MID-TERM REVIEW

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

B. 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	MTR Submission 3/31/2026
Actual MTR 10/28/2025	Expected Completion 3/31/2026

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Eldoret–Iten Water Fund (EIWF) finds that the project has made good progress across most of its technical, institutional, and environmental targets, while also identifying several

gaps that must be addressed to ensure long-term sustainability, especially the establishment of a legally registered and financially viable Water Fund. While EIWF has performed strongly across restoration, capacity development, knowledge management, Indigenous Peoples engagement, and stakeholder coordination, the complex institutional requirements of a Water Fund have constrained progress on establishment of governance structures that are central to the Fund's long-term vision and sustainability of the project.

Key achievements

The MTR target was 1,500 beneficiaries. The program had on-boarded 5,730, which is 382% of the target, and was supporting them to carry out conservation activities as identified in respective Farm Specific Action Plans (FSAPs). The program identified and onboarded **37,588 beneficiaries**, supporting them to carry out conservation activities as identified in respective FSAPs. These were clustered as; 5,730 (1,996-F, 3,734-M, 1,557-youth, 183 IPs & 34-PWDs). Another 31,855 of beneficiaries (category 1 (at least one intervention implemented) were 21,707 beneficiaries [9.037-F,12,670-M, 6,916-Y, 855-IPs], while Category 2 (at least two interventions implemented) were 10,151 beneficiaries [3,810-F, 6,341-M, 2,373-youth, 184-PWDs and 387-IPs]) at preliminary stages of implementation of activities identified in their FSAPs.

The project has also made very good progress towards achievement of expected Outcomes based on the indicators compared to MTR targets.

Component 1:

For the establishment of a public-private partnership platform and enabling policies for sustainable management of the targeted water towers, two-thirds of activities are ongoing. The primary constituents required to establish the Water Fund are in place. ELDOWAS is hosting the fund and has established administrative systems, with most procedures ready to take effect after on-going capacity development. The project's successful engagement with relevant policy bodies (KWTA, WRA, NEMA, MoEF, MoW, MoA) facilitated the integration of the WF concept into water tower management strategies. WF activities were directly embedded in County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs). Engagement with the public and private sector, including Kenya Association of Manufacturers members and the Coca-Cola Foundation, has driven contributions to EIWF activities, setting the stage for future fundraising after establishing the WF under its legal framework.

Component 2:

The component focusing on ecosystem restoration and climate-smart production systems, represents the project's strongest area of performance. The EIWF significantly exceeded its restoration targets, restoring **6,654 hectares through agroforestry and water conservation** measures, **51,625 hectares under sustainable land management**, and **425.8 hectares of wetlands and springs**, far surpassing mid-term expectations. The project onboarded 5,730 households implementing at least 75% of their farm plans and a total of 37,588 beneficiaries across all categories uptake. Indigenous Peoples are meaningfully engaged through tree nurseries capable of producing one million seedlings annually, wetland restoration, and livelihood activities such as beekeeping. Climate-smart value chain interventions (fruit trees, super napier grass, and water pans) have reached more than 8,000 households.

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) and training of the CFAs and project scouts to support the KFS rangers. The METT score rose from 50 in 2023 to 55 in 2024, reflecting improved management of Forest resources in the project areas. Also, the project conducted a review and implementation support to 10

PFMPs, did institutional capacity building support to CFAs, WRUAs, KWS, KFS and facilitated the involvement of Indigenous People (IPs) with implementation of IPAPs.

Component 3:

Capacity development and knowledge management under EIWF shows one of the most comprehensive knowledge management and monitoring systems among comparable watershed conservation initiatives in Kenya. The project has operationalised 13 automated river gauging stations, deployed drone monitoring for restoration tracking, and implemented multiple M&E tools including METT, BCG, digital Farm-Specific Action Plans, and an SMS-based advisory system now used by 24,000 farmers. Youth engagement has been particularly strong, with 15 trained drone pilots actively supporting monitoring activities across the landscape. Training programmes for WRUAs, CFAs, women, youth, and extension officers have been implemented as planned.

Evidence on the ground and data provided shows that the EIWF is on course towards meeting its set development objectives in the areas of biodiversity conservation and protection, reviving the integrity and resilience of critical ecosystems and their services in the Cherangany Hills and Mau Forest Complex by promoting sustainable natural resources management, as well as improvements in the smallholder production sector, targeting of IPs, women, girls and marginalized people in society. However, structures for the water fund model as a tool for stakeholder engagement and sustainable financing are yet to be put in place. This could be associated with the fact that the project spent much time setting up the physical infrastructure as well as engagement with IPs. Thus, the remaining project period of six months is too short for putting together the robust governance systems and fund raising necessary for a self-sustaining WF. The PMU requested for extension of the project at no-cost basis, for another one and a half years, especially for this activity.

Key challenges and underlying reasons

Despite these achievements, several challenges remain. The core objective of establishing a fully functional Water Fund governance structure, supported by a credible financing mechanism, remains incomplete. Only USD 140,000 has been raised towards the Endowment Fund, against a mid-term target of USD 300,000, and the legal registration and constitution of the Water Fund governing body have not yet been finalised. These delays stem primarily from the project's short timeline, the time-intensive process of stakeholder consultations, and frequent changes in county-level political leadership, each of which slowed policy processes and institutional negotiations. The three-year project duration is insufficient for the establishment of an independent Water Fund, given the time required to secure high-level buy-in, align policies, negotiate institutional arrangements, and mobilise private sector financing. Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, though ultimately successful, required substantial time due to historical sensitivities and the need to follow robust FPIC processes.

Despite the strong technical achievements, several shortcomings were also identified at mid-term. Some water pans were found to be poorly designed or inappropriately located, largely due to compressed implementation timelines, extremely high community demand, and limited hydro-technical oversight during early rollout, compounded by unpredictable rainfall patterns. Similarly, while distribution of fruit trees, super napier and other inputs was successful, no measurable improvements in farm production or value chain visibility could yet be assessed because these interventions require more time to mature and were introduced in the early biological stages of establishment. In addition, the steep declines reported in river turbidity and sediment loads raised concerns about the credibility of some hydrological data, reflecting the early-stage use of newly installed monitoring systems, methodological inconsistencies, and the absence of sufficient longitudinal datasets to support robust trend analysis. These shortcomings do not detract from overall progress but highlight areas requiring methodological strengthening and technical recalibration.

Overall, the MTR concludes that the EIWF is performing strongly and remains well aligned to GEF and IFAD objectives. The environmental and institutional foundations have been successfully laid, and the project has

generated widespread community support and strong county alignment. However, the central strategic objective of creating a sustainable and financially viable Water Fund requires additional time.

A minimum of a one-year no-cost extension is considered necessary to complete governance structures, mobilise funding, and ensure that the substantial gains made to date translate into a durable, long-term Water Fund model for the Cherangany and North Mau water towers. Budget reallocation across expenditure categories is also considered necessary to accelerate progress in concluding beneficiaries' farm action plans and provide the technical inputs and support required. This was reviewed and approved by the Project Steering Committee and does not constitute a change to the project structure and objectives.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

During the project development phase, at least some 35 institutional stakeholders were engaged to represent the wide spectrum of relevant issues across water, environment, food production, policy and governance, finance, social, economic, research, private sector and community interests. The project engaged 16 stakeholders who form part of the EIWF Stakeholders' Steering Committee (see table below). Through this committee, the WF was able to conserve critical water towers, with lessons learned being integrated into both the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs).

The mail challenge was the frequent changes in governance at County levels. The leadership in the two counties kept changing, thereby derailing inroads into policy engagement. For instance, in Uasin Gishu, leadership changed three times. This was resolved through fresh policy engagement and briefings each time.

C. Gender Equality

1) Gender Assessment

The first year of the project, a socio-economic survey was done. It involved a Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) survey, which provides baseline data for inclusive implementation across targeted landscapes. Socio-economic monitoring tools were integrated into the Project's M&E framework and implementation were developed and partners trained to assess and monitor rural livelihoods and resilience in the targeted area.

2) Gender Mainstreaming

The project implemented its gender mainstreaming and pro-poor targeting strategy, using the WEAI baseline survey continues to guide the implementation of project activities. In terms of gender distribution, 39.49% of participants are female and 60.51% male. Age disaggregation is as follows: 56.26% adults (36–60 years), 33.36% youth (18–35 years), and 10.38% elderly (over 60 years), as indicated in the Figure 3 below.

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

3) 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. In engaging Indigenous communities, representation was ensured in the Steering Committee, where one of the four Indigenous Peoples' representatives is a woman.

In addition, 18 youths were 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. These youth now contribute to monitoring restoration activities within the project area. Their work was featured in mainstream media for using innovative technology to conserve water towers and inform communities about necessary corrective actions

D. Knowledge Management

The project ensured strong emphasis on M&E frameworks to a) support WF decision making and allowing for an adaptive management approach for targeted PES and incentive schemes, and b) to allow for upscaling and replication of lessons learned as quickly as feasible. This was chieved through

a) Knowledge Management and Learning Deliverables

The project has put in place the instrumentation, tools and human resource for knowledge management. This included hiring a Monitoring, Evaluation & Knowledge Management Officer, Mr. Allan Tuwei. A number of tools were adopted for tracking the GEB and local level progress for the project. The following M & E tools were adopted or developed to support monitoring and evaluation of the project.

(i) Biological Condition Gradient (BCG),
(ii) SMS System (Short Messaging System) was developed to provide agricultural extension services. As of June 30, 2025, a total of 24,000 beneficiary farmers had been registered in the system and continue to receive farm advisory services via SMS.
(iii) Farm-specific action plan,
(iv) METT, Mobile-based Kobo Toolbox, and
(v) Drone monitoring technologies.

b) Knowledge products

The project engaged ELDOWAS, the Water Resources Authority (WRA), and Water Resources Users Associations (WRUAs) in conducting seven field-based water quality and quantity monitoring exercises across 21 sites. The following monitoring tools and products were set up, data analysed and archived by the project's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer:

(i) Some 13 telemetric stations have been installed to monitor river flows. Water quality data collected includes Total Suspended Solids (TSS), turbidity, salinity, conductivity, nitrates, phosphorus, and temperature
(ii) Water quantity monitoring focuses on water levels and flow.

(iii) Digital Farm-Specific Action Plan designed and deployed – capacity built to over 50 staff;

(iv) A total of 24,000 beneficiaries were enrolled in the project's SMS platform – receiving technical agronomic support;

(v) The Youth Drone Program developed to support the monitoring of restored landscapes – Forests and farms flight paths developed. Digital baseline images processed; and

(vi) One (1) Digital platform established for knowledge sharing.

c) Knowledge Events and Activities

The project has promoted good agricultural practices and environmental conservation through various events implemented as part of knowledge sharing and capacity building. These included:

(i) 15 trainings undertaken for WRUAs (10) and CFAs (5) –Target was 10.

(ii) 2 PFMPs – Cherangany and Cheptongei PFMPs developed with respective Action Plans.

(iii) 5-workshop and trained 20 extension officers across the two counties on SLM

(iv) 504 cook stoves installed – Target 500

(v) 37,588 farm plans developed (14,843 F; 22,746 M; 10,846 Youth; 798 PLWD).

(vi) Dissemination of project information –success stories, website developed, social media and conferences

In 2025, athletic event was held with 40 schools participating (3 Editions). This aligns with project objective of targeting gender, youth and inclusion of indigenous peoples.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
85138	85138	85138	

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
85138	85138	85138	

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Forest Reserves Cheboit Chemurukoi Kaisungor Kaptagat Kerrerr Kipkabus (U. Gishu) Kipkabus (Elg-Mara) Kipkunurr Northern Tinderet Sogotio Toropket	Incl. 7546, 7548, 7567, 7577, 7587, 7610, 7611, 7612, 7693, 7713, 7729.	Others	85,138.00	85,138.00	85,138.00		50.00	55.00	

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
19000	19000	58704.8	

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland	3,500.00	3,500.00	6,654.00	

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
15,000.00	15,000.00	51,625.00	

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
500.00	500.00	425.80	

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
15862	15862	19947	

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
5,862.00	5,862.00	6,654.00	

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
10,000.00	10,000.00	13,293.00	

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	400000	6414261	6414261	
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	254500			

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	400,000.00	6,414,261	6,414,261	

Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	254,500			
Anticipated start year of accounting		2022	2022	
Duration of accounting		20	20	

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	65,000	11,250	13,532	
Male	65,000	11,250	24,056	
Total	**130,000**	**22,500**	37,588	**0**

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO($)	Materialized at MTR($)
GEF Agency	IFAD	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,606,000.00	400,662.00

Other	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	380,000.00	800,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Uasin Gishu County	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	7,500,000.00	8,300,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Elgeyo-Marakwet County	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	7,100,000.00	8,500,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Government of Kenya (taxes and duties)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3,979,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Government of Kenya	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,350,000.00	5,500,000.00
Private Sector	Local corporate partners, e.g. Coca Cola, Water utility companies (water tariffs)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,610,000.00	1,500,000.00
Beneficiaries	Local resource users	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	308,000.00	200,000.00
Beneficiaries	Local resource users	Grant	Investment mobilized	15,000.00	
Total Co-financing				**24,848,000.00**	**7,200,000.00**

Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Medium/Moderate	Medium/Moderate	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Progress on Safeguards Implementation ESS and GRM

During the design of the EIWF, the project undertook several risk assessments to accommodate the Environmental & Social Safeguards (ESS) and the Grievances Redress Mechanism (GRM). Various thematic plans to mitigate risk were developed as per the Project Implementation Manual (PIM). They include:

- Procurement Plan for first 18 months of the project;
- Conducting and implementing Strategic Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (SESIA);
- Developing the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), which also encompasses the GRM for the EIWF project;
- Developing and implementing Annual Work Plan and Budgets (AWP&B);
- Conducting regular public participation meetings with stakeholders where grievances are aired and resolutions arrived at in participatory forums.

Climate Change and Unpredictable Weather

Unpredictable weather conditions, irregular rainfall patterns and prolonged dry spells in certain zones led to low survival rates for tree seedlings, particularly during the early establishment phase.

- This was addressed by adjusting planting schedules, enhancing farmer guidance on post-planting care, and integrating adaptive strategies to improve resilience under changing climatic conditions.
- The integration of climate-smart agricultural practices and socio-economic coping mechanisms, including rainwater harvesting (water pans), grass strips, terraces, protection of riparian lands and agroforestry, were also interventions for coping with climate change. These measures address the risk of increased surface erosion due to unreliable weather and intensified agriculture.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Prefix	Title
M and E Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	Kenya_EIWF_Final Report of MTR
Project Supporting Document	ESS Supporting Document	Annex 6 SECAP review note