

UNHCR Evaluation Management Response			
Evaluation title:	Final Evaluation Report of Phase I Climate Smart Agriculture and Market Development - Enhancing Livelihoods of Refugees and Their Host Communities in Rwanda 2020 - 2023		
UNHCR evaluation reference:	075 Climate Smart (Unique QA ID)		
Entity that commissioned the evaluation:	UNHCR Rwanda		
Due date of Management Response:	9 May 2025		
Coordinator of Management Response:	Marcellin Mugabe Marjorie Mua	Assistant Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Officer Senior Programme Officer	UNHCR Rwanda
Management Response approved by (senior manager in commissioning office):	Name: Ndeye Aissatou Masseck Ndiaye	Job title: Country Representative	Country/Office: Rwanda
Date:	9 May 2025		

General comments on the evaluation:	<p>UNHCR Rwanda welcomes the positive findings of the evaluation. We agree with the findings that the implementation of the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Market Development project has significantly enhanced UNHCR's operational effectiveness, agility, and engagement with partners. Considering that UNHCR is implementing Phase II of the same project, now is an opportune time to review how well the climate-smart-agriculture approach is working and what needs to be further adjusted.</p> <p>UNHCR acknowledges that finetuning is still needed in several areas, including in the areas of resilience to climatic shocks, engagement of vulnerable groups, adaptive cooperative management practices, and sustainable market linkages. UNHCR has carefully considered all the recommendations presented in the review and fully or partially agrees with all the findings. Looking ahead, UNHCR will address these recommendations in alignment with its planned activities and evolving approaches, including the integration of disaster risk reduction, forecasting, and scenario planning in livelihood programming.</p> <p>At the core of these efforts remains UNHCR's focus on protection and solutions and its catalytic role under the Global Compact on Refugees. Furthermore, the renewed emphasis on efficiencies and refugee self-reliance requires strategic partnerships, while ensuring continued adherence to the principles of inclusion and sustainability. UNHCR remains committed to empowering operations with the necessary capacities, coordination, support, and oversight, enhancing agility and responsiveness, strengthening its contribution to the goals of "One UN", the 2nd edition of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST-II) and the Refugee Sustainable Graduation Strategy which aim at fostering self-reliance for refugees in Rwanda.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 1:	The project needs to more systematically engage the vulnerable (elderly, chronically ill and those living with disability) to identify other livelihood opportunities that are more appropriate for them and will lead to more meaningful progress towards resilience and self-reliance.
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Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		The elderly, chronically ill and those living with disability are included as indirect beneficiaries (as members of participating households) since the project directly targets a member of the household who is able to till the land.				
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR livelihoods, protection, and Accountability on Affected People (AAP) teams in close collaboration with the community, the private sector and Government of Rwanda.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Evaluate the vulnerability status of current project participants and/or members of their respective households and implement a preferential treatment plan for them when undertaking physically demanding tasks, such as transporting manure and harvesting.	-Livelihoods/ protection Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the Field Office -Implementing Partner (IP).	Phase 2 of the project (August 2024 - July 2027) plans to conduct a Quick Baseline Assessment. The data collection tool will incorporate questions designed to assess the vulnerability status of existing participants or members of their respective households.	31 Dec 2025		
2	Create job opportunities for members of vulnerable groups, including the elderly, chronically ill, and persons with disabilities (PWD), within Phase II Project components that require minimal physical effort. For example, employ them in livestock farming in Nyabicwamba and mushroom cultivation in Mushishito.	-Livelihoods /protection Unit at the CO -Livelihood Staff at the FO -IP	In addition to agricultural activities in the marshlands, Phase II encompasses low-intensity labor tasks, such as small livestock and mushroom farming, which will generate additional employment opportunities reserved for vulnerable groups.	31 Dec 2025		
RECOMMENDATION 2:		At the programmatic level, UNHCR should strengthen resilience and mitigate against the effects of recurring climatic shocks by pro-actively integrating disaster risk reduction, forecasting and scenario planning in livelihood programming. This should be with the objective of inbuilding resilience capacities, preparedness, anticipatory action, and shock management strategies into projects.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						

Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR livelihoods unit in consultation with senior management; in close collaboration with the community, the private sector and the government.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Integrate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into livelihood projects.	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field office -Implementing partner	The specific action involves developing and implementing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies within Phase II of the Climate-Smart Agricultural (CSA) Project. This entails conducting comprehensive risk assessments to identify potential climatic shocks and vulnerabilities and establishing early warning mechanisms to alert communities of impending disasters. The objective is to enhance the ability of communities to anticipate and respond to climatic shocks, thereby mitigating their impact on livelihoods and improving overall resilience. In addition, the project should sensitize participants to buy a crop and livestock insurance for each cropping season in order to obtain financial compensation in the event of natural disasters. Likewise, Phase II of the project will complete the remaining marshland development and irrigation work which will mitigate the effects of floods and drought respectively.	31 Dec 2026		
RECOMMENDATION 3:		A participatory, scenario and evidence-based exit strategy should be developed based on needs and experiences from men, women, the youth, the elderly, people living with disability, the chronically ill and key stakeholders to ensure no one is left behind.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR livelihoods unit in consultation with protection and senior management; in close collaboration with the community, the private sector and government				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Conduct Inclusive Participatory Assessment	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices	The specific action involves conducting a participatory assessment with project participants through focus group discussions encompassing diverse categories, including men, women, youth, the elderly, people living with disabilities, the chronically ill, and key community leaders. This assessment aims to gather insights,	31 Dec 2025		

		-Implementing partner	experiences, and needs related to the project and its exit strategy. The objective is to ensure that the exit strategy is informed by the voices and experiences of all community members, fostering inclusivity and addressing the specific needs of each group.			
2	Develop an Evidence-Based Exit Strategy	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner	The specific action involves the creation of an exit strategy based on consultations and data analysis, with the objective of enabling project participants to develop a robust, inclusive, and evidence-based exit strategy, including, but not limited to, grouping project participants into agricultural cooperatives, supporting cooperatives in extending their businesses from farming activities to livestock and agro-processing (maize processing plant); off-farm businesses such as agro-dealership.	31 Dec 2025		
RECOMMENDATION 4:		UNHCR in close collaboration with beneficiaries, implementing partner, government and donors should clearly integrate adaptive management practices where evidence is used during implementation, to inform programmatic, capacity development and resource allocation adjustments that can contribute to inclusion, sustainability planning and effective risk management.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR livelihoods in consultation with the government, the implementing partner, community representatives and key stakeholders.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Establish a Continuous Monitoring and Feedback System and Conducting Annual Participatory Assessment.	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner	The specific action involves developing a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that continuously collects data on project performance, climatic conditions, and beneficiary feedback. This system should include regular surveys, focus group discussions, and real-time data collection tools, with the objective of using the collected evidence to make informed adjustments to programmatic activities, capacity development initiatives, and resource allocation.	31 Dec 2025		

2	Facilitate Collaborative Decision-Making Meetings.	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner	The specific action involves organizing regular meetings with beneficiaries, implementing partners, government representatives, and donors to review project data and discuss adaptive management strategies. The objective is to foster a collaborative approach to decision-making that leverages the expertise and insights of all stakeholders. This approach helps in effectively managing risks, ensuring that the project adapts to new challenges, and fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among all parties involved.	31 Dec 2025		
RECOMMENDATION 5:		UNHCR in close collaboration with youth representatives should develop an approach or adjust the project to introduce innovative approaches to farming and marketing that can create more demand and engagement by the youth.				
Management response:		<input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		We partially agree because the focus of the project is not specifically on the youth, but rather on members of existing cooperatives who may not necessarily fall within the youth category (below 35 years). However, we acknowledge the importance of introducing innovative approaches to farming and marketing, regardless of the age of the participants.				
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR livelihoods in consultation with implementing partners, youth representatives, private sector and government.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Introduce Mobile-Based Agricultural Advisory Services	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner	Specific activities involve procuring mobile phone for farmers leaders in order to make use of the existing mobile-based advisory service that provides farmers with simple, actionable farming tips and market information via SMS or voice messages in the local language.	31 Dec 2025		
2	Establish Farmer Field Schools (FFS)	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner	This action consists in setting up Farmer Field Schools where participants can learn and practice innovative farming techniques through hands-on experience and peer learning. Specific steps include: Identify Local Trainers: Select knowledgeable local farmers or agricultural extension workers to lead the Farmer Field Schools. Conduct Regular Sessions: Organize regular sessions where participants can learn about and practice new farming techniques, such as crop rotation, organic farming, and pest management.	31 Dec 2025		

			Promote Peer Learning: Encourage participants to share their experiences and learn from each other, fostering a collaborative learning environment.			
RECOMMENDATION 6:		UNHCR should use evidence from the evaluation to strengthen their procurement processes on (i) timeliness (ii) vetting on quality of prospective contractors to ensure quality and timely delivery of tasks.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						
Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR senior management, livelihoods, procurement, programmes, and key departments.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Enhance timeliness in procurement processes by implementing through an Implementing Partner	-Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner	To fast-track the timeliness in procurement processes and reduce delays, UNHCR has reverted to implementing through an implementing partner. This approach involves selecting a capable and reliable partner organization with a proven track record in efficient procurement and agricultural project implementation. The implementing partner is responsible for managing the procurement of goods and services, ensuring that all processes adhere to UNHCR's standards and timelines. By leveraging the partner's local expertise and established networks, UNHCR can expedite procurement activities, minimize bureaucratic delays, and ensure timely delivery of essential resources. This collaborative effort enhances overall project efficiency and effectiveness, ultimately benefiting the target communities.	31 Dec 2025		
RECOMMENDATION 7:		UNHCR should consider increasing the capacity of cooperatives to better manage surplus, fund productive kits, and market their produce more effectively to strengthen sustainability.				
Management response:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):						

Unit or function responsible:		UNHCR programme and livelihoods unit in collaboration with cooperative representatives and implementing partners.				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Enhance Surplus Management Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner -Cooperatives 	<p>The initiative will help improve the ability of cooperatives to manage surplus produce effectively, ensuring minimal waste and maximizing profitability. Specific steps include:</p> <p>Implement Storage Solutions: Invest in harvest-storage facilities and technologies, such as cold storage (mushroom in Mushishito) and vacuum packing (maize flour in Nyabiheke), to extend the shelf life of surplus produce.</p> <p>Training Programs: Conduct training sessions for cooperative members on best practices for surplus management, including inventory tracking and demand forecasting.</p> <p>Partnerships with other Food Storage Facilities: Establish partnerships with local food banks and community organizations to distribute surplus produce, reducing waste and supporting community needs</p>	31 Dec 2026		
2	Fund Productive Inputs and Kits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Livelihoods Unit at the country office -Livelihood Staff at the field offices -Implementing partner 	<p>This action will provide cooperatives with the necessary tools and resources to enhance productivity and efficiency in farming operations. Specific steps include:</p> <p>Secure Funding: Identify and apply for grants and funding opportunities for Phase II of the project, specifically aimed at supporting agricultural cooperatives.</p> <p>Distribute Kits: Provide productive kits that include essential farming tools, seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs to cooperative members.</p> <p>Strengthening cooperative for sustainable management of its financial resources, supporting it to engage and diversify income which will enable them to secure resources for further investment in access to kits and inputs.</p>	31 Dec 2025		

			Monitor and Evaluate: Regularly monitor the use of these kits and evaluate their impact on productivity and sustainability, making adjustments as needed.			
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