

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10209
Project Name:	Eldoret-Iten Water Fund for Tropical Water Tower Conservation
Countr(ies):	Kenya
Implementing Agency:	IFAD

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Eldoret-Iten Water Fund for Tropical Water Tower Conservation

Country

Kenya

GEF ID

10209

Implementing Agency

IFAD

Executing Entity

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Co-executing agencies: Kenya
Water Towers Agency (KWTa), Kenya Forest Service (KFS)

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/11/2026

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2026 , 3rd PIR

Objective

Conserve globally significant biodiversity and protect the integrity and resilience of critical ecosystems and their services in the targeted water towers

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Highly Satisfactory

Development Objective

Highly Satisfactory

Overall risk

Moderate Risk

Project Financing

2,880,000.00

Cumulative Disbursement

2,602,673.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

6/3/2022

Agency Approval

6/3/2023

Implementation Start

1/2/2023

First Disbursement

3/8/2024

Expected MTR 7/21/2025	Actual MTR 10/28/2025
Expected Completion 3/30/2027	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Component 1: Establishment of a public-private partnership platform and enabling policies for sustainable management of the targeted water tower (catchments)

1.1.1 Assessment of enabling conditions for scaling up WF

A legal consultant was engaged to develop the governance and legal structures for the Water Fund. A comprehensive report was subsequently prepared and validated by stakeholders (Annex 1). Following extensive consultations, stakeholders unanimously agreed to establish the Water Fund as a Charitable Trust, like the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund.

As part of the Trust establishment process, TNC is leading identification and appointment of members to the Board of Trustees and Board of Management of the Eldoret Iten Water Fund (EIWF). Registration of EIWF as a Charitable Trust under Trustees Perpetual Succession) Act, Cap. 164, Laws of Kenya is underway, with legal consultant engaged by TNC to support completion of the registration process by December 2026.

In parallel, progress has been made towards capitalization of the planned USD 4 million endowment fund. An endowment campaign is currently being developed with technical support from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) fundraising team coordinated by EIWF Fundraising Subcommittee chaired by the Managing Director of Eldoret Water and Sanitation Company (ELDOWAS). The subcommittee includes representatives from Almasi Beverages Limited (Coca-Cola Beverages Africa), Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu County Government and Khetia Drapers Limited. Engagement with potential contributors has already commenced, and the formal launch of the fundraising campaign is planned for October 2026 with support from Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) county chapters and the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu. The campaign seeks to secure long-term financing from public-sector institutions, water users, businesses, philanthropies, and private-sector partners.

A milestone achieved towards endowment campaign is ELDOWAS commitment to allocate 2% of water tariff revenues for watershed conservation with the supporting policy framework currently under development. In addition, a Carbon Project Identification Note (PIN) has been approved by Plan Vivo, paving way for the development of Carbon Project Design Documents (PDDs). Once completed, this will enable the generation and sale of carbon credits, with proceeds earmarked for investment into the endowment fund.

Activities required prior to project closure are: (i) completion of the legal registration of the EIWF Trust; (ii) formal appointment and operationalization of the Board of Trustees and Board of Management; (iii) launch and implementation of the endowment campaign; and (iv) mobilization of USD 4 million in endowment capital, together with sufficient operational financing to support the first three years of post-project implementation and ensure a sustainable transition to a fully operational Water Fund by March 2027.

The Mid Term Review (MTR) identified delays in Water Fund governance establishment, Trust registration, and endowment capitalization as sustainability risks. To address these challenges, the project secured a no-cost extension to March 2027, initiated registration of the EIWF Charitable Trust, advanced appointment of governance bodies, and commenced implementation of the endowment fundraising strategy.

1.2.1: Enabling by-laws/regulations enacted in 2 target counties (Uasin Gishu & Elgeyo-Marakwet)

Through continued engagement with the County Governments of Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu, the EIWF project has contributed to the enactment and implementation of several County Acts and policies since the project's inception in 2017. The policies and Acts include;

- Climate Change Policy 2020,
- Sustainable Forestry and Tree Growing Policy, 2020,
- County Charcoal Act, 2017,
- Climate Change Fund Act, 2021
- Sustainable Forestry and Tree Growing Bill, 2021
- County Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027) for Uasin Gishu County
- County Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027) for Elgeyo Marakwet County Climate Change Policy 2020

During the reporting period, four County Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings were convened, during which priority actions were agreed to strengthen implementation of these policies. These included enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems, tracking implementation progress, integrating priority actions into county plans and budgets, and strengthening coordination among relevant county departments and stakeholders. All these policies are now under implementation, supported by existing institutional arrangements, budget allocations, and county planning frameworks, with continued progress dependent on sustained political commitment, resource allocation, and effective inter-agency coordination.

In addition, the CAC identified the development of new policy frameworks to strengthen management of shared and transboundary natural resources across Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu counties. These include an Inter-County Riparian Management Policy and an Elgeyo Hills Escarpment Management Policy, both of which have been identified as priorities for future consideration and development.

Component 2: Restoration of degraded catchment and wetland ecosystems and improved production practices and food value chains in the WF areas

2.1.1 Enhanced awareness and skills of local communities to engage in participatory land-use planning in support of LDN

The project has empowered eleven (11) community groups (seven Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and four Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs)) against a target of ten (10) community groups responsible for critical forest areas and primary water sources. The program has identified and onboarded 43,413 beneficiaries and is supporting them in carrying out conservation activities as determined in their respective Farm Specific Action Plans (FSAPs). Out of these, 7,490 (2,772-Female, 4,718-Male, 2,477-Youth, 200 IPs & 44-PWDs) have put over 75% of their land under Sustainable Land Management (category 3&4), and 35,923 beneficiaries are at different levels (category 1&2) of implementation of activities. These efforts are conducted at the farm level, where trained agricultural extension officers work directly with farmers to develop tailored Farm-Specific Action Plans (FSAPs). The project continuously monitors the progress of each plan to ensure complete conservation of the targeted farms.

To support this, the project established a Short Messaging System (SMS) platform with 43,413 registered farmers, exceeding its target of 5,000 farmers. Of these, 39.31% are women, significantly higher than the national average of 24% for female-headed households. The platform is regularly updated with project interventions and provides free agricultural extension and climate advisory support via SMS. The age distribution of registered farmers is as follows: 55.94% are adults (36–60 years old), 33.07% are youth (18–35 years old), and 10.98% are elderly (over 60 years old).

2.1.2: A participatory catchment management plan for the EIWF is established and adopted for implementation, in line with existing management plans at the catchment and sub-catchment levels, covering an area of 120,000 ha.

The project developed and launched two Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs), which are currently being implemented, and is supporting implementation of four additional plans across the catchment. The newly developed plans are for the Cheptongei (23,350.7 Ha) and Cherangany forest (20,215 Ha) areas. These plans were developed in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Community Forest Associations (CFAs), and other local stakeholders. The PFMPs were launched in Cherangany in August 2025. During the current implementation period, EIWF implemented PFMP action plans which include the establishment of indigenous tree nurseries to raise 1000,000 trees, recruitment and training of six scouts to support KFS in protecting the restored forested areas, conducting environmental awareness on forest-adjacent communities, protection of natural regeneration through the establishment of enclosures, among other activities listed in the action plan.

In addition, the project worked with the Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs) and the Water Resources Authority (WRA) to implement action plans under the current Sub-Catchment Management Plan (SCMP) for the Chepkongony WRUA in the Kipkaren River catchment and the Moiben Sub-Catchment Plan. EIWF supported the training of Water Resources Users in with support from Water Resources Authority (WRA). The training covered Upper Sosiani, Kipkabus, Ainabkoi-Kesses, Moiben and Chepkongony WRUAs in February 2026. In addition, the project supported WRUAs in undertaking riparian restoration, sensitizing communities living along riparian areas on Soil, Water, and Land Conservation, and highlighting the need to cut down invasive tree species such as eucalyptus along the riparian areas. The other activity supported by the project was the engagement of WRUAs in wetland restoration, through which 10 ha of wetland were conserved in the Kesses Catchment.

A team of 16 youth drone pilots trained through EIWF were contracted to map highly degraded areas within the riparian areas targeted for interventions.

2.2.1 Agroforestry and SWC implemented on 3500 ha of degraded land.

Cumulatively, the EIWF project has engaged 43,413 farmers who have implemented restoration activities and land management practices across 43,442.6 hectares. This exceeds the initial target of 3,500 Ha, which was pegged at an outreach of 5,000 households. The project adopted a scalable extension model that combined four county extension assistants, Agricultural Extension Offices in the two counties, 51 technical assistants, local administration, and community-level mobilization structures. This approach substantially expanded farmer outreach and enabled wider uptake of Sustainable Land Management practices. The strong collaboration with county governments, continuous technical backstopping, farmer learning exchanges, and targeted training of Ward agricultural officers and County Agricultural Extension Officers further accelerated the adoption and implementation of restoration activities at the farm level.

During the reporting period, the project facilitated farmer learning exchanges and trained Ward Agricultural Officers and County Agricultural Extension Officers to strengthen technical support for farmers implementing sustainable land management (SLM) practices.

To support these efforts, the project has issued 1.7 million agroforestry tree seedlings, including 380,000 fruit trees (macadamia and avocado) and indigenous species, bamboo, and naturalized agroforestry species, with an average survival rate of 70%. The survival counts were conducted through use of SMS platform both in FY2024/2025 and FY 2025/2026 and sample field verification. The decline in survival counts this year is majorly due to prolonged dry season.

2.2.2 Sustainable Forest management is implemented on 15,000 ha of degraded forest land.

The project partnered with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Community Forest Associations (CFAs) to enhance the management of 85,138 hectares of protected forest areas. This was achieved through the adoption of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)¹ and the training of CFAs and project scouts to support KFS rangers. Since the project's inception, the METT score has improved from a baseline of 50 in FY 2022/2023 to 55 in FY 2024/2025 and 65 in FY 2025/2026. An improvement in the METT score typically signals that a protected area or conservation site is being managed more effectively over time, with better resource allocation, stronger governance, enhanced conservation impact, increased stakeholder engagement, and adaptive management informed by lessons learned from past assessments.

Within the above area, EIWF also supported the development of Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs) for the Cheptongei and Cherangany forest areas, along with action plans that are currently being implemented. These include the Sabor and Kaptagat forest blocks. As a result, 51,625.4 hectares of protected forest are now under improved management. This has been achieved through capacity building of seven CFAs, direct planting of 398,440 indigenous trees in degraded forest areas, the establishment of temporary enclosures to support natural regeneration, and intensified surveillance by community scouts.

2.2.3 Wetlands restored through the implementation of green infrastructure on 500 ha.

The project has successfully protected and restored three springs and 444.1 hectares of wetlands out of the target 500 ha through active community engagement. The restored wetlands include Kapsemwo (205 ha), Lenguse (15.4 ha), Chepkongony (19 ha), Tirich (15 ha), Kadonge (6 ha), Narasha (48 ha), Kapsoen (112 ha), Line moja (10Ha) and Kaptalamwa (13.7 ha). These areas are vital for water recharge and serve as critical habitats for endangered species in the region. Additionally, three springs were safeguarded by establishing enclosures and implementing protective measures to support natural regeneration. Additionally, Kaptalamwa wetland in Moiben catchment measuring 33 ha and Kerita covering 42 ha in Two rivers Catchment is currently under restoration with respective WRUAs bringing total hectareage under restoration to 505.4 ha.

2.2.4: Pro-poor and climate-smart food value chains benefit 5,000 households (22,500 persons, comprising 50% males and 50% females) with a 20% increase in farm production.

The project has supported 43,413 households through conservation initiatives, training, and empowerment. Within this group, approximately 8,151 ultra-poor and vulnerable households were identified, and 6000 households were trained on Gender Action Learning (GALs) in collaboration with KelCoP. These households also received support in adopting sustainable land management (SLM) practices, with priority given to the provision of conservation materials. Socio-Economic Survey is currently being undertaken with technical support from University of Eldoret (UOE) to determine farm production increase based on the SLM intervention undertaken.

A total of 2006 water pans (against a target of 500) were established with co-financing from the Coca-Cola Foundation. These water pans are now harvesting over 241.4 million liters of water per year, which would otherwise have been drawn from the river system. Some of the water pans are being utilized as fishponds, offering alternative sources of food and income through collaboration with the University of Eldoret's Fisheries Department. Rainwater harvesting in water pans presents a transformative opportunity for pro-poor households, enhancing water security and supporting climate-smart food systems. These low-cost, scalable storage systems provide a reliable water source during dry seasons, reducing dependency on distant or expensive supplies and enabling consistent agricultural production. With access to stored rainwater, smallholder farmers have adopted drought-resistant crops and diversified their practices, including horticulture, fish farming, and agroforestry, thereby increasing their resilience to climate shocks.

Through the IFAD-funded KelCoP programme, EIWF has partnered with the Elgeyo Marakwet County team to implement the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) as a tool for strengthening climate risk management, natural resource management, and disaster risk reduction at the household level. As part of KelCoP's co-financing contribution, GALS training and mentorship are being delivered through trained community champions. The initiative has facilitated the identification and targeted support of 6000 ultra-poor households from the 43,413 farmers reached by the project. To enhance resilience, food security, and livelihood diversification, these

households are receiving support from EIWF in establishment of 24,000-litre water harvesting systems and training on kitchen gardening and sustainable land management practices. This approach is helping vulnerable households improve water access, nutrition, and adaptive capacity while strengthening their participation in watershed conservation efforts.

The MTR found Component 2 to be the strongest-performing project component, with restoration achievements significantly exceeding mid-term targets across agroforestry, sustainable land management, forest restoration and wetland conservation. However, the review identified concerns regarding the quality and siting of some water pans, limited evidence of farm productivity increases due to the early stage of climate-smart value chain investments, and the need to accelerate adoption of the SLM practices as provided for in the Farm-Specific Action Plans (FSAP). The MTR recommended strengthening technical oversight of water harvesting investments, providing additional support for farmers to complete planned conservation measures as per the FSAP and generating robust evidence on production, livelihood and value-chain outcomes as interventions mature.

To address these concerns, the project prioritized intensive farmer engagement during the reporting period through extension support provided by County Extension Officers and the formation of farmer groups to accelerate the adoption of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices. Regular monitoring and technical supervision of water harvesting infrastructure (water pans) were undertaken to improve design quality, functionality, long-term performance and security through fencing. In addition, the University of Eldoret is currently conducting a household socio-economic impact assessment to generate evidence on the project's contributions to agricultural productivity, livelihoods, resilience and climate-smart value chain development.

Component 3: Capacity development and knowledge management support a paradigm shift toward INRM in the necessary water towers.

3.1.1 The M&E system implemented with local stakeholders and county decision-makers was adopted in 2 counties for monitoring of INRM and contribution to Kenya's LDN targets.

Water Quality and Quantity Surveys: In collaboration with Eldoret Water and Sanitation Company (ELDOWAS) and the Water Resources Authority (WRA), conducted 10 field surveys to monitor water quality and quantity across 21 rivers during the project period. Additionally, the project installed 18 automatic river flow data loggers (Hobo) against a project target of 10 in critical rivers to monitor the impact of conservation efforts on water quality and quantity. These loggers record data hourly, providing a robust basis for tracking the effects of climatic extremes on river flows and the watershed's response to such shocks.

The data is accessed through an online dashboard co-managed by TNC and WRA. It informs hourly river flow patterns, while the jointly conducted quantity surveys with WRA and the Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAs) help identify priority areas for intervention, particularly in implementing Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices. For instance, a river exhibiting high turbidity signals the need for site-specific interventions, including identifying and addressing pollution sources.

Biodiversity Monitoring: The Biological Condition Gradient (BCG) tool was developed in partnership with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) to monitor biodiversity—both aquatic and terrestrial—within the watershed. The tool assesses the composition and abundance of species across various taxonomic groups, reflecting the condition of their habitats. During the period, NMK presented a summary of key areas for prioritization, which guides the project team in undertaking targeted interventions. Specifically for river systems affected by surface runoff from the farmland, the project has intensified soil erosion control through the establishment of terraces and vegetation riparian buffer zones. Other activities undertaken guided by the BCG report are on spring protection in Kimwareb, Lenguisse, and Kapsemwo.

SMS Communication Tool: An SMS-based communication platform disseminates extension messages to rural farmers, promoting alternative farming methods and diversified cropping patterns. It also serves as a channel for addressing farmers' concerns and grievances. As of June 2026, the platform had enrolled all 43,413 beneficiary farmers. During this period, farmers received extension messages to guide them in maintaining and enhancing the sustainable land management practices already in place. These messages emphasized practical steps to ensure that both the environmental benefits, such as improved soil health, water conservation, and biodiversity protection, and the socio-economic gains, including increased productivity and household resilience, are fully

realized. By reinforcing knowledge and encouraging continuous improvement, the project strengthened farmers' capacity to sustain conservation outcomes and adapt effectively to climate change.

Farm-Specific Action Plan Tool: This tool has been adapted for mobile phones to facilitate the routine monitoring of beneficiary farmers. It captures key data, including location, gender, age, contact information, and household decision-making dynamics. Additionally, it records baseline farm conditions and recommends interventions for optimal soil and water conservation. The tool is used by the project management team and field officers to track and grade farmers based on the extent to which they implement these recommended measures.

Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT): The METT is being applied in project areas to monitor progress in the restoration and management of protected areas. This is being done in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). The Excel-based tool tracks scores per management element, which includes planning, inputs, process, outputs, and outcomes, and scores them out of 100%. The link to the updated EIWF METT as of August 2025 is accessible via <https://tnc.box.com/s/le78ba268kasufxmmtte7yglrfiu7ftg>. The project team has scheduled the next METT update for August 2026, as this is an annual exercise.

3.1.2 Assessment and knowledge management tools developed and adopted facilitate the incorporation of the INRM approach into policymaking, enabling scaling beyond the targeted water towers.

The project developed various tools to support counties in promoting Sustainable Land Management (SLM) interventions. Among these were illustrated manuals focused on developing farm-specific action plans, siting water pans, and implementing agroforestry practices. These materials were shared by county governments across various media platforms to reach a broader audience.

A targeted SLM campaign conducted in partnership with Elgeyo Marakwet County led to increased adoption of terraces. To further expand outreach, an SMS platform was utilized to disseminate information directly to farmers, enhancing access to practical guidance and encouraging wider adoption of SLM techniques beyond the project area.

During the period, the project developed Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials in the form of booklets focusing on farm planning, agroforestry, and water pan establishment, which have been disseminated to the communities, county government departments, and other organizations undertaking restoration in the water towers.

Outcomes of project implementation activities:

- Governance and Legal Structure report developed to inform the transition of the project to a sustainable water fund
- The project supported the implementation of seven policies that provide coordination for watershed management at the County level in collaboration with County Advisory Committees
- People are benefiting from adapting to climate change: 43,413 households.
- Land area under improved management 93,752 Ha
- Riparian system with improved management on 2,494.8 ha covering 415.8 km of river corridors restored and protected
- Wetland restored for biodiversity conservation 435.8 ha
- MEL system established and operational: Eight (8) monitoring tools developed to support monitoring and evaluation of the project. The tools are Biological Condition Gradient (BCG), SMS System, farm-specific action plan, METT, Mobile-based Kobo Toolbox, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) booklets, hydrological monitoring tools, and drone monitoring technologies.

Lessons generated through the EIWF are being systematically documented through the project's monitoring and knowledge management systems, including hydrological monitoring data, drone-based restoration assessments, FPIC and Indigenous Peoples Action Plans, farm-specific action planning tools, SMS advisory platforms, METT assessments, and technical manuals on agroforestry, water harvesting, and sustainable land management. These lessons are analyzed and shared through Project Steering Committee meetings, County Advisory Committees, Stakeholder Steering Committee forums, county agricultural expos, farmer field days, peer-learning exchanges, and knowledge products such as IEC materials, governance reports, and implementation manuals. Drone program has supported baseline line surveys for the Mau Forest Complex Integrated Conservation and Livelihood Improvement Programme (MFC-ICLIP) implemented by Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry. The governance model and water tariff adoption lessons is being shared with Kericho, Nandi and Kakamega Counties through the Yala-Nyando Water Fund.

The MTR recognized Component 3 as a strong area of project performance, with robust monitoring, knowledge management, and capacity development systems established. Majorly, the recommendations focused on strengthening data quality assurance, improving analysis and documentation of project results, and enhancing the dissemination of lessons learned to support replication and scaling of the Water Fund model. To address this, the project has undertaken more robust analysis of hydrological monitoring data (quantity and quality) and regularly disseminates findings through the EIWF Stakeholders Steering Committee and other stakeholder platforms. Knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning have been undertaken through engagements with the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund and the newly established Yala-Nyando Water Fund under GEF-8, providing technical support and sharing lessons, tools, and implementation materials to support emerging water funds. In addition, project experiences and knowledge products have been widely disseminated through county agricultural expos, farmer field days, and stakeholder forums in Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet counties, contributing to broader uptake of Sustainable Land Management and watershed conservation approaches.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Challenges:

- Policy influencing at the county level - it takes time to integrate the water funds model into the county-integrated development plan, given that it is reviewed every five years, and county-level policies require time to be adopted by the county assembly.
- Unpredictable rainfall patterns during FY 2025/26 adversely affected tree-growing programs, seedling survival rates, and overall restoration activities across the watershed.
- Delayed establishment of the Water Fund governance and legal framework, and slower-than-anticipated mobilization of resources for capitalization of the endowment fund.
- Non-standardized approaches to tracking and reporting co-financing contributions by county governments and partner institutions, compounded by reliance on quarterly reports with varying reporting formats and verification methods.

Recommendations to improve progress

- Policy engagement through the County Advisory Committees (CACs) resulted in the incorporation of priority Water Fund interventions into county planning and budgeting processes and enhanced the monitoring, reporting, and coordination of restoration and natural resource management activities.
- Strengthen climate-resilient restoration approaches through improved site selection, promotion of water harvesting technologies, adaptive planting schedules, and enhanced post-planting management to improve seedling survival and restoration outcomes during periods of climatic variability.
- Accelerated registration and operationalization of the EIWF Trust, finalize appointment of the Board of Trustees and Board of Management, and intensify implementation of the endowment fundraising strategy to secure capitalization commitments and ensure long-term financial sustainability of the Water Fund.
- Development of the EIWF Strategic Plan to guide the implementation beyond the GEF 7 funding cycles (March 2027) is underway to be completed by December 2026.
- Establish a standardized co-financing tracking and reporting framework, including harmonized templates, verification procedures, and reporting schedules across all partners to improve consistency, accuracy, and accountability in co-financing reporting.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Project Steering Committee meeting

During the period, two project steering committee meetings were held to approve work plans and budgets and to undertake field visits. The PSC, chaired by the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, recommended the establishment of an ad hoc PSC committee to steer the endowment campaign and set up structures for the water fund, chaired by the Managing Director for ELDOWAS, during the PSC meeting held on 30th June 2026

Eldoret Water and Sanitation Company (ELDOWAS)

ELDOWAS renovated and equipped an office for the EIWF project staff as part of its contribution to the initiative. The office currently hosts the EIWF project management unit, and the institution has also made facilities such as the boardroom and vehicles available for project use. In collaboration with the County Governments of Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu, four County Extension Assistants (CEAs) were seconded to the project on a full-time basis.

To enhance project monitoring, 18 youths were trained in drone operation to support the tracking of restoration activities. Upon completion, 16 of them qualified to receive pilot drone operating licenses. Additionally, 51 youths within the project area are actively promoting sustainable land management practices and assisting with tracking seedling distribution, growth, and survival rates, including promoting water harvesting techniques.

Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry

The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Forestry conducted four supervision missions during the reporting period, including two visits aligned with Project Steering Committee meetings. A visit by the Ministry's Department of Planning established a link that enabled the project's monthly reporting to be incorporated into the Ministry's broader reporting on environmental sector achievements at the ministerial level. The project has continued to submit monthly progress reports to both the Ministry and IFAD, detailing the implementation of activities, emerging issues, challenges, and opportunities.

Voluntary stakeholders Steering Committee meetings.

The project has held four meetings with the voluntary Stakeholders' Steering Committee. During these meetings, the Project Management Unit (PMU) presented progress reports and engaged the committee in discussions to foster collaboration on project implementation. These sessions provided valuable opportunities for joint planning, reviewing progress, monitoring implementation, and sharing lessons learned. They also enabled the project team to track planned activities, address emerging

constraints and challenges, and keep stakeholders informed and engaged in the project's progress. ELDOWAS, the current chair of the committee, has been hosting the bi-monthly meetings.

County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu

The project continued to engage farmers in developing farm-specific action plans, with support from county extension assistants and Agricultural Extension Offices. Sensitization on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices was also conducted through local community meetings, known as barazas.

Through the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP), the project engaged with Uasin Gishu County in promoting water pans, in which NAVCDP purchased liners for 500 farmers and paid for agripreneurs to promote water pans and SLM uptake at the community level.

Indigenous communities - FPIC and IPAP implementation and Upstream stakeholders

Simultaneously, engagement with the Cherangany, Ogiek, and Sengwer communities progressed, leading to the development of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols and the implementation of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan (IPAP). These initiatives enabled the communities to participate actively in project implementation. Indigenous Peoples (IP) nurseries with a combined capacity to raise 800,000 indigenous tree seedlings. Additionally, the Ogiek community set up a beehive workshop, producing 800 beehives and training 43 local youth in beehive construction, with the graduation overseen by the GEF focal officer in the Ministry.

The upstream community groups, which include WRUAs and CFAs, contributed to community mobilization towards the restoration of riparian areas and forested areas, respectively. During the period, EIWF approaches to watershed conservation have influenced approaches adopted by partners implementing the Cherangany Hills Ecosystem Restoration Program (CHERISH) and the Kaptagat Integrated Conservation Program (KICP), which include enclosures, engagement of the local community, and monitoring restoration using drones, where EIWF drone-trained youth supported the two programs.

Coca-Cola Foundation – Financing Agroforestry and Water Pan Promotion

To promote water harvesting, 20 technology/water pan promoters were engaged to raise awareness within communities. They provided technical support in siting, measuring, and guiding the excavation and lining of water pans. As a result, 2,006 water pans were excavated to harvest rainwater and surface runoff, which are used during the dry season for domestic purposes and irrigating vegetable gardens, contributing to increased household income.

North Rift Valley Water Works Development Authority (NRVWDA)

EIWF has partnered with NRVWDA to restore wetlands by establishing enclosures and planting trees. A total of 300 ha has been restored through this partnership.

Engagement with the athletic community in Eldoret

As part of conservation awareness efforts in schools, three athletic competitions were held, involving 43 schools. The event featured a 6 km cross-country race for boys and a 4 km race for girls. A total of 5000 indigenous tree seedlings were planted, with each participating school receiving three seedlings of their choice for planting at their school. The event was championed by Mr. Moses Kiptanui, a highly respected sports personality and former world champion in the 3000m steeplechase.

Water Resources Authority (WRA)

The project engaged ELDOWAS, the Water Resources Authority (WRA), and Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs) in conducting ten (10) field-based water quality and quantity monitoring exercises across 21 sites. These sites were identified during the feasibility phase to track the project's progress toward improving water quality and quantity for the municipalities of Eldoret and Iten. In addition, 18 automated stations have been installed to monitor river flows. Water quality data collected includes Total Suspended Solids (TSS), turbidity, salinity, conductivity, nitrates, phosphorus, and temperature,

while water quantity monitoring focuses on water levels and flow. All data is analyzed and archived by the project's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in collaboration with WRA, which is the lead institution.

Youth engagement

The TNC Monitoring and Evaluation Competitive Grant supported ecosystem monitoring by engaging 16 youth in using drones to track restoration efforts. Four drones were procured and registered with the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA). The youth were trained in both theoretical and practical aspects of drone operation, and all 16 received multi-rotor UAV operator licenses. These youth now contribute to monitoring restoration activities within the project area through a contract model. Their work has been featured in mainstream media for using innovative technology to conserve water towers and inform communities about necessary corrective actions.

Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVftTSNw-vk>

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

TNC, as the lead implementer, supported resource mobilization by contributing \$1million co-financing to the project. Through the Monitoring and Evaluation a pilot youth drone program was implemented, enabling 16 youths to monitor restoration activities in the project area using drones. The funds mobilized from private donors supported installation of 2006 water pans exceeding original target of 500 water pans, partially funded the One Million Tree Growing Campaign, and enhanced community awareness on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices. They facilitated the development and operationalization of the SMS farmer platform.

Additionally, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Africa Carbon Program provided the Eldoret–Iten Water Fund (EIWF) with USD 75,000 to support the development of a carbon project through a feasibility study. A consultant commenced the assignment on 1 August 2023 and successfully prepared and submitted the Project Idea Note (PIN) to Plan Vivo, where it was subsequently reviewed and approved.

Following the approval of the PIN, the Project Design Document (PDD) is currently being developed with technical support from the University of Eldoret. Once implemented, the project is expected to sequester approximately 6,414,261 metric tonnes of CO₂e over a 20-year crediting period, generating significant climate mitigation benefits while promoting sustainable livelihoods and landscape restoration across the project area.

TNC is spearheading the development of the Fund's governance and legal frameworks, including the establishment of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and Board of Management (BoM), while also leading efforts to raise USD 4 million for the endowment fund.

University of Eldoret and Moi University

As part of joint support for conserving critical watersheds, experts from the University of Eldoret devoted their time to conducting a socio-economic impact assessment of the project, developing the carbon project design document, and preparing a strategic plan for the project. This is done on a pro bono basis with EIWF facilitation field cost. The two universities sit in the Stakeholders steering committee for the project.

Private Sector Engagement

In the private sector, collaboration has been established with Khetias Drapers and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KNCCI), Almasi Beverages and actively engaged in watershed conservation activities. Additionally, the Coca-Cola Foundation has supported rehabilitation activities in the catchment area through a grant to TNC.

EIWF was recognized during the 8th GEF Assembly

In summary, EIWF was recognized during the 8th GEF Assembly held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, as a model of the Whole Society approach to conservation, as well as during the Saudi Water Week in Jeddah, organized by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA) in collaboration with regional and international partners.

D. Gender Equality

Gender Mainstreaming

During the year, the project implemented its gender inclusion and pro-poor targeting strategy, ensuring that 39% of all participants engaged are women. The Women's Empowerment Index baseline survey continues to guide the implementation of project activities, with a focus on mainstreaming gender throughout execution.

In terms of gender distribution, 39.31% of participants are female and 60.69% male. Age disaggregation is as follows: 55.94% adults (36–60 years), 33.07% youth (18–35 years), and 10.98% elderly (over 60 years).

To ensure that women-led households benefit from the project, the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) framework—adopted from the IFAD/KeLCoP program—has been implemented. Vulnerable households, particularly those headed by women, are prioritized for the provision of conservation materials and receive a 50% subsidy on drip irrigation kits, water pan liners, and pedigree dairy goats and improved chickens.

Women and Youth Empowerment

The project continued to focus on capacity building for youth and women in group dynamics, livelihood improvement initiatives, and various soil and water conservation technologies.

It also empowered 51 technical assistants to promote Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices, 20 of whom are women—representing 39% of the total. Additionally, 16 youths have been trained and licensed in drone technology and are actively engaged in collecting high-resolution imagery to support farm planning and identify priority areas for restoration.

To engage Indigenous communities, representation has been ensured on the Steering Committee, where one of the four Indigenous Peoples' representatives is a woman.

At the request of the GEF Council through IFAD, a paper on youth engagement in conservation has been submitted (Appendix 1). The paper highlights the project's achievements in integrating youth into conservation efforts through various programs, including sports, drone monitoring, water harvesting, and the promotion of SLM activities.

Women in decision-making and leadership

The Voluntary Stakeholders' Steering Committee includes five women out of 16 members, a deliberate effort to strengthen women's voices in conservation. The project actively promotes women's participation in leadership roles across various levels of project management. At the community level, women are leading the promotion and installation of energy-efficient cookstoves.

Women's contribution to sustainable and resilient food systems

The project promotes innovative technologies to reduce the burden of food production on women. These include the construction of 2006 water pans to support horticulture and the cultivation of traditional vegetables, as well as the distribution of 1000 improved cookstoves. The cookstoves improve fuelwood efficiency, saving time, energy, and effort previously spent collecting firewood. Local women trainers ensure every household is equipped with the skills to manage the cookstoves. An endline survey is scheduled to be undertaken before project closure in 2027 to report on the impact of water pans and cookstoves on health and labour time saved.

Women in the Project Management Unit

The project management team comprises two men and three women, with the women serving as the Project Manager, Operations and Procurement Officer, and the Replenishment Coordinator. The field management unit also includes two men

and two women. Additionally, 51 youth (31 men and 20 women) were hired on short-term contracts to promote water pan technologies, support the adoption of sustainable land management practices, and monitor restoration efforts using drones.

The project engaged three interns whose placements were extended by one year in line with TNC internship guidelines. All three successfully completed their assignments and exited the project. Following their internship, two were recruited by the County Government as Environment Officers, where they continue to support EIWF objectives aligned with the project's watershed conservation and restoration agenda as County Seconded staff. The communications intern was subsequently engaged by the Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund, further contributing to ongoing water fund and conservation initiatives.

E. Knowledge Management

The project has made substantial progress in implementing the Knowledge Management (KM) approach envisioned at CEO Endorsement under Component 3, which seeks to promote learning, adaptive management, policy influence, and scaling of Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) and the Water Fund model beyond the project area.

During the reporting period, the project continued to generate, document, and disseminate knowledge products and lessons from implementation. The KM tools established and operationalized include the Biological Condition Gradient (BCG) biodiversity monitoring framework, hydrological monitoring system, Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), Farm-Specific Action Plan (FSAP) digital platform, SMS farmer advisory system, drone-based restoration monitoring, Kobo Toolbox data collection platform, and a suite of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. These tools provide evidence for adaptive management while supporting county and national reporting on biodiversity conservation, land restoration, and watershed management.

Knowledge products developed and disseminated include governance and legal structure reports for establishment of the Eldoret-Iten Water Fund Trust, technical manuals and booklets on farm planning, agroforestry, water harvesting, sustainable land management, FPIC and Indigenous Peoples Action Plans, hydrological monitoring reports, restoration monitoring products, and policy briefs supporting watershed conservation and sustainable financing. These products have been shared with county governments, WRUAs, CFAs, private-sector partners, academic institutions, and community stakeholders.

The project has also facilitated knowledge exchange and peer learning through Stakeholder Steering Committee meetings, County Advisory Committee meetings, agricultural expos, farmer field days, learning visits, and collaboration with the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund. Lessons from EIWF have informed emerging water funds and watershed initiatives, particularly the Yala-Nyando Water Fund, while drone monitoring approaches have supported restoration planning in other landscape restoration programs including the Mau Forest Complex initiatives.

Digital communication and outreach have been significantly expanded through the SMS platform, which currently reaches 43,413 farmers with extension messages, climate and restoration information, and feedback mechanisms. The project website, social media engagement, media coverage, youth drone programme, and conservation awareness events have further enhanced visibility and dissemination of project lessons to wider national and regional audiences.

The Mid-Term Review recognized knowledge management as a strong area of project performance and recommended further strengthening of data quality assurance, analysis, documentation of lessons learned, and dissemination for replication and scaling. In response, the project has intensified the analysis of hydrological, biodiversity, and restoration data and strengthened sharing of lessons through stakeholder platforms, knowledge products, and partnerships with government, academia, and the Water Funds for Africa Network.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	The number of trees to be grown under the project is expected to exceed the original targets. This increase is driven by high community demand and the successful mobilization of additional matching funds by project partners. This expansion falls under Component 2 of the project. There are no cost implications for the GEF, as the newly secured matching funds will comprehensively cover the additional tree planting.
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	TNC and the Eldoret Water and Sanitation Company (ELDOWAS) have jointly signed a cooperative agreement to implement project activities on the ground. To ensure long-term sustainability, the EIWF will initially operate as a project and eventually transition into the de facto Watershed Conservation Department within ELDOWAS.
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	A request for a no-cost extension of an additional 12 months was approved by PSC and got no objection from IFAD. The new project end date is 30th March 2027. The extension aims to ensure the full establishment of the water fund's governance and legal structures, the effective integration of Indigenous Peoples into the project, and the complete realization of co-financing from the IFAD/KeLCoP program. No additional funding is being requested.
Executing Entity	The Nature Conservancy (TNC) remains the executing agency for the project. It has signed a Collaborative Agreement with the Eldoret Water & Sanitation Company (ELDOWAS) to support project implementation. Under this agreement, ELDOWAS provides office space in Eldoret town, engages project staff, and offers management support. This partnership has accelerated on-the-ground execution and enhanced operational efficiency.
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	

Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kaptarakwa and Kitany	0.459094	35.523903	1

Location Description:

23 ha Protected forest in Kaptarakwa and Kitany

Activity Description:

Forest Restoration. In collaboration with the Office of the First Lady - In progress

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sabor forest -Kipsalen block 1C	0.4747348	35.5268766	2

Location Description:

86 ha of degraded forest area

Activity Description:

Forest Restoration - Completed

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sabor forest -Kipsalen block 1L	0.4865333	35.4722417	3

Location Description:

15 ha of degraded forest area

Activity Description:

Forest Restoration - In progress

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sabor forest -Kapko	0.5167965	35.4763262	4

Location Description:

10 ha of degraded forest area

Activity Description:

Forest Restoration. - In progress

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Wetland restoration - Tirich	1.161472	35.459854	5

Location Description:

6ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetlands Restoration. CFAs, WRUAs, and the local community fenced off a critical water source and planted 3000 indigenous trees – wetland-friendly species. - Completed

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Wetland restoration -Lenguise wetland	0.152978	35.432369	6

Location Description:

15.4 acres of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetlands Restoration. CFAs, WRUAs, and the local community fenced off a critical water source and planted 8,000 indigenous trees – wetland-friendly species. - Completed

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kapsemwo wetland	0.272477	35.262483	7

Location Description:

205 ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetland restoration with WRUA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kapsoen Wetland	0.1365893	35.4209204	8

Location Description:

112 ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetland restoration with WRUA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Narasha wetland	0.03927	35.54020	9

Location Description:

48ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetland restoration with WRUA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Chepkongony wetland	0.36475	35.41632	10

Location Description:

19ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetland restoration with WRUA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kaptalamwa wetland	1.10340	35.42928	11

Location Description:

13.7ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Wetland restoration with WRUA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kadonge wetland	0.15381	35.41937	12

Location Description:

6 ha of wetland restored

Activity Description:

Forest restoration with CFA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kabarmagai forest restoration	0.9996572	35.4754977	13

Location Description:

96 ha of degraded forest areas

Activity Description:

Forest restoration with CFA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Cengalo forest restoration	0.1477188	35.4054618	14

Location Description:

20 ha of degraded forest area

Activity Description:

Forest restoration with the Ogiek community - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Suswemoi forest restoration - Cherangany	1.0039083	35.43199831	15

Location Description:

10 ha of degraded forest area

Activity Description:

Forest restoration with CFA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Matira/Sangurur forest restoration - Cheptongei	0.880963	35.5644349	16

Location Description:

40 ha of degraded forest area

Activity Description:

Forest restoration with CFA - ongoing

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Moiben River	1.0475216	35.4681301	17

Location Description:

Riparian restoration

10ha

Activity Description:

Riparian restoration with WRUA - ongoing

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document