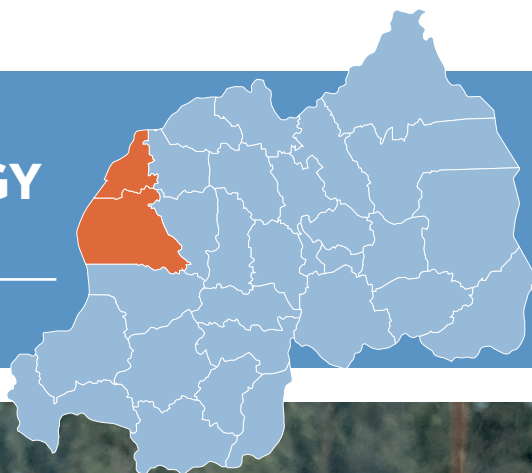




SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND EFFICIENT RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD

RWA/028



SECTOR | Environment and climate change

DURATION | 60 months (August 2024 - July 2029)

TARGET GROUPS

Private forest operators and producers' groups, landholders, youth and women, SMEs and entrepreneurs active in value chains related to cooking fuel and stoves, timber and non-timber forest products, communities living around degraded forest plantations, charcoal and cooking fuel consumers.

SECTORIAL POLICIES AND REFERENCE STRATEGIES

- the National Strategy for Transformation;
- Green Growth and Climate Change Resilient Strategy;
- National Forest Policy (2018);
- Forestry Sector Strategic Plan (2018-2024);
- Biomass Energy Strategy (2018-2030).

INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORAGE

Ministry of Environment (MoE), Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA), Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)

BUDGET | EUR12 million



The Sustainable Forestry and Efficient Renewable Energy for improved livelihood (SFERE) project is a five-year, EUR12 million initiative funded by the Government of Luxembourg. Implemented by LuxDev, the project aims to enhance the resilience of forest landscapes and improve the livelihoods of communities in north-western Rwanda. Biomass from the forestry sector provides the largest share of Rwanda's energy mix in the form of inefficient charcoal for cooking and heating. Beyond their low energy efficiency, traditional cooking methods, contribute extensively to air pollution and health issues, affecting women the most. High energy demand drives the prices, as forest resources are overexploited, leading to their degradation. The sector remains however critical for Rwanda's environmental sustainability and economic development, providing essential resources and employment for rural populations.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the SFERE project is to strengthen the resilience of forest landscapes and communities to climate change. This will be achieved through the restoration of forest plantations, the establishment of climate-resilient value chains, and the promotion of clean cooking fuel and improved cookstoves in both urban and rural areas. The project targets increased sustainable biomass production, reduced deforestation, and enhanced income for local communities.

To achieve its objectives, the SFERE project aims to engage the private sector and to facilitate access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and cooperatives, to support investment in sustainable practices and technologies.

The project follows an integrated three-results approach:

- restoration and sustainable management of forest plantations;
- promotion of improved cookstoves and sustainable biomass;
- enhancing and diversifying income through value chain development.

In each of these results, the project will facilitate access to finance for SMEs and cooperatives to support investment in sustainable practices and technologies.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The project is implemented the Western Province, in priority in the Rutsiro and Rubavu districts. Urban and peri-urban areas across the country will also be targeted for the promotion of clean cooking fuel and improved cookstoves.

BENEFICIARIES

- rural forest owners: organised into the private forest management unit model (PFMU), these beneficiaries will receive support for the restoration of forest plantation, and capacity building in sustainable forest management and agroforestry practices;
- urban and peri-urban households will benefit from the adoption of improved cookstoves, leading to reduced energy costs and improved air quality;
- SMEs and entrepreneurs, engaged in the production of cookstoves and sustainable biomass will receive technical and financial support to scale up their operations;
- cooperatives and farmer groups involved in the value chains for timber and non-timber forest products, as well as products from agroforestry, will benefit from capacity building and market linkages;
- the project places special emphasis on addressing gender issues by supporting women and youth-led businesses, promoting their active participation and leadership in the forestry and renewable energy sectors, and ensuring inclusive economic growth.

Additionally, the project will engage key public institutions such as the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Local Government, Rwanda Forestry Authority, and Rwanda Environment Management Authority, among others, contributing to their high-level strategies and ensuring alignment with national policies and sustainability of project outcomes.

EXPECTED CHANGES/RESULTS

- improved forest management and restoration practices will enhance the resilience of forest landscapes to climate change, contributing to sustainable environmental management;
- adoption of high efficiency improved cookstoves will reduce biomass consumption, reduce pressure on forest resources, and improve air quality, promoting health benefits for rural and urban households;
- strengthened agroforestry value chains and increased adoption of efficient renewable energy solutions to improve livelihood, boost incomes in targeted areas, and create job opportunities, especially for women and youth.

MAIN ACTIONS

- set-up of forest cooperatives on the PFMU to engage communities in the restoration and management of degraded forest plantations and facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices;
- conduct awareness raising campaigns on the use and purchase of improved cookstoves in urban, peri urban and rural areas. Strengthen technical and business development capacities of private actors producing clean cooking fuel from sustainable biomass;
- develop and promote sustainable production methods for biomass-based fuel, including pellets and briquettes, to provide cleaner and more efficient energy alternatives;
- equip forest operators and agroforestry practitioners with necessary tools and training to adopt sustainable practices and improve productivity;
- establish market linkages and develop infrastructure to support the aggregation, processing, and distribution of forest and agroforestry products, including biomass, timber, fruits, fodders, honey, essential oils, or else;
- provide adequate financial mechanisms to unlock investment and increase profitability throughout the value chains;
- provide training and capacity development for SMEs and entrepreneurs on sustainable practices, business management, and market access;
- work with government institutions to improve the regulatory framework for sustainable forestry and renewable energy practices.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

The first technical milestones are the early identification of specific areas for forest restoration, necessary for the preparation of the annual tree-planting campaign of October 2025.

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