



# PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)<sup>1</sup>

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized Project

TYPE OF TRUST FUND: Multi-Trust Fund

## PART I: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Title:	Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC)		
Country(ies):	Rwanda	GEF Project ID: <sup>2</sup>	4952
GEF Agency(ies):	WB (select) (select)	GEF Agency Project ID:	P131464
Other Executing Partner(s):	Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)	Submission Date:	2012-04-19
GEF Focal Area (s):	Multi-focal Areas	Project Duration (Months)	60
Name of parent program (if applicable): ➤ For SFM/REDD+ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Agency Fee (\$):	953,200

### A. FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK<sup>3</sup>:

Focal Area Objectives	Expected FA Outcomes	Expected FA Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount (\$)	Indicative Co-financing (\$)
(select) BD-2	2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation.	National and sub-national land use plans that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation	GEFTF	1,299,000	2,300,000
(select) LD-3	3.1 Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management	Integrated land management plans at the microwatershed level developed and implemented.	GEFTF	633,000	2,095,000
(select) LD-3	3.2 Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities	INRM tools and methodologies developed, tested, and implemented	GEFTF	2,000,000	19,300,000
(select) SFM/REDD-1	1.3: Good management practices adopted by relevant economic actors.	Forest area (hectares) under sustainable management, separated by forest type.  Types and quantity of services generated through SFM.	GEFTF	1,300,000	9,000,000
CCA-1 (select)	1.2 Reduced vulnerability to climate change in development sectors	Vulnerable physical, natural, and social assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability	LDCF	2,625,000	11,000,000
CCA-2 (select)	2.1: Increased knowledge and understanding of climate variability and change-induced threats at country level and in targeted vulnerable areas	Risk and vulnerability assessments conducted and updated  Systems in place to disseminate timely risk information	LDCF	840,000	2,635,000
CCA-2 (select)	2.3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level	Targeted population groups participating in adaptation and risk reduction awareness activities	LDCF	385,000	4,950,000
(select) (select)			(select)		

<sup>1</sup> It is very important to consult the PIF preparation guidelines when completing this template.

<sup>2</sup> Project ID number will be assigned by GEFSEC.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the reference attached on the [Focal Area Results Framework](#) when filling up the table in item A.

(select) (select)			(select)		
(select) (select)	Others		(select)		
Sub-Total				9,082,000	51,280,000
Project Management Cost <sup>4</sup>			GEFTF	<b>450,000</b>	2,250,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>				9,532,000	53,530,000

## B. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

<b>Project Objective: To restore and maintain critical landscapes in Rwanda that provide global environmental benefits and contribute to enhanced resilient economic development and livelihoods.</b>						
<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Grant Type</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Indicative Grant Amount (\$)</b>	<b>Indicative Cofinancing (\$)</b>
Component 1: Nation-wide multi-sectoral landscape restoration planning and institutional development	TA	<p>1.1 Strengthened integrated multi-sectoral forest and land restoration and conservation actions in priority landscapes.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <p>At least 5,000 hectares of critical forest and other types landscapes identified for restoration and conservation actions.</p> <p>- 50% increase in financing towards landscape restoration compared to baseline</p> <p>1.2 Strengthened institutional capacity and multi-sectoral collaboration for long-term landscape restoration and conservation</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <p>- Improvement in capacity development indicators of key institutions vis a vis Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) baseline for</p>	<p>1.1.1. Nation-wide analysis of degraded lands and ecosystems identifying landscape values and restoration opportunities</p> <p>1.1.2. Nation-wide landscape restoration strategy and operational guidelines</p> <p>1.1.3. Monitoring mechanisms on landscape restoration and conservation, for knowledge generation and adaptive management (including spacial and non-spacial database, and web-based platform for learning and lessons sharing).</p> <p>1.1.4. Sustainable financing strategy developed and implemented, including PES and other innovative financial schemes on SFM.</p> <p>1.2.1. Sustainable national multi-stakeholder mechanism/forums developed to ensure integrated approach to landscape restoration and conservation.</p> <p>1.2.2. Key sectors and stakeholders trained and increased access to technical expertise on effective landscape restoration &amp; conservation.</p> <p>1.2.2. Advocacy and</p>	GEFTF	1,267,000	9,070,000

<sup>4</sup> GEF will finance management cost that is solely linked to GEF financing of the project. PMC should be charged proportionately to focal areas based on focal area project grant amount.

		environmental mainstreaming	awareness strategy established and targeting the wider stakeholder group			
	(select)			(select)		
<p>Component 2: Demonstration of land and forest restoration and conservation at the priority landscapes</p> <p>2.1. Land and Forest Restoration Management Planning</p>	TA	<p>2.1. Improved forest restoration and maintainance in the priority landscapes of Gishwati Forest (GEF funded) and at least another four microwatersheds sites (baseline funded)</p> <p>(Indicators:  - At least 3000ha of natural forest within Gishwati restored.</p> <p>- At least 50% increase in area under sustainable land management in Gishwati forest and other project areas.</p> <p>- Population of key threatened species including chimps and birds maintained or increased in the Gishwati forest area.</p> <p>- 876,000 tons of carbon benefits over a 10 year period</p> <p>- At least 40% positive increase in livelihood indicators as defined for each site.</p>	<p>2.1.1. Landscape restoration and management plans developed and implemented, and integrated with sectoral plans &amp; programmes in selected priority sites.</p> <p>2.1.2. Biological corridors identified and re-established to enhance connectivity and reduce fragmentation to enhance biological diversity.</p>	GEFTF	1,000,000	8,475,000
2.2. Support to physical investments in and and forest restoration	Inv	2.2. Cost effective approaches for land and forest restoration and conservation actions tested and systemazied for further replication at the national level.	<p>2.2.1. Community based sustainable forest management systems established, integrating biodiversity consideration.</p> <p>2.2.2. Adoption of alternative and sustainable agricultural practices and livelihoods</p>	GEFTF	3,220,000	20,000,000

			2.2.3. Methodologies for measuring and monitoring carbon stocks above and below ground tested, systemized and disseminated			
	(select)			(select)		
<p>Component 3: Landscape level restoration in support of greater adaptation and resilience of local communities to the effects of climate change</p> <p>3.1: Vulnerability assessments and capacity building in targeted landscapes</p>	Inv	<p>Increased knowledge and understanding of climate variability and change- induced threats at country level and in targeted vulnerable areas, especially in Gishwati forest.</p> <p>Strengthened awareness, ownership, and adaptive capacity to reduce risks to climate-induced economic losses at the local level.</p>	<p>3.1.1. Risk and vulnerability assessments conducted and updated for Gishwati forest and at least four other microwatersheds</p> <p>3.1.2. System to disseminate timely risk information in at least two microwatersheds</p>	LDCF	840,000	2,735,000
<p>3.2: Targeted investments to enhance resilience in the face of floods and droughts</p>	Inv	<p>Reduced vulnerability to climate change of investments in infrastructure and productive assets in Gishwati and in at least four microwatersheds</p> <p>Productive functions (selected and negotiated amongst stakeholders) within target landscapes enhanced (integrated with components 1 and 2 under GEFTF)</p> <p>Reduced vulnerabilities of local communities and subsequent pressures on natural resources</p> <p>Skills, awareness and technical expertise of local communities for adaptation enhanced.</p>	<p>3.2.1. Resilient infrastructure measures introduced to prevent economic losses, including irrigation schemes, drainages, improved runoffs, terraces.</p> <p>3.2.2. Forest restoration &amp; rehabilitation in microwatersheds.</p> <p>3.2.3. Marshlands and river basins restored and protected within critical landscapes</p> <p>3.2.4. Implementation of priority actions identified through risk assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climate resilient agricultural practices to promote food security</li> <li>- Water management</li> </ul>	LDCF	2,755,000	11,000,000

			practices to increase access to water for irrigation and drinking - Promoting adoption of efficient use of fuelwood			
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
Sub-Total					9,082,000	51,280,000
Project Management Cost <sup>5</sup>				GEFTF	450,000	2,250,000
<b>Total Project Costs</b>					<b>9,532,000</b>	<b>53,530,000</b>

**C. INDICATIVE CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY SOURCE AND BY NAME IF AVAILABLE, (\$)**

Sources of Cofinancing	Name of Cofinancier	Type of Cofinancing	Amount (\$)
GEF Agency	Third Rural Sector Support Project-World Bank/MINAGRI	Soft Loan	33,000,000
GEF Agency	Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project, Phase II (LVEMP) - World Bank/REMA	Soft Loan	9,400,000
National Government	Gishwati Water and Land Management Project (GWLM) - MINAGRI	In-kind	8,800,000
CSO	International Union for the Conservation of Nature - IUCN	Grant	2,330,000
(select)		(select)	
<b>Total Cofinancing</b>			<b>53,530,000</b>

**D. GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY, FOCAL AREA AND COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>**

GEF Agency	Type of Trust Fund	Focal Area	Country Name/Global	Grant Amount (a)	Agency Fee (b) <sup>2</sup>	Total c=a+b
WB	GEFTF	Biodiversity	Rwanda	1,362,000	136,200	1,498,200
WB	GEFTF	Land Degradation	Rwanda	2,761,000	276,100	3,037,100
WB	GEFTF	Multi-focal Areas	Rwanda	1,364,000	136,400	1,500,400
WB	LDCF	Climate Change	Rwanda	4,045,000	404,500	4,449,500
WB	(select)(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)(select)	(select)				0
<b>Total Grant Resources</b>				<b>9,532,000</b>	<b>953,200</b>	<b>10,485,200</b>

<sup>1</sup> In case of a single focal area, single country, single GEF Agency project, and single trust fund project, no need to provide information for this table

<sup>2</sup> Please indicate fees related to this project.

<sup>5</sup> Same as footnote #3.

## **PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

### **A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH:**

#### A.1.1 the [GEF focal area/LDCF/SCCF](#) strategies /[NPIF](#) Initiative:

The project has a clear forest focus and was developed with the Multi-Focal Area/Sustainable Forest Management objectives at its core. Rwanda is a flexible STAR country, and the project is developed around a landscape approach which will bring the forest ecosystems into better management and develop multiple benefits. They will be achieved through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, increased forest cover, climate change adaptation efforts together with combating land degradation. This approach is fundamental when managing ecosystems at the landscape level, and can help secure a robust mix of environmental and social ecosystem services from the landscape mosaic while adapting to climate change and variability. Given the importance of forests to local communities the project includes the integration of people's livelihood objectives in the management of forest ecosystems.

Biodiversity. The proposed project is in line with the GEF-5 strategic objectives for the Biodiversity focal area. The project aligns primarily with the GEF objective BD-2 ("Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes and Sectors). The project will support activities to help reduce the negative impacts of human activities on forested landscapes and wetlands that depend on them. Project activities will especially target negatives impacts from: unsustainable agriculture and livestock practices; reforestation with homogeneous plantations of exotic species; erosion from rural roads; and resource extraction such as timber harvesting for fuel. More specifically, in the Gishwati forest area the GEF resources could support activities to increase and conserve the area of protected forests as habitat for native biodiversity, as well as encourage farmers to establish diverse agroforestry plots and woodlots using native trees that provide benefits to food security and decrease pressure on forests as sources of livelihoods, including fuelwood. These investments will be based on the experience gained through the recently closed GEF Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystems Project (OP12) and other similar projects in Rwanda and in the region.

Land Degradation. The project is aligned with the GEF-5 strategic objectives for the Land Degradation focal area, specifically with objectives LD-3 ("Reduce Pressures on Natural Resources from Competing Land Uses in the Wider Landscape."). The project would promote Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLWM) for rehabilitation of degraded lands using TerrAfrica Partnership definition of SLWM that includes from the construction of terraces and soil bunds, stone bunds, bench terraces, all the way to agro-forestry and reforestation. Enhancing and improving soil fertility will be achieved through SLM practices that should maintain or improve a balanced soil organic material-nutrient cycle, meaning that net losses should be eliminated and organic matter and / or nutrients added to stabilize or improve the soil fertility. Replenishment and reduced loss of soil nutrients can be achieved through the following options: improved fallow-systems, residue management, application of improved compost and manure, tapping nutrients, tillage systems with minimum soil disturbance ; but also Agro-forestry and silvopastoral systems; improved management of pastures and grazing practices on natural grasslands, including optimizing stock numbers and utilizing rotational grazing to maintain ground cover and plant biodiversity; and conservation agriculture – to increase soil organic carbon (SOC) content through permanent soil cover with crops and mulch, minimum soil disturbance, fallows, green manures, and crop rotations.

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). The project is aligned with the GEF-5 strategic objectives for the Sustainable Forest Management focal area, specifically with objective

SFM-1 (“Reduce pressures on forest resources and generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.”). The SFM activities will include a menu of community-driven forestland management activities that will protect and/or enhance vegetation cover in forestlands with degraded forests, forest fragments and areas with limited (but greater than zero) forest stocks. The project will be implemented following a landscape approach which integrates people's livelihood objectives in the management of the different ecosystems within the forested landscape, and with greater focus on restoration of critically degraded areas. Project activities will support a variety of approaches depending on the specific needs of each watershed, but the following are examples of the planned investments: (i) reforestation with native species; (ii) forest enrichment with native species and support to natural forest regeneration; (iii) establishment of agroforestry plots; and (iv) establishment of family or community woodlots.

LDCF. Based on the priorities identified under the Rwanda National Action Plan for Adaptation, the LDCF resources will support the country to become climate resilient by supporting (i) capacity building in the public sector and local communities to understand and address adaptation needs, (ii) in critically degraded areas, vulnerability assessments and investments in infrastructure to address immediate and longer term adaptation measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the impacts of floods and landslides, as well as those of extreme droughts; and (iii) adoption more sustainable agricultural practices, such as intensive agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as of income generating non-agricultural activities as a way to reduce pressure on natural forests that lead to deforestation and land degradation.

While the project would not seek specific funding for climate change mitigation activities, it is recognized that the project also generate mitigation benefits. The project will promote improved management practices within forested land and in the wider landscape, and thus enhance carbon stocks in both forests and other types of landscapes including agricultural lands and wetlands. Support for the establishment of family or community woodlots, as well as for investments in agroforestry, would help towards enhancing carbon stocks while also releasing some of the pressure on the utilization of native forests.

A.1.2. For projects funded from LDCF/SCCF: the LDCF/SCCF eligibility criteria and priorities:

In Rwanda NAPA (2006), some options are proposed for adaptation to climate change. The prioritization exercise identified the following six high priority options:

Priority no. 1: Integrated water resources management (IWRM), which aims to reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems, population and sectors due to the quantitative and qualitative shortage of water resources and the damages caused by the runoff due to the climate change.

Priority no. 2: Set up information systems of hydro-agrometeorologic early warning system and rapid intervention, which aims to improve such systems as a way to reduce exposure of the population and sectors to the risk of extreme events and climate catastrophes.

Priority no. 3: Promotion of income generating activities, which aims to improve the adaptation capacity of rural populations vulnerable to climate change through the promotion of income generating non-agricultural activities.

Priority no. 4: Promotion of intensive agriculture and animal husbandry, which aims to improve the adaptation capacity of farmers and pastoralists to climate change through setting up agro-sylvo-pastoral systems adapted to real land vocation.

Priority no. 5: Introduction of varieties that better resist changes in environmental conditions, which aims to improve the capacity of farmers to adapt to climate change through promotion of appropriate agricultural techniques and the introduction of more resistant varieties.

Priority no. 6: Development of energy sources alternative to firewood, which aims to reduce the pressure on woody combustibles and hence reduce the overexploitation and degradation of forests through the promotion of alternative energy sources.

These high priority options led to the formulation of fifteen urgent and immediate projects. Out of those, six have been prioritized for support under the proposed GEF/LDCF supported project and are described in section A.2 below. It is important to note that the NAPA identifies the Northern and Western districts in Rwanda as a priority area for intervention due to the existing and future risks of floods and landslides due to extreme weather events. This fact led to the choice of the Gishwati forest area as the main focus for implementation of adaptation investments under the proposed project.

***Gishwati forest*** – Although this area is not highlighted in fig.9 of NAPA as an area with excess rains, it is indeed extremely susceptible to flooding and landslides due to high soil fragility and extensive loss of natural vegetation. Tables 5 and 6 identify priority areas for intervention, and include former Provinces in which Gishwati is located as areas most vulnerable to floods, heavy rains, frequent landslides and landslips. Due to a national administrative reform that has taken place since the formulation of the Rwanda NAPA, those former Provinces have since been subdivided into Districts, namely: Gisenyi, now dispatched into the Nyabihu, Ngororero and Rubavu Districts, and Kibuye, which now includes area from the Rutsiro District. These Districts are in the Western Region of the country, a region of the Congo-Nile Crest identified as one of the rainiest of the country (as far as regions are compared). In addition, restoration of Gishwati landscape would respond to some of the priority options identified on page 43 of NAPA such as land development plans (for sustainable land management), forest development plans and integrated water resources management.

The strategies of this project take into account the fact that climate change is one of the key threats to the medium and long term success of landscape restoration activities and, therefore, the need to focus on activities that enhance both social and environmental resilience. The project is also directly aimed at disaster risk reduction and enhancing water and food security through the rehabilitation of critical ecosystem functions (such as flood control and reduced soil erosion). Rehabilitative activities, however, will need to be underpinned by secure livelihoods and a strong enabling institutional environment. Under this context, partnership with the Least Developed Countries Fund (LCDF) has the potential to bring added value to the Rwanda Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation project. The LCDF focuses on several aspects which are very relevant to the proposed project, such as adaptation practices from sectors and ecosystems, risk analysis and vulnerability assessments, strengthening of institutional capacity to implement adaptation measures, as well as promotion of diversified and strengthened livelihoods.

A.1.3 For projects funded from NPIF, relevant eligibility criteria and priorities of the Fund:

[n/a]

A.2. National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, if applicable, i.e. NAPAS, NAPs, NBSAPs, national communications, TNAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, etc.:

Rwanda has one of the most comprehensive and progressive legislative framework and policy instruments across Africa and this project is aligned with and aimed at contributing to the

National Vision and Objectives reflected within these frameworks. The Rwanda Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) provides the overarching framework for realizing these aspirations, prioritizing actions through three flagship programmes: i) Sustainable Growth for Jobs and Exports; ii) Vision 2020 Umurenge (VUP) and iii) Governance. This project aligns itself with priorities reflected within these flagship programmes, such as: (a) Agricultural priorities – including the intensification of sustainable production systems (EDPRS, 2007); (b) Environmental and land priorities – involving ecosystems, the rehabilitation of degraded lands and strengthening newly established central and decentralized institutions (ibid pp i); and (c) Managing change through; i) enhancing the role of local governments in implementing national sectoral strategies; strengthening the interconnectedness of services across sectors; and iii) changing attitudes of sectoral ministries to accelerate poverty reduction (VUP, 2007).

The project also builds on Rwanda’s experiences, framed in a context of scarcity of resources and a recognition that “people respond to incentives” (ibid, pp i): (a) the limitations of interventions undertaken in isolation by sectors or institutions and as well more integrated approaches; (b) the importance of making choices and doing so in a participatory manner to mitigate the risk of choices not being appropriate or accepted; and (c) the need to balance participation with structures and systems to ensure that incentives are compatible with overarching objectives (e.g. eradicating extreme poverty).

Rwanda is also a signatory to a number of international treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified May 1995), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), ratified August 1998 and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD). The country has developed national strategies for each convention, viz: The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) - 2003 and the National Plan of Action (NAPA) for climate change adaptation, 2006, and National Action Plan for the UNCCD. The proposed project is clearly in line with these national strategies and plans under the Conventions. The GEF project will contribute to the implementation of the following strategies outlined in the NBSAP: (i) Development and updating of policies related to the conservation of biodiversity and the creation of an enabling environment for their implementation; (ii) Research and promotion of technologies adapted to a rational use of biological resources; (iii) Establishment of an integrated information, formal and informal education and communication system for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; (iv) Strengthening of partnership and constitution of actors networks for the promotion of conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of biological resources; (v) Development of alternatives to the use of including promotion of energy saving technologies; and (vi) Increased benefits obtained by grassroots communities from the use biological diversity through sustainable management of natural and agro-ecosystems.

These strategies and action plans reflect national priorities for environment and natural resources that are in turn aligned with the priorities of the Five Year Strategic Plan for the Environment and Natural Resources Sector (2009-2013). This project contributes to most of the sectors strategic priorities (ENRSSP, 2009), which places strong emphasis on the need for multi-sectoral engagement for improved environmental management and supports NAPA priorities.

## **B. PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

B.1. Describe the baseline project and the problem that it seeks to address:

### **Background**

Rwanda is a Central African country, situated South of the Equator, and bordered to the north by Uganda, to the east by Tanzania, to the West by the Democratic Republic of Congo and to the south by Burundi. Rwanda's relief is hilly, with average altitude of 1700 meters, and the highest point on Mt Karisimbi is 4507 meters above sea level. Rwanda is characterised by its small surface area (26,338 km<sup>2</sup>) and the current population is estimated at 11 million with a growth rate of 3.3%. These two factors combined result in high demographic pressure, especially considering that only 52% of the territory is constituted by arable lands.

Situated at the heart of the Albertine Rift, Rwanda's habitats are highly varied and the country is well known for its rich biodiversity, with flagship species including the Gorillas and Chimpanzees, and forest and wetland systems that support both wildlife and human population. The Albertine rift hosts 52% of all bird species and 39% of all mammal species on the African continent and is considered an endemic bird area, ecoregion and biodiversity hotspot. Much of the rich biodiversity within the Landscape is currently conserved within Protected Areas, including the Gishwati Forest Reserve – home to a small group of Chimpanzees, currently classified as endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Albertine rift also contains some of the highest population densities in Africa, many of whom are amongst the vulnerable poor and heavily reliant on subsistence farming and natural resources for their livelihoods.

Key biodiversity hotspots within Rwanda include the three national parks: (i) The Volcanoes National Park, famous for its mountain gorillas; (ii) The Nyungwe National Park, contiguous with Kibira National Park in Burundi, one of the largest mountainous rainforests remaining in Africa and the most endemic species-rich areas in all of Africa; and (iii) the Akagera National Park, the only protected savannah environment in the country and encompassing one of the largest protected wetlands in Central Africa). In addition, more than 80% of Rwanda's territory is within the Lake Victoria Basin and most of the waters coming out of the country are channeled by the Kagera river into Lake Victoria, a globally recognized freshwater biodiversity hotspot.

Rwanda is a water scarce economy yet it discharges 5.5 cu km to the Nile while withdrawing only 0.55 for national consumption. The water flowing from Rwanda carries with it more than 14 million tones of humus and top layers of Rwandan soil. If effective watershed management was in place, less soil would be washed away and more water would be retained in Rwanda.

Natural resources and ecosystem services in particular contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty reduction. This means that failure to manage natural resources, conserve and protect the ecosystem will result in degradation of these assets and compromise medium and long term sustainable development. Unfortunately, widespread deforestation and land degradation are already the reality in Rwanda. In order to begin to address this situation, the GoR has set up in place a strategy for environmentally sound agriculture intensification in its hillsides and marshlands, as articulated by MINAGRI in its Second Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture (PSTA II) which has four pillars: (i) Physical Resources and Food Production: intensification and development of sustainable production systems; (ii) Producer Organization and Extension: support to the professionalization of producers; (iii) Entrepreneurship and Market Linkages: promotion of commodity chains and the development of agribusiness; and (iv) Institutional Development: strengthening the public sector and regulatory framework for agriculture.

The Government has also developed a solid legal framework for land issues and for farmer organizations. The 2005 Land Law secures tenure rights for all existing private landholders, whether under customary or written law. Implementation of titling has started, with the UK

Department for International Development (DFID) support, and should be completed by 2012. Government policy is also working to convert the 2,500 grass root farmer organizations into cooperatives, enabling them to enter into commercial activities under an enhanced regulatory framework (i.e., the Cooperative Law). Nevertheless, these organizations are weak and require greater institutional support.

### **Threats and Barriers**

Limitations in available arable land, increasing population pressures and an economy that is highly dependent on agriculture, have had significant consequences for Rwanda's rich biodiversity. Prevailing agricultural practices have contributed to an overall reduction in habitats and ecosystems, which in turn have resulted in the loss of both biodiversity as well as critical ecosystem services such as controlling floods and soil erosion. Today, over 70% of the country's total land surface is exploited for agriculture with about 57% of marshlands under cultivation. This, in turn, has resulted in habitat loss, including a decrease in the total area under protection as well as a reduction in the area of critical habitats such as forests– (the estimated loss of forest cover is approximately 64% between 1960 and 2007). The biophysical changes have both social and economic impacts, with the most immediate effects being felt by communities that depend on forests and productive landscapes for their livelihoods. Following are key threats that are causing increased deforestation and land degradation in Rwanda:

***Forest and Land Conversion:*** The socio-economic development of Rwanda is highly dependent on subsistence farming since agriculture employs more than 80% of the population. Land holdings are very small with more than 60% of households cultivating less than 0.7ha, about 50% cultivating less than 0.5ha and more than 25% cultivating less than 0.2ha. The shrinking of land holdings and the civil war in the early 1990's have led to invasion of marginal areas, including steep slopes, in search of agricultural land, leading to widespread deforestation, soil erosion and landslides - about 40% of Rwanda is classified as very high to high erosion risk, 75% is classified as "highly degraded" by FAO, and the country has one of the highest negative nutrient balances in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to land degradation, agricultural expansion and intensification have decreased the overall area of forest and woodlands, simplified the structure of the remaining forests and broken up forest areas into smaller and more isolated fragments. Together, deforestation, forest degradation, and unsustainable agricultural practices have led to lower soil productivity, downstream impacts on water quality and flow regulation, and widespread loss of biodiversity and reductions in supply of various ecological goods and services including carbon sequestration and capacity to cope with climate change/climate variability impacts.

***Energy Use (Fuelwood and Charcoal):*** Another important driver of deforestation in Rwanda is the widespread use of fuelwood and charcoal as energy sources for cooking and industrial uses. Wood is still the main source of energy for 94% of the population, and 80.4% of all energy consumed in Rwanda today still comes from wood. Studies carried out as far back as 1981/82 and 1989/90 already showed a gap of 3,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wood for energy needs only. As a result, there continues to be massive deforestation across the country with negative impacts on the environment.

***Lack of Cross Sectoral Collaboration:*** one relevant barrier to a long term solution for restoration and protection of Landscapes is the poor cross-sectoral collaboration that, if improved, would increase the environmental and social sustainability of individual activities that involve the use of natural resources in Rwanda. Many individual efforts have been made to date by different sectors in Rwanda to improve environmental and social outcomes of development activities, but even taking into account the small size of the country, coordination has been a challenge and thus the need for a better approach.

## **Baseline Project**

The GoR is implementing a number of projects and initiatives to address the high levels of land degradation and poverty in the country. As part of this strategy, food security and improved management of soil and water resources have received most of the attention in a number of projects focusing on rehabilitation of degraded hillsides and improvement of marshes for food production. GEF/LDCF support will allow Rwanda to strengthen the current efforts with activities that also result in additional benefits to the population of Rwanda and to the global community, including enhanced biodiversity, environmentally sustainable agriculture, climate change mitigation through improved forest cover, and adaptation to climate change through improving community resilience to floods, landslides, and droughts. The restoration strategy and operational guidelines to be implemented under the proposed project will draw heavily upon the wealth of knowledge, experience, and lessons learnt from both within the country and beyond.

The baseline for the proposed project constitutes of a number of environmental, agricultural and climate change initiatives undertaken by Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This will be further defined during the PPG but a preliminary list of projects include the following operations (more details in Annex 2):

**(1) The Gishwati Water and Land Management Project (GWLM)** implemented by MINAGRI and financed by the Government of Rwanda aims at: (i) Harmonizing the healthy co-existing of the agrarian communities with the fragile eco-system of Gishwati”; and ii) Maximizing sustainable economic contribution of Gishwati to the communities improved way of life. The total value is US\$ 25 M. The baseline activities considered as co-financing to the proposed project are US\$ 8.8 M.

**(2) The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II Phase II (LVEMP II).** The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II is a regional APL with three envisioned phases. LVEMP II Phase I, approved on March 3, 2009, involves an IDA credit to each of three National Governments (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) and two trust funds (GEF and SIDA) to the East African Community. Phase II, involving an IDA credit to the Republic of Rwanda and an IDA grant to the Republic of Burundi, was approved by the Board in June of 2011 and is not associated with a GEF grant. The three IDA credits under Phase I, for a total of US\$90 M, were provided as cofinancing to leverage the US\$7 M GEF grant to the EAC under Phase I.

LVEMP II Phase II, approved on June 13, 2011, is a US\$ 30M operation aiming at addressing the socio-environmental impacts of environmental degradation in the Lake Victoria Basin. More specifically, it seeks to (i) improve the collaborative management of the transboundary natural resources of the LVB for the shared benefits of the five EAC Partner States; and (ii) reduce environmental stress in targeted pollution hotspots and selected degraded sub-catchments to improve the livelihoods of communities who depend on the natural resources of the LVB. Out of the US\$ 15M IDA credit to Rwanda under LVEMP II Phase II, US\$ 9.4M are being considered as co-financing for the proposed project, and these resources are new and additional and have not been considered cofinancing for LVEMP II Phase I.

**(3) The Third Rural Sector Support Project (RSSP).** The Third Rural Support Project is an \$ 80 M IDA project aiming to support implementation of the PSTA II, especially its first two strategic pillars: intensification and development of sustainable production systems, and support to the professionalization of producers. The current operation is the third in a series that started in 2001 and has so far over-achieved in relation to the triggers previously established for its preparation and approval. More specifically, project objectives are to: (i) Increase the

agricultural productivity of organized farmers in marshlands and hillsides of sub-watersheds targeted for development in an environmentally sustainable manner; and (ii) Strengthen the participation of women and men beneficiaries in market-based value chains. The baseline activities considered as co-financing of the GEF incremental costs are US\$ 33 M, and the letter of support from the Ministry of Agriculture can be found as Annex 3.

**(4) Rwanda Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative.** Based on an Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Government of Rwanda, IUCN and the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Government of Rwanda announced in the beginning of 2011 an ambitious plan to integrate landscape restoration into it's national development plans and to pursue a goal that would witness large-scale border to border restoration of land, soil, forest and water resources for the benefit of the Rwandan population over the next twenty five years. As a direct follow up of the MoU and following communications with the Government of Rwanda at high level (MINIREMA, MINAGRI, REMA, NAFA, etc) and consultations with Cooperation partners and international experts, an IUCN scoping mission to Rwanda was carried out in May 2011. The outcome of the consultation process was the design of a small project aimed at supporting the organisation of an initial workshop to outline a definitive process and means of implementation for the initiation and pilot phase of the Rwanda Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative. The workshop was as a direct complement and contribution to on-going erosion prevention and landscape restoration activities in the framework of climate change adaptation already underway. The workshop developed an outline framework that details the elements of a pilot phase of the Rwanda Forest Landscape Initiative (RFLR). As preparation of LAFREC proceeds IUCN will leverage additional funding from other bilateral and private sector organizations, given their active and diverse network with donors in the region The baseline activities considered as co-financing are estimated at US\$ 2.33 M.

B. 2. [Incremental /Additional cost reasoning](#): describe the incremental (GEF Trust Fund/NPIF) or additional (LDCF/SCCF) activities requested for GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF financing and the associated [global environmental benefits](#) (GEF Trust Fund/NPIF) or associated adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF) to be delivered by the project:

Despite existing projects and programs aimed at rehabilitating and restoring some of the most degraded areas in Rwanda, many barriers still exist to actually arresting and reversing environmental degradation on a national basis. The GoR has made good strides towards this objective but additional resources are needed to support a more systematic and better coordinated effort involving the various stakeholders – both within government and in society at large. Because (i) so much of Rwanda's economy depends on natural resources and agricultural activities; (ii) so much of the continuously growing population is still concentrated in rural areas; and (iii) most landscapes in the country suffer from intense degradation and are located in environmentally fragile areas (due to the predominance of fragile soils, high slopes, intense periods of rainfall, intense and prolonged droughts, or various combinations of these factors) - the landscape approach to land-use planning and restoration is believed to be the most promising methodological approach to convening all relevant stakeholders around a specified landscape to discuss and agree on the best combination of uses for that particular area. This approach allows for solutions and agreements tailored to the specific situation in one landscape area – and such agreements could be revised and re-negotiated on a regular basis as the situation evolves, both on the ground and in terms of new knowledge available.

The baseline projects already described, are a testament to the commitment of Rwanda in addressing deforestation, land degradation, and sustainable livelihoods issues. In order to address the remaining issues outlined above, incremental investments are required to address both strategic long lasting measures as well as short to medium concrete actions on the ground.

In order to implement effective landscape restoration described above, the project's strategic objectives will encompass both directly engaging in restorative activities as well as enhancing the enabling environment to better allow for and institutionalize landscape restoration across the country in the long term. In doing so, it will also explore and seek to redress current tensions arising from inherent challenges related to balancing environmental conservation requirements with those of economic and livelihood development. In order to provide global environmental benefits, the project will catalyze a paradigm shift from the current sectoral based approach to one that is more holistic and systemic in nature, as described in the Table below:

<b>Current Practice</b>	<b>Alternatives to be put in place by the project</b>	<b>Expected Global Environmental and Adaptation Benefits</b>
<i>Insufficient collaborative actions between sectors and stakeholders arising from factors such as: i) Conflicting targets and indicators within sectoral plans; and the ii) Inadequate integration of the various productive sectors (e.g. infrastructure)</i>	i) Establishing a Nation-wide restoration strategy and operational guidelines including an impact monitoring  ii) Review and identification of mechanisms to address institutional barriers to multi-stakeholder approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nation-wide strategy developed, endorsed and reflected in multiple sectoral institutional frameworks</li> </ul>
<i>Inadequate capacities for landscape restoration and management, including i) insufficient understanding of and the ability to engage in landscape approaches; and ii) inadequate physical and financial resources for policy enforcement and implementation (arising from multiple development priorities)</i>	i) Establishment and/or strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms and other functional cross-sectoral institutional mechanisms  ii) Enhancing awareness and regular access to up-to-date technical know-how and expertise for landscape restoration at all levels  iii) Establishing and integrating market-based sustainable financing mechanisms across sectoral institutional frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Multi sectoral strategies and National/Sub-national land use plans harmonized (including review of conflicting targets and integration of restoration principles)</li> <li>○ Increased involvement of multiple sectors and stakeholders (including private sector and local community level) as a result of increased awareness, technical know-how and incentives/reduced perverse incentives for landscape restoration</li> </ul>
<i>Unsustainable land use practices (such as in agriculture, mining and industry)</i>	i) Landscape restoration principles integrated into across multiple sectors, including the private sector  ii) Gishwati forest restored and providing a negotiated mix of socio-economic, biodiversity, and ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reduced negative foot print on forest and wetland biodiversity</li> <li>○ Increased investments by local communities and private sector actors in landscape restoration activities</li> <li>○ At least 70% of selected project sites</li> </ul>

	<p>benefits</p> <p>iii) Other degraded landscapes in selected microwatersheds restored and providing a mix of socio-economic and ecosystem services benefits</p>	<p>will have forests restored, resulting in enhanced ecosystem functions in line with negotiated social, ecological and environmental benefits (to be determined during the PPG):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o [e.g] Enhanced productivity/ha of agriculture and 45% increased incomes from diversified sources in Gishwati leading to avoided deforestation over at least 70% of remaining forest areas and improved carbon stocks by 30% (Average estimates for Rwanda forests according to FAO are about 100 tons of carbon per ha)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Inadequate capacity at the local level to understand and respond to threats from climate change.</i></p>	<p>iv) Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at the local level</p> <p>v) Reduced vulnerability to climate change in the agriculture and water resources infrastructure sector, and also in non-agricultural economic activities</p> <p>vi) Improved capacity for more efficient use of fuelwood and charcoal, as well as adoption of alternative energy sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Develop alternative sources of energy and improved technologies for the use of wood</li> <li>o Promotion of non-agricultural alternative sources of income to improve livelihoods</li> <li>o greater resilience of small scale irrigation schemes financed under RSSP</li> <li>o greater resilience of landscape restoration and water resources management investments under LVEMP II.</li> </ul>

### Project Alternative

Project objectives are to restore and maintain critical landscapes in Rwanda that provide global environmental benefits and contribute to enhanced resilient economic development and livelihoods.

1. GEF financing support through the biodiversity, sustainable forest management (SFM), and land degradation focal areas will be combined with IDA financing and other co-financing to generate a range of global public environmental benefits in targeted project areas. The benefits include: (i) enhanced soil health and reduced erosion thereby

strengthened ecosystem health, (ii) biodiversity conservation, (iii) accumulated terrestrial carbon from expanded or protected vegetation and tree cover (about 876,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq over 10 years), and (iv) strengthened capacity of the public sector to manage and regulate the use of biodiversity in productive landscapes.

2. Activities supported by the GEF financing will be an integral part of the watershed plans that will be established. These SLWM activities include a menu of community-driven forestland management activities that will protect and/or enhance vegetation cover in forestlands with degraded forests, forest fragments and areas with limited (but greater than zero) forest stocks. Sustainable land management practices such as grassing, low tillage and agroforestry will complement these forestland activities, but all of the natural resource management activities are presented together as a package of community responses depending on the natural assets, environmental risks, community needs, and local sub-watershed characteristics.
3. LDCF resources will be combined with IDA financing and other cofinancing to improve the climate resilience of eligible communities and sites by capturing rainwater, reducing runoff, make irrigation schemes more resilience, and promote ecosystem based solutions to better resilience and adaptation..

The project will help with the identification and establishment of innovative financing mechanisms to ensure the long term sustainability of this initiative. National level initiatives will be guided as well as informed by actions on the ground. Following the initial stakeholder consultations, the restoration process will use a progressive approach, with most of the actions focused on Gishwati as a pilot landscape for implementation of the Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation. In the other landscapes where the project overlaps either/or with implementation of LVEMP II and RSSP, the GEF/LDCF financing will support both incremental and additional activities that strengthen the resilience of the ecosystem and communities to climate change while also improving environmental conditions that foster the rehabilitation of native biodiversity and generate additional livelihood benefits. For example, while RSSP would focus mostly on marshland rehabilitation and improvement for greater and more sustainable agricultural production, and on improving management of agriculture on hillsides up to a certain altitude, the GEF/LDCF financing would support activities that improve environmental conditions and generation of ecosystem services in the area (such as agroforestry and reforestation of river banks with native species, and conservation of forest remnants) while also supporting additional investments on soil and land management at higher altitudes in areas with lower agricultural potential, including the establishment of agroforestry and rehabilitation of native forests.

The microwatersheds in the baseline scenario are selected according to criteria specified under the respective baseline project (LVEMP II and RSSP), but the level of soil degradation and poverty are common criteria to both initiatives. From the set of microwatersheds benefitting from the baseline project, this proposed project will use additional criteria to select those which also have the potential to benefit from the landscape approach to forest restoration, especially (i) the presence of important forest remnants; (ii) level of degradation and potential for reforestation and enhancement of ecosystem services; and (iii) susceptibility to environmental, social, and economic impacts from climate change.

Project objectives will be met through the following three interrelated components, financed through a total **GEF/LDCF funding** of US\$ 9,532,000:

**Component 1- Nation-wide multi-sectoral landscape restoration planning and institutional development**

This component is primarily directed at establishing a strong nation-wide integrated institutional framework for effective landscape restoration and conservation.

Main outputs are:

1. Nation-wide landscape restoration strategy and operational guidelines
2. Monitoring mechanisms on landscape restoration and conservation, for knowledge generation and adaptive management (including spacial and non-spacial database, and web-based platform for learning and lessons sharing).
3. Sustainable financing strategy developed and implemented, including PES and other innovative financial schemes on SFM.
4. Sustainable national multi-stakeholder mechanism/forums developed to ensure integrated approach to landscape restoration and conservation.
5. Key sectors and stakeholders trained and increased access to technical expertise on effective landscape restoration & conservation.
6. Advocacy and awareness strategy established and targeting the wider stakeholder group

Landscape restoration shifts the focus from simply planting trees (or other actions aimed at returning a particular habitat to its original state) to one that is directed towards multi-functionality and seeks to establish the mix of ecosystem goods and services required to meet socio-economic interests – while also securing biodiversity conservation and addressing the new challenges and uncertainties posed by climate change. Therefore, effective landscape restoration requires negotiation and agreement amongst multiple stakeholders around a negotiated balance of ecological, social and economic benefits required from any one system. This, in turn, must be based on a shared understanding of and support for the approach as well as in-depth knowledge of the ecological, socio-economic and institutional context to enable stakeholders to make decisions around optimal use and tradeoffs. In addition, financial sustainability is a key ingredient for the medium to long term success of a nation-wide landscape restoration program, and a feasibility study on potential sources of such financing will be conducted under the project preparation grant.

The project will build on existing national inter-sectoral discussion fora, such as the LVEMP II National Policy Steering Committee (as well as the National Technical Steering Committee) which congregates representatives from the most relevant Ministries and related institutions, and meet quarterly to examine and discuss project implementation in general, and in particular those issues that require inter-institutional coordination and/or harmonization of policies. The Permanent Secretaries of MINIRENA and MINAGRI represent Rwanda at the LVEMP II Regional Policy Steering Committee, where representatives from the five EAC Partner States and the East African Community (EAC) come together to examine and discuss project implementation with particular focus on issues that require coordination at the Lake Victoria Basin level, such as management of water resources, fisheries, and sustainable land use (SLM) policies and strategies. In the context of the proposed GEF/LCDF operation, MINAGRI has provided a letter of support to this initiative lead by MINIRENA/REMA. Greater participation from CSOs, NGOs, and the private sector will be fostered and institutionalized through project activities since they are key players in the way landscapes are managed.

## **Component 2 – Demonstration of land and forest restoration and conservation at the priority landscapes**

This Component will support the application of the landscape approach to forest restoration and conservation for the improvement of ecosystem functions and services in two groups of priority landscapes: (a) the Gishwati forest area, and (b) landscapes at the microwatershed level where marshlands, wetlands and hillsides will be being selectively rehabilitated for specific objectives through the baseline projects - some envisioned areas for project intervention include the margins and slopes around the Bugesera wetland complex, as well as degraded microwatersheds in the critically degraded Kadahokwa microwatershed – a tributary of the Nyabarongo river.

The main outputs of this component are:

1. Landscape restoration and management plans developed and implemented, and integrated with sectoral plans & programmes in selected priority sites.
2. Biological corridors identified and re-established to enhance connectivity and reduce fragmentation to enhance biological diversity.
3. Community based sustainable forest management systems established, integrating biodiversity consideration.
4. Adoption of alternative and sustainable agricultural practices and livelihoods
5. Methodologies for measuring and monitoring carbon stocks above and below ground tested, systemized and disseminated

One of the main objectives of this component is to address the issue of forest and land conversion in Rwanda, focusing on decreasing the drivers for such activities and eliminating barriers to addressing the problem. Activities under this Component will also be directed as much as possible to the restoration of natural forests in support of the reestablishment or rehabilitation of biological corridors to enhance habitat connectivity and reduce fragmentation, and to maintain ecosystem viability. This will necessitate the establishment of community based sustainable forest management, as well as reforestation and conservation measures to ensure the longer term sustainability of benefits realized. For example, Gishwati Forest Reserve is “one link in a chain” of high biodiversity sites hosting a diversity of flora and fauna with important ecological, social and economic functions and services. Of key importance are the Nyungwe, Mukura, Maramagambo, Kibale and Budongo forests, scattered along Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Connectivity among these sites is vital to preserve the unique fauna and flora of the Congo-Nile Divide, which has been designated by Conservation International as a high priority conservation “hot spot.” Key icon species are also highly dependent on the integrity and connectivity of these habitats, such as the endangered golden monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis ssp.kandti*) found in Gishwati and Nyungwe, and the eastern chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinturthii*), an endangered great ape that occurs in fragmented populations in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, along the north-south mountainous divide that separates the watersheds of the Congo and Nile Rivers. The long-term viability of most of these chimpanzee populations will depend on connecting them with others.

The actual social, economic, ecological, and environmental benefits generated by restored landscapes will depend on their initial condition and potential – as well as on the final negotiated set of interventions and expected benefits. Component 1 would support and guide the definition of the methodology for carrying out such negotiation process, while Component 2 would put it in practice in the context of the areas selected for project investments in restoration activities. It is expected that environmental benefits generated from restoration of forests and productive landscapes in the Gishwati area will decrease the pressure on the remaining native forests while providing additional diverse forested habitat for use of local biodiversity, including Chimpanzees.

### **Component 3 – Landscape level restoration in support of greater adaptation and resilience of local communities to the effects of climate change**

This Component seeks to enhance the resilience of baseline investments through the LVEMP II and RSSP operations according to the priorities established in the NAPA.

The NAPA identifies two lots of Districts for implementation of the first pilots for Climate change adaptation: (a) Districts prone to drought: Bugesera, Kirehe, Kayonza, Gatsibo, Rulindo and Nyamagabe; and (b) Districts prone to floods: Nyabihu, Rubavu, Rutsiro and Ngororero. The first group (prone to drought) shows a good overlap with areas identified under the

baseline as priority for investments: Bugesera (*LVEMP* and probably *RSSP*), Kirehe, Kayonza (*RSSP*), Gatsibo (*RSSP*), Rulindo (*LVEMP*) and Nyamagabe. In those, LDCF resources would probably just complement the substantial investments from the baseline and concentrate in specific actions to improve adaptation and resilience to droughts towards enhancing the long term sustainability of baseline investments. The damages inflicted in those areas by either floods, landslides or droughts are greatly exacerbated by the high degree of landscape degradation due to deforestation and unsustainable land use which affect the ability of the ecosystem to moderate the effects of the increasing frequency of such extreme events. As such, concerted efforts and investments in forest rehabilitation and conservation, as well as in activities that decrease the pressure on forests as sources of fuelwood, constitute an integral part of the strategy to strengthen adaptation capacity in local communities and for maintenance of soil quality and reducing soil erosion. These activities to support adoption of alternative sources of energy that reduce population dependence on natural resources will allow downstream benefits such as reduced siltation, landslides and flooding and flooding and also induce behavioral change to more sustainable practices. Examples of baseline investments that would benefit from LDCF activities are: irrigation schemes in marshlands; terracing and other measures to enhance water infiltration; adoption of no-till agriculture, green manuring, and other techniques to improve year-round soil cover and increase organic matter in the soils; agroforestry and family agricultural plots; protection of water springs; rainfall collection structures; reforestation on higher altitudes and steeper slopes; protection of forest remnants; and adoption of alternative livelihoods by local communities including more efficient use of fuelwood in order to reduce population dependence on natural resources.

Under the second group of Districts, those prone to floods and landslides, it is interesting to note that the Gishwati area is spread over all of parts of each of the four Districts. Since the only substantial baseline investments in this area would come from the GWLM project, it is likely that a larger portion of the LDCF resources would be directed to this area to support investments in adaptation measures to increase resilience to more frequent and extreme rainfall events, such as improvement in management of land and water in the landscape, increased soil cover through reforestation, and support to alternative livelihoods that reduce population dependence on natural resources. Examples of baseline investments that would benefit from LDCF activities are: improved drainage and control of runoff in areas of fragile soils; terracing, grass lines, and other measures to decrease soil erosion; adoption of no-till agriculture, green manuring, and other techniques to improve year-round soil cover and increase organic matter in the soils; agroforestry and family agricultural plots; rainfall collection and diversion structures; reforestation on higher altitudes and steeper slopes and protection of forest remnants; and adoption of alternative livelihoods by local communities including more efficient use of fuelwood.

It is important to note that the climate change-focused activities supported under this component are implemented together with components 1 and 2 of the project. The main outputs of this component are:

1. Risk and vulnerability assessments conducted and updated for Gishwati forest and at least four other microwatersheds
2. System to disseminate timely risk information in at least two microwatersheds
3. Regional centers and networks are trained and equipped to rapidly respond to extreme weather events
4. Resilient infrastructure measures introduced to prevent economic losses
5. Forest restoration & rehabilitation in microwatersheds.
6. Marshlands and river basins restored and protected within critical landscapes
7. Climate resilient agricultural practices to promote food security
8. Water management practices to increase access to water for irrigation and drinking

## 9. Alternative energy sources and adopting efficient use of fuelwood

### Summary of Expected Global Environmental and Adaptation Benefits

**Global Environmental Benefits:** To secure global environmental benefits the GEF will specifically finance SLWM activities in areas prone to erosion. It will also enhance the country's effort to conserve its rich biodiversity assets. By protecting vegetation cover in the landscape, including forestland and forest fragments, or re-greening project sites, carbon will be accumulated in the biomass and soil.

Without incremental GEF support, there will be fewer specific conservation and SWLM efforts. Biodiversity assets and forestlands will likely not be identified or specifically targeted, and biomass carbon accumulation will not be prioritized as part of the local gully rehabilitation site investments. The incremental resources requested from GEF would generate global benefits in the form of enhanced habitats for biodiversity of global importance; increased forest cover and adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices (leading to enhanced carbon sequestration above and below ground); and decreased erosion, thus contributing to better quality of surface waters discharged into Lake Victoria by the Kagera river. The table below provides estimates of the carbon benefits generated by the project over a 10 year period.

#### Estimated Forest Carbon Savings from Landscape and Forest Restoration/Protection in Rwanda

Type of Forest Cover	Hectares Covered by Project	Standing Stock (tC/ha)	Total Standing Stock on Project Area (tC)	Total Standing Stock Year 1 under Baseline Forest Degradation (assumes 6.9% forest cover loss per year)* -B-	Total Standing Stock under Reduced Forest Degradation due to Project in year 1 (assumes 1% forest cover loss) -P-	Carbon Savings Attributable to Project over 10 years ((P-B) times 10)	CO2 Savings Attributable to Project Over 10 years (adjust by 44/12)
Gishwati Forest	500	210	105,000	97,755	103,950	61,950	227,150
Albertine Montaine landscape	3000	100	300,000	279,300	297,000	177,000	649,000
Total	3500		405,000	377,055	1,277,100	238,950	876,150

\*Assume reduction in total standing stock of 6.9% per annum.

Project global environmental benefits would also stem from supporting the rehabilitation of biodiversity corridors. Rwanda's Gishwati Forest Reserve is "one link in a chain" of high biodiversity sites hosting a diversity of flora and fauna with important ecological, social and economic functions and services. Of key importance are the Nyungwe, Mukura, Maramagambo, Kibale and Budongo forests, scattered along Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Connectivity among these sites is vital to preserve the unique fauna and flora of the Congo-Nile Divide, which has been designated by Conservation International as a high priority conservation "hot spot." Key icon species are also highly dependent on the integrity and connectivity of these habitats, such as the endangered golden monkeys found in Gishwati and the eastern chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinturthii*), an endangered great ape that occurs in fragmented populations in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, along the north-south mountainous divide that separates the watersheds of the Congo and Nile Rivers. The long-term

viability of most of these chimpanzee populations will depend on connecting them with others.

Discussions have started on a planning exercise for a forest corridor to connect Gishwati with Nyungwe National Park, about 50 km to the south, which would increase available habitat fourfold and, more importantly, allow interbreeding between the chimpanzees of Gishwati and Nyungwe. Of equal importance is the connectivity with the Parc des Volcans situated in the far northwest of Rwanda that protects the steep slopes of the mountain range - home of the rare mountain gorilla - and the rich mosaic of montane ecosystems, which embrace evergreen and bamboo forest, open grassland, swamp and heath. Connectivity to Mukura Forest reserve in particular and private forests would aim to halt the observed negative effects of deforestation and degradation such as erosion, reduction of lake levels, water flows, as well as their consequences on the production of hydro electrical energy. The project would support the planning and rehabilitation of forests in some of the areas found to be important for the establishment of the corridors above.

**LDCF adaptation benefits:** To secure adaptation benefits, the LDCF financing will specifically fund vulnerability assessment, climate smart agriculture activities, measures to ensure resilience of infrastructure, and alternatives for efficient use of fuelwood, etc. Without LDCF support, there will likely be no assessment of vulnerability, no early warning systems in place, less agriculture related climate adaptation measures, and lower uptake of improved infrastructure (irrigation, drainage, etc) and therefore higher probability of floods and landslides, run-off, erosion rates, and loss of lives and property. Resources from LDCF would be instrumental in helping Rwanda improve the adaptation capacity of local communities to the effects of climate change, including through: (i) increased capacity of local government and communities to respond to changing climate conditions; (ii) supporting investments in structures to minimize the effects of more frequent flood events, especially in areas of extremely fragile soils (such as parts of the Gishwati forest); (iii) supporting investments in structures and activities to enhance resilience to prolonged dry periods, such as rain harvesting and storage structures, and protection of water springs; and (iv) introduction and adoption of new plant and livestock varieties and races more adapted to the new climatic conditions and more resilient to the effects of extreme weather events and (v) promoting adoption of efficient use of fuelwood. Adaptation is to be undertaken by a variety of actors, including individuals, communities, businesses, private actors, civil society and governments, and will consist of a wide range of behavioural, institutional, structural and technological adjustments.

- B.3. Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the Project at the national and local levels, including consideration of gender dimensions, and how these will support the achievement of global environmental benefits (GEF Trust Fund/NPIF) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF). As a background information, read [Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF.](#)":
1. As described earlier, approaches to Landscape Restoration are aimed at enhancing functionality and *negotiated* ecosystem social, economic and biodiversity services and functions. Subsequently, specific socio-economic benefits and clear targets will be identified through multi-stakeholder discussions and negotiations (based on sound data and information) during the PPG. This socio-economic study will also include analysis of gender issues to ensure that the project applies adequate gender sensitive approaches and gender disaggregated indicators in the project framework and design. It is important to note that both LVEMP II and RSSP are tracking project benefits disaggregated by gender and the proposed project will follow the same methodology. For example, LVEMP II aims to have at least 35% of women as direct beneficiaries of subproject grants, while RSSP has a target of 42% for direct beneficiaries that are female.
  2. In general, social benefits generated by the project are expected to be significant. They will range from capacities/skills built/developed by community members and authorities to better

direct benefits of forest restoration and conservation to local communities. Such benefits might include those related to enhanced rainfall, improved climate adaptation and related benefits, jobs creation and related wage transfers and multiplier effects resulting from either direct public works on forest restoration and conservation, or from adoption of alternative economic activities, to mention a few. Other direct benefits to communities and local authorities range from learning on participatory planning, projects development, community supervision and evaluation, as well as implementation of the related activities.

3. Indicative specific benefits in the priority landscapes may include the following: Livelihoods of the vulnerable poor within the Gishwati Landscape are highly dependent on their natural resources and affected by the loss of ecological services. Restoration of the Landscape has the potential to provide direct benefits such as timber and non-timber forest products communities once heavily relied upon. More importantly, however, are the potential indirect benefits such as mitigation of disasters such as floods and landslides as well as maintenance of soil quality and limiting soil erosion (with subsequent potential benefits for food security both within the area and beyond). Additionally, restoration within this biodiversity hotspot has considerable potential to revive tourism in the area – providing a source of foreign exchange and job creation for local livelihoods. Downstream, benefits include reducing siltation and flooding – both of which have had significant impact on local industries (including a hydro-electricity plant which is of national importance). Furthermore, the project will establish sustainable financing mechanisms which are aimed at directly benefiting communities through introducing new income generating activities as well as indirectly through the use of market-driven approaches such as Payment for Ecosystem Services.

B.4 Indicate risks, including climate change risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation Strategy</b>
Limited awareness and incentives to enable a paradigm shift among key actors regarding cross-sectoral cooperation and integration of Landscape approaches and principles	Medium	Strong awareness strategy to be developed and implemented; institutional barriers to be identified and addressed; and sustainable financing mechanisms to be developed and integrated.
Changes in land tenure systems will be insufficient or untimely which will affect adoption of agro-ecological practices being promoted	Medium	The project will establish close linkages across relevant Ministries including Lands, Water, Environment and Agriculture. Further, activities will be guided by the Land Bill, Landuse Master Plan as well as site specific Land Use Plans (e.g. Gishwati)
Short term economical and livelihood requirements will take precedence over long term gains from Landscape restoration	Medium-High	The project will develop and establish sustainable livelihood and income generation activities to contribute to meeting immediate needs, particularly of the vulnerable poor.
Increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events	Medium-Low	The project will strengthen Rwanda's ability to monitor land

in areas beyond those identified as critical in the NAPA		degradation and weather events, which should provide early indication of potential disasters in additional areas in need of interventions.
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B.5. Identify key stakeholders involved in the project including the private sector, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, and their respective roles, as applicable:

Rwanda has taken a major step in decentralization of powers, including transfer of funds to make sure local communities are empowered and to make sure that they deliver. The Central Government/entities are no longer major implementers. The administrative structure that is entrenched on decentralization policy demands that communities participate, and in so doing facilitates capacity building and skills development. Rwanda is currently reviewing the decentralization policy and its implementation arrangements, and one of the areas of focus is to further empower local governments and communities to own their development agenda. Thus, community participation in LAFREC will be central to project preparation and implementation, and planning and discussions at the local level would culminate in the development of Sector priorities and subsequent consolidation and prioritization through the Joint Action Development Fora (JADF). LAFREC would thus utilize the JADFs as important entry points for targeting benefits to project areas and communities.

For example, although Gishwati extends over 4 Districts, LAFREC activities on ground will result from a consensus between the implementing agency (i.e: REMA - central level) and local communities at the different targeted *imidugudu* (the smallest administrative settlement - site level); the agreed activities should illustrate responses to local communities' needs and wishes as well as the responsibility of these beneficiaries towards the project itself. Once the consensus is made, all the agreed activities will be reflected in District action plans (the district being the smallest autonomous administrative/financial entity) to be developed during project implementation phase. The specific District Action Plans would identify the priority activities and investments for Districts in the project area, and the technical assistance necessary to support implementation through the REMA. Depending on the nature of the technical assistance the project is likely to engage with other organizations and groups, such as universities and research centers, or local and international NGOs. Such national and local partners would also participate in and contribute to the various discussion and decision-making fora, as well as to the multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platform.

LAFREC activities implementation might be governed by a simple (easy) type of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the implementing agency and the various relevant District authorities. These MoU hold a component on detailed roles of both local communities and implementing agency. Roles which will be implemented, monitored and evaluated by all parties involved. At the district level, implementation is mostly done through "community approach" where the implementing agency is required to avail specific expertise. It is worth noting that LAFREC will benefit from other projects that use or have used the participatory approach such as DEMP (Decentralized Environment Management Project) and LVEMP II, and be aligned with main national programs, namely: (i) Sustainable economic growth for jobs and exports; (ii) Targeting growth on enhanced role of decentralized institutions (Vision 2020 Umurenge); and (iii) Deepening good governance.

Establishing appropriate institutional frameworks will be central to the success of the project particularly in light of its multi-sectoral nature. Specific structures, roles and responsibilities will be further detailed during the PPG, guided by core principles which include ensuring ownership

and buy-in across sectors and stakeholders at different levels (including Government, Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organizations and Local Communities). Preliminary suggestions for the institutional framework (generated as a result of the stakeholder workshop convened in July 2011) are as follows:

- a. At National level, the project will be implemented through a consortium coordinated by MINIRENA with support from an independent body with knowledge and expertise in Landscape restoration. It is of importance that the latter is able to retain its independence as its ability to play its role effectively, particularly in relation to multi-stakeholder processes and as an advisor, will be closely linked to it being perceived as a neutral player (or “honest broker”). The consortium will be structured into the following mechanisms:
  - i. A Project Coordination Unit responsible for day to day implementation and consisting of dedicated staff (in light of the scale and complexity of the project), preferably seconded from key Ministries from different relevant sectors (for sustainability and ownership). Project staff will need to include technical advisors as well as administrative and support staff. This unit will be fully integrated with REMA Special Project Implementation Unit, which coordinates all projects implemented under the REMA.
  - ii. An Advisory Committee consisting of Heads of Key Ministries, National Authorities and (Non-Governmental) Technical Support Organizations to provide overall strategic direction and ensure support from high level decision-makers. It is further suggested that a representative of a private sector umbrella organization (such as the Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF)) is invited to join this Committee. MINAGRI will be a key partner in this committee due to the great level of overlap between activities promoted and implemented by that Ministry and those of the proposed project.
  - iii. A multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platform: To both ensure linkages with other ongoing initiatives as well as ensure wider representation in the learning and knowledge generation processes. This platform will also include representatives from the two landscapes.
- b. At Landscape level, project implementation mechanisms will include:
  - i. A Landscape Restoration Implementation Task Force: Coordinated by a Landscape Coordinator and supported by administrative staff. The task force may include relevant district officers to strengthen the integration across sectors (through, for example, ensuring integration of the Landscape Restoration and Management Plans with Local Development Plans).
  - ii. A Landscape level multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platform: This platform combines both the roles of the national level Advisory Group as well as the National Multi-stakeholder Platform. The platform provides an opportunity to engage the wider stakeholder group in planning, adaptive management and learning processes and should therefore contribute to activities such as the development and regular review of the Landscape Restoration and Management plans.

#### B.6. Outline the coordination with other related initiatives:

There are a good number of projects and activities in the country, both large and small, focused on land restoration. This concentration of activities is stronger in areas of great identified needs, such as the Gishwati Forest. The multiplication of activities focused on forest and land restoration underscores the need for National, Regional and Local spaces for planning and

designing such activities. The Landscape level multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platform, as well as the Landscape Restoration Implementation Task Force, will provide an opportunity to engage the wider stakeholder group in planning, adaptive management and learning processes, and thus ensure coordination among the various existing and proposed activities for one area.

The project will be closely linked with baseline initiatives described under Section B.1. Representatives from these initiatives (at decision-making levels) will be engaged primarily in the multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platforms. At Landscape level, this will allow for their involvement in the development and review of the Landscape Restoration and Management plans – as well as the identification of synergies between initiatives to ensure that duplication of efforts is avoided. Furthermore, the Nation-wide landscape restoration strategy and operational guidelines as well as Landscape level plans will be based on the solid base of data and information collected under these different initiatives (for example, the Land use plan developed for Gishwati).

Project preparation during the PIF stage has been greatly informed by the lessons learned from the Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystems Project, a GEF funded operation with the World Bank as IA, which closed in 2011. The main lessons for the design of LAFREC are: (i) It is crucial to also conserve biodiversity in areas outside protected areas, such as in the larger production landscapes; (ii) The commitment to inter-sectoral collaboration should be very well defined and established *a priori*; (iii) Project activities should be mainstreamed into existing institutions as much as possible; and (iv) Community level investments, even if small, can have a transformative effect in terms of developing new paradigms.

An important related initiative is the “Sustainable afforestation and reforestation management of the natural forests of Rwanda”, a 3-year project financed by a grant from the Congo Basin Forest Fund to MINIRENA and executed by the National Forestry Agency of Rwanda. The project will contribute to the reduction of the deforestation and the poverty in the Congo Basin through (i) the increase of the forest cover and the improvement the living conditions of the populations touched by the project, and (ii) the establishment of the necessary conditions to allow Rwanda to be eligible to participate in the carbon market and to implement schemes for the payment of ecosystem services (PES). This project follows the approach in Rwanda to integrate the local communities into the sustainable management of forest resources and to link the protection of the natural forests to the reduction of the poverty of the waterside populations. This project and LAFREC are highly complementary in their activities but aimed at avoiding duplication. For example, while this project focuses on the Congo basin part of Gishwati, LAFREC would complement its activities by restoring additional forest areas both in the Congo basin and in the Lake Victoria basin parts of Gishwati. Since both initiatives are implemented under the same Ministry, REMA will foster the necessary collaboration and ensure that there are no conflicts between the two.

The project will also link closely with The African Model Forest Initiative (AMFI), a 1-year, \$ 120,000.00 regional program implemented by IUCN in collaboration with Africa Model Forest Network and funded by the Ministry of Natural Resources Canada. The AMFI programme aimed at initiating a learning network of forest landscape restoration model sites in the Congo Basin – with a particular emphasis on DRC, Rwanda and Cameroon – for demonstration, exchange of experience and dissemination of best practices, integrated within the International Model Forests Network and the Global Program on Forest Landscape Restoration learning network (GPFLR) for broad outreach and influence. Specifically the scope of the programme included the establishment of a Model Forest/Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) learning site in Rwanda- Gishwati landscape, complementing the DRC and Cameroon sites.

Another important associated activity where close collaboration will be established is the “Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change by Establishing Early Warning and Disaster Preparedness Systems and Support for Integrated Watershed Management in Flood Prone Areas

Project. The project objectives are to reduce the vulnerability of communities in Gishwati forest and the associated Congo-Nile watershed area to climate change impacts. Specifically, the project aims to: (i) prepare an early warning and disaster management plan for the Gishwati forest and the Congo-Nile watershed; (ii) produce a land use master plan for climate resilience; (iii) introduce improved land use management practices; and (iv) distribute the lessons learned from pilot areas to the rest of the country. The project intervention area includes the four districts bordering the Gishwati forest, identified through the NAPA process as being among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. This US\$ 15.9 M project includes US\$ 3.5 M financing from the Least Developed Countries Fund (LCDF) under the Global Environment Facility. The project is supported by UNEP and UNDP and executed by the REMA - the same implementing agency proposed for the project. The main outputs from this project, namely an Early Warning System (EWS) established in Gishwati area, climate change risks incorporated into District development planning; and good practices to reduce vulnerability promoted among communities in the project areas, will provide a solid ground for implementation of LEFREC activities in Gishwati.

### **C. DESCRIBE THE GEF AGENCY'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT:**

The World Bank has a comparative advantage in this project as a result of the sustained partnership with REMA through the GEF-financed Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystems Project (IMCE) in Rwanda, which closed on June 2011. This partnership has been renewed and strengthened with the approval in June of 2011 of the IDA-financed Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II. The proposed project will scale-up some of the activities on watershed management already included in the IDA project, with emphasis on rehabilitation of highly degraded hillsides in the Nyabarongo catchment through the adoption of more sustainable agricultural practices and reforestation, and on strengthening the Government's policy and regulatory framework.

In addition, the World Bank is the leading partner in the agriculture sector in Rwanda and there are currently two IDA-financed projects focused on improving agricultural productivity and sustainability in the country: (i) The Land, Water, and Hillsides Irrigation Project (LWH), and (ii) the Third Rural Support Project, which will provide substantial co-financing for the proposed GEF alternative.

#### **C.1 Indicate the co-financing amount the GEF agency is bringing to the project:**

The GEF agency is bringing approximately US\$ 44.4 million in regional and national IDA allocations.

#### **C.2 How does the project fit into the GEF agency's program (reflected in documents such as UNDAF, CAS, etc.) and staff capacity in the country to follow up project implementation:**

Rwanda has one of the most comprehensive and progressive legislative framework and policy instruments across Africa and this project is aligned with and aimed at contributing to the National Vision and Objectives reflected within these frameworks. The Rwanda Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) provides the overarching framework for realizing these aspirations, prioritizing actions through three flagship programmes: i) Sustainable Growth for Jobs and Exports; ii) Vision 2020 Umurenge (VUP) and iii) Governance. This project aligns itself with priorities reflected within these flagship programmes, such as: (a) Agricultural priorities – including the intensification of sustainable production systems (EDPRS, 2007); (b) Environmental and land priorities – involving ecosystems, the rehabilitation of degraded lands and strengthening newly established central and decentralized institutions (ibid pp i); and (c) Managing change through; i) enhancing the role of local governments in implementing national sectoral strategies; strengthening the interconnectedness

of services across sectors; and iii) changing attitudes of sectoral ministries to accelerate poverty reduction (VUP, 2007).

The project is also well aligned with the World Bank Strategy for Africa. Pillar Two of the Strategy - Vulnerability and Resilience – highlights the need to support adaptation to the effects of climate change, building resilience against the impacts of droughts and other climate-related risks on the agriculture sector. In many cases, this will be achieved through better management of water resources through the adoption of sustainable land and water management approaches and technologies, as well as of improved management of biodiversity resources and adoption of sustainable forest management.

The World Bank is already supporting the implementation of two operations that constitute the baseline scenario for this project, and project task teams work alongside the Rwandan counterparts on a regular basis while providing implementation support to project activities. In addition, the World Bank has an office in Rwanda (Kigali) staffed with international and local experts in natural resources management, procurement, and financial management, who will integrate the bank team working on the project.

**PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)**

**A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):** (Please attach the [Operational Focal Point endorsement letter\(s\)](#) with this template. For SGP, use this [OFP endorsement letter](#)).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)
Rose Mukankomege	Director General for REMA and GEF Focal Point	MINIRENA	04/05/2012

**B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION**

<b>This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF policies and procedures and meets the GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF criteria for project identification and preparation.</b>					
<b>Agency Coordinator, Agency name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Project Contact Person</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Karin Shepardson GEF Agency Executive Coordinator		04/05/2012	Paola Agostini	(202) 473-7620	pagostini@worldbank.org

## **ANNEX 1: Priority Forest and Landscapes for Restoration and Conservation under the Project**

### ***The Gishwati Forest***

Within Rwanda, one of the most critically degraded areas in urgent need of restoration and rehabilitation is Gishwati, in the Northwest part of the country. Gishwati is an Albertine Rift Afro-mountain forest and for decades constituted an important area of biodiversity. It used to cover large areas of the highland range of the Congo-Nile Divide in Northwest Rwanda before the deforestation started in the middle of the 1990s. It had a population of chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) and golden monkeys (*Cercopithecus mitis kandti*) as well as blue monkeys (*Cercopithecus doggeti*).

Gishwati Forest reserve had been heavily affected by human activities even prior to the Rwandan civil war in 1993-94. In the 1970s, Gishwati had an area of 280 km<sup>2</sup> but the forest was already degraded by many years of cattle herding in the forest. An integrated forestry and livestock project in the early 1980s converted 100 Km<sup>2</sup> to pasture and other 100 km<sup>2</sup> to pine plantations. Another 30 Km<sup>2</sup> were designated as a military zone in the North of the forest, leaving only 50 km<sup>2</sup> of natural forest. During and following the war, the northern part of Gishwati was used to host camps for displaced people, and by late 1997 the total number of families settled in Gishwati was estimated at 10,184. During 1997 and 1998, the forest was also used as a hide out by many of the Interahamwe militia. Consequently, a considerable number of military operations took place in the forest, which caused further degradation.

As a result of all of the above, the forest has been converted to settlements, agricultural lands and pasture. After the degradation, there is little of the original forest remaining in Gishwati, except on the highest elevations. Like in any other tropical forests, Gishwati helped maintain soil quality, limit erosion, stabilise hillsides and modulated seasonal flooding. It has also protected downstream water resources from accelerated siltation. The loss of the forest in many areas has resulted in tremendous environmental consequences such as accelerated soil erosion, landslides and flooding towards the valleys. This is mainly due to cultivation on steep slopes and the volcanic soil of the region, which is fragile. The resulting problems are also closely related to direct loss of agricultural productivity of the farmers. This ecological function is particularly important to the poorest people who rely on natural resources for their everyday survival.

Gishwati forest was an important source of goods and services ranging from wild fruit, wild vegetables, wild animals, foods and medicinal herbs. Agricultural loss due to degradation was estimated by peasants to be about RWF 120,000 per season. Degradation has led to more floods in Gishwati and electricity shortage in Cyangugu due to siltation of Sebeya River.

The impact of degradation on livelihoods of communities near and around Gishwati has been tragic. About 72 per cent of respondents used to get stakes for supporting crops from Gishwati now stands at only 7 per cent. Before degradation 40.3 % of residents used to get grass to feed livestock from the forest and only 3.5 % were able to get grass by the time of the study. Wild fruits have declined by 93.3 per cent, wild vegetables by 99.6 per cent animals by 99.7 per cent wild medicine by 79.9 per cent. Thatching grass collection was estimated to have been about 1.4 tones before degradation but the fall was of 93.7 per cent by the time of the study. Woven goods that were estimated to be about 2.8 tones have declined to 0.335 of a tone after degradation.

Despite the bleakness of the situation presented above, considerable progress has been made through several initiatives aimed at ecosystem restoration in the recent past and is ongoing. This includes reforestation, using a variety of agroforestry techniques and planting of species such as *Calliandra calothyrsus* and *Leucaena diversifolia*. However, there is still much to be done to restore the functionality of the Gishwati Landscape. Increasing populations continue to place considerable pressure on the area, thereby feeding into a destructive cycle. For example, with the increase in populations and need for food security, there have been drastic reductions in fallow periods and practices such as mulch farming (due to

the competitive uses of crop residues such as fodder for livestock and fuel). Negative impacts have been further compounded by the lack of adequate soil conservation measures (which has been linked to land tenure). As land productivity drops (farmers estimated a drop in food production by 25% between 1998 and 2005 as a consequence of soil erosion and climate variability), there is continued deforestation which in turn contributes to continued soil erosion and flooding.

Because of the severe degradation that the Gishwati forest area is facing, and aiming to reverse the situation, three land use categories have been identified following findings of land suitability studies conducted in the area. Those categories are: crop land, range land and forest land. The process of land registration is being fine tuned and land titles will be given to users (individuals, cooperatives) of the range and crop lands, provided they respect prescribed land use (agriculture or animal husbandry). The forest land has been gazetted as public domain and consequently a certain number of households or land users of this part of Gishwati have been relocated in order to maximize ecosystem restoration benefits while at the same time protecting people's lives and properties against impacts of climate change - such as destructive landslides and floods which characterize the area. The affected households have been resettled and compensated with farm land (average national farm land size/household) and individuals who had woodlots in the forest land area will also be compensated.

### ***Other Degraded Landscapes***

Rwanda is known as the land of a thousand hills, and for every hill there is a valley. Many of these valleys (which in combination with the respective hillside areas constitute a microwatershed) have been filled in with sediments originated from erosion on the hillsides, and the resulting areas are called marshlands – most of which have been under cultivation for subsistence agriculture for many years. These marshland areas have been the focus of a number of government initiatives aimed at improving the agricultural productivity and sustainability of the marshland areas while restoring some of the hillsides to decrease the input of sediments into the marshlands and provide small farmers with additional areas for sustainable agriculture. Although successful, these initiatives could provide additional environmental and social benefits if more investments were done towards adoption of agroforestry over larger areas, and for reforestation of fragile hillside areas and river margins with native tree species.

In addition to the microwatershed areas described above, there are many other areas where fragile hillsides have been deforested and are currently under unsustainable agriculture, as a consequence of past civil wars, fast population growth, and unregulated land tenure. These areas do not have much potential for increased agricultural productivity in marshland areas and alternative more sustainable livelihoods are sorely needed for adoption by the local communities. Existing initiatives in those areas have focused mostly on erosion control and improved management of water runoff as a way to improve water quality and quantity in the Lake Victoria Basin. The project will bring additional resources to generate global benefits to biodiversity, sustainable land and forest management, and carbon sequestration in those microwatersheds. The microwatersheds are selected according to criteria specified under the baseline project (LVEMP II and RSSP), but the level of soil degradation and poverty are common criteria to both initiatives. Out of the microwatershed benefitting from the baseline project, the proposed GEF financing will be used based on additional criteria related to the potential for reforestation and for enhancement of biodiversity to select which areas should receive additional investments under the project so as to benefit from the landscape approach to forest restoration – through the elaboration of negotiated landscape restoration plans and implementation of investments identified within such plans.

## **ANNEX 2: Details on the Baseline Projects**

The GoR is implementing a number of projects and initiatives to address the high levels of land degradation and poverty in the country. As part of this strategy, food security and improved management of soil and water resources have received most of the attention in a number of projects focusing on rehabilitation of degraded hillsides and improvement of marshes for food production. GEF/LDCF support will allow Rwanda to strengthen the current efforts with activities that also result in additional benefits to the population of Rwanda and to the global community, including enhanced biodiversity, environmentally sustainable agriculture, climate change mitigation through improved forest cover, and adaptation to climate change through improving community resilience to floods, landslides, and droughts. The restoration strategy and operational guidelines to be implemented under the proposed project will draw heavily upon the wealth of knowledge, experience, and lessons learnt from both within the country and beyond.

The baseline for the proposed project constitutes of a number of environmental, agricultural and climate change initiatives undertaken by Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This will be further defined during the PPG but a preliminary list of projects include the following operations:

**(1) The Gishwati Water and Land Management Project (GWLM)** implemented by MINAGRI and financed by the Government of Rwanda aims at: (i) Harmonizing the healthy co-existing of the agrarian communities with the fragile eco-system of Gishwati"; and ii) Maximizing sustainable economic contribution of Gishwati to the communities improved way of life. The total value is US\$ 25 M. The baseline activities considered as co-financing for the proposed project are US\$ 8.8 M. The following activities are baseline:

*Component 1: Sensitization, mobilization and empowerment of beneficiaries.* The activities under this component are geared towards mobilizing, sensitizing and empowering the beneficiaries with skills and technologies in order to get them fully involved in the project activities and foster ownership for sustainable management of the landscape and improved livelihoods.

**Main Output:** Beneficiary farmers are sensitized and are using effective, sustainable and environmental-friendly technologies.

*Component 2: Road network construction.* Gishwati is a land-locked area and, while it remains one of the areas with the most potential for agriculture development in the country, it also hosts an important remnant of natural forest. This component focuses on improving access to the area thus facilitating high-value agriculture products reaching the market, while also helping control erosion and the monitoring of the success in protection of the forest area from encroachment. The provision of better rural roads which can be used year-round will allow local communities to shift agricultural production to higher value commodities and to non-agricultural activities such as crafts which can only be sold at good market prices if producers can guarantee delivery to markets with consistent quality and delivery schedules. Shifting activities to those with better economic returns will allow local communities to decrease their dependence on local forests for their livelihoods. In addition, rural roads built or rehabilitated using proper engineering designs and technology will decrease soil erosion and the risk of landslides in the Gishwati area.

**Main Output:** The road network at Gishwati watershed is constructed and rehabilitation and maintenance measures are put in place.

*Component 3: Water and land management.* Three land use categories have been determined: crop, range and forest lands. This component includes activities meant to improve land and water management through implementation of sound environmental technologies for increased productivity for the range and crop land but also regeneration of the natural forest.

**Main Output:** Appropriate land and water management technologies applied and forest cover increased.

## **(2) The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II Phase II (LVEMP II).**

The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II is a regional APL with three envisioned phases. LVEMP II Phase I, approved on March 3, 2009, involves an IDA credit to each of three National Governments (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) and two trust funds (GEF and SIDA) to the East African Community. Phase II, involving an IDA credit to the Republic of Rwanda and an IDA grant to the Republic of Burundi, was approved by the Board in June of 2011 and is not associated with a GEF grant. The three IDA credits under Phase I, for a total of US\$90 M, were provided as cofinancing to leverage the US\$7 M GEF grant to the EAC under Phase I.

LVEMP II Phase II, approved on June 13, 2011, is a US\$ 30M operation aiming at addressing the socio-environmental impacts of environmental degradation in the Lake Victoria Basin. More specifically, it seeks to (i) improve the collaborative management of the transboundary natural resources of the LVB for the shared benefits of the five EAC Partner States; and (ii) reduce environmental stress in targeted pollution hotspots and selected degraded sub-catchments to improve the livelihoods of communities who depend on the natural resources of the LVB. Out of the US\$ 15M IDA credit to Rwanda under LVEMP II Phase II, US\$ 9.4M are being considered as co-financing for the proposed GEF incremental costs, and these resources are new and additional and have not been considered cofinancing for LVEMP II Phase I. The baseline activities to the proposed GEF project are:

*Component 1: Strengthening institutional capacity for managing shared water and fisheries resources.* This component focuses on building the capacity and increasing the effectiveness of the existing national institutions to manage the water and fisheries resources in the Kagera River Basin, and improve the cooperative management of shared transboundary natural resources of the Lake Victoria Basin. This IDA operation and the GEF project greatly overlap in their geographical area of implementation.

Main Output: Adoption by Rwanda of harmonized water and fisheries policies, and establishing the basis for future adoption of harmonized policies for sustainable land management.

*Component 2: Point source pollution control and prevention.* The main objective of this component is to reduce environmental stresses from point source pollution, especially municipal wastewaters, on the rivers, wetlands, and lakes in the LVB portion of Rwanda. The main point sources of pollution in Rwanda are related to municipal wastewaters.

Main output: Reduced environmental pollution coming from municipal wastewaters.

*Component 3: Watershed management.* This component seeks to reduce environmental stresses in the LVB through integrated watershed management, including the rehabilitation of degraded wetlands and river banks, and the adoption of on-farm soil and water conservation programs on the hillsides. There will be three sub-components: (i) Restoration of wetlands and riparian vegetation; (ii) Rehabilitation of hillside areas for production and conservation; and (iii) Community driven development for livelihoods improvement. The work under this component complements geographically most of the work to be done under the proposed GEF project, since both projects will work with the communities that are part of the LVB and the Kagera river Basin, focusing on SLM practices such: grass-strip, agro-forestry, intercropping, soil bunds, terraces, protection of water springs, etc.

Main Output: 5,000 ha under SLM by year 5 in target subcatchments.

*Component 4: Project coordination and management.* This component will provide resources necessary for effective Project coordination, national and regional communication and capacity building, monitoring and evaluation activities, and sharing of information with stakeholders and among the countries in LVB. The baseline project and the proposed GEF project will both be implemented through REMA's Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU).

**(3) The Third Rural Sector Support Project (RSSP).** The Third Rural Support Project is an \$ 80 M IDA project aiming to support implementation of the PSTA II, especially its first two strategic pillars:

intensification and development of sustainable production systems, and support to the professionalization of producers. The current operation is the third in a series that started in 2001 and has so far over-achieved in relation to the triggers previously established for its preparation and approval. More specifically, project objectives are to: (i) Increase the agricultural productivity of organized farmers in marshlands and hillsides of sub-watersheds targeted for development in an environmentally sustainable manner; and (ii) Strengthen the participation of women and men beneficiaries in market-based value chains. The baseline activities considered as co-financing for the proposed GEF project are US\$ 33 M. The baseline activities are:

*Component 1: Infrastructure for Marshland, Hillside and Commodity Chain Development.* This component aims to expand irrigation in cultivated marshlands through rehabilitation and development, promote sustainable land management practices on associated hillsides; and improve economic infrastructure in support of commodity chain development.

**Main Output:** 6,000 ha of marshland provided with improved irrigation and drainage services; 17,000 ha of hillsides sustainably developed; and around 63,000 farmers provided with irrigation and drainage services.

*Component 2: Capacity for Marshland, Hillside and Commodity Chain Development.* This component aims to provide multi level capacity needed to maximize beneficiary gains from the infrastructure investments and to ensure sustainability of Project objectives beyond its implementation. Total value of the component is US\$ 7.5 M (of which US\$ considered as baseline co-financing).

**Main Output:** 30 cooperatives with 50% increase in net revenues; increase in share of production sold through cooperatives (70% for marshlands and 50% for hillsides); and 30 cooperatives having access to finance.

*Component 3: Project Coordination and Support.* This component aims to provide resources necessary for effective Project coordination, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation activities, and information dissemination to stakeholders. Project implementation takes place through MINAGRI's SPIU.

**(4) Rwanda Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative.** IUCN has been the lead institution in developing the concept of landscape restoration more than 10 years ago and, since has continued to be at the cutting edge of global knowledge development in this area, including producing the global assessment of restoration potential with partners. IUCN occupies a globally unique position as the coordinator of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) which has been officially recognized and mandated in decisions of the parties to the UNFF and the CBD COP and SBSTTA. As the coordinator of the GPFLR, IUCN has begun leveraging private sector support involving such partners as Danone's Livelihoods Fund and the German Senat der Wirtschaft. Based on an Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Government of Rwanda, IUCN and the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Government of Rwanda announced in the beginning of 2011 an ambitious plan to integrate landscape restoration into its national development plans and to pursue a goal that would witness large-scale border to border restoration of land, soil, forest and water resources for the benefit of the Rwandan population over the next twenty five years. As a direct follow up of the MoU and following communications with the Government of Rwanda at high level (MINIREMA, MINAGRI, REMA, NAFA, etc) and consultations with Cooperation partners and international experts, an IUCN scoping mission to Rwanda was carried out in May 2011. The outcome of the consultation process was the design of a small project aimed at supporting the organisation of an initial workshop to outline a definitive process and means of implementation for the initiation and pilot phase of the Rwanda Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative. The workshop was as a direct complement and contribution to on-going erosion prevention and landscape restoration activities in the framework of climate change adaptation already underway. The workshop developed an outline framework that details the elements of a pilot phase of the Rwanda Forest Landscape Initiative (RFLR). In light of the significance of this project and alignment with IUCN's programmatic priorities (globally and regionally), IUCN is planning to contribute to both the design and

implementation phases. During the design phase, IUCN is likely to be engaged in gathering of baseline data (building on ongoing work in Gishwati under the AMFI project), while during implementation, IUCN is planning to bring together its expert base as a neutral facilitator and technical advisor. Overall IUCN will partner and support the government and the key stakeholders in driving this agenda forward. As preparation proceeds IUCN is expected to leverage additional funding from other bilateral and private sector organizations, given their active and diverse network with donors in the region. The baseline activities considered as co-financing for the GEF incremental costs are US\$ 2.33 M.

### **ANNEX 3: Response to GEFSEC comments (Review Sheet of 9/14/11)**

*Q 11. Thanks for the explanation. However, the response provided for the concerns expressed about the LVEMP II stays unclear. The PIF needs to provide a brief description of the original WB/GEF project (GEF ID 3399 / WB. ID P103298) and indicate exactly how the new LVEMP II financing in Rwanda is differentiated from the initial IDA funding. Otherwise GEF Council members will most certainly express concerns about the risk of "doublecounting" in the indicative co-financing.*

**Response:** Point has been noted. The following explanation was added to the description of the baseline project on page 13 of the PIF and in Annex 2:

Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project II is a regional APL with **three envisioned phases**. **LVEMP II Phase I**, approved on March 3, 2009, involves an IDA credit to each of three National Governments (**Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda**) and two trust funds (GEF and SIDA) to the East African Community. Phase II, involving an IDA credit to the Republic of Rwanda and an IDA grant to the Republic of Burundi, was approved by the Board in June of 2011 and is not associated with a GEF grant. The three IDA credits under Phase I, for a total of US\$90 M, were provided as cofinancing to leverage the US\$7 M GEF grant to the EAC under Phase I. Please see below the financing arrangements for Phase I, (pages 158-159 of Phase I Project Appraisal Document, in annex 11 for GEF incremental costs analysis)

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>IDA (US\$ m)</b>	<b>GEF (US\$ m)</b>	<b>Sida (US\$ m)</b>	<b>Borrowers (US\$ m)</b>	<b>Total (US\$ m)</b>
1. Strengthening institutional capacity for managing shared water and fisheries resources	12.70	6.30	1.20	2.20	22.40
2. Point sources pollution control and prevention	26.80	0.00	7.00	3.40	37.20
3. Watershed management	42.30	0.00	0.00	1.30	43.60
4. Project coordination and management	8.20	0.70	1.80	0.90	11.60
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>90.00</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>7.80</b>	<b>114.80</b>

**LVEMP II Phase II**, the next phase of the APL, approved on June 13, 2011, is a US\$ 30M operation aiming at addressing the socio-environmental impacts of environmental degradation in the Lake Victoria Basin. Out of the US\$ 15M IDA credit to Rwanda under LVEMP II Phase II, US\$ 9.4M are being considered as co-financing for the proposed GEF increment, and these resources are new and additional and have not been considered cofinancing for LVEMP II Phase I.

*- It is still not clear why IUCN is included in the baseline project. The explanation provided is based on the historical role of IUCN on landscapes. Please, describe the baseline activities for \$2.3 million that are considered in the cofinancing.*

**Response:** Additional text to respond to this point was added to the description of the baseline on page 14 of the PIF and also in Annex 2.

*Q13. According to the re-submission, Component 3 would support the introduction of alternative sources of energy and more efficient use of fuelwood. These measures would contribute directly towards several global environmental benefits, particularly climate change mitigation. However, their effectiveness for adaptation has not been clearly demonstrated in the context of the proposed project.*

**Response:** The point has been better clarified (please see Component 3 on page 19). It needs to be understood that the damages inflicted in those areas by either floods, landslides or droughts are greatly exacerbated by the high degree of landscape degradation due to deforestation and unsustainable land use which affect the ability of the ecosystem to moderate the effects of the increasing frequency of such

extreme events. As such, concerted efforts and investments in forest rehabilitation and conservation, as well as in activities that decrease the pressure on forests as sources of fuelwood, constitute an integral part of the strategy to strengthen adaptation capacity in local communities and for maintenance of soil quality and reducing soil erosion. Overall, therefore support to the adoption of alternative sources of energy that reduce population dependence on natural resources will allow downstream benefits such as reduced siltation, landslides and flooding and also induce behavioral change to more sustainable practices.

*Moreover, the PIF refers to "regional centers and networks" and the "dissemination of timely risk information" in the Project Framework and on p.20, but such activities are not listed in the context of adaptation benefits on page 21. If such technical assistance is indeed to be provided for adaptation, alongside vulnerability and risk assessments and capacity building, please provide further information and ensure that it is adequately reflected throughout the proposal as appropriate*

**Response:** That output (3.1.3) was removed from the Results Framework as there is another project under discussion in Rwanda which would support such centers.

*Please (i) justify the proposed allocation of LDCF resources towards alternative sources of energy and the more efficient use of fuelwood, and (ii) ensure that the proposed adaptation measures and their expected benefits are consistently described.*

**Response:** (i) The point has been better clarified (please see Component 3 on page 19) and see response to Q13 above.

(ii) The text has been made consistent.

*Q14. The project framework has been revised and clarified, but it does not appear to be fully consistent with the revised description of the adaptation measures proposed under Component 3, which appears to have two sub-components: (i) vulnerability assessments and capacity building (TA), and (ii) targeted investments to enhance resilience in the face of floods and droughts (INV).*

**Response:** The project framework (table B) has been better clarified to now clearly reflect the TA and investment activities under component 3 and these have been aligned with the description of the component. We liked the suggestion of combining the investments under Component 3 under a single sub-component. Please note that due to the PIF format restrictions earlier while the component included both TA and INV, it was not possible to select both as an option.

*- During the PPG phase, please develop the sustainability of the approach that is not clear.*

**Response:** Noted. Studies on a strategy and activities towards achieving sustainability will be carried out during the PPG.

*- How would investments in the Gishwati forest landscape link with other landscapes, such as Mukura and Nyungwe in the south and Volcanoes in the north, "in support of the reestablishment of biological corridors to enhance habitat connectivity and reduce fragmentation"*

**Response:** The issue has been better clarified (please see page 21 of the PIF (Global Environmental Benefits) as well as to the description of Component 2 on page 18. It however should be noted that the Gishwati Forest Reserve is "one link in a chain" of high biodiversity sites hosting a diversity of flora and fauna with important ecological, social and economic functions and services. Of key importance are the Nyungwe, Mukura, Maramagambo, Kibale and Budongo forests, scattered along Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Connectivity among these sites is vital to preserve the unique fauna and flora of the Congo-Nile Divide, which has been designated by Conservation International as a high priority conservation "hot spot".

*Q 17. The point is not addressed in the table (there is a response on the role of IUCN that is out of the scope). However, we find some elements in the section B3 and in the annex on baseline projects. Please, clearly confirm the work to be undertaken on CSO, indigenous people, and local communities in general. All points related to these issues are skipped.*

**Response:** A detailed explanation on the Rwanda decentralized structure for implementation at the local level has now been added on pages 24 and 25, under section B.5. Rwanda has taken a major step in decentralization of powers, including transfer of funds to make sure local communities are empowered and to make sure that they deliver. The Central Government/entities are no longer major implementers. The administrative structure that is entrenched on decentralization policy demands that communities participate including all stakeholders at the local level, and in so doing facilitates capacity building and skills development. Rwanda is currently reviewing the decentralization policy and its implementation arrangements, and one of the areas of focus is to further empower local governments and communities to own their development agenda. Thus, community participation in LAFREC will be central to project preparation and implementation, and planning and discussions at the local level would culminate in the development of Sector priorities and subsequent consolidation and prioritization through the Joint Action Development Fora (JADF). LAFREC would thus utilize the JADFs as important entry points for targeting benefits to project areas and communities.

Also although Gishwati extends over 4 Districts, LAFREC activities on ground will result from a consensus between the implementing agency (i.e: REMA - central level) and local communities at the different targeted *imidugudu* (the smallest administrative settlement - site level); the agreed activities should illustrate responses to local communities' needs and wishes as well as the responsibility of these beneficiaries towards the project itself. Once the consensus is made, all the agreed activities will be reflected in District action plans (the district being the smallest autonomous administrative/financial entity) to be developed during project implementation phase. The specific District Action Plans would identify the priority activities and investments for Districts in the project area, and the technical assistance necessary to support implementation through the REMA. Depending on the nature of the technical assistance the project is likely to engage with other organizations and groups, such as universities and research centers, or local and international NGOs. Such national and local partners would also participate in and contribute to the various discussion and decision-making fora, as well as to the multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platform.

*Q 18: Please, include a comprehensive risk analysis in the PPG.*

**Response:** Risk analysis will be further enhanced and detailed during the preparation phase.

*Q 19: Rwanda is member of COMIFAC and at the heart of many initiatives related to sustainable forest management issues. We are quite surprised to not find mention of the main projects and programs developed under the COMIFAC convergence plan and other regional initiatives, as the CBFF.*

*At national level, please, explain how this project will be developed in coordination and good intelligence with the project prepared by AfDB and financed by the CBFF. At first sight, there is a strong risk of duplication of efforts with this Euro 4.5 million project entitled "Sustainable Woodland Management and Natural Forest Restoration project in Rwanda".*

**Response:** Thank you for bringing this gap to our attention. Additional information on other related activities, such as the "Sustainable Woodland Management and Natural Forest Restoration project in Rwanda" project financed by the Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF), and their coordination with the proposed project has been added to page 26, under section B.6.

*At local level, it will be a minimum to mention how this GEF project will be coordinated with other initiatives that focus on the Gishwati forest (IUCN, Grape Ape Trust, bilateral cooperation agencies,*

*etc.). Moreover, this project is not the first GEF project dealing with ecosystems and forests in Rwanda. Please, explore how you can take lessons from the Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystems project that recently closed. Same recommendation with the GEF/UNDP project entitled "Conservation of the Montane Forest Protected Area System in Rwanda project.*

**Response:** Additional information on related activities and coordination with them has been added to page 26 and 27 under item B.6. There is a multitude of projects and activities implemented in Rwanda by various government and non-governmental organizations. This concentration of activities is stronger in areas of great identified needs, such as the Bugesera area in Rwanda. The multiplication of activities focused on forest and land restoration underscores the need for National, Regional and Local spaces for planning and designing such activities. The various players will be consulted in greater detail during the PPG - once the project areas have been defined.

*Q 20. Please, provide further information on the role of national and local partners in the implementation phase (university, research center, etc.).*

**Response:** A detailed explanation on the Rwanda decentralized structure for implementation at the local level has been added on pages 24 and 25 under B.5. As designed it is expected that the specific District Action Plans would identify the priority activities and investments for Districts in the project area, and the implementing agency (REMA) would be in charge of looking for the technical assistance necessary to support implementation of the project related activities identified in the District Action Plans. Depending on the nature of the TA the project will likely engage the support of other organizations and groups (such as universities and research centers, or local and international NGOs). Such national and local partners would also participate in and contribute to the various discussion and decision-making fora, as well as to the multi-stakeholder learning and knowledge generation platform.