



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
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**Mid-term review of FAO-GEF project
GCP/BDI/040/GFF
GEF Project ID: 9178**

***“Food-IAP: Support for Sustainable Food Production and
Enhancement of Food Security and Climate Resilience in
Burundi's Highlands”***

**Final Report - Executive Summary
MTR conducted in December 2020**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Burundi, May 2021

Executive Summary

1. The IAP-FS project "Support for sustainable food production and enhancement of food security and climate resilience in Burundi's highlands " is financed by the GEF over a period of 5 years (2017-2022) for a GEF allocation (USD 7,396,330) and Co-Financing-IFAD, World Bank projects, MINEAGRIE, FAO- (Total USD 45,050,728).
2. The IAP-FS project aims to increase the adoption of improved and resilient production systems through integrated landscape management and the promotion of sustainable food value chains. It aims to address the main drivers of environmental degradation by providing a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving agricultural productivity in smallholder systems where food security is directly linked to agriculture. This approach will ensure that gender and nutrition are mainstreamed throughout the program and considered critical issues in addressing food insecurity. The project is implemented at several levels: national, provincial, and local. On the ground, it operates in the provinces of Gitega, Mwaro and Muramvya located in the agro-ecological system of the highlands east of the Congo-Nile watershed.
3. The mid-term evaluation covered all outputs for which indicators were expected at mid-term. It was conducted during the months of October, November and December 2020, i.e., from October 19 to December 15, 2020 by a team of two experts. The objective of the mid-term review was twofold: (i) to determine the progress made in achieving the expected results; (ii) to identify corrective actions and/or measures, if necessary.
4. This summary presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review.

Key Findings

Relevance:

Finding 1: The project is in line with national priorities (vision, policies, strategies, programs/plans) related to environment, agriculture, food security/nutrition and gender, as well as those of GEF and FAO. The project design took into account current GEF/LDCF and FAO policies and strategies.

Finding 2: The project is relevant to the three intervention zones. On the one hand, these areas share common environmental, socio-economic and institutional problems that hinder the increase in food availability and, on the other hand, there are opportunities to provide significant solutions to these problems. The project is also relevant to the beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Its action is appropriate to the context and complementary to existing interventions.

Effectiveness:

Finding 3: Several outputs have been achieved by the project in relation to outcome 1 since the start of implementation but very few have reached the expected level of achievement according to the mid-term indicators. The evaluation noted, among other things, that:

- *The operationalization of 03 GSADR-Ps in Mwaro, Gitega and Muramvya but the one expected at the national level has not been revitalized;*
- *Preliminary technical trainings and other initiatives to put in place knowledge sharing mechanisms at the national, provincial and local levels have been initiated but have not yet to be finalized. To date, no knowledge sharing mechanisms are operational;*
- *Consultations with community representatives of both sexes, including indigenous peoples, to develop harmonized guidelines for the implementation of Farmer Field Schools and interconnected value chains are being conducted. The same consultations were held in the implementation of the CSIF (Country Strategy Investment Framework for SLM) at the provincial, communal and watershed levels*
- *The national strategy for harmonization of the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) approach has been finalized, as have the harmonized FFS guidelines, but without taking into account the concerns of indigenous peoples; the roadmap for institutionalization of FFS at the national level is being developed*
- *The 09 community watershed management plans have been drawn up. These documents, which are expected to be ready in the middle of the year, are of major importance for the technical management of all watershed facilities.*

Finding 4: The 09 micro-watershed management plans have been developed and implemented. Different actors including Communities, FFS groups and Cooperatives are implementing the management plans using combined SLM technologies and INRM approaches. In addition, the capacities of master trainers and facilitators are being strengthened. These capacity-building rounds have helped to introduce sustainable agriculture practices, SLM/INRM, value chains, nutrition into the national FFS curricula and facilitate their adoption in the watersheds. The areas and agro-ecological systems exploited in integrated natural resource/landscape management and according to good SLM practices are increasing. These increased areas ensure increased production (see production and sustainable livelihoods monitoring tables) because of various training and coaching provided by the project. Various improved SLM practices (Crop rotation, Agroforestry 79%, Agro-sylvo-pastoral integration, Intercropping, Contour lines: 56%), are adopted in a combined approach, monitored and not documented for the time being as part of the knowledge management and good practices put in place by the project.

Aspects of agro-biodiversity are not yet taken into account, even though specific training has been provided to communities and surveys have been conducted at the household level. On the other hand, the Ministry of the Environment is taking into account forest genetics issues with a view to improving the genetics of seedlings (establishment of seedbeds, training of harvesters, treatment and packaging of forest seeds).

Finding 5: The trainings of technicians from institutions involved in participatory impact monitoring have been completed. The application of the same tools by farmers for impact monitoring and analysis, as an impressive number of them apply the said tools but do not yet share the results because no sharing mechanism has been put in place by the project.

A project monitoring and evaluation document has been developed, but the application of the tools proposed in this document remains problematic, especially at the FFS level. Also, the expected consultations for the elaboration of the National Manual of harmonized monitoring-evaluation of SLM/IRM projects and initiatives (aligned with the SDGs) are not yet effective. The evaluation also noted that the various targeted technical communications, compilation and sharing of INRM impacts are not also being carried out.

Efficiency:

Finding 6: The project promotes the use of local expertise through the involvement and mobilization of the deconcentrated technical services of MINEAGRIE at all levels of project intervention. Local labor for various works is also available free of charge through the members of the FFS. This approach valorizes resources by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise) into results in the fastest and least expensive way compared to other solutions.

Sustainability:

Finding 7: The project has begun to lay the groundwork for environmental, economic, social and capacity development sustainability. FFS have already begun to take ownership of the project's interventions through the 3 pillars of the resilience fund approach:

- (i) the technical pillar: techniques adapted to the development and protection of watersheds as well as good practices in seed multiplication and techniques for setting up vegetable gardens have been mastered;
- (ii) the economic pillar: the FFS have increased their productive capital through savings and credit according to the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model;
- (iii) the social pillar: the FFS have set up community listening clubs (CECs) which have strengthened their inclusion and social cohesion.

However, the current operational structures alone are not sufficient to guarantee the sustainability of the project activities at this stage. There is an urgent need to intensify the activities of setting up these community structures to strengthen the sustainability of the project's achievements and to create links with the communal, provincial and national levels so that each level of intervention effectively plays its role for a more global sustainability (financial, socio-political, institutional and governance, environmental).

Factors affecting performance

Financial management and mobilization of planned co-financing:

Finding 8: The expected in-kind co-financing will not have fully materialized because two of the projects that were expected to provide co-financing ended before the closure of the project

without having made available all the expected co-financing. It is likely that at the end of the project this situation will negatively affect the results in terms of value chain promotion. With regard to the financial management of the project, the evaluation was unable to reach a conclusion because no audit was conducted.

Application of an M&E system:

Finding 9: The monitoring and evaluation document exists. It is useful for the project because conceptually it presents a number of well-designed tools for data collection. However, several monitoring and evaluation tools for SLM require international expertise that is not always available. Also, at the beneficiary level, mainly at the FFS level, despite the simplification of the monitoring-evaluation tools, several pieces of information are not captured and do not reach the central level.

Project design and preparation for implementation:

Finding 10: The project design was participatory with the involvement of all stakeholders. Most of the project partners are able to contribute significantly to its implementation. In Gitega and Mwaro provinces, service providers are more efficient than in Muramvya. With regard to adequate adaptation to changes in the context during its implementation, the project experienced a significant delay at the beginning of its implementation, a halt in activities following the COVID 19 pandemic and a change in the State's strategic vision, which wanted to move from the FFS to the "outreach center. In relation to these changes, only the COVID situation was not well managed.

Project Coordination Mechanisms:

Finding 11: The project has put in place an excellent coordination mechanism that provides for decision-making bodies at the national level, namely the FAO, MINEAGRIE and the NPSC (National Project Steering Committee). At the operational level, there are, among others, the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), the 04 focal points, 01 at the national level and 03 at the provincial level. Service providers and 62 FFS facilitators, all of whom operate at the level of all project beneficiaries in the field, assist the PCU and the three focal points. In addition to this organization, monthly programming meetings are held regularly between the project, the technical services and the communities to evaluate the activities carried out and plan other activities for the following month. It is also important to note the holding of 03 Steering Committees of the project since the beginning of its implementation.

Project partnerships and stakeholder participation:

Findings 12: The project has four focal points, one at the national level and 03 at the provincial level. In addition, a number of collaboration protocols have been signed and joint actions have already been initiated and undertaken, notably with ISABU, OBPE, IGEBU, DGA, BPEAE, and others are being finalized, notably with the BBN. These protocols were signed based on the

sovereign mandates of the state structures partners of the project and on the quality of the skills of the other providers. In this list of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender (MDHASG), an essential government stakeholder for gender issues, is absent.

Project implementation, including project management (implementation modality as well as participation of counterparts and different stakeholders).

Finding 13: In concrete terms, the project involves 3 provincial experts, 18 communal technicians and 35 BEPEAE zone assistants who are close to the project's target groups. Five (5) memoranda of understanding have already been signed between various permanent government structures (ISABU, DGA, BEPEAE) to support the project in certain specific areas of expertise and two others are awaiting signature, namely with DGEREA and IGEBU. These structures will even perpetuate the actions after the end of the project. In addition, the project works with service providers such as ADISCO, APROCUVI, ADRSEPAL, and BIOVERSITY.

Project implementation, including supervision by FAO (BH, FTP and FLO), support activities and overall PMU contribution.

Finding 15: Based on interviews, the project PMU has the skills to produce and conduct activities. All positions are filled. It is important to note the replacement of the project's first value chain expert by the project coordination. This replacement has been beneficial according to several stakeholders. Supervision by FAO (BH, FTP and FLO) is effective. It is done through meetings and supervision missions. However, there are misunderstandings between the administration of the FAO Country Office and the PMU regarding the application of procurement procedures and the cumbersome processing of project files. These misunderstandings have a negative impact on the implementation of project activities.

Communication, Public Awareness and Knowledge Management:

Finding 16: The project has developed a communication strategy that integrates public awareness and knowledge management aspects. This communication strategy is being implemented in an embryonic way through the organization of 03 exchange visits and the production of a few information notes on the farmers' field schools and the landscape approach, the FFSs, a summary of information on the project and the monitoring-evaluation.

Cross-cutting dimensions

Gender

Finding 17: The project has strongly involved women in all of its activities, particularly in training, group structuring, consultations in the context of institutionalizing the FFS approach, and more specifically in the RWHs, as well as in the day-to-day practices of technical activities related to SLM practices and sustainable agro-sylvo-pastoral systems. In addition, the evaluation

observes a timid participation of women in strategic activities related to activities other than FFS practices.

Issues related to indigenous populations and minorities

Finding 18: Issues related to indigenous populations are taken into account by the project. Consultations to obtain the Free, Prior and informed Consent of the indigenous populations (FPIC) of the provinces of Gitega, Muramvya and Mwaro have been completed and the interim report is available. This report will make it possible to formulate recommendations to increase the support and participation of the indigenous populations in the Project's activities.

Social and Environmental Safeguards

Finding 19: The assessments and risk status in relation to Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESGS) at mid-term are identical to those at the project design phase. This finding is the same as that contained in the IRP covering the period July 2019 to September 2020. Indeed, this project does not cause any damage to the environment or to any stakeholder; on the contrary it is a solution to the socio-environmental problems identified since its conception. Thus, the overall risk assessment is low. However, in order to increase the adhesion of the indigenous populations to the project, a financial provision of 33,000 euros is to be foreseen according to the provisional report on the FPIC.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Relevance.

The overall project relevance is rated highly satisfactory (HS) because its design took into account most of the current policies, strategies, programs and plans of the GEF, FAO and Burundi, particularly those related to the specific project objectives. Also, the project is relevant to the areas of intervention, and to its overall objective.

Conclusion 2: Effectiveness.

With regard to output 1: the GSADR-N does not function. The functioning of the GSADR-P alone does not solve the targeted problem of integrating SLM/INRM into the institutional, political and legal framework at the national level because if discussions on strategic issues remain at the provincial level, it is known that high-level political decisions will have to be made at the national level. Regarding the knowledge sharing mechanism, the project has trained Ministry of Agriculture officials at the central and provincial levels in the use of SLM tools such as Collect Earth, LADA-WOCAT and DATAR to produce a report each year. Contrary to what was planned, none of the tools that have been developed are still functional after 3 years of implementation.

Regarding output 2: The 09 Action Plans for 09 targeted watersheds, including the biophysical and socio-economic characterization and the main priorities for combating land degradation and poverty in each watershed were developed using the LADA tool for the baseline situation.

The observations made during field visits and the reports exploited demonstrate sufficiently that areas and agro-ecological systems exploited in integrated natural resources/landscape management and according to good SLM practices are increasing.

Still in the perspective of INRM, the project has produced and planted 3,654,805 forest, agroforestry and fruit plants. The project has also contributed to the stabilization of 147 km of banks of the Kayokwe, Waga and Ruvyironza rivers with 50,000 bamboo plants produced in nurseries, the erosion control with 445 km of contour lines, the realization of hill irrigation and the establishment of a hydro-agricultural micro-dam in the commune of Giheta, Gitega province

From the expected progress, it appears that all training modules have been developed. The evaluation notes that 100 facilitators are trained on the RWH methodology and various technical topics including sustainable agriculture, SLM/INRM, value chains and nutrition. In addition, as part of improving the livelihoods of beneficiaries, the project has, among other things:

- (i) the dissemination of 30 tons of potato seeds, 2 tons of wheat and vegetable seeds;
- (ii) the distribution of inputs for mushrooms to 43 FFS, i.e. 1205 households, 200 modern beehives, 1290 pigs for the first 43 FFS and equipment for honey processing such as honey extractors, solar certification, agri-food processing distributed to 6 FFS around the Kibira National Park;
- (iii) Initiate Village Saving Loan Association (VSLA) for mutual aid and social cohesion.

Based on interviews with the project team and findings from field visits, it appears that the project is indeed working with the Village Savings Loan Association (VSLA) approach. Indeed, 43 FFSs work consistently on the three pillars of the resilience fund approach:

- (i) the technical pillar: techniques adapted to the development and protection of watersheds as well as good practices in seed multiplication and techniques for setting up vegetable gardens have been mastered;
- (ii) the economic pillar: the FFSs have increased their productive capital through savings and credit according to the village savings and Loan association (VSLA) model;
- (iii) the social pillar: the FFSs have set up DIMITRA clubs which have strengthened their inclusion and social cohesion. The village savings and Loan association approach implemented by the project, although very effective, has not been sufficiently highlighted and promoted by the project because no indicator relating to it has been clearly developed in the project's monitoring and evaluation system with regard to the economic and social pillars.

Leadership in terms of sustainable value chains is in its infancy, requiring structuring into cooperatives and several rounds of capacity building on multiple themes related to the development of agricultural value chains, according to field observations and exchanges with project experts.

However, in three years of implementation, some activities raise questions due to their low level of achievement. Among others, there are:

- (i) the promotion of orphan crops that are not interesting for the communities even though they could present an economic advantage;
- (ii) the creation of forest stands because on the operational level there are difficulties in finding sites for the installation of such stands by complying with the norms, but according to the project, the 18 reforestation sites expected at the end of the project are already installed. The difficulty in finding reforestation sites also arises at the level of school gardens, but for this specific case, it should be taken as educational actions that do not require large spaces;
- (iii) Very few households have introduced new crops (including endangered crops) about 4%. The creation of a system of in situ seed bank and farmer's production of adapted varieties to promote local food systems and better nutrition (provided for in the LoA with Biodiversity International). In view of the difficulties raised in relation to the problematic activities, the evaluation proposes their reformulation. This reformulation will take into account the project objectives and especially the concerns of the beneficiaries.

With regard to result 3, it is expected that: a monitoring and evaluation document for the project has been developed, but the application of the tools proposed in the framework of this document remains problematic, especially at the FFS level. Also, the expected consultations for the elaboration of the National Manual of harmonized monitoring-evaluation of SLM/INRM projects and initiatives (aligned with the SDGs) are not yet effective. The evaluation also noted that the various targeted technical communications, compilation and sharing of INRM impacts are not equally carried out

The majority of the indicators for the expected mid-term outputs taken as a whole have not been achieved. This situation can be explained by the fact that the project was delayed at the start of the project and also that the COVID 19 pandemic imposed a halt in activity for approximately six months. The effectiveness of the project is therefore rated Moderately Satisfactory (MS). Therefore, progress towards achieving the project objective of increasing the adoption of improved and resilient production systems for sustainable food security and nutrition through integrated landscape management and sustainable food value chains is rated Moderately Satisfactory (MS). The same is true for the overall progress of implementation.

Finding 3: Efficiency:

This criterion was found to be moderately satisfactory (MS). The project experienced a 12-month delay in its implementation. Notwithstanding the suspension of field activities related to COVID 19, the project could have focused during this time on activities that do not require physical contact to improve its low disbursement rate and adapt to changing situations. We can cite, among others, the acceleration of the procurement process and the management of orders materials for value chains, the structuring of an adapted knowledge-sharing mechanism, the revitalization of the GSADR-N through virtual meetings, etc.

Conclusion 4: Sustainability.

In sum, multi-stakeholder platforms are not yet in place at the hill level even though the review notes scattered efforts made by some FFSs. For the review, the current operational structures alone are not sufficient to guarantee the sustainability of project activities at this stage. There is an urgent need to intensify the activities of setting up these community structures to strengthen the sustainability of the project's achievements and to create links with the communal, provincial and national levels so that each level of intervention effectively plays its role for a more global sustainability (financial, socio-political, institutional and governance, environmental and social). In view of the above, the sustainability is Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks.

Conclusion on factors affecting performance

With regard to the mobilization and management of co-financing, this criterion is moderately unsatisfactory (IS). The project will not mobilize the expected 100 percent of in-kind co-financing because the co-financing from the World Bank's PRODEMA and PADZOC projects is 63.33 percent and 19.84 percent respectively. These two projects have closed while the present project is still being implemented.

Regarding the application of the monitoring and evaluation system, the evaluation assesses the development of the indicator-monitoring document. In the evaluation's view, this document is not sufficiently used by the project team, mainly with regard to the collection of data related to the FFS. Under these conditions, one of the key roles of the M&E system, which is to induce strategic changes during the implementation of the project, may not be achieved. In addition, the M&E system includes several tools that require prior training for proper use. However, the trainers, who are mainly international experts, are not always available. Based on these observations, the evaluation finds this criterion to be **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

With regard to project design and preparation for implementation, all the interventions implemented by the project were defined in a participatory manner by the project beneficiaries through consultation workshops organized from the commune level to the province level. With regard to adequate adaptation to the changes in the context that occurred during its implementation, the project experienced a significant delay at the beginning of its implementation. In relation to these changes, only the situation of COVID was not well managed. With regard to the two elements of change (a halt in activities following the COVID 19 pandemic and a change in the State's strategic vision, which wanted to move from the FFSs to the "outreach center"), while the project did demonstrate to the Government the complementarity between the FFS and the "outreach centers". The project was not able to adapt to the changing conditions (COVID 19) in order to improve the efficiency of its implementation. During this time, the project could have emphasized activities that did not require physical contact and adapted to changing conditions. On this basis, this criterion is rated **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

Regarding the project coordination mechanism, at the institutional level, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) finances the project and FAO is the Project Executing Agency. The

Project is under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock (MINEAGRIE) where this Ministry is present at all levels of its implementation. At the decision-making level, a National Project Steering Committee appointed by the Minister coordinates the Project and where the Project Coordinator provides the Secretariat. The Minister has appointed a Project Focal Point who acts as an interface between the Coordination Unit and the Ministry. At the operational level, a Provincial Focal Point (PFP) of the Project has been designated by each Provincial Environment, Agriculture and Livestock Office (BPEAE) to ensure daily coordination and monitoring of all project interventions in the province. At the commune level, agronomists and communal veterinarians are facilitators of the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in the commune. In the hills, basic supervisors (Moniteurs) from MINEAGRIE are generally presidents of the Farmer Field Schools. This institutional arrangement is **Highly satisfactory (HS)** not only because it achieves coverage of the project at the micro (communities/FFSs; Hills; Communes), meso (Provinces) and macro (National) levels but also because it involves several types of stakeholders.

With respect to project partnerships and stakeholder participation, the evaluation finds the results **Satisfactory (S)**. 05 protocols (ISABU, DGA, BEPEAE) to accompany the project in some specific expertise and 2 others are pending signature, namely the one with DGEREA and IGEBU) of collaboration are signed with the state structures and 04 with NGOs/service providers namely ADISCO, APROCUVI, ADRSEPAL, BIOVERSITY. All these partners are concerned with the integrated management of natural resources, the improvement of communities' livelihoods and the improvement of food security and the fight against climate change. In this list of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender (MDHASG), a key government stakeholder for gender issues, is absent.

These partnerships are functional in the other project provinces, but not in Muramvya. In Muramvya province, it appears that the service provider "ADRA" initially planned for the supervision of the FFS has not been recruited or replaced by another with the same skills. This shortcoming is at the root of several shortcomings noted at the level of certain FFSs.

At the operational level and in its area of intervention, the project works with other projects/programs working in integrated natural resource management and value chain development. The projects/programs already in synergy with the project are PRODEFI, PRODEMA and PADZOC.

Regarding the project implementation, including supervision by FAO (BH, FTP and FLO), support activities and the overall contribution of the PMU, it appears that the project PMU has the skills to produce and carry out activities. All positions are filled. Supervision by FAO (BH, FTP and FLO) is effective. It is done through meetings and supervision missions. However, there are misunderstandings between the administration of the FAO Country Office and the PMU regarding the application of procurement procedures and the cumbersome processing of project files. These misunderstandings have a negative impact on the implementation of project activities.

With regard to communication, public awareness and knowledge management, it appears that the communication strategy is not yet fully functional, thus inhibiting all actions related to public awareness and knowledge management. The evaluation noted very embryonic communication actions that do not reflect expectations

Finding 16:

Conclusion on cross-cutting dimensions

Conclusion 6: Gender:

At the beginning of the project, a baseline study highlighting gender took place during project formulation with the SHARP tool. These elements are included in the Prodoc. However, at the operational level, the project has taken into account the involvement of women because they are the majority in the FFS activities and the value chains supported by the project. However, certain needs specific to women and youth must be better taken into account and well-illustrated in the monitoring-evaluation system, particularly with regard to the development of guide documents, training materials at the FFS level, and respect for the representation of women and youth in all decision-making bodies.

For the evaluation of the effectiveness of the inclusion of women in the project's activities, the rating is **satisfactory (S)**

With regard to issues related to indigenous populations and minorities, they are effectively taken into account. A study is currently being finalized by the project. The study shows that indigenous populations have a low participation rate in the projects implemented by the FAO for several reasons, including lack of awareness and information, contribution fees constituting working capital, extreme poverty, and lack of food, manure, landed property, small livestock, professional trades, and school materials for children. Several factors explain this situation: exclusion and/or self-exclusion, non-participation in meetings organized at the hill level, lack of short-, medium- and long-term vision due to extreme poverty, and poor access to communication channels. This makes their social integration at the global level and in the implementation of the project problematic.

With regard to social and environmental safeguards, the assessments and risk status in relation to Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESG) at mid-term are identical to those at the project design phase. Indeed, this project does not cause any damage to the environment or to any stakeholder; on the contrary, it is a solution to the socio-environmental problems identified since its conception. Thus, the overall risk assessment is low. However, in order to increase the adhesion of the indigenous populations to the project, a financial provision of 33,000 euros is to be foreseen according to the provisional report on the FPIC.

Recommendations:

❖ **For the Government of Burundi**

Recommendation 1: Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms and knowledge-sharing mechanism: Expand the mandate of the GSADR to include considerations related to the knowledge-sharing mechanism (WOCAT-DATAR Group), the management of good practices (Communal Platform on Good Practices), the sharing of results related to impact analysis, and dissolve the groups related to these different mandates. Concentrate the mandates and objectives of the project within a single structure (GSADR) at any level.

❖ **To the FAO Country Office**

Recommendation 2: Establish a dynamic with the Sub-regional Office to create an expert pool at the national and/or regional level:

1. Form a pool of experts at the regional level for the tools: Exact, DATAR, WOCAT with a view to having national and sub-regional expertise available and at a lower cost in order to overcome the difficulty of not having international experts available. Each country hosting the IAP-FS project will be able to contribute so that the experts from the headquarters can facilitate the training of this pool of country experts, thus each project will realize financial gains and gain in time and competence.

❖ **For the Project Management Unit (PMU)**

Recommendation 3: Transform the Community Watershed Management Plans into a "bankable" document and facilitate ownership of the watershed management plans once the management committees are in place.

2. To annex to the Community Watershed Management Plans a financial estimate of the management operations to be carried out and a budget in order to have a real "Shopping document" able to mobilize other financing from the various donors.

3. In addition, the project should organize working sessions with each of the watershed management committees once they are set up to facilitate the appropriation of the content of the management plans by the members. The project should have put in place a strategy for structuring the groups as soon as it is implemented in order to complete these activities very quickly. To this end, the project must identify all the activities requiring structuring (Watershed Committees, GSADR-N and its branches, etc.), theoretically map out their structuring and operation, then set them up and finally make them operational (in fact, this is the constructive approach of a functional group).

Recommendation 4: Highlight the Resilience Fund approach implemented by the project.

4. Highlight the Resilience Fund approach in the logframe and implementation reports. The Resilience Fund approach implemented by the project, although very effective, is not sufficiently

highlighted and promoted by the project because no related indicators are clearly developed in the project's monitoring and evaluation system for the economic and social pillars.

Recommendation 5: Produce initial capitalization documents on knowledge management

The evaluation recommends that the project produce simple materials in the local language, "Kirundi"-and also in pictorial form, radio programs, videos, plays, etc., to disseminate messages more effectively. This strengthens SLM/INRM integration and awareness of the many synergistic benefits of SLM technologies. The institutionalization of the RWH approach underway with the ministry's extension services will also strengthen the knowledge sharing mechanism. The project can also produce a map of all reforested areas.

Recommendation 6: consolidate the structuring, functioning of existing FFSs, promote pilot value chains, and take into account the concerns of indigenous populations

In order to guarantee the achievement of the objectives related to the FFS, the project should no longer set up new FFS but rather consolidate the structuring, operation and close monitoring of the 106 existing FFSs in order to improve their effectiveness.

Given the complexity of setting up a complete value chain, it is desirable that the project develop 03 pilot value chains (one in each province) and communicate sufficiently on the success factors and pitfalls. This approach will be demonstrated to the FFSs/Cooperatives, communities and other key stakeholders with a view to stimulating their greater involvement in the value chain development process.

For indigenous populations, as recommended in the consultation document, a communication strategy will have to be put in place that is adapted to this specific group, for the most part; the illiteracy rate is very high. Thus, the opening of the information space via the communication channels and the implementation of specific projects designed for and by them will allow to better integrate them in the project.

Recommendation 7: Identify good practices according to the FAO approach and share knowledge of them with stakeholders.

Use the FAO framework and approach to identify Good Practices. To this end, the project must first develop the related identification strategy and put in place the appropriate mechanism at all levels of project intervention.

Recommendation 8: Organize additional training for the 15 other untrained managers to set up a functional system for collecting data on impact indicators related to household food security, resilience and nutritional aspects.

Recommendation 9: Continuously document all quantitative and qualitative data related to the project's implementation at the FFS level. To this end, a file for each FFS must be developed to highlight the strengths that have contributed to the FFS success, as well as the

weaknesses that still undermine the smooth implementation of the FFS activities. A synthesis report will be consolidated for all the FFSs, and will allow to judge the degree of maturity by FFS or by groups of FFS. In turn, the degree of maturity will serve as a basis for the organization of exchanges of experience, knowledge management on good practices and synergy between FFSs.

❖ **For the FAO Country Office**

Recommendation 10: Improve the speed of the project's procurement process through greater involvement of the FAO Country Office and clarify misunderstandings about procedures in order to anticipate possible blockages in the project's implementation.

Although this situation is recurrent in most FAO projects, it is important that the FAO Burundi office be more involved in facilitating project procurement while respecting the related procedures. A system of anticipation can be put in place in order to avoid serious consequences on certain sensitive activities related, for example, to agricultural production, which is very demanding in terms of respecting certain growing seasons.

Recommendation 11: Request an extension of the project for 12 months and re-budget the remaining activities, prioritizing those related to improving the living conditions of the local beneficiary communities. It will also be necessary to take into account the new activities resulting from the recommendations of the MTR.

At mid-term, co-financing from the World Bank's PRODEMA and PADZOC projects is 63.33% and 19.84% respectively. These two projects have closed while the present project is still active. As a result, a new budgeting of the remaining activities, taking into account this co-financing deficit, is required. This budget revision should reduce the imbalance in the distribution of the budget between activities related to capacity building and activities to improve community livelihoods. Furthermore, given that the project still has about 65% of its financial resources, with less than 20 months before the end of the project, and that the project experienced a delay at the start and a significant slowdown in activities in 2020 over six months following the COVID 19 pandemic, the evaluation recommends a one-year extension without financial impact in order to allow the project to complete the implementation of all of its activities. However, the revision of the logical framework to take into account the indicators proposed by the MTR is an important prerequisite. This revision must also take into account the new activities resulting from the MTR recommendations.

GEF Evaluation Criteria Assessment Table

FAO - GEF Rating Scheme	Rating	Summary Comments ¹
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¹ Include hyperlink to relevant sections in the report

1)Relevance		
Overall relevance of the project	HS	Conclusion 1 : Relevance.
2) RESULTS OBTAINED (EFFECTIVENESS)		
Overall assessment of project results	MS	Conclusion 2 : EFFECTIVENESS
Outcome 1: Functional multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms to support policies and institutions and knowledge sharing on sustainable agriculture and sustainable Land Management/Integrated Natural Resources Management	MS	Only the GSADR-PS are in place in the three provinces. The GSADR-N has not yet been revitalized. In addition, the knowledge sharing mechanism is not functional.
Outcome 2 : Increased area and agro-ecosystems under integrated natural resource and landscape management and supported by FFS and sustainable value chains for increased production and sustainable livelihoods	MS	The project has already contributed to increasing the area and agro-ecosystems under integrated natural resource and landscape management and supported by FFS. But no sustainable value chains for increased production and sustainable livelihoods are in place
Outcome 3: A monitoring and evaluation plan in place and stakeholders' capacities strengthened through the monitoring of activities, experiences and impacts shared for decision making	MS	An excellent monitoring and evaluation plan exists, but stakeholders are not able to monitor the impacts of the project. Also, FFS members are not able to capitalize on all project activities and experiences.
3) EFFICIENCY, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & EXECUTION		
Overall quality of project implementation and adaptive management (implementing agency)	MS	Conclusion 3 : Efficiency :
Quality of execution (execution agencies)	MS	The disbursement rate is low, about 35%. Also, the FAO procurement procedures are a major constraint for both service providers and the project team
Efficiency (including cost effectiveness and timeliness)	MS	Conclusion 2 : effectiveness.
4) MONITORING - Evaluation		
General Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation	MS	Conclusion 4 : Monitoring - Evaluation
Design of monitoring and evaluation at the start of the project	S	The monitoring and evaluation document is of good quality, including the data collection tools
Implementation of monitoring and evaluation	MS	The collection of information at the local level is not always well done, given the discrepancy between the flow of information at the FFS level and the information available in Bujumbura
5) Sustainability		
Overall Sustainability	MP	Financial resources : MPP Socio-Politic : MS Institutional framework and governance : MS

		Environmental : P
6) Stakeholders Engagement		
Overall quality of stakeholder engagement	S	The project has four focal points, one at the national level and three at the provincial level. In addition, a number of collaboration protocols have been signed and joint actions have already been initiated and undertaken, notably with ISABU, OBPE, IGEBU, DGA, BPEAE, ADISCO, APROCUVI and others are being finalized, notably with the BBN. These protocols were signed based on the sovereign mandates of the state structures that are partners in the project and on the quality of the skills of the other providers. It is important to note the absence of the Ministry of Gender