



Strategic Plan
— 2026 - 2031 —



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Letter from the Executive Director

REDO recognizes that the social and economic problems of the human population have a direct bearing on both wildlife habitats and the social-economic circumstances of the local people. We believe that these issues can be addressed by planning with communities, working together, assessing progress jointly, and ultimately transferring the project's ownership to the community.

Since 1999, REDO has dedicated itself to protecting the environment while fostering social and economic resilience in rural areas in Rwanda. Through innovative programs such as modern bee keeping integrated into the environment, tree planting, energy conservation, sustainable agriculture, and income-generating activities we are working to restore degraded ecosystems, improve livelihoods and build community resilience to climate change. We are rooted in our belief in community-led conservation and sustainable development for resilient people and ecosystems, with the aim of creating a society where environmental conservation and social empowerment go hand in hand.

We want the world to know that REDO is committed to building a future where rural communities sustainably manage their natural resources, uphold their rights, and achieve socio-economic progress. Our work demonstrates that with collective effort, participatory approaches, and a deep respect for nature, lasting positive change is possible.

Join us in our journey to nurture the environment, empower communities, and create a more equitable and sustainable world.

Damascene Gasumba
Executive Director, REDO





About REDO

Rural Environment and Development Organization (REDO) was founded in 1999 to address environmental degradation while empowering rural communities, especially the historically marginalized. Founded at a time of growing pressure on Rwanda's protected areas and natural resources, REDO emerged as a bridge between conservation and community development.

REDO began its work in areas bordering Rwanda's most vulnerable protected ecosystems, the Volcanoes, Nyungwe, Akagera, and Gishwati-Mukura National Parks, where rising population pressure had led to forest encroachment for firewood, farming and pasture. REDO's earliest programs focused on the social integration of historically marginalized people, many of whom were landless and excluded from mainstream economic activities.

With strong community ties and its first major partnership with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, REDO supported over 1,600 people to secure land, start small livestock ventures, and reduce dependency on forest resources. From these foundations, REDO's mission was clear: that rural community development and environmental conservation can go hand-in-hand.

Over the years, REDO expanded its approach to respond holistically to the interconnected challenges of poverty, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable land use. REDO's approach includes promoting interventions such as beekeeping, pottery and handicraft development, tree planting, improved cookstove distribution, soil conservation, water harvesting, and sustainable agriculture as key strategies to improve both livelihoods and environmental health.

By partnering with local cooperatives, REDO helped communities generate income while reducing reliance on forests and wetlands. In regions including Kirehe, Rusizi, Bugesera, and Ruhango, tens of thousands of energy-efficient cookstoves were distributed, cutting emissions and reducing firewood use. In other areas, solar-powered irrigation and agroforestry transformed degraded land into productive, climate-resilient farms.

REDO's success lies in its deeply rooted livelihoods-based approach, working with communities to both protect nature and sustainably benefit from it. Whether through reforestation efforts around degraded forest patches or helping cooperatives develop ecotourism and green enterprises, REDO has always believed that people are not threats to conservation, but its essential stewards.

REDO also places strong emphasis on environmental education and awareness, believing that long-term conservation can only succeed when people understand its value and are equipped with alternatives.

Notably, REDO is lobbying for one of its restored forests, Ibanda Makera, to be gazetted as a new protected area, showcasing that locally led restoration can lead to national-level impact.



A Framework for Change - TEAMS

REDO's strategy is encapsulated in the acronym TEAMS, reflecting its multi-dimensional, people-centered conservation approach to rural development:

T

Tree planting: Restoring degraded landscapes through tree planting and agroforestry to enhance biodiversity and climate resilience.

E

Environmental awareness and energy conservation: Promoting energy-saving technologies and educating communities about the importance of conservation.

A

Agriculture: Supporting climate-smart, sustainable agriculture to secure food systems while protecting ecosystems.

M

Micro-Projects: Supporting small-scale enterprises (beekeeping, crafts, livestock) that offer alternative livelihoods and reduce pressure on natural resources.

S

Social Integration: Ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable and historically marginalized groups in conservation and development programs.



Where We Work

REDO operates across nine districts in Rwanda, focusing on regions facing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and pressure on natural resources. Our work is tailored to community livelihoods, ecological needs and conservation potential of each landscape.



Eastern Province

Nyagatare, Ngoma, Kirehe, Rwamagana, Bugesera

This semi-arid region is characterized by low forest cover, shrinking water resources, and declining biodiversity. High population pressure has intensified reliance on natural resources, accelerating land degradation. REDO intervenes to restore degraded land and forests, protect unprotected remnant forests, and promote sustainable livelihoods that reduce environmental strain. The region also holds untapped community ecotourism potential.

Western Province

Karongi and Rusizi

Home to critical ecosystems including the Ndoha Forest, Cyamudongo Forest (part of Nyungwe NP), and the Lake Kivu belt, this area faces ongoing degradation from human activity. REDO focuses on forest and shoreline restoration, biodiversity conservation, and community-based initiatives involving reformed poachers. We support alternative livelihoods such as beekeeping and ecotourism to reduce environmental pressure.

Northern Province

Musanze

REDO works in areas of Musanze District that are home to historically marginalized and displaced communities living along the edges of the ecologically sensitive Virunga landscape. These communities face limited access to resources and economic opportunities, placing added pressure on nearby natural ecosystems. REDO supports their inclusion and resilience through sustainable livelihoods such as beekeeping, environmental education, and good conservation practices, reducing dependence on fragile forest resources while promoting environmental stewardship.

Southern Province

Ruhango

This is a severely degraded area within the Amayaga region, marked by deforestation, soil erosion, and poor soils. REDO promotes land restoration, green culture, and youth-led tree planting and nursery initiatives to combat environmental degradation and build resilience.

Situation Analysis

Achievements and organizational strengths

REDO's holistic approach is a key strength in its conservation efforts. This ensures that environmental restoration is linked to community empowerment and sustainable livelihoods.

By combining reforestation with education, REDO fosters long-term environmental stewardship. The promotion of energy-saving stoves reduces deforestation and indoor air pollution, while sustainable agricultural practices improve food security and soil health. Additionally, supporting micro-enterprises helps communities develop alternative income sources, reducing dependence on unsustainable resource use.

This approach strengthens conservation impact while improving community resilience and economic stability.





Promoting clean energy and reducing deforestation

One of REDO's most significant accomplishments is the distribution of 60,000 improved cookstoves across Kirehe, Ngoma, Rwamagana, Nyagatare, Karongi, and Rusizi districts. This initiative has drastically reduced household firewood use, easing pressure on forests and significantly lowering carbon emissions. Additionally, 10,000 CANARUMWE fuel-efficient stoves - a type of improved cooking stove - were distributed around Nyungwe and Cyamudongo forests in Rusizi District. By promoting clean energy solutions, REDO has helped communities transition from traditional cooking methods, improving indoor air quality and reducing deforestation.

Forest restoration and landscape rehabilitation

To combat land degradation and restore biodiversity, REDO has planted over 110,000 agroforestry trees in Ibanda-Makera Natural Forest in Kirehe District, rehabilitated 50 hectares with indigenous tree species, and planted another 100,000 agroforestry trees in Mashyoza Natural Forest in Rurenge and Kazo sectors of Kirehe District. Additionally, 25 hectares of bamboo were planted on waterways around Volcanoes National Park in Burera District, helping with soil conservation and flood prevention. Further environmental restoration efforts include 1 km² of ravine rehabilitation in Mahama Sector, Kirehe District. REDO has also implemented integrated agroforestry on 35 hectares in Musanze, Burera, and Nyamagabe Districts, ensuring that sustainable land-use practices continue to thrive in these communities.





Promoting climate-smart agriculture and food security

REDO has played a key role in promoting climate-smart agriculture, with 1,627 historically marginalized people trained in sustainable farming techniques across Nyamagabe, Musanze, and Burera Districts. This has led to increased agricultural production and reduced reliance on natural resources for their livelihoods. Additionally, climate-smart agriculture has been developed on 8 hectares in Ruhango's Ntongwe sector, enabling farmers to adapt to climate variability while increasing productivity. Farmers in Bugesera and Rusizi have also benefited from solar-powered irrigation systems, ensuring efficient water use in regions prone to drought. REDO has further supported cooperatives in Bugesera with irrigation systems, and helped cooperatives in Rusizi access loans to boost agricultural productivity.



Supporting alternative livelihoods

Livelihood improvement has been a core focus of REDO's work.

- Twenty-five beekeeping cooperatives, comprising 1,508 members in Burera, Musanze, Nyabihu, Nyamagabe, Kirehe, and Rusizi, were engaged and supported in the honey value chain. Members received modern beekeeping equipment, practical training on improved honey production techniques, and access to markets. Additionally, two new beekeeping cooperatives were established and supported in Rusizi District, around Cyamudongo Forest, reinforcing REDO's commitment to sustainable livelihoods.
- Three community-based tourism cooperatives were established and supported with start-up capital in Rutsiro District, enabling communities to tap into eco-tourism opportunities.
- A total of 234 goats were distributed to 132 historically marginalized families in Nyamagabe, providing them with a sustainable source of income through livestock rearing. Additionally, 24 goats were distributed to farmers practicing climate-smart agriculture in Ruhango.
- Fifty-one youth in Nyamagabe were trained in bamboo handicrafts, equipping them with skills to generate income sustainably.





Social development and welfare of communities

REDO has also provided health insurance for 20 vulnerable families in Kirehe District, ensuring access to essential healthcare services. Without access to affordable healthcare, rural households may resort to environmentally harmful activities such as illegal tree cutting, poaching, or overharvesting natural resources to cover medical costs. Health insurance reduces this financial pressure. REDO has also supported various training programs. A total of 428 historically marginalized people completed adult literacy training, gaining knowledge in governance, decision-making, and local institutions, empowering them to participate in community development. Through REDO's advocacy efforts, 32 hectares of land that had been illegally sold was successfully reclaimed and returned to the historically marginalized communities.

Community awareness and environmental education

Environmental awareness and education have played a crucial role in REDO's initiatives. At EP Ibanda in Kirehe District, students were trained in environmental conservation, fostering a new generation committed to sustainability. REDO has worked closely with local leaders at village, sector and district levels to align its projects with government strategies, ensuring broader community participation and support.



The impact of REDO's initiatives has been transformative. Communities are now better equipped to adapt to climate change, generate sustainable income, and actively participate in environmental conservation. Farmers have improved yields through climate-resilient agriculture, while beekeeping, bamboo crafts, and agroforestry have provided alternative income streams. With thousands of hectares rehabilitated, biodiversity restored, and clean energy solutions promoted, REDO continues to create lasting change, ensuring that both people and nature thrive together.

Moving forward, REDO aims to expand its long-term projects, enhance monitoring efforts, scale up tree planting initiatives, and introduce solar-powered irrigation systems to more drought-prone areas, reinforcing its commitment to a greener and more sustainable future.

Key Figures



232,000 indigenous trees planted



700 ha of Ibanda-Makera forest restored with indigenous trees



1,627 historically marginalized people trained in sustainable farming

25 commercially beekeeper's cooperatives gathering 1508 members operating

115,000 improved cooking stoves distributed

Challenges and weaknesses

Heavy reliance on donors and short-term funding

REDO's heavy dependence on short-term project funding limits its ability to plan and invest in long-term strategies. For example, the lack of multi-year funding has constrained its ability to retain staff and scale successful programs.

Low organizational visibility and external communication

REDO's external communications are underdeveloped, with an inactive website and minimal social media presence. This hinders its ability to showcase achievements, attract new donors, and build its brand.

Outdated tools and systems for effective operations

Key tools, such as GIS mapping software, are outdated, reducing operational efficiency and the ability to deliver data-driven interventions. For example, the lack of updated tools limits REDO's capacity to monitor land-use changes effectively.

Critical staffing gaps

Critical roles in Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL), communications, and Human Resources remain unfilled, placing additional burdens on existing staff and limiting operational capacity. This gap is particularly evident in MEL, where the absence of robust systems impacts reporting.

Opportunities

Rwanda presents a significant opportunity for large-scale restoration and conservation due to widespread land degradation, biodiversity loss, and national commitments to ecosystem restoration. With increasing government and community support and growing global interest in climate resilience and sustainable land management, REDO is well-positioned to scale its impact across the country, restoring degraded landscapes, protecting remaining natural habitats, and strengthening community-led conservation initiatives.

Increased Government support in conservation and restoration

The Rwandan government's policies and funding mechanisms, such as the Green Fund, align with REDO's goals, providing an enabling environment and resources for project implementation. This creates an opportunity for REDO to scale its initiatives with government backing.

Growing donor interest in the Albertine Rift, Lake Kivu and Congo Basin

There is an increase in international funding for environmental conservation in the Lake Kivu and Congo Basin region where REDO works. REDO can leverage its reputation and strong networks to attract more donors and secure multi-year grants.

Strengthening networking and knowledge sharing

Rwanda has become an international hub for conservation and restoration, and the convergence of practitioners. Participation in these events provides a platform for REDO to learn, share experiences, and forge new partnerships. For instance, attending global conservation forums could position REDO as a thought leader in environmental sustainability, and foster new relationships. Coupled with improved communication and impact stories, networking will increase REDO's visibility.

Threats

Natural disasters arising from the effects of Climate Change

Environmental factors, such as floods and landslides on one end, droughts on the other end, disrupt project activities and impact community livelihoods, particularly for restoration. For example, flooding in agricultural zones can negate the benefits of REDO's interventions in sustainable farming as well as affect the survival of trees in restoration.

Competition for limited funding resources

Rwanda is a small country with a large number of NGOs. NGOs with greater visibility and resources often outcompete REDO for donor funding. This challenge is exacerbated by limited external communication on REDO's achievements.

Contradicting or misaligned policies across sectors

Such as agriculture, infrastructure development, and conservation, pose a significant threat to environmental NGOs in Rwanda. These inconsistencies can undermine restoration and conservation efforts, create confusion at the community level, and lead to decisions that prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term ecological sustainability. Such policy gaps limit the effectiveness of NGOs like REDO in advancing integrated and sustainable environmental solutions.



REDO Strategy Framework

Vision

A sustainable future where people and nature live in harmony.

Mission

To advance community-led conservation and sustainable development for resilient people / communities and ecosystems.

Values

Leave no one behind: We believe sustainable development and conservation are only possible through collaboration. Through an inclusive approach, REDO ensures all voices are valued and that youth groups, vulnerable people and women are not left behind.

We do what is right - Integrity, respect, accountability: Our work is grounded in trust. We act in honesty and transparency, respecting nature, people and commitments, holding ourselves accountable to the communities we serve and the environment we protect.

Adaptability: REDO evolves with the changing context, learning from nature and from communities to respond effectively to emerging conservation challenges with resilience and creativity.

Commitment to future generations: We champion the wellbeing of people and the environment, safeguarding natural resources and biodiversity today for future generations.

Excellence driven by purpose: REDO is committed to achieving lasting impact through evidence-based approaches, continuous learning and a culture of excellence. We lead by example.

Value proposition

REDO has adopted a holistic model of conservation that integrates environmental conservation with economic development, ensuring that people and nature not only coexist, but thrive together.

We recognize that the transformation of rural livelihoods must go hand in hand with sustainable environmental stewardship. Our work is deeply rooted in community-driven approaches. We do not impose solutions but co-create them with the people most connected to the land. By placing communities at the heart of our mission, especially the vulnerable and marginalized communities in underserved rural areas, we work to improve livelihoods while restoring ecosystems.

We focus on long-term sustainability and measurable impact, understanding that true conservation is generational work. Every intervention is designed with the future in mind, thus producing ripple effects that improve ecosystems, strengthen resilience, engage marginalized people in the community, and build sustainable development models that last.

Problem statement

As rural areas grow and develop in Rwanda, they face a number of environmental and socio-economic challenges. Environmental degradation, driven by widespread deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, poor land-use planning, and unregulated mining, continues to threaten ecosystems, biodiversity, and the long-term well-being of communities.

In addition, **limited livelihood opportunities** force vulnerable populations to embark on environmentally unsustainable practices. In many areas, there is a **lack of awareness, knowledge, and positive attitudes** toward environmental conservation as well as youth unemployment and land scarcity, resulting in **low participation** in sustainable practices and **a mindset resistant to change**.

Weak implementation and enforcement of environmental policies, combined with insufficient community engagement, hinder meaningful sustainable development. Without adequate support and livelihood or economic alternatives, communities remain trapped in cycles of poverty and ecosystem degradation.

REDO recognizes that these interlinked issues require a **holistic, community-driven response** that addresses both the environmental challenges and the socio-economic realities faced by rural populations.

Theory of Change

At REDO, we believe that restoring degraded landscapes, promoting sustainable land use, empowering rural livelihoods, and raising community awareness must go together to achieve sustainable environmental and social transformation.

Our approach is built on the understanding that environmental degradation and poverty are deeply interconnected, and that sustainable development requires integrated, community-driven solutions.

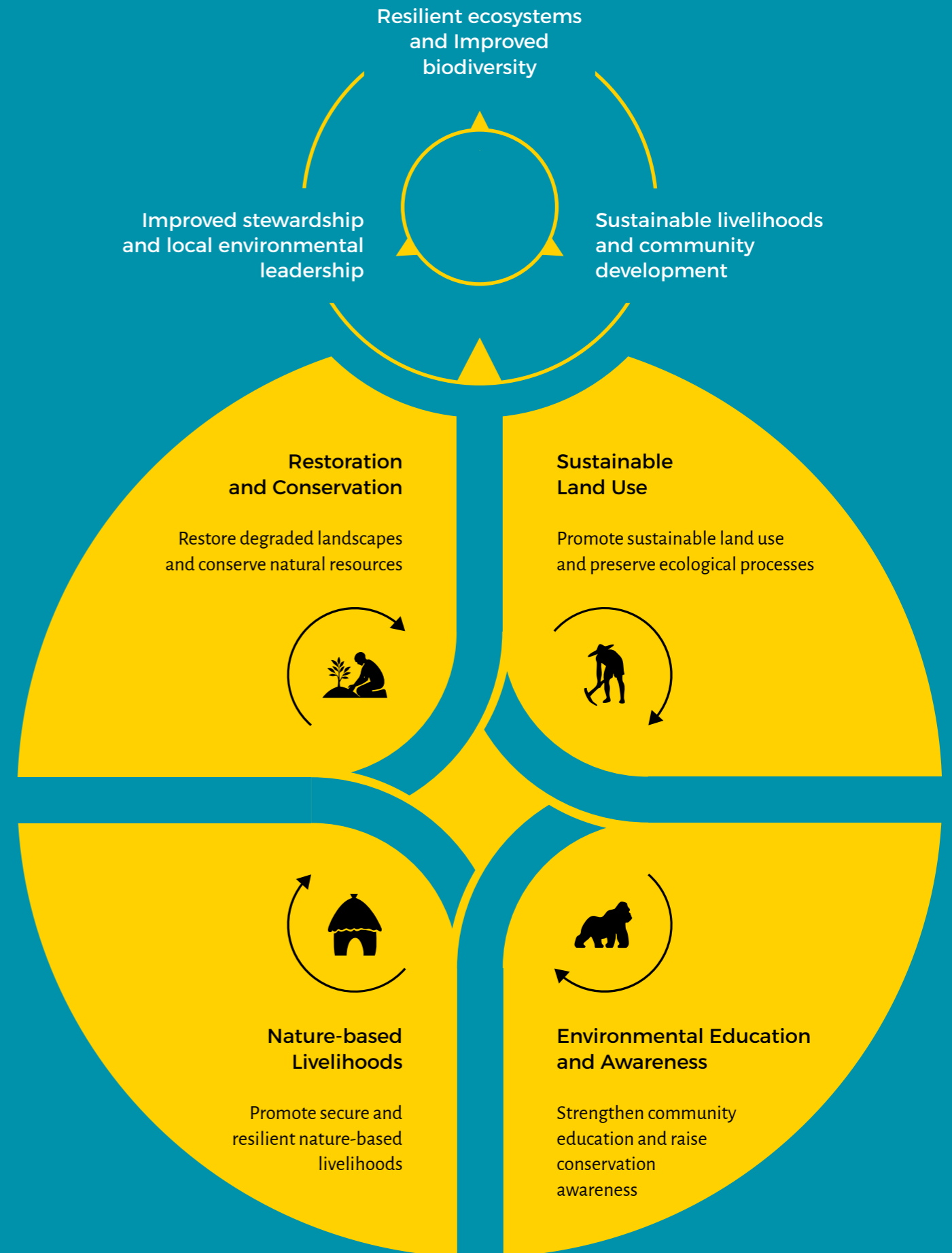
We begin with the assumption that if communities are empowered with the knowledge, tools, partnerships and opportunities to care for their natural resources and build sustainable livelihoods, they will become effective stewards of the environment and active drivers of development.

If communities are equipped to restore degraded ecosystems and protect water and land resources, if farmers adopt sustainable agricultural and land management practices to prevent future degradation, if households are supported to pursue nature-based livelihood opportunities that are environmentally sound and economically viable, and if communities, especially youth and women, are educated, engaged, and mobilized to take ownership of conservation efforts and collaborate with partners ...

Then ...

... communities will reduce their reliance on environmentally destructive practices, degraded landscapes and ecosystems will begin to regenerate, improving biodiversity, water availability and land productivity, leading to healthier ecosystems and improved food and income security. Local knowledge and capacity for conservation and natural resource management will be strengthened, creating a culture of sustainability, and there will be strong, lasting community ownership of conservation and development initiatives, supported by partnerships, policies, and institutions.

Therefore, REDO's integrated approach will result in thriving, resilient rural communities living in harmony with nature, where environmental restoration, sustainable livelihoods, and community leadership drive lasting impact for current and future generations.



Goals and Objectives



Goal 1: Restore degraded landscapes and conserve natural resources

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

The ecological value and potential of landscapes, forests, wetlands, and other community natural resources in REDO's target areas are fully restored. Biodiversity is protected, forest cover and vegetation have regenerated, and soil and water systems are resilient. Communities actively participate in conservation, benefiting directly from the responsible use of natural resources. As a result, ecosystems thrive and livelihoods improve across restored and well-managed landscapes.

Objective 1: Restore degraded landscapes and protect ecosystems

REDO aims to rehabilitate degraded land and restore the health of ecosystems through reforestation, agroforestry, and soil conservation practices. Many landscapes within REDO's target areas have experienced severe deforestation, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity, undermining both environmental integrity and potentially, community livelihoods. This objective focuses on increasing vegetation cover, improving soil fertility, and promoting biodiversity recovery while ensuring that communities are at the center of restoration efforts. Through large-scale tree planting, establishment of community tree nurseries, and capacity building in sustainable forest management, REDO will enable communities to restore their environments and adopt practices that balance ecological health with livelihood needs. These actions will contribute to long-term ecosystem resilience and sustainable natural resource use across the landscapes.

Interventions and targets

By 2030

TREE PLANTING AND AFFORESTATION

- Establish community tree nurseries: Set up 20 tree nurseries in Ruhango District to produce high quality seedlings, support local ownership, and ensure a sustainable supply for reforestation and agroforestry initiatives.
- Reforest degraded land: Conduct tree planting on 750 hectares of degraded landscapes in Ruhango and Rusizi, focusing on native tree species to restore ecosystem functions and biodiversity.
- Scale-up restoration across target areas: Plant a total of 700,000 trees in Kirehe, Rusizi, Ruhango, and Ngoma districts, integrating agroforestry in community areas.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

- Build community capacity in reforestation and forest management by training 20 Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in Ruhango and Kirehe districts on proper tree harvesting, replanting, and forest restoration practices. These trainers will, in turn, cascade knowledge and skills to local community members to promote responsible tree management and continuous forest regeneration.

Objective 2: Improve water and land management

Communities in REDO's target areas manage land and water resources sustainably, reducing soil erosion, protecting wetlands and rivers, and ensuring reliable water availability. Watersheds and buffer zones are restored and protected, wetlands are healthy and functional, and communities actively participate in conservation practices that secure both livelihoods and ecosystem services.

Interventions and targets

By 2030

- Restore, protect and stabilize buffer zones including 67 hectares around Lake Rweru in Bugesera and 29 hectares along the Akagera River in Kirehe by planting native vegetation to stabilize soil and prevent erosion.
 - Restore 7 hectares of wetlands surrounding Mashyoza Natural Forest in Ngoma District through planting bamboo and indigenous tree species, improving water retention and habitat quality.
 - Restore and protect 80 hectares around Vubiro Wetlands in Rusizi District, integrating community participation in monitoring, sustainable use, and protection activities.
-

Goal 2: Preserve sustainable land use and promote ecological processes

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Communities in REDO's target areas practice sustainable agriculture that increases productivity while conserving natural resources. Land and water are managed to prevent soil erosion, nutrient loss, and other forms of environmental degradation. Forests, wetlands, and other critical ecosystems are protected, and ecological processes such as watershed function and soil fertility are maintained. As a result, landscapes are resilient and productive, supporting both biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods for current and future generations.



Objective 1: Increase the adoption of sustainable agriculture and land use practices

REDO aims to support farmers and communities in adopting sustainable agriculture and land management practices that increase productivity while conserving natural resources. By integrating practices such as agroforestry, conservation agriculture, soil restoration, and efficient water management, communities can reduce crop losses, restore degraded soils, and increase resilience to climate variability. This objective ensures that at least 60% of farmers in target areas apply practices that protect the environment, improve livelihoods, and sustain ecosystem services for the long term.

Interventions and targets

By 2030

- Implement land consolidation and improved field planning in Bugesera (75 ha) and Ruhango (20 ha) to optimize land use and reduce soil degradation.
- Enhance water management and irrigation by installing irrigation systems on 60 ha in Kirehe and 15 ha in Bugesera. This will improve water efficiency, extend growing seasons, and increase crop yields while reducing pressure on natural water sources.
- Landscape and soil conservation: Establish 50 ha of terraces in Rusizi and promote soil restoration practices to prevent erosion, retain moisture, and improve soil fertility.
- Train and support farmers to adopt agroforestry systems, cover crops, and other conservation agriculture techniques across target areas to enhance biodiversity, stabilize soils, and build long-term landscape resilience.

Objective 2: Prevent land and environmental degradation

REDO seeks to address the growing challenge of land and environmental degradation caused by deforestation, unsustainable land use, and overexploitation of natural resources. Many areas where REDO operates face severe soil erosion, declining soil fertility, and loss of forest cover, all of which threaten both biodiversity and community livelihoods. Through this objective, REDO will promote the conservation and restoration of forest resources, encourage the adoption of sustainable land management practices, and build community awareness around environmental protection.

Interventions and Targets

By 2030

- Promote clean energy and forest conservation: Distribute 115,000 improved cooking stoves across Kirehe, Ngoma, Nyagatare, Rwamagana, and Karongi districts to reduce reliance on firewood, decrease deforestation, and improve household energy efficiency and health.
- Support alternative livelihoods: Establish five community-based beekeeping cooperatives (three in Kirehe and two in Rusizi) to generate alternative income for local communities while enhancing the reproduction of wild plants and agricultural crops through pollination.

Objective 3: Promote environmental awareness to drive conservation action

REDO aims to build awareness, knowledge, and understanding of environmental issues among communities. By enhancing environmental literacy, community members are better equipped to make informed decisions, adopt sustainable practices, and actively participate in conservation efforts. This includes understanding the value of biodiversity, the impacts of environmental degradation, and practical strategies for protecting ecosystems while improving livelihoods.

Interventions and Targets

- Conduct annual sensitization campaigns in Kirehe, Bugesera, Ruhango, and Rusizi to instill a tree-planting culture, educate communities on tree care and maintenance, and encourage active participation in forest restoration and conservation activities.
- Improve environmental education in schools: By 2029 establish and support environmental clubs in at least two schools in Kirehe District to provide hands-on conservation education, foster ownership among youth, and build long-term awareness of sustainable natural resource management.

Goal 3: Promote sustainable and resilient nature-based livelihoods

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Through environmentally friendly livelihoods that reduce pressure on natural resources, rural communities in Rwanda experience economic growth, improved well-being, and long-term stability without compromising natural resources. Over time, communities build local value chains, increase economic resilience, and reinvest in conservation, creating a cycle where rural economic development directly supports environmental restoration and protection.



Objective 1: Increase income generation through sustainable economic activities

REDO aims to enhance livelihoods while promoting environmental sustainability by supporting communities to engage in eco-friendly income-generating activities. By diversifying income sources through sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, handicrafts, and tree-based enterprises, communities can reduce pressure on natural resources, build economic resilience, and strengthen local stewardship of their environment. The aim is to ensure that households benefit from income opportunities that are both profitable and environmentally responsible.

Interventions and Targets

By 2030

- Develop micro-enterprises: Establish and train 10 cooperatives in Kirehe focused on sustainable micro-enterprises such as beekeeping, handicrafts, and other green income-generating activities.
- Support communities in Kirehe and Bugesera to establish 20 tree nurseries as income-generating enterprises, supplying seedlings for reforestation and agroforestry while creating local employment.
- Establish four eco-tourism initiatives in Kirehe years that showcase local culture, nature, and crafts, providing sustainable income while fostering conservation awareness.

Objective 2: Increase agriculture production and productivity

Agriculture is the main activity for the majority of rural communities in Rwanda. Increasing the agricultural potential - production and productivity in a sustainable way - ensures communities can sustainably meet their livelihood demands.

Interventions and Targets

- Promote climate smart and sustainable agriculture: Support farmers in Bugesera District to adopt improved agricultural practices such as crop rotation, soil conservation, and terrace farming to enhance soil fertility, reduce erosion, and increase productivity sustainably.
- Strengthen post-harvest management and market access: Construct two community warehouses in Kirehe and Bugesera districts by 2028 to improve post-harvest handling, reduce losses, and enhance market access and income opportunities for local farmers.

Objective 3: Strengthen knowledge and skills in agriculture and land use

REDO aims to build the knowledge, skills, and capacity of communities to actively participate in environmental conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. Many community members rely on natural resources for their livelihoods, often without knowledge of practices that balance productivity with ecological health. Through training and awareness initiatives, REDO will promote conservation agriculture and other sustainable land-use practices that build livelihoods while conserving the environment.

Interventions and Targets

By 2030

- Build capacity for cooperative management: Train 45 community groups in Bugesera District on how to establish and effectively manage cooperatives, strengthening their ability to engage in sustainable livelihood and conservation initiatives.
- Promote conservation agriculture through farmer field schools: Establish two farmer field schools in Bugesera District to provide hands-on training in conservation agriculture, soil management, and sustainable farming practices that enhance productivity while protecting the environment.
- Enhance knowledge on climate smart agriculture: Conduct two annual training sessions in Kirehe and Bugesera Districts to equip farmers with practical skills in climate-smart agriculture, helping them adapt to changing climatic conditions and reduce environmental degradation.

Objective 4: Promote economic integration of marginalized community

REDO seeks to strengthen the inclusion and participation of historically marginalized groups in environmental conservation and community development. Many of these communities live in ecologically sensitive areas but remain socially and economically excluded, limiting their access to opportunities. By promoting social integration, REDO aims to strengthen equity, build trust, and ensure that conservation and development benefits reach all members of society.

Interventions and Targets

- Support the creation and capacity strengthening of two functional community cooperatives engaged in the production and marketing of improved cooking stoves by 2029
- Support marginalized communities to develop beekeeping enterprises that contribute to both income generation and forest conservation.
- Target: At least 50 households trained and engaged in beekeeping by 2029.
- Strengthen community tourism initiatives that showcase local craftsmanship, including pottery and handwoven basket production, while promoting conservation awareness.
- Target: Support two community-based tourism groups to develop and market eco-cultural products by 2030.

Goal 4: Strengthen community conservation education, awareness and participation

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

Community members in rural and ecologically sensitive areas develop a strong understanding of conservation. This leads to positive shifts in attitudes and behaviors, with communities moving away from harmful practices such as deforestation and land degradation toward sustainable alternatives. As awareness grows, local engagement grows.



Objective 1: Increase community knowledge and understanding of conservation

REDO seeks to deepen environmental awareness and knowledge through interactive and participatory approaches. By using sports, peer education, and cooperative engagement, communities, especially youth, develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their environment. This objective focuses on changing behaviors and fostering a culture of conservation through learning, fun, and collaboration.

Interventions and Targets

- Community outreach through sports and Campaigns
 - » Conduct two annual community outreach campaigns using sports events (e.g., football tournaments) in three villages of Mpanga Sector, Kirehe District to raise conservation awareness and promote positive environmental behaviors.
 - » Organize annual football competitions and learning sessions through school environmental clubs in Kirehe and Ruhango Districts to build environmental literacy and youth engagement in conservation.
- Peer to peer learning and local expertise: Facilitate two annual Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops for 60 community members in Kirehe, Bugesera, Rusizi, and Ruhango Districts, reaching 60 ToT members who will cascade training to their communities using REDO's educational materials to promote peer-to-peer learning and ensure the continuous sharing of best practices in conservation.
- Promote environmental education in schools: By 2029 establish and support environmental clubs in at least two schools in Kirehe District to provide hands-on conservation education, foster ownership among youth, and build long-term awareness of sustainable natural resource management.

Objective 2: Foster community participation and involvement in conservation

Meaningful conservation requires active participation from the communities living closest to natural resources. REDO empowers youth and local groups to take practical action through restoration, eco-enterprise, and conservation-friendly livelihoods. This objective promotes inclusion, hands-on engagement, and ownership of local conservation initiatives.

Interventions and Targets

By 2030

- Engage youth in restoration and tree planting.
 - » Involve 120 youth in Ruhango District in establishing and managing community tree nurseries.
 - » Mobilize 600 youth in Ibanda-Makera Natural Forest to remove invasive species and replant indigenous trees around the forest.
 - » Engage 400 youth in Rusizi District in large-scale community tree planting campaigns.
- Support the development of community-based tourism at Ibanda-Makera Natural Forest, showcasing local biodiversity, crafts, and cultural heritage while providing sustainable income for local residents.

Objective 3: Strengthen partnerships and collaboration towards the shared restoration and conservation goals

Sustained conservation success depends on strong partnerships among communities, local governments, and development partners. REDO fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and joint action to leverage resources and align restoration efforts for greater landscape impact.

Interventions and Targets

- Enhance collaboration with local authorities:
 - » Develop collaboration agreements with all eight partner districts within five years to ensure alignment and co-implementation of REDO's projects.
 - » Hold two annual coordination meetings with local authorities in all REDO's target districts Kirehe, Ngoma, Nyagatare, Ruhango, Rwamagana, Rusizi, Bugesera, Karongi, and Musanze to review project progress, share lessons, and strengthen joint action.
- Build strategic partnerships with national and global institutions: By 2030 sign two Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Rwanda Green Fund (RGF) and the Global Nature Fund (GNF) under IKI to support landscape restoration and conservation initiatives.
- Promote Peer learning and knowledge exchange: Organize annual peer learning and study tours for REDO staff, community representatives, and partners to share experiences and best practices in conservation and restoration.

Implementation Priorities

Organizational structure and team development

To ensure the effective implementation of this strategy, REDO will strengthen its organizational structure to support both program delivery and core operations. The structure will be designed to provide clear leadership, coordination across functions, and flexibility to scale activities in response to growing demands.



Key objectives and intervention include the following:

Establish critical roles and fill the gaps in the organizational structure

REDO will recruit and integrate key personnel to fill existing capacity gaps:

- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL): to support tracking progress, adaptive management, and improve impact measurement
- Communications: to improve external communication, outreach, visibility, and stakeholder engagement
- Fundraising and Partnerships: to lead resource mobilization efforts and strengthen donor relations

Strengthen cross-functional coordination and internal communications

The organizational structure will work towards seamless collaboration between field operations and administrative functions, supported by cross-cutting roles that address gender, youth, and climate resilience.

Invest in staff development

With the majority of our staff being youth, REDO will prioritize ongoing professional development to ensure staff remain competent, motivated, and prepared to lead. This includes:

- Targeted training in technical, financial, and managerial skills
- Leadership and management development to build internal capacity for decision-making and strategic oversight

Build a performance-oriented culture

A clear reporting structure and performance management system will be implemented to improve accountability, teamwork, and delivery across all units.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

1. Fully staffed core team with defined roles and responsibilities
2. Improved operational efficiency and program coordination
3. Stronger internal leadership and staff retention
4. Enhanced ability to track and communicate impact and adaptively manage programs



Fundraising

For over 25 years, REDO has remained a lean yet impactful organization, delivering meaningful change to the rural communities it supports. However, much of REDO's work has relied heavily on short-term, project-based funding, which has limited its ability to design and implement long-term, transformative programs.

These funding constraints have affected the continuity of community engagement, the sustainability of interventions, and the scaling of successful interventions. Additionally, delays in donor disbursements and limited visibility of REDO's achievements have posed further challenges to timely implementation and donor confidence.

To address these challenges and strengthen REDO's financial sustainability, this strategic plan prioritizes the development and implementation of a fundraising strategy. The strategy will guide REDO in securing diverse, long-term, and flexible funding streams to support its mission.



Key strategic directions include:

Diversify funding sources

To reduce overreliance on short-term project-based funding, REDO will:

- Expand its donor base to include bilateral, multilateral, and private philanthropic donors
- Pursue strategic partnerships with private sector actors
- Explore new opportunities through regional and international climate and biodiversity funding mechanisms

Develop income-generating activities

REDO will invest in the design and implementation of its own income-generating activities that align with its conservation mission. These initiatives will not only contribute to organizational self-reliance but also provide employment and benefits to local communities. These may include:

- Community-based eco-enterprises
- Sustainable agricultural ventures
- Production and sale of improved cookstoves and other green technologies

Strengthen team's capacity in fundraising and proposal development

Recognizing the importance of internal capacity, REDO will:

- Provide regular training for staff on resource mobilization, donor engagement, and proposal writing
- Establish a small, skilled fundraising team to coordinate funding efforts and donor relationship management
- Integrate fundraising goals into individual and departmental workplans

Improve visibility and impact communication

Effective fundraising depends on the ability to clearly demonstrate impact. To this end, REDO will:

- Strengthen its communication strategy to showcase success stories, lessons learned, and measurable outcomes
- Invest in documentation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems to track results and report to stakeholders effectively
- Develop high-quality promotional and donor engagement materials

Strengthen strategic planning for fundraising

Fundraising will be fully integrated into REDO's strategic and annual planning processes. This will include:

- Setting annual fundraising targets based on strategic priorities
- Aligning programs and funding proposals with donor priorities without compromising REDO's mission
- Conducting regular fundraising performance reviews to adapt strategies as needed

Strategic communications and visibility

Effective communication is important to REDO to build its profile, strengthen stakeholder and partner relationships, mobilize resources, and amplify the impact of its work.

Despite REDO's significant contributions to environmental conservation and community development over the past 25 years, poor visibility and underutilized communication channels have limited public awareness and donor engagement. Currently, REDO's website is inactive, some social media platforms are non-functional, and there is a shortage of tools and materials to support awareness-raising efforts at the community and national levels.

To address these gaps, REDO will prioritize the development and implementation of a robust Communication Strategy aimed at showcasing its impact and positioning itself as a trusted and credible voice in environmental conservation.

The strategy will focus on the following key areas:

Reactivate and manage social media and information sharing platforms

REDO will update and maintain an active website and functional social media platforms to share stories, updates, and results consistently.

Strengthen internal capacity

REDO will build on its experienced staff by investing in communication training and hiring or designating dedicated personnel to lead communications efforts.

Develop effective communication tools

REDO will produce high-quality visual and written materials, including reports, videos, and infographics, to communicate impact to donors, partners, and the public.



Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning is a critical pillar for REDO's effectiveness, accountability, and continuous improvement and needs to be leveraged for adaptive management, fundraising and impact communication.

Over the years, REDO has successfully implemented MEL components within individual projects, with regular field monitoring and responsive follow-up activities. However, these efforts have been largely project-driven, based on donor requirements, and implemented without a dedicated MEL team or centralized system for data management.

Key challenges include the absence of full-time MEL staff, limited MEL skills, reliance on donor designed systems, and the lack of a digital platform for field level data collection and organizational learning. These constraints hinder REDO's ability to demonstrate impact across programs and to use evidence to drive decision-making and resource mobilization.

To address these gaps, this strategic plan commits to strengthening MEL capacity across the organization through the following priorities:

Develop a REDO-wide MEL framework

REDO will design and implement a MEL framework aligned with its strategic objectives. This framework will:

- Define clear indicators to measure progress and impact across all thematic areas
- Harmonize data collection, analysis, and reporting systems across projects
- Facilitate organizational learning, adaptation, and knowledge sharing

Recruit and strengthen staff capacity in MEL

To ensure consistent and professional MEL practice, REDO will:

- Recruit qualified MEL staff to oversee implementation and coordination of MEL activities
- Provide regular training to staff and partners on MEL methodologies, tools, and data use
- Build a culture of evidence-based planning, reflection, and learning

Establish an information management system

REDO will invest in a user-friendly digital platform for real-time data collection, storage, and analysis.

This system will:

- Improve data quality, accessibility, and security
 - Enable REDO to track its own outcomes and demonstrate value to a broader range of partners and stakeholders
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REDO

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