

# Intambwe Savannah – Gakoma Restoration Pilot

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Kayonza, Rwanda

**Developed by:**

The Lifescape Project

Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association (RWCA)

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**This PDD is open for public consultation.** This PDD has not yet undergone a full review, is not approved under the Plan Vivo Standard, and does not represent the final version of the PDD if the project eventually successfully registers. This is an opportunity for anyone to give their feedback on anything, including but not limited to the appropriateness of:

- The interventions
- Carbon benefit quantification
- Community engagement and FPIC process
- Coordinating body and governance structures
- Carbon and land rights
- Monitoring plans and indicators
- Environmental and social risks and safeguards

This feedback is then considered by the validation team during the validation process. For more information on the review and certification processes, please consult the Plan Vivo Procedures Manual.

Please submit any feedback to [projects@planvivofoundation.org](mailto:projects@planvivofoundation.org)

Public consultation opening date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Public consultation closing date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026

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## Overview

<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Intambwe Savannah -</b> Gakoma Restoration Pilot Project
<b>Location:</b>	Rwanda, Eastern Province, Kayonza District Enter the country, and district/province(s) where the project region is located.
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Project Coordinator:</b>	Olivier Nsengimana Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association <a href="mailto:olivier@rwandawildlife.org">olivier@rwandawildlife.org</a> +250788387041 Enter name and contact details for the project coordinator.
<b>Validator:</b>	Enter name and contact details for validator. Amade Real (Plan Vivo-approved independent validator). <a href="mailto:amadereal@gmail.com">amadereal@gmail.com</a>
<b>Validation Date:</b>	Enter date of validation. TBC – planned for end June 2026.
<b>Project Intervention(s):</b>	The restoration of deforested, previously over-grazed land to wooded savannah, through Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting. Intervention category: Restoration. List the project interventions and specify whether they are Protection, Restoration or Improved Management.
<b>Project Participants:</b>	Participants are involved in the project through employment as Carbon Community Conservation Champions (CCCCs), and as rangers. To suit the current scale of the pilot, there will likely be 3 CCCCs and 2 rangers comprising the participant team. CCCCs focus on leading the planting and growing of saplings, and other restoration activities, and the rangers focus on flagging threats (human and environmental), such as protecting the restored site from unauthorised grazing or extraction.
<b>Project Area:</b>	State the extent of the total project area (in hectares) at the start of the project and any plans for expansion.

	<p>The pilot phase of the project outlined in this document involves a project area comprising five contiguous parcels of land. These parcels of land are, for most purposes, considered together as the project land, as they are under the same management plan and ownership structure, and have similar biophysical characteristics.</p> <p>For some specific purposes (for example, detailing timelines related previous land use and different planned sapling planting densities), it is helpful to refer to the land parcels separately – see below.</p> <p>Land parcel 1 (L1) is 11.7 hectares and was acquired through RWCA unrestricted funding in August 2023. Farming ceased in January 2024.</p> <p>Land parcel 2 (L2) is 22.8 hectares and was acquired through grant funding in Sept 2024 for the purpose of the pilot carbon project. Farming ceased in October 2024.</p> <p>Land parcel 3 (L3) is 5.5 hectares and was acquired through RWCA unrestricted funding in April 2025. Farming ceased in July 2025.</p> <p>As the project scales, the project area may expand to the north, west and south within the Kayonza District where opportunities for land acquisition arise. The expansion to the east is not possible as it the part of the wetland managed by Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA). Within the vicinity of the project area, there are several plots owned by non-resident landowners (business owners) who are currently using the land for grazing; these landowners have previously expressed interest to RWCA in selling their land. There are also parcels of land that RWCA owns but does not currently have funding to restore. However, conditional on additionality requirements being met, these RWCA landholdings could potentially be added as part of a strategy to scale.</p> <p>Collectively, these opportunities create scope for scaling the project by implementing successive pilot iterations on land contiguous to the existing project area.</p>
<b>Project Period:</b>	Enter the start and end date of the project period.

	<p><b>Start of active restoration (planting):</b> 25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025</p> <p><b>Project start and end date:</b> Jan 1 2024 – 25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2055</p> <p><b>Proposed validation visit:</b> 6<sup>th</sup> June 2026</p> <p><b>Estimated validation date:</b> Aug 2026</p>
<p><b>Methodology:</b></p>	<p>State the methodology applied to estimate climate benefits.</p> <p>PM001 Agriculture and Forestry Carbon Benefit Assessment Methodology</p>
<p><b>Expected Carbon Benefit:</b></p>	<p>Describe the expected carbon benefit of the project (in tCO<sub>2</sub>e).</p> <p>Primarily through the increase in above ground woody biomass, we project the total carbon benefit for the pilot land parcels to be approximately 471 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Over a 30-year period of carbon projections modelling from the date of enrichment planting (25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025), this results in a total sequestration of around 14,126 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This is based on model results generated by <i>AirImpact</i>, a carbon modelling tool specialising in forest and restoration carbon projections.</p>
<p><b>Expected Ecosystem Benefit:</b></p>	<p>Describe the expected ecosystem benefit of the project.</p> <p>The project will expand and improve natural habitats in the area, with restoration expected to drive significant gains in vegetation biomass and floral biodiversity. These improvements will in turn support greater fauna diversity and abundance, contributing to an overall uplift in biodiversity.</p> <p>Ecological connectivity will also be strengthened by creating habitat refuges outside Akagera National Park. This will be particularly valuable for migratory wildlife, as restored sites will function as ‘stepping stones’ between protected areas and agricultural landscapes. Their role as refuges and buffers will help reduce human–wildlife conflict and enhance ecosystem resilience along the Park’s boundaries.</p>

<p><b>Expected Livelihood Benefit:</b></p>	<p>Describe the expected livelihood benefit of the project.</p> <p><b>Livelihood benefits</b></p> <p>The project is designed to create new and stable livelihood options for community members that are involved as participants, through taking on the role Carbon Community Conservation Champions (CCCCs), which builds on an established successful model of nature-based employment that RWCA have used across Rwanda on different types of projects. Carbon Champions will take on practical work such as land preparation, tree planting, and sapling care and monitoring, while also acting as educators and stewards of restoration in their communities.</p> <p><b>Community development projects</b></p> <p>A share of carbon revenues will be directed to community-level initiative, and what this looks like is decided by the bottom-up project governance node, called the Community Restoration Committee, or CRC. Since smallholders are not at this stage of our project committing land directly towards growing of carbon, carbon finance only has to primarily cover restoration, labour, and maintenance costs through employing CCCCs, so by not needing to cover smallholders' opportunity costs, it frees up potential carbon sales for use by the community to address other development priorities identified locally. The main priority identified in community meetings that could benefit from carbon financial support is an Early Childhood Facility.</p> <p><b>Enhanced natural resources</b></p> <p>Looking broadly and long term, savannah restoration is likely to improve the natural resource base underpinning local livelihoods. This potentially looks like better and more resilient ecosystem services, like soil protection, erosion control, pollination and therefore more resilient farms and healthier landscapes.</p>

	<p><b>Future eco-tourism potential</b></p> <p>As the project grows and strengthens ecological links with Akagera National Park, eco-tourism opportunities are likely to develop. The Intambwe Savannah project forms part of a longer-term RWCA vision for larger scale conservation (Gakoma Conservancy), which will aim create additional income streams for community members in the future.</p>
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# 1 General Information

## 1.1 Project Interventions

For each project intervention, describe why they are expected to provide long-term increases in carbon storage or reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and have positive impacts on local livelihoods and ecosystems; and demonstrate that livelihood benefits to project participants and other local stakeholders exceed direct benefits from the sale of Plan Vivo Certificates or employment in project activities.

For this pilot project, we are focusing on one type of intervention: Restoration of wooded savannah habitat, for carbon and ecological uplift. This will be carried out through Assisted Natural Regeneration, with enrichment planting.

**Project intervention description**

As the project co-ordinator and local implementing entity, RWCA leads the technical planning and implementation of the ecological restoration of the land. This restoration plan is included in Annex 7. This includes details of the species that will be planted, and the number of each type that will be planted. The planting density is set at 200 saplings per hectare for L1 and L2, and 150 saplings per hectare for L3, balancing carbon sequestration objectives with the future habitat requirements of endemic birds, herbivores, and other fauna which thrive in a semi-open to open woodland environment. The planting plan outlined in the Annex 7 (with more species details in the Annex 6 carbon calculations) will be implemented across the entire project area (L1, L2, L3).

The project pioneers a novel community-led restoration model, building on RWCA's established framework of Community Conservation Champions (CCC) which encompasses various functions including wildlife rangers, tree champions, and seed collectors. With the launch of Intambwe Savannah, a new category is introduced: Carbon Community Conservation Champions (CCCCs). Three individuals form the core group of participants in this pilot, coordinating activities on behalf of RWCA, on land that they own. The intervention is led by these three community members, supported by a wider group of seasonal workers drawn from the local community, thereby ensuring strong local ownership and genuine bottom-up participation.

## **Carbon benefits**

The carbon uplift (total) for the land is estimated to be around 5471 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year. Over a 30-year project period, this results in a total sequestration of around 14,126 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. This is based on model results generated by *AirImpact*, a carbon modelling tool specialising in forest and restoration carbon projections.

## **Social/economic benefits**

Ecosystem restoration in this area will provide opportunities for rural communities to strengthen and diversify their local economies and livelihoods. For the Gakoma village community, three distinct types of financial benefit will be realised.

### *1. Carbon Community Conservation Champions*

This type of financial benefit is generated through formal employment as project participants. These roles build on RWCA's established Community Conservation Champion (CCC) model, which has engaged over 100 individuals across Rwanda. In this project, the carbon-specific CCCs in our project region will serve as formal participants, benefiting from direct and sustained employment as they lead community-focused restoration activities, as well as maintenance and monitoring efforts.

### *2. Supplementary and seasonal work*

A second, more temporary form of financial benefit arises from the short-term jobs created through the labour needed to prepare the land, plant and tend seedlings, and maintain young trees. In line with RWCA's established approach to restoration projects across Rwanda, priority for these roles will be given to more vulnerable households, such as those who are landless, or with a high proportion of dependents and elderly. Ongoing engagement with the Gakoma Village

Committee, particularly the member responsible for social and civil affairs, has been and will remain central to this process.

### *3. Development projects supported by carbon revenues*

As the project (this pilot and further iterations) develops, there will be carbon revenues available (the 60% of community revenues, minus contributions to category 1 and 2 in this current section) to support community development projects, managed through the governance mechanism called the Community Restoration Committee (CRC). The CRC will be facilitated and supported by project partners but developed within communities themselves, with input and guidance from the Gakoma Village Committee executives.

#### *Broad, long-term economic benefits*

Looking at broader and more long term impacts on the local economy of this project is especially important when considering how to ensure permanence of the carbon sequestered, but more importantly, the shift in land management practices towards more sustainable ones that also deliver tangible benefits to the local community.

Intambwe Savannah sits within RWCA's wider vision of using carbon finance to support sustainable development. The land parcels for carbon credit generation (L1, L2, L3) are expected to link into the planned Gakoma Conservancy, a community-focused eco-tourism initiative. In practice, this means carbon revenues can be trialled as one of the income streams for the Conservancy, helping reduce reliance on carbon alone and making the project more resilient to market ups and downs. At the same time, the core purpose of the carbon finance remains community restoration and livelihood support, with eco-tourism seen as a way of complementing and reinforcing those aims.

In this model, visitors contribute directly to the communities who are responsible for safeguarding wildlife and restoration, rather than benefiting only indirectly through Akagera National Park's revenue-sharing scheme. The conservancy will create direct employment, support diverse roles in tourism and conservation, and enable equitable benefit-sharing without requiring individuals to be landowners. In the long term, this integrated approach has the potential to diversify livelihoods, incentivise ongoing habitat stewardship, and strengthen the link between conservation outcomes and tangible community benefits. This is a longer-term vision, expected to be implemented over 8–15 years.

At the local level, ecosystem restoration will diversify and strengthen the provision of ecosystem services, including reduced erosion, improved water and soil quality, resilience against

desertification, microclimate regulation, and cultural benefits. While not considered direct financial gains, these ecosystem services generate significant economic value through natural capital uplift and productivity-enhancing processes associated with restored forests.

Another key benefit at the local scale is the reduction of land inequalities. By granting communities the right to benefit from land previously owned and controlled by absentee landowners, the project enables broader participation in sustainable land use. Through diversifying rural income, more members of the community will share in the benefits from the same parcel of land.

In the short term (0-4 years), grazing will be restricted while saplings become established. In the medium to long term, however, the to the project will introduce controlled, low-density community grazing, ensuring fair and equitable access and preventing power imbalances in decision-making around use rights.

Beyond the local scale, this project also links communities to global markets in ecosystem services, such as carbon credits. By channeling nature-based finance directly into rural economies, it fosters local development and supports broader economic growth. The pilot will deliver even greater impact by serving as a scalable model that can be replicated across the wider project region. Furthermore, by mainstreaming natural capital considerations into the practices of NGOs, government, and other institutions, the project will help ensure that the value of the natural environment informs decision-making beyond the environmental sector, extending into Rwanda's economic policymaking.

### *Ecological impacts*

Restoration carried out at the site is expected to provide a significant uplift in biodiversity given its location in close proximity to Akagera National Park. Biodiversity benefits will result from improvements in ecological connectivity and the creation of 'stepping stone' habitats for key species, enabling movement between protected areas and agricultural landscapes. The restored sites will act as refuges and buffers, reducing human-wildlife conflict risk and strengthening ecosystem resilience along the Park's boundaries.

## **1.2 Management Rights**

### **1.2.1 Project Boundaries**

Provide map(s) showing the boundaries of the project region(s) and initial project area(s). Include geospatial data files for project region and project area boundaries in Annex 1.

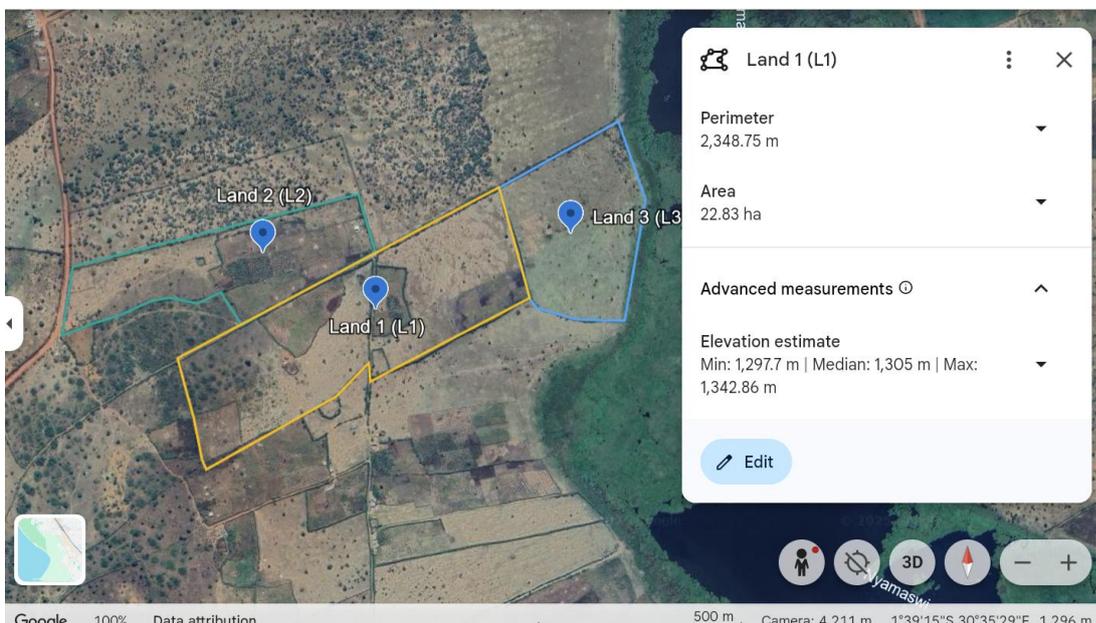
Projects are recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit Tool 9: Participatory Resource Mapping](#) to define the *Project Area*.

<b>Location:</b>	Rwanda, Eastern District, Kayonza District			
<b>Project Region(s):</b>	<p>The project region is considered to be the district of Kayonza – with the exception of the land that is included in Akagera National Park, as this land is under protection and managed as part of a national park. The Kayonza District land area is 200,000 ha. Around 30% of this area comprises the southern part of Akagera National Park.</p> <p>Future expansion will be considered within the framework of RWCA’s broader eco-tourism business plans for the area, and specifically the establishment of Gakoma Conservancy. Potential land parcels including both those already owned by RWCA as well as grazing business-owned plots on the market from landowners seeking to sell will be assessed for their suitability to be incorporated over time if they meet applicability and additionality conditions. Priority will be given to land contiguous to existing project areas or adjacent to wetlands, as these offer opportunities to strengthen ecological connectivity, protect water quality, and enhance habitat conditions.</p>			
<b>Project Area(s):</b>	<p>The project is located in Gakoma village, Buhabwa cell, Murundi sector, Kayonza district, in Rwanda’s Eastern Province. It lies between the wetland to the west and Akagera National Park to the east (see table 1.2.1, and figures 1.2.1 -1.2.3). The site consists of three contiguous land parcels, covering a total of 40 ha.. These farms had previously employed several men, most of whom have since relocated to new farms acquired by their former employer. Further details on livelihood baselines are in section 3, safeguarding measures in section 3.9, and leakage in section 3.12.</p> <p>Table 1.2.1. Project land areas</p>			
	<b>Land Parcel</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Location (GPS)</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>

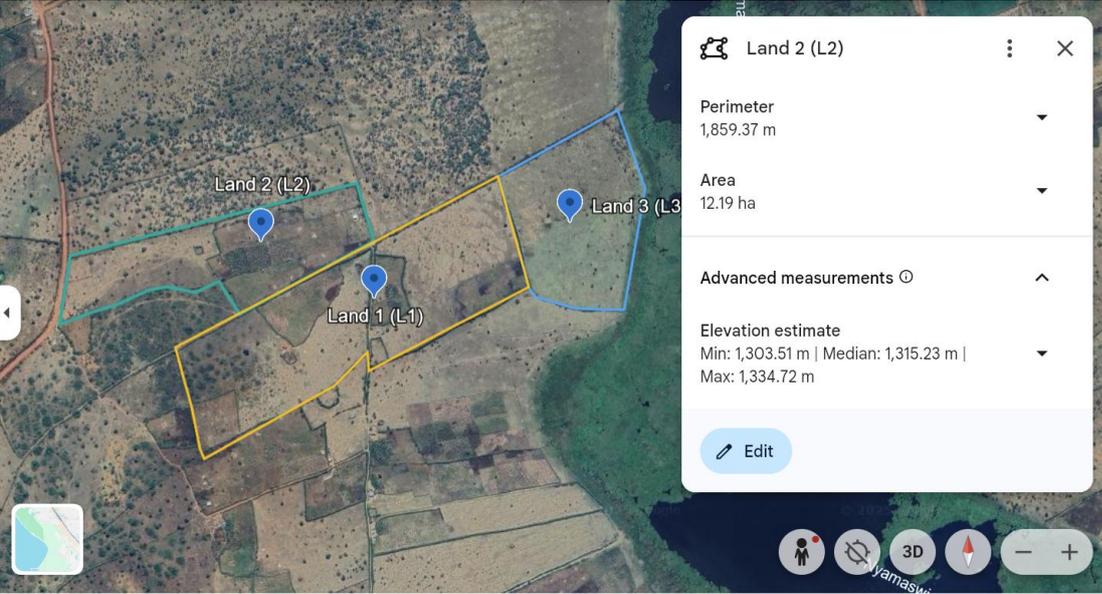
	Land Parcel 1 (L1)	Assisted Natural Regeneration with enrichment planting.	1°39'26.60"S 30°35'28.57"E	11.7	Farming ceased January 2024 (bought on 20/08/2023)
	Land Parcel 2 (L2)	Assisted Natural Regeneration with enrichment planting.	1°39'29.08"S 30°35'17.76"E	22.8	Farming ceased October 2024 (bought on 18/09/2024)
	Land Parcel 3 (L3)	Assisted Natural Regeneration with enrichment planting.	1°39'28.21"S 30°35'08.85"E	5.5	Farming ceased July 2025 bought on 16/04/2025
<b>Protected Areas:</b>	<p>Akagera National Park is a legally designated protected area, located 4km to the east of the project area, and bordering Tanzania. Around half of the area of Akagera National Park falls within Kayonza District; the other (northern) half is in Gatsibo District. The Park covers an area of over 100,000 ha and is characterised by diverse ecosystems including savannah plains, wetlands, and woodlands.</p> <p>It serves as critical habitat for numerous species, including elephants, lions, hippos, and over 500 bird species. It is managed by African Parks, which manages several National Parks across sub-Saharan Africa and is a well-established organisation. More than a half of the original 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> of this area was degazetted from the park in 1997 to accommodate refugees after the genocide. That area is now considered marginal land agriculturally, but de-gazettement was detrimental for the large mammals of the park that relied on it for dry</p>				

	<p>season habitat. The Akagera Management Company's Community Benefit Sharing Program allocates a portion of park revenues to neighbouring communities.</p> <p>Identify any legally designated protected areas within or adjacent to the project region(s).</p>
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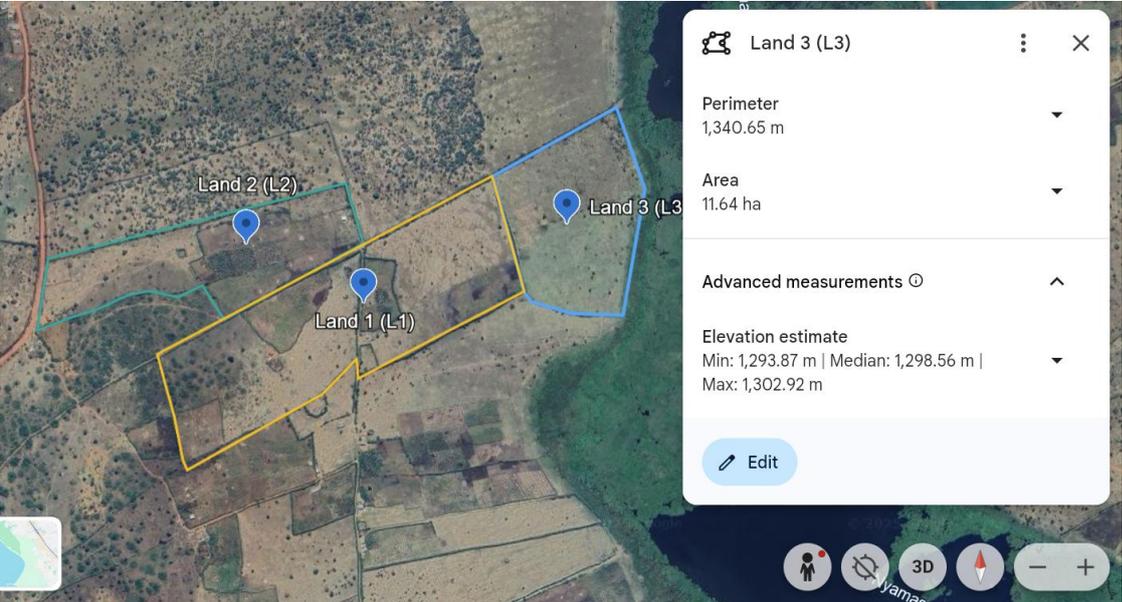
Figures 1.2.1, 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 map the project areas (L1, L2 and L3) and how they fit together. Boundaries were mapped in Google Earth Pro, with perimeter and area calculated for each parcel. To the west (not pictured), the sites border Akagera National Park and the Tanzania boundary, and wetlands (shown on the right half of each screenshot) run adjacent to the project area.



**Figure 1.2.1** Land 1 (L1) in yellow - project boundary map: evidence of perimeter and area measurements (hectares) derived using Google Earth tools.



**Figure 1.2.2** Land 2 (L2) in turquoise - project boundary map: evidence of perimeter and area measurements (hectares) derived using Google Earth tools.



**Figure 1.2.3** Land 3 (L3) in blue - project boundary map: evidence of perimeter and area measurements (hectares) derived using Google Earth tools.

## 1.2.2 Land and Carbon Rights

Complete Table 1.2.2 to describe the ownership, tenure, user rights or management rights of the project area(s), and how these relate to the carbon rights of project participants. If the project participants have customary rights to the project area(s) describe the legal basis for this with detail of any procedures necessary to formalise these rights. Add a row for each project area, or project area type.

The pilot project area comprises three contiguous parcels of land owned outright by RWCA, providing a clear legal basis for carbon rights. While carbon rights are not explicitly defined in Rwandan law, existing provisions indicate that benefits follow land ownership; these rights are formalised through PES agreements that promote community participation, governance, and benefit-sharing.

**Table 1.2.2 Land and Carbon Rights**

<b>Project Area</b>	<b>Ownership and user rights status</b>	<b>Carbon rights</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Add a row for each project area, or group of project areas with the same type of ownership and user rights.	Describe the ownership, tenure, user rights or management rights held by the project participants or other stakeholders.	Describe the ownership of carbon rights from land/marine use activities in the project area(s).	Describe what evidence is available of ownership, user rights and carbon rights. E.g. ownership deeds, or customary title documents.
The pilot project area comprises three contiguous parcels of land (L1, L2, L3), of 40ha.	The project area is owned by RWCA. RWCA ownership is necessary for legal and risk management purposes. Participants (the five carbon-related Community Conservation Champions) will enter	RWCA holds full legal ownership of the project land, which provides a clear and straightforward basis for carbon rights. While there is no explicit legal provision in Rwanda directly addressing carbon	Land title documents are provided in Annex 1.

	<p>into a Project Agreement granting them rights that allow them to influence the project's design, implementation and use of available carbon funds through the Community Restoration Committee's governance structure, provided all actions align with the restoration focus. For example, participants will not be permitted to introduce cash crop monoculture within the project area. However, they will have the ability to influence restoration activities and halt the carbon project if it is deemed to have a negative impact on the surrounding communities. Communities will have early and continual input in developing the benefit sharing mechanism, with guidance of RWCA and</p>	<p>rights on private land, existing natural resource law (e.g. Article 36<sup>1</sup>) supports the inference that rights to carbon benefits follow land ownership in such cases. Accordingly, RWCA is entitled to the carbon revenue generated. The delineation of rights to benefit from this revenue—such as community shares and participant payments—is clearly set out within the project governance structure and formalised through the PES agreement. There are no ongoing legal or tenure disputes affecting the project's ability to generate and distribute carbon benefits.</p>	
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<sup>1</sup> Law No. 046/2024 of 04/06/2024 Governing Forests and Tree.

	Lifescape and the Village Executive Committee.		
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## 2 Stakeholder Engagement

### 2.1 Stakeholder Analysis

#### 2.1.1 Stakeholder Identification

Complete table 2.1.1 to identify and describe the main stakeholder groups that could influence or be affected by the project. Describe the relationship of each stakeholder group to the project and state whether they are considered local stakeholders or secondary stakeholders (see Plan Vivo Glossary for definitions).

Projects are recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit](#) Tool 1: Stakeholder Analysis.

**Table 2.1.1 Stakeholder Analysis**

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
Add a row for each stakeholder group.	Identify whether the stakeholder group is a local stakeholder or secondary stakeholder.	Describe whether the stakeholder group will be positively or negatively impacted by the project and state the expected level of impact (i.e. High, Moderate, or Low)	Describe whether the stakeholder group will positively or negatively influence the project and state the expected level of influence (i.e. High, Moderate, or Low)	Describe if and how the stakeholder group has been and/or will be involved in the project.
<b>Participants (Carbon Conservation)</b>	<b>Local stakeholder</b>	<b>Positively – High</b>  CCCCs will be directly	<b>Positively – High</b>  CCCCs will have a strong influence	The CCCCs are selected through a guided, community-led nomination (including

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
<b>Community Champions)</b>		<p>employed as formal project participants, providing them with stable income, training, and long-term roles in restoration, monitoring, and governance. Their involvement also strengthens their social standing as community leaders and role models. Care is taken during selection to be fair and balanced, to try and offer available positions who are equally enthusiastic but may be less visible or influential (such as how women may typically be perceived in strongly</p>	<p>over the day-to-day running of restoration activities and will play a central role in monitoring and reporting for carbon, biodiversity, and social outcomes. Through their positions on the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), they also influence how carbon revenues are used for wider community benefit.</p>	<p>self-nomination) process facilitated by RWCA to ensure legitimacy, balance, and inclusivity. Three initial participants were introduced during meetings in September and November 2024, with further confirmation and training planned in Kigali. They have already been engaged in wellbeing assessments, social mapping, and discussions on roles, responsibilities, and benefit-sharing. They take part through Project Agreements and renewable contracts, to carry out roles which are clear, transparent, and entirely voluntary.</p>

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Type	Impact	Influence	Engagement
		patriarchal societies).		
<b>Members of the Gakoma Community (excluding participants)</b>	<b>Local stakeholder</b>	<p><b>Positively – Moderate.</b></p> <p>Gakoma community members will benefit (i.e. be positively impacted, to a moderate level on average) through temporary employment opportunities and from new development projects funded and implemented using carbon finance. The exact ways in which members of the local community benefit will depend on the types of development projects that are implemented using revenue</p>	<p><b>Positively – Medium to High</b></p> <p>High influence in terms of the community at large having their development priorities and needs – assuming these are accurately represented and advocated for by the CRC.</p> <p>The group has a low influence over restoration and planting plans per se, as these are primarily led by the formal participants and RWCA given their expertise. However, community members will be actively involved in the activities through seasonal</p>	<p>The Gakoma community has been actively involved from the outset, with around 80 members of the village attending two initial meetings about the project (18 September 2024, 22 November 2024 and 25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025) where the project and opportunities for paid seasonal work were discussed (See Annex 4a for full meeting minutes).</p> <p>Some community members have previously worked on RWCA projects and are familiar with the type of work and income involved. And many people expressed interest in participating in this carbon project, through providing temporary labour for restoration activities.</p>

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
		<p>from carbon sales, who these projects impact directly and indirectly, and whether community members are involved through temporary labour or benefit in other ways (e.g. from facilities or services provided).</p>	<p>and temporary work, on their terms, and in that way, exert influence.</p>	
<p><b>Gakoma Village Executive Committee</b></p>	<p><b>Local Stakeholder</b></p>	<p><b>Positively – Moderate</b></p> <p>The Gakoma Executive Village Committee is expected to be positively impacted, with a moderate level of impact. The project offers a new potential source of funding for community development priorities, which they'll help shape through</p>	<p><b>Positively – High</b></p> <p>The Gakoma Village Executive Committee is expected to have a positive influence, with a moderate to high level of influence. As elected leaders and CRC members, they'll help guide benefit-sharing decisions and ensure the project reflects local priorities, reinforcing</p>	<p>The Gakoma Village Committee has already been engaged in early project meetings and will play an ongoing role through their confirmed participation in the Community Restoration Committee (CRC). As community-elected leaders with defined responsibilities, they are well-placed to represent local development priorities and provide input into how carbon revenues may be used.</p>

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
		<p>participating in the CRC. While not financially rewarded, their role in coordination and decision-making strengthens their position as local representatives.</p>	<p>alignment with Rwanda's governance structures.</p>	<p>The CRC—comprising both village executives and the project participants, will act as the central governance body for the project at the community level. The project team has introduced the CRC concept during broader community meetings, and its structure will continue to be shaped with input from both participants and village leadership.</p>
<p><b>Rwanda Environment Management Authority</b></p>	<p><b>Secondary Stakeholder</b></p>	<p><b>Positive - moderate</b></p> <p>At the national level, REMA is the main government authority we work with, as they are the national authority responsible for environmental regulation and carbon market</p>	<p><b>Positive - high</b></p> <p>REMA has a high level of influence on the project given its role in approving carbon projects in Rwanda. Its technical guidance and registration templates directly shapes how the project has been</p>	<p>Project information and documentation has been, and will continue to be, shared with REMA, on both technical and policy matters. This has already been done through the process of seeking a formal letter of approval (this has now been issued). RWCA will continue meeting with the carbon markets team (particularly Eric</p>

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
		governance. The project supports its mandate by contributing to the implementation of Rwanda’s voluntary carbon market framework and to national objectives for restoration and sustainable land management.	designed, documented, and aligned with national policies, such as the conversations we’ve had with them around aligning with National Land Use and Development Masterplan.	Mudakikwa), to maintain consistency with registry and reporting requirements and anticipate early any obstacles or dissonance with national policy.
<b>District/sector governments</b>	<b>Secondary Stakeholder</b>	<b>Positive – moderate</b>  Intambwe Savannah aligns with district and sector priorities and supports coordination between local government and conservation partners. It also provides an institutional framework that guides how the Gakoma Village Council, as a key local stakeholder	<b>Positive – moderate</b>  Kayonza District and Murundi sector authorities hold a moderate level of influence as they hold some influence over land use zoning, and have development strategies and policies that can influence how well Intambwe Savannah will be supported by	Ongoing coordination with the District Director of Natural Resources, the Mayor’s office, and Murundi Sector leadership will be important for maintaining local support and resolving operational matters as they arise.

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
		involved in project implementation and governance, operates and communicates.	local government institutions.	

## 2.1.2 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Complete Table 2.1.2 to identify any Indigenous Peoples or local communities that have statutory or customary rights to land or resources in the project area(s) and describe their governance structure and decision-making processes, including details of the involvement of women and marginalized or vulnerable groups.

**Table 2.1.2: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**

<b>Indigenous Peoples or local communities.</b>	<b>Rights to land or resources in the project area(s)</b>	<b>Governance structure</b>	<b>Involvement of women and marginalised groups</b>	<b>Engagement</b>
Add a row for each group of Indigenous Peoples or local communities with statutory or customary rights to land or resources in the project area(s)	Describe the statutory or customary rights to land or resources in the project area(s)	Describe the governance structure of and decision-making processes of the Indigenous Peoples or local communities.	Describe the involvement of women and marginalised groups in decision making.	Describe how the project will engage the Indigenous Peoples or local communities, and state whether their representatives have been identified.
Gakoma local community	The project area was formally acquired for the purpose of	Gakoma Village is governed by a Village Executive	Currently, the head of the Village Committee is a	The engagement with the local communities

	<p>implementing the pilot. Prior to this acquisition, the local community held no formal ownership or management rights over the land; therefore, there were no pre-existing community tenure or management rights in the baseline condition.</p>	<p>Committee (VEC), a community-elected body of five members responsible for local decision-making on social and development matters. Each village in Rwanda follows the same structure, with the VEC reporting upward through the cell, sector, and district administrative hierarchy. See section 2.5.1 for more description on where the Gakoma Village committee sits within broader government structure.</p>	<p>woman, as is one other member of the 5 member team. Rwanda is a patriarchal culture and Intambwe Savannah project seeks to empower the women already in existing governance structures as well as provide opportunities for woman to be formal project participants.</p>	<p>(Gakoma Village) is direct and clear – as they are local stakeholders, and the participants are included within this group (see section 2.1.1).</p>
<p>Within our project structure, there are no groups identified under the category of</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>indigenous groups. This is intentional, as the Rwandan government does not formally recognise indigeneity or ethnicity in such terms. See Section 2.6.2 for further explanation of how this matter is addressed in national policy.</p>				
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### 2.1.3 Disputed Land or Resources

Identify and describe any past or ongoing disputes over land or resources in the project area(s) and provide details of how they were or will be resolved.

There are no known past or ongoing disputes within the project area. All parcels are privately held with registered ownership; the Intambwe Savannah parcels are owned by RWCA, and tenure is clear and uncontested. RWCA completed title/encumbrance checks prior to acquisition and keeps the documentation on file. RWCA has worked in the wider area for several years and engages routinely with neighbouring landowners, which would surface any problems early.

Occasional unauthorised grazing occurs at the margins of the land. If these occur, they are not considered disputes (more so informal incident) and are resolved through discussion with herders and landowners.

We will continue to monitor any potential disputes through our communication with the Gakoma VEC, and if necessary, local administrative channels and land-registry checks. The grievance mechanism (see Annex 12 – section 12) also provides a way to formally deal with any land-related problems or disputes. And, if a substantiated claim arises, we will follow a documented process,

including, for example, ground-truthing with the Gakoma VEC, followed by mediation with local authorities, corrective actions, and, if needed, legal confirmation of boundaries.

## 2.2 Project Coordination and Management

Identify the project coordinator organisation that will take overall responsibility for the project, and any other organisations that will play a role in project coordination and management. Identify the parties responsible for each of the project coordination and management functions listed in Table 2.2.

Provide a summary of relevant experience that demonstrates proficiency in the in the assigned function(s) for the project coordinator and any other organisations listed in Table 2.2. Include details of skills and experience to allow for appropriate engagement with any indigenous vulnerable or disadvantaged peoples in the project region.

All organisation in Table 2.2 must be include in the project's governance structure in Section 5.1.

If monitoring and patrolling is supported by the government, projects must provide Memorandum of Understanding between the project coordinator and the government agency responsible for law enforcement.

In Annex 2, include i) evidence of establishment of the project coordinator (e.g. company or charity registration certificate), and ii) signed agreements between the project coordinator and all other organisations named in Table 2.2 demonstrating their commitment to fulfil their assigned responsibilities throughout the project period; iii) an MoU between the project coordinator and the government agency responsible for law enforcement (if required).

As outlined in Table 2.2, The Lifescape Project (Lifescape) and the Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association (RWCA) will jointly work to implement the project.

The **Lifescape Project** is a registered charity based in the United Kingdom, with a global scope of work. Lifescape's ultimate objective is to assist the protection and restoration landscapes where nature can function to the fullest extent possible, to generate a sustainable future on our planet. Lifescape see people as a core part of that goal, exploring ways to continue coexisting with nature in a harmonious way. This project would be the first Lifescape has registered in the Voluntary Carbon Market, and the first restoration project to be designed and carried out in the Global

South. However, Lifescape have worked with RWCA – the local partner - in other capacities including in developing the detailed feasibility study for this project (completed in Feb 2023).

Especially in the early phases of the project, Lifescape will be responsible for high-level co-ordination and overall management of the project, such as ensuring compliance and due diligence and registration of project and sale of carbon credits.

**Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association (RWCA)** is the local project co-ordinator and has strong complement of staff (including botanists, ecologists, rangers, and community liaison officers) and extensive experience in meaningfully engaging with local communities in ecosystem restoration across a range of nationally and internationally funded projects.

RWCA will be responsible for implementing the project on the ground, and for stakeholder engagement. This is key, as the RWCA staff have a positive and established presence in the communities for which the project may be chosen to go ahead. The community connections and engagement with RWCA form much of the technical support available and necessary for implementing the project, particularly ecological restoration expertise and capacity.

**Experience and capacity of Lifescape:** Since 2017, Lifescape has been delivering high-quality, interdisciplinary projects across various jurisdictions, integrating ecological, legal, and economic expertise while collaborating with diverse partners and partnership structures. Lifescape's strong legal expertise allows the organisation to effectively draft, manage, and oversee contracts and agreements, ensuring due diligence throughout. The social science and ecological teams are currently completing a comprehensive social engagement program in the UK, aimed at fostering open and healthy dialogue around species restoration and addressing the biodiversity crisis, with a focus on the Lynx.

In 2023, Lifescape published a Biodiversity Metrics review, examining the development of metrics for use in markets (voluntary and statutory), academia, and rewilding, which involved engaging with various actors and leaders in the environmental markets space. Recently, Lifescape was awarded funding through a four-year EU Horizon project, starting in 2025, to generate knowledge on ecosystem services and natural capital markets in Europe. The rewilding economist (project lead) and senior economic advisor (technical advisor) both have an interdisciplinary background, and extensive experience in East Africa, including at the policy level like Government and UNEP, as well as at the community level. We therefore have a learned understanding of the sensitivities, complexities, and participatory processes that are fundamental to Plan Vivo's project vision.

**Experience and capacity of RWCA:** RWCA have a proven track record of successful restoration projects, always prioritising community involvement as a core value and outcome. For example, in the Umusambi Village Wetland Restoration project, RWCA restored 21 hectares of wetland, creating a sanctuary for over 50 endangered Grey Crowned Cranes. This project combined ecological restoration with tourism and education, benefiting both biodiversity and local communities. RWCA engages communities to protect wildlife, offering sustainable alternatives like tree planting and beekeeping, ensuring nature-based livelihoods are central to their projects. A recent restoration project that RWCA have been delivering is in Rugezi Wetland, where protection and restoration interventions were carried out, involving planting indigenous trees and working with the communities to maintain the restoration outcomes. They have trained and hired rangers and community conservation champions to monitor the use of the marsh, and to help the rangers educate others on the sustainable use of the wetland for long term benefits.

**Project partnership**

RWCA and Lifescape have been working on developing this project together from 2022, delivering a comprehensive feasibility study on the potential for PES in Rwanda, focusing on carbon finance. We also delivered a natural capital assessment of the Umusambi Village restoration project in Kigali, which is one of RWCA's flagship projects and is the location of their headquarters as well as the sanctuary for injured and confiscated grey crowned crane.

If the project becomes registered and particularly if opportunities to scale are identified the partnership between RWCA and Lifescape will continue through the initial grant period, to August 2027 according to the partnership agreement (Annexes 2C and 2D). A core part of the project is determining when RWCA can assume all responsibilities without external support. The partnership's view is that Lifescape should only take on roles not yet within the capacity of RWCA or local communities, helping to build domestic capacity and reduce reliance on international expertise. Roles and responsibilities will evolve over time, with partnership agreements updated accordingly throughout the project.

**Table 2.2 Responsibility for Project Coordination and Management Functions**

Project Coordination and Management Function	Responsible Party/Parties
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Stakeholder engagement during project development and implementation	RWCA/Lifescape Project.
Ensuring conformance with the Plan Vivo Standard and compliance with applicable policies, laws and regulations	Lifescape Project.
Developing technical specifications, land management plans and project agreements with project participants	RWCA/Lifescape Project.
Ensuring that the PDD is updated with any changes to the project	Lifescape Project.
Registration and recording of management plans, project agreements, monitoring results, and sales agreements	Lifescape Project (with a focus on registration and sales matters), and RWCA (with a focus on recording of land management plans and project agreements).
Managing project finances and dispersal of income to project participants as described by the benefit sharing mechanism	Lifescape Project, supported by RWCA.
Managing Plan Vivo Certificates in the Plan Vivo Registry	Lifescape Project.
Preparing annual reports and coordinating validation and verification events	RWCA, supported by Lifescape Project
Securing certificate sales and other means of funding the project	Lifescape Project.
Assisting Project Participants to secure any legal or regulatory permissions required to carry out the project	Lifescape Project and RWCA together.
Providing technical assistance and capacity building required for project participants to implement project interventions	Lifescape Project to oversee, but RWCA to offer on-ground support and capacity building.
Monitoring progress indicators, livelihood indicators and ecosystem indicators and providing ongoing support to project participants	RWCA, with support from Lifescape Project.
Measurement, reporting and verification of carbon benefits	RWCA, supported by Lifescape Project.

## 2.3 Project Participants

Complete Table 2.3 to identify the initial and potential project participants and describe their location of residence in relation to the project area(s) and project region, their use of land or natural resources within the project region and their typical use of labour for land or natural resource management activities.

Provide maps showing the location of project participants in relation to the project area(s) and project region.

If the project includes any Type II participants (see Table 2.3 for definition), describe what measures are in place to ensure that the project areas they manage: i) Collectively make up less than 30% of the total Project Area at all times; ii) Were not acquired from smallholders or community groups for the purpose of inclusion in the Project; and iii) Have clear benefits to the Project, for example by increasing connectivity or benefits to local communities.

Describe what measures are in place to ensure that there is no discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion or social status when selecting project participants; and to reduce potential for tensions or disputes within or between communities.

Include a full list of initial project areas in Annex 3.

### **Selection process:**

Selection for the CCCCs is facilitated by RWCA, but is also community-led, in the sense that during the meetings the RWCA staff will allow communities to essentially 'nominate' people for roles, if they think they'd be suitable. This is an important step, and in the theory of change for the project, because the CCCCs at the broadest level are the informal environmental educators and advocates in the area, so it is important they have some initial pro-environmental values, as well as trust and respect within the community to play that role. However, it is also important to ensure that it is not just the 'popular', extroverted (or most influential) individuals that take up the CCCC roles, and RWCA has had a lot of experience in helping to guide the selection process to find a good balance between community-nomination, self-nomination, and RWCA-selection, to ensure there's some gender balance as much as possible, and that there is not more than one person from the same household or immediate family for example. More information on the participatory processes underpinning the selection and recruitment process is included in section 2.4.

### **Other participation types:**

In our project logic, we refer to project participants as the individuals who are signing the PES agreement and Carbon Community Conservation Champion employment agreement. Our project logic is structured around the context that land is not participant-owned, which opens up different categories of what participation means. There is participation in Intambwe Savannah without being a signatory of the Project Agreement, which refers to the involvement of Gakoma Village Community members as tree planters where labour is needed outside of CCCC involvement and roles, as well as the leaders of the Gakoma Village Community (the 5 village council members) who comprise a significant part of the community governance node for the project. These are listed as local stakeholders and aren't categorised as the suppliers or 'farmers' of carbon, but because they are participating in defined way, they are included in this section under participants.

**Table 2.3: Project Participants (grouped by village, area or region)**

<b>Project Participant</b>	<b>Participant Type*</b>	<b>Location of Residence</b>	<b>Typical Land Holding</b>	<b>Land and Natural Resource Use</b>
Add a row for each project participant or group of project participants with similar characteristics	Indicate whether they are Type I or Type II participants*	Describe the participants' location of residence in relation to the project area(s) and project region	Describe the typical area of land owned or managed by each participant	Describe the participants' typical use of their use of land or natural resources within the project region with details of use of hired labour (if any)
<b>Carbon Community Conservation</b>	Type I	<3km away from the carbon project area)	All CCCCs are renting in Gakoma village area, and do not own their own land.	Mostly, income outside of what is earned through involvement in this project

<b>Champions (4 in total)</b>				under RWCA's job role of CCC, has consisted of working on other peoples' farms. Participation in Intambwe Savannah does not preclude generating income from these activities.
<b>Gakoma Village Residents</b>	Type 1	Gakoma village (of 2,724 residents) is the main village community within which Intambwe Savannah project is located.	Many residents are landless or own less <1 ha for growing food.	Many residents live on houses owned by their employer, if working to manage a farm. Around 30-40% of residents are migrants that moved there to find job opportunities.

\* Type I = Project Participants that are resident within the Project Region; who manage and use land or natural resources within the Project Region for subsistence or small-scale production; and are not structurally dependent on year-round hired labour for their land or natural resource management activities; Type II = Project Participants that do not meet the Type 1 definition.

## 2.4 Participatory Design

Describe the participatory process followed to develop project interventions and define the project logic involving representatives of potential project participants and other local

stakeholders. Include details of any measures to ensure the inclusion of those that may normally be excluded or marginalized because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, or social status and to ensure that their concerns and aspirations were consistently understood and considered.

Provide evidence of stakeholder involvement in the participatory design process, such as attendance lists, photographs, and videos in Annex 4.

### *Approach to participatory process*

We have been implementing this pilot in a way that gives communities a real role in shaping how things are done, with regular chances to share ideas and influence decisions. This means involving people in planning and decision-making at every stage, not just informing them of plans. We place a strong emphasis on fairness, transparency, and good practice in community engagement, and build these into both project design and long-term monitoring. RWCA has a strong track record of working closely with local communities on restoration projects, with recognised success in this area. Regular contact and familiarity with the team (RWCA often, as well as Lifescape visits around 2 times a year), has been core of this approach. There cannot be genuine participatory processes without trust and rapport built over time.

### *Early engagement*

From the outset, the project has ensured that local stakeholders are directly involved in shaping both the design and implementation of the pilot. Initial engagement began with an introductory meeting on 18 September 2024 with the Gakoma Village Council and wider community. On 22 November 2024, RWCA and Lifescape facilitated structured activities using the Plan Vivo Participatory Toolkit, including social mapping with the Village Executive Committee, a wellbeing assessment with confirmed participants and executives, and a larger community meeting with around 70 attendees. The process for selecting the three initial Community Carbon Champions (CCCs) was community-led, with measures to ensure gender balance, equitable representation (for example, avoiding participants from the same household or family), and be able to gauge interest and engagement from more shy, but interested individuals. On the 25<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025, the community was again reminded of decisions up to that point in time, and asked for questions around clarity or any concerns.

### *Selection and role of CCCCs*

In early 2024, RWCA employed three individuals on a temporary basis, with the intention of engaging them as CCCs on Intambwe Savannah and subsequently extending their contracts for that purpose. Once more project details were refined and discussed, on 8 July 2025 a meeting was

held with these individuals to explain the purpose and components of the Plan Vivo Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) agreement, how it links to the CCC roles, the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), and the project's benefit-sharing mechanism. To avoid information overload, participants were introduced to the PES agreement and given time to reflect on the details, rather than being asked to sign immediately.

### *Corrective action and participant amendments*

On 1 September 2025, RWCA became aware of potential misconduct involving two of the CCCs. In line with RWCA's protocols and a zero-tolerance stance on corruption, a formal process was undertaken to determine the appropriate outcome. This resulted in one of the original participants staying on the project, while the others' contracts were discontinued past November 2025. In February, the additional participants were recruited from within the same community.

## 2.5 Stakeholder Consultation

### 2.5.1 Design Phase Consultations

Describe the stakeholder consultations have taken place during the design phase of the project, including details of: i) how and when the each of the stakeholder groups listed in Section 2.1.1 was informed of the project and given the opportunity to provide feedback on the project interventions and project logic; and ii) any feedback received from stakeholders on the project interventions and project logic.

It is helpful to first outline the structure of government in Rwanda to contextualise the project's engagement with different levels of administration. Levels of government are organised in a clear, tiered system as part of a hierarchical governance framework. Intambwe Savannah operates within the following administrative units:

Eastern Province (there are 5 provinces in Rwanda)

Kayonza District (there are 7 districts in Eastern Province)

Murundi Sector (there are 12 sectors in Kayonza District)

Buhabwa Cell (there are 4 cells in Murundi Sector)

Gakoma Village (there are 5–10 villages in Buhabwa Cell)

#### **ii) How and when local stakeholder groups will be consulted, and any feedback received**

## *Participants (CCCCs):*

Three initial participants were identified through a community-led process between September and November 2024, with attention to gender balance, equitable representation, and avoiding multiple members of the same household. They were engaged throughout 2025 in shaping project design and activities, including the development of planting plans. In July 2025, a dedicated meeting was held with the CCCs and the Village Executive Committee to review the PES agreement, the CCC role, and the benefit-sharing mechanism, with space for participants to reflect before signing.

As of January 2026, four Community Carbon Champions are in place. One original (i.e. originally recruited in mid 2025) CCC (Kaduhire) continues in the role, while three new CCCs have been recruited from the community. This change followed the identification of a conduct issue within the CCC group. In line with RWCA protocols, which include safeguarding of vulnerable livelihoods and a zero-tolerance approach to corruption, the issue was addressed directly, whereby disciplinary action was taken, and three of those CCCs implicated did not have their contracts renewed. Three new CCCs were then recruited transparently from within the community, with a clear understanding of expectations.

Looking ahead, CCCCs will continue to be consulted before each major project activity, such as subsequent planting seasons, monitoring exercises, and reviews of the benefit-sharing mechanism. They will also have a standing role in the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), providing input on community perceptions of the project, livelihood opportunities, and how available carbon funds are allocated to development activities.

## *Rangers*

Rangers are engaged on an ongoing basis through regular supervision by senior RWCA staff and provide feedback during their work, which includes work on Intambwe Savannah. Their role includes monitoring and reporting on environmental and social risks to restored land, such as invasive species, unauthorised grazing or harvesting, damage to planted saplings, and any suspicious activity. While rangers are not signatories to the project agreement and do not sit on the Community Restoration Committee, their observations and reports are fed into internal project discussions and help inform adaptive management.

## *Gakoma village residents:*

The wider community was first consulted during project inception (Sept–Nov 2024) and ongoing. Meetings are held through existing village structures, (the weekly Tuesday afternoon meeting, convened by the Village Executive Committee), and RWCA were always sure to spread the word of gatherings far in advance. Information is shared in plain Kinyarwanda with simple visuals, and RWCA facilitators always left time in between different topics, for questions and discussion.

People responded with genuine interest. Some community members said they wanted to be considered as Community Carbon Champions, pointing out their knowledge of local trees. Others asked about job opportunities, how carbon could be sold, and what would happen if buyers didn't materialise (Annex 4B – section A4B.1). There was also feedback that benefits should be directed to practical projects, particularly those supporting women and children (Annex 4B – section A4B.2). These conversations have directly shaped how roles and responsibilities were explained and how benefit-sharing priorities are being developed.

#### *Gakoma Village Executive Committee (VEC):*

The Village Executive Committee (VEC) was identified early in project design as the most appropriate governance structure to incorporate into the bottom-up approach for Intambwe Savannah. We did not want to “reinvent the wheel”: the VEC is already a trusted, community-elected group responsible for village and social matters. From the outset they were consulted on the project vision and objectives. For example, at the first meeting in September 2024 (see Annex 4A), village head Richard Karake worked with Deo Ruhagazi (RWCA) to facilitate discussions and explain concepts in accessible ways, mindful of local literacy levels.

Their involvement has continued throughout. At the July 2025 meeting, where the Community Restoration Committee (CRC) was discussed (half of which is made up of VEC members), they responded enthusiastically to the suggestion of annual CRC meetings and asked for more frequent meetings instead. They have also strongly influenced the discussion on development priorities. One example is their proposal to prioritise an early childhood development facility: Kayonza District has pledged to provide funding for operations if the community can secure the upfront costs such as land, and the VEC saw this as a practical first project that supports women and children, who they recognised as among the most vulnerable. This reflects their view of how carbon finance benefits should be directed — towards projects that are discrete, achievable, and aligned with community priorities.

It has been very valuable for the project to have the VEC so actively engaged in this way and they will remain closely involved, particularly in decisions on benefit-sharing and in keeping project activities aligned with wider community priorities.

*National Government – Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA):*

We have consulted REMA from the outset of project development, beginning before submission of the PIN and during the feasibility study. For example, on 8 February 2023 we met with the Deputy Director of REMA to present the project model and vision and to discuss how it might align with Rwanda's emerging voluntary carbon market framework. Since then, engagement has taken different forms, sometimes with representatives from both Lifescape and RWCA, and at other times led directly by RWCA, discussions led by CEO Olivier Nsengimana. Early discussions centred on REMA's plans for developing a regulatory framework for carbon markets and how projects like ours could fit within it.

REMA later formed a dedicated carbon markets team, with Eric Mudakikwa as our main contact. Through discussions with Eric and others, we have carefully considered key points such as land use classification under the national masterplan, and received feedback on how to present the project's alignment with both national policy priorities and those of Kayonza District, which is the administrative district for our project region. Ongoing engagement with REMA has supported Intambwe Savannah in preparing the documentation required for their own national processes (like carbon registries and NDC reporting). Discussions have also allowed us to develop a shared understanding of the project as it evolves, placing us in a strong position as we look to scale and perhaps eventually replicate in other regions across Rwanda. RWCA have also discussed the broader vision for the Gakoma Conservancy and how Intambwe Savannah fits within this strategy, in a way that responds to biodiversity and development priorities of the government.

*Murundi Sector and Kayonza District engagement*

Based on their experience, RWCA has advised that effective project implementation requires first approaching the district government (in this case, Kayonza District), specifically the District Director of Natural Resources, to present and discuss the plan and project design, followed by more detailed discussions with district forestry and environmental officials. Following advice from REMA (see above), RWCA has also been engaging with the Kayonza Mayor to arrange a meeting. A meeting was scheduled for 14 August but had to be cancelled; a new date will be organised, after which future engagement plans should become clearer.

In early November 2024, Deo Ruhagazi (Deputy CEO of RWCA and member of the team implementing this project) met with Benon Gashayija, the Executive Secretary of Murundi Sector. During their conversation, they discussed an overview of RWCA, the size of the land that was purchased, the

other organisations and donors involved. They also discussed the project logic and reasoning behind the initiative, and Deo also explained our ideas around how the carbon project will be specifically implemented, and ways in which the community may benefit through temporary jobs, permanent jobs, and additional future projects funded by revenue generated from the carbon project.

From here, at the geographically sector level (Murundi sector for this project), meetings should be held with the Executive Secretary's team, including relevant sector officials such as the land officer and agronomist. These officials would help to facilitate and formalise other types of stakeholder engagement.

## 2.5.2 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Describe how stakeholders will be consulted throughout the project period, including details of: i) how and when all local stakeholder groups identified in Section 2.1.1 will be consulted; ii) the information that will be provided and consultation approaches that will be used; and iii) opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and raise issues or concerns about the project.

### *Participants (Carbon CCCs):*

The Carbon Community Carbon Champions, as the participants, are the core of the project and are engaged in a capacity of community leader and implementer of Intambwe Savannah, within the employee structures of RWCA. As such, they will be brought into discussions before each major activity, such as planting seasons and various types of monitoring and will also take part in regular reviews of the benefit-sharing mechanism. As members of the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), which as well as the VEC, also include representatives from the project developers, they will have an ongoing role in feeding back how the project is working for the wider community and helping guide how carbon revenues are allocated.

### *Rangers*

Employment as a ranger is another way that RWCA often engage local residents. Only males are chosen for this role, due to safety concerns of working during nighttime. There are four rangers working in the Gakoma area, which includes, but is not limited to, the land encompassed in the

Intambwe Savannah project area. Part of their role will be looking out for environmental and social threats to the restored land, like arrival of invasive species, unauthorised grazing or harvesting, damage to saplings, and reporting on suspicious behaviour that might indicate some corruption, for example.

*Gakoma village residents:*

The wider community will continue to be engaged through existing village meetings, which take place every Tuesday afternoon and are already well attended. RWCA will use these as the main forum to share project updates and to invite questions whenever activities are planned or changes are needed. These will either be communicated directly by RWCA, or indirectly, through members of the VEC or participants, depending on what is deemed appropriate. Any information will be explained in Kinyarwanda, using visuals if helpful. If and when needed, smaller follow-up groups will be organised so that people who are less comfortable speaking in front of the full meeting still have the chance to contribute. Topics for future consultation include seasonal work opportunities, safeguards (such as fire risks and grazing rules), and how carbon benefits should be shared. The grievance mechanism will also continue to be explained to the community as the process for raising any concerns or complaints.

*Gakoma Village Executive Committee (VEC):*

The VEC is, as described above, a core part of project governance; around half of the Community Restoration Committee is made up of VEC members, so they will continue to play a leading role in linking project decisions with community priorities. They will be consulted regularly on benefit-sharing, grievance handling, and any adjustments to project design. Importantly, they will continue to test the project logic against real community needs, just as they have already done with development priorities such as the proposed early childhood development facility.

*Rwanda Environment Management Authority:*

At the national level, REMA is the lead government body we work with on carbon market issues, and we now have good rapport with team members who support this. We'll keep meeting with their carbon markets team (in person where possible, with RWCA leading) to make sure the project stays aligned with Rwanda's national framework, including registry requirements and other reporting. At each stage we'll share our documents with REMA and take on board their

feedback, whether on technical details or policy matters.

*Murundi Sector and Kayonza District:*

District and sector authorities will also be consulted on a regular basis. At the district level, this includes the Director of Natural Resources and the forestry and environment officers, who will receive updates and provide input on technical and land-use aspects. At the sector level, the Executive Secretary's team, including the land officer and agronomist, will be engaged to ensure day-to-day coordination and to help facilitate other types of community consultation.

As mentioned above in section 2.5.1, RWCA usually call in at the Murundi sector office during field visits to share updates on the project and will continue to do so. Alongside these drop-ins, more formal meetings will also be organised, but the informal visits are valuable for building trust and familiarity. Engagement with Kayonza District will increase over time, especially once carbon buyers are confirmed and cash flow begins, when we can start discussing how to work together on getting community development projects off the ground.

## 2.6 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

### 2.6.1 FPIC Legislation

Complete Table 2.6.1 to identify any national legislation or legal obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>2</sup>, International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 (ILO 169)<sup>3</sup>, or other FPIC legislation applicable to the project region and describe any measures in place to ensure that the project follows these.

**Table 2.6.1: National Legislation and International Standards on FPIC**

Legislation/Standard	Relevance to Project	Compliance Measures
Add additional rows for other relevant legislation	Describe the relevance of the legislation/standard to the project.	Describe any measures in place to ensure the project is carried out in compliance

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/295>

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312314:NO](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312314:NO)

		with relevant FPIC legislation and standards.
UNDRIP	Rwanda was non-voting/absent at adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.	Although Rwanda has not ratified UNDRIP, the project applies FPIC principles in line with Plan Vivo standards. Community participation is voluntary, based on informed discussion in local language, and decisions are made collectively through established structures such as the CRC.
ILO 169	Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) Binding for ratifying States; requires consultation with the objective of obtaining consent where projects affect Indigenous/tribal peoples. Rwanda has not ratified ILO 169	The project voluntarily aligns with ILO 169 principles by ensuring meaningful, good-faith consultation and the possibility to withhold consent at community level, records decisions, and has an accessible grievance mechanism.

### 2.6.2 FPIC Process

Describe the FPIC process to enable a collective decision by Indigenous Peoples and local communities with statutory or customary rights to land or resources in the initial project area(s) to negotiate the conditions under which the project is designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated and grant or withhold consent to: i) consider the proposed project; ii) engage in the project design process; and iii) implement the project.

Include details of: i) the information provided prior to making any decision; ii) the decision-making process and timeline defined by the rights holders; iii) the stakeholder representatives involved and how they were chosen; and iv) any measures to ensure the involvement of women and marginalised vulnerable and/or disadvantaged people.

*Indigenous Peoples and local communities*

In Rwanda, national policy since the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi prohibits official recognition or classification of citizens by ethnicity or indigeneity. All Rwandans are considered equal under the law, and public use of ethnic categories such as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa is discouraged to promote national unity and prevent division. While some groups, such as the Twa, are recognised internationally as Indigenous Peoples, the Rwandan government does not apply a separate legal or administrative status for them. For this reason, the project does not identify or engage stakeholders on the basis of ethnicity or indigeneity in line with domestic law. Instead, it applies the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to all local communities within the project area. This includes making particular efforts to ensure participation of groups who may be marginalised, disadvantaged, or hold distinct cultural traditions, in line with international safeguard requirements (e.g., Plan Vivo, VCS, Gold Standard). The project's engagement processes are designed to ensure inclusive decision-making, equitable benefit-sharing, and respect for cultural heritage, regardless of ethnic identification. See sections 2.4 (Participatory Design) and 2.5 (Stakeholder Consultation) for more detailed information regarding how procedural justice principles have been woven into the project design and how considerations around marginalised peoples, local communities, and cultural sensitivities are integrated into decision making.

*Customary rights to land and resources*

Intambwe Savannah Project is being implemented on private land, and the parcels that comprise the project area are all under RWCA-held land title. There are no layers of management, use, or access rights of communities that exist, and indeed the project seeks to contribute positively to this, by allowing communities to benefit from land (financially and in other ways) that they previously have not been able to access or benefit from.

### 2.6.3 Initial FPIC

Describe the FPIC process that has been followed for the initial project areas

Provide evidence of key decisions (e.g. signed meeting minutes and attendance lists), and copies of information provided prior to key decisions being made in Annex 5.

Comprehensive minutes from the three full community meetings — including agendas, participatory tools used, photos of written notes, translations of Kinyarwanda notes, recorded questions and answers, and photographs - are provided in Annex 4A and Annex 4B. Annex 5 gives

a specific overview of how FPIC principles were applied during the early development of the project, with direct references to the meeting records in Annex 4A.

## 3 Project Design

### Baselines

#### 3.1 Baseline Scenario

Describe the expected future land use and land management of the project areas(s) in the absence of project intervention(s) and provide evidence that this is most likely baseline scenario by applying the procedures in an approved methodology.

In absence of the proposed Intambwe Savannah Plan Vivo project, the barrier analysis has concluded the most likely land use for the project area to be high-density cattle grazing by non-local agribusiness owners. This is the prevailing land use in Buhabwa cell and Murundi sector more broadly, where land is increasingly consolidated by absentee owners into larger parcels and managed for intensive grazing. For example, recent Land Degradation Surveillance Framework assessments in Kayonza District (Aynekulu et al., 2023) found degraded soils, low soil organic carbon in cropland and grassland, poor water infiltration, and widespread erosion - conditions linked in part to overgrazing and known to reduce soil fertility, impair water retention, and harm nearby habitats such as the Nyamaswi wetland.

An alternative scenario where the land is restored through another mechanism without carbon finance is highly unlikely, due to substantial financial, institutional, and social barriers. Restoration in Rwanda requires significant upfront investment, has limited short-term returns, and no alternative funding sources are currently available for the project area.

For the detailed barrier analysis, considering both of the aforementioned scenarios, including identification of alternative scenarios, and supporting evidence, see Annex 7.

#### 3.2 Carbon Baseline

Complete Table 3.2 to provide a summary of net-greenhouse gas emissions from all initial project areas under the baseline scenario for each year of the first crediting period. Add rows if necessary.

Provide details of the calculations for each intervention in Section 3.8 and Annex 6.

Baseline net GHG emissions for all initial project areas (Land parcels L1, L2 and L3) were estimated at zero for each year of the first crediting period, reflecting an assumption of no net change in carbon stocks or non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions without the project. This assumption is applied consistently across all project areas with full rationale provided in Section 3.8 and Annex 6.

**Table 3.2 Total net-greenhouse gas emissions under the baseline scenario**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Baseline emissions (t CO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12	0
13	0
14	0
15	0
16	0
17	0
18	0
19	0
20	0
21	0
22	0

23	0
24	0
25	0
26	0
27	0
28	0
29	0
30	0

\*

### 3.3 Livelihood Baseline

#### 3.3.1 Initial Livelihood Status

For each of the local stakeholder groups identified in Section 2.1.1, provide descriptions of livelihood status immediately prior to the start of the project, disaggregated by gender where appropriate. Include details of access to and main uses of land and natural resources, typical assets, income levels and sources, livelihood activities, and other factors important in the context of the project region. Include data sources.

Projects are recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit](#) Tool 5: Well-being Assessment to establish Livelihood Baseline.

*Local Stakeholder: Project Participants (CCCCs)*

The three current pilot participants have livelihoods that are fairly typical of Gakoma village, though as migrants renting land they sit at the more vulnerable end of the spectrum. They rely mainly on small-scale cultivation through land-sharing agreements and occasional casual work, with limited assets and food supplies that are not always secure. In the wellbeing assessment, participants highlighted access to health insurance, education for children, land to farm, and reliable food as the things that matter most. One mentioned concerns over secondary school fees, another brought up food security concerns as a daily worry. These individual reflections line up with broader community concerns, but they also underline the added challenges migrant households face.

*Local Stakeholder: Gakoma Village Residents*

Gakoma village (of 2,724 residents) is the main village community of focus for understanding livelihood dynamics, as it is where the project area is located. Across parts of Kayonza, there is an

existing revenue-sharing scheme for all communities living in close proximity to Akagera National Park (NP) and who are impacted (directly or indirectly) by the presence of the National Park. Around 10% of revenue collected from tourism ventures goes directly to the community, however rather than cash payments, it is used to fund public goods and infrastructure, such as schools, medical clinics, etc. This existing scheme does not directly benefit the communities we are working with, will provide helpful institutional scaffolding for us to learn from if we are to set up a benefit sharing scheme in this area.

*Local Stakeholder: Gakoma Village Committee*

Members of the Gakoma Village Executive Committee hold leadership and administrative responsibilities within the village and are typically drawn from the wider community. Their livelihoods and access to land and natural resources are broadly similar to those of other Gakoma residents, with most households relying on small-scale agriculture for subsistence and occasional surplus sales, and limited diversification of income sources. However, their roles confer a degree of influence and access to decision-making processes that can reduce certain livelihood vulnerabilities compared to other community members. While their direct dependence on the project area's resources mirrors that of the broader community, their primary relevance to the project lies in their governance role—representing residents, facilitating collective decisions, and helping manage benefit-sharing.

### 3.3.2 Expected Livelihood Change

For each of the local stakeholder groups identified in Section 2.1.1, provide a description supported by evidence of how livelihood status is expected to change under the baseline scenario.

*Project Participants (CCCCs)*

Under the baseline, participants' livelihoods would remain much the same as they are at present. As a small group of semi-migrant households relying on land-sharing arrangements and casual labour, they would continue to face the same constraints of insecure access to land, limited assets, and low and variable incomes. As they are not landowners, the shift towards intensive grazing by non-local owners in the wider area would likely only have limited direct effect on them, though broader landscape pressures like reduced quality of soils and water associated with

overgrazing and wetland conversion may indirectly exacerbate to an underlying vulnerability. The prospective participants for the Intambwe Savannah pilot highlighted in the wellbeing assessments, that they face challenges around meeting school expenses and food, and these challenges are not expected to be ameliorated in the baseline scenario, and may worsen with incremental pressure from environmental stressors.

#### *Gakoma Village Residents*

As with the participants, under the baseline, the livelihood status of Gakoma residents may remain largely as they are today, with most households depending on small-scale farming and temporary work for income. The expected continuation of intensive cattle grazing in the wider area would not directly change their access to land, but it would contribute to ongoing soil degradation, erosion, and reduced water availability in the landscape, all of which gradually make farming less reliable. Conversion and trampling of wetlands, together with reliance on biomass for fuel in an already arid region, may increase the time and effort required to secure water, fodder, and wood. Taken together, livelihoods would therefore remain broadly the same in the short term, with gradual increases in vulnerability linked to environmental pressures.

#### *Gakoma Village Committee*

Under the baseline, members of the Village Executive Committee would maintain livelihoods similar to those of other households, based primarily on small-scale farming with limited diversification. They face the same gradual pressures of soil degradation, erosion, and declining natural resources as the wider community, but their leadership positions confer a degree of resilience by giving them influence and access to decision-making processes. At the same time, these roles are likely to involve continued demands to manage disputes and represent community interests, particularly as land and water pressures persist, though this would affect their responsibilities more than their household wellbeing. Overall, their livelihoods would remain broadly stable under the baseline, with their main distinction from other residents lying in their governance role rather than in heightened vulnerability.

## **3.4 Ecosystem Baseline**

### **3.4.1 Initial Ecological Conditions**

For each project region, describe the ecological conditions immediately prior to the start of the project. Include details of the main ecosystems and habitat types present, and any species of conservation concern known or thought to be present.

There are not any protected areas in terms of national parks directly adjacent to the project land, though Akagera National Park is in close vicinity, around 4km away. Akagera contains Central Africa's largest protected wetland and the last remaining refuge for savannah-adapted species in Rwanda. The project area lies next to the large wetland that runs north–south along the western side of the park, in what is known as the Central Valley. This valley was degazetted from the park in 1997 to accommodate returning refugees after the genocide, reducing Akagera's size by around 1,415 km<sup>2</sup>. The loss of this land was detrimental for many species, including large mammals that relied on it as dry season habitat, and contributed to a significant reduction in suitable habitat and refuges for wildlife.

The land in and around the project site has since been degraded by deforestation, overgrazing, and livestock trampling of the Nyamaswi wetland, with erosion and prolonged drought further compounding pressures. Wetlands in the area are increasingly being converted for rice production, placing added strain on already stressed water resources and reducing their capacity to provide clean, usable water for communities and wildlife. A continued reliance on biomass for fuel also depletes local wood and fodder resources, which are not replenishing quickly in these arid conditions.

The ecological importance of the area is well recognised. The Eastern Province forms part of the Albertine Rift region, home to around 280 endemic flowering plant species, including roughly 20 species restricted to Rwanda alone. The overlap of savannah and forest habitats creates unique niches for a range of species, particularly birds such as hornbills, marsh harriers, cranes, gonoleks, and storks. However, refuges and breeding sites for these species are now increasingly scarce, degraded, and under encroachment.

Kayonza District itself is an arid region, and climate change is expected to heighten risks of further aridification and possible desertification. Without transformative change in land use and restoration, natural ecosystems in the area may face critical tipping points.

### 3.4.2 Expected Ecosystem Change

For each project region, provide a description supported by evidence of how ecological conditions are expected to change under the baseline scenario.

If no restoration or conservation action is taken, ecological conditions in and around the project area are expected to continue to decline. The project region, being in the vicinity of Akagera National Park, contains Central Africa's largest protected wetland and is an important refuge for Rwanda's remaining savannah-adapted species. Since the 1997 degazettement of the Central Valley (1,415 km<sup>2</sup> removed from Akagera), dry-season habitat and connectivity for large mammals have been reduced (Bariyanga et al. 2016).

Under the baseline scenario of continued and expanded grazing, further pressures on terrestrial savannah habitat, adjacent wetlands, and connectivity are expected to persist, particularly around the ecological buffer zones adjacent to the park. At the project site, land degradation is likely to continue, likely, predominantly through livestock grazing, and use and degradation of Nyamaswi wetland especially as fodder and water for livestock are put under pressure during droughts. The combination of human and environmental drivers will likely contribute to reduced vegetation cover, soil erosion, and nutrient loss (Verdoodt & Van Ranst, 2006). Rapid conversion of wetlands for rice production is continuing, as observed by RWCA staff who have seen this pattern reflect and increasing competition for already limited water resources and affecting water quality for communities and wildlife (FAO, 2017).

The Albertine Rift, where the project region is situated, is recognised for high species richness and levels of endemism (Plumptre et al., 2003). However, outside of protected areas, up to 38 % of suitable habitat for endemic species has already been converted (Brooks et al., 2001), and in the absence of intervention this trend is likely to continue. Local bird populations, including cranes, storks, hornbills, and papyrus specialists such as the gonolek, are expected to face further habitat constraints as breeding and refuge sites are gradually reduced.

Climate change is expected to compound pressures - Kayonza District is already semi-arid, and projections suggest an increasing risk of aridification and desertification if land use remains unchanged (REMA, 2019). Overall, in the baseline scenario, ecosystems in the region are expected to become less resilient to climate and land-use pressures over time.

#### *References (for section 3.4)*

*Brooks, T.M. et al. (2001). Habitat loss and extinction in the hotspots of biodiversity. Conservation Biology, 16(4).*

Bariyanga, J.D., Wronski, T., Plath, M., Apio, A. (2016). Effectiveness of Electro-Fencing for Restricting the Ranging Behaviour of Wildlife: A Case Study in the Degazetted Parts of Akagera National Park. *African Zoology*. 51. 183-191.

*FAO (2017). The future of food and agriculture: Trends and challenges. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.*

*Plumptre, A.J. et al. (2003). The biodiversity of the Albertine Rift. Biological Conservation, 134(2).*

*REMA (2019). State of the Environment Report: Rwanda. Rwanda Environment Management Authority.*

*Verdoodt, A. & Van Ranst, E. (2006). Environmental assessment tools for land evaluation in Rwanda. Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment, 114(2-4).*

## Theory of Change

### 3.5 Project Logic

Complete table 3.5 to provide a summary of the causal links between project activities and expected outcomes and identify key assumptions. Add rows for additional outputs and activities as required. Activities must include all activities needed to implement project interventions and risk mitigation measures.

Add additional text or figures below if needed to demonstrate how project interventions will generate carbon, livelihood and ecosystem benefits relative to the baseline scenario, and how risks will be mitigated. If the project interventions include harvesting of trees, include details of replanting or regeneration after harvest.

Projects are recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit](#) Tool 2: Problem Analysis and Tool 3: Visioning to develop the *Project Logic*.

The specific problems identified that the project seeks to address are summarised by the following:

(1) There has been a decline in natural capital and land productivity in Murundi, and across Kayonza more broadly, making subsistence farming increasingly unreliable. Unsustainable grazing and growing demand for natural resources are compounding this decline, accelerating erosion, drought, and other forms of degradation. These pressures are affecting both people (particularly those dependent on subsistence farming) and the region's wildlife.

(2) As a result of (1), the local economy has become increasingly fragile, with low levels of diversification leaving the community reliant on a narrow base of agricultural production. This dependence on limited and degraded resources has led to volatile incomes and reduced livelihood security.

(3) Alongside these pressures, patterns of land agglomeration, driven largely by foreign investment in land speculation and Kigali-based grazing enterprises are becoming more common. These trends risk reinforcing wealth inequality and limiting community access to land over the long term, creating challenges that are complex to address.

(4) The global and local effects of climate change call for an urgent, targeted approach to the mitigation of climate change. Identifying marginal lands which have low agricultural productivity, but high carbon and biodiversity benefits is one tangible approach to lowering emissions and increasing resilience to climate events in the area. This needs to be done in a way that opens up rather than restrains economic opportunities for community members.

The project logic is broken down further through linking outcomes and benefits, and then outputs and activities, below in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5 Project Logic**

<b>Aim</b>		
Describe the problems the project aims to address.		
	<b>Description</b>	<b>Assumptions/Risks</b>
<b>Outcomes</b>		
<b>Carbon Benefit</b>	Add description of expected carbon benefits as a result of the outputs listed below.  Total carbon sequestered over the project period is projected to be around <b>14,126</b>	Describe any assumptions linking outputs to expected carbon benefits.  Assumptions: There's an assumption that

	<p><b>tCO2e.</b> Per-hectare values are relatively modest, at around <b>353 tCO2e</b>, reflecting the low planting densities chosen to suit the ecosystem and natural landscape. This approach will produce a vegetation density that best promotes biodiversity in the region.</p> <p>Restoring wooded savannah and shrub savannah ecosystems provides substantial carbon benefits. As vegetation regenerates and replaces areas of bare and degraded soil, carbon is stored both in biomass and soil organic matter. Restoration also enhances the resilience of these ecosystems to climate impacts such as drought and soil erosion, further supporting long-term carbon storage and ecosystem health.</p>	<p>baseline carbon stocks are low – specifically that degraded savannah areas currently have significantly reduced above-ground biomass and depleted soil organic carbon, creating scope for substantial net carbon gains through restoration. This is evidenced in literature but implies this applies to our case as well.</p> <p>Relatedly, it also assumes that ANR and planting of native trees and shrubs will lead to measurable increases in biomass and soil organic matter over the project lifetime.</p> <p>Risks: There's an ecological risk related to carbon, around the potential impact of drought and other environmental pressures affecting the growth of saplings. Helping to mitigate these risks, is RWCA's approach to restoration and maintenance that measures progress based on trees surviving rather than volume of saplings planted.</p>
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<p><b>Livelihood Benefit</b></p>	<p>Add description of expected livelihood benefits achieved as a result of the outputs listed below.</p> <p>The project is designed to deliver tangible livelihood benefits for participants particularly, who will serve as carbon community conservation champions. This builds on an already established employment role within RWCA. The role will include physical work such as land preparation, tree planting, and sapling maintenance. They will also act as educators and stewards of restoration efforts within their communities.</p> <p><b>Future eco-tourism potential</b></p> <p>As the project expands, and increases functional connectivity with Akagera National Park, eco-tourism opportunities are expected to emerge – especially as the Intambwe Savannah project is a component of a larger long term vision around community-driven conservancy, led by RWCA. This will create additional streams of income for community members, particularly those already engaged as conservation champions.</p> <p><b>Community development projects</b></p> <p>A significant proportion of carbon finance will be channelled into community-level development initiatives. Because smallholders are not committing their land directly to the interventions at this stage, carbon revenues primarily cover restoration, labour, and maintenance costs. This frees up funds to support wider</p>	<p>Describe any assumptions linking outputs to expected livelihood benefits.</p> <p>There is an assumption that a small group of community members are motivated to engage with the project as carbon community conservation champions. The existing participants are set and engaged in the project, but as the project scales in the region, this assumption will become more important to pay close attention to.</p> <p>Realising community level benefit of eco-tourism in this way assumes there will be adequate demand (domestic and/or international) for these types of tourism offerings.</p> <p>This assumes that carbon revenues will be sufficient to fund community-level development projects,</p>
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	<p>development priorities identified by the community.</p> <p><b>Enhanced natural resources</b></p> <p>Restoration also strengthens the resource base on which local livelihoods depend. Improved ecosystem services such as soil protection, erosion control, and natural pest and disease regulation, contribute to more resilient farms and healthier landscapes.</p>	<p>beyond covering core restoration and labour costs. Also assumes that the CRC as the governance node will be able to guide the allocation of funds in line with community priorities. There's a risk that the amount of finance available from the sale of PVCs will not be enough to fund the development project of the community's first priority (an early childhood facility), and to mitigate this risk we will develop plans around blended finance options and plan for implementing other development projects based on different projections of cash flow and possible finance available.</p> <p>The point around enhanced natural resources assumes that there is a tangible pathway through which restoration will, in a observable way, make soils healthier, reduce erosion, improve water availability. Additionally, that communities will be able to make use of these improved natural resources in a sustainable way, so that their</p>
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		farms and livelihoods become more resilient over time.
Ecosystem Benefit	<p>Add description of expected ecosystem benefits achieved as a result of the outputs listed below.</p> <p>The area and condition of natural habitats in the project area will increase as a result of the restoration work, with vegetation biomass and floral biodiversity to increase significantly as a result of the project interventions. We also expect a resulting increase in fauna species diversity and abundance in the area once the habitat improvements have taken place, with an overall increase in all aspects of biodiversity (genetic, functional, species, and habitat).</p> <p>Ecological connectivity will be improved through providing habitat refuges for wildlife outside of Akagera NP, with especially valuable potential benefits to migratory wildlife in the area.</p>	<p>Describe any assumptions linking outputs to expected ecosystem benefits.</p> <p>An assumption is that we are successful in putting mechanisms in place to proactively address any human-wildlife conflict concerns that the community may have. (This was not a present concern of the community when asked during the initial meeting, but we want to continue to be proactive in preventing it becoming an issue).</p> <p>This also assumes that we are successful in establishing new vegetation and regeneration of existing vegetation in the project area, with no substantial risks coming to pass which might prevent that, such as fire, excessive drought, unauthorised grazing, etc.</p> <p>The anticipated ecological benefits assumes that the improvement of natural resources like soil quality, water retention, and biodiversity assumes that</p>

		<p>restored ecosystems will stabilise and function as expected. This can be supported by regular monitoring and adaptive management practices.</p> <p>There is a risk that new vegetation establishment and the regeneration of existing vegetation in the project area may be hindered by factors such as fire, excessive drought etc as described above, compromising the project's anticipated ecological benefits.</p>
<p><b>Outputs and activities</b></p>		
<p><b>Output 1</b></p>	<p>Add description of the specific output that will be achieved as a result of activities 1.1 to 1.#.</p> <p>Degraded land restored to functioning savannah ecosystems</p>	<p>Describe any assumptions linking activities to the output.</p> <p>This assumes that identified restoration sites will remain available for project use, and that the selected species and methods are ecologically suited to local conditions under a changing climate. It also assumes that communities will continue to support restoration efforts and help manage risks such as fire, grazing, or encroachment.</p>

<p>Activity 1.1</p>	<p>Add description of a specific project activity that contributes to Output 1.</p> <p>Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) - Supported natural regrowth of native savannah species by reducing pressures such as overgrazing, invasive plants (e.g. lantana), and ecological barriers (fencing).</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk that grazing pressure, fire, or invasive species like lantana will not be effectively controlled, slowing or reversing regeneration. These risks will be mitigated through close coordination with community grazing plans, regular site monitoring, and active management of invasive plants, with RWCA and Conservation Champions responsible for maintenance of protective measures.</p>
<p>Activity 1.2</p>	<p>Add description of a specific project activity that contributes to Output 1.</p> <p>Enrichment planting – Complement natural regeneration with targeted planting of native and climate-resilient tree and shrub species, including site preparation, planting, maintenance, and monitoring of survival and growth rates.</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk of low survival rates if planted species are poorly suited to local conditions, or if drought and fire reduce establishment success. There is also a risk of inconsistent maintenance if responsibilities are unclear or resources are stretched. These risks will be mitigated by selecting native and climate-resilient species, tailoring planting methods to site conditions, and ensuring</p>

		that CCCCs are trained and resourced for maintenance and monitoring.
<b>Output 2</b>	<p>Add description of the specific output that will be directly achieved as a result of activities 2.1 to 2.4.</p> <p>Community governance structures established and functioning.</p>	<p>Describe any assumptions linking activities to the output.</p> <p>This assumes that community members and village leaders remain willing to engage in CRC structures, and that inclusive participation can be maintained over time despite changes in leadership. It also assumes that the CRC will be trusted to make fair decisions and guide benefit-sharing in line with community priorities.</p>
Activity 2.1	<p>Add description of a specific project activity that contributes to Output 2.</p> <p>Establish the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), including set up governance and benefit-sharing agreements through signing and formalising of the overarching project agreement, and its associated community governance annex E.</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk of unequal representation, as part of the CRC is made up of village-elected leaders that RWCA cannot influence, which could allow local elites or men to dominate. On the participant side, RWCA can guide inclusivity by ensuring women, landless households, and other vulnerable groups are involved. Although we know who holds these roles now, they will inevitably</p>

		<p>change, possibly many times over 30 years, so strong and transparent systems are essential. These risks will be mitigated through inclusive facilitation and ongoing monitoring.</p>
<p>Activity 2.2</p>	<p>Add description of a specific project activity that contributes to Output 2. Facilitate at least one full CRC meeting per year (likely 2-3 meetings), to discuss cash flow and carbon buyers' prospects as well as development project ideas and planning.</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk of low or inconsistent participation in CRC meetings. Encouragingly, at the most recent community meeting, village leaders expressed a desire for more frequent meetings than the minimum of once per year. Mitigation will mainly involve the project co-ordinator maintaining close communication with village leaders and participants, so that any early signs of low engagement can be picked up and addressed quickly. This is considered a relatively low risk given that participants are effectively employees with regular contact with RWCA and the governance structures, and the project team already have strong rapport with the village executive committee.</p>

		<p>There is also a risk, common in patriarchal rural contexts, that decision-making is dominated by men, wealthier households, or larger families, while more vulnerable groups are less heard. RWCA have experience in facilitating inclusive processes and using techniques to draw out quieter voices during meetings. A further risk is that technical or financial issues (such as carbon market dynamics or cash flow) may be difficult for participants to engage with, potentially reducing the quality of decisions. This will be mitigated by clear and patient communication, use of accessible language, and openness to questions — all of which RWCA have strong experience in delivering.</p>
<p><b>Output 3</b></p>	<p>Local people employed and trained in restoration and monitoring</p>	<p>Describe any assumptions linking activities to the output.</p> <p>This assumes that a motivated group of local people will continue to take up roles as Conservation Champions, and that RWCA’s employment model will engage women, youth, and vulnerable groups effectively. It also assumes that carbon</p>

		<p>revenues will reliably cover employment and training costs, and that skills gained will be applied in practice, reinforced by visible improvements in natural resources and livelihoods.</p>
Activity 3.1	<p>Recruit Conservation Champions from within the local community to deliver restoration activities.</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk of limited availability of suitable candidates within the community, or of perceptions of bias if recruitment is not seen as fair. RWCA have previously identified and addressed these types of risks in other projects and in early stages of Intambwe Savannah, and responded with sensitive and inclusive approaches to recruitment (See Annex 4 for details). These risks may still arise again, but will be managed through open recruitment processes, clear selection criteria, and proactive outreach to underrepresented groups.</p>
Activity 3.2	<p>Build long-term community capacity by providing Carbon Conservation Champions with fair employment, structured training,</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the</p>

	<p>and mentoring to develop technical expertise and leadership.</p>	<p>activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk that Carbon Community Conservation Champions move on to other opportunities. There is also a risk that training does not always translate into practical skills. RWCA’s employment model however is designed to mitigate these risks, in that contracts are aligned with national labour standards, stipends are consistent and transparent, and training is built around hands-on fieldwork and community engagement</p>
<p><b>Output 4</b></p>	<p>Verified data and carbon credits generated</p>	<p>Describe any assumptions linking activities to the output.</p> <p>This assumes that monitoring systems can be maintained consistently over the life of the project, even with changes in staff, and that external validators will continue to recognise Plan Vivo methodologies. It also assumes that sufficient demand exists for carbon credits, so that verified results translate into issuable and sellable Certificates.</p>

<p>Activity 4.1</p>	<p>Annual reporting – Carry out annual monitoring (particularly carbon, but also biodiversity and livelihood data according to the monitoring plan) and submit reports to Plan Vivo to access verified, sellable, carbon credits (rPVCs).</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>There is a risk of miscommunication around the type of data required and how it should be analysed, especially if there are changes in RWCA project staff or among the Conservation Champions. This could lead to inconsistencies in how data is collected or processed over time. The mitigation is to keep the monitoring plan (see Annex 13) extremely clear and detailed, setting out step-by-step protocols so that even with staff turnover, data collection and analysis remain consistent.</p>
<p>Activity 4.2</p>	<p>Third-party verification – Every five years (minimum), have the wider monitoring data on biodiversity, livelihoods, and carbon checked by an independent verifier to confirm annual reporting results and generate verified credits (vPVCs)</p>	<p>Describe any risks for successful completion of the activity and how they will be mitigated.</p> <p>Independent validation can be time-consuming and follow timelines outside of the project team’s control, which could delay verification. To manage this, the project will plan ahead for validation</p>

		cycles (and has already done so), setting clear and realistic objectives and maintaining early communication with validators to reduce delays.
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## Technical Specification

For each project intervention, complete the technical specification template in Annex 7. A single technical specification may include potential for some variation, but substantially different management interventions should be presented in separate technical specifications.

### 3.6 Project Activities

Complete Table 3.6 to provide a summary of the project activities and inputs for each project intervention. Add additional rows as required. Full details must be provided in a separate technical specification for each project intervention in Annex 7.

**Table 3.6 Project Activity Summary**

Project Intervention	Project Activities	Inputs
Enter the name of the project intervention. This must correspond to the title of a technical specification included in Annex 7.	Enter a summary of the activities needed to implement the project intervention.	Enter a summary of the inputs that will be provided to implement the project activities.
Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting	<p><b>Project activities: Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)</b></p> <p>(i) Acquire degraded land from business graziers willing to sell, using a mix of pilot grant funding, unrestricted funds,</p>	(i) Labour from Conservation Champions and community members for land preparation, invasive species clearance, planting, and maintenance.

	<p>and carbon revenues as the project scales.</p> <p>(ii) Allow naturally sprouting native saplings (mainly acacia) to establish by reducing pressures such as overgrazing.</p> <p>(iii) Remove <i>Euphorbia tirucalli</i>, which suppresses nearby seedling growth and reduces carbon sequestration, in order to promote biodiversity outcomes.</p> <p>(iv) Control invasive <i>Lantana camara</i> through clearance at the start of the project and as part of the ongoing maintenance plan.</p> <p><b>Project activities:</b> <b>Enrichment planting</b></p> <p>(i) Collect seeds through RWCA's existing community seed collection programme, providing income opportunities for local people.</p> <p>(ii) Grow seedlings at RWCA's Umusambi Village indigenous tree nursery in Kigali and transport them to the project site.</p> <p>(iii) Plant seedlings at restoration sites, partially led</p>	<p>(ii) Tools and equipment for site preparation and ongoing maintenance.</p> <p>(iii) Seedlings and planting materials sourced from nurseries, with an emphasis on native and climate-resilient species.</p> <p>(iv) Technical expertise and training provided by RWCA to guide ANR methods, planting techniques, and monitoring.</p> <p>(v) Financial support (through carbon revenues and project funds) to cover employment, inputs, and maintenance activities.</p>
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	<p>by the Gakoma Carbon Conservation Champions (CCCs) with additional support of casual workers (per diem) from surrounding community seeking supplementary income.</p> <p>(iv) Maintain planted seedlings through regular activities including watering, manure application (at planting and at intervals during establishment), weeding, and replacement where necessary.</p>	
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### 3.7 Additionality

Complete Table 3.7 to provide a summary of the main barriers to project implementation and how they will be overcome for each project intervention. Add additional rows as required. Full details of the additionality assessment, following an approved methodology must be provided in a separate technical specification for each project intervention in Annex 7.

**Table 3.7 Additionality Assessment Summary**

<b>Project Intervention</b>	<b>Main Barriers</b>	<b>Activities to Overcome Barriers</b>
<p>Enter the name of the project intervention. This must correspond to the title of a technical specification included in Annex 7.</p>	<p>Enter a summary of the main barriers project participants face to implementing the project intervention in the absence of the project.</p>	<p>Describe how the project will enable project participants to overcome the barriers identified.</p>
<p><b>Assisted Natural Regeneration with enrichment planting</b></p>	<p><b>Financial barriers:</b> Upfront land acquisition and restoration costs are</p>	<p>The project partnership secured initial grant funding in Sept 2024 to acquire pilot</p>

	<p>prohibitively high for local communities or smallholders; without carbon revenues or grant support, large-scale restoration is not viable.</p> <p><b>Land access barriers:</b> Land is increasingly consolidated by absentee business graziers, with high prices limiting opportunities for smallholders or non-landowners to participate.</p> <p><b>Technical barriers:</b> Restoration of degraded grazing land faces challenges such as invasive species (lantana, euphorbia), degraded soils, and lack of restoration expertise locally.</p> <p><b>Institutional/social barriers:</b> In rural Rwanda, only landowners typically participate in land-based projects, excluding landless households and limiting community-level inclusion.</p>	<p>land parcels, combined with other project areas to demonstrate how carbon revenues can contribute to a viable land management model.</p> <p>We have developed an innovative governance and participation model that allows not only landowners but also landless households (e.g. those with only a house plot) to participate, broadening community benefits and inclusion.</p> <p>RWCA establishes, with the commencement of Intambwe Savannah, a new category of <i>Carbon Conservation Champions (CCCs)</i> to deliver restoration and monitoring activities, creating paid roles for local people and ensuring technical quality.</p> <p>The project draws on RWCA's technical expertise in ecological restoration to design land management plans, and partnering with the Lifescape Project to develop a project that meets Plan Vivo Climate standards.</p> <p>Designed the project around long-term carbon finance as a sustainable funding source,</p>
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		with potential complementary revenue (e.g. tourism) as the landscape recovers.
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### 3.8 Carbon Benefits

Complete Tables 3.8a and 3.8b to provide a summary of the expected carbon benefits from each project intervention over the first crediting period. Add additional rows as required. Full details of procedures for estimating carbon benefits, following an approved methodology must be provided in a separate technical specification for each project intervention in Annex 7.

**Table 3.8a Expected Carbon Benefits Summary**

<b>Project Intervention</b>	<b>Baseline Emissions (t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha)</b>	<b>Project Emissions (t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha)</b>	<b>Leakage Emissions (t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha)</b>	<b>Carbon Benefit (t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha)</b>
Enter the name of the project intervention. This must correspond to the title of a technical specification included in Annex 7.	Enter expected emissions for each baseline scenario the project intervention is applicable to (use negative emissions to indicate removals)	Enter expected emissions with the project intervention (use negative emissions to indicate removals)	Enter expected leakage emissions.	Enter expected carbon benefit.
Assisted Natural Regeneration with enrichment planting	Litter and Deadwood (non-burned or collected): 0	Litter and Deadwood (non-burned or collected): -32 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha	Litter and Deadwood (non-burned or collected): 0	Litter and Deadwood (non-burned or collected): -32 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha

	Below Ground Biomass (Woody): 0	Below Ground Biomass (Woody): - 64 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha	Below Ground Biomass (Woody): 0	Below Ground Biomass (Woody): - 64 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha
	Above Ground Biomass (Woody): 0	Above Ground Biomass (Woody): -257 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha	Above Ground Biomass (Woody): 0	Above Ground Biomass (Woody): -257 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha
	<b>Total: 0 t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha</b>	<b>Total: 353 t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha</b>	<b>Total: 0 t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha</b>	<b>Total: 353 t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha</b>

**Table 3.8b Plan Vivo Certificate Potential**

<b>Project Intervention</b>	<b>Carbon Benefit (t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha)</b>	<b>Project Area (ha)</b>	<b>Total Carbon Benefit (t CO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	<b>Risk Buffer (t CO<sub>2</sub>e/ha)</b>	<b>Potential PVCs (t CO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>
Enter the name of the project intervention. This must correspond to the title of a technical specification included in Annex 7. Assisted Natural Regeneration with enrichment planting	Enter expected carbon benefit.  The expected carbon benefit is around 353 t CO <sub>2</sub> e per hectare.	Enter the extent of the initial project area where the intervention will be applied.  It is a small project area of three contiguous parcels of land amounting to 40 hectares.	Enter the total carbon benefit expected. This is the product of Carbon Benefit and Project Area.  14,126 t CO <sub>2</sub> e	Enter the Risk Buffer. This is 20% of the Total Carbon Benefit.  2,825 t CO <sub>2</sub> e	Enter potential Plan Vivo Certificates. This is Total Carbon Benefit minus the Risk Buffer.  11,301 t CO <sub>2</sub> e

<b>TOTAL</b>	353 t CO <sub>2</sub> e/ha	40 ha	14,126 t CO <sub>2</sub> e	2,825 t CO <sub>2</sub> e	11,301 t CO <sub>2</sub> e
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## Risk Management

### 3.9 Environmental and Social Safeguards

#### 3.9.1 Exclusion List

Indicate whether the project includes any activities listed in the Plan Vivo Exclusion List (see Annex 8), describe any changes made to the project design to exclude activities listed in the Exclusion List, and provide evidence for any activities that are not obviously excluded.

Include a copy of the Exclusion List in Annex 8.

Intambwe Savannah does not involve any activities recorded on the exclusion list. The full list is displayed in Annex 8.

#### 3.9.2 Environmental and Social Screening

Copy the summary table from the project's E&S screening review at PIN stage into Table 3.9.2 to provide a summary of the potential risks and impacts identified in the environmental and social risk screening.

Include a copy of the Environmental and Social Screening in Annex 9.

The Environmental and Social Screening document, building on the version submitted as part of the PIN documents, is provided as Annex 9.

**Table 3.9.2 Environmental and Social Risks**

<b>Risk Area</b>	<b>Likelihood (1-5)</b>		<b>Magnitude (1-5)</b>	<b>Significance (low, moderate, severe, high)</b>
Vulnerable Groups	1	3	Low	
Gender Equality	1	3	Low	
Human Rights	1	4	Low	
Community, Health, Safety & Security	2	3	Moderate	
Labour and Working Conditions	1	2	Low	

Resource Efficiency, Pollution, Wastes, Chemicals and GHG emissions	2	2	Low
Access Restrictions and Livelihoods	1	2	Low
Cultural Heritage	1	1	Low
Indigenous Peoples	1	1	Low
Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources	1	2	Low
Land Tenure Conflicts	3	3	Moderate
Risk of Not Accounting for Climate Change	2	2	Low
Other – e.g. Cumulative Impacts	2	2	Low
<b>Overall risk assigned to project: Low risk</b>			

### 3.9.3 Environmental and Social Assessment

Describe the scope of the assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts, including the geographical scope of the project, the project activities and potential risks and impacts assessed (and criteria for this), national legislation and international Environmental and Social Standards used as point of reference, and the safeguard plans developed.

Describe the methods used to and assesses the significance of potential environmental and social risks and impacts, and develop measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate these impacts – including descriptions of consultations with affected communities, local stakeholders, and vulnerable and/or disadvantaged people; clear assessment criteria; and sampling strategy and methods.

Identify the project staff or other experts that conducted the environmental and social assessment and provide a summary of their relevant skills and experience, including details of understanding of the local context and socioeconomic conditions and familiarity with international Environmental and Social Standards, impact assessment, and the development associated safeguard plans.

Please see the Environmental and Social Assessment Guidance document, available at the [E&S Safeguards section](#) of the Plan Vivo website, for more guidance on this process.

Include a full environmental and social assessment report in Annex 10. A template for this report can also be found in Annex 10.

The full assessment and structured appraisal of potential risks, impacts, and opportunities associated with the Intambwe Savannah pilot is included in Annex 10. The ESA was put together by project coordinators RWCA and project developers the Lifescape Project, with RWCA leading the local engagement and ecological risks, and Lifescape Project particularly assisting with aligning local context with international standards and Plan Vivo Standard.

The following outlines the general approach and contents of the assessment.

The ESA is based primarily on the Plan Vivo Standard, as well as various environmental and social regulations and policies (both national Rwandan government and international). Its main purpose will be define the significance of potential impacts using transparent criteria, and set the foundation for ongoing management through an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP).

### **Scope of the assessment**

The ESA looks at all project activities, as well as any reasonably foreseeable indirect effects. This includes the physical restoration work itself, as well as governance and how communities are involved. Risks and impacts were identified with the local context as the focus, considered with the context of compliance considerations, and grouped into three broad areas: social, environmental, and land & governance.

To assess the significance, we used a simple likelihood–magnitude matrix in line with Plan Vivo Standard 5.2. Each risk was scored from 1–5 on both scales, which then translated into an overall rating of low, moderate, or high. This methods ensured a consistent way to link each identified risk to specific mitigation actions and responsibilities within the ESMP.

### **Reference framework**

The ESA is grounded in a mix of national laws, policies, and international standards.

Nationally, it focuses on the key laws most relevant to Intambwe Savannah, mainly around land, biodiversity, labour, water, and environmental management. It also links to broader policy strategies like Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy and its National Environment and Climate Change Policy. These set the overall direction and make sure the project aligns with national priorities.

Internationally, the assessment draws on widely recognised standards such as the IFC Performance Standards, the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standards, and the ILO Core Conventions. Plan Vivo's safeguards provide the practical backbone, shaping how consultation,

consent, grievance processes, and benefit-sharing are handled. Altogether, this creates a clear reference point for identifying risks, managing impacts, and adjusting as the project evolves.

## **Methodology and consultation**

The ESA combined desk-based analysis with participatory fieldwork and expert review. The process was iterative and designed to be proportionate to the project's small pilot scale, but with scope to be applied to its expansion.

Key steps in creating the assessment included:

**Screening and scoping:** using Plan Vivo's E&S checklist to identify relevant risk categories and define assessment criteria.

**Participatory methods:** social mapping with local governance representatives, wellbeing assessments with households, and community discussions integrated throughout project design.

**Sampling and inclusion:** purposive sampling ensured representation of women and vulnerable households, with all participants directly consulted due to the project's small scale.

**Validation:** findings were triangulated across data sources and revisited during subsequent field visits to ensure reliability and reduce bias.

## **Assessment of significance and mitigation**

Risks were assessed using a simple likelihood and impact matrix, and most came out as low to moderate. The main moderate risks relate to possible tensions around grazing access and the chance of drought affecting young seedlings.

Mitigation measures are both preventative and responsive. On the social side, this means clear and open communication, making sure women are meaningfully involved through the Community Restoration Committee, and having a working grievance process in place. Environmentally, it includes planting drought-tolerant native species, keeping invasive regrowth under control, and setting practical thresholds for replanting if survival rates drop. Governance risks are managed through clear documentation of land agreements and participatory decision-making processes.

## **Safeguard planning and adaptive management**

The ESMP will operationalise the ESA's findings. It will map each risk to project activities, define mitigation measures and responsibilities, and integrate safeguards like FPIC, occupational health and safety, and grievance procedures. The ESMP will be reviewed and updated annually alongside

Plan Vivo reporting to ensure adaptive management and responsiveness to changing social and environmental conditions.

### 3.9.4 Environmental and Social Management Plan

Complete Table 3.9.4 to describe the mitigation measures in place to address environmental and social risks and impacts. Add a row for each environmental and social risk and impact identified in Sections 3.9.2 and 3.9.3. Mitigation measures will either be plans, protocols, or specific project activities. Where a mitigation measure is a plan (e.g. a community engagement plan), the activities for this plan need to be included in the project design and budgeted for. If a standalone plan, such as a stakeholder engagement plan, or livelihoods restoration plan, or protocol (e.g. H&S protocol) is the mitigation measure, simply list this plan or protocol and ensure that it is annexed to the PDD.

Mitigation measures should include compensation measures (including for example livelihood restoration) if Local Stakeholders are negatively affected by Project Interventions and negative impacts cannot be fully mitigated.

Please see the Environmental and Social Risk Management document, available at the [E&S Safeguards section](#) of the Plan Vivo website, for more guidance on this process.

**Table 3.9.4 Environmental and Social Risk and Impact Mitigation Measures**

<b>Risk/Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Project Activity</b>
Add type and brief description of risk/impact.	Add numbered list of measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate the identified risk or impact.	For each mitigation measure, cross reference the relevant project activity number from Section 3.5. (e.g. Activity 1.1.1)
Grazing pressure, fire, or invasive species (e.g. <i>Lantana camara</i> ) not effectively controlled (slowing regeneration)	RWCA will keep an eye on relationships with neighbouring landowners and be mindful of local dynamics, including the risk that wealthier grazers might try to pressure or pay participants to allow cattle access. Regular dialogue and oversight will	Activity 1.1

	<p>help avoid grazing becoming a problem. Fire will be managed through awareness-raising and, if needed, the creation of firebreaks, drawing on RWCA's existing experience with regeneration protocols. Invasive species will be monitored closely and dealt with early, with Champions trained to spot and manage outbreaks effectively. RWCA staff will provide oversight and adjust management if pressures increase.</p>	
<p>Ecological risk that drought and other environmental pressures affect sapling growth (potentially affecting carbon).</p>	<p>RWCA's restoration model measures progress based on survival of trees, rather than number planted. This creates incentives to ensure long-term care of saplings. Maintenance is prioritised through regular site visits by CCCCs, watering support where feasible, mulching and soil preparation to retain moisture, and replanting where survival rates are low or concerning.</p>	<p>Activity 1.2</p>
<p>Low survival rates of planted species due to poor species selection, drought, or fire.</p>	<p>Planting focuses on native, climate-resilient species (See Annex 7 for details), so they're well suited to the site. Preparation will include digging, mulching, and soil improvements (through application of manure where</p>	<p>Activity 1.2</p>

	<p>appropriate) to help seedlings grow. Planting will be timed around the longer rainy season (Oct) to reduce stress in the early stages for the saplings. Champions will monitor survival regularly, help with replacing losses, and make adjustments if certain species or spots aren't doing well.</p>	
<p>Unequal representation in CRC governance (e.g. elites, men dominating decision-making)</p>	<p>RWCA has made sure the structure of the CRC includes a mix of representations, including local leaders but also participants and small representation from RWCA and Lifescape. Keeping the rules and records open and simple will help keep trust in the process. As new participants and village leaders are selected and elected, there will be reflection on how this affects the decision-making dynamics.</p>	<p>Activity 2.1</p>
<p>Low or inconsistent participation in CRC meetings.</p>	<p>RWCA will keep in regular contact with village leaders and Champions so meetings are planned at times that work so that people can attend. The existing positive relationship the project team has with the village executive committee will help with turnout, and sharing meeting</p>	<p>Activity 2.2</p>

	<p>results back to the wider community will make sure discussions don't feel like they're being made in an untransparent way.</p>	
<p>Participants and community members may struggle with technical/financial issues (carbon markets, cash flow), reducing decision quality.</p>	<p>As has been done thoroughly in all community meetings so far (see Annex 4B) RWCA will avoid using jargon and explain technical issues in everyday language, using clear examples or visuals where it helps. Meetings will continue to leave plenty of space for questions throughout discussion, not just at the end. Champions and CRC members will also be supported in their confidence to articulate and navigate the topic.</p>	<p>Activity 2.2</p>
<p>Limited availability of suitable local candidates for Conservation Champions, or perceptions of bias in recruitment.</p>	<p>Recruitment will continue to be done openly (for example, during Tuesday afternoon meetings when the Gakoma village usually meet with leaders). As has been the case so far, extra effort will go into reaching women, young people, and vulnerable households who might otherwise be left out. RWCA already has a good track record with inclusive hiring and will build on that, with simple ways for people to</p>	<p>Activity 3.1</p>

	raise concerns if they think the process isn't fair.	
High turnover of Carbon Community Conservation Champions	<p>Champions are brought in on fair terms with steady pay, and there are clear ways for them to take on more responsibility over time.</p> <p>Training is practical and sensitive to the relatively low literacy rates that are prevalent in rural Rwanda. RWCA makes an effort to bring all staff together once a year in Kigali including all types of Community Champions from across the country for a retreat. It's usually in November (though in 2025 it was in August) and involves team-building games, reflection and planning, and shared meals. The aim is to keep people connected and recognise people's contributions.</p>	Activity 3.2
Data collection could become inconsistent if staff or champions leave.	To keep monitoring consistent even when staff or Champions change, the CCCC employment contract combined with the monitoring plans (Annexes 13-13D) ensure that data collection methods are well understood, and records are maintained in a simple, standardised format that	Activity 4.1

	new CCCCs and staff can follow.	
As ecosystems improve, human-wildlife conflict could emerge.	Champions will keep track of local issues such as crop or livestock damage, and community members can raise concerns through the grievance mechanism, which in the first instance is going to their local leaders who partly comprise the CRC. This is the first most direct way that potential problems can be identified and addressed early to prevent any escalation or harm to wildlife or humans.	Activity 4.1

### 3.9.5 Native Species

Complete Table 3.9.5 to identify any non-native tree species that will be planted or other non-native plant or animal species that will be introduced to project. For each non-native species, describe the livelihood or ecosystem benefits that justify their inclusion in the project in lieu of alternative native species, and provide an assessment and evidence that they pose no environmental risk or threat.

The Intambwe Savannah Project plants only native species from Rwanda and the local region. This underpins the project’s objectives, which are strongly focused on improving biodiversity and ecosystem benefits. Focusing on native species also promotes resilience of the saplings planted, in ensuring that trees are well adapted to local conditions and able to withstand the frequent droughts in Kayonza.

**Table 3.9.5: Non-Native Species Overview**

<b>Project Intervention</b>	<b>Non-Native Species Planted/ Introduced</b>	<b>Justification</b>	<b>Risk Assessment and Management</b>
Enter the name of the project intervention that	Add a row for each non-native species planted or introduced	Describe the livelihood or ecosystem benefits	Provide evidence that the species poses no environmental risk or

involves planting or introduction of non-native species	as part of the project intervention	that justify including the non-native species in lieu of alternative native species	threat and/or describe measures in place to mitigate risks.
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### 3.10 Achievement of Carbon Benefits

If the project will generate fPVCs or rPVCs, state the proportion of carbon benefits that will be held as insurance against non-achievement of carbon benefits (minimum is 10%). If the project will not claim fPVCs or rPVCs, this section can be left blank.

The project will hold a minimum of 20% of credits as insurance non-achievement of carbon benefits.

### 3.11 Reversal of Carbon Benefits

Complete Table 3.11 to describe and provide supporting evidence for the impact and likelihood of risks to the long-term maintenance of Carbon Benefits from the project.

In the Impact column enter a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 where 0 = none, 1 = low, 2 = moderate and 3 = high, and provide a description supported by evidence of the potential impact of the risk factor on the Carbon Benefits achieved by the project, if the stated mitigation measures are in place.

In the Likelihood column enter a score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 where 0 = none, 1 = low, 2 = moderate and 3 = high, and provide a description supported by evidence of the likelihood the risk factor will lead to reversal of the Carbon Benefits achieved by the project, if the stated mitigation measures are in place.

In the Mitigation Measures column describe any mitigation measures that will be implemented to reduce the impact or likelihood of the risk factor, cross reference activities from Section 3.5 (e.g. Activity 1.1.1).

In the Score column, multiply Impact and Likelihood scores to give a total score between 0 and 9. If the score is greater than 4 for any risk factor additional mitigation measures will be required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

**Table 3.11 Risk of Reversals**

<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures*</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Social</b>				
Land tenure and/or rights to climate benefits are disputed	1	1	This risk is low for the project. RWCA owns the land and holds the carbon rights, and the project area has no recent history of land disputes. Decisions on the use of carbon finance sit with the Community Restoration Committee (CRC) under agreed benefit-sharing rules. The CRC provides a clear locus for 'rights to carbon (finance)', ensuring decisions are transparent and responsive to community input.	1
Political or social instability	1	1	The project (particularly RWCA as the project co-ordinator) maintains strong working relationships with	1

			<p>REMA and Kayonza District, and regular visits help to keep these links active. Lifescape also benefits from an advisor with extensive experience in Rwanda who follows political developments closely, providing early insight if issues arise. The project's location in the Eastern Province, (near the Tanzania border), is considered stable with less exposure compared with more sensitive border regions to the south and west.</p>	
Community support for the project is not maintained	1	1	<p>The project will use the Community Restoration Committee (CRC) as the main platform to maintain community support. The CRC ensures inclusive decision-making, transparent benefit-sharing, and regular dialogue between the project and community members</p>	1

			(through weekly Tuesday afternoon meetings in Gakoma), while also providing a channel for grievances and logging/updating of activities to local priorities.	
<b>Economic</b>				
Insufficient finance secured to support project activities	1	1	The carbon project sits within a wider nature-based economy strategy for the Gakoma Conservancy. It uses blended finance to avoid dependence on a single source and is designed around multiple revenue streams. RWCA brings proven experience in developing viable business plans in Rwanda, reducing delivery risk and strengthening long-term viability.	1
Alternative land uses become more attractive to the local community	1	1	The project is implemented on RWCA land, so it doesn't rely on private landholders choosing the project over alternative land uses. Community	1

			<p>participation centres on governance, monitoring, and benefit-sharing (CRC/CCC roles) rather than needing to make opportunity-cost decisions about their land. So, other land uses are not likely to undermine engagement.</p>	
<p>External parties carry out activities that reverse climate benefits</p>	1	1	<p>The project is on RWCA-managed land with clear maps and boundaries. We can act swiftly if there is any unauthorised grazing, wood-cutting, etc. Indeed, a key part of our model is that the participants (CCCs) report any risk to the project activities swiftly. And, the RWCA project coordinator team have had experience of sensitively handling issues like this in other restoration projects in the wider area, so are well equipped and have established</p>	1

			rapport with the neighbouring landowners and communities.	
<b>Environmental</b>				
Fire	2	1	Planting resilient, indigenous trees and shrubs -native species are adapted to local conditions, staying moister in the dry season and reducing flammable invasive grasses, which lowers ignition risk and slows fire spread. Part of CCC (participant) training involves working with communities on fire awareness and prevention.	2
Pest and disease attacks	1	1	As above, our biodiversity-focused planting scheme means reflects our aim is to make a resilient - including to pests to and disease – ecosystem. Additionally, indigenous species are better able to withstand local pests and diseases. Part of the CCC’s role is to monitor sapling	1

			health closely and frequently, and we use environmentally friendly sprays if issues arise.	
Extreme weather or geological events	1	1	Planting a diverse mix of grasses, shrubs, and trees with different root depths and structures creates a stable, resilient ecosystem that reduces erosion from heavy rains, storms, and landslides. The slope of our land is low to moderate, and planting native species will further lower risk that events will disrupt project outcomes.	1
<b>Administrative</b>				
Capacity of the project coordinator to support the project is not maintained	1	1	The project coordinator is the landowner, so there's inherent motivation and values-alignment (institutionally) to see it succeed. There's also capacity support from Lifescape in the medium term (factored into the financial planning).	1

<p>Technical capacity to implement project activities is not maintained</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>RWCA project team are upskilling in ways that will strengthen capacity in nature markets. For e.g. One project officer is pursuing master's degree in natural resource economics. RWCA's broader theory of change explicitly focuses on building technical ability and shifting values around sustainability, so the CCC role is well established and there will be community, bottom-up capacity to draw on, even if participants change.</p>	<p>2</p>
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\*Cross reference activities from Section 3.5 (e.g. Activity 1.1.1)

### 3.12 Leakage

Complete Table 3.12 to describe the risk of leakage and leakage mitigation measures for each project intervention. Add additional rows as required.

Include procedures to estimate and monitor leakage for each project intervention following and approved methodology in Annex 7.

**Table 3.12 Leakage Risk Mitigation**

Project Intervention	Leakage Risk	Mitigation Measures*
<p>Enter the name of the project intervention. This must correspond to the title of a</p>	<p>Describe risks of leakage from the project intervention and their potential impact on</p>	<p>Describe measures that will be implemented to mitigate the risk of leakage.</p>

technical specification included in Annex 7.	emissions outside the project area(s).	
<p>Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting.</p>	<p>The project does not rely on land voluntarily committed by participants or on areas under shared use, but instead on a clearly defined parcel purchased outright for restoration. This makes the leakage picture relatively straightforward, as land ownership and use rights were unambiguous at the time of project initiation. The main land user prior to the purchase has since moved activities to other land of similar type and grazing intensity, so no step change in external pressure is expected. There have been occasional issues with neighbouring farmers grazing cattle on other RWCA sites, but these are best treated as a direct project risk to carbon benefits rather than leakage per se.</p> <p>The main potential leakage pathways are: (i) restrictions on grazing or fuelwood collection inside the project area could displace these activities to nearby land; and (ii) since land purchase was an enabling condition of the intervention, there is a</p>	<p>RWCA will continue engaging local communities through established processes of employment (via CCCCs) and the Intambwe Savannah CRC to agree on land-use and grazing rules, reducing the chance of activity shifting. Routine patrols (which are part of CCCC responsibilities) and community feedback will be used to spot any signs of displacement. If evidence of leakage emerges (e.g. increased grazing pressure in neighbouring areas), RWCA and the CRC will adapt management and adjust accordingly. Carbon accounting is also applied conservatively, so any residual leakage risk does not result in overstated credit projections.</p>

	<p>chance that the previous landowner shifts farming or grazing to another location. In practice, the landowner was already seeking to sell, and has since moved to similar plots with comparable grazing pressure. Combined with the small scale of the pilot (~40 ha) and the degraded, low-productivity condition of the land, the risk of significant net emissions outside the project boundary is considered low.</p> <p>In support of this analysis, is that Leakage tool AR-TOOL15 states that: <i>Leakage emission attributable to the displacement of grazing activities under the following conditions is considered insignificant and hence accounted as zero:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Animals are displaced to existing grazing land and the total number of animals in the receiving grazing land (displaced and existing) does not exceed the carrying capacity of the grazing land.</i></p>	
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\*Cross reference activities from Section 3.5 (e.g. Activity 1.1.1)

### 3.13 Double Counting

Complete Table 3.13 to identify any greenhouse gas emission reduction and removal projects, programmes or initiatives that overlap with the project region(s) and explain why there is no potential for generating transferable emission reduction or removal credits from carbon pools or emission sources included in the project. Include any national, jurisdictional, or sub-national program or project that emission reductions or removals achieved by the project will contribute to (including Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement) and provide evidence that carbon benefits achieved by the project will not be included in any other form of greenhouse gas emissions trading.

Describe what measures are in place to ensure that the project remains in compliance with emerging regulations that relate to trading carbon credits in the host-country.

**Table 3.13 GHG Emission Reduction and Removal Projects and Programmes in the Project Region**

<b>Project, Programme or Initiative</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Carbon Credit Generation</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation</b>
Add a row for each GHG emission reduction/removal project programme or initiative that overlaps with the project region	Add a description of the project, programme or initiative and identify any overlap with carbon pools and emission sources included in project accounting.	Describe whether the project, programme or initiative generates transferable carbon credits and the registry they are listed on (if any).	Describe any measures in place to prevent double counting with the project.
<b>Rwanda National Carbon Market Framework &amp; Carbon Registry (REMA)</b>	National system to register and track mitigation activities/units. Potential overlap only if our units were also counted nationally toward NDCs without proper authorisation.	Registry tracks units; Rwanda framework defines authorization/corresponding adjustments for internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs).	Notify/register the project with the Rwanda Carbon Registry as required; issue credits only once under Plan Vivo. Best risk mitigation is avoiding pursuing authorising PVCs for Article 6 use (see below)

<p><b>Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)</b></p>	<p>National accounting of emissions/removals; no direct project overlap unless credits are authorized toward the NDC.</p>	<p>NDC is not a credit standard; Article 6 transfers may contribute to NDCs if authorized.</p>	<p>Treat Plan Vivo credits as non-authorized voluntary units (no NDC claim).</p>
<p><b>Jurisdictional / nested REDD+ programmes (if/when established over this area)</b></p>	<p>Could overlap if a jurisdictional programme includes AGB/BGB accounting that covers our project area - None identified currently within Kayonza district (our project region).</p>	<p>At present, no transferable credits are being generated from this land under any jurisdictional system</p>	<p>Commit to nesting if a jurisdictional programme is launched over the site (e.g. align baselines, leakage, buffers). Avoid double issuance by keeping the project in a single registry.</p>
<p><b>Other VCM projects in immediate vicinity</b> (e.g. Verra, Gold Standard)</p>	<p>No known projects operating in the project region, and no known projects claiming the same carbon pools within the project region or in the vicinity of Intambwe Savannah's project areas.</p>	<p>No (known) carbon credits being generated under these standards.</p>	<p>Each year we'll check the main public registries and confirm with local authorities that no overlapping projects are registered in the area. We'll also keep clear records on land tenure, GIS shapefiles, and the project's exclusive rights to issue credits. Project contracts include a clause that prevents any parallel listing or issuance, and these checks are documented as part</p>

			of the annual reporting process.
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## Agreements

### 3.14 Land Management Plans

Describe the process through which land management plans are developed with project participants, and measures in place to ensure they: i) identify the location and extent of each project area; ii) include all details needed to estimate carbon benefits using the appropriate technical specification; iii) are fully understood and agreed to by the project participants; iv) have potential to enhance the livelihood of the project participant; and v) do not risk undermining the food and/or income security of the project participants.

Provide example land management plans in Annex 11.

Projects are recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit Tool 9: Participatory Resource Mapping](#) when developing *Land Management Plan*. For tree-planting projects, Tool 11a: Assessment and Utilisation of forest and tree products is also recommended, and for blue carbon projects Tool 11b: Assessment and Utilisation of blue carbon ecosystem products and areas is also recommended.

In this project, land management planning is led by RWCA as the landholder and technical authority, drawing on their extensive experience in ecological restoration. The process therefore differs from a smallholder agroforestry context, where farmers design plans for their own parcels of land. Instead, RWCA develops land management plans for each restoration area, ensuring they:

**i) Identify location and extent** – RWCA delineates the project area boundaries and compartments using GIS and field surveys, and these maps are made available to participants and the Community Restoration Committee (CRC).

**ii) Include details for carbon estimation** – All management plans include the technical information required for estimating carbon benefits under the relevant technical specification (species mix, hectares under assisted natural regeneration, planting densities, invasive species management, etc.), drawing on RWCA’s ecological expertise.

**iii) Are understood and agreed to by participants** – While the technical design is prepared by RWCA, participants are engaged through workshops, field visits, and training sessions where plans are presented and discussed. These sessions use accessible language and examples, focusing on

why particular interventions (e.g. removing lantana, assisted natural regeneration, enrichment planting) matter for ecosystem services and long-term benefits. Community Conservation Champions play a key role in relaying this information, gathering feedback, and ensuring participants' perspectives are heard.

iv) **Have potential to enhance livelihoods** – The project's theory of change emphasises that participants gain new knowledge and skills about ecological restoration and land management over time. Hopefully, the familiarity and trust is established enough to the point where nearby landowners and agricultural businesses consider adding carbon revenue as a way to diversify production and improve the land. RWCA's community champion model (including the carbon champions but also others like wildlife and tree champions) is designed to build local skills, provide paid jobs in restoration, and, over time, strengthen natural resources and open up future income opportunities.

v) **Do not undermine food or income security** – As the project is on RWCA's own land, no smallholder agricultural or subsistence land is displaced, apart from a small number of farmers who had already moved with the land's previous owners—a common practice in the area. Instead, participants are offered restoration roles and training opportunities. This ensures that involvement adds livelihood benefits without creating risks to existing food or income sources.

## 3.15 Crediting Period

State the initial crediting period and any plans for extension.

The project crediting period runs from January 2024 (when the first land parcel started naturally regenerating) to November 2055, beginning with the start of enrichment planting. While farming ceased earlier on some parcels, allowing natural regeneration to begin before this date, these saplings are only counted through verified monitoring once the crediting period has started. They are excluded from projections and therefore fPVC calculation.

## 3.16 Benefit Sharing Mechanism

Describe the process through which an agreed benefit sharing mechanism was developed with project participants.

Provide a summary of the agreed benefit sharing mechanism with details of: i) the percentage allocation of income from the sale of Plan Vivo Certificates to different stakeholders; ii) measures in place to ensure that at least 60% of income from the sale of Plan Vivo Certificates (after payment of any charges, taxes or similar fees levied by the host country) will directly benefit project participants and other local stakeholders; iii) how and when benefits to project participants will be received; iv) the mechanism and any dependencies for dispersal of funds and/or other benefits to project participants including monitoring responsibilities, targets and corrective actions.

A key difference between this project and the standard Plan Vivo model is that communities are not entering as landholders with carbon rights to sell. We are working with either landless participants, or households with less than 1 hectare of land title to their name, which contributes to part of our community empowerment theory of change. As the project area is owned by the project coordinator (RWCA), households are not needing consider their own land use, carbon rights or bearing opportunity costs in order to participate. Because of this, the benefit-sharing model emphasises community benefits that include in-kind contributions, rather than only direct cash flows (as might be applied in a smallholder landowner compensation model).

### **(i) Percentage allocation of income from PVCs**

In Intambwe Savannah, the 60:40 safeguard is applied in a way that reflects the structural differences of our model. Since communities are not giving up land rights or livelihoods, benefits are not structured as direct compensation but instead as a mix of financial and economic benefits generated through participation. To ensure compliance with Plan Vivo's requirements, community revenues flow through three channels:

- (1) Direct payments to participants (Carbon Community Conservation Champions and restoration workers), and
- (2) The Community Restoration Committee (CRC), which allocates funds to wider development initiatives. This guarantees that the minimum 60% allocation is safeguarded for communities, and that decisions about spending are made collectively and transparently.
- (3) In-kind benefits such as tools, training, and infrastructure provided directly through project activities.

## **(ii) Measures in place to ensure fair allocation**

The CRC is the governance node that has the say over what are prioritised and what development priorities should be funded. So, the bottom-up influence is channelled through the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), which we are establishing as part of this project, building on existing local governance structures and processes. The CRC has a mandate to decide on what the allocations to the Community Development Fund are spent on.

This governance structure ensures that while the community are not the legal carbon rightsholders, they still have real decision-making power over how benefits are used locally.

We recognise that revenues may fluctuate from year to year, depending on the type of offtake agreements, pre-sales, and the timing of credit purchases. To manage this, during meets and as appropriate, the CRC is kept informed of cash flow (current and prospects) and agrees on, if revenue is available for the CRC, how this might look in terms of funding a project.

## **(iii) How and when benefits will be received**

While the annual proportion of spending may vary due to cash flow and the timing of carbon sales under different types of agreements (for example offtake agreements), the overall allocation will be reconciled to ensure compliance with the 60% community benefit safeguard over the project period. CCCCs receive monthly salaries through mobile money or bank transfer under their contracts and similarly, any per diem workers that contribute towards project activities, are paid promptly once attendance is verified (assisted by the CCCCs). Allocations for community development projects are communicated by the project team, discussed by the CRC in terms of confirming priorities of funding, and transferred by RWCA from a dedicated account. The structure aims to ensure transparent reporting, a level of certainty for non-participant stakeholders, and alignment with community priorities.

## **(iv) Dependencies, monitoring, targets, and corrective actions**

The main governance mechanism related to funding and benefit allocation, is the CRC, and there are some dependencies involved in this mechanism working effectively to help with the benefit sharing of that particular aspect.

*Dependencies:*

**Carbon revenue timings** – timing of credit sales (pre-sales, offtake agreements, spot sales) determine annual cash flow available

**Verification of delivery** – the realisation of benefits depend on the monitoring and measuring of progress (particularly carbon values) attributable to restoration activities, and that these measurements are verified by Plan Vivo and third party.

**Governance functionality** – the CRC governance mechanism remains functional and its constituents remain engaged.

Because participants work under the guidance of the Carbon Community Conservation Champion, their responsibilities are set out clearly in the employment agreement—what tasks to carry out, when and how to monitor, which areas of land to oversee, and how to check for issues such as illegal grazing.

*Corrective actions:*

If carbon sales are delayed or fall short, the main impact is on the CRC's ability to fund community development rather than on participants' short- to medium-term income. If there is a longer-term issue with carbon revenue, RWCA can step in by giving participants priority access to other nature-based jobs on nearby projects, such as wildlife surveys. If the delay is shorter—over a period of months—the dedicated Intambwe Savannah project fund within RWCA's accounts includes a buffer, enough to cover around six months of salary payments for three participants, to keep wages flowing until carbon revenues recover. Any shortfall in CRC funds is assessed over rolling five-year periods, so temporary dips can be evened out. If a CRC-approved project goes ahead but then stalls, funds can be redirected or an implementation partner brought in to finish the work.

## 3.17 Grievance Mechanism

Describe the mechanism through which grievances raised by all stakeholders are reported and resolved in a transparent, fair, and timely manner. Include details of an independent arbitrator that will be responsible for mediating resolution of any grievances that cannot otherwise be resolved.

*Intambwe Savannah* established a grievance mechanism (articulated in Annex 12 – Project Agreement – Section 5, Clause 12) to ensure that concerns raised by participants and other stakeholders are addressed in a transparent and fair way. Grievances are initially raised informally with the RWCA Project Coordinator or Community Restoration Committee. If unresolved, stakeholders can submit a formal grievance verbally or in writing via a dedicated contact point.

RWCA will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days, investigate the concern, and provide a written response within 20 working days. All grievances are logged, documented, and reported anonymously.

If in the unlikely event a grievance cannot be resolved through this process, it will be referred to an independent arbitrator for mediation. The independent arbitrator will be a neutral mediator, agreed by all Parties, with experience that matches the type of grievance raised and no conflict of interest.

Lessons learned from grievances will be reviewed regularly and used to improve how the Project is managed. This may include updating procedures, strengthening communication with communities, or adjusting governance structures to prevent similar issues in the future.

### 3.18 Project Agreements

Describe the process for entering into project agreements between project participants and the project coordinator following FPIC principles, including any measures in place to ensure that project agreements do not remove, diminish or threaten project participant's rights to land and/or resources.

State the agreement period and provide justification for why this represents a period over which the project participants are able to make a meaningful commitment to implement and monitor the project interventions with support from the project coordinator.

In Annex 12, include example project agreements that includes: i) the crediting period; ii) an agreement period that covers the entire crediting period, or that is extendable to cover the entire crediting period; iii) estimates of the expected annual carbon benefit from the project area(s) for each year of the crediting period; iv) clauses that give the project coordinator the right to sell plan vivo certificates on behalf of the project participant, and that prevent the project participant from generating any other type of carbon credit from the same project interventions; iv) a summary of the benefit sharing mechanism with details of the minimum amount the project participant is eligible to receive if monitoring targets and other dependencies are met, and consequences if targets are not met; and v) a description of the grievance mechanism and how it can be accessed by the project participant.

Initial engagement with the Gakoma Village Council and wider community was on 18 Sep 2024, followed by participatory work on 22 Nov 2024. The November meeting involved social mapping

with the Village Executive Committee, a wellbeing assessment with confirmed participants and executives, and a larger community meeting). On 8 July 2025 we met with the CCCs and Village Executive Committee to explain the PES agreement in detail, including how it relates to the CCC (formal participant) role, the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), benefit-sharing. We also discussed plans around monitoring carbon sequestered, biodiversity and social/economic progress. In this meeting, RWCA spoke in the local language (Kinyarwanda), and there were diverse questions asked. It was important in the process to make sure that there was time (weeks) between discussing the agreement, and actually signing it, so that each person had time and space to consider what has been proposed.

The PES agreement does not change, transfer, or limit participants' land or resource rights, as participants' responsibilities in generating carbon are tied to their CCCC role, not to their individual use of their own land.

## 4 Monitoring and Reporting

### Indicators

#### 4.1 Progress Indicators

Complete Table 4.1 by adding a row for each output and activity in Table 3.5. Indicators should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART).

Indicators for measuring progress on outputs have been defined at the activity level, since the activities collectively demonstrate achievement of each output. For example, output 1 on the “degraded land restored to functioning savannah ecosystems” is verified through a combination of activity indicators on sapling survival, vegetation cover, and species diversity.

**Table 4.1 Progress Indicators**

<b>Output/Activity</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
Include a row for each output and activity listed in Table 3.5	Add a SMART indicator for each activity and output.	Describe how the indicator will be assessed.
<b>Output 1</b>	N/A	N/A

Degraded land restored to functioning savannah ecosystems		
<p><b>Activity 1.1</b> Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) - Supported natural regrowth of native savannah species by reducing pressures such as overgrazing, invasive plants (e.g. lantana), and ecological barriers (fencing).</p>	<p>% increase in native savannah vegetation cover on ANR sites (every 2 years).</p> <p>&lt;5% project area where dominant species is Lantana camara.</p>	<p>Photo-monitoring at fixed points (spatial and temporal)</p>
<p><b>Activity 1.2</b> Enrichment planting - Complement natural regeneration with targeted planting of native and climate-resilient tree and shrub species, including site preparation, planting, maintenance, and monitoring of survival and growth rates.</p>	<p>≥85% survival rate of planted seedlings (after 2 years).</p> <p>&gt;10 different (tree and shrub) species per hectare</p>	<p>We'll check progress using simple one-hectare plots. After about two years, seedlings will be counted to see how many have survived, aiming for at least 85%. In the same plots, we'll also make a list of all woody species over 30 cm tall, with success marked by more than 10 different species. A simple tally sheet and some geotagged photos will be evidence.</p>
<p><b>Output 2</b> Community governance structures established and functioning.</p>	N/A	N/A
<p><b>Activity 2.1</b> Establish the Community Restoration Committee (CRC), including set up governance and benefit-sharing agreements through signing</p>	<p>CRC established with a signed governance and benefit-sharing agreement by commencement of planting (Oct 2025).</p>	<p>Copy of the signed agreement and membership list kept on file.</p>

and formalising of the overarching project agreement, and its associated community governance annex E.		
<b>Activity 2.2</b> Facilitate at least one full CRC meeting per year (likely 2-3 meetings), to discuss cash flow and carbon buyers' prospects as well as development project ideas and planning.	At least one full CRC meeting held each year, with $\geq 75\%$ attendance of the members in the agreement.	Meeting minutes and attendance sheet, supported by a short photo record.
<b>Output 3</b> Local people employed and trained in restoration and monitoring.	Number of local people who have completed training programs related to restoration and monitoring.	Training attendance sheets, certificates, and training program reports. Moreover, Employment records and payroll documents will be available.
<b>Activity 3.1</b> Recruit Conservation Champions from within the local community to deliver restoration activities.	At least 3 Carbon Community Conservation Champions recruited by end 2025.	Signed employment agreements, plus a simple record in CRC meeting notes confirming employment.
<b>Activity 3.2</b> Build long-term community capacity by providing Carbon Conservation Champions with fair employment, structured training, and mentoring to develop technical expertise and leadership.	Each CCCC has at least two check-ins per year regarding specific points around training and leadership with the Senior Habitat Restoration Manager and attends the annual end of year RCWA retreat.	Retreat report with agenda, group photo, and participant sign-in sheet.
<b>Output 4</b> Verified data and carbon credits generated	Data collected	Produced reports
<b>Activity 4.1</b> Annual reporting – Carry out annual monitoring (particularly carbon, but also	Monitoring reports on carbon, biodiversity, and livelihoods submitted to Plan Vivo every year.	Record of credits issued by Plan Vivo.

<p>biodiversity and livelihood data according to the monitoring plan) and submit reports to Plan Vivo to access verified, sellable, carbon credits (rPVCs).</p>		
<p><b>Activity 4.2</b> Third-party verification – Every five years (minimum), have the wider monitoring data on biodiversity, livelihoods, and carbon checked by an independent verifier to confirm annual reporting results and generate verified credits (vPVCs).</p>	<p>Independent verification carried out at least once every 5 years.</p>	<p>Verification report from the accredited auditor.</p>

## 4.2 Carbon Indicators

Complete Table 4.2 to provide a summary of the carbon indicators that will be monitored for each project intervention. Include full details of each carbon indicator in Annex 7.

Information on the methodology and rationale for measuring carbon to be verified and compared to projections is provided in Annex 7. Details of the monitoring plan for collecting and reporting these measurements are set out in Annex 13A.

<b>Project Intervention</b>	<b>Carbon Indicator</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
<p>Enter the name of the project intervention. This must correspond to the title of a technical specification included in Annex 7.</p>	<p>Add a row for each indicator that will be monitored to assess the carbon benefit of the project intervention.</p>	<p>Describe how the indicator will be measured (methods of measurement, sampling approach, frequency of monitoring, groups or individuals involved, resources or capacity required).</p>

<p>Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting</p>	<p><b>C1.1.</b> Number of seedlings planted per hectare</p>	<p><b>Number of seedlings planted per hectare</b> is recorded through a full count at the time of planting. RWCA field teams, together with community restoration workers, record the numbers using simple datasheets and GPS to reference each compartment. This is done once per planting season across all areas, so it doesn't rely on sampling. The only resources needed are datasheets, GPS units or mobile devices, and some basic training to keep the recording consistent.</p>
<p>Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting</p>	<p><b>C1.2</b> Survival rate of saplings (Annual)</p>	<p><b>Survival rate of saplings (annual)</b> is checked by counting how many planted saplings are still alive compared with the original baseline records. Instead of covering every hectare, the team uses stratified random plots across the different restoration blocks to make sure a good range of conditions is represented. Monitoring takes place once a year, after the dry season when losses are easiest to see, and is carried out by RWCA staff with support from Community Conservation Champions. The</p>

		methods are straightforward and only require simple protocols, GPS or mobile devices, and training in plant ID and data entry.
Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting	<b>C1.3</b> Survival rate of saplings (over 5-years average)	<b>Survival rate of saplings (5-year running average)</b> is worked out from the annual survival data, so no extra fieldwork is needed. I.e. RWCA staff will calculate the five-year average to smooth out the seasonal variability. It requires few resources – mainly good data management and a reliable way of storing and analysing results (see section 4.10).
Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with enrichment planting	<b>C1.4</b> Number of observations of uncontrolled fires and damage through livestock	Number of observations of uncontrolled fires and damage through livestock is recorded by CCCCs during routine patrols (part of the land management plan). Any incidences are reported immediately to RWCA, and then logged with date, location, and estimated area affected.

### 4.3 Livelihood Indicators

Complete Table 4.3 to describe the indicators that will be used to monitor the livelihood status of project participants and other local stakeholders, and risks of negative social impacts.

Recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit](#) Tool 5: Well-being Assessment to develop Livelihood Indicators.

<b>Livelihood Indicator</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
Describe the indicator that will be monitored to assess livelihood status or social risks.	Describe how the indicator will be measured (methods of measurement, sampling approach, frequency of monitoring, groups or individuals involved, resources or capacity required).
<b>L1.1</b> Participant: Annual CCCC income	CCCC salaries are compared with baseline household income using payroll records and short household surveys, carried out annually (Quantitative).
<b>L1.2</b> Participant: Access to healthcare in CCCC (participant) households	CCCC access to healthcare will be ascertained through short household surveys, carried out annually. (e.g. How many times and when health insurance was used to access services (Quantitative).
<b>L1.3</b> Primary stakeholder (Gakoma community): The amount of development funding available to the CRC to utilise for projects (5 year annual average).	Intambwe Savannah financial records and CRC meeting minutes are reviewed to confirm what funding is available and which projects have been approved and are moving forward (Qual). Once sufficient time has passed, a five-year average will also be calculated (Quantitative).
<b>L1.4</b> Primary stakeholder (Gakoma community): CRC funds reaching women, youth, and priority groups	In the household survey, percentage of households reporting that women, youth, or other priority group members have benefited from CRC-funded projects (Quantitative). Follow-up questions in the survey to capture examples of how they have benefited, or are set to benefit (Qualitative).
<b>L1.5</b> Community perceptions of ecosystem service changes	Participatory sessions are held with Gakoma Village Executive every 5 years to discuss observed changes in the project land and surrounds, such as erosion, microclimate, or bird life (Qualitative).

## 4.4 Ecosystem Indicators

Complete Table 4.4 to describe the indicators that will be used to monitor ecological conditions risks of negative environmental impacts in the project region.

<b>Ecosystem Indicator</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
Describe the indicator that will be monitored to assess ecological conditions or environmental risks.	Describe how the indicator will be measured (methods of measurement, sampling approach, frequency of monitoring, groups or individuals involved, resources or capacity required).
E1.1 Sapling survival rate (Annual)	Sample plots are established across planting areas; survived saplings and perished saplings are counted annually (Quant) Data collected by CCCC participants under RWCA supervision.
E1.2 Ground cover % (Annual)	Using photo monitoring points in sample plots, to show change in bare ground versus vegetated. Photos taken same time each year. Photos are overlaid with a fixed grid (10 x 10), and the proportion of grid points landing on vegetation versus bare ground is counted. The percentage of vegetated points provides the ground cover measure for each plot.
E1.3 Tree and shrub diversity (5 years)	Indicator measured using Simpson’s Reciprocal Index (Quant). Data collected on number of individuals per species, across sample plots, by CCCC participants under RWCA supervision.
E1.4 Indicator of bird species (number of different bird species)	Bird point counts in fixed locations across the site, repeated every 5 years. Surveys led by RWCA biodiversity staff with CCCCs assisting.

## Monitoring

### 4.5 Monitoring Plan

Provide a brief description of the plans to monitor the progress, carbon, livelihood, and ecosystem indicators described in Section 4.1 to 4.4 with details of monitoring approaches, sample selection, frequency of assessment, groups or individuals responsible for monitoring, and resource and capacity requirements.

Include a detailed monitoring plan with details of specific monitoring and verification activities in Annex 13.

All details of monitoring are included in Annexes 13A-13D, including outlines for monitoring of progress indicators, carbon indicators, livelihood indicators and ecosystem indicators, respectively.

## 4.6 Progress Monitoring

For each of the progress indicators listed in Section 4.1, identify a milestone for each year of the crediting period, and describe corrective actions that will be implemented if milestones are not met.

Milestones and corrective actions for each of the project's progress indicators are set out in Annex 13D. The annex organises the indicators by their monitoring schedules, including breaking down monitoring actions into annual or multi-year intervals, and describes the processes involved with associated responses, if the indicators of progress are not reached. A summary is provided below.

**Output 1 (Degraded land restored):** Milestones track how well the savannah vegetation comes back, using photo monitoring for natural regeneration, and survival and species diversity checks for enrichment planting. If native cover isn't increasing or survival rates are lower than usually experienced in similar conditions on other restoration sites, the plan is to respond with replacement planting, targeted weeding (i.e. targeting *Lantana camara* and other alien species) or other adaptive management interventions.

**Output 2 (Community governance):** The key milestone is getting the CRC established at the signing of Project Agreements, with a signed governance and benefit-sharing agreement in place before maintenance work of the CCCCs start. One of the main indicators of progress will be how

actively members take part in and show up to the regular meetings. These are likely to run twice a year (as suggested by village leaders in the most recent meeting), though the frequency can shift depending on what members want and the decisions that need attention at the time. If attendance or momentum drops, RWCA assist with more facilitation and co-ordination in the short term, and capacity-building of governance in the long term.

**Output 3 (Employment and training):** By the end of Year 1, at least three CCCCs will be on board, with mentoring and check-ins in place to build their skills over time. We will continue to gauge interest in participation through this formal process in parallel to identifying additional land parcels that meet applicability conditions and could generate more stable employment through CCCCs in the community. Key indicators of progress include successful recruitment and retention of members, alignment between capacity and the area of land under the carbon project, and overall satisfaction with the role.

**Output 4 (Verified data and credits):** If a report comes in late or a verifier flags an issue, RWCA will put in extra technical capacity to sort it, such as going back to the field to re-measure plots with CCCC support, or double-checking the verified carbon data and how its calculated, so that corrected results – and verified PVCs for sales, can be rectified quickly.

## 4.7 Carbon Monitoring

Describe the planned verification schedule for the project and confirm that the carbon indicators described in Annex 7 will be monitored throughout the crediting period.

The monitoring plan for carbon indicators (Annex 13A) provides an outline for monitoring activity-based indicators (see section 4.2) that underpin the carbon estimation methodology, allowing for the confirmation of verified PVCs (see Annex 7).

Comprehensive carbon verification rounds are carried out every five years – for external validation of the field-based carbon measurements made, as well as to verify the biodiversity-related and livelihood progress reported, according to the indicators described in sections 4.3 and 4.4.

## **4.8 Livelihood and Ecosystem Monitoring**

Describe plans for sharing livelihood and ecosystem monitoring results with all stakeholders, receiving feedback on the likely causes of any trends identified and their relationship to project activities, and adjusting project activities to address any issues identified.

The Community Restoration Committee (CRC), as the project’s community-led governance mechanism, will be the main channel for sharing survey results, both ecological field surveys and household livelihood surveys, with participants and Village Executives. Since all participants are part of the CRC (with a sub-set potentially representing them as the project scales), it provides the most appropriate platform for communicating overall findings back to participants. The CRC will meet roughly twice per year, and these meetings will provide a forum to share updates on data collection and results.

Because the CRC includes community representatives and leaders, key findings can be shared more broadly through village meetings, such as the weekly Tuesday gatherings in Gakoma. The CRC will determine what to communicate, the best way to do so, and how the project should respond to monitoring results. Community members will then be able to provide feedback, and if any issues are identified, the CRC and participants will review activities together and make adjustments where needed.

## **Reporting**

### **4.9 Annual Report**

Describe the planned annual reporting schedule for the project, with details of the start and end date of the first reporting period and planned annual report submission date.

The first annual report will be submitted in July 2027. Monitoring periods will run from June 30 to July 1 each year, and carbon data collection will be between June 30 and September 30 to align with the dry season fieldwork window. Annual monitoring will focus on carbon reporting, while monitoring for other project indicators will follow the same seasonal schedule but occur every five years, in 2032, 2037, 2042, 2047, 2052, and 2057 (the final reporting year), aligned with the scheduled verification rounds.

## 4.10 Record Keeping

Describe how details of project agreements, land management plans, geographic locations of project areas, monitoring results, and Plan Vivo Certificates issued will be recorded and stored.

Provide a copy of the project database in Annex 14.

Project design data are stored on a secure SharePoint drive with restricted access. All members of the Intambwe Savannah project team from RWCA and the Lifescape Project have access (Project Agreement – Annex 12). The database includes technical, financial, and monitoring information.

Primary financial data are held within RWCA's systems, as the project fund is managed through a dedicated account under RWCA. These data are then shared with the project team and uploaded to SharePoint for use in financial modelling spreadsheets and related analyses.

Annex 14 provides an overview of the database architecture. As this is a dynamic system, its structure may be adjusted over time. At present, the database contains the following top-level folders:

00\_ Budget, workplan, agreements

01\_PIN (Plan Vivo)

02\_PDD (Plan Vivo)

03\_Project Overview

04\_PV Accelerator trainings

05\_Photos

06\_Fundraising and bids

07\_Post-registration

Post-Registration sub-folders

00\_Carbon Sales (PVC issuance)

01\_Annual Reports

02\_Grievances

03\_Project Agreements

04\_Verifications

05\_Monitoring Data

06\_Carbon Buyers

## 5 Governance and Administration

### 5.1 Governance Structure

Describe the project's governance structure and decision-making process with details of how input from project participants is managed and how project participant and other local stakeholder representatives are selected.

Recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit](#) Tool 4: Local Institution Mapping to determine roles of the *Participants* and *Project Coordinator*, and to assist in designing an appropriate project governance structure.

Overall responsibility for the successful implementation of Intambwe Savannah resides with RWCA (the project coordinator) and the Lifescape Project (project developer). The governance structure includes a bottom-up component – the Community Restoration Committee – which is detailed in Annex E of the Project Agreement (Annex 12 of this document). The governance has been designed to be transparent, inclusive, and attentive to the needs and viewpoints of project participants and local stakeholders.

In the formalisation and signing of the Project Agreement, the Community Restoration Committee (CRC) will be established. This is facilitated and supported by project partners, with a representative from both, but is built on the already familiar and strong foundation of the Gakoma Village Executive Committee.

Each village in Rwanda has the same structure regarding a village council, comprising of 5 members. The responsibilities of the 5 different positions held in this committee, and the individuals who currently (at the time of PDD preparation) hold these positions are as follows:

- (1) Village Head: Jean Marie Vianney Karenzi
- (2) Member in charge of security and entry/exit: Sam Kasumba
- (3) Member in charge of social and civil affairs: Donatha Maniragena
- (4) Member in charge of information and population education: Aloys Ngendahimana
- (5) Member in charge of development: TBC – currently they are in the process of re-electing.

The Community Restoration Committee (CRC) serves as the central governance body for the pilot project, made up of the three project participants and the Gakoma Village Executive Committee

(VEC). The VEC is well placed to anchor governance and decision-making around potential carbon finance and its use. Members already liaise with Buhabwa Cell on development priorities requiring funding, and they bring both the skills and willingness to provide this leadership on a voluntary basis. As a trusted node of local governance within Gakoma, the VEC offers the strongest foundation for a bottom-up decision-making process for the Intambwe Savannah Project.

The project coordinator (RWCA) and developer (the Lifescape Project) will provide ongoing guidance and support through their representative on the CRC. At one meeting on the 8 July 2025 (see Annexes 4A and 4B), RWCA and Lifescape met with the project participants and VEC. Although the PES agreement specifies at least one meeting per year, the VEC proposed meeting more frequently, reflecting strong engagement and buy-in, as well as a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

### *Applying the CRC to an expanded project:*

If the project expands into areas outside the governance sphere of Gakoma, the Community Restoration Committee (CRC) model will be used as a blueprint and adapted to the new village context. Within Gakoma, there is also potential to include additional land while remaining under the same governance structure. If the number of participants exceeds five, a bottom-up selection process will be used to decide which participants form the representative CRC (with a maximum of five members). It should also be noted that not every member of the village committee—which changes over time—needs to sit on the CRC. Voluntary involvement is a central principle.

## 5.2 Equal Opportunities

Describe the project's procedures and employment policies with details of how unfair discrimination is avoided, potential for elite capture of project benefits is minimised, and opportunities for local people are created.

The project is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all participants. As outlined in Section 2.3, no participant is discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, or social status during selection. Participation in the project is entirely voluntary, whether as individual smallholders, as Community Conservation Champions (CCC), or as members of a Community Restoration Committee (CRC). CCCs and members of the CRC are democratically

lected by village members. Together, the project agreements, and project design demonstrate the project’s strong commitment to inclusivity and fair representation.

Stakeholder participation has been embedded from the design phase of the project through community consultations and remains central throughout implementation. The project actively encourages women’s involvement (see section 2.4).

The CRC plays a central role in selecting appropriate development projects and ensuring equitable benefit distribution. Continuous community engagement, including surveys and risk assessments during implementation, demonstrates the project’s responsiveness to evolving community needs and reinforces its commitment to inclusive and participatory development.

### 5.3 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Complete Table 5.3 to identify all national and international policies, laws and regulations that affect the project, and demonstrate that the project will operate in full compliance with these.

In Annex 15, Include a letter of approval from the authorities with overall responsibility for land management and greenhouse gas emissions assessment within the project region, which states that the project does not violate any national or regional laws or regulations.

**Table 5.3: Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

<b>Policy, Law or Regulation</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Compliance Measures</b>
Add a row for each relevant policy, law or regulation that applies to the project	Describe the relevance of the policy, law or regulation	Describe any measures in place to ensure the project is carried out in compliance with relevant polices laws and regulations
National Land Use and Development Master Plan (NLUDMP 2020–2050)	It provides a long-term vision for optimizing land for urbanization, agriculture, infrastructure, natural resources, tourism.	The project aligns with district policies and the national <i>Land Use and Development Master Plan</i> . RWCA (and at times Lifescape Project) has met several times, both in person and online, with REMA's

		<p>carbon markets team to talk through the project. During these discussions, REMA provided carbon project templates to complete and initially flagged a possible land-use change requirement under the master plan. After RWCA clarified that Intambwe Savannah is focused on restoring natural ecosystems rather than forestry, the documents were updated accordingly, and REMA will now issue a formal letter of approval.</p>
<p>Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (2011, revised 2020)</p>	<p>Sets out Rwanda’s long-term vision to become a climate-resilient, low-carbon economy by 2050. It provides a strategic framework for integrating climate action into national development planning, promoting sustainable land management, renewable energy, green innovation, and ecosystem restoration as pathways for economic growth.</p>	<p>The project contributes directly to this strategy by restoring degraded savannah-forest landscapes, enhancing ecosystem resilience, and creating livelihood opportunities through nature-based carbon finance.</p>
<p>National Environment and Climate Change Policy (2019)</p>	<p>Provides the overarching policy framework for environmental protection,</p>	<p>The policy provides the enabling foundation for restoration-based carbon</p>

	<p>climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience building in Rwanda. It promotes sustainable natural resource management, low-carbon development, and mainstreaming of climate change across all sectors of the economy. The policy underpins national efforts to align environmental action with socio-economic transformation goals.</p>	<p>projects, helping the project team to align Intambwe Savannah’s objectives on climate mitigation, adaptation, and community resilience with Rwanda’s national climate priorities.</p>
<p>National Biodiversity Policy and Strategy</p>	<p>Guides the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity, in line with international commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It outlines priorities for habitat restoration, protection of endangered species, and integration of biodiversity considerations into national and local planning.</p>	<p>Intambwe Savannah directly supports the goals of this policy through the restoration and enhancement of biodiversity within landscapes that are critical for wildlife refuges as they are in close proximity to Akagera National Park.</p>
<p>Carbon Market Framework (2022, REMA/MINEMA/MINECOFIN)</p>	<p>Establishes Rwanda’s approach to participating in international carbon markets, including under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. It sets</p>	<p>The framework defines the regulatory basis for carbon credit generation that the pilot will adhere to (as a layer on top of Plan Vivo’s</p>

	<p>eligibility and procedural requirements for domestic projects generating carbon credits (additionality, monitoring, reporting, verification, and benefit-sharing) and provides the institutional foundation for transparent and equitable carbon trading in Rwanda.</p>	<p>requirements), ensuring that we alignment with national standards. This will be a key priority topic of discussion as the project team has ongoing engagement with the REMA team leading on carbon market regulation and as the framework is amended and refined. There is also an opportunity for two-way learning, where insights from Intambwe Savannah can help to inform the REMA teams developing and refining the framework.</p>
<p>Law N° 27/2021 of 10/06/2021 Governing Land</p>	<p>Determines how land is acquired, registered, transferred, managed and used. It includes provisions on state land protection, rights over natural resources, obligations for conservation and productive land use, land-use planning and masterplans (including the National Land Use Masterplan).</p> <p><i>Relevance to Intambwe Savannah:</i> Clear land tenure and land-use regulation are critical to the pilot - this law underpins the security and legitimacy of the restoration</p>	<p>RWCA already manages and restores land under this legal framework, so the team is familiar with the requirements and processes and the same approaches to complying to Law N° 27/2021 of 10/06/2021 Governing Land are taken for implementing Intambwe Savannah.</p>

	<p>area and supports the permanence (of carbon removals) of the project.</p>	
<p>Law N° 064/2021 of 14/10/2021 Governing Biological Diversity</p>	<p>Aims to conserve, manage, protect and promote biodiversity. It covers establishment of conservation areas, protected zones, wildlife habitats, management organs, human-wildlife co-existence, introduction of alien species, and sanctions.</p> <p><i>Relevance to Intambwe Savannah:</i> Restoration of savannah forest implies biodiversity co-benefits, and this law ensures that habitat and species work is aligned with national biodiversity policy. Also, biodiversity benefits are core to what Intambwe Savannah is including as part of its carbon certificate offering.</p>	<p>As the project co-ordinator RWCA is a wildlife conservation NGO, the team is very familiar with laws concerning biodiversity and its protection. Intambwe Savannah, like other projects RWCA is involved in, is closely aligned with the legal frameworks Rwanda has in place for promoting biodiversity, such as having meetings with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority.</p>

<p>Law N° 49/2018 of 13/08/2018 on the Use and Management of Water Resources in Rwanda</p>	<p>Includes regulation of water resources such as water use permits, quality control, pollution prevention, wastewater reuse, and zones that protect groundwater and ecosystems.</p> <p><i>Relevance to Intambwe Savannah:</i> The pilot project area is adjacent to a wetland (though doesn't directly include it), and as such, hydrology and water management will influence the savannah-forest restoration – and vice versa, as there will be flow on effects of savannah restoration, on wetland parameters like bird biodiversity, and water quality.</p>	<p>Similarly to laws governing the promotion of biodiversity, Intambwe Savannah is careful to align with and comply with the legal framework around water management – particularly wetland environments as the project area is adjacent to a long and significant wetland in Kayonza.</p>
<p>Law on the Environment (2018)</p>	<p>Establishes the measures for protecting, conserving and promoting the environment, including in the context of a changing climate. It covers conservation of soil, water,</p>	<p>Intambwe Savannah is placed within a set of conservation and wildlife-related projects coordinated by RWCA. The participant structure, based on Community Conservation Champions. These roles are all based on different aspects of</p>

	<p>biodiversity and atmosphere; obligations for state, decentralised entities and communities; and provides for inspection and criminal investigation in environmental matters. It also includes education on conservation, climate change and the development of climate-relevant information.</p> <p><i>Relevance to Intambwe Savannah:</i> This law gives the overall environmental framework for restoration and carbon projects, supports community engagement and helps anchor the project in national climate and conservation policy.</p>	<p>protecting, promoting and conserving the environment, with the carbon CCCs role based on the promotion of forest-based carbon promotion.</p>
<p>Law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 Regulating Labour in Rwanda</p>	<p>Regulates labour in Rwanda: sets the minimum age for employment, prohibits forced labour, defines employment contracts (fixed-term and indefinite), outlines working conditions, salary rules, occupational health &amp; safety,</p>	<p>The project's participation model is built around RWCA's established Carbon Community Conservation Champions, which are formal roles within RWCA's structure, so both participation and any temporary labour follow the organisation's existing employment processes and safeguards</p>

	<p>collective agreements and dispute settlement.</p> <p><i>Relevance to Intambwe Savannah:</i> For our restoration-based carbon project this law ensures that labour used in implementation (community workers, field staff, contractors) meets national standards for employment, health and safety, fair terms and conditions.</p>	

## 5.4 Financial Plan

Describe how the finance required to fund all project operating and management costs will be obtained.

In Annex 16, provide a detailed financial plan with full costing of all project activities listed in Table 3.5, benefit sharing commitments in Section 3.16 and monitoring and verification activities in Annex 13 for the first crediting period; and details of expected revenues from sale of Plan Vivo Certificates

and other sources. Detailed financial plans will be reviewed by Plan Vivo and the validator but will not be made publicly available.

In September 2024, the project partners together were awarded GBP 311,116 to implement the pilot phase of the Intambwe Savannah restoration project. A more detailed breakdown of this budget is provided in **Annex 16A**.

This initial funding has enabled the project to secure the land required for the proof of concept, establish nurseries and procure seedlings, cover necessary capital inputs, and support staff time from both RWCA and Lifescape. It has also covered associated implementation costs such as travel, stakeholder engagement, and Plan Vivo registration fees. The grant provides financial security for the first three years of the project (to Aug 2027). This has placed the project in a strong position by reducing immediate reliance on advance carbon sales to cover start-up costs. Instead, the project can devote sufficient time to evaluating potential buyers and exploring different types of long-term purchase agreements, ensuring that future carbon revenues are contracted on favourable terms for the project. The process of engaging with buyers and funders as part of a blended finance model is underway and will continue in parallel with the planning and implementation of project activities from the third quarter of 2025 onwards.

**Annex 16B** includes a text description of the pilot funding, financial analysis post-implementation of the project, and the financial management plans in fuller detail.

**Annex 16C** includes the multi-scenario financial planning document for the project, mostly focused on post-pilot finances.

## 5.5 Financial Management

Describe the financial procedures in place for managing income and expenditure of finance generated from the sale of Plan Vivo Certificates. Include details of planned audits of project finances by an independent financial auditor certified by a nationally recognised regulatory body.

Recommended to use [Participatory Toolkit](#) Tool 16: Public Audit annually, preferably before the annual project reports are compiled, to improve transparency of project's financial management.

Annex 16B outlines the financial procedures of finance generated from the sale of PVCs. A summary of this is included below.

### **Financial procedures for PVC income and expenditure**

RWCA will create a ring-fenced account for the Intambwe Savannah project within its financial framework. Project income and expenditure are tracked separately from other RWCA activities while using RWCA's established oversight systems. Transactions follow RWCA's internal financial controls, including dual signatories, segregation of duties, and quarterly reconciliations. All disbursements to participants run through RWCA's existing community payment channels, ensuring transparent allocation of carbon finance in line with the benefit-sharing commitments. This approach avoids building a separate financial system and uses RWCA's proven structures for reliable, efficient financial management.

### **Accountability and auditing**

As a registered charity in Rwanda, RWCA produces annual audited organisational accounts in line with statutory requirements. These audits cover all income and expenditure, including project-specific funds. For Intambwe Savannah, RWCA will use a dedicated fund code in its chart of accounts so all Plan Vivo Certificate revenues and project costs are ring-fenced and fully traceable. At each verification cycle (every five years, in line with Plan Vivo requirements), RWCA will compile project-level financial statements for independent review alongside carbon verification, aligning financial and carbon reporting.

Audit reporting will verify that Plan Vivo revenues are received, recorded, and allocated through RWCA's systems; review expenditure against the approved financial plan, noting any justified variances; and provide confidence to Plan Vivo, the validator, and project stakeholders that funds are managed appropriately.

### **Risk management and buffer**

RWCA will hold a reserve within the project fund to manage revenue fluctuations and unforeseen costs. Strong financial monitoring, supported by independent and community reviews where relevant, keeps the risk of mismanagement low and allows issues to be addressed quickly.

## **Annexes**

### **Annex 1 – Project Boundaries**

Provide geospatial data files for project region and project area boundaries.

### **Annex 2 –Registration Certificate and PartnerAgreements**

Provide a copy of the project coordinator's registration certificate and signed agreements with all partner organisations identified in Section 2.2

### **Annex 3 – Initial Project Areas**

Include a table or spreadsheet that includes (as a minimum) the following information for each project area: i) Name of project participant; ii) Location; iii) Project Intervention(s); iv) Extent of project area; v) Project agreement reference; vi) Start date; vii) Whether or not they meet Project Requirement 2.3.1 and/or 2.3.2.

### **Annex 4 –Participatory Design**

Provide evidence of stakeholder involvement in the participatory design process, such as attendance lists, photographs, and videos.

### **Annex 5 – Initial FPIC**

Provide evidence of key decisions in the initial FPIC process (e.g. signed meeting minutes and attendance lists), and copies of information provided prior to key decisions being made.

### **Annex 6 – Carbon Calculations Spreadsheet**

Provide details of the calculations for the Carbon Baseline summary and other tables summarising carbon benefits.

### **Annex 7 – Technical Specifications**

Use the template below to provide a separate technical specification for each project intervention.

<b>Project Intervention:</b>	Enter the title of the project intervention.
<b>Version:</b>	Enter a version number for the technical specification.
<b>Date Approved:</b>	Enter the date this version was approved for use by Plan Vivo.
<b>Methodology:</b>	State the methodology applied to estimate carbon benefits.
<b>Modules/Tools:</b>	List any approved modules or tools applied.
<b>Certificate Type(s):</b>	List the types of PVC the technical specification can be used to generate (i.e. fPVC, rPVC, or vPVC).

## Applicability conditions

Specify the baseline scenario(s), geographical area(s) and any other conditions under which the technical specification can be applied, and any exclusion criteria.

## Additionality

Provide full details and supporting evidence for the additionality assessment completed following an approved methodology.

## Project activities

Provide a detailed description of all activities and input needed to implement the project intervention, including species selection, establishment, and long-term management.

## Carbon benefits

### Crediting Period

State the crediting period over which carbon benefits are estimated.

### Carbon Pools and Emission Sources

List the carbon pools and emission sources included in the estimation of carbon benefits and provide justification for any excluded carbon pools or emission sources.

### Baseline Emissions/Removals

Provide full details of the calculation of baseline emissions/removals for each baseline scenario the technical specification is applicable to, following an approved methodology. Include details of all assumptions and data sources and demonstrate that these meet the requirements of the approved methodology. Include a spreadsheet with all calculations.

### Expected Project Emissions/Removals

Provide full details of the calculation of expected project emissions/removals, following an approved methodology. Include details of all assumptions and data sources and demonstrate that these meet the requirements of the approved methodology. Include a spreadsheet with all calculations.

## **Potential Leakage**

Provide full details of potential leakage estimation, following an approved methodology. Include details of all assumptions and data sources and demonstrate that these meet the requirements of the approved methodology. Include a spreadsheet with all calculations.

## **Uncertainty**

Provide full details of uncertainty assessment, following an approved methodology. Include details of all assumptions and data sources and demonstrate that these meet the requirements of the approved methodology. Include a spreadsheet with all calculations.

## **Expected Carbon Benefits**

Provide full details of calculation of expected carbon benefits, following an approved methodology. Include details of all assumptions and data sources and demonstrate that these meet the requirements of the approved methodology. Include a spreadsheet with all calculations.

## **Monitoring**

For each indicator that will be used to monitor carbon benefits: i) describe how they will be assessed, with details of all measurements and calculations; and ii) demonstrate that the data sources and measurement approaches meet the requirements of the approved methodology.





## **Annex 10 – Environmental and Social Assessment Report**

A typical ESA report would cover many of the items in the Table of Contents below. Note that where this information is presented elsewhere in the PDD, then text can be duplicated, or sections of the PDD can be referred to, to reduce time and effort on duplicating report writing.

### Introduction

- Purpose and objectives of the assessment
- Scope of the assessment
  - Aims and objectives of the assessment
  - E&S risks and impacts assessed
  - Geography of the assessment
  - Reference framework
    - National legislation
    - International Standards
    - PV E&S requirements

### Project background

- Location
- Objectives and activities
- Timeframe and budget
- Partners

### Social and environmental context

- Characterisation of the socioeconomic context
- Environmental context

### Assessment approach and methodology

- Approach
  - Risk framework and/or other assessment criteria
- Methodology
  - Sampling strategy
  - Methods

- Assessment team
  - Team members, skills and experience
  - Challenges and limitations ☒ Assessment findings
- Summary of key findings
- Description of results by E&S risk and impact topic
  - Risk significance
  - Key gaps
  - Recommendations

## Roadmap to developing the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

- Workplan with the activities to finalise the ESMP

## To include in Annex 10 'E&S Assessment Report' (for example)

- *Plan Vivo E&S screening results summary*
- *Summary of national legislation and international standards (reference framework)*
- *Results of the stakeholder analysis*
- *List of stakeholder consultations conducted, photos of fieldwork activities. o Draft ESMP (and any other relevant safeguard plans).*

## **Annex 11 – Land Management Plans**

## **Annex 12 – Project Agreements**

## **Annex 13 – Monitoring Plan**

## **Annex 14 – Project Database**

## **Annex 15 – Letter of Approval**

## **Annex 16 – Financial Plan**