



Community Led Food Forest Project (CFFP) - Restoration of Marmanet, and Igwamiti Landscapes through a Sustainable Food Forest Approach, Kenya

Document prepared by WOCAN

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1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENARIO FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

1.1 Background

Location of the Project: The project Community Led Food Forest Project (CFFP) - Restoration of Marmanet, and Igwamiti Landscapes through a Sustainable Food Forest Approach is implemented in Igwamiti and Marmanet Wards, Laikipia County, Kenya, where rural communities depend primarily on small-scale agriculture and livestock production for their livelihoods. The area faces increasing environmental pressures, including land degradation, declining forest cover, biodiversity loss, and the impacts of climate change, which have reduced agricultural productivity and increased pressure on natural resources. These challenges affect household livelihoods while threatening the long-term sustainability of local ecosystems.

Women play a central role in agricultural production, livestock management, household food security, and natural resource management. Despite their significant contributions, they often face barriers to accessing productive resources, financial services, and leadership opportunities, limiting their ability to influence decisions affecting their households and communities. Strengthening women's economic resilience and leadership is therefore essential to achieving both sustainable landscape restoration and inclusive community development.

The project combines forest landscape restoration, agroforestry, and sustainable livelihood interventions with activities that strengthen women's participation, leadership, and economic opportunities. By supporting women through capacity building, livelihood diversification, and participation in community governance, the project aims to improve environmental outcomes while contributing to more resilient and equitable communities.

Scenario Existing Prior to the Implementation of the Activities: Prior to project implementation, communities in Igwamiti and Marmanet Wards depended largely on small-scale agriculture and livestock production in a context of unreliable rainfall, seasonal drought, water scarcity, declining soil fertility, and land degradation. Women have played a central role in farming, household food security, livestock care, and natural resource management but generally had more limited access to land, productive assets, financial resources, and decision-making opportunities than men.

1.2 Project sector and type

Forest landscape restoration: Restoration of degraded landscapes through community-led tree planting, establishment of food forests, and sustainable management of natural resources to improve ecosystem health and resilience.

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Agroforestry and sustainable agriculture: Promotion of agroforestry systems through the establishment of fruit and non-fruit trees that improve soil fertility, diversify agricultural production, strengthen household food security, and increase climate resilience.

Climate change adaptation and environmental conservation: Restoration activities contribute to improved watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, enhanced soil health, and increased resilience of both ecosystems and communities to climate change.

1.3 Project implementers

Organization name	GROOTS Kenya Association
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Other entities involved in the project

Organization name	Vumbuzi Impact Africa Foundation (VIA)
Role in the project	Project developer
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Title	Chief Executive Officer
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1.4 Project activities start date

January 2024

1.5 Description of project activities

The project implements an integrated programme that combines forest landscape restoration, agroforestry, sustainable livelihoods, and women's leadership to improve ecosystem resilience and strengthen women's economic and social empowerment. Through community-led restoration, capacity building, and the strengthening of grassroots organizations, the project seeks to improve women's participation in natural resource management, increase livelihood opportunities, and strengthen their voice in household and community decision-making. The main project activities include:

- Forest landscape restoration and agroforestry

Activity: The project supports the restoration of degraded landscapes through tree planting, assisted natural regeneration, establishment of food forests, and the promotion of agroforestry systems. Restoration activities are implemented through community participation and in collaboration with local institutions and community groups.

Women's empowerment contribution: Women actively participate in restoration activities and agroforestry initiatives, strengthening their technical capacities while creating opportunities to improve household livelihoods and participate more actively in natural resource management.

- Community nursery establishment and livelihood development

Activity: The project supports the establishment and strengthening of community nurseries and promotes sustainable livelihood activities, including tree seedling production and other climate-resilient enterprises linked to restoration.

Women's empowerment contribution: Women strengthen their income-generating opportunities through nursery enterprises and diversified livelihood activities while improving their access to productive resources and financial resilience.

- Capacity building and leadership development

Activity: The project provides training on forest restoration, agroforestry, climate-smart agriculture, governance, gender and feminist approaches, land rights, leadership, and organizational strengthening. Capacity building is complemented by mentoring, peer learning, and participatory planning processes.

Women's empowerment contribution: These activities strengthen women's technical knowledge, confidence, agency, and leadership skills, enabling them to participate more actively in household decision-making, community organizations, and landscape restoration governance.

- Community organization and participatory governance

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Activity: The project strengthens community organizations and supports participatory planning, community dialogue, and engagement with local institutions to promote inclusive landscape restoration and sustainable resource management.

Women's empowerment contribution: Women are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles within community groups and participate in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes, to strengthen their voice and influence in community decision-making.

- Community awareness and gender inclusion

Activity: The project conducts community awareness activities to promote gender equality, inclusive participation, environmental conservation, and sustainable natural resource management.

Women's empowerment contribution: These activities contribute to changing social norms that limit women's participation, strengthen community support for women's leadership, and promote more equitable participation in restoration and livelihood activities.

1.6 Project's activities boundary and scope

The project is implemented in **Igwamiti and Marmanet Wards, Laikipia County, Kenya**, where it works with rural communities engaged in agriculture, livestock production, and natural resource management. Project activities are implemented in collaboration with local community groups, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to promote sustainable landscape restoration and strengthen community resilience.

The project adopts an integrated landscape approach that combines forest landscape restoration, agroforestry, sustainable livelihood development, and women's empowerment. Activities include the establishment of community tree nurseries, restoration of degraded landscapes, promotion of climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry, livelihood diversification, capacity building, leadership development, and community engagement on gender equality and natural resource governance.

The scope of the project includes strengthening women's technical capacities, leadership, and participation in household and community decision-making and project activities, while improving access to livelihood opportunities and productive resources. Through these interventions, the project seeks to restore degraded landscapes, enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services, strengthen climate resilience, and promote more equitable participation of women in environmental governance and sustainable development.

1.7 Conditions Prior to the Project's Initiation of Activities

Before the project began, households in Igwamiti and Marmanet Wards relied primarily on rain-fed agriculture, livestock production, and small-scale businesses for their livelihoods. Agricultural production was affected by unreliable rainfall, recurring droughts, limited water availability, shallow and erosion-prone soils, declining soil fertility, human-wildlife conflict, and livestock theft. These

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environmental and economic pressures reduced household income, affected food security, and increased vulnerability to climate-related shocks.

Women have contributed substantially to crop production, livestock management, household food provision, and natural resource management, specifically for activities such as planting, weeding, harvesting, poultry keeping, milking, feeding animals, collecting water and firewood, in addition to their roles in childcare, food preparation, cleaning, and other domestic tasks. Women therefore have combined extensive unpaid care responsibilities with agricultural and income-generating work, resulting in a heavier overall workload than men. Field consultations indicated that women's days often began around 5:00 a.m. and continued until late in the evening, while men generally had fewer domestic responsibilities and more time for rest and social activities.

Access to and control over productive resources has also been unequal. Although women have participated actively in agriculture, land ownership has generally remained under male control. Women can inherit land under Kenyan law, but customary practices have continued to affect their ability to claim or retain land after marriage. Women have often accessed land through husbands or relatives and had limited authority over long-term land-use decisions. Men have been more likely to control higher-value livestock and major household assets, while women have had greater responsibility for poultry, kitchen gardens, and smaller-scale livelihood activities.

Decision-making within households has been influenced by these unequal patterns of resource ownership, with men generally exercised greater authority over land, livestock sales, major investments, and the use of higher-value income. Women have been more involved in everyday decisions related to food, children, and household needs but sometimes have used informal strategies to retain control over small amounts of income, including selling vegetables or small livestock when husbands were absent. These practices indicate that women's participation in economic activities did not automatically translate into equal control over the income generated.

At the community level, women have participated in self-help groups, savings groups, table banking arrangements, and other grassroots organizations. These groups provided access to savings, credit, mutual support, knowledge exchange, and collective action. GROOTS Kenya's Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO) has also offered an alternative financial mechanism for women who might not qualify for formal banking services. However, women's participation in formal leadership and land-governance decisions has remained influenced by gender norms, household responsibilities, and unequal access to productive resources.

The project was developed within this context to combine landscape restoration and agroforestry with women-led nursery enterprises, paid restoration work, group organization, leadership development, and improved access to financial and productive resources. Through these activities, the project is specifically intended to address several of the baseline conditions identified above, including women's limited and insecure livelihood opportunities, restricted access to financial and productive resources, limited control over income, and barriers to participation in household and community decision-making. The project also builds on women's existing participation in self-help groups, savings mechanisms, and collective action as an entry point for strengthening their economic and social

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position. In this way, the baseline conditions provide the reference point against which expected changes under the **Income & Assets and Leadership domains** can be assessed, particularly changes in women's access to and control over income and productive resources, livelihood opportunities, participation in decision-making, leadership, and agency.

1.8 Compliance with Laws, Statutes and Other Regulatory Frameworks

The project is in compliance with all the necessary laws, statutes and regulatory frameworks of Kenya and has the right to engage in project activities.

1.9 Project Implementer's Right to Engage in the Project

The project implementer has all the requisite legal rights to engage in the project.

1.10 Other Forms of Environmental or Social Credit

None

1.11 Additional Information Relevant to the Project

NA

2. GENDER AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Brief summary of GSA findings

The Gender and Stakeholder Analysis highlights the important role women play in agriculture, household livelihoods, and natural resource management within the project area. Women actively participate through women's groups, savings groups, producer groups, and other community-based organizations, which provide important platforms for collective action, financial inclusion, and knowledge sharing. These existing structures, together with support from local leaders, county institutions, and technical partners, provide opportunities to strengthen women's leadership, economic resilience, and participation in sustainable land management.

However, the analysis identified persistent gender inequalities affecting women's access to and control over productive resources, including land, financial services, and higher-value assets. While joint land ownership among spouses is increasingly practiced and some widowed, single, and unmarried women own land independently, women's ownership and control of productive assets remain limited. Unequal decision-making power and women's high burden of unpaid care work may also restrict participation in training, leadership opportunities, and livelihood activities.

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These factors may influence outcomes to be measured under the W+ **Leadership** and **Income & Assets** domains. While limited access to resources and time constraints may affect women's ability to participate in and benefit from project activities, existing women's organizations and community structures provide important entry points for strengthening women's agency, leadership, economic opportunities, and resilience through gender-responsive implementation.

Introduction

This gender and stakeholder analysis examines the gendered conditions, social norms, power relations, and opportunities associated with the Project. The analysis aims to identify the factors that may influence women's ability to benefit from project activities and to inform the application of the W+ Standard under the selected domains of **Leadership** and **Income & Assets**.

The analysis draws on project documentation, focus group discussions with 50 women and 18 men participating in project activities, interviews with project staff, and consultations with community members conducted during the field assessment. The assessment explored gender roles, access to and control over productive resources, decision-making processes, livelihood strategies, leadership opportunities, and barriers that may influence women's empowerment outcomes.

The findings indicate that women play a central role in agriculture, household livelihoods, and natural resource management while also demonstrating strong levels of collective organization through community groups. However, structural inequalities continue to affect women's access to productive resources, leadership positions, and decision-making authority. At the same time, the assessment identified important opportunities to strengthen women's leadership, confidence, agency, and economic resilience by building on existing grassroots organizations, community-led restoration initiatives, and women's collective action. The relationship between these gender conditions and the project's design, including how project activities respond to identified barriers and opportunities for women's empowerment, is further examined under the Intentionality section.

Gendered Roles in Natural Resource Management and Livelihoods

The focus group discussions identified a clear gender division of labour across agricultural, livestock, household, and community activities. **99% of participants** reported that women carry primary responsibility for activities including crop production, kitchen gardens, poultry keeping, household food security, water and firewood collection, food preparation, childcare, and other unpaid domestic responsibilities. Women also contribute significantly to tree planting, seedling management, and environmental stewardship through community initiatives.

Men were more commonly associated with land preparation, livestock marketing, construction activities, and management of larger productive assets. **90% of participants** identified men as primarily responsible for one or more of these activities. This division of labour means that although both women and men contribute to household production, their responsibilities and their relationship to productive resources differ.

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Women combine their agricultural and livelihood activities with extensive reproductive responsibilities. **95% of participants** identified women as primarily responsible for household and care activities. This combination of productive and reproductive work results in a heavier and more fragmented workload and reduces the discretionary time women have available for other activities. The assessment also identified strong traditions of collective organization. Women actively participate in self-help groups, savings groups, producer groups, and other community-based organizations that facilitate mutual support, savings, knowledge exchange, and collective action. These existing structures provide an important institutional foundation for community participation and represent valuable entry points for women's leadership and other empowerment initiatives.

Implications for the intervention

The project's success depends on women's active participation in restoration, livelihood, and leadership activities. However, women's multiple productive and reproductive responsibilities may reduce the time they are able to dedicate to trainings, meetings, and collective restoration activities. At the same time, the strong presence of women's groups provides an established platform through which project activities can be delivered efficiently, strengthening participation, peer learning, and collective action while reducing barriers to engagement.

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DAILY WORKLOAD PROFILE

Illustrative composite based on GROOTS Kenya focus group discussions

WOMEN'S DAILY WORKLOAD		
Women combine productive work, businesses, household work, and care throughout a long and fragmented day.		
TIME	ACTIVITY	TYPE
 5:00-6:00	Wake, pray, prepare breakfast	Household / care
 6:00-7:30	Milk and feed animals; prepare children for school	Productive + care
 7:30-9:00	Clean utensils and house; take children to school	Household / care
 9:00-1:00	Farm, nursery, business, casual work, or meetings	Productive / community
 1:00-2:00	Prepare and serve lunch	Household / care
 2:00-5:30	Farm, grazing, business; collect water or firewood	Productive + household
 5:30-7:00	Return home; feed animals; prepare dinner	Productive + household
 7:00-9:00	Serve dinner; clean; help children with homework	Household / care
 9:00-11:00	Prepare for next day; rest or sleep	Care / personal

MEN'S DAILY WORKLOAD		
Men focus more heavily on productive activities and generally retain more discretionary or social time.		
TIME	ACTIVITY	TYPE
 6:00-6:30	Wake and check the compound or animals	Personal / productive
 6:30-7:30	Breakfast; prepare for work	Personal
 7:30-1:00	Farm work, livestock, casual labour, or business	Productive
 1:00-2:00	Lunch and rest	Personal
 2:00-5:30	Continue farm, livestock, market, or transport work	Productive
 5:30-7:00	Return home; check animals or compound	Productive / personal
 7:00-8:00	Dinner	Personal
 8:00-10:00	Social time, phone, radio, television, or rest	Leisure / social
 10:00	Sleep	Personal

The schedules vary by household and location. This composite illustrates the central finding: women's productive and leadership roles are layered onto extensive unpaid domestic and care responsibilities.

Access to and Control over Productive Resources

Although women contribute significantly to agricultural production and household livelihoods, access to and control over productive resources remain unequal. The field assessment highlighted an important distinction between women's **access to productive resources and their control over those resources**. **99% of women reported accessing or using agricultural land, while only 35% reported owning land independently or jointly**. Land ownership remains more commonly concentrated among men, with many women accessing land through their husbands or male relatives. However, participants noted that when married couples purchase land together, it is increasingly common for the title to be registered jointly in the names of both spouses, providing women with formal co-ownership rights. A small number of women also reported purchasing land independently.

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Despite these positive developments, the significant difference between women's access to land and their ownership of it may limit their ability to make independent, long-term production decisions, invest in land improvements, access formal credit, and fully benefit from agricultural and restoration initiatives. These constraints have also been identified within Laikipia County as barriers to women's adoption of climate-smart agriculture and sustainable land management practices.

A similar distinction exists in relation to livestock and other productive assets. Women participate actively in livestock management and household livelihood activities, yet **86% of women reported that men exercise greater control over higher-value livestock, livestock sales, and major household investments**. Women exercise greater control over poultry, kitchen gardens, household expenditures, and smaller income-generating activities. This illustrates that women's substantial contribution of labour does not necessarily translate into equivalent decision-making authority over productive assets or the income generated from them.

At the same time, the assessment identified women's strong participation in community-based financial mechanisms, including self-help groups, table banking initiatives, Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs), and mobile money systems. **92% of women reported participating in savings mechanisms**. This high level of participation represents an important existing resource for women's economic empowerment, providing access to savings and financial services and creating opportunities to strengthen economic resilience and livelihood diversification.

Implications for the intervention

Women's limited control over productive resources may affect their ability to independently adopt restoration practices, invest in agroforestry, or make long-term decisions regarding land use. Strengthening women's access to financial services, savings mechanisms, and livelihood opportunities can increase their economic resilience, but achieving lasting empowerment will also depend on ensuring that women are able to influence decisions regarding productive resources and retain control over the benefits generated through project activities.

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ACCESS VS. CONTROL OVER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

GROOTS Kenya - synthesis of Gender and Stakeholder Analysis findings

Women and men may both use productive resources, but access does not always translate into ownership, control, or equal decision-making authority.

RESOURCE	ACCESS / USE	CONTROL / OWNERSHIP	DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY
 LAND	Women and men farm and use land. Women contribute substantially to planting, weeding, harvesting, and food production.	Land ownership and long-term authority remain more commonly associated with men. Women may access land through husbands or relatives.	Men often lead major land-use and sale decisions. Women may be consulted, and legal consent may be required for a sale.
 LARGE LIVESTOCK	Women feed, milk, water, and care for cattle and goats; men also participate in grazing and management.	Men more commonly own or control higher-value livestock.	Men more often lead decisions on sales, purchases, breeding, and other major livestock matters.
 SMALL ANIMALS	Women are primarily responsible for raising, feeding, cleaning, and caring for chickens and other small animals.	Women have greater ownership and day-to-day control of small animals.	Women commonly decide on eggs, chicken sales, household use, and the use of smaller income streams.
 AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND EQUIPMENT	Women and men access seeds and basic agricultural inputs. Project training and inputs increased women's access.	Control over costly inputs, machinery, and larger equipment remains more frequently associated with men or negotiated jointly.	Major purchases may require joint or male approval; women exercise more authority over inputs linked to their own activities.
 TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION	Women and men use mobile phones. Project groups and training expanded women's access to information and networks.	Access to internet-enabled devices and communication resources may still be uneven.	Women increasingly use information for business and group decisions, but device access and connectivity can shape who acts on opportunities.
 FINANCIAL SERVICES	Women use self-help groups, table banking, the GROOTS Kenya SACCO, banks, M-Pesa, and other mobile-money services.	Women exercise control through individual and collective savings; the SACCO reaches women underserved by formal banks. Sharing PINs can reduce independent control.	Women increasingly decide on savings and business reinvestment. Larger household expenditures may still be decided by men or negotiated jointly.
 TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	Women access project training, mentoring, groups, and opportunities to practise leadership.	Knowledge, group membership, and mentoring strengthen women's capacity to claim opportunities and support others.	Women increasingly influence household, group, business, and community decisions, although time and resource constraints remain.

Women's Material Conditions

Most households depend on rain-fed agriculture and livestock production as their primary sources of income. However, agricultural livelihoods are increasingly affected by prolonged droughts, changing rainfall patterns, declining soil fertility, human-wildlife conflict, livestock diseases, and fluctuating

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market conditions. These environmental and economic pressures reduce agricultural productivity, increase livelihood insecurity, and affect household food security.

Women are particularly affected by these challenges because they have primary responsibility for household food production, family nutrition, and many day-to-day agricultural activities. Environmental pressures such as drought, declining soil fertility, and changing rainfall patterns can place additional demands on women's time and responsibilities as they seek to maintain household food security and agricultural production. At the same time, women have diversified livelihood strategies that include poultry production, beekeeping, tree nursery activities, small businesses, and participation in community savings groups, reducing dependence on a single income source and strengthening household resilience.

Implications for the intervention

Women's responsibility for household food security means they are often the first to experience the impacts of environmental degradation and climate variability. As land and water becomes increasingly affected by climatic changes, resulting in agricultural productivity declines, women frequently need to dedicate additional time and labour to maintaining household livelihoods, reducing the time available for income diversification, leadership activities, and skills development. By strengthening diversified livelihood opportunities, improving ecosystem health, and increasing household resilience, the project has the potential to reduce these vulnerabilities while expanding women's economic opportunities.

Women's Time Burden

Women carry primary responsibility for both productive and reproductive work within the household. In addition to farming and livestock management, women are responsible for childcare, food preparation, water collection, firewood collection, cleaning, and caring for elderly or sick family members. Seasonal agricultural activities further increase women's workload during planting and harvesting periods.

This unequal distribution of unpaid care work limits women's availability to travel and spend time to participate in training, take on leadership roles, attend community meetings, and take advantage of income-generating opportunities. Women's disproportionate care responsibilities continue to represent one of the principal barriers to their economic participation and leadership.

Implications for the intervention

Women's time poverty has direct implications for their ability to participate consistently in project activities and benefit fully from project opportunities. Time constraints may reduce attendance at trainings, leadership meetings, and restoration activities, while also limiting women's ability to engage in new livelihood opportunities. Interventions that reduce time spent on domestic tasks—such as energy-efficient cookstoves, improved access to water, and locally delivered training—can increase women's availability to participate while reducing the risk of adding to their existing workload.

Women's Position and Decision-Making

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The consultations indicate that household decision-making remains differentiated by gender, particularly in relation to higher-value productive resources. **90% of participants** reported that men generally exercise greater decision-making authority over land, livestock sales, major financial decisions, and other higher-value household assets. At the same time, women's involvement in decision-making is not entirely absent, women's influence varies according to the type and economic significance of the decision. Women also exercise greater authority over some areas of household expenditure, kitchen gardens, poultry, and smaller livelihood activities.

At the community level, the assessment identified well-established women's groups, self-help groups, and savings associations that provide spaces for collaboration, peer learning, financial inclusion, and collective action. **96% of women** reported participating in one or more community or women's organizations. These groups provide women with opportunities to exchange information, participate in collective activities, access financial resources, and engage with community initiatives.

However, participation in groups does not necessarily mean that women exercise equivalent influence within wider community decision-making structures. Gender norms, household responsibilities, and unequal control over productive resources may continue to influence women's ability to assume leadership positions and participate in decisions concerning land, natural resources, and other community priorities.

Implications for the intervention

Women's ability to influence household and community decisions will shape the extent to which they can adopt new livelihood practices, participate in restoration activities, and benefit from project investments. Building on existing women's organizations and strengthening leadership capacities can increase women's confidence, agency, and participation in community governance, helping ensure that women are not only participants in project activities but also active contributors to decision-making processes.

Stakeholder Analysis

The principal stakeholders include women participating in self-help groups, savings groups, community-based organizations, farmer groups, and groups managing restoration activities, together with local community leaders, county government departments, extension officers, GROOTS, VIA Foundation, and other organizations supporting landscape restoration and rural development in the project area.

Women represent one of the project's primary stakeholder groups because of their central role in agriculture, household livelihoods, and natural resource management. Existing community organizations provide effective mechanisms for communication, collective action, knowledge sharing, and financial inclusion, while county government institutions and technical partners contribute extension services, policy support, and technical expertise. The presence of these institutions, combined with strong grassroots organizations, creates favourable conditions for promoting women's

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participation in sustainable livelihood development, environmental stewardship, and community leadership.

Implications for the intervention

The project benefits from a well-established network of community organizations and institutional partners that can facilitate implementation, capacity building, and long-term sustainability. However, because decision-making authority over land and other productive resources often remains concentrated among male household members and community leaders, continued engagement with both women and key decision-makers will be important to support women's meaningful participation, strengthen local ownership, and ensure that project benefits are equitably shared.

3. SELECTION OF W+ DOMAINS

The selection of the **Leadership** and **Income & Assets** domains (as noted in the Project Idea Note) is based on the project's intervention strategy, FGDs and activities implemented, as well as on the interest expressed by the project developer and funding partner on measuring Leadership and Income & Assets. The assessment identified important opportunities to strengthen women's participation in community leadership while improving their access to livelihood opportunities and productive resources. At the same time, structural barriers—including unequal control over productive assets, limited participation in decision-making, and women's disproportionate workload—may influence the extent to which women benefit from project activities. These two domains therefore provide the most appropriate framework for measuring women's empowerment outcomes achieved to date under the Project.

The **Leadership** domain was selected because the project includes activities designed to strengthen women's participation in household and community decision-making, natural resource governance, and grassroots leadership. The project supports leadership development through training on gender and feminist approaches, participatory planning, land and resource governance, organizational strengthening, and the promotion of women leaders and community champions. These activities seek to strengthen women's confidence, agency, participation in collective action, and ability to influence decisions affecting their households, communities, and natural resource management.

The **Income & Assets** domain was selected because the project supports women's economic resilience through diversified livelihood opportunities linked to forest landscape restoration and agroforestry. Activities such as community tree nurseries, restoration employment, poultry production, beekeeping, agroforestry, and savings mechanisms provide opportunities to strengthen women's access to income, productive assets, financial services, and livelihood diversification while contributing to household resilience and sustainable natural resource management.

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W+ Domain	Benefits	Challenges/Potential Risks
<i>Leadership</i>	• Increased confidence and self-efficacy. • Greater participation in household and community decision-making. • Strengthened leadership skills and collective action. • Increased participation in natural resource governance. • Expanded social networks and peer support.	• Traditional gender norms may continue to limit women's participation in leadership roles. • Household responsibilities may reduce participation in meetings and leadership activities. • Women may face resistance when assuming leadership positions traditionally held by men. • Existing power dynamics within community organizations may limit equal participation.
<i>Income & Assets</i>	• Increased access to income-generating opportunities. • Diversified livelihood opportunities. • Improved access to productive assets and financial services. • Increased financial resilience. • Greater economic independence	• Limited land ownership and control may reduce women's ability to benefit fully from land-based activities. • Climate variability and environmental risks may affect livelihood outcomes. • Men may retain control over higher-value household assets and income. • Additional livelihood activities may increase women's workload if not accompanied by appropriate support.

W+ Domains and Crediting Periods

<i>W+ Domain and title of related activities</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>	<i>Crediting period: Total Years</i>	<i>Any Associated Standard</i>
Leadership • Gender and feminist approaches training • Leadership development and mentoring • Organizational strengthening • Participatory planning and governance • Community dialogue and stakeholder engagement • Trainings targeting women restoration champions	January 2024	December 2028	2 years	NA
Income & Assets • Employment in community tree nurseries • Forest restoration employment • Agroforestry production • Poultry production • Beekeeping • Trainings and guidance to increase participation in savings groups, table banking and SACCO participation	January 2024	December 2028	2 years	NA

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4. PROJECT'S INTENTIONALITY

For the W+ Standard, women's empowerment outcomes must be both intentional and measurable.

Policy for gender/women's empowerment	Budget targeted for women's empowerment	M&E plan for women's empowerment	Internal capacities for gender analysis and women's empowerment	Project's selection criteria of beneficiaries <i>to demonstrate equal opportunity for participation of women from all social groups in project activities</i>
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Both Groots and VIA have an active gender policy	Groots has a budget targeted for women's empowerment	Groots has an M&E Plan for women's empowerment	The Project Officer at Groots has extensive knowledge on gender analysis and women's empowerment. The project design responds to key barriers identified in the gender analysis, particularly women's limited access to income and productive resources and their participation in leadership and decision-making.	Groots includes targets such as 60% women participants in trainings

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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PLAN

Result Level	W+ Domain	Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
End Outcome	Income & Assets	Women strengthen their financial resilience, diversify household livelihoods, and increase control over income and productive resources.	% reporting improved access to productive assets; % reporting improved financial resilience (% of women with increased access to financial mechanisms, % of women with established businesses); % women reporting access to sustained income beyond the project	project records; beneficiary interviews. interviews with peers, financial statements
End Outcome	Leadership	Women exercise leadership and representation roles in community, and institutional spaces, with the capacity to influence processes, agendas, and outcomes.	% of leadership spaces where women report influence over outcomes. - Diversity of women's profiles participating (age, territory, ethnic identity).	Committee and meeting minutes, testimonies, institutional records
Intermediate outcome	Income & Assets	Women have improved access to employment opportunities, productive assets, and diversified livelihood activities.	% of women accessing employment or livelihood opportunities; % receiving productive assets; % of Increased income, % of small businesses operationalized	FGDs, Project monitoring records, testimonials, financial statements
Intermediate outcome	Leadership	Women have recognised roles, formal or informal, in decision making, oversight, and representation bodies through inclusive organizational arrangements. Their contributions are taken seriously and recognized among the community.	- Number of women in leadership or spokesperson roles, both formal and informal. % of sustained participation over time. % of women's proposals accepted by their groups % of leadership spaces where women report influence over outcomes. - Existence of spokesperson mechanisms, networks, or expanded representation structures.	Community groups and organizational records, attendance lists, process systematizations, project reports, meeting notes that indicate women's proposals or initiatives
Immediate Outcome	Income & Assets	Women are receiving income from in livelihood activities including community nurseries, agroforestry, restoration employment, poultry production, beekeeping, and savings mechanisms such as table banking and SACCOs.	% of women employed or supported, % of increased income, number of plans for small business	Project reports, attendance sheets, community records, training reports.

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Immediate Outcome	Leadership	Women strengthen their confidence, leadership skills, and capacity to communicate, negotiate, and articulate diverse interests in complex contexts.	• % of women reporting increased confidence to speak and make decisions. • % of women reporting greater capacity to articulate collective interests. % of women reporting greater capacity to speak out in community spaces	W+ individual surveys, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews. Self-assessments, facilitator observations, qualitative testimonies.
Outputs	Leadership & Income	Women participate in training on gender and feminist approaches, leadership, governance, land rights, organizational strengthening, participatory planning, and community dialogue. Women also participate in community groups, restoration committees, and leadership development activities. Women have access to the projects financial resources and inputs for their nurseries	# of leadership trainings, mentoring, or accompaniment processes. # of collective spaces (forums, working groups, territorial processes) strengthened • Number of women participating in livelihood activities. • Number of women accessing savings and financial mechanisms. • Number of women restoration champions *Number of livelihood trainings delivered.	Project records, attendance sheets, training reports, community group records.
Inputs	Leadership & Income	Human, technical, and organizational resources are mobilized to support women's leadership in a sustained and context-sensitive manner. Training courses, nursery inputs, financial support and financial services, extension support, safeguards are developed.	Resources allocated for project implementation, Gender Action Plan, Safeguards, development of training materials, consultations with community members	Project documentation, work plans, budgets and implementation records.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

The W+ measurement will be conducted using individual surveys administered to a representative sample of 35 women for Leadership and 61 women for Income & Assets participating in the project. The sample size was calculated using 90% confidence level and 10% margin of error for both domains. Data collection will be carried out using KoboToolbox by trained local enumerators following the W+ Standard methodology.

As this is a back-crediting project to measure outcomes achieved over the past two years, both the Leadership and Income & Assets domains will be measured using the recall methodology, allowing participating women to reflect on changes experienced since the start of the project activities. Individual survey data will be complemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to provide qualitative context, triangulate survey findings, and support the interpretation of women's empowerment outcomes.

Data collected through the surveys and qualitative methods will be analyzed in accordance with the W+ Standard methodology. The findings will be presented in the W+ Monitoring and Results Report, which will document changes in women's empowerment across the selected domains of Leadership and Income & Assets, generating a percentage of change for each domain.

Women's Empowerment Outcome	Indicators	MoV	Frequency	Collection methods	Responsibility
Leadership: Women participate regularly and sustainably in decision-making, oversight, and representation bodies through inclusive organizational arrangements. Their contributions are taken seriously and recognized among the community.	- Number of women in leadership or spokesperson roles. % of sustained participation over time. % of women's proposals accepted by their groups % of leadership spaces where women report influence over outcomes. - Existence of spokesperson mechanisms, networks, or expanded representation structures.	Training evaluation, interviews with peers	Measurement will take place from May 21 to 26, 2026 Annually	Surveys and focus group discussions	WOCAN team
Women have improved access to employment opportunities, productive assets, and diversified livelihood activities, contributing to , increased economic resilience.	% of women accessing employment or livelihood opportunities; % receiving productive assets; % of Increased income, % of small businesses operationalized	Project monitoring records; bank records, SACCO records	Measurement will take place from May 21 to 26, 2026 Annually	Surveys and focus group discussions	WOCAN team

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6. DO NO HARM

The W+ Standard requires projects to identify potential social and gender-related risks that could unintentionally reduce women's empowerment or create negative impacts for women participating in project activities. As this Project Design Document (PDD) is prepared prior to the W+ measurement, the purpose of this section is not to assess whether harm has occurred, but rather to identify areas that require attention during project implementation and subsequent monitoring.

The gender analysis identified several contextual factors that have the potential to influence women's ability to participate in and benefit equitably from the project. These include existing inequalities in access to and control over productive resources, women's disproportionate unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, prevailing gender norms that may affect leadership and decision-making, barriers faced by more vulnerable groups of women, and governance challenges that could influence the transparent and equitable management of project benefits. These represent potential risks associated with the implementation context rather than confirmed impacts of the project itself.

During the field assessment, discussions with women participants and interviews with project staff indicated that GROOTS Kenya has integrated safeguarding considerations into project implementation. Existing measures include gender-responsive community engagement, transparent beneficiary selection processes, collaboration with community institutions and county government, awareness-raising activities, and mechanisms through which participants can raise concerns or provide feedback. These discussions suggest that the project recognizes the importance of preventing unintended harm and has established processes intended to support inclusive and equitable implementation.

The effectiveness of these safeguarding measures, together with any unintended impacts identified through individual surveys, FGDs, KIIs, and stakeholder consultations, will be assessed during the W+ results measurement. The findings will be presented in the W+ Monitoring and Results Report, which will document whether any unintended harm has occurred and evaluate the effectiveness of the project's safeguarding measures.

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7. BENEFIT SHARING MECHANISM

A key requirement of the W+ Standard is the establishment of a transparent, reliable, auditable, timely, and secure benefit-sharing mechanism to ensure that women directly benefit from revenues generated through the sale of W+ credits.

Potential benefit-sharing mechanisms were discussed during the field assessment with project staff and community representatives to better understand the existing organizational structures through which women participate in project activities and community decision-making. The assessment explored current governance arrangements, women's leadership and participation in community groups, existing financial management mechanisms, and opportunities to ensure that women themselves manage the use of revenues generated from the sale of W+ credits.

Recommended Benefit-Sharing Mechanism

Based on the assessment, GROOTS Kenya may consider using its existing women's groups, self-help groups, and community organizations as the primary mechanism for distributing revenues generated through the sale of W+ credits. These groups already provide established structures for women's leadership, community participation, collective decision-making, savings, and financial management, making them a suitable platform for administering W+ revenue, while building on existing governance systems.

Where existing community groups are used, clear procedures should be established to ensure that:

- women eligible to receive W+ revenues are clearly identified and documented;
- decisions regarding the use of W+ revenues are made collectively by the women beneficiaries;
- financial records and benefit distributions are transparent, traceable, and auditable;
- appropriate financial management and accountability mechanisms are maintained; and
- accessible feedback and grievance mechanisms are available should concerns arise regarding the management or distribution of benefits.

Building on existing community structures provides an opportunity to strengthen local ownership while minimizing the need to establish new governance arrangements. However, the final benefit-sharing mechanism should be determined by GROOTS Kenya in consultation with participating women and should comply with all requirements of the W+ Standard.

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8. DECLARATION OF NON-INVOLVEMENT IN ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE OR HARASSMENT (SEAH)

Hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, neither Groots Kenya or any other entity involved in project design or implementation has been involved in or will be involved in any form of discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment (SEAH).

This signed declaration is made in good faith and with my full consent, without pressure or coercion. I understand that any breach thereof may/will result in the termination of the W+ Application.

This signed declaration forms part of the requirements of the application of the W+ Standard.

Signature of authorized representative submitting this Project Design Document

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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W+ Project Design Document Template Revision History		
#	Date	Description
1	2015	Original
2	22 May 2017	Edits to nomenclature for consistency. Removal of redundant information requests. Addition of time-frames and specificity regarding multiple domains and prevention of double-counting.
3	16 June 2017	Expansion of PDD requirements, transferred text from W+ Standard responding to public comments.
4	12 February 2019	Edits to clarify content of each section
5	27 October 2020	Edits to clarify content of each section
6	7 November 2023	Edits to clarify content of each section and include Women's empowerment plan and intentionality