

FINAL HANDOVER REPORT



BETWEEN



RWANDA ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

AND



KIREHE DISTRICT

FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF LDCF II PROJECT IN KIREHE DISTRICT

June 2023

1. INTRODUCTION OF LDCF II PROJECT

Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) implemented the project titled: “Building resilience of communities living in degraded forests, savannahs and wetlands of Rwanda through an Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approach”; abbreviated as LDCF II project an acronym for Least Developed Countries Fund. The project was funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) through United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under GEF Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), climate change adaptation focal area. The main objective of the project is to increase capacity of Rwandan authorities and local communities to adapt to climate change by implementing Ecosystem based Adaptation (EbA) interventions in degraded forests, savannahs and wetlands. The project was implemented in Gasabo, Kirehe, Kayonza, Bugesera, Ngororero, and Musanze Districts from 2017 to 2023.

The project had the following three components:

Component 1: National and local institutional capacities strengthened for implementation of EbA approach to increase resilience of local communities to climate change;

Component 2: EbA interventions that reduce vulnerability and restore natural capital;

Component 3: Policy, planning and legislation strengthened for adaptation to climate change.

In close collaboration between the Districts and REMA, LDCFII project was successfully implemented and reduced vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change to the local communities in the sites of the project intervention.

2. RATIONALE OF THE PROJECT

Kirehe District which is in savanna region is among the Districts in Rwanda that have undergone intensive deforestation in the last two decades, leading to degradation of savannas and forests, scarcity of wood fuels which is the sole source of energy, inter alia, and consequently increased vulnerability of local communities to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Rural landscapes of Mpanga Sector in Kirehe District consist of farmlands interspersed with savannas and forest areas. These landscapes support livelihoods of both farmers and

livestock keepers through a set of ecosystem services such as provisioning (food, fodder, medicines, construction materials and wood fuels); supporting (soil fertility, moisture, biodiversity); regulating (climate, water and air quality); and cultural and recreational services. These ecosystem services are essential for the resilience of the local communities to climate changes. However, these savannas and forests ecosystems are depleting and at risk due to high population density, increasing need for arable land, uncontrolled exploitation, and minimal application of conservation measures.

To reverse the trend and create conditions for the District's sustainable development, it was necessary to develop projects that improve local communities' livelihoods while preserving and conserving its natural resources.

3. OBJECTIVE OF LDCFII PROJECT IN KIREHE

a) General objective

The objective of this project is to restore degraded savanna and forests ecosystems in Kirehe District using Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approach to increase resilience of local communities to the observed and anticipated effects of climate change.

b) Specific objectives

- Restoration of degraded savannas and forests by planting 250 Ha of agroforestry, 68 Ha of indigenous species and 20 ha of fruit trees.
- Restoration of Rwampanga lakeshores with bamboo and plantation of agroforestry on 50 Ha.
- Support beekeeping project around Ibanda-Makera natural forest, including establishment of two (2) apiaries with 30 modern beehives each, construction of honey collection center, and supply of beekeeping equipment.
- Mobilize and sensitize the local population on the use of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approach to restore degraded savannas and forests ecosystems and on environmental policy and law in general;

- To mobilize local authorities and communities for ownership and sustainability of project activities.

4. LDCF II PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS IN KIREHE DISTRICT

Nº	Project achievements	Survival rate	Budget (frw)
1	Restoration of 250 Ha with agroforestry at Mushongi site	92%	92,473,824
	Restoration of 68 Ha of IBANDA-MAKERA savanna natural forest with indigenous species	94.6%	
	Plantation of 20 Ha of fruit trees in Kirehe District	80%	
2	Restoration of Rwampanga lakeshores with bamboo and plantation of agroforestry on 50 Ha	80%	31,414,353
3	Support local communities in bee keeping project, including supply and installation of beekeeping equipment and construction of honey collection center in Kirehe District	N/A	64,829,741

NB: Households that benefited directly from the project is 1012.

5. ILLUSTRATION OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS IN PICTURES



Ibanda Makera natural forest before restoration



Ibanda Makera natural forest after restoration



Ibanda Makera natural forest before restoration



Ibanda Makera natural forest after restoration



Training of beekeepers



Honey collection and selling point



Traditional beehives



Modern beehives



Mushongi agroforestry site before intervention



Mushongi agroforestry site after intervention



Lake Rwampanga buffer zone before restoration



Lake Rwampanga buffer zone before restoration

6. LDCF II PROJECT SUCCESS AND LESSON LEARNED

- a) **Capacity building:** The project beneficiaries have acquired appropriate knowledge and skills in the project related activities and thus can serve elsewhere in their communities for tree nursery preparation, tree plantation, and beekeeping projects. Local government officials in the District were empowered in EbA, monitoring and evaluation, and implementation and management of EbA related projects.
- b) **Social cohesion built:** The project has increased the social integration, cohesion, trust and solidarity among the community beneficiaries.

- c) **Job creation:** The project was implemented using community approach, thus provided jobs to the local communities, hence enabled them to earn income as well as creating in them the culture of saving and built their capacities on working with financial institutions.
- d) **Women Economic Empowerment:** The project was gender sensitive hence contributed to women economic empowerment.
- e) **Soil erosion control:** Planted trees and erosion control ditches to protect the buffer zones reduced runoff and minimized soil erosion.
- f) **Participatory approach:** The project was implementation through consultative and participatory approach, this generated behavioral change and boosted ownership of project outputs among the beneficiaries. Moreover, community based cooperatives were formed and supported.
- g) **Climate resilient opportunities and natural forest protection:** The project enhanced climate resilience of local communities, on the one hand through establishment of alternative livelihoods such beekeeping project, on the other hand bolstered protection and conservation of Ibanda-Makera natural forest.
- h) **Tree plantation:** Due to prolonged drought that is common in Kirehe District, it is imperative to prepare enough seedlings for beating up every year for the first three years of the project.

7. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure sustainability of the project outputs, the following measures were undertaken:

- a) Local communities were trained in management and maintenance of the project activities, as well as environmental protection and conservation, thus they have required skills to sustain project activities.
- b) Awareness campaigns on environmental laws, regulations and importance of conserving ecosystems as means of adapting to climate change were conducted. Beneficiary local communities are aware of laws and regulations on environmental protection and conservation, as well as importance of healthy ecosystems for their livelihoods.
- c) The project contributed to poverty reduction through support of livelihoods projects that are linked to the restored ecosystems, and hence increased local communities' guardianship of the restored ecosystems.
- d) Cooperatives were formed for supported livelihoods projects to ensure concerted efforts in sustaining the livelihoods projects and restored ecosystems.
- e) Members of the cooperatives contribute on seasonal basis to established cooperatives baskets to ensure availability of funds for maintenance of project activities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Kirehe District Authorities

- ❖ To continue the success of the project through mobilization and capacity building of key stakeholders and service providers: Capacity building is an ongoing process that is required to keep up with the ever-changing environment.
- ❖ Continuous monitoring of project activities, at least quarterly.

b) Local communities (Project Beneficiaries)

- ❖ Ensure regular maintenance of project activities.
- ❖ Ensure development of the established beekeeping cooperative.

Approved by:

Technical team

On behalf of Kirehe District

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On behalf of REMA

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