

National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) Document

Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established to help developing countries to fund projects and programs that protect the global environment. The GEF supported areas include biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. GEF funding activities are programmed in phases and after 1994 restructuring process; the GEF Trust Fund was replenished as follow:

- GEF-1, (1994-1998) at \$2.0 billion
- GEF-2 (1998-2002) at \$2.75 billion,
- GEF-3 (2002-2006) \$3 billion; and
- GEF-4 (2006-2010), \$3.135 billion.

During the first years of GEF funding, country programming has been traditionally mediated by the GEF Implementing Agencies without much involvement of beneficiary countries. Those agencies are WB, UNDP, UNEP, AfDB, ADB, IADB, EBRD, FAO, IFAD, and UNIDO. Throughout the years, GEF made substantial changes to improve its performance. In October 2002, GEF council endorsed policy recommendations of resources allocation. The objective was to maximize the impact of these resources on global environmental improvements and promoting sound environmental policies and practices across the globe. The Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) adopted by the GEF Council in September 2005 was to allocate GEF resources to recipient countries based on global environmental priorities and country-level performance. The overall objective of the policy recommendation was to define a system for allocating resources to countries in a transparent and consistent manner based on global environmental priorities and country capacity, policies and practices relevant to successful implementation of GEF projects. The RAF began implementation with the start of the fourth replenishment period of the GEF from July, 2006 to June 2010.” During 2009-2010 the GEF secretariat decided to upgrade the Resource Allocation Framework to **System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)** to ensure greater functionality, transparency, and structural simplicity of the model. Under STAR, Rwanda was allocated 4.58M \$ and will cover Climate Change- CC (\$2m), Biodiversity- BD (\$1.5m) and Land Degradation-LD(\$1.08m).

To improve GEF’s strategic engagement at country-level, during the GEF5 replenishment period, each country was requested to prepare, with GEF financial support, a national portfolio formulation exercise. Even if the preparation of the exercise is not a prerequisite for GEF project funding, it helps interested recipient countries to establish or to strengthen national processes and mechanisms to facilitate GEF programming and to respond to country recipient national and regional priorities. Rwanda is among the countries engaged to undertake the NPFE with the understanding that it will help:

- To strengthen country ownership over decisions on GEF resource programming;
- To align the programming of GEF resources with national planning processes and other relevant strategies.
- To increase responsiveness to country priorities for generating global environmental benefits under the multilateral environmental conventions;

- To improve coordination among partners and build capacity of GEF focal points to coordinate GEF policy with all other stakeholders including other ministries.
- To identify projects and programmatic approaches that will use national allocations under the STAR in the three concerned focal areas (Climate change, Biodiversity and Land degradation) and, as well as other resources available under the GEF focal areas not subject to STAR allocations.

The following describes the process for the elaboration of the NPFE Document for Rwanda to be submitted to GEF under STAR arrangement.

A. Description of the National Steering Committee

The GEF activities coordination mechanism was discussed in a workshop held in Kigali on 12 April 2011. During that workshop, the need for establishing a National Steering Committee was highlighted. This Committee is composed of :

- The GEF Operational Focal Point at the country level, in the person of the Director General of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority, whose role is to
 - a) Facilitate GEF coordination, integration, and consultation at country level.
 - b) Serve as the liaison with the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and representing their constituencies on the GEF Council.
 - c) Oversee operational aspects of GEF activities, including endorsing project proposals, monitoring implementation of GEF supported projects
- The Committee comprises also the National Focal Points of the main Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD.)

The NSC facilitated the process of the preparation of the NPFE document through a number of meetings as well as consultations. Recently, Rwanda has embraced a broad and ambitious program related to Forest and Landscape rehabilitation. This is a strategic orientation that the country has embraced and aiming at integrating landscape rehabilitation into Rwanda's national development plans and to pursue a goal that would catalyze large scale border to border restoration of land, soil, forest and water resources for the benefit of the Rwandan population over the next twenty five years. The present NPFE process therefore aims at taking this process a bit further through the Project Identification Form (PIF) and Project Preparation Grant (PPG) as part of the Rwanda's GEF National Portfolio Formulation Exercise.

B. Description of broader consultations

The preparation of the Rwanda's Initiative of Forest and Landscape Rehabilitation was participatory and inclusive. It is in this regard, that Rwanda embarked on a series of consultative processes, among which is the stakeholders consultative meeting that took place in Kigali on 18 – 21 July 2011 and whose outcome was an initial framework for the development of the National Forest and Landscape Rehabilitation Program in Rwanda. Furthermore, as part of the preparation of the present NPFE itself, specific and broad consultation process involving government ministries and other stakeholders such as civil society,

community-based organizations, were conducted to establish key priority and pilot sites for forest and landscape restoration process. Particularly, this consultation process benefited also from some ad hoc consultations and collaboration with other existing relevant forum such as the Environmental and Natural Resource Sector Working Group which comprises all the players in the Environment Sector (Government Institutions, NGOs, and Donors).

Key objectives for stakeholder consultations were:

- To ensure that there is buy-in and a shared understanding of the proposed programme as detailed in the July workshop report; and
- To seek stakeholder views on the proposed framework, sites etc.

A final NPFE validation workshop was organised on 23rd February 2012 in Kigali to present the outcomes of the consultations and participants were able to discuss and validate key priority and pilot sites in the National Forest and Landscape Restoration initiative.

C. Brief description of country's global environmental challenges in different sectors

Rwanda accounts today with a human population of more than 10 million individuals, with a surface area of 26,338 Km². Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa, with a population density of 300-350/Km² (EDPRS 2008-2012). Environment and natural resources form the resource base upon which the majority of the rural poor in Rwanda depend on for their livelihoods particularly. This puts a great pressure on the environment and environmental goods and services.

The main environmental problems in Rwanda consist of:

- a) Degradation of soil due to the loss of vegetation cover, overexploitation and inappropriate agricultural systems.** Recent efforts to establish anti-erosive measures are to be recognised but additional efforts are needed as they are not yet established in all the affected areas and in some places anti-erosion measures are inadequately established. 40% of Rwanda's land is classified by FAO as having a very high erosion risk with about 37% requiring soil retention measures before cultivation. Only 23.4% of the country's lands are not prone to erosion. The most vulnerable area is located in the Congo-Nile divide region and its surroundings. The land degradation is aggravated by the heavy rain, deforestation and poor agricultural systems.
- b) Loss of species diversity due to deforestation and wetland mismanagement.**

The Rwandan territory is covered with diverse ecosystems rich in flora and fauna. Those include natural ecosystems (consisting of mountain rainforests, gallery forests, savannah woodland, wetlands and), forested area and agro-ecosystems. The key biodiversity spots include:

- (i) Protected areas: Protected areas are mainly the three national parks: i) *Volcanoes National Park* which is famous worldwide due to the presence of mountain gorillas-*Gorilla gorilla beringei* and variety of plants and animal species, ii) *Nyungwe National Park* has more than 1,200 species of flora, 275 species of birds, iii) *Akagera National Park* covers a surface area of about 108,500 ha and inhabits more than 900 species of plants and 90 mammals.

- **(ii) Relict and gallery forests** comprise: i) *Gishwati forest* covering 600 ha; ii) *Mukura natural forest* covering 800 ha; iii) *relict forests and savannahs of the Eastern Province* situated around Akagera National Park have a variety of endemic and rare species most of which are used in traditional medicine and iv) *gallery forests* with endemic and rare species.
 - **(iii) Biodiversity of wetlands:** The ecosystems of wetlands of Rwanda inhabit a biological diversity that is rich in plant and animal species except for the lakes of Kivu, Bulera and Ruhondo that have some limnologic problems. Most lakes of the Akagera Park are rich in biodiversity. The Water hyacinth is present and started covering big areas of lakes, posing a threat to their biological diversity. The lakes of the Akagera National Park are among the richest in fish species in the whole country. The most dominant species is the haplochromis and other fluvial species. Other lakes like Muhazi, Nasho, Rwampanga, lakes of Gisaka and Mugesera are also very rich in fauna and flora. Rwanda has a total of 278,536 Ha of marshlands (10.6% of the country's surface area). Since 2003, more than 8,000 Ha of marshlands has been reclaimed for irrigated agriculture, mostly rice, and the PSTA estimates to put more wetland area under agriculture irrigation (Rwanda State of Environment and outlook, 2009).
 - **(iv) Biodiversity in agricultural systems, pastoral land and wooded areas:** In Rwanda, human settlements, diversified agro-pastoral practices, consumption of forest products, bush fires and urbanization have caused the disappearance of the natural climatic conditions to more than 90%. Those changes have caused secondary vegetation consisting essentially of graminaceous plants, numerous seasonal or perennial species alternating with crops. The importance of each crop varies according to regions. Today, over 70% of the country's total land surface is exploited for agriculture with about 57% of marshlands under cultivation. This, in turn, has resulted in habitat and biodiversity loss, including a decrease in the total area under protection as well as a reduction in the area of critical habitats such as forests, pastoral land and wooded areas– (the estimated loss of forest cover is approximately 64% between 1960 and 2007) (Rwanda State of Environment and Outlook, 2009).
- c) Deforestation** mainly due to the demographic pressure, the uncontrolled production of domestic energy (charcoal, firewood, etc.), the migration and resettlement of the population, etc.
- Extension of the activities of agriculture/animal husbandry has led to an extensive destruction of natural forest cover: during the period 1960-2002, more than two-third of the forest cover was lost. As result of agricultural extension, Nyungwe forest has lost about 20% of its surface between 1958 and 1998, and the Volcanoes National Park lost 60%.
 - The energy sector is essentially of the traditional type as only wood (15% charcoal, 71 % fire wood and 8% harvest wastes) covers about 94% of the total energy needs of the country which contributes greatly to deforestation (Environmental Profile,2006).
- d) Pressure on wetlands** (clearing of natural marshes, hydro-agricultural development which is not associated with the protection of catchments basins), resulting in a reduced capacity of flood accumulation (risks of flooding and sedimentation of lakes).
- Agricultural activities extend to wetlands: MINAGRI has recorded 165,000 ha of marshland out of which 93,754ha are cultivated (57%) and more area is going to be developed for agriculture purpose (Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture 2, 2009).
- e) Multiplication of aquatic weeds** essentially along the Akagera and Nyabarongo rivers systems, etc.

In addition to these challenges, Rwanda is faced with other important challenges in relation to:

f) Persistent Organic Pollutants

Rwanda ratified the Stockholm Convention in 2002. Since then, this Convention has been into force in the country. The National Implementation Plan was drafted and approved by the Cabinet and submitted to the Stockholm Convention Secretariat in 2007. Rwanda is still confronted with various challenges in adhering to certain provisions of the convention. Those include: lack of awareness among the stakeholders at various levels about the negative impacts of PoPs (especially new POPs, UPOPS, PCBs and pesticides); lack of specific regulations related to the manipulation of specific PCBs products; lack of knowledge and means among the stakeholders to apply environmental sound practices in manipulating the PCBs products; lack of environmental sound infrastructures and equipment for detecting POPs substances in the products and handling storing and manipulation on PoPs products; lack of studies on POPs effects monitoring, lack of incentives to support private initiatives in applying sound environmental practices and handling PCBs products, power management of contaminated sites by the toxic substances/POPs.

g) Capacity development

Capacity building is a long-term challenge in different areas in Rwanda. It is characterized by lack of a common framework for capacity building, lack of human resources policy, shortages of skilled staff, inadequate education and training curriculum, lack of vocational and industrial training skills, problems of coordination and management, problems of knowledge generation, information and data base management. The different REMA strategic plans including the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSA) and Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) identified capacity building gaps and priorities. The identified gaps include lack of effective coordination at all levels; inadequate information material; lack of management system for database on biodiversity; shortage of skilled senior staff in the field of environment protection and conservation of biodiversity. The capacity building priority areas are: mainstreaming the environment into national/local development plans; ecosystem management (Land, Water, Forests, and Energy); pollution and waste management; sanitation, health, and environment; environmental disaster preparedness and response; and food security and environment. Up to now, a comprehensive capacity building support is still needed. For example, there is today inadequacies in human resources and institutional capacity – despite an impressive environmental compliance regime, EIA application and environmental mainstreaming in general, is undermined by inadequate skills, knowledge and resources among practitioners, hence the quality of EIA reports submitted is generally low. Also, the capacity for environmental inspection and compliance monitoring is hampered by inadequate staff and limited logistical facilitation.

h) International waters

Rwanda is divided into two major international drainage basins; the Nile to the east covering 67 per cent and delivering 90 per cent of the national waters and the Congo to the west which accounts for 33 per cent

of all national waters. The management of water in the country will certainly have impacts on the international waters and therefore regional collaboration with other neighboring countries remains important. Existing regional initiatives in the water management include NBI-NELSAP and its Transboundary Integrated Water Resources Management Project of the Kagera River Basin (TIWRM) and other initiatives. However, coordination, information sharing and capacity are still key challenge in the management of international waters. The water hyacinth *Eichhornea crassipes* which was introduced as an ornamental plant and has since invaded lakes and rivers in the region represents a regional problem in the management of water resources

i) Ozone depleting substances

Rwanda's production of chemicals is very minimal if not negligible. However, it imports large quantity of chemicals ranging from agricultural, industrial to consumer chemicals to meet the increasing demand of such chemicals which increases with economic and population growth. Petroleum products are imported on a large scale, followed by other consumer chemicals and then agrochemicals. However, the country depends mainly on organic farming but the Government policy is to increase use of chemicals to enhance productivity in agriculture. Rwanda is a party to both the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Rwanda acceded to both in 2002 with all the amendments. In this regard, Rwanda has set up the mandatory structures for the implementation of the Protocol in the country, which includes the preparation of the Country Programme for the phase out of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS); setting up of the National Ozone Unit (NOU); and the National Ozone Steering Committee.

j) Sound chemical management

The use of fertilizers and insecticides in agriculture is still very low in Rwanda. However, with the modernization of agriculture and the promotion of use of fertilizers (for example, through, the crop intensification programme, and rice production in marshland zones), it's important to establish a system to monitor the effects of agricultural practices on environment in the next future (including water pollution)

In Kigali, industries, petroleum depots and garages have been established in unplanned locations and unfortunately they are located mainly in marshland areas which render pollution control difficult. They have been responsible for water pollution by the chemical discharges and the pollutants are for the most part toxic to humans and animals and also interfere with environment by polluting soils. The industrial effluents and other pollutants created in the Gikondo- Nyabugogo wetland system pose today an environmental challenge in Rwanda.

k) Climate change adaptation

Based on the vulnerability assessment to Climate Change influence, Rwanda appears to be highly vulnerable due to mutual influences and cumulative impacts of: high degradation of arable land due to erosion, following torrential regime of rains in Northern region (Rubavu, Musanze and Gicumbi,

Centre/West (Muhanga, Karongi, Nyamagabe) and floods in their downhill slope; desertification trend in agro-bioclimate regions of the East and South-East; the lowering of level of lakes and water flows due to pluviometric deficit and prolonged droughts; and degradation of forests. This situation is translated into high vulnerability of a big proportion of Rwanda population to climate change because it essentially lives on biophysical support and its modes of existence highly depend on services that are directly offered by ecosystems, not only for food but also for energy. These services are currently more and more sharpened and altered by climate change and anthropogenic action.

The strategy for adequate response to this situation reached by NAPA Rwanda is articulated on six (6)-priority adaptation options to climate change which include:

- An Integrated Water Resource Management – IWRM;
- Setting up an information systems to early warning of hydro-agro meteorological system and rapid intervention mechanisms;
- Promotion of non agricultural income generating activities;
- Promotion of intensive agro-pastoral activities;
- Introduction of species resisting to environmental conditions;
- Development of firewood alternative sources of energy.

D. STAR allocation and Priority projects

Rwanda has benefited from a total of 20 million USD to support environmental related national projects. Those include:

- Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystem (Biodiversity), WB, \$4.3m
- Montane Forest Protected Area Management Project (Biodiversity), UNDP, \$5.45m
- Kagera Basin Management (Int'l Waters), FAO
- Regional Lake Victoria Basin Management (Int'l Waters), WB
- Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change (Climate), UNDP, \$3.16m
- Sustainable Energy Development (Climate), WB, \$4.5m
- Management of PCB Stockpile (POPs), UNDP, \$1m
- Enabling Activities: Preparation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA), National Biosafety Framework Development, National reports to the Conventions

Under the provision of GEF System of Transparent Allocation of Resource (STAR): a total of GEF STAR allocation of \$4.58 million will be provided to Rwanda (Biodiversity \$1.5m, Sustainable Land Management \$1.08m, and Climate Change \$2m).

Through the consultation process as above described and based on the needs, aspirations and experiences, Rwanda agreed to have a multi-sectoral and multi-focal approach for the GEF-5 project support, and decided to have a single project on Rwanda Forest and Landscape Restoration (RFLR). This is an ambitious plan for the government of Rwanda to integrate landscape restoration into its national development plans and to pursue a goal that would catalyze large scale border to border restoration of land, soil, forest and water resources for the benefit of the Rwandan population over the next years. Criteria has been defined for the selection

of priority sites and an initial application of this criteria identifies two sites: (i) Gishwati Forest Restoration Project and (ii) Nyandungu Wetland Restoration Project

The Gishwati Landscape is a mountainous rainforest within the Congo-Nile watershed divide. Gishwati is part of the Albertine rift, which hosts 52% of all bird species and 39% of all mammal species on the African continent and is considered an endemic bird area, ecoregion and biodiversity hotspot. Much of the rich biodiversity within the Landscape is conserved within Protected Areas, including the Gishwati Forest Reserve – home to a small group of Chimpanzees, currently classified as endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The Gishwati Forest Landscape provides a number of direct and indirect livelihood and economic benefits at both national and international levels (Source: Economic Analysis of Natural Resources Management in Rwanda, 2006, REMA). Direct benefits include agricultural, timber and non-timber forest products as well as potential income generated from tourist related activities. Indirect benefits include soil protection, water conservation, carbon sequestration and climate control.

The destruction of Gishwati was caused by the introduction of agriculture and livestock project in the 1980s and later with the recent occupation of the area by displaced people following the genocide of Tutsi and conflict in Rwanda (1990-1994). The destruction of the forests has been accompanied by persistent problems of landslides and floods in the area. The area is located in excessively high rainfall area and therefore with limited in area coverage, the steep-slope mountains are sources of speeding floods. The deep soils are underlain by rocky material. The situation makes it vulnerable to landslide and soil erosion that affect the human settlement and the land by flooding and siltation.

The natural vegetation of Nyandungu wetland includes typical wetland plants including *Phragmites australis* (urubingo), Cattail (*Typha latifolia*), *Pycurus nitidus*, *Phoenix reclinata* jacquin and the Pink Smartweed (*Polygonum bicornis* Raf.). Although not identified to specific locations, 14 species of wetland birds including the endangered crested crane, black head Ibis, kingfisher, cygonia, eagle, pelican, ploceus and heron, were recorded in the wetlands of Kigali with some cited in Nyandungu. However, the Nyandungu valley today can be described as a heavily disturbed and degraded wetland. It is intensively used for various subsistence and livelihood activities. The 2004 EIA report showed that the valley was utilized for subsistence and livelihood activities including small scale farming, livestock grazing and watering, laundry and car and motorcycle washing. Small-scale enterprises such as brickworks and coffee washing and drying also take place in the valley. The 2004 EIA report noted that the Nyandungu wetland was severely degraded. These activities were harmful to the natural flora, fauna and avifauna, especially habitat that provides breeding grounds for rare and endangered indigenous and migratory birds and other animals and birds. The rehabilitation of the Nyandungu wetland as recommended by the study contribute to reduce the impacts of the establishment of the free zone in the area and will serve as pilot project for the rehabilitation of other degraded marshlands in Kigali. The project will also contribute to the creation of a recreation and educational zone in Rwanda.

Different stakeholders and participants in the February 2012 validation workshop identified others priority sites to be considered under the Forest and Landscape Restoration initiative and include Nyungwe National Park, Muvumba relict forests, Mukura forest, new settled areas in Akagera region and Rugezi Marshland.

E. Priority Areas outside the STAR

a) Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

List of priority projects to be financed by order of priority:

Project n° 1: Sensitization, information and education of the public on POPs

Project n° 2: Construction of a securisation stockpile of obsolete in Kigali city

Project n° 3: Promotion of alternatives to POPs pesticides in Musanze District

b) Climate Change National Action Plan for Adaptation – Priority projects

Key priority areas are:

Priority n° 1: Integrated water resources management (IWRM): with the aim to reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems, population and sectors due to the quantitative and qualitative shortage of water resources and the damages caused by the runoff due to the climate change.

Priority no2: Set up information systems of hydro agrometeorologic early warning system and rapid intervention: with the aim to improve information system of hydro agro meteorological early warning system and rapid intervention and reduce the exposure of the population and sectors at risk of extreme events and climate catastrophes. .

Priority n° 3: Promotion of income generating activities: with the aim to improve the adaptation capacity of rural population vulnerable to climate change through the promotion of income generating non-agricultural activities.

Priority n° 4: Promotion of intensive agriculture and animal husbandry: with the aim to improve the adaptation capacity of farmers and pastoralists to climate change through setting up agro-sylvo-pastoral systems adapted to real land vocation.

Priority n° 5: Introduction of varieties resisting to environmental conditions: Improve adaptation capacity of farmers and adapt to climate change through promotion of appropriate cultural techniques and the introduction of varieties resisting to environmental conditions.

Priority n° 6: Development of energy sources alternative to firewood: with the aim to reduce the pressure of woody combustible and hence reduce the overexploitation and degradation of forests through the promotion of energy sources alternative to firewood. This aim contributes at the same time to reducing the vulnerability to the energy crisis of the country especially the poor rural population.

c) Priority projects for Sound Chemical Management

Key priority projects include:

(1) The development of industrial parks and free export zones to facilitate establishment of new Industries and relocation of existing ones operating in or in the surrounding of the marshland zones.

(2) The rehabilitation of affected wetlands: from the rehabilitation of the proposed Nyandungu wetland as pilot project, lessons learnt will serve to extend the initiative to other affected wetlands in Kigali.

(3) Monitoring of the effects of agricultural practices (fertilizer, insecticides,

d) Priority projects for International Waters

Key priority area include:

- 1) Improve the coordination and information sharing
- 2) Harmonize policies and programmes
- 3) Development of capacity and knowledge at regional level
- 4) Undertake joint programmes that can eliminate the water *hyacinth Eichhornea crassipes* .

e) Priority projects for Ozone Depleting Substances

Rwanda is planning to meet the 2013 HCFC freeze and it will require 10% reduction target by 2015 and 35% reduction target by 2020 as set by Montreal protocol. Key priority activities include:

- 1) Dissemination of the amended ODS regulations
- 2) training of Customs and other Law Enforcement Officers and Strengthening the customs training schools
- 3) Strengthening of the three regional retrofitting centres through provision of technical assistance and equipment.
- 4) Strengthening capacity of technical colleges and existing institutions and associations in Good Refrigeration Practices and hydrocarbon technology.

F. An outline on how implementation of these projects will contribute to the fulfillment of obligations to the Conventions (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC)

Rwanda has experience in implementing 12 GEF-funded national projects and is involved in 12 regional projects in most GEF focal areas, including biodiversity, sustainable land management, climate change, POPs, and international waters. The country also has experience in working with different GEF Agencies for these projects, namely the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, and FAO. The GEF-5 priority programs and projects will build on the experiences and lessons learned from these projects.

The proposed GEF 5 funding projects are part of the Rwanda's initiative of Forest and Landscape Rehabilitation whose objective is articulated as follows: "*Multiple stakeholders motivated and engaging in informed, collaborative and inclusive action to restore and conserve critical landscapes for resilient sustainable economic development, livelihoods and biodiversity within and beyond the national borders of Rwanda*"

This is consistent with the GEF Focal areas; the country has developed national strategies for the different conventions (The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)- 2003 and the National Plan of Action (NAPA) for climate change adaptation, 2006. These strategies and action plans reflect national priorities for environment and natural resources that are in turn aligned with the priorities of the Five Year Strategic Plan for the Environment and Natural Resources Sector (2009-2013). This project contributes to most of the sectors strategic priorities (ENRSSP, 2009), which places strong emphasis on the need for multi-sectoral engagement for improved environmental management areas.

1) Biodiversity

As, it was described, Rwanda biodiversity is found in protected areas and in degraded lands (agricultural land, wetlands, woodland, savannahs). The Forest and Landscape Rehabilitation initiative represents the best possible combination of productive and sustainable agro-ecosystems with conserved and/or restored lands that will contribute to the country biodiversity restoration and conservation.

2) Climate Change

The overall goal of the GEF in climate change mitigation is to support developing countries and economies in transition toward a low-carbon development path. The Rwanda's initiative of Forest and Landscape Rehabilitation represents a unique opportunity and will greatly contribute to the promotion of conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable land use management (SLM). The rehabilitation of forest and other degraded areas will increase the forested areas. Other important areas for climate change highlighted include the development of energy source alternatives to firewood and capacity building. The project contributes to the country's strategies towards climate change where particularly Gishwati is listed as a high priority site in the NAPA.

3) Desertification

The objective of the Convention is to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, through effective action at all levels. Achieving this objective will involve long-term integrated strategies that focus on improved productivity, rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources for better livelihood. The forest and landscape restoration initiative presents a unique opportunity to achieve the UNCCD objective.