive all joint learning briefs, standardized protocols, research findings from DeSIRA, and monitoring data relevant to all projects, ensuring institutional memory is retained beyond individual project lifecycles. 3. **Development of Integrated Tools:** Mandate the PMU's GIS Officer, in collaboration with counterparts from other projects, to lead the development of at least one unified practical tool by Q3 2026, such as a "Species Selection Decision Matrix" that integrates COMBIO's biodiversity data with TREPA's socio-economic and survival rate data, for use by all projects and government partners. 4. **Joint Reporting and Advocacy:** Produce a semi-annual "One Programme Synthesis Bulletin" that aggregates key achievements, lessons, and challenges from TREPA, COMBIO, and AREECA, presenting a unified narrative of	**TREPA, COMBIO, AREECA, DeSIRA** (Mandatory participation in forums, contribution to knowledge products and tools)	Forum held), **Q3 2026** (First unified tool - Species Matrix - completed), **Q4 2026** (First One Programme Synthesis Bulletin published)

		IUCN's impact in Rwanda's Eastern Province to the PSC, GCF, and other donors, thereby enhancing collective visibility and influence.		

5.2.9. Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
GY-01	**Finding (4.9.1):** The project has a Gender Action Plan (GAP) but no youth-specific strategy, activities, or mainstreaming framework. The GAP defines activities but lacks a dedicated budget, relying on ad-hoc allocations from IPs, which leads to inconsistent implementation. There is no specific framework for targeting or measuring youth-specific outcomes. **Conclusion (5.1.9):** Gender is partially integrated but youth inclusion is ad-hoc, and the lack of a dedicated, strategic budget undermines the effective implementation of gender and youth empowerment activities.**	Conduct a comprehensive revision process to transform the GAP into a fully costed and actionable GYAP: 1. **Stakeholder-centric revision:** Hire a national Gender and Youth Inclusion Specialist for a 2-month contract to lead a participatory revision process. This will include separate consultation workshops with women's groups and youth representatives (aged 18-35) from the target districts to identify their specific barriers, priorities, and opportunities within TREPA's value chains. 2. **Target-setting:** The new GYAP will establish specific, measurable, and time-bound targets for youth (e.g., "30% of all leadership positions in strengthened FFPOs/PFMUs held by individuals under 35 by end-2026") and for women (e.g., "50% of beneficiaries accessing new financial products are women-led enterprises").	**PMU (Gender Officer)** (Manage the process and consultant), **National Gender & Youth Inclusion Consultant** (Lead revision and costing), **IUCN Finance Manager & All IPs** (Collaborate on budget costing and reallocation proposal), **PSC** (Approve the final GYAP and budget revision)	**Q1 2026** (Consultant hired and consultation workshops completed), **Q2 2026** (Draft GYAP and budget reallocation proposal submitted to PSC for approval)

		3. **Budget integration:** The specialist will work with the IUCN Finance Manager and all IPs to cost every activity in the GYAP. The PMU will then formally propose a reallocation of the project budget to create a dedicated, transparent GYAP budget line, ensuring funds are ring-fenced for these activities.		
GY-02	**Finding (4.9.1):** The project's gender activities are not formally linked to the national policy framework, missing an opportunity for enhanced legitimacy, government ownership, and sustainability of gender and climate action beyond the project's life. **Conclusion (5.1.9):** Aligning with national policy can significantly strengthen the impact, credibility, and sustainability of gender and youth mainstreaming efforts.**	Proactively align the TREPA GYAP with national policy to ensure it serves as a model of best practice: 1. **Liaison with Government:** Assign the PMU Gender Officer to formally liaise with the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and the Ministry of Environment to secure a pre-release draft or the key priority areas of the national CcGAP as soon as it is available. 2. **Structured integration:** During the GYAP revision (see GY-01), the consultant will map the draft GYAP activities directly against the objectives and indicators of the national CcGAP, ensuring full alignment and identifying where TREPA can act as a pilot for national priorities. 3. **Knowledge sharing for scale:** Once the GYAP is finalized, IUCN will organize a dedicated dissemination workshop for other GCF Accredited Entities and Implementing Entities in Rwanda, presenting the aligned GYAP as a case study and providing a replicable template for	**PMU (Gender Officer)** (Lead government liaison and knowledge sharing), **National Gender & Youth Inclusion Consultant** (Technically integrate CcGAP into GYAP), **IUCN Program Manager** (Host the knowledge-sharing workshop for other AEs)	**Q1-Q2 2026** (Liaison and integration during GYAP revision), **Q3 2026** (Knowledge-sharing workshop held after GYAP finalization)

		integrating the national CcGAP into project-level action plans.		
GY-03	**Finding (4.9.1):** The existing GAP does not have a dedicated budget, and there is no strategic allocation for youth-focused activities. This results in underfunding and the treatment of gender and youth work as secondary, optional components rather than core, cross-cutting priorities. **Conclusion (5.1.9):** Strategic and dedicated financial allocation is the single most critical factor for translating gender and youth plans from paper into tangible, empowering actions.**	Execute a formal budget restructuring to ensure the GYAP is fully financed and executable: 1. **Activity-Based Costing:** As part of the GYAP revision (GY-01), conduct a detailed activity-based costing for all proposed GYAP interventions, including training, mentorship, specific outreach campaigns for women and youth, and monitoring of disaggregated indicators. 2. **Formal Budget Proposal:** The PMU, supported by the IUCN Finance Manager, will prepare a formal budget modification proposal. This proposal will clearly identify sources for reallocation (e.g., from underspent line items, efficiency savings from Rec EF-01) to create a consolidated, transparent GYAP budget line worth no less than 5% of the total remaining project management and implementation budget. 3. **Financial Tracking:** Implement a dedicated tracking code in the project's financial system for the GYAP budget line. The PMU Gender Officer will provide a quarterly report to the PMCC on GYAP budget utilization against planned	**IUCN Finance Manager & PMU** (Develop and submit the formal budget modification proposal), **All IPs** (Provide cost data for GYAP activities under their scope and adhere to the new budget structure), **GCF/IUCN** (Approve the budget reallocation)	**Q2 2026** (Budget modification proposal prepared and submitted for approval), **Q3 2026** (New budget line active and tracking begins), **Each Quarter** (Reporting on GYAP budget utilization)

		activities, ensuring full financial accountability and transparency.		

5.2.10. Science/policy/action interface

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
SP-01	**Finding (4.10.1):** TREPA has produced valuable research (e.g., ROAM assessment, agroforestry productivity studies, ICS efficiency tests) but this knowledge remains largely within project and academic circles, creating a gap with local practical education systems that are training the next generation of farmers and technicians. **Conclusion (5.1.10):** A significant opportunity is being missed to embed TREPA-generated knowledge into local education, which is crucial for the long-term sustainability of climate-resilient practices and for building local capacity.**	Establish a formal "Knowledge to Curriculum" pipeline to integrate TREPA's findings into Rwanda's education system: 1. **Stakeholder engagement & needs assessment:** The PMU Knowledge Management Officer will lead a mapping of 3-5 key TVET and agricultural secondary schools in the Eastern Province, followed by structured meetings with school directors and trainers to identify gaps in their current curricula related to climate-smart agriculture, FLR, and sustainable energy. 2. **Co-development of learning modules:** Based on the assessment, convene a "Curriculum Development Workshop" with TREPA technical experts (from ICRAF, RFA, Enabel) and the identified TVET trainers. The objective is to co-develop 2-3 standardized, practical learning modules (e.g., "Practical Agroforestry Establishment and Management," "Efficient Cookstove Production and Entrepreneurship")	**PMU (Knowledge Management Officer)** (Lead engagement and coordination), **TREPA Technical Experts (ICRAF, RFA)** (Provide scientific content for modules), **TVET School Directors & Trainers, Rwanda TVET Board (RTB)** (Co-develop and adopt modules)	**Q2 2026** (Stakeholder mapping and needs assessment completed), **Q3 2026** (Curriculum Development Workshop held and modules drafted), **Q4 2026 - Q1 2027** (Piloting of modules

		derived directly from TREPA research and field manuals. 3. **Piloting and resource provision:** Pilot these modules in 2-3 partner TVET schools. TREPA will support this by providing practical demonstration kits (e.g., seedling varieties, ICS models) and organizing field visits for students to high-performing TREPA demo plots and enterprises, creating a direct link between theory and applied practice. 4. **Official handover for sustainability:** Formalize the partnership through an MoU with the Rwanda TVET Board (RTB) and the selected schools, with the ultimate goal of handing over the finalized modules for official integration into the national curriculum or as certified short courses.		in partner schools)
SP-02	**Finding (4.10.2):** TREPA has been effective in influencing district-level policy (e.g., integrating FLR into DDS). However, its research publications and activities, while robust, lack formal government endorsement, which can limit their perceived credibility, widespread public trust, and uptake in national-level policy formulation. **Conclusion (5.1.10):** Government endorsement is a powerful catalyst for	Implement a proactive "National Endorsement Strategy" for TREPA's key knowledge products: 1. **Product identification and packaging:** Identify the 3-5 most policy-relevant TREPA knowledge products (e.g., the finalized ROAM reports, the Tree Seed Sector Assessment, the ICS efficiency test results). Repackage these into concise, visually appealing "Policy Briefs" and "Summary for Policymakers" documents in both English and Kinyarwanda. 2. **Formal submission and review**	**IUCN Program Manager & PMU** (Lead the strategy and high-level engagement), **TREPA Researchers (ICRAF, RFA, etc.)** (Repackage technical reports into policy briefs), **Ministry of Environment (MoE), REMA** (Provide	**Q2 2026** (Policy briefs prepared and submitted), **Q3 2026** (National Research Validation Forum organized),

	the scale-up and institutionalization of research findings, moving them from project outputs to nationally recognized best practices.**	**process:** Formally submit these packaged documents to the relevant government bodies—primarily the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)—with a cover letter requesting a technical review and, if deemed satisfactory, an official endorsement or "letter of no objection." 3. **Stakeholder validation forum:** Organize a high-level national "TREPA Research Validation Forum," hosted by the MoE or REMA, where TREPA researchers present their key findings to a audience of senior technocrats from MINAGRI, RAB, and district vice-mayors. The goal of the forum is to achieve collective buy-in and a public statement of support from the chairing government institution. 4. **Co-branding and dissemination:** Following endorsement, re-publish the key knowledge products with the logos of both IUCN and the endorsing government institution, and disseminate them through government channels as well as project channels, significantly amplifying their reach and authority.	technical review and official endorsement)	**Q4 2026** (Co-branded products disseminated)
SP-03	**Finding (4.10.1, 4.10.2):** While annual communication plans are developed, their implementation is often hampered by competing priorities and the absence	Formalize communication as a core project function through strategic financial commitment: 1. **Costed Communication Strategy:** Task the	**IUCN Communications Coordinator & PMU** (Develop the costed strategy and justify the	**Q1 2026** (Costed Communication Strategy

	of a clear, dedicated budget, leading to under-communication of successes and reduced policy influence. **Conclusion (5.1.10):** Strategic communication is not an optional add-on but a critical implementation activity that requires secure funding to be effective in bridging the science-policy-action gap.**	IUCN Communications Coordinator, in close consultation with the PMU, to develop a detailed, activity-based budget for the FY2026 and FY2027 Annual Communication Plans. This budget must itemize costs for key activities such as: production of high-quality multimedia content (video documentaries, success stories), media engagement (press conferences, field visits for journalists), printing and dissemination of policy briefs and research summaries, and management of the "TREPA Research Validation Forum." 2. **Creation of a dedicated budget line:** The PMU and IUCN Finance Manager will create a new, dedicated "Strategic Communication and Outreach" budget line within the project's core budget. A minimum of 2-3% of the remaining total project budget should be allocated to this line, ring-fencing the funds to prevent their use for other purposes. 3. **Performance-linked reporting:** The Communications Coordinator will provide quarterly reports to the PMU and PSC, detailing communication activities executed, products delivered, and—crucially—an qualitative assessment of their reach and policy influence (e.g., media pick-up, citations in government documents, requests for information from	budget), **IUCN Finance Manager & PMU** (Establish and manage the dedicated budget line), **GCF/IUCN** (Approve the budget allocation)	for 2026-27 finalized and budget line proposed), **Q2 2026** (Budget line approved and activated), **Each Quarter** (Reporting on communication outputs and outcomes)

		officials), demonstrating a return on the investment.		

5.2.11. Country ownership of projects and programmes

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Enhanced Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
CO-01	**Finding (4.11.1):** The GCF project portfolio in Rwanda has grown significantly (FP245, FP217, FP073, FP221), and while informal learning occurs (e.g., TREPA learning from Green Gicumbi), there is a recognized gap in formal, GCF-facilitated knowledge sharing. This hinders the systematic transfer of best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions between projects, leading to potential duplication of effort and missed opportunities for synergistic impact at a national level. **Conclusion (5.1.11):** Enhanced structured learning among GCF projects is essential to maximize the collective effectiveness and efficiency of climate investments in Rwanda, strengthening	Execute a multi-pronged "GCF Rwanda Portfolio Learning Initiative" to systematically bridge the knowledge gaps between projects: 1. **Structured engagement with GCF:** The IUCN Country Representative, in their capacity as the AE for TREPA, will draft a formal concept note and proposal to the GCF Secretariat. This document will outline a structured "Rwanda GCF Projects Annual Learning Forum," proposing a format, key themes (e.g., community-based adaptation models, sustainable forestry finance), and a request for the GCF to play a convening and facilitating role, potentially leveraging its Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU). 2. **Creation of a National Knowledge Platform:** Concurrently, IUCN will take the lead in establishing an interim "GCF Rwanda Community of Practice." This will start as a	**IUCN Country Representative** (Lead high-level engagement with GCF Secretariat), **TREPA PMU** (Establish the Community of Practice, host learning sessions, produce Synergy Briefs), **Other GCF Project AEs and PMUs in Rwanda** (Participate in community and sessions), **GCF Secretariat** (Respond to and support the formal learning proposal)	**Q2 2026** (Formal proposal submitted to GCF, Community of Practice launched), **Q3 2026** (First Thematic Deep-Dive Session hosted), **Q4 2026** (First Rwanda GCF Synergy Brief published and shared)

	overall country ownership and strategic alignment.	dedicated online platform (e.g., a moderated WhatsApp group or Microsoft Teams channel) for all GCF project managers and key M&E staff in Rwanda, facilitating real-time problem-solving, resource sharing, and announcement of field visits. 3. **Organize thematic learning events:** Even before a formal GCF response, the TREPA PMU will proactively organize and host at least one bi-annual "Thematic Deep-Dive Session." The first session in Q3 2026 will be hosted virtually or in-person, focusing on a specific cross-cutting challenge (e.g., "Monitoring and Verifying Carbon Sequestration in Landscape Restoration Projects") and inviting participation from FP217 (Congo Nile Divide), FP073 (Green Gicumbi), and other relevant projects to share methodologies, data, and lessons. 4. **Document and showcase synergies:** Produce a semi-annual "Rwanda GCF Synergy Brief" that documents instances of collaboration and learning between projects. This brief will be shared with the GCF Secretariat and the Rwandan NDA (REMA) to demonstrate the value of facilitated knowledge sharing and to build a		

		case for more formal, funder-supported mechanisms.		

5.2.12. Innovativeness in result areas

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Enhanced Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
IN-01	**Finding (4.12.1):** TREPA's innovative, holistic approach—integrating landscape restoration, livelihood diversification, market linkages, access to finance, and institutional capacity building—is demonstrating a new, effective paradigm for Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR). This approach is actively supporting a shift away from reliance on degraded, climate-sensitive ecosystems. **Conclusion (5.1.12):** The project's core innovativeness lies in its integrated model, which has high potential to influence how future sustainable development interventions are designed, financed, and implemented, both within and beyond the climate sector.	Launch a strategic "TREPA Innovation Scaling Initiative" to systematically package and promote its model for broader adoption: 1. **Document the 'TREPA Model':** Commission the development of a comprehensive "TREPA Integrated FLR Model Playbook." This will not be a standard report but a practical, modular guide detailing the "how-to" of its innovative approaches, including: the block leader system for community mobilization, the architecture of the climate-resilient value chain development, the structure of the tailored financial products with SACCOs, and the operational framework for the DPCC cross-sectoral coordination. Each module will include cost estimates, potential pitfalls, and success metrics. 2. **Targeted dissemination to strategic**	**IUCN Program Manager & PMU** (Lead the initiative, commission the Playbook, manage partnerships), **External Documentation Specialist** (Develop the "TREPA Model Playbook"), **TREPA Technical Leads (RFA, ICRAF, CordAid)** (Provide technical content for the Playbook modules), **Targeted National & International Partners (RAB, MINALOC, other AEs)** (Participate in briefing sessions and explore replication)	**Q2-Q3 2026** (Playbook development and finalization), **Q4 2026** (First round of targeted dissemination sessions completed), **Q1 2027** (First "TREPA-Spin-Off" concept note developed with a partner)

		partners: Identify and engage 3-5 key national and international institutions beyond the current project scope. This includes the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) for scaling sustainable agriculture practices, the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) for replicating the governance model in other provinces, and other GCF AEs (like SNV or UNDP) operating in Rwanda. Conduct dedicated briefing sessions for each, presenting the Playbook and exploring specific replication opportunities. 3. **Pilot a replication project in a new sector/area:** Based on the most promising partnership identified, develop a concrete concept note for a "TREPA-Spin-Off" project. For example, this could be a proposal to RAB and the World Bank's "Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Food Security Project (SAIP)" to integrate TREPA's agroforestry and silvopastoral models into their extension services in the Western Province, using adapted versions of the Playbook's modules. 4. **Position IUCN as an innovation hub:** Use the documented success and the Playbook		

		to position IUCN's Rwanda office as a central hub for FLR and climate-resilient development innovation. Actively present these findings at national and regional conferences and to potential donors, not just as a project report, but as a scalable solution for achieving NST2 and NDC targets.		

5.2.13. Replication and scalability

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
RS-01	**Finding (4.13.1):** There is a strong consensus among all stakeholders, supported by the ROAM assessment, which identified 182,176 ha of highly degraded land (3x the TREPA target area), on the necessity and high potential for scaling up TREPA's successful holistic model. The project has created foundational enabling conditions (e.g., integrated FLR in DDS, available nurseries, community awareness) that can be leveraged for more cost-effective and impactful expansion.	Initiate the formal, structured development of "TREPA 2.0" to ensure a seamless transition and expanded impact: 1. **Strategic scoping and stakeholder consultation:** The IUCN Program Manager will lead a comprehensive scoping phase, convening a series of workshops with the original EEs/SPs, the PSC, district mayors, and the NDA (REMA). The objective is to collaboratively define the precise geographical scope (e.g., scaling within Eastern Province vs. replicating in a new province), thematic focus (e.g., deepening value chains, integrating water	**IUCN Program Manager & Country Representative** (Lead the strategic process and high-level engagement), **TREPA PMU & Technical IPs** (Provide data, lessons, and technical input for the concept), **PSC, District Mayors, NDA (REMA), Ministry of Environment** (Co-define scope and provide official endorsement),	**Q4 2025 - Q1 2026** (Stakeholder scoping workshops completed), **Q2-Q3 2026** (Full GCF Concept Note drafted and government endorsement secured), **Q4 2026** (Concept Note formally submitted to GCF)

	Conclusion (5.1.13): The project has demonstrated a highly replicable and scalable model. A planned, strategic successor is the logical next step to build on TREPA's successes and address the vast remaining restoration and resilience needs in the Eastern Province and beyond.	management), and scale of the successor project, ensuring it is fully demand-driven and aligned with the next cycle of national strategies. 2. **Development of a full project concept note:** Based on the scoping, task a dedicated team (potentially including a hired proposal development specialist) to draft a full GCF Concept Note. This note will explicitly build on TREPA's validated results, using its MTR and final evaluation as evidence of concept. It will articulate a clear theory of change for scaling, incorporating lessons learned (e.g., from the delayed startup, Enabel's exit) into a more robust design and outlining a strategy for leveraging significantly larger co-finance based on TREPA's demonstrated economic benefits. 3. **Securing high-level government endorsement:** Proactively work with the NDA (REMA) and the Ministry of Environment to secure a formal letter of endorsement for the TREPA 2.0 concept from the Government of Rwanda, positioning it as a national priority for the next cycle of climate finance. This endorsement should be secured prior to	**GCF Secretariat** (Provide early-stage guidance and feedback)	

		the formal submission to the GCF. 4. **Engagement with the GCF Secretariat:** IUCN, as the AE, will initiate early, informal discussions with the relevant GCF Secretariat division to present the TREPA 2.0 concept, gauge interest, and align the proposal's development with the GCF's current strategic priorities and funding windows, thereby increasing its chances of success.		

5.2.14. Unexpected results

Rec. ID	Key Finding & Conclusion	Actionable Recommendation	Proposed Responsible Actor(s)	Suggested Timeline
UR-01	**Finding (4.14.1):** The most significant unexpected positive result was the design and subsequent funding by SIDA of the COMBIO project (€7.87 million), which was directly inspired by and designed to fill biodiversity gaps within TREPA's landscape restoration efforts. To date, COMBIO has integrated 8,062,285 native trees into TREPA landscapes, a contribution not fully captured in TREPA's primary tree-planting metrics. **Conclusion (5.1.14):** TREPA acted as a	Implement a "Synergistic Co-Benefit Integration Protocol" to systematically capture, attribute, and leverage the value of the TREPA-COMBIO partnership: 1. **Develop a joint results framework:** The TREPA and COMBIO M&E officers will co-develop a simple but formal "Joint Results Tracking Matrix." This matrix will clearly map COMBIO's contributions (e.g., native tree counts, biodiversity monitoring data, specific community groups supported) against relevant TREPA outputs and	**TREPA PMU (M&E Officer)** (Lead the coordination and revision of the MEL plan), **COMBIO Project M&E Officer** (Collaborate on the Joint Framework and data sharing), **IUCN Program Manager** (Oversee the synergy assessment and	**Q1 2026** (Joint Results Framework and data sharing protocol established), **Q2 2026** (Joint Synergy Assessment completed), **Q3 2026** (TREPA MEL Plan officially updated to include

	catalytic trigger for significant additional investment and ecological enrichment, demonstrating that a well-designed project can attract complementary funding, but its M&E system was not initially equipped to fully track and attribute these synergistic benefits.	outcomes (e.g., Output 1.1 - Restored Hectares, Outcome - Enhanced Ecosystem Services). This will create a single source of truth for the combined impact. 2. **Formalize data sharing and attribution:** Establish a quarterly data exchange meeting between the TREPA and COMBIO M&E teams. The explicit purpose is to share progress data and agree on the attribution of results for reporting to respective donors (GCF and SIDA). This ensures that the 8 million+ native trees from COMBIO are systematically reported as a co-financed contribution in TREPA's reports and that TREPA's restoration framework is acknowledged in COMBIO's reporting. 3. **Conduct a Joint "Synergy Assessment":** In Q1 2026, commission a joint rapid study to quantify the added value of the integration. For example, comparing the survival rates, biodiversity indices, and soil health metrics in areas with TREPA interventions alone versus areas with combined TREPA+COMBIO interventions. This will generate powerful evidence on the multiplicative impact of integrated programming.	ensure institutional learning)	synergistic benefit tracking)

		4. **Update the TREPA MEL Plan:** Based on the above, formally revise the TREPA MEL plan to include specific indicators and data collection methods for capturing major co-benefits and contributions from synergistic projects like COMBIO. This creates a permanent mechanism for future unexpected partnerships.		

Annexures

Annex A: Evaluation design matrix: Summary of evaluation data sources

Evaluation questions	Methods	Documents to be reviewed	Interview Respondents (to be invited by IUCN)
Relevance:			
To what extent does the work of the TREPA project address its objectives and the priority issues?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Project Document • Annual Performance Report (to GCF) • Quarterly Reports (IPs) • Minutes of the Steering Committee	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN.
To what extent have Executing Entities (EEs) and Service Providers (SPs) been fit-for purpose?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Supervision Mission Note (PMU) • Financial Audit Report • Minutes of PMCC • Monitoring Report (Accredited Entity)	• TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer)
How relevant is the TREPA project and, in particular, its outputs and impact achieved so far to the Eastern Province of Rwanda?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGD):	• 2024 TREPA HH Survey Report	• Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers (Kanyamashyamba) • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain). • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
Is the project theory of change (TOC) and intervention logic coherent and realistic?	1. Document Review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Project document	• TREPA Chief of Party • GCF Portfolio Manager • IUCN PMU MEL Officer

Does the TOC and intervention logic hold, or does it need to be adjusted?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)		• TREPA Chief of Party • GCF Portfolio Manager • IUCN PMU MEL Officer
Coherence:			
Who are the partners of the project and how strategic are they in terms of capacities and commitment?	1. Document review: 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	• District Development Strategy	• TREPA Chief of Party • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
Is there coherence and complementarity by the project with other actors for other local climate change interventions?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	• District Development Strategy	• TREPA Chief of Party • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
To what extent has the project complimented other on-going local-level initiatives (by stakeholders, donors, governments) on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	• District Development Strategy	• TREPA Chief of Party • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
How has the project contributed to achieving a stronger and more coherent integration of the shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways and/or increased	• Document review • Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• 2024 TREPA HH Survey Report • Project Document • Annual Performance Report	• TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN.

climate-resilient sustainable development (GCF RMF/PMF paradigm shift objectives)? Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.	• Focus Group Discussions (FGD)		• Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga Beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
Effectiveness:			
To what extent is the project achieving its targets and objectives?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• 2024 Annual Performance Report • 2024 and 2025Q2 Monitoring Report (by Accredited Entity) • Excel sheet on indicators	• Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA Chief of Party • IUCN PMU office (Etienne)
How effective is the TREPA project's modus operandi? Are the EEs adequately supported from IUCN to deliver on their outputs? How have the problems encountered been resolved?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)		• Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN.
How effective are the strategies in place in reaching out and influencing the TREPA project's target audiences? What factors have contributed to accelerate or hinder the uptake of the project's recommendations by its target audience(s)?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)		2. Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. 3. TREPA PMU Communication Coordinator 4. TREPA PMU MEL Officer 5. TREPA GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer (Dr. Lamek)
Is the project achieving its set targets and expected objectives? What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall impacts such as adaptation beneficiaries and improved ecosystem services?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• 2024 TREPA HH Survey Report • EICV7 thematic reports • Climate Vulnerability Index 2025 Rwanda • 2024 Annual Performance Report • 2024 and 2025Q2 Monitoring Report (by Accredited Entity) • Excel sheet on indicators	6. Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. 7. TREPA Chief of Party 8. TREPA PMU MEL Officer

To what extent is the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and tools set up helping to (a) answer key guiding questions, (b) detect any needed programme implementation adjustments for better progress towards results, (c) collect the right kind of data in view of conducting an impact evaluation by the end of the project? What adjustments to the MEL system are recommended to help understand impact of the TREPA project? (d) Are project targets realistic and correct or some need adjustments? (d) Do indicators in the project log frame measure the full suite of results that TREPA is achieving?	1. Document review: 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussions	• Activity tracker • Indicator Performance Tracking Table • Semi-annual report • DPCC Meeting Report • Project Management Coordination Committee (PMCC) meeting report	• Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA PMU Office (MEL Officer, Project Manager) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • TREPA Chief of Party
Efficiency:			
To what extent are the project's outputs in balance with the level of effort, time and resources spent?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Finance external audit reports • Annual Performance Report • Quarterly Progress Report	• Project Managers/Budget Manager/Finance Manager (IPs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • TREPA PMU MEL Officer • TREPA Chief of Party
Have spending and project delivery progressed according to the planned schedule?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Finance external audit reports • Annual Performance Report • Quarterly Progress Report	• Project Managers/Budget Manager/Finance Manager (IPs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • TREPA PMU MEL Officer • TREPA Chief of Party

Is the relationship between resources and results appropriate and justifiable?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)		• Project Managers/Budget Manager/Finance Manager (IPs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • TREPA PMU MEL Officer • TREPA Chief of Party
Are there less costly ways of achieving the same outputs?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)		• Project Managers/Budget Manager/Finance Manager (IPs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • TREPA PMU MEL Officer • TREPA Chief of Party
Learning:			
What can we learn from the way the TREPA project is designed and implemented?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Contribution of IUCN Rwanda to ISARO report (Q1) • 2024 Annual Performance Report • 2025Q2 Quarterly Performance Report	• TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
What has and what hasn't worked well so far and what needs to be improved or done differently?	1. Document review: 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Contribution of IUCN Rwanda to ISARO report (2025Q1) • 2024 Annual Performance Report • 2025Q2 Quarterly Performance Report	• RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN.

			• TREPA PMU (MEL Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
Are there lessons or best practices that can be up-scaled or replicated in similar environments?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)		• RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
Sustainability:			
Are the project interventions and benefits likely to continue after the end of GCF funding?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• 2024 Annual Performance Report • 2025Q2 Quarterly Performance Report	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN.

			• TREPA PMU (MEL Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
What sustainability measures are in place?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Project Document	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
What real difference has TREPA interventions made to the project's target groups (m/f)? How has it changed their lives?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• 2024 TREPA HH Survey Report • 2024 Annual Performance Report	• Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party

			• Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
What exit strategy does the project have?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Project Document	• TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN.
Impact Orientation:			
Is the project oriented towards a positive impact on people and nature?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)		• Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
Indications of project positive impact on nature?	• Document review • Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) • Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• 2024 TREPA HH Survey Report • EICV7 Thematic Reports • 2024 Annual Performance Report	• Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN

			• TREPA PMU (Communications Coordination Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
Indications of positive impacts on people's lives and livelihoods?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• 2024 TREPA HH Survey Report • EICV7 Thematic Reports • Annual Performance Report	• Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN • TREPA PMU (Communications Coordination Officer, GIS and Knowledge Sharing Officer) • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
One Programme Approach:			
Is the project leveraging the Union to achieve its objectives?	1. Document review: 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• One Program Approach Document • Annual Performance Report	• TREPA Chief of Party • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers
To what extent is TREPA project implemented in accordance with IUCN's One Programme Approach?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• One Program Approach Document • Annual Performance Report	• TREPA Chief of Party • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce)
To what extent has it engaged with other constituents of the Union to achieve,	1. Document review	• One Program Approach Document	• TREPA Chief of Party • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce)

disseminate, strengthen, scale up or embed its outputs or outcomes?	2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Forest and Landscape Cross-sectoral Taskforce reports	• IUCN Country Representative (Kaori)
Gender, indigenous peoples, and youth:			
To what extent has the TREPA project's objectives and design promoted and advanced gender equality, gender responsiveness, and/or the needs and priorities of youth?	3. Document review: 4. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 5. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Gender Action Plan	• Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
To what extent has the project monitored its progress with appropriately disaggregated monitoring data and with the participation of women and/or youth?	1. Document review: 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Gender Action Plan • 2024 Annual Performance Report • Quarterly Performance Reports	• Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer)
To what extent is the project compliant to environmental and social safeguards (ESS)?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• ESS framework • Gender Action Plan • 2024 Annual Performance Report • Quarterly Performance Reports	• Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • TREPA PMU (MEL Officer) • Hub coordinators • Field Officers
Science/policy/action interface:			
How has the knowledge produced or disseminated by TREPA relevant?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Village Land Use Action Plans • Imfashanyigisho (PFMU Fact sheets/Brochure, Flyers) • DESIRA Agroforestry Research Project Documents • Agroforestry Conference Proceedings	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce) • Project Manager (PIs) (IUCN)

			• Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
Has it been effective in influencing policy or actions?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Village Land Use Action Plans • Imfashanyigisho (PFMU Fact sheets/Brochure, Flyers) • DESIRA Research • Agroforestry Conference Proceedings	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • District Forestry and Natural Resource Officers/Kanyamashyamba (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce) • Project Manager (PIs) (IUCN) • Project beneficiaries (farmer leaders, President of PFMU/Nyagahanga beekeeping value chain, Demo plot owners, ICRAF model pasture lands/Rwimbogo fodder value chain).
Country ownership of projects and programmes:			
How is the project contributing to other projects/programmes within the country? are there further commitments, e.g. more co-financing towards the project?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy • Rwanda National Forestry Policy (2018) • Forest Sector Strategic Plan (2018 – 2024)	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce) • Project Manager (IUCN)
To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of national partners?	1. Document review: 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	• Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy • Rwanda National Forestry Policy (2018) • Forest Sector Strategic Plan (2018 – 2024)	• Chair of Project Steering Committee (PS MoE) • RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce)

			• Project Manager (IUCN)
Innovativeness in result areas:			
To what extent may the project interventions lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)		• RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • TREPA Chief of Party • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce) • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, Enabel, IUCN.
Replication and scalability:			
Can the project activities be scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries?	1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)		• RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce) • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, Enabel, IUCN.
Unexpected results, both positive and negative:			
Has the project foreseen any unexpected results, both positive and negative?	1. Document review 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) 3. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)	• Project Document (Risk Mitigation) • 2024 Annual Performance Review	• RFA DG (represents MoE/GoR) • Vice Mayor/Economic Cluster (**Kirehe, Rwamagana**) • TREPA Chief of Party • IUCN Program Manager (Alphonce) • Project Managers (PIs): RFA, ICRAF, WVR, CordAid, Enabel, IUCN. • Hub Coordinators • Field Officers

Annex B: Informed Consent

Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPA) Project Interim Evaluation

INFORMED CONSENT

Hello, my name is **Patrick Hitayezu**, and I am with my colleague **Emmanuel Shyaka**. We are program evaluation specialists from **Research Hub Ltd**, a research and program evaluation firm based in Kigali/Rwanda. Research Hub was contracted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Rwanda to undertake a Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation **(TREPA) Project Interim Evaluation**.

The mid-term evaluation will explore TREPA's work and achievements with the aim of assessing progress made between **1st January 2022** and **30th December 2024**, and providing guidance on how to maximize the potential for achieving the intended results and improve learning in its remaining timeframe (2025-2027). Through the assessment of the performance, achievements and lessons learnt to date, the review will contribute to both learning and accountability.

You are among the key stakeholders who have been selected to participate in this evaluation. We would like to interview you to learn more about your views, opinions, and experiences that will help us assess the following aspects:

- The **relevance** of the TREPA project to achieve a paradigm shift in land management practices in Rwanda's Eastern Province, and in terms of project approaches and adaptiveness to the needs of stakeholders targeted by the intervention.
- The **effectiveness** of the TREPA project at achieving its objectives and the extent to which the project is achieving its mid-term targets.
- The **efficiency** in terms of value for money of the delivery of the TREPA outputs.
- The **sustainability** of results & approaches, including the scaling mechanisms and potential impacts;
- **Lessons** and actionable recommendations on how the project and the project coordination/management could be adjusted for further improvement.
- **Progress** made on compliance of the environmental and social safeguards (ESS), fiduciary standards, and gender and youth action plan.

This interview takes approximately 60-90 minutes. Your participation in the evaluation is **voluntary**, and you can decide not to participate, decide not to answer particular questions without any consequences. Your participation will not impact in any way your relationship with the project. Your personal data and your answers to questions will be kept confidential. No names will appear in the final report.

Do you provide consent to document, use, store, and share the information provided for reporting and communication purposes? YES ☐ NO ☐

Names, Affiliation, and Signature and Date: _____

Annex C: Qualitative Interview Guide

Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPA) Project Interim Evaluation

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. First, let's discuss the **relevance** of the TREPA project for Rwanda, for the local communities, and your organization as an Executing Entity or Service Provider:
    - 1.1. [MoE & RFA] to what extent does the TREPA project align with national policies and strategies in place (e.g., Vision 2050, NST2, Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS), Rwanda National Forestry Policy (2018), Forest Sector Strategic Plan (2018 – 2024)
    - 1.2. [EE & SP, MEL] Do TREPA objectives and activities align with your core mandate as an organization?
        - 1.2.1. Probe: Do you have to outsource some of the activities to be able to perform? If yes, how often and why?
    - 1.3. [VM, DFNRO] How relevant is the TREPA project and, in particular, its outputs and impact achieved so far to the conservation of agroecosystems and restoration of landscapes and transformation of livelihoods in the Eastern Province of Rwanda?
        - 1.3.1. [VM, DFNRO] How relevant are the TREPA project outputs and impact achieved so far to the local community/economic development?
            - 1.3.1.1. Probe: In terms of district planning? And market development? How about access to finance?
        - 1.3.2. [VM, DFNRO] Do the project activities and impacts achieved so far respond to real community needs? To what extent?
    - 1.4. [CoP & GCF Portfolio Manager] How would you assess the TREPA's Theory of Change (ToC) and intervention logic?
        - 1.4.1. Are they coherent?
            - 1.4.1.1. Probe: How does the Results Framework translate the ToC into measurable actions and indicators, and provide a roadmap for monitoring and evaluation?
        - 1.4.2. 3 years down the line, are they still holding?
        - 1.4.3. Are funds flow optimal and stakeholder roles clear? Any challenges?
2. Now let's talk about the coherence, complementarities, and synergies with other local climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.
    - 2.1. How does TREPA align with broader policies (e.g., through cross-sectoral plans, local governance structures)?
    - 2.2. Who are the key partners, and how strategic are they in terms of capacities and commitment? Start with conservation and natural resource

management initiatives (e.g., water access, early warning systems), then local economic development programs (e.g., access to finance, value chain development).

2.3. Is there coherence and complementarity by the project with other actors for other local climate change interventions?
    2.3.1. How is the coherence and complementarity of such initiatives coordinated (e.g., through cross-sectoral district development planning, Forest and Landscape Cross-sectoral Taskforce?)

2.4. To what extent has the project complemented other on-going local-level initiatives (by stakeholders, donors, governments) on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?
    2.4.1. Examples include afforestation/reforestation, irrigation, water and energy access (e.g., ICS),
    2.4.2. What about other development programs (e.g., infrastructure development, entrepreneurship and investment promotion, access to finance, broader educational development, health/sanitation/nutrition, social protection, conflict resolution, etc.)?

2.5. Synergies: How do they enhance the TREPA project's overall impact and effectiveness? E.g., leveraging their expertise and resources?

2.6. Have you ever identified significant overlaps with other projects or local government initiatives that operate independently and effectively?
    2.6.1. How has any duplication been addressed? (e.g., through cross-sectoral district development planning and budgeting? Forest and Landscape Cross-sectoral Taskforce?)

2.7. Does that enhance conservation and resource management?

2.8. How has the project contributed to achieving a stronger and more coherent integration of the shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways and/or increased climate-resilient sustainable development (GCF RMF/PMF paradigm shift objectives)?
    2.8.1. Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.

2.9. Going forward, what are some of the potential collaboration areas that could further enhance project impact and facilitate replication? (e.g., advocating for supportive policies, capacity building, investment in key value chains like fodder production, beekeeping, improving community preparedness through climate early warning systems, and resilience planning, etc.)

3. Next, we'll discuss the effectiveness of the TREPA project at achieving its objectives and the extent to which the project is achieving its mid-term targets.

3.1. To what extent is the project achieving its targets and objectives?
    3.1.1. Let's use the matrix to review the progress towards project objectives

3.2. How effective is the TREPA project's modus operandi? Are the EEs adequately supported from IUCN to deliver on their outputs?
    3.2.1. How have the problems encountered been resolved?

3.2.2. Hint: some activities might be financed through the public finance system or their implementation might require coordination with government institutions, creating some coordination challenges (e.g., due to limited resources for coordination at the landscape level, or inadequate, delayed or simply misaligned disbursements of central and local government institutions funds, complex reporting structure in government institutions etc), and policy differences among partners (e.g. public vs. private procurement) processes may have affected the achievement of some objectives.

3.3. How effective are the strategies in place in reaching out and influencing the TREPA project's target audiences?

3.3.1. Let's refer to the insights from the 2024 TREPA Annual HH Survey.

3.3.2. What factors have contributed to accelerate or hinder the uptake of the project's recommendations by its target audience(s)?

3.4. Is the project achieving its set targets and expected objectives?

3.4.1. What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall impacts, such as adaptation beneficiaries and improved ecosystem services?

3.5. To what extent is the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and tools set up helping to:

3.5.1. (a) answer key guiding questions,

3.5.2. (b) detect any needed programme implementation adjustments for better progress towards results,

3.5.3. (c) collect the right kind of data in view of conducting an impact evaluation by the end of the project?

3.6. What adjustments to the MEL system are recommended to help understand the impact of the TREPA project?

3.6.1. (d) Are project targets realistic and correct or some need adjustments?

3.6.2. (d) Do indicators in the project log frame measure the full suite of results that TREPA is achieving?

4. We now turn to the efficiency in terms of value for money of the delivery of the TREPA outputs.

4.1. To what extent are the project's outputs in balance with the level of effort, time, and resources spent?

4.1.1. Can you give an account of some activities that appear to have consumed more of the staff time and project budget in a way that was not justified based on the weight of their expected outcomes?

4.2. Have spending and project delivery progressed according to the planned schedule?

4.2.1. Where have delays been noted the most?

4.2.2. What have been the strategies to fast-track the activities that are lagging behind the schedule?

4.3. Is the relationship between resources and results appropriate and justifiable?
    4.3.1. Compared to similar Interventions, does the cost of TREPA appear to be competitive? Is TREPA leveraging low-cost, sustainable land management practices that provide significant returns in terms of community benefits and environmental conservation?
4.4. Are there less costly ways of achieving the same outputs?
    4.4.1. Probe: Are there some activities that might have had higher costs than market rates, or higher unit costs than other partners (especially government institutions), or similar projects (e.g., check transport/travel, communications budget lines)?

5. Now I'd like to hear from you some of the key lessons and actionable recommendations on how the project and the project coordination/management could be adjusted for further improvement.
    5.1. But first, tell us how lessons are captured, documented and shared with stakeholders?
        5.1.1. Are there any mechanisms or formalized channels for documenting and disseminating the lessons, to enhance informed decision-making within the project and outside (e.g., through community meetings)?
    5.2. So far, what key lessons have we learnt from the way the TREPA project is designed and implemented?
        5.2.1. Think of its intervention approaches (e.g., restoration approach, community-centric approach, one-program approach, ICS subsidy, integration with district development planning, training approach, procurement, etc).
    5.3. What has and what hasn't worked well so far and what needs to be improved or done differently?
        5.3.1. For example, think of what extent has resilience to climate change and landscape restoration been integrated into local government's cross-sectoral planning and budgeting processes?
    5.4. Are there lessons or best practices that can be up-scaled or replicated in similar environments?
6. The next set of questions is on the sustainability of results & approaches, including the scaling mechanisms and potential impacts;
    6.1. Are the project interventions and benefits likely to continue after the end of GCF funding?
        6.1.1. Think of levels of community engagement and support from local administrative structures and autonomous incentives of sustainable land management (e.g., nature-based enterprises).
    6.2. What sustainability measures are in place?

6.2.1. E.g., Comprehensive training, community engagement, and development of action plans (e.g. Village Land Use Action Plans).

6.3. What real difference have TREPA interventions made to the project's target groups (m/f)? How has it changed their lives?

6.4. What exit strategy does the project have?

6.4.1. How does the TREPA approach aim to maintain benefits beyond project funding.

6.4.1.1. Hints: focus on building local capacity and creating investment opportunities such as nature-based enterprises and sustainable finance instruments inspired by the climate resilience fund.

7. Now, let's focus on the lasting changes and improvements that TREPA aims to achieve (beyond the immediate outputs or activities).

7.1. Is TREPA oriented towards a positive impact on people and nature?

7.2. Does TREPA MEL framework have a (visual) tool for monitoring restoration progress, like a biodiversity dashboard/barometer, that can effectively visualize key biodiversity indicators, track conservation performance at various scales, (from regional to local), and help identify areas and specific actions needing attention?

7.3. Can you give the indications of project's positive impact on nature?

7.3.1. Hint: This can be anything that might have created benefits for the environment, often exceeding any negative impacts. This can involve actions like habitat restoration, pollution reduction, and sustainable resource management, ultimately contributing to a healthier ecosystem and greater biodiversity.

7.4. In the TREPA MEL framework, how is the impact of TREPA on people's lives and livelihoods monitored?

7.5. Can you give us any indications of positive impacts on people's lives and livelihoods?

7.5.1. Hint: including improved nutrition, health, skills and knowledge; access to natural resources; increased savings and investment opportunities; enhanced trust, cooperation and social cohesion, which reduces socio-economic and environmental vulnerability and increases resilience to shocks.

7.5.2. Example: Improved water and energy access, improved fodder and animal production, and livestock production might have enhanced livelihoods. These improvements can contribute to a better quality of life and economic stability.

8. Now I would like us to review how TREPA implements the IUCN's one program charter to better deliver in an integrated and effective manner.

8.1. Is the TREPA project leveraging the Union (i.e., Members, Commissions, and Secretariat) to achieve its objectives?

8.1.1. Hint: Thinking of its predecessors, such as DESIRA Agroforestry Research Project, AREECA, COMBIO, etc.

8.2. To what extent is TREPA project implemented in accordance with IUCN's One Programme Approach?
    8.2.1. Probe: Does TREPA integrate other IUCN Members, Commissions, and Secretariat in project design, delivery and financing? Does it provide sufficient resources and flexibility in their use to achieve agreed Programme results?
8.3. To what extent has it engaged with other constituents of the Union to achieve, disseminate, strengthen, scale up or embed its outputs or outcomes?

9. The following questions will look at gender and social inclusion aspects of the TREPA project.
    9.1. To what extent has the TREPA project's objectives and design promoted and advanced gender equality, gender responsiveness, and/or the needs and priorities of youth?
        9.1.1. Probe: Does TREPA strategies include deliberate targeting of women/youth-led groups?
        9.1.2. Probe: Can you give concrete examples of how the project has empowered women and youth (e.g., through training and involvement in economic activities).
        9.1.3. Probe: How do you see their participation in the governance of natural resources? Are women and marginalized groups involved in decision-making?
        9.1.4. Probe: To what extent do such groups (women and youth) benefit from economic opportunities created by the project?
        9.1.5. Probe: What are the barriers to gender Inclusion (e.g. lack of affirmative action policies, and local/cultural dynamics)?
    9.2. To what extent has the project monitored its progress with appropriately disaggregated monitoring data and with the participation of women and/or youth?
    9.3. To what extent is the project compliant with environmental and social safeguards (ESS)?
        9.3.1. Probe: Are environmental and Social considerations are integrated well into project design?
        9.3.2. Which grievance and feedback mechanisms are in place? Are they functioning properly?
        9.3.3. What else does the project do to empower local communities (in terms of environmental sustainability) and foster harmonious coexistence (e.g., participatory approaches, capacity building, etc)?

10. Now let's explore the science/policy/action interface.
    10.1. What are the main channels of knowledge production and dissemination used by TREPA?
        10.1.1. Hint: Might include Village Land Use Action Plans, *Imfashanyigisho*, Agroforestry Conference, DESIRA Agroforestry Research Project, Community-Centric Approach, etc.

10.2. How has the knowledge produced or disseminated by TREPA been relevant?
10.3. Has it been effective in influencing policy or actions?

11. Let's discuss the country ownership of projects and programmes:
    11.1. To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of national partners?
        11.1.1. How are national and district-level agencies and institutions involved?
    11.2. How is the project contributing to other projects/programmes within the country?
        11.2.1. Examples: the identification of landscapes for potential restoration, best practices for restoration projects, etc...
    11.3. Are there further commitments, e.g. more co-financing towards the project?
        11.3.1. Examples include technical assistance.
12. Next, we are going to explore the innovativeness of TREPA project in result areas.
    12.1. To what extent may the project interventions lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways?
        12.1.1. Probe: Do the TREPA's restoration activities have the potential to shift traditional practices towards more ecologically sustainable approaches?
        12.1.2. Probe: Which new intervention approaches would you say are still in the testing or early adoption phases to bring new nature-based solutions to climate change?
        12.1.3. Which key lessons have you learnt from such innovative approaches? Especially, on their implementation.
        12.1.4. Are those innovations scalable to offer opportunities for broader impact and replication?
13. Replication and scalability:
    13.1. Can the project activities be scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries?
    13.2. Which aspect support scalability
        13.2.1. Examples include strong policy alignment, community and local government involvement, etc.
    13.3. What challenges in scaling up do you foresee?
        13.3.1. Examples include capacity gaps, resource constraints, etc.
    13.4. Can TREPA be replicated in other countries?
        13.4.1. Are the challenges that it addresses felt in other countries?
            13.4.1.1. What can be done to make it adaptable to other regions?
        13.4.2. So far, which lessons have you learned for replication and adaptation of a project like TREPA to local context?
        13.4.3. What are the key factors for successful replication?
14. Unexpected results, both positive and negative
    14.1. Has the project foreseen any unexpected results, both positive and negative?

14.1.1. Which positive results enhanced the overall impact of the project? (e.g. Improved public health).

14.1.2. Which negative results (austerity measures by the government that impact availability of co-finance)?

14.2. How did TREPA manage the unexpected consequences on the project.

14.2.1. Examples include strategy adjustment, continuous community and officials' engagement.

Annex D: Work Plan

The Excel version of the work plan is available on this link.

	Mon 09-Jun	Tue 10-Jun	Wed 11-Jun	Thu 12-Jun	Fri 13-Jun	Sat 14-Jun	Sun 15-Jun	Mon 16-Jun	Tue 17-Jun	Wed 18-Jun	Thu 19-Jun	Fri 20-Jun	Sat 21-Jun	Sun 22-Jun	Mon 23-Jun	Tue 24-Jun	Wed 25-Jun	Thu 26-Jun	Fri 27-Jun	Sat 28-Jun
	Inception	Inception	Document review	Document review	Document review	Rest	Rest	Data collection	Data collection	Data collection	Data collection	Data collection	Rest	Rest	Data Analysis	Data Analysis	Validation	Validation	Reporting	Reporting
	Inception	Inception	Inception	Inception	Inception	Rest	Rest	FGD	KIIs	KIIs	KIIs	KIIs	Rest	Rest	KIIs	KIIs	Outcome Harvesting Workshop	Report Writing	Report Writing	Report Submission
e)																				
	Inception Workshop (Kigali)	Inception report writing (Kigali)	Inception report writing (Kigali)	Review of workplan (Kigali)	Revision of draft inception report (Kigali)			Vice Mayor and DFNRO (Kirehe)	Vice Mayor and DFNRO (Rwamagana)	WVI, Cordaid, (Kigali)	Chief of Party (Online)	PS MoE			Alphonce (Kigali)	PMU (TREPA Project Manager, MEL Office, Comms, GIS & Knowledge Sharing) (Kigali)	(Eastern Province)	Report Writing (Kigali)	Report Writing (Kigali)	Report Writing (Kigali)
	Inception Workshop (Kigali)	Inception report writing (Kigali)	Submission of draft inception report (Kigali)	Inception report validation meeting (Kigali)	Submission of final inception report (Kigali)			Beneficiaries (Kayonza)	Hub Coordinators (Kigali)	ICRAF (Kigali) RFA (Huye)	AREECA DESIRA COMBIO	DG RFA			Kaori (Kigali)	PMU (Project Manager, MEL Office, Comms, GIS & Knowledge Sharing) (Kigali)	(Eastern Province)	Report Writing (Kigali)	Report Writing (Kigali)	Submission of draft report (Kigali)

Annex E: Strategic Alignment between TREPA and Executing Entities and Service Providers

Executing Entity	Strategic Alignment
World Vision	• **Shared Goal of Sustainable Livelihoods:** Both TREPA and World Vision aim to improve the livelihoods of communities, particularly through agricultural practices and access to markets. • **Climate Resilience:** TREPA focuses on restoring degraded landscapes and promoting climate-resilient agriculture, which aligns with World Vision's broader efforts to build community resilience to climate change. • **Community Empowerment:** TREPA's approach, which includes community participation in landscape restoration and value chain development, resonates with World Vision's focus on empowering communities to address their own challenges. • **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** World Vision's WASH initiatives, particularly its focus on clean water access, complement TREPA's efforts to improve access to clean cooking fuel and promote healthy living. • **Focus on Vulnerable Groups:** World Vision's commitment to including women and other vulnerable groups in development aligns with TREPA's focus on gender-responsive climate resilience. • **Partnership and Collaboration:** World Vision's participation in the TREPA consortium highlights the importance of collaborative approaches to development, a key principle for both organization
CordAid	• **Climate Resilience:** TREPA aims to enhance the resilience of communities in the Eastern Province of Rwanda to the impacts of climate change. This aligns with Cordaid's work in promoting climate adaptation and building sustainable livelihoods. • **Financial Inclusion:** TREPA supports local financial institutions to develop and offer climate-related financial products tailored to farmers' needs. This aligns with Cordaid's efforts to improve access to finance and promote financial literacy in rural communities. • **Community Empowerment:** TREPA focuses on empowering communities through financial education, access to markets, and improved agricultural practices. This aligns with Cordaid's commitment to fostering sustainable, locally-led community transformation. • **Sustainable Livelihoods:** By supporting climate-resilient agriculture, promoting clean energy, and developing value chains, TREPA contributes to building sustainable livelihoods for the targeted communities. This aligns with Cordaid's broader goal of supporting sustainable livelihoods and economic development. • **Partnership:** Cordaid's involvement in TREPA as a key partner demonstrates its commitment to collaborative approaches in addressing development challenges. The project's success relies on the combined efforts of various organizations, including Cordaid, to achieve its objectives.

Enabel	**Climate resilience** Enabel's aim to reform agriculture from a subsistence sector into a knowledge-based value-creating sector is in line with TREPA's objective of helping local communities to shift away from highly degraded and climate-sensitive agro-ecosystems towards a climate-smart agricultural economy that ensure food and nutrition security. **Community development** TREPA's focus on climate change adaptation, sustainable land management, and community development aligns with Enabel's broader mission of supporting sustainable development and poverty reduction in partner countries. **Clean and efficient cookstoves** Promoting the use of efficient cooking stoves aligns with Enabel's broader national goals to reduce deforestation and improve public health by reducing reliance on traditional, inefficient cooking methods.
RFA	**Climate resilience:** Both TREPA and RFA aim to enhance the resilience of landscapes, particularly through forest restoration and sustainable land management practice. The goal of the Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA) is to ensure the growth, management, and protection of forest resources for sustainable development. This includes promoting sustainable forestry practices, conserving biodiversity, and contributing to the country's economic development through the responsible use of forest resources.
ICRAF	• **Agroforestry Transformation:** TREPA's focus on restoring degraded landscapes and promoting climate-resilient livelihoods through agroforestry directly aligns with ICRAF's core mission of advancing agroforestry for improved livelihoods and environmental sustainability. • **Targeting Vulnerable Populations:** TREPA aims to enhance the resilience of 75,000 smallholder farmers in the Eastern Province, aligning with ICRAF's focus on improving the lives of vulnerable populations through agroforestry. • **Biodiversity conservation** TREPA's activities, such as establishing breeding and clonal seed orchards for key tree species, directly contribute to ICRAF's work on improving tree seed and seedling supply for agroforestry. • **Addressing Climate Change:** TREPA's focus on restoring degraded landscapes and promoting climate-resilient livelihoods is a direct response to the impacts of climate change in the Eastern Province, which aligns with ICRAF's broader efforts to address climate change through agroforestry.

Annex F: Logical Framework Indicators Performance Report

Indicator	Actual value (Dec 2024)	Mid-term Target	Final Target	Percent of mid-term target	Percent of LOP target
Mitigation and Adaptation Core Indicator					
Mitigation Core Indicator 1 - Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2eq) reduced as a result of GCF funded project/programme (Unit: tCO2eq)	N/A	131,061	1,307,819		
Mitigation Core Indicator 2 - Cost per tCO2eq decreased for GCF funded project/programme (Unit: Cost per tCO2eq)	N/A	379	38		
Mitigation Core Indicator 3 - Volume of fi nance leveraged by GCF funding	18,554,195	7,919,521	15,839,042	234%	117%
Adaptation Core Indicator 1 - Direct Beneficiaries of GCF funded project/programme (Units: number of individuals)	242,379	278,125	556,252	87%	44%
Adaptation Core Indicator 2 - Indirect Benefi ciaries of GCF funded project/programme (Units: number of individuals)	951,614	602,093	1,364,185	158%	70%
Adaptation Core Indicator 3 - Number of total benefi ciaries relative to total population (Units: percentage %)	0	2	4		
Fund-level Impact Indicators					
M4.1 Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2eq) reduced or avoided as a result of sustainable management of forests and conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (Unit: tCO2eq)	N/A	131,061	1,308,063		
A1.2 Number of males and females benefiting from the adoption of diversified, climate resilient livelihood options (including fisheries, agriculture, tourism,etc.) (Units: number of individuals and percentage %)	80,552	278,262	556,252	29%	14%
A2.2 Number of food secure households (in areas/periods at risk of climate change impacts) (Unit: number of individuals/households, % percentage, selectas many as applicable)	312,809	63,241	35,933	57%	28%

A4.1 Coverage/scale of ecosystems protected and strengthened in response to climate variability and change (Units: Ha)	43,709	30,000	69,185	145.6%	63.17%
Fund-level Project/programme Outcome Indicators (PMF)					
M5.1 Institutional and regulatory systems that improve incentives for low emission planning and development and their effective implementation (Number of plans/strategies/roadmaps)	7	7	7	100%	100%
A5.1 Institutional and regulatory systems that improve incentives for climate resilience and their effective implementation (Number of policies/strategies/plans/regulations)	7	7	7	100%	100%
A7.1 Use by vulnerable households, communities, businesses and public-sector services of Fund supported tools, instruments, strategies and activities torespond to climate (Number of households) change and variability	29,567	17,333	64,605	171%	46%
A8.1 Number of males and females made aware of climate threats and related appropriate responses (Number of individuals)	169,761	70,000	150,000	243%	113%
Project/Programme-level Outcome & Output Indicators					
Number of beneficiaries and farmer groups in target districts who have applied agro-forestry measures	22,255	2,000	32,000	1113%	70%
Average tree density in restored agro-forestry lands	89	100	100	89%	89%
Area/number of hectares (ha) with woodlots and tree plantations brought under rehabilitation and sustainable management	16,573	9,245	17,945	179%	92%
Average biomass productivity (expected growth) in restored forests of more than 2 years in degraded state forest	N/A	3	8		
Area (ha) of pastoral lands brought under climate resilient silvopastoral packages	7,456	2,000	10,000	373%	75%
Average tree density in restored Silvo-pastoral lands	81	100	100	81%	81%
Area (ha) of ecologically sensitive and erosion prone lands with reduced erosion and improved ecological integrity measured by reduced soil erosion rates	1,218	600	1,800	203%	68%
Number of households adopt effi cient cooking energy technologies	7,000	70,000	100,000	10%	7%

Number of Farmers' groups representatives that report an increased level of capacity of cooperatives to conduct business.	32,374	20,396	47,591	159%	68%
Number of businesses/cooperatives with viable business plans established and operational for climate resilient value chains (VC).	15	0	86		17%
Number of fi nancial products developed, tested and rolled out to improve access to fi nance for agriproducts , tree crop, bee products, and fodder VCs.	1	4	9	25%	11%
M5.1 Institutional and regulatory systems that improve incentives for low-emission planning and development and their effective implementation	7	7	7	100%	100%
Number of districts with integrated climate resilient metrics in Landscape Restoration Plans within annual district development strategies	7	7	7	100%	100%
Number of staff from national government and district authorities reporting improved capacity to manage information systems and integrate climate-related aspects.	99	34	34	291%	291%
National breeding program for adapted seed and seedling supply systems (including # agro-climatic maps) is in place	1	0	1	100%	100%
Number of climate resilience related research publications or knowledge materials produced	24	12	24	200%	100%

Annex G: Data Sources Reference List

This annex provides the key for the in-text citations used throughout the evaluation report to ensure full transparency and traceability of evidence.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

- KII-VM-01, 02 - Vice Mayor for Economic Affairs, Kirehe and Rwamagana Districts
- KII-DFNRO-01, 02 - District Forestry and Natural Resource Officer, Kirehe and Rwamagana
- KII-ICRAF-01 - TREPA Project Manager, ICRAF
- KII-Enabel-01 - TREPA Project Manager, Enabel
- KII-RFA-01 - TREPA Project Manager, RFA
- KII-IUCN-01 - TREPA Project Manager, IUCN
- KII-WVR-01 - TREPA Project Manager, World Vision Rwanda
- KII-CordAid-01 - TREPA Project Manager, CordAid
- KII-PMU-MEL-01 - TREPA PMU ME&L Office Staff
- KII-IUCN-FIN-01 - TREPA PMU Finance Officer
- KII-PMU-COP - TREPA Project Chief of Party, PMU
- KII-RFA-DG - Director General, Rwanda Forestry Authority
- KII-MoE-PS – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment
- KII-IUCN-PM-01 - IUCN Program Manager
- KII-IUCN-CR-01 - IUCN Country Representative

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- FGD-Farmers-01 - Farmer leaders and demo plot owners
- FGD-HubStaff-01 - IUCN Hub Coordinators and Field Officers

Document Review (DR)

- DR-2022-APR - TREPA Annual Performance Report 2022
- DR-2023-APR - TREPA Annual Performance Report 2023
- DR-2024-APR - TREPA Annual Performance Report 2024
- DR-2025-Q2-QPR - TREPA Quarterly Progress Report, Q2 2025
- DR-TREPA-ProDoc - TREPA Project Document
- DR-LogFrame-Annex-F - Logical Framework Indicators Performance Report (Annex F)

Other Sources

- OHW- Notes from the Outcome Harvesting Workshop with PMU and IPs
- SURV-2024-HH - 2024 TREPA Annual Household Survey Report

Green Climate Fund
Department of Monitoring,
Evaluation and Learning (DMEL)
OCSIO.DMEL@gcfund.org