# Regreening Africa

# OUTCOME STORY FOR RWANDA

## Establishment of an Agroforestry Task Force to implement the national agroforestry strategy

## Summary of the change

Rwanda, as the first African country in 2011 to declare an ambitious land restoration target of 2 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 under the Bonn Challenge and the African Forest landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), has recognised agroforestry as a key approach to achieve this goal. However, the development of agroforestry has faced challenges due to factors such as insufficient investment, coordination issues, and ineffective dissemination approaches (Gassner and Dobie, 2022). To address these challenges and support agroforestry development, the government adopted a national agroforestry strategy and action plan (2018-2027). To operationalise this plan, the establishment of an Agroforestry Task Force was necessary. World Agroforestry (ICRAF), through the Regreening Africa Programme and Trees on Farms for Biodiversity project, took the lead in supporting the establishment of the task force in collaboration with government partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society, and community-based organisations. The task force includes multiple organisations and sectors to ensure effective coordination and harmonisation of agroforestry interventions and investments. This policy coordination outcome is significant as it institutionalised agroforestry in public policy and national land restoration interventions, potentially attracting more investment and benefiting farmers and communities.

## Context

In Rwanda, agroforestry is recognised as a nature-inspired solution to address socio-ecological, economic, and climate change-related challenges. The country has committed to restoring two million hectares, representing 76% of its total land area, by 2030. Agroforestry, which involves integrating trees on farms, is considered a key approach to achieving this restoration target. To support agroforestry development, Rwanda has adopted an Agroforestry Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2027) led by the Ministry of Environment.

The Rwanda Agroforestry Strategy aims to promote leadership, synergies, and coordinated action in agroforestry implementation. It focuses on acquiring knowledge, building capacity, developing tools and regulations, and facilitating the adoption and development of agroforestry at scale. The strategy identifies six interconnected thematic areas for priority actions: creating policy and institutional frameworks, advancing innovative research and knowledge, strengthening communication and extension services, promoting priority agroforestry practices, marketing agroforestry products and developing value chains, and empowering women and youth in agroforestry development.

Despite the strategy, coordination challenges persist as agroforestry spans across sectors and lacks a single ministry's direct mandate. Effective institutional coordination is necessary, involving representatives from various government ministries, technical and research organisations, NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, private sector actors, and bilateral investors. To address these challenges, the Agroforestry Strategy calls for the establishment of an Agroforestry Task Force operating at multiple levels. The task force's role is to guide and support the strategy's implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management. The idea of supporting the establishment of the task force emerged within the Regreening Africa programme's implementation in Rwanda, in collaboration with World Vision Rwanda, Trees on Farms for Biodiversity projects, and other partners.

## Description of the outcome process

The national Agroforestry Task Force was established in March 2022 under the leadership of the Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), following high-level policy influencing with support from ICRAF through the Trees on Farms for Biodiversity project and Regreening Africa programme. The task force's purpose is to guide the implementation of the Agroforestry Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring effective coordination, harmonisation, and insight among various implementing actors, interventions, and investments. The increased agroforestry interventions are expected to provide ecosystem services to the Rwandan population. Additionally, the task force aligns with national strategies such as the National Strategy Transformation (NST1), Rwanda Vision 2050, AFR100/Bonn Challenge, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and 2063 African targets, and the Agroforestry Strategy.

The task force structure includes a management committee chaired by RFA, co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, the European Union Delegation, and the Water Resources Board, with ICRAF serving as the secretariat. The membership comprises representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda Environmental Management Authority, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Enable - Belgian Development Authority, ARCOS Network, World Vision Rwanda, FONERWA - Environment and Climate Change Fund for Rwanda, and Urugaga Imbaraga. The committee's responsibilities include setting the strategic direction, managing the task force's activities, providing guidance for implementation, prioritising action plans, harmonising interventions, advocating for agroforestry as a national priority, aligning with government priorities, and producing and circulating meeting minutes.

The Technical Committee, chaired by RAB and co-chaired by the University of Rwanda and World Resources Institute, operates under the secretariat of ICRAF. Its membership includes ministries, public institutions, international organisations, national and international NGOs, farmer federation organisations, and civil society. The Technical Committee's role is to provide technical input and advice to the Management Committee, implement approved action plans, conduct field visits, develop agroforestry techniques and guidelines, harmonise monitoring tools, consolidate knowledge and information, facilitate synergies in agroforestry interventions, advocate for issues, identify funding opportunities, produce extension materials, review strategic documents, and report to the Management Committee for approval.

## Significance of the outcome

The establishment of the Rwanda Agroforestry Task Force signifies improved coordination and synergies among stakeholders involved in agroforestry development. It reflects the government's increased interest in agroforestry and its integration into overall policies and land restoration practices, helping Rwanda achieve its land restoration, biodiversity, and climate commitments. The task force's institutionalisation highlights the roles played by various parties and ensures that agroforestry is nested within national and continental commitments. This supports Rwanda's strategies, such as the 2050 Vision and Africa Agenda 2063, while contributing to climate change efforts, NDCs, Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets, agrobiodiversity, SDGs, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The outcome also demonstrates the government's ownership of regreening practices and their integration into performance contracts between mayors and the president. These changes contribute to increased tree cover, tree diversity in agro-sylvo-pastoral landscapes, improved soil fertility, and enhanced nutrition and food security for farming communities.

## Contribution of Regreening Africa

The Regreening Africa programme has made significant contributions to the outcome, including launching the task force establishment process, leading high-level policy influencing with national and international stakeholders to institutionalise agroforestry within government proceedings, and raising awareness and strengthening ties with key organisations and parties through annual Joint Reflective and Learning Missions (JRLMs) and policy engagement work using the Stakeholder Approach to Risk-Informed and Evidence-Based Decision Making (SHARED) methodology. Additionally, the programme has conducted tree planting campaigns involving policy makers, local government, the Forestry Authority, the EU Delegation to Rwanda, and community members, such as in the Bugesera District, as part of ongoing influencing activities. Moreover, the programme has provided vital financial and technical support for the initial meetings during the task force development, further contributing to its successful establishment. Overall, the Regreening Africa programme's efforts have played a crucial role in initiating the task force, influencing policies, promoting awareness, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

# Contribution of Regreening Africa to the outcome

The Tree on Farms for Biodiversity (TonF) Project supported the Agroforestry Task Force in collaboration with Regreening Africa has brought together task force members for the full launch of activities, resulting in encouraging outcomes with active participation from various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Rwanda Forestry Authority (RFA), and Water Resources Board (RWB). This has created a unique opportunity for mainstreaming TonF across ministries and other relevant authorities.

**Specific support from TonF includes:**

- Providing co-funding for the inaugural task force meeting in December 2021, two follow-up meetings in 2022, and one more in 2023.

- Providing technical support/inputs on operationalising the Agroforestry Task Force in terms of structure, composition, mandate, and possible funding sources.

- Initiating the new programme co-owned by MINAGRI and MoE, tentatively called the **"Trees on Farm Intensification Program"**.

- Collaborating with the Ministry of Environment in the launch of the book **"Agroforestry: A Primer – Design and management principles for people and the environment",** a guide to help practitioners in agroforestry assist farmers in implementing agroforestry principles based on their local conditions.

- Piloting a performance-based incentive scheme in collaboration with RAB under their Twigire Muhinzi extension system to assess the effectiveness of various cash and in-kind incentives in enhancing tree survival and growth for planted trees and those under Farmer Managed Natural Resources (FMNR).

- Ensuring the sustainability of the task force by engaging high-profile decision-makers to advocate for the adoption of the task force, the tree intensification programme, and other strategies.

- Providing financial support for engagement activities related to the task force.

# Next steps

Following the success of Regreening Africa in setting up the Rwanda Agroforestry Task Force, the next steps to ensure the delivery of expected results involve:

1. Institutionalising the task force within the government's structures;

2. Operationalising the task force, including fundraising efforts; and

3. Ensuring the task force's sustainability. CIFOR-ICRAF has taken steps to fully operationalise the task force through its German Government International Climate Initiative (IKI)-funded Trees on Farms for Biodiversity (TonF) project.

## References

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[3] Gassner A and Dobie P. eds. 2022. Agroforestry: A primer. Design and management principles for people and the environment. Bogor, Indonesia: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Nairobi: World Agroforestry (ICRAF). https://doi.org/10.5716/cifor-icraf/BK.25114

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