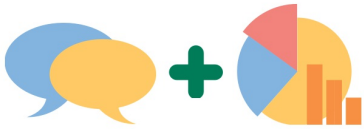
PAREF NL2, RWANDA

EVALUATION RESULTS

This document is a summary of the evaluation results, complete analyses and recommendations can be found in the full evaluation report. This public summary is meant to inform all stakeholders and participants in the evaluation about the results. Readers' comments and suggestions are most welcome and will help the Government of Rwanda (GoR) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) to strengthen their future approaches, projects and partnerships leading to larger or more sustainable impact.

Evaluation Team
ADE, Fair & Sustainable Advisory Services

Methodology



The evaluators used a mixed approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. The qualitative data collection aimed to understand the positive changes or improvements with regard to forest management, the performance of the woodlots, and its underlying reasons. It consisted of documentary review, interviews and focus group discussions. The quantitative analysis was made, based on (monitoring) data collected from project documents and during field visits.

The evaluators interviewed key organizations and resource persons (ministries, districts, farmers, woodlot owners, forest management companies, fuelwood traders and other projects) in Kigali and in five (out of 9) districts. In total 262 persons, consisting of 182 men and 80 women, were consulted. Moreover, observations were made of woodlots and agroforestry sites during the field visit.

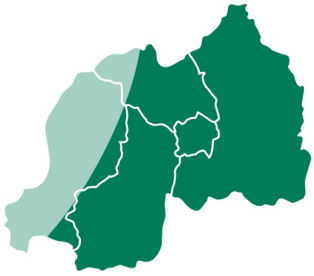
182 **80** **Consulted**

Introduction

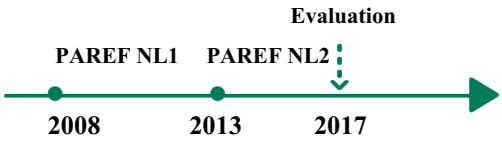
The **Project of support to Participatory forest management pilots and biomass energy production in 9 districts of Rwanda (PAREF NL2)**, supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kigali, was evaluated by Fair & Sustainable Advisory Services (Netherlands) and ADE (Belgium).

Evaluation Zone

The zone of intervention consisted of nine districts: Burera, Musanze (in Northern province), and Rubavu, Nyabihu, Ngororero, Rutsiro, Karongi, Nyamasheke and Rusizi (in Western province).



Timeline



The project was carried out from August 2013 to June 2017 by the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority (RNRA) under the Ministry of Natural Resources and its Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation (DFNC).

For many years, the EKN has supported the forestry sector in Rwanda and the PAREF NL2 project built on the experience of its predecessor project PAREF NL1 (2008- 2013).

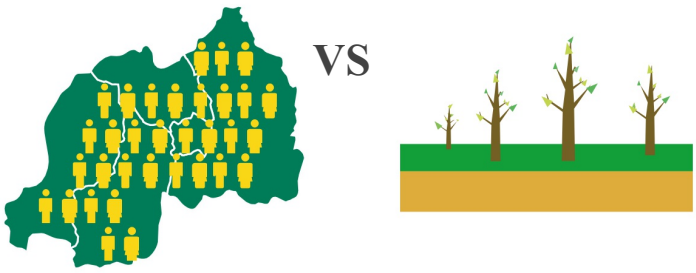
The evaluation took place from 25th of May to 25th of July 2017, with a mission from 12th to 28th of June 2017.

RESULTS

Supply & Demand

Despite the increase in forest cover in recent years, stimulated by government policies and projects, there is an increasing gap between the supply and demand of fuelwood (firewood and charcoal). Reasons for this gap are low tree productivity, land scarcity, population growth and the low availability and use of alternative sources of energy. Therefore, the PAREF NL2 project aiming to increase forest cover and woodlot productivity was relevant for the population in the nine targeted districts.

This project was fully in line with the Government's national policies on forestry and natural resources management. The project involved key actors from private sector, communities and the government, who all have to play a specific role leading to the sustainable use, conservation and management of forests and trees in Rwanda.



Effectiveness

Achievements

- PAREF NL2 addressed the key problem in the sector; increasing the forest cover and (future) productivity of tree planted landscapes; it contributed to increased supply of fuelwood and to reduced erosion. However, it cannot fully fill the gap in fuelwood supply or stop erosion, because the gap is too big, and additional measures are needed. Also, the productivity of the plantations could not be evaluated by lack of quantitative data.
- Increased incomes, improved livelihoods, medical insurance and installing a savings culture among the households of over 17,000 workers (53% male, 47% female) was a direct effect of the High Intensive Labour Work (HIMO) strategy. By this strategy the project contracted private forest operators to coordinate and manage tree production and planting. PAREF hired vulnerable persons from local communities as laborers for tree production, planting, forest protection and management. This strategy was effective and efficient. It had multiple effects: income security, improved skills, and savings by local households, increased forest cover and agroforestry area, leading to improved erosion control and environmental protection.
- Woodlots (2,544 ha) and agroforestry sites (4,929 ha) have been (re)planted with trees; The planting of agroforestry trees, which was not planned initially, showed the project's capacity to adjust (implementation) and learn.
- Many respondents reported that tree planting resulted in improved erosion control and decreased flooding in specific areas.
- With additional means, in a watershed area of 1100 ha, several anti-erosion control measures were put in place to protect the area.
- Capacities of HIMO workers, districts and cooperatives in tree production, tree planting and forest management (among other things) were strengthened.
- Nine District Forest Management Plans (DFMP) for the period 2017-2027 have been developed, which are important documents and guides for the districts' forest sector development and interventions. These plans contain a lot of useful information, e.g. details on proposed concessions to be issued to private operators for the duration of 30 years or more.

0 Unmet objectives

PAREF NL2
Did not:

- Pilot participatory forest management: due to delays in preparing the District Forest Management Plans, the issuing of long term concessions to private operators did not yet take place.
- Implement the District Forest Management Plans.
- Sufficiently reinforce staff capacity in the Districts.

Possible results

These results need to be validated.

- Improvement of the carbonization efficiency.
- Increased annual increment (productivity) in PAREF NL1 woodlots.
- Adoption (level %) of improved tree cutting and charcoal production techniques.

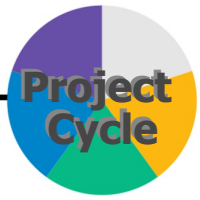
Sustainability

There are many changes that are expected to be sustained, such as the awareness about the importance of trees for erosion control and soil productivity; skills and knowledge on nursery management, silvicultural techniques (tree planting etc.), tree seeds collection & handling; and the savings culture. The service provision by cooperatives and the small business set up by (mostly) female ex-HIMO workers, are likely to be pursued as these directly benefit them.

Factors hampering the sustainability include:

- The insufficient capacity of districts (skills, budget/means and incentives), which risks to affect the adequate management and maintenance of established (especially young) woodlots, the implementation of DFMPs and monitoring of concessions that will be exploited by forest operators.
- The low management and entrepreneurial skills of most cooperatives.

Recommendations



Project Design

1) Agree on a project period of a minimum of 5 to 10 years in line with well-known longer time perspective of forestry projects, to generate a longer term perspective among key actors, and develop/test new techniques and profitable business cases.

2) Ensure better donor coordination and exchange of results, experiences and lessons learnt in the sector by:

a) planning regular meetings with ministries, donors and projects in the agricultural, forestry, and water management sectors;

b) regular and pro-actively sharing of EKN information and reports.

3) Apply an integrated approach with attention for multiple functions (landscape, watershed) and linkages (also with other project and donors).

4) Involve gender expertise to enrich the gender analysis as from the start of projects, and when further developing/revising the DFMPs. Make better use of existing knowledge: e.g. the REMA (Rwanda Environment Management Authority) Tool for agroforestry which explains the importance of gender in the environmental and agroforestry sectors.

Investment Agro-forestry

5) Agroforestry: MINAGRI and GoR to agree on a common vision on agroforestry, and decide on the clear division of responsibilities and roles. Higher government budgets for agroforestry research and promotion.

6) To analyze and improve the genetic basis of exotic and indigenous tree species, to obtain a larger variety of species and trees with good growth, resistance to pests and diseases, and with varying functions/products.

7) Select appropriate tree species for woodlots and agroforestry, while involving the owners/farmers. Compare the properties of different species and match these with needs of woodlot owners and farmers, in order for them to make the best choice.

8) Valuation of the forestry sector: to better show the importance and promote (investments in) the forestry sector through an (annual) estimate of the contribution of the forestry sector to GDP (as is done for agriculture). This can be done by adding up the market value of forest products such as charcoal, firewood, timber, poles, non-timber forest products such as honey, and services such as tourism.

9) Higher Districts' budget for forestry, to ensure an adequate regulatory and monitoring role of the forestry sector and DFMP implementation.

Forest management

10) Improve the operational dimension of the DFMPs to ensure its implementation, by developing practical instruction tools and materials for both district staff and other users, and by sharing key information about the project to specific users.

11) Reinforce District staff for implementation of the DFMPs.

Monitoring & Evaluation

12) Improve the monitoring and evaluation system (preferably linked to the existing government system), in order to ensure (a) regularly collection of key data throughout the year, and (b) a frequent monitoring of progress at impact and outcome levels.

Innovation & Capacity Development

13) Ensure that new techniques are low risk, affordable (low investment) and profitable, by making cost/benefit analyses, validate these with the users (e.g. coops), and by testing technical and economic performance before introduction. Also assess the needs for capital and financial services, related to adoption of new techniques, and build linkages with financial service providers.

14) To continue to support promising and young cooperatives to become stronger and profitable entities in the forestry sector.

Follow-up

EKN

EKN will use the evaluation results and recommendations to guide future projects, notably the Landscape Restoration program which is currently being conceived by Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority and EKN.

GoR

The GoR will consider the evaluation results and decide on appropriate follow up measures.

Contact

For feedback or suggestions

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