



FINAL REPORT SUSTAIN PRO MIDTERM EVALUATION

Prepared by Altai Consulting for IUCN | Tanzania_Mozambique – September, 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IUCN commissioned Altai Consulting to conduct a mid-term review (MTR) of the Productive Landscapes for Inclusive Growth in Tanzania and Mozambique (SUSTAIN Pro). This report documents the findings of the MTR.

BACKGROUND

Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa (**SUSTAIN-Africa**) was an IUCN-led initiative implemented by the IUCN Water and Wetlands Team from 2014 to 2020 in Tanzania and Mozambique. The multi-year project sought to integrate conservation and development efforts to enhance resilience and productivity in African landscapes, focusing on catalysing climate-resilient development and creating a balance between economic growth, ecosystem stewardship, and social prosperity. Since 2021, building on SUSTAIN-Africa's gains in its first phase, IUCN initiated a second phase of SUSTAIN-Africa through SUSTAIN Pro and Ecosystem Stewardship to Balance Sustainability and Growth in Tanzania (SUSTAIN Eco) projects. Both sister projects aim to accelerate a paradigm shift that will foster resilience in economies, people, and nature.

SUSTAIN Pro is funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and was launched in December 2021, with an initial operational period from 2022 to 2024, including an inception phase in 2022. A no-cost extension was granted until December 2025 within a broader long-term vision for the project, which was designed as a 10-year initiative. SUSTAIN Pro focuses on promoting sustainable food systems and healthy, productive landscapes in Mozambique and Tanzania. At the same time, SUSTAIN Eco aims to enable healthy ecosystems and prosperous communities in Tanzania by improving governance and rights, strengthening sustainable management practices, and catalysing investment in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

The project works in productive landscapes to balance economic growth with enhanced food security, land health, and social prosperity, contributing to the development of sustainable food systems. The project is delivered through three main outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Solutions for sustainable agricultural production are scaled up;
- Outcome 2: Land health is restored using landscape partnerships; and
- Outcome 3: Investments in sustainable value chains accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems (IUCN, 2021).

PURPOSE OF THE MTR

The main objectives of the MTR were to assess the performance of SUSTAIN Pro, identify areas for improvement, and inform future phases of project implementation. The MTR assessed the project against five OECD-DAC criteria, and two additional criteria based on IUCN's priorities:

- **Relevance:** Determine whether the project remains aligned with the strategic priorities of IUCN and national and local authorities/policies, and whether it meets the needs of the target communities in Tanzania and Mozambique.
- **Coherence:** Assess the project's coherence with its original design, and its compatibility with other IUCN initiatives and other actors in the region. Under coherence, the MTR also assessed the extent to which the project engaged relevant constituents of the Union in its design or implementation so far (government, IUCN members, and commission members with experience in Tanzania and Mozambique) through a One Programme approach, as recommended by the IUCN evaluation policy guidelines.
- **Effectiveness:** Assess the success of the project in achieving its outcomes and outputs, including the expansion of sustainable agricultural practices, the restoration of land health, and

the development of sustainable value chains. In line with IUCN's evaluation policy, the MTR also considered contributions to science/policy/action.

- **Efficiency:** Assess the use of project resources and the value for money achieved. The MTR also assessed measures put in place to avoid corrupt practices, in line with IUCN's evaluation policy.
- **Sustainability:** Assess the project's contribution to long-term sustainability and its ability to produce lasting effects beyond the project's duration.
- **Gender, youth and human rights:** Assess the extent of promotion of gender and youth objectives under the project to advance gender equality and/or gender responsive strategies.
- **Environment and climate change:** Assess whether the project used IUCN's environment and social management systems for the identification and mitigation of risks during implementation. Also assess whether there have been any negative environmental and climate impacts from project interventions, and if so, how they have been mitigated/addressed.

These criteria and their evaluation questions guided the development of an evaluation matrix, providing a framework for tool development, data analysis, synthesis, and reporting.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research methodology was employed to address the needs of the MTR. The evaluation team conducted an extensive document review of SUSTAIN-Africa, SUSTAIN Pro and relevant SUSTAIN Eco project documents. The MTR drew from 53 key informant interviews with government representatives, private sector stakeholders and partnering agencies. The team also consulted with Norad as SUSTAIN Pro's funding partner, SUSTAIN Pro staff, and implementing partners in Mozambique. A total of 20 focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with SUSTAIN Pro stakeholders at the landscape level, including producers, village associations, community leaders, lead farmers, natural resource management committees, water user associations, and input suppliers.

FINDINGS

The mid-term review concluded that SUSTAIN Pro is progressing at either highly satisfactory or satisfactory levels across each of the evaluation criteria. SUSTAIN Pro remains highly relevant to key stakeholders and target groups. It is highly appreciated for its focus areas on promoting sustainable agricultural practices, land health restoration, and its ongoing work on catalysing sustainable food systems.

Relevance: The level of performance was assessed as **highly satisfactory**. SUSTAIN Pro aligns strongly with IUCN priorities, national and sub-national priorities, and stakeholder/beneficiary needs in the present, medium term (next 5 years), and longer term (10 years).

SUSTAIN's Theory of Change remains relevant, with selected pathways demonstrating that outputs are contributing towards intended change.

Coherence: The project's approach to ensuring coherence in its delivery was found to be **satisfactory**. In its first phase, SUSTAIN Pro has largely followed its design, making minor adjustments that were informed through feasibility assessments and stakeholder engagement. There was complementarity with other IUCN projects implemented in shared landscapes.

Effectiveness: The level of performance was assessed as **satisfactory**. SUSTAIN Pro shows the expected level of progress towards achieving its indicators as set in the project logframe. Achievement of outputs under Outcome 1 are highly satisfactory, while outputs contributing to Outcomes 2 have made substantial progress. Outputs under Outcome 3 have also kicked off, with greater progress expected in 2025. Some emerging results include the increased adoption of climate-smart agricultural

practices, such as innovative solutions like SRI, leading to higher yields in supported value chains. Anecdotal evidence also suggests improved soil health, sustainable water use, and enhanced moisture retention. Landscape stakeholders have continued to show commitments to the ILM approach through landscape partnerships, leading to the restoration of forests and water resources. And under Outcome 3, SUSTAIN Pro has laid a strong foundation with early adoption of sustainability standards, development of market-ready tools, and partnership building.

Efficiency: The level of performance was assessed as **highly satisfactory**. Established systems and processes are in place to ensure accountability for project funds, timely reporting, and meeting donor requirements. The project's M&E system and tools are robust, with opportunities to enhance documentation of lessons learned and learning from project implementation.

Sustainability: The level of performance was assessed as **satisfactory**. SUSTAIN Pro project stakeholders show strong ownership of project activities and the gains they have realised. SUSTAIN has anchored its programme work in regional and local structures and multi-stakeholder platforms, providing a foundational basis for the long-term sustainability of project achievements and leveraging policy influence and stakeholder buy-in. Continued funding of the project over the next phase remains crucial for important gains that are just materialising, such as the land health monitoring index (LHMI), which has been piloted and contributed towards multi-stakeholder commitments to a soil health compact in Tanzania, and for Outcome 3, on building bankable business cases and policy pathways to unlock finance for climate-smart agriculture, NbS, and integrated landscape management (ILM), planned for 2025 and beyond.

Gender, youth and human rights: The Level of performance was assessed as **satisfactory**. SUSTAIN Pro, through its gender and youth action, has ensured that project activities reflect balanced benefits for men, women and youth. These are tracked through gender indicators integrated into SUSTAIN Pro's logframe indicators. GESI activities were welcomed by stakeholders, particularly AMCOS and its farmer members. The most significant gains have been achieved in fostering more GESI-aware leadership within AMCOS, as reflected in the increasing involvement of women and youth in decision-making structures. Nevertheless, GESI activities are strongly influenced by societal beliefs and systemic disadvantages against women and youth, which limit, for instance, the number of women extension workers attached to government agencies, who work on the project, or how youth are integrated within decision-making structures at the landscape level. SUSTAIN Pro has aimed to change these biases through GESI awareness and training.

Environment and climate change: the level of performance was assessed as **satisfactory**. The project uses project monitoring indicators, such as LHMI, which will assess the impact of SUSTAIN interventions on the environment in the long term. Baselines were completed in Kilombero and Ihemi clusters and are planned to roll out in Sumbawanga, Tanzania, and in Vanduzi and Bárue districts in Mozambique.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

SR1. Program Sustainability and Exit Planning	
SR1a	Develop a comprehensive exit strategy with financial and operational plans, including phased funding scenarios, to ensure long-term sustainability. SUSTAIN Pro should develop a comprehensive exit strategy that provides clear financial and operational plans for ensuring long-term intervention sustainability. The exit strategy should be forward-looking for the 10-year planned project period, incorporating scenarios for diminished funding or the premature end of the project. The design of Phase 2 can be presented with funding scenarios that cater to partial funding and full funding, along with identified priorities for each scenario.
SR1b	Prioritise consolidating SUSTAIN Pro's innovations regionally, establishing replicable models, and sharing lessons for potential expansion. Phase 2 of the SUSTAIN programme should prioritise the consolidation of SUSTAIN Pro's interventions within the existing geographical areas, with emphasis tailored to the specific context of each region. The focus

	<p>should be on continuing to establish robust and replicable models and sharing knowledge and lessons with stakeholders who wish to expand or replicate them in other areas.</p> <p>In Tanzania, SUSTAIN Pro should build on the successes of integrated landscape management, leveraging synergies between Pro and Eco interventions and consolidating partnerships with key private-sector actors to create replicable multi-stakeholder collaboration models. <u>In Kilombero</u>, these partnerships can support integrated approaches, while <u>in Ihemi</u>, emphasis should be placed on strengthening cooperative governance, enhancing female representation, and ensuring institutional accountability, alongside access to formal financing and technical support to sustain adoption of sustainable practices. <u>In Sumbawanga</u>, lessons from SUSTAIN Eco should inform broader landscape interventions in water, forest, and agriculture, generating transferable models for use in Mozambique and similar contexts.</p> <p>In Mozambique, efforts should focus on additional technical capacity to DCGs <u>in Bárue</u> and <u>Vanduzi</u> as self-sufficient exemplars of multi-stakeholder governance and coordinated landscape management. The operationalisation of the LHMI across priority restoration areas should also be completed to support decision-making, alongside full implementation of financing mechanisms to ensure economic sustainability prior to any geographic expansion.</p>
SR2. Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement	
SR2a	Strengthen partnerships through targeted private sector engagement. The MTR recommends that SUSTAIN Pro continue to expand and deepen engagement with stakeholders in the private sector, including manufacturers, agrodealers, financial institutions, including those providing microfinance.
SR2b	Formalise and strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms by developing operational and sustainability plans, assigning conveners, and ensuring continuity beyond project support. It is recommended that the program continue to pursue the MSP approach, as evidence demonstrates its effectiveness in advancing collective gains and embedding them within formalised agreements. Lessons from the implementation of Phase I of Pro underscore the importance of formalising MSPs to strengthen their long-term sustainability. To ensure continuity beyond the project cycle, operational and sustainability plans should be developed for these platforms.
SR2c	Initiate new collaborations with strategic partners to contribute to Sustain Pro in phase 2. AGRA offers SUSTAIN Pro strong value through its Africa-wide seed networks, crop value chains, agrodealer systems, and financing mechanisms, complementing SUSTAIN Pro's policy influence with continental advocacy and commercial scaling. The Mastercard Foundation provides strategic partnership potential by linking SUSTAIN Pro's agricultural innovations with its youth employment, funding capacity, and digital agriculture programs in Tanzania and Mozambique, amplifying reach and impact. WISER addresses SUSTAIN Pro's climate information gap by pairing its expertise in meteorological services with SUSTAIN Pro's farmer networks, enabling co-created climate-smart advisories and integrated weather-agriculture solutions.
SR2d	Strengthen collaboration with authorities to integrate social impact and human-wildlife conflict mitigation into restoration and land-use planning. SUSTAIN can consider further collaboration with wildlife authorities and district planning offices in the next phase for restoration-related work to assess social impact for communities living around conservation areas, in addition to integration of human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures into landscape restoration and land -use planning.
SR3. Program Integration and Coherence	
SR3a	Strengthen SUSTAIN-Africa's unified branding and ensure consistent messaging to avoid misinterpretation of SUSTAIN Pro's focus. Greater emphasis should be placed on promoting SUSTAIN-Africa as a unified brand to provide stakeholders with a clear view of its overall goals. Clear communication is also needed to correct misconceptions linking SUSTAIN Pro solely to organic farming, with consistent messaging from extension officers helping to address misinterpretations.

SR3b	Promote stronger integration between Pro and Eco through shared planning, stakeholder mapping, and regular joint meetings. Work planning should be conducted at the overall SUSTAIN initiative level alongside project-specific plans, with shared activities and stakeholders clearly mapped. Biannual joint meetings with Pro and Eco stakeholders would help demonstrate complementarities, shared resource use, cost efficiencies, and aligned work plans.
SR3c	Develop localised theories of change for SUSTAIN Pro that align with the overarching SUSTAIN ToC while reflecting country-specific contexts. SUSTAIN Pro should develop a more localized, country-level Theory of Change linked to the overall SUSTAIN ToC, allowing for nuanced pathways and hypotheses that reflect each landscape's specific challenges and program approach.
SR4. Inclusion	
SR4	Expand participation of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups. SUSTAIN should strengthen the inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalised groups by expanding value chain opportunities in areas such as agro-processing, agri-technology, and value-added services, while leveraging existing structures like ministries, youth groups, and women- and youth-led enterprises.
SR5. New area of focus	
SR5	Explore energy as a new thematic area interlinked with SUSTAIN Pro's interventions for sustainable food systems under a phase 2. Given the alignment between SUSTAIN Pro's thematic priorities and energy, Phase II should more explicitly consider how its outcomes may both benefit from and contribute to sustainable energy use. While proposed value chains offer opportunities to advance ecosystem stewardship and reforestation through alternative energy sources, agriculture remains energy-intensive, particularly in mechanisation, irrigation, and post-harvest processes. This underscores the need to safeguard environmental gains by promoting or facilitating access to sustainable energy solutions across the value chains.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

OR1. Project monitoring, learning and reporting	
OR1a	Introduce qualitative indicators to complement the logframe and better capture SUSTAIN Pro's broader impacts. Consider additional qualitative indicators to complement the quantitative results framework. The evaluation recommends introducing qualitative indicators into the project logframe, to strengthen implementation and monitoring.
OR1b	Strengthen the gender and youth action plan with outcome-level indicators. Including gender and youth indicators at the outcome level should support teams in more innovatively addressing gender and youth integration beyond activities and representation, aligning with the original intent of the action plan.
OR1c	Ensure the SUSTAIN Pro database is complete, accurate, and timely to support reliable reporting and decision-making. Data must be comprehensive, clean, timely, and accurate to underpin effective reporting and decision-making. It is also considered best practice that data used in annual reports be available within the monitoring tools at the time of reporting.
OR1d	Strengthen the knowledge management approach to support lesson-sharing, replication, and enable peer-to-peer learning. A centralised knowledge management platform should be established to systematically document and share lessons across Pro and Eco, complemented by more inclusive storytelling, stronger engagement with underrepresented partners, particularly in the private sector, and regular reflection on missed partnership opportunities to guide future thematic and stakeholder priorities.
OR2. Project delivery	
OR2a	Simplify communication materials and tailor channels to suit different stakeholder needs. SUSTAIN Pro should maintain diverse communication channels tailored to the specific

	needs of different stakeholders. For instance, farmer beneficiaries preferred audio and video content over written materials, whereas stakeholders such as CEOrt found the language overly technical.
OR2b	Strengthen collaboration with other IUCN programs to enhance landscape gains and promote knowledge sharing. In line with SUSTAIN's proposal, opportunities were identified for IUCN to leverage or collaborate with other in-country projects, such as BIODEV2030 in Mozambique and AGSTA in Tanzania. It is recommended to utilise these opportunities to reinforce gains in key landscapes, strengthen the One Programme approach, and facilitate knowledge and lesson sharing.
OR2c	Enhance learning questions to guide outcome harvesting activities as well as monitoring and annual reflections on project implementation. For the planned outcome harvesting and change documentation, SUSTAIN Pro should further refine its learning questions, which would guide both outcome harvesting activities and the monitoring and annual reflection processes on project implementation.
OR2d	Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the value and efficiency of SUSTAIN Pro investments. The MTR found that SUSTAIN Pro utilises resources efficiently, prioritising local ownership and complementing partners' and stakeholders' initiatives. Budget expenditure has increased as planned activities gain momentum. To further substantiate the project's benefits relative to costs, a future cost-benefit analysis or value-for-money assessment would be valuable.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADEM	Manica Agency for Economic Development
ADVZ	Zambezi Valley Development Agency
AMCOS	Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Society
ARA	Centro Water Regional Agency – High Punguè Division
ARR	Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation
ASDP	Agriculture Sector Development Plan
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CBFM	Community-Based Forest Management
CCRO	Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy
CEOt	CEO Roundtable of Tanzania
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCG	District Coordination Group
DPAP	Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Fishing
DPDTA	Provincial Directorate of Territorial Development and Environment
DUATs	Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra (Mozambique land-use rights)
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
FENAGRI	Federation of Agrarian Associations of Mozambique
FFPO	Forest and Farm Producer Organisations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FNPV	Financial Net Present Value
FYDP	Tanzania Government Five-Year Development Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GCF	Green Climate Fund
HQ	Headquarters
IFCU	Iringa Farmers' Cooperative Union
IGG	Inclusive Green Growth
IIAM CZC	Mozambique's Institute of Agricultural Research - Centro Zonal Centro
ILM	Integrated Landscape Management
IP	Implementing partner
ISPM-Manica	Manica High Polytechnic Institute

IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JFM	Joint Forest Management
JVFMC	Joint Village Forest Management Committees
KBAs	Key Biodiversity Areas
KII	Key Informant Interview
KSC	Kilombero Sugar Company
LHMI	Land Health Monitoring Index
MADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Partnership
MTR	Mid-term Review
MVIWATA	National Network of Farmers Groups in Tanzania (Farmer Apex Institution)
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIBIO	Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research
NLUPC	National Land Use Planning Commission
NMB	National Microfinance Bank plc (NMB Bank Tanzania)
NOK	Norwegian Krone
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRM	Natural Resources Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASS	Private Agriculture Sector Support Foundation
PEDSA	Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PNISA	National Agricultural Investment Plan
PO-RALG	President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSB	Programme Steering Board
RALG	Regional Administration and Local Government
RAS	Regional Administrative Secretariat
RBWB	Rufiji Basin Water Board
RDF	Result Demonstration Field

SAFs	Agroforestry Systems
SAGCOT	Southern Agriculture Growth Corridor of Tanzania
SAT	Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (field-training NGO)
SDAE	District Services of Economic Activities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDO	Small Industries Development Organisation
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
SUSTAIN-Africa	Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa
SUSTAIN Eco	SUSTAIN Ecosystem stewardship to balance sustainability and growth in Tanzania
SUSTAIN Pro	SUSTAIN Productive Landscapes for Inclusive Growth in Tanzania and Mozambique
SUSTENTA	National Agriculture Programme in Mozambique
TADB	Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank
TARI	Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute
TARISSfupi	Tanzania river scoring system
TASFIP	Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan
TAWA	Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority
TBA	Tanzania Bankers Association
TCCIA	Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
TFS	Tanzania Forest Service Agency
TIB	Tanzania Investment Bank
TIRDO	Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organisation
TOAM	Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement
UCAMA	Manica Small Farmers Union
USD	United States Dollar
VBA	Village-Based Advisors
VCM	Voluntary Carbon Market
VLUM	Village Land Use Management
VLUP	Village Land Use Plan
VNRC	Village Natural Resources Committee
VPO	Vice President's Office
VSLG	Village Savings and Loan Association
WUA	Water Users Association

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa (**SUSTAIN-Africa**) was an IUCN-led initiative implemented by the IUCN Water and Wetlands Team from 2014 to 2020 in Tanzania and Mozambique. The multi-year project sought to integrate conservation and development efforts to enhance resilience and productivity in African landscapes, focusing on catalysing climate-resilient development and creating a balance between economic growth, ecosystem stewardship and social prosperity. Since 2021, building on SUSTAIN-Africa's gains in its first phase, IUCN initiated a second phase of SUSTAIN-Africa through the Productive Landscapes for Inclusive Growth in Tanzania and Mozambique (SUSTAIN Pro) and Ecosystem Stewardship to Balance Sustainability and Growth in Tanzania (SUSTAIN Eco) projects. Both sister projects strive to accelerate a paradigm shift, building resilience in economies, people and nature.

SUSTAIN Pro focuses on promoting sustainable food systems and healthy, productive landscapes in Mozambique and Tanzania. At the same time, SUSTAIN Eco aims to enable healthy ecosystems and prosperous communities in Tanzania by improving governance and rights, strengthening sustainable management practices and catalysing investment in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

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SUSTAIN Pro works in productive landscapes to balance economic growth with enhanced food security, land health and social prosperity, contributing to the development of sustainable food systems. The project is delivered through three main outcomes: Outcome 1: solutions for sustainable agricultural production are scaled up; Outcome 2: land health is restored using landscape partnerships; and Outcome 3: investments in sustainable value chains accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems. (IUCN, 2021)

In Tanzania, SUSTAIN Pro is implemented in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), specifically in Ithemi (Kilolo District and Iringa District) and Kilombero (Mlimba District, Malinyi District, Ifakara Town Council) clusters. The focus of SUSTAIN Pro in Tanzania is on encouraging the transition to sustainable food systems through actions that strengthen the linkage between productivity and sustainability in agriculture. In Tanzania, SUSTAIN Pro engages in rice, soybean, sunflower, and sugarcane value chains, scaling up good agricultural practices for commodities in SAGCOT, sustainable natural resources management, developing and rolling out a land health monitoring index (LHMI) as a mechanism to integrate action on the ground with policy aiming to improve land and water resilience. Furthermore, SUSTAIN Pro seeks to strengthen investment in sustainable value chains and nature-based businesses, including through business case development for key value chains (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN, 2021).

SUSTAIN Eco is implemented in Sumbawanga and Kilombero landscapes in Tanzania. It is focused on the sustainable management of water, forest, and land resources, and integrating NbS in their management. (Aleph Strategies, 2025)

In Mozambique, SUSTAIN Pro is implemented in the Beira Corridor, mainly in Manica Province, Bárue and Vanduzi districts. The SUSTAIN team works closely with the Agência de Desenvolvimento Economico de Manica (ADEM), the local economic development agency of Manica, which supports project execution on the ground under Outcome 1. Mozambique's focus has been on the sustainability and restoration of agricultural soils, value chains, particularly corn, soy, pigeon pea, horticulture

(cabbage and green bean), integrating NbS and ecosystem services into district land use planning (PDUT) and promoting sustainable investment based on biodiversity and climate assessments designed by the project (IUCN, 2025).

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

IUCN commissioned a mid-term evaluation (MTR) of its SUSTAIN Pro project to assess its performance, identify areas for improvement and inform future phases of the project implementation. The MTR was intended to provide valuable information against a set of four OECD-DAC criteria, and two additional criteria based on IUCN priorities:

- **Relevance:** Determine whether the project remains aligned with the strategic priorities of IUCN and national and local authorities/policies, and whether it meets the needs of the target communities in Tanzania and Mozambique.
- **Coherence:** Assess the project's coherence with its original design, and its compatibility with other IUCN initiatives and other actors in the region. Under "Coherence", the MTR also assessed the extent to which the project engaged relevant constituents of the Union in its design or implementation so far (government, IUCN members, and commission members with experience in Tanzania and Mozambique) through a One Programme approach, as recommended by the IUCN Evaluation policy guidelines.
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These criteria and their evaluation questions guided the development of an evaluation matrix, providing a framework for tool development, data analysis, synthesis and reporting, presented in this MTR report.

2. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research methodology was applied to respond to the needs of the MTR, involving project document review, collection of primary data through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and field mission observations. The evaluation covered the period from SUSTAIN Pro's design completion in December 2021, its inception phase beginning in January 2022, to June 2025.

2.1. EVALUATION MATRIX

An evaluation matrix based on the MTR evaluation criteria discussed in Section 1.2 was developed and shared with SUSTAIN Pro's project team for feedback and finalisation.

Within the evaluation matrix, each criterion was divided into sub-questions to clarify and detail what kind of analysis needed to be implemented. For each of those sub-questions, the team developed one or several judgment criteria indicators that would allow the team to assess SUSTAIN Pro's performance with respect to the evaluation question. In addition, the evaluation matrix identified the sources of information and how that information would be collected. The evaluation team leveraged multiple sources of data and data collection methods to provide a comprehensive approach, enabling us to answer all of the evaluation questions.

2.2. IN-DEPTH DOCUMENT REVIEW

The evaluation mainly drew from project documentation shared by SUSTAIN Pro. Initially, document review contributed to the team's understanding of the programme design and evolution, and identification and preparation for interviews with stakeholders, beneficiaries and project staff. Additional research was used to complement our understanding of specific projects and to provide more macro-level context information, for instance, national policy documents. The detailed list of documents used in the MTR is provided as Annex B. Any secondary sources used have been referenced in the report and listed in the annex.

2.3. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Individual interviews were conducted with key stakeholder groups and with project staff. In total, 53 key informant interviews (27 in Tanzania, 17 in Mozambique, and 9 with project staff) were conducted, as shown in Table 1. The detailed list of informants who participated in the MTR is provided in Annex C. Interviews were conducted both in-person in Tanzania and Mozambique and remotely.

Table 1: List of KII participants

COUNTRY	TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
TANZANIA	GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS	19
	PRIVATE SECTOR	3
	PARTNERING AGENCIES	1
	LEAD FARMERS	4
MOZAMBIQUE	GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS	13
	PRIVATE SECTOR	1
	PARTNERING AGENCIES	1
PROJECT STAFF AND IP		10
DONOR		1

2.4. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDs)

FGDs were primarily conducted to engage with beneficiaries at the landscape level. This included interactions with forest and extension workers, lead farmers, and members of farmer-producer cooperatives and associations. Each discussion was organised in groups of six to eight participants. In total, 20 FGDs were held, with eight conducted in Tanzania and twelve in Mozambique.

A breakdown of the types and numbers of FGDs conducted is provided in Table 2, and a detailed list of the FGD participants can be found in annex C. Direct observations were also carried out, particularly at demonstration plots and water restoration sites.

Table 2: List of FGDs conducted

COUNTRY	FGD TYPE	PARTICIPANTS	No of FGDs
TANZANIA	AMCOS MEMBERS	FEMALE	2
	AMCOS GOVERNING BOARD	MIXED	2
	VLUM	MIXED	1
	VNRC	MALE	1
	VLUM	FEMALE	1
	WUA	MIXED	1
MOZAMBIQUE	LEAD FARMERS	MIXED	2
	AMCOS	FEMALE	4
	AMCOS	MALE	3
	NRM	MIXED	1
	COMMUNITY LEADERS	MIXED	1
	INPUT SUPPLIERS	MIXED	1

2.5. ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE RATING

Guided by the evaluation matrix, data from document review, qualitative interviews and FGDs were analysed to respond to evaluation questions. Notes from the KIIs were analysed by topic and by sentiment. Given the diversity of stakeholders and vast array of topics addressed, the evaluation employed a qualitative approach based on which opinions were echoed across the interviewees and also attributing additional value to certain responses over others based on interviewees' areas of expertise or knowledge of SUSTAIN Pro activities, the evaluation also captured emerging themes where several respondents shared similar opinions, such as in a FGD. Recurring sentiments were grouped to inform key findings and triangulated against other data sources.

Preliminary findings were shared with SUSTAIN Pro staff for clarification and feedback on areas that require more in-depth analysis. These were then incorporated into the drafting of the report, which provides more detail on the preliminary findings, triangulates the data obtained, and offers additional context.

Key findings are supported with evidence sources, indicating the strength of evidence obtained during the evaluation.

The MTR adapted GEF ratings to rate performance based on a six-scale rating system as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory (HS):** The project clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings within a specific assessment criteria.
- **Satisfactory (S):** Level of performance achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** Level of performance achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** Level of performance achieved was somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory (U):** Level of performance achieved is substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
- **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** Negligible level of achievement and/or there were severe shortcomings.
- **Unable to Assess (UA):** The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of performance or achievement.

2.6. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The SUSTAIN Pro project staff were supportive and provided the required assistance to the evaluation team in regard to inception preparations, availability of project documents, preparation and conducting of field missions to meet with stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners, and clarification regarding preliminary findings.

Despite the challenges encountered in planning the field missions, both missions to Mozambique and Tanzania were carried out successfully. It wasn't easy to arrange interviews, especially with government officials, but eventually the relevant interviews were conducted.

Some activities, as expected, were still underway at the beginning of the MTR, making it premature for the MTR to assess them. This includes work related to the completion of value chain analysis and business case feasibility studies, including the feasibility of financial models to support NbS work.

For the assessment of synergies between SUSTAIN Eco and SUSTAIN Pro, this MTR has relied solely on information from the SUSTAIN-Africa theory of change narrative and diagram document, the SUSTAIN Eco MTR report, and the SUSTAIN Eco annual report 2024, as well as limited project staff interviews. In this respect, for some of the findings, the MTR has relied on third-party analysis (SUSTAIN Eco MTR report).

3. FINDINGS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Relevance:** The project was assessed as **highly satisfactory** for its strong alignment with IUCN priorities, national and sub-national priorities, and stakeholder/beneficiary needs in the present, and medium term (next 5 years) to longer term (10 years).
- **Coherence:** The project's approach to ensuring coherence in its delivery was found to be **satisfactory**. There was complementarity with other IUCN projects. The project has largely followed its design with very little deviation. Project adjustments were made to better align with stakeholder needs or improve implementation.
- **Effectiveness:** The level of performance achieved was **satisfactory**, with activities contributing towards outcome achievement. Outputs under Outcome 1 are highly satisfactory, while Outcome 2 has made substantial progress and Outcome 3 has commenced with greater progress expected in 2025.
- **Efficiency:** The project is assessed as **highly satisfactory** with established systems and processes ensuring accountability for project funds, timely reporting and meeting donor requirements. The project's M&E system and tools are robust, with room to improve its approach to documenting and sharing learning.
- **Sustainability:** The level of performance achieved is **satisfactory**, as project stakeholders show strong ownership of project gains and activities, appreciate and share in the objectives of the project. Continued funding of the project over the next phase remains crucial for essential gains that are just materialising, such as the land health monitoring index (LHMI), which is being piloted, and for Outcome 3, on building bankable business cases and policy pathways to unlock finance for climate-smart agriculture, NbS, and integrated landscape management (ILM), planned for 2025 and beyond.
- **Gender, youth and human rights:** The level of performance achieved was **satisfactory**. There are opportunities for the project to increase engagement with youth, promote inclusion of other vulnerable groups, and strengthen monitoring and documentation of gains made towards GESI.
- **Environment and climate change:** The level of performance achieved was **highly satisfactory**. SUSTAIN Pro implements the LHMI, which supports the assessment of the project's impact on the environment at various levels, from farm/site to interaction with the landscape and water systems, and, at the national level, in relation to broader policy and global commitments.

This section delves into the findings of the MTR, organised along the OECD-DAC criteria applied to the MTR. A summary of the assessment criteria rating and strength of evidence is provided in Annex D. Each section responds to specific questions contained in the evaluation matrix provided in a separate Annex E.

3.1. RELEVANCE

Determine whether the project remains aligned with the strategic priorities of IUCN and national and local authorities/policies, and whether it meets the needs of the target communities in Tanzania and Mozambique.

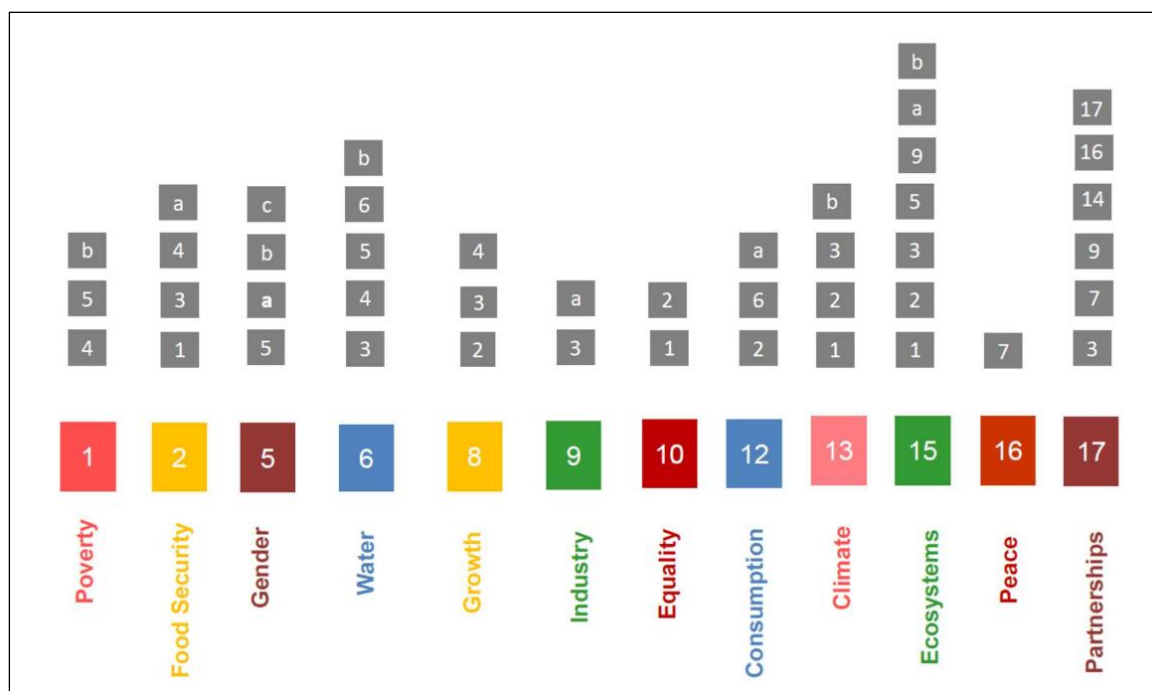
The project was assessed as **highly satisfactory** for its strong alignment with IUCN priorities, national and sub-national priorities, and stakeholder/beneficiary needs.

3.1.1. ALIGNMENT WITH IUCN PRIORITIES

SUSTAIN Pro is strongly aligned with IUCN's priorities envisioned in IUCN's Nature 2030¹. It supports the decade vision by promoting priorities that ensure the sustainable use of natural resources in a just and inclusive manner, as well as equitable and effective governance of natural resources at all levels, including ecosystem restoration. SUSTAIN Pro also supports IUCN's commitment to broaden its engagement with land-use and agriculture sectors, both public and private, to help restore and maintain critical ecosystem services.

The project also aligns with the IUCN's commitments to contribute to the SDGs. The IUCN recognises that global problems are interconnected and interdependent and encourages its members to address the SDGs in an integrated manner. SUSTAIN Pro has identified a suite of SDGs for which the project contributes, as seen in Figure 1 below (Source SUSTAIN Pro Proposal).

Figure 1: Diagram outlining how SUSTAIN Pro contributes to SDGs



3.1.2. ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The envisioned outcomes strongly echo Tanzania and Mozambique's priorities, especially those focused on increased agricultural productivity contributing to increased food security, increased incomes, sustainable water resource and land use management, climate change mitigation and adaptation.²

During implementation, SUSTAIN Pro teams have engaged in policy review pertinent to parts of their work. For example, the LHMI report (IUCN, Land Health Monitoring Index Report, 2024) discusses several policies in Tanzania, identifying policy gaps and alignment with IUCN's land health initiative. A similar review is planned for Mozambique in 2025. Policy briefs were also prepared considering the enabling environment and legal and regulatory framework of proposed business cases and specific

¹IUCN, 2020, Nature 2030, One Nature, One Future. [Link](#)

² SUSTAIN Pro's proposal focused mainly on national plans targeting the agricultural sector, while SUSTAIN Eco is aligned to plans around ecosystems and use of natural resources.

crop value chains in Tanzania and Mozambique (IUCN, Policy briefings: Value chain development for climate-smart agriculture and nature-based solutions, 2025).

SUSTAIN Pro (and Eco) has made considerable contributions to influencing policy and the enabling environment for facilitating CSA, natural resource management, and NbS in a way that promotes ILM. For instance, the Kilombero Landscape NbS Strategy was co-created as a locally owned roadmap for restoration and investment. The partnership between Kilombero Sugar Company (KSC) and Newcastle University, focusing on riverine restoration and private-sector engagement, directly contributed to Tanzania's Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) commitments. Collaborations with district and provincial authorities have also contributed to local policy priorities by integrating NbS and sustainable agriculture into local development plans. Furthermore, work on LHMI influenced both local and national policy dialogues, contributing insights for Tanzania's NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). These were shared by informants such as the representative from the National Land Use Plan Commission, who highlighted SUSTAIN Pro's contribution to Tanzania's commitments to NDCs and the restoration of natural resources: *"Our country has national and international commitments, such as the NDCs and Kyoto Protocols, including the restoration of 5 million hectares. Most of these initiatives are community-based. IUCN's duties align perfectly with fulfilling these commitments by propagating and implementing NbS"*.

Government stakeholders also shared that they were using SUSTAIN Pro's tools and approaches in their work, as affirmed by the Morogoro IUCN Regional Secretary in Tanzania, among other informants: *"SUSTAIN Pro employs a landscape approach and nature-based solutions. We have been using the tools shared by them at the provincial office. Various projects within the Vice President's Office (VPO) also utilise their methodologies. At the village level, we are enacting bylaws and other initiatives in reforestation and agriculture as propagated by SUSTAIN Pro."*

Since the IUCN's SUSTAIN Pro proposal and inception report, several national development policies have been updated. The focus of the development policies has not shifted drastically and still shares a similar vision with SUSTAIN Pro's work. The following policies have changed/or been updated since SUSTAIN Pro's project proposal document:

- **Tanzania Development Vision 2025:** SUSTAIN Pro's design aligned with Tanzania's vision for the transformation from low production to a semi-industrialised agricultural economy, through the implementation of highly productive agricultural activities. The new Tanzania Development Vision 2050 has six key objectives, one of which is "effective and sustainable management of natural ecosystems and resources, building resilience to climate change", aligning with SUSTAIN Pro's intended change narrative. Modernised agriculture remains a large part of Tanzania's vision.
- **Tanzanian Government Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III):** SUSTAIN Pro's proposal was built on the premise of the FYDP II, which focused on lengthening and deepening value chains, modern agricultural technologies, working with producer groups, marketing, and improved access to financial services. FYDP III comes into place to build on FYDP II, addressing these challenges. The new plan builds on gains achieved in FYDP II, including increased production of cash crops, horticultural crops, and a food sufficiency of 118%.³ The new plan focuses on increasing agricultural growth, productivity, and value addition. It also intends to proactively engage the private sector to drive investments in agriculture as a priority.
- **Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP) 2011/2012 – 2020/2021:** A ten-year plan that provides a financing mechanism for Tanzania's commitment to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the established Agriculture Sector Development Programme (ASDP). Although TAFSIP's implementation period has expired, ASDP is still being implemented.

³ Tanzania National Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III, page xx

- **Mozambique’s Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development (PEDSA I) and National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNISA I):** PEDSA was designed to guide Mozambique’s agricultural sector from 2011 to 2020 and supports Mozambique’s CAADP. The strategy aimed to increase agricultural productivity, improve food security, and promote sustainable development, while promoting gender equity and youth engagement in the agricultural sector, which strongly aligns with SUSTAIN Pro’s work under Outcome 1. The updated Mozambique strategies, PEDSA II (2030) and PNISA II, prioritise productivity and agricultural competitiveness, sustainable management of natural resources, institutional strengthening, and development. These remain strongly aligned with SUSTAIN Pro and have been considered in the development of business cases for maize, soy, and horticulture.
- **Mozambique’s National Development Strategy (2025–2044):** This strategy encompasses Mozambique’s priorities, including environmental sustainability and climate change, which will be relevant for SUSTAIN Pro’s work in Mozambique.

SUSTAIN Pro is also aligned with the plans and policies associated with biodiversity protection and water management in both countries. In Tanzania, biodiversity management is based in particular on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015–2020)⁴ and the National Environment Policy adopted in 2021,⁵ which has been reviewed in the LHMI report. Regarding water resources, Tanzania relies on the National Water Policy, established in 2002, which is scheduled for update in 2025.⁶ In Mozambique, biodiversity conservation is governed by the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, which covers the period from 2015 to 2035.⁷ Water management is primarily governed by the Water Law enacted in 1991.⁸

SUSTAIN Pro actively engaged with national and sub-national actors, specifically those involved in land use planning, agricultural extension services, and water resource management. These engagements, mainly concentrated at the sub-national level (in-country, regional, and at the district level), have ensured that key stakeholders share in and support the project’s objectives, and that the project remains relevant to its government stakeholders. A respondent from the provincial agriculture department in Manica province, Mozambique, commented on the close engagement and alignment with national policies: *“Environmental sustainability and climate adaptation have become top priorities for governments worldwide, including Mozambique. Manica Province has increasingly faced extreme weather events, such as strong winds, while human activities, including deforestation and water pollution, have contributed to environmental degradation. In response, the provincial government has integrated resilience strategies into its development plans. SUSTAIN Pro aligns with these efforts, playing a key role in implementing strategic actions to address climate impact.”*

There is an opportunity for SUSTAIN Pro to broaden the national and sub-national actors engaged to expand project reach. For instance, collaborating with other ministries, such as those responsible for youth and women’s affairs, may help advance SUSTAIN Pro’s work in mainstreaming gender and youth into its programme. Engaging ministries responsible for trade and employment creation may contribute to Pro’s value-chain approach and viable business cases on NbS.

SUSTAIN Pro’s focus on growth corridors is still relevant as countries (and their regional economic body memberships) are still interested and continue to invest in the concept of growth corridors. The continued work along the SAGCOT growth corridor in Tanzania under SUSTAIN 1 has proved beneficial in sustaining gains and increasing momentum towards the achievement of Outcomes in Tanzania. SAGCOT expressed deep satisfaction with its collaboration and work with SUSTAIN Pro, citing that its

⁴ National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2020, 2021, Tanzania [link](#)

⁵ National Environmental Policy, Tanzania, 2021 [link](#)

⁶ National Water Policy 2002, revised 2025, Tanzania [link](#)

⁷ National Strategy and Action Plan of biological diversity of Mozambique, 2015-2035, 2015 [link](#)

⁸ Limpopo Watercourse Commission, National Policies and Laws Mozambique [link](#)

capacity was strengthened, and it is planning to replicate activities in other clusters within the corridor. Notable achievements include promotion of the IGG tool and development of soil health measurement capabilities with stakeholder action plans. SUSTAIN Pro also contributed to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The Beira Growth Corridor also continues to play a crucial role in the economic development of Mozambique, linking it to the regional market with bordering countries. The Beira Growth Corridor promotes agricultural and mining sectors, presenting an interesting interplay, relevant to SUSTAIN Pro, given the interaction between these actors, implications for land health and water resource use. SUSTAIN Pro works within the Beira Growth Corridor, engaging various stakeholders.⁹

3.1.3. ALIGNMENT WITH DONOR PRIORITIES

SUSTAIN Pro's objectives are aligned with Norad's priorities as articulated in Norway's strategy for promoting food security in development policy. Norway emphasises achieving food security through a focus on smallholder farmers. The strategy also recognises the role of women and youth in agriculture and calls for the inclusion of people with disabilities. The strategy's focus areas include productivity and production loss, value chain and markets, preventive actions and integrated food security efforts.

In addition, the strategy emphasises the role of cooperatives in increasing income, market stability and economic growth. These are areas that SUSTAIN Pro may potentially strengthen in the next phase of implementation, scaling up the scope of its work with cooperatives in both countries, supporting Norway's strategy to promote women-led cooperatives and catalyse private investment in agriculture, which is already in alignment with SUSTAIN Pro's goal to establish catalytic grants through private investment and PPP models. It should be noted, however, that Norad's ambitions and priorities may change over time.

3.1.4. RELEVANCE TO THE NEEDS OF TARGET GROUPS

The project responds to the productivity needs of smallholder farmers in targeted value chains. The approach used has strongly promoted farmers' self-reliance, which contributes to sustainable behaviour change in the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. If a farmer adopts the practices, their motivation is to improve their yield. Numerous accounts from farmers who adopted climate-smart agricultural practices described how these practices improved soil fertility, increased yields, and reduced the effects of flooding on farmland. For example, in Vanduzi, Mozambique, a male farmer noted, *"The most relevant project activity for me has been soil enrichment. The practices introduced have significantly improved soil fertility and health, making it more sustainable for future cultivation"*. He also highlighted his perceptions of improved produce quality: *"The quality of the food has improved; it has a richer flavour and a longer shelf life compared to crops grown with chemical fertilisers"*. Another example is of a rice lead farmer from Tanzania who testified to a significant increase in her harvest, saying that it has increased from five sacks to 18 sacks. Farmers in Tanzania and Mozambique have reported several challenges, including the high labour demands associated with larger agricultural operations and the limited differentiation of organically¹⁰ grown products in the local market, particularly in terms of pricing. Farmers generally understood the interventions of SUSTAIN Pro within the context of their engagement with the project. In some FGDs, certain farmers however associated the project with organic farming.

⁹ SUSTAIN Pro had identified BAGC as a potential stakeholder in its proposal, but realised that the organisation was an NGO rather than a governing secretariat. SUSTAIN Pro in Mozambique continues to work along the Beira Growth Corridor working in collaboration with other actors.

¹⁰ Some farmers associated sustainable agricultural practices with organic farming.

The project also responds to the needs of farmer-producer organisations and AMCOS for stronger governance systems. This includes the inclusive approach for women and youth members, integrating them into decision-making structures of the AMCOS and farmer-producer organisations. Producer organisations feel that their needs for access to sustainable seeds and an expanded market, however, remain unmet.

SUSTAIN Pro has worked to address challenges faced by smallholder farmers. Related to post-harvest losses, for example, ADEM and IUCN have continuously worked with cooperatives to enhance post-harvest produce handling. Concerning market access, Pro has supported innovations such as the My.COOP training in Tanzania which aims to enhance farmers' knowledge and skills in financial matters, record keeping, product marketing, buyer negotiations, and income diversification. In Mozambique, the Kugulissa platform was used to help farmers reach new buyers and negotiate their prices. During the MTR, the majority of the farmers participating in the FGDs shared that they needed increased support in accessing sustainable farm inputs, post-harvest practices, and market linkage, further supporting the relevance of the SUSTAIN Pro project. Farmer cooperatives and their members expressed increased interest in several key areas: enhanced storage, collective negotiation power, and access to markets and financing.

The impact of climate change, crop/livestock diseases, and human-wildlife conflicts remains a reality for key stakeholders and beneficiary groups. SUSTAIN Pro (and Eco) are designed to build resilience and counter the impact of climate change. A recent example is the setup of mobile farm clinics in collaboration with TARI in Tanzania. The mobile farm clinics aim to enhance smallholder farmers' resilience to climate-related production challenges and improve access to extension services. This has included agronomic practices, soil management, integrated pest management, advice to farmers on crop disease management, and soil health (IUCN, 2025).

Stakeholders engaged in land health and natural resources restoration felt that the project was relevant and found collaborations useful. For instance, collaboration with ISMP and IIAM in Mozambique has focused on landscape health, and efforts are progressing towards the development of land health indicators, training of target groups on measuring soil health, as well as collaborations with the private sector to spearhead organic certification to facilitate access to market and securities for farmers, including insurance.

3.1.5. TOC RELEVANCE

SUSTAIN Pro's three outcome areas and contributing outputs remain valid within the pathways to change that have been identified. Below, we highlight a few gains within the three pathways. Section 3.3 on effectiveness delves deeper into progress made against project outputs and outcomes.

Pathway 1: Enable inclusive governance, equity and rights: SUSTAIN Pro has engaged extensively with government stakeholders, contributing to policy discussions and prioritisation for natural resource management. Government counterparts expressed positive attitudes towards the project, saying that it strongly aligned with their own priorities. A strong sense of ownership and commitment was also evident among government stakeholders, reflecting buy-in into SUSTAIN Pro's ILM approach. SUSTAIN Pro's work has involved mobilisation and advocacy targeting multiple stakeholders, support to the establishment and functioning of natural resource management committees, water user associations, and village land use management committees. These management structures have also reported a positive change in their response to the inclusion of women and youth in decision-making processes, with women noting improved engagement and participation.

Pathway 2: Implement and scale up sustainable agriculture and innovative nature-based solutions: SUSTAIN Pro has made commendable strides in advancing climate-smart agricultural practices through training and promotion of specific tools at the landscape level. These efforts have resulted in increased adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, reported increased farm soil quality, increased yields among adopters, and increased crop resilience to climate shocks such as

flooding. Investments in progressive innovations, such as System of Rice Intensification (SRI), have demonstrated increasing benefits. Additionally, work with stakeholders in the private sector, including collaborations with KSC, has shown the benefits of adopting NbS. Work with district extension workers, and innovations such as farm clinics, have increased outreach to farmers in the implementation areas, providing them with knowledge and support to transition into climate-smart agricultural practices. Further, SUSTAIN Pro has developed knowledge products, extending them to farmers and other stakeholders, contributing to the knowledge base for NbS and sustainable agriculture.

Pathway 3: Catalyse investment: SUSTAIN Pro's approach is based on the premise that uptake of ILM and NbS by landscape actors increases as a result of increased technical capacity and a supportive enabling environment. As these increase, so does the availability of sound business models leading to investments in NbS. SUSTAIN Pro completed several business models targeting various value chains in Tanzania and Mozambique. In addition, a catalytic fund was set up in Mozambique. Later in 2025, SUSTAIN Pro will focus on driving the work initiated under Pathway 3.

The assumptions made continue to hold and remain relevant for SUSTAIN Pro. Government stakeholders at various levels continue to show their interests and commitments to pursuing integrated and inclusive landscape governance and management. SUSTAIN Pro has also engaged with private sector and public institutions like KSC and TARI in Tanzania and SEEDco and SDAE in Mozambique, to identify, implement, and scale up successful approaches and strategies that incentivise investment in integrated land and water management and NbS and result in opportunities for sustainable land use, income generation, and healthy ecosystems. The potential phase 2 of SUSTAIN Pro could be used to push forward work under Outcome 3, building on gains achieved in 2025, where assumptions on market conditions and co-investments can be further tested.

The ToC was constructed with consideration of realities that may cut across all the landscapes in which the project is implemented. Both Mozambique and Tanzania have their unique intricacies, which perhaps warrant a more localised ToC for SUSTAIN Pro in both countries. For example, a Theory of Action at the country level, linked to the SUSTAIN ToC, may provide an opportunity for each country to develop more nuanced (sub) pathways and assumptions that consider the unique challenges of each landscape and their unique approach to the programme.

In a future phase, insights from the implementation of Pro and Eco in a shared landscape can be leveraged. Landscapes in both Mozambique and Tanzania, where SUSTAIN Eco is not implemented, may replicate its activities that have demonstrated valuable contributions to enhancing output or outcome achievement, especially under ToC outcomes that were enhanced because of implementing both Pro and Eco. For example, SUSTAIN Eco's work in Sumbawanga highlights the benefits of linking on-farm climate-smart practices with landscape restoration efforts, resulting in tangible environmental and livelihood gains. The implementation of Eco also demonstrates the importance of linking environmental goals to market benefits, as illustrated by the KSC's riparian restoration initiative, conducted under their corporate sustainability efforts. The co-development of the Kilombero strategy also supports the strengths of a MSP approach and what can be achieved through inclusive governance and dialogue.

3.2. COHERENCE

Assess the project's coherence with its original design, and its compatibility with other IUCN initiatives and other actors in the region.

The project's approach to ensuring coherence in its delivery is **satisfactory**.

3.2.1. PROJECT DESIGN

Project implementation has largely aligned with the SUSTAIN Pro proposal and work plans. SUSTAIN Pro has made positive progress in the implementation of identified outputs towards outcome areas, as

discussed in Section 3.3. Although the project experienced some delays in the inception phase, including staff transition setbacks and, in the case of Mozambique, disruptions related to conflict, elections, and extreme weather, the project team has worked to ensure that activities are carried out smoothly with minimal interruption.

The evaluation notes that there were no major changes to the project design in the last three years of implementation. A few adjustments worth mentioning were made as follows:

- Establishment of knowledge hubs in Mozambique. Although a physical hub was not established as initially planned,¹¹ knowledge management has involved work led by ADEM on different thematic areas, including demonstration sites, capacity building initiatives, development of farmer/agricultural guidelines, among other knowledge products, as well as collaborations with IIAM, ISPM, ARA Centro, TARI, etc.
- There were some adjustments in the value chain focus since the proposal phase, to adapt to the realities in the landscapes and maximise ownership. Value chains initially presented in the proposal were adjusted to align with insights from feasibility studies, stakeholder needs (especially farmers' preferences), and locally grown crops in the intervention landscapes and to increase buy-in and adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. In Mozambique, at the proposal stage, cotton, horticulture, and tree nuts (macadamia and cashew) were identified. Currently, the project works with soybeans, pigeon peas, green beans, cabbage, and maize, as well as organic compost. These changes were based on evidence gathered from local stakeholders during the inception phase. In Tanzania, at the proposal stage, sugarcane, rice, maize, and sunflower were identified; most of these have remained the same.

3.2.2. IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

SUSTAIN Pro's approach to implementation and stakeholder engagement has contributed to gains made in outcome achievement. Government engagement at the district and regional levels in both countries is positive. This has contributed to government buy-in, support, and more substantial project alignment with government priorities. Government representatives participating in the MTR shared that they appreciated the consultative approach SUSTAIN Pro applied. They felt that these consultations were useful in aligning with the government's broader plans and needs. These strong relationships and collaboration have also contributed to less duplication of efforts, as the government aligns with different stakeholders working with them. It has also supported better harmonisation of SUSTAIN Pro interventions with government priorities.

Partnering with ADEM as the implementing partner for Outcome 1 in Mozambique has not only allowed SUSTAIN Pro to benefit from one of the most influential institutions in the country's agricultural sector but also provided a strategic opportunity for IUCN to support and influence ADEM in integrating NbS into conventional value chains. ADEM brings strong experience in working with traditional value chains and agricultural markets. Through this partnership, the organisation is being exposed to new approaches that promote sustainability and resilience across the production chain. This collaboration has the potential to serve as a model for mainstreaming NbS in other ongoing agricultural and development initiatives across the Beira Corridor, amplifying the impact and scalability of SUSTAIN Pro's approach.

SUSTAIN Pro's approach to investing in ongoing innovative efforts fosters a sense of ownership, thereby promoting the overall sustainability of the gains made. For instance, investing in TARI's System of Rice Intensification (SRI) has been successful and popular with rice farmers, leading to increased rice yields, water conservation, and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices within the value

¹¹ The Knowledge Hub room was not established due to security concerns.

chain with producers. At the time of the MTR, SUSTAIN Pro had reached 256 farmers in Ilimba, Malunyi, and Mkula, Tanzania, with SRI training.

3.2.3. SYNERGIES BETWEEN SUSTAIN PRO AND ECO

SUSTAIN Eco and Pro contribute towards SUSTAIN-Africa's objectives. While Pro focuses on promoting sustainable food systems and healthy productive landscapes in Mozambique and Tanzania, Eco aims to enable healthy ecosystems and prosperous communities in Tanzania by improving governance and rights, strengthening sustainable management practices and catalysing investment in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

The two sister projects are complementary to each other in their design. They both align strongly to IUCN's priorities and vision for SUSTAIN. Given the strong linkages between ecosystem protection and agriculture, as well as the shared themes between the two projects (such as advancing NbS), both projects are necessary to achieve SUSTAIN's objectives as outlined in the theory of change.

The MtR observed that there are significant overlaps between the two projects in their design. Areas that reflect a coordinated approach include NbS work, where Pro integrates NbS into its sustainable agriculture value chains, while Sustain Eco focuses on integrating NbS into the management of land, forest, and water resources, including agriculture (Aleph Strategies, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025) (KILs with project staff). For example, the Kilombero landscape NbS strategy was co-led with AWF under SUSTAIN Eco, with Pro contributing to shaping discussions and promoting synergies with ongoing work in the shared landscape. In addition, both projects aim to contribute to climate change adaptation and resilience. Sustain Pro's conservation farming is recognised for mitigating climate risks, and Sustain Eco is described as striking a balance between agricultural growth and environmental protection. SUSTAIN Pro focuses on water source restoration and water quality monitoring, while Eco is concerned with integrated water resources management, including improving river health and conducting water quality assessments. Some common activities include capacity building for farmers, cooperative members, NRMs, and WUAs, and extension officers on sustainable agricultural practices and resource management. There are also knowledge-sharing outputs attributed to both projects.

Although SUSTAIN Pro and Eco were conceptually designed to be complementary, their separate proposal processes and timelines meant that the two often functioned in parallel rather than as fully integrated initiatives (Aleph Strategies, 2025). (IUCN, 2021) (IUCN_Annual, 2025). In practice, this limits opportunities for collective planning and systematic cross-learning, particularly in Mozambique, where SUSTAIN Eco is absent. This has meant fewer direct interventions in ecosystem stewardship and biodiversity protection, as well as slower adoption of tools such as TARISSfupi and MiniSASS, which have proven effective in Tanzania. In response, joint planning sessions, shared supervision missions, monthly reflection workshops, and a central knowledge repository have been introduced to improve cross-program coordination.

3.2.4. COHERENCE WITH OTHER IUCN PROJECTS AND SIMILAR PROJECTS

SUSTAIN Pro complements other IUCN projects working within the landscapes in Tanzania and Mozambique. For instance, in Mozambique, SUSTAIN Pro works alongside BIODEV2030. The SUSTAIN Pro project teams participated in informing BIODEV2030's design for future projects. While BIODEV2030 will operate from a higher-level policy perspective in Mozambique, SUSTAIN Pro focuses strongly on landscapes and productive systems at the implementation level. SUSTAIN Pro has also championed the land health monitoring index, which will contribute to the knowledge base and practical tools of other IUCN projects, such as AGSTA in Tanzania.¹²

¹² The AGSTA project funded by the IKEA Foundation with a total budget of €3 million over four years (2021–2025) is being implemented in six countries (India, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Guatemala) to accelerate the integration of

SUSTAIN Pro subscribes to IUCN's One Programme approach. As discussed under relevance, the project strongly aligns with the priorities of IUCN and, to the extent possible, consults with other IUCN projects. The project also shares IUCN staffing at the ESARO level and headquarters with other in-country IUCN projects. A project steering committee brings relevant stakeholders together at the country level, who are engaged in the overall direction of the project and strategic-level decision-making.

SUSTAIN Pro strongly engages with the government in both landscapes at various governance levels, fostering continued partnership. In Tanzania, SUSTAIN Pro collaborates closely with the Office of the Vice President, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other relevant stakeholders, including SACGOT and local government authorities. Similarly, in Mozambique, the main ministry with which SUSTAIN Pro works is the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Fisheries. Regional and local government stakeholders, such as the District Economic Service (SDAE), are also engaged, up to the community level, with community leaders. These consultations and engagements contribute to greater buy-in and increased alignment with stakeholder priorities.

SUSTAIN Pro filled a unique space in the landscapes through the ILM approach. In both Mozambique and Tanzania, stakeholders and farmers mentioned that they were aware of or had participated in other projects that aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture, reforestation, and agroforestry. Given SUSTAIN's Pro's approach, and the benefits realised across its output and outcome areas, including development of various targeted knowledge products, there is great potential to collaborate with ongoing initiatives that share similar priorities, particularly those promoting CSA, working in NbS and within the value chains that Pro is focusing on.

3.3. EFFECTIVENESS

Assess the success of the project in achieving its outcomes and outputs, including the expansion of sustainable agricultural practices, the restoration of land health and the development of sustainable value chains.

The level of performance achieved was assessed as **satisfactory**, with activities contributing towards outcome achievement.

3.3.1. OUTPUT DELIVERY AND PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOME 1

The project demonstrated strong progress towards achieving Outcome 1: solutions for sustainable agricultural production are scaled up; in both Tanzania and Mozambique. Across both countries, there was broad adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. According to the project database, 93% of trained farmers in Mozambique (reported in 2024) and 83% in Tanzania (as of 2025)¹³ had adopted these practices. All the farmers who participated in the Mtr reported improvements in yields and crop resilience after adopting practices. These practices included SRI, crop rotation, intercropping, mulching and organic soil management. These gains were supported by the project's hands-on training approach, using demonstration plots, mobile farm clinics, and peer-to-peer learning led by trained extension officers and lead farmers.

SUSTAIN Pro made advances in strengthening governance and leadership within farmer organisations and establishing multi-stakeholder platforms that improved coordination and policy alignment at both local and national levels. This contributed to local ownership of sustainable land and water management

soil health issues into sustainable agriculture. The main activity of the project is the organisation of common ground dialogues, multi-stakeholder meetings aimed at producing and refining standards and case studies. AGSTA has supported the development of the Land Health Monitoring Framework and conducts workshops on the framework in its countries of intervention (including Tanzania, at national level).

¹³ The percentage is expressed as a proportion on a sample of farmers surveyed out of those who received training.

efforts, creating the enabling environment envisioned under Outcome 1. It also contributed to the increased participation of women and youth.

The project has also initiated market-based interventions to incentivise sustainable production, including training on value addition, branding, and market linkages. These efforts improved product quality and opened new opportunities for farmer groups, with examples of successful regional exhibitions and early business case development.

While these achievements have created initial market pathways for sustainable products and laid the foundation for investment mobilisation under Outcome 3, Phase 2 of SUSTAIN Pro will need to deepen market integration, improve access to finance, and develop mechanisms for premium pricing and certification to ensure long-term economic incentives for sustainable agriculture.

3.3.1.1. Output 1.1: Sustainable and productive agricultural solutions are disseminated

This output promotes the dissemination and scaling-up of sustainable, climate-smart agricultural solutions through on-farm interventions and extension services. It focuses on identifying and prioritising practices with potential for replication while strengthening linkages with land and water governance systems and addressing institutional barriers to adoption.

Tanzania

By 2024, over 2,900 farmers across the Ihemi and Kilombero landscapes had participated in sustainable agriculture training and adoption, with 30% represented by women. The project set up 14 demonstration plots in Ihemi for sunflowers and soybeans in 2023 (IUCN_Annual, 2024) and another 15 in 2024 in Kilombero for rice (IUCN_Annual, 2025). Farmers adopted SRI, sugarcane mulching, cover crops, crop rotation, intercropping, minimal tillage, and integrated pest management (IPM) practices.

Adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices through training contributed to a significant increase in yield, reported in SUSTAIN Pro's monitoring database. All farmers and district extension officers participating in the MTR, affirmed that they had experienced increased yields. These were reported for rice, sugarcane, soybean, sunflower and horticultural crops.

Women's participation was notable, with women from Kilombero and Malinyi reportedly becoming trainers and leaders in agricultural cooperatives. This reached more farmers in the community, helping them to learn and adopt new methods. Interviews and project reports (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2024) confirm that women's involvement increased overall training reach and group cohesion. A representative from KSC observed high female participation in AMCOS: *"We can see the quality of leadership that women bring on board,"* and confirmed that *"Forty per cent of leaders are now women. This is attributed to IUCN empowerment initiatives."*

Local authorities and extension officers, who were trained and equipped through SUSTAIN Pro, regularly visited and engaged with farmers. Interviews with farmers in Kilolo and Kilombero revealed that hands-on support, delivered through mobile clinics, one-on-one guidance, and demonstration plots, was a key factor in their confidence in adopting new rice production practices.

Mozambique

Approximately 93% farmers, including women, adopted sustainable agriculture practices after participating in hands-on training, peer learning, and field demonstrations between 2023 and 2024, which benefited 1,398 farmers. These trainings were organised and coordinated by the project team and delivered by district government extension officers. Knowledge was also spread through peer farmer leaders and local committee members, who helped cascade skills and information via demonstration plots and community meetings. The project established 38 demonstration fields and agroforestry plots, which were managed by technical teams from IUCN and ADEM in collaboration with

SDAE officers and local farmer committees. These demonstration sites became local hubs for learning and sharing, as confirmed by project reports, interviews, and feedback from participating farmers.

Farmers reduced their reliance on chemical fertilisers and improved soil fertility by learning to produce and apply organic manure and compost, as well as by adopting crop rotation and intercropping with legumes. This progress was supported by hands-on training and demonstrations from SDAE officers and the project team, who showed farmers how to compost and apply manure during field days and group meetings. The adoption of crop rotation and intercropping, introduced through SUSTAIN Pro training and reinforced by peer learning at demonstration plots, further enhanced soil structure, increased nitrogen content, and helped control pests and diseases. Both farmer interviews and project monitoring data confirmed these.

Project teams and reports highlighted a significant shift away from traditional field burning. Most of the interviewed farmers also affirmed these shifts. Farmers shifted to using crop residues as mulch to improve soil moisture retention and reduce erosion. This practice was promoted through field demonstrations and technical guidance from extension officers and the project team, resulting in healthier, softer soils.






Farmers began integrating fruit and native trees with their crops and started using natural biopesticides, which they felt contributed to lower input costs and safer food. This progress was supported by the distribution of seedlings and technical guidance for tree planting in water-stressed areas, along with group workshops and follow-up visits led by SDAE extension officers and the project team, who provided practical training on both tree integration and biopesticide use. A male farmer in Vanduzi noted: *"We have also been taught about agroforestry, where we integrate trees with food crops. We learned about proper spacing and were provided with suitable tree species for planting. Our agroforestry system includes a mix of fruit trees and native plants, which serve multiple purposes: providing shade for our crops, a source of organic manure, and eventually supplying firewood."*


Water conservation increased drought resilience and better water availability for crops, as reported by interviewed local farmers and project reports. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) This was achieved through the restoration of water sources and the use of mulching and residue retention, which were set up by the project team in partnership with local committees.

Farmers achieved higher yields and improved productivity after adopting new practices. Monitoring data indicated that adopters were realising higher yields compared to non-adopters for maize and horticultural crops such as green beans and cabbage (see Table 3).

Soil fertility, structure, and moisture retention improved, making cultivation easier and crops more resilient to dry periods. This was achieved through the use of organic manure and compost, which enabled continuous cropping without soil exhaustion, and through agroforestry and tree planting, which provided shade, enhanced biodiversity, and protected water sources. Women's groups led efforts in compost production, water source restoration, and horticulture, resulting in increased confidence and income from selling organic vegetables valued for their taste and durability. These outcomes were reported by women's groups and farmer leaders in Barué and Vanduzi, confirmed by project monitoring data, and further highlighted in FGDs and project reports. Peer learning and demonstration plots also helped spread these successful practices quickly, as neighbours adopted techniques that showed clear benefits, a trend noted by both interviewed farmers and extension officers. One cooperative leader respondent emphasised the hands-on learning: *"Through the SUSTAIN Pro project, producers receive hands-on learning opportunities directly in the demonstration fields where they acquire technical skills related to sustainable farming practices and after training, each farmer applies the knowledge and skills gained to their own farms"*. The leader also observed that *"...even those who are not direct beneficiaries of the program are adopting these practices... The dissemination occurs organically. People see the results, seek to understand better, and begin to take plants to new cultivation areas."*

Table 3: Highlights of various crop performance in Tanzania and Mozambique

	<p>Rice yields increased substantially for farmers in Kilombero and Malinyi, Tanzania by about 8.9% since baseline. For farmers, this increase was estimated at around five sacks to as high as 18 sacks per season. This improvement followed hands-on training in SRI, which covered the use of young seedlings, proper spacing, line planting, and careful water management. Farmers attributed their gains to adopting sustainable agricultural practices, improved seeds, timely planting, and better nursery management. The training was delivered by SUSTAIN Pro, TARI, and local extension officers, and reinforced through demonstration plots and farmer field schools.</p>
	<p>Sugarcane yields in Kilombero increased by 6.38% from baseline (47,000 tonnes to 50,000 tonnes). Farmers reported that this increased to about 15 tonnes per acre to between 22 and 30 tonnes per acre after they adopted new practices. This progress followed comprehensive training on the sugarcane value chain, which began in 2022 and covered farm preparation, seed selection, pest and disease management, soil testing, and improved fertiliser management. Farm clinics in Kidatu, Mangula, Sanje, and Msolwa-Ujamaa provided hands-on advice from extension officers and Kilombero Sugar Company agronomists. Farmers began using sugarcane residues as mulch, planting legumes as cover crops, and digging trenches to slow runoff and prevent erosion. The project also emphasised the correct timing and application of fertilisers, marking a major change from previous methods.</p>
	<p>In Mozambique, project monitoring data revealed that maize yields on supported farms averaged 2.38 tons per hectare in 2024, compared to 2.1 tons per hectare on non-adopter farms. Although these yields were below the baseline, they were notably higher than those of non-adopters during a season impacted by El Niño rains, demonstrating greater resilience among adopting farmers.</p> <p>Maize farmers in districts like Kilolo and Iringa, Tanzania, received training on crop rotation, intercropping (especially with legumes), mulching, minimal tillage, and integrated pest management. Demonstration plots and peer learning were central to the approach, with farmers reporting improved yields and soil fertility after adopting these practices. Farmers also noted better soil structure and moisture retention, which helped crops withstand dry spells.</p>
	<p>Horticultural crops also benefited, with cabbage yields in Mozambique reaching 48.3 tons per hectare and green beans 1.99 tons per hectare. Farmers directly attributed these gains to the use of organic manure, crop rotation, and mulching, a link discussed in FGDs and validated during interviews with SDAE officers.</p> <p>Horticulture farmers, particularly women and youth, were engaged through AMCOS and extension services in areas such as Kilolo and Iringa, Tanzania. Training covered mulching, residue management, safe agrochemical use, biopesticides, and water conservation. Farmer field schools and demonstration plots were key to learning and adoption.</p>
	<p>Soybean was promoted as a strategic crop, especially in the Ihemi landscape, to support local edible oil and livestock feed sectors. According to project reports, soybean yields increased from a baseline of 0.606 tons/ha to 1.202 tons/ha on participant farms in 2024. Farmers were trained in drought-tolerant seed use, inoculant application, zero-till, and legume intercropping, often in rotation with maize. This was affirmed by an interviewed soybean lead farmer, who reported being trained on soy farming resulting in 80% increase in their harvest. They also reported being trained on the ways of accessing markets through exhibitions. These</p>

	<p>conservation agriculture practices reportedly contributed to improved soil fertility and more stable farm incomes. In Ihemi, the promotion of soybean farming saw lower adoption than expected because of resource gaps and market uncertainties. SUSTAIN responded to these challenges through targeted support to farmer cooperatives, alongside efforts to link sustainable production to market incentives (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (Goodluck Massawe, 2023) (Metroeconomica_Tanzania, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2022).</p> <p>In Mozambique, soybean yields nearly doubled for those who adopted the practices, and pigeon pea yields were higher than those of non-participating farmers, as confirmed by monitoring data and interviews with extension officers.</p>
	<p>Sunflower yields in Tanzania improved from 0.968 tons/ha at baseline to 1.316 tons/ha in 2024. By-products such as press-cake and husks were promoted for use as livestock feed or compost, supporting circular economy principles. Project reports indicate that farmers received support on best practices, including the selection of drought-tolerant seeds, residue management, and basic processing techniques.</p>

3.3.1.2. Output 1.2: Governance institutions and processes are strengthened to build an enabling environment

The focus of this output is strengthening governance systems to support sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. It works to improve coordination across local, district, and national levels, enhance decision-making processes, and ensure equitable land and resource rights, particularly of rural women and youth.

Tanzania

By 2024, fifteen FFPOs and NRM governing bodies in Tanzania had been strengthened, meeting the project’s target for this output. This progress resulted from formal training on governance, leadership, and financial management, along with direct coaching and follow-up support from the project team and partners Agriterra.

SUSTAIN Pro also facilitated leadership and cooperative management training, focusing on increasing the participation of women and youth in decision-making, while strengthening the overall functionality of AMCOS. In Mkula AMCOS, for example, women’s board representation rose from below 25% to 42.9%, and youth made up 22% of elected leaders by 2024. These gains were attributed to targeted awareness sessions and election support, delivered through partnerships with the project, Ifakara Town Council, Kilombero Sugar Company, and local cooperative officers. Awareness sessions were conducted with 786 participants across seven villages, utilising radio, noticeboards, and mobile amplifiers to disseminate information. Interviews with various stakeholders confirm that these trainings equipped leaders, particularly women and youth, with critical skills in governance, inclusion, and cooperative operations. Pre- and post-election capacitation efforts not only enhanced leadership performance but also helped overcome gender biases in service delivery. AMCOS reported improved administrative capacity through the provision of essential equipment such as computers and filing cabinets.

The project successfully established and operationalised multi-stakeholder platforms at the landscape level, improving coordination and joint planning among diverse partners. In Kilombero and Ihemi, these platforms brought together public, private, and civil society actors, including SAGCOT, local government authorities, AMCOS, and private sector partners, to address land health, sustainable agriculture, and NbS. The project also contributed to national and local policy priorities, including Tanzania’s NDCs and CAADP, and advanced collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture through work towards a five-year Memorandum of Understanding. Interviewed stakeholders confirmed that IUCN’s technical support and

convening role were crucial for aligning project objectives with national policy frameworks and enabling the scaling up of tested solutions across agricultural corridors.

In parallel, the project advanced land use planning and tenure security efforts across Ihemi and Kilombero landscapes. As captured during interviews with the project team and from project reports (IUCN_Annual, 2024), the project engaged with land use planning structures and law enforcement, convening district land officers, farmer representatives and National Land Use Planning Commission (NPLUC) to validate solutions and identify rollout opportunities. This included participation in a national workshop hosted by NLUPC in 2023, focusing on the development of zonal, regional, and Village Land Use Plans (VLUPs). VLUPs were implemented in Vidunda, Chonwe, and Udung'hu, contributing to improved land management across 1,783 hectares. The project also supported training for VLUMs, VNRCs, and WUAs in natural resource governance. In Sumbawanga, 18 out of 20 villages successfully integrated natural resource management into local governance, with inclusive committees supporting enforcement and community sensitisation.

To improve land tenure security, SUSTAIN Pro worked with local authorities to support the issuance of Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCROs), particularly for women and youth. (IUCN_Supervision, 2023) By mid-2025, 3,648 CCROs had been secured in Ihemi and Kilombero landscapes. (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025)¹⁴ These efforts were backed by targeted radio campaigns and training sessions on land tenure issues, which reached approximately 600,000 people. Brochures titled “Haki miliki katika ardhi” (land tenure) were distributed during sensitisation events. (IUCN_Annual, 2024) Interviewed respondents credited the programme for expanding women’s land ownership, reported at over 40% in Kilombero, and noted improved security of tenure through participatory land use planning. However, they also flagged risks, beyond the program, that could undermine these gains. Frequent changes in village leadership could disrupt continuity, particularly when new leaders are unfamiliar with the existing land-use plans or conservation agreements. Some respondents cited political interference as a concern, including cases¹⁵ where land previously designated for conservation was reallocated for agricultural use, threatening long-term environmental goals. As a result, they emphasised the importance of sustained engagement with village leadership and deeper involvement of government officials in ongoing project activities.

The project strengthened the capacity of public extension officers, AMCOS leaders, and local government staff, enhancing their ability to support farmers, manage cooperatives, and promote inclusive governance. The training covered sustainable land management, soil health, agrochemical safety, and leadership skills. Progress was also made in increasing the participation of women and youth in cooperative and community leadership through the formation of women’s and youth councils within AMCOS, targeted training on leadership and election processes, and sponsorship for women to attend exhibitions and learning events. The majority of respondents acknowledged that these efforts empowered women and youth with a stronger voice in decision-making, helping to address long-standing participation gaps. Cooperative leaders and AMCOS members reported that project staff maintained regular communication with local authorities and farmer groups via meetings, phone calls, and site visits to gather input and respond to emerging needs. Local authorities showed active support by participating in project launches and awareness sessions. However, some AMCOS members noted that while leaders were well-informed, information dissemination to all members could be improved. The project could consider encouraging AMCOS leaders to embed communication and information dissemination responsibilities into their leadership roles and monitor this as part of cooperative performance accountability. This would reinforce and encourage more inclusive engagement between AMCOS leadership and members.

¹⁴ A further 301 titles were issued under SUSTAIN Eco in Sumbawanga in 2024, including 134 to women and 59 to joint households (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025).

¹⁵ This was reported as an example from a case in the Iluma Wildlife Management Area, outside the project scope and implementation area

Mozambique

SUSTAIN Pro advanced its collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, working towards the finalisation of a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will provide a formal platform to embed NbS, ILM and land health principles into national strategies and service delivery models. The project also established strategic partnerships with organisations such as SeedCO Mozambique, BIOAGRI, ARA Centro, and IIAM to support seed co-financing, bio-input testing, water monitoring, and agroforestry systems.

Nine FFPOs and natural resource management (NRM) governing bodies in Mozambique were strengthened by 2024, meeting the project's target for this output. This was achieved through formal training on governance, leadership, and financial management, as well as direct coaching and follow-up support from the project team and SDAE officers. SUSTAIN Pro facilitated training sessions on leadership, cooperative management, and record-keeping, with special emphasis on increasing women's and youth participation in decision-making. For instance, in Cooperativa S. Machel and 7 de Abril associations, women's representation in leadership increased, and youth were elected to key positions by 2024. These positive changes were attributed to targeted awareness sessions, election support, and ongoing technical assistance delivered in partnership with the project team and local government authorities.

Interviews with the project team and district extension officers confirmed that IUCN's technical support and convening power were instrumental in strengthening institutional coordination and aligning project objectives with local policy frameworks. This included support for training on legal and participatory land governance, facilitating policy dialogue on integrating agriculture and environmental planning, and contributing to the operationalisation of platforms like the Project Steering Board to embed tested solutions within districts and provincial strategies across the Beira Corridor (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2022) (Ipsos_Mozambique, 2023).

SUSTAIN Pro delivered targeted capacity building for public extension officers, cooperative leaders, and local committee members, covering sustainable land management, soil health, agrochemical safety, and leadership skills. A total of 1,398 farmers received training, including 623 who were directly engaged in 17 demonstration fields and agroforestry plots. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN_Supervision MZ, 2024) Extension officers and cooperative leaders reported to the MtR team that these trainings improved their ability to support farmers, manage cooperative affairs, and promote inclusive governance. The project also supported the formation and training of a new natural resource management committee, which took on responsibilities for water source restoration and agroforestry activities. Women's and youth councils within FFPOs were formed and received targeted training on leadership and election processes. Focus group discussions and project reports emphasised that these efforts gave women and youth a stronger voice in decision-making and helped shift long-standing participation gaps in community leadership. In several associations, women's groups became more active in governance, compost production, and water source management.

The project maintained regular communication with local authorities and farmer groups through meetings, phone calls, and site visits. This facilitated alignment with local governance structures, supported training, and enabled a timely response to the needs of farmers. However, some NRM committee members noted that information about project activities did not always reach all members and called for more inclusive and transparent communication strategies.

3.3.1.3. Output 1.3: Market-based approaches & incentives help transition to sustainable agricultural systems

This output aims to enable farmers to produce competitive, value-added products and strengthen local and regional markets for sustainably produced commodities. The project aims to achieve this by building the competitiveness of FFPOs and cooperatives through value addition and market linkages. Additionally, it provides training for farmers on sustainable business practices and works to strengthen cooperative governance with inclusive structures for women and youth.

Tanzania

The project provided training on how to add value to crops, enhance packaging, and develop effective branding. According to project monitoring data (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025), at least 11 AMCOS and cooperative leaders participated in value addition training in 2023, covering rice and sugarcane processing, improved packaging for market access, and branding strategies to help differentiate products in local and regional markets. The Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) in Iringa hosted a five-day training program on value addition for farmers, focusing on food hygiene, processing, labelling, and marketing for crops such as sunflower and soybean. Interviewed respondents noted that these interventions were particularly helpful in enabling farmers to shift from selling unprocessed produce to value-added products, for instance, processed rice instead of raw paddy, which increased profitability. Packaging and grading also improved rice quality and attractiveness to buyers, with respondents from SIDO Iringa describing value addition as a “revolutionary help” that generated employment and significantly reduced post-harvest losses, which typically range between 30–40% in Tanzania. Farmers trained under the programme reported improved ability to store produce and sell it later at a higher price, thereby increasing income. However, challenges persist, including market price fluctuations, local levies that reduce competitiveness, and limited storage infrastructure that makes it difficult to attract buyers or manage harvests effectively. Despite these constraints, interviewed farmers and AMCOS leaders expressed increased confidence in reaching new markets, particularly for rice and sugarcane products.

In 2024, the project deepened engagement with four cooperatives in Ithemi and Kilombero, representing over 600 members, to improve their governance, inclusivity and market competitiveness. In partnership with Agriterro, the project conducted business and governance assessments for six farmer organisations (Maguililwa, Muungano Mtitu, Lupelwasenga, Mtimbila, Mkula Scheme, and Katurukila AMCOS), selecting four for intensive capacity-building. These cooperatives received My.COOP training, financial management support, and established women’s and youth councils, positioning them as inclusive, sustainable business entities ready to access finance and markets (IUCN_Annual, 2025).

A recent study commissioned by the project on advancing financing mechanisms for CSA and NbS investments in Tanzania underscores the importance of access to finance as a driver for sustainable market growth. Tanzania has a diverse financial sector, comprising 45 licensed banks, including the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) and TIB Development Bank, which offer targeted agricultural financing. However, smallholder farmers and cooperatives face persistent barriers to formal credit, including high interest rates, limited collateral, and short repayment terms, which often force them to rely on informal financing, VSLGs, and SACCOS. The project’s capacity-building and cooperative-strengthening efforts are therefore essential in preparing farmer organisations to access these financing mechanisms, negotiate with development finance institutions, and participate in emerging sustainable value chains.

The project contributed towards enhancing market visibility and networking opportunities by supporting AMCOS members’ participation in regional exhibitions, such as Nanenane (2023), where they showcased value-added products and learned from other market actors. The project also organised farm clinics and business case workshops, bringing together public and private extension officers, cooperative leaders, and company representatives to discuss market requirements, quality standards, and value chain opportunities. These events facilitated partnerships between AMCOS, farmers, and private sector actors, most notably KSC.

Mozambique

The project delivered training on value addition, packaging, and branding to farmer organisations and cooperatives in Barué and Vanduzi with nine FFPOs and cooperatives supported by 2024, meeting the project’s target for this output. This training was organised by the project team with support from SDAE extension officers and covered topics such as organic vegetable production, composting, improved packaging, and basic branding strategies for local markets. Majority of farmers and all of the cooperative leaders interviewed reported that these interventions enhanced their understanding of product quality

and shelf life, particularly for organic vegetables such as cabbage and green beans, which were recognised for their superior taste and durability in local markets. However, the rollout of formal certification and sustainability standards was still in its early stages, with only a few agribusinesses and cooperatives beginning to explore these areas.

SUSTAIN Pro also facilitated connections between farmer groups and local markets, particularly in Chimoio and district centres, where women's groups and cooperatives sold organic vegetables and other produce. Interviewed farmers and cooperative leaders noted that while organic produce was generally preferred by customers for its taste and longer shelf life, no price premium for sustainable or organic produce was received, with products sold at the same price as conventional crops. To address these market gaps and catalyse investment, the project aimed to develop and disseminate business cases for selected crops, including vegetables, maize, and legumes. By the time of the evaluation, three business cases had been identified in Mozambique. However, dissemination and uptake were still in progress, with most activities scheduled for the second half of 2025.

In 2023, SUSTAIN Pro engaged six agricultural value chain actors, including input providers, traders, and medium producers, to integrate sustainable practices into local business models and improve market functionality (SUSTAIN Pro 2023 Annual Report). This included identifying key manure suppliers, demonstration field locations, and input providers to support sustainable farming practices. By 2024, the project developed business plans for two organic compost production units, which were intended to supply local farmer groups with organic fertilisers and create new community-based value chains (SUSTAIN Pro 2024 Annual Report). These efforts were complemented by linking producers to 11 potential maize buyers (4 in Vanduzi and 7 in Bárue) who expressed interest in purchasing up to 200 tons of maize, providing a pathway for increased farmer incomes and market security.

To improve market visibility and connectivity, producers and cooperatives were registered on the Kugulissa digital platform. The platform provides real-time market information, including buyer availability and current prices, and aims to improve market transparency and competitiveness for smallholder products. Interviews with the implementing partner and farmers indicated that the Kugulissa platform had enhanced market transparency, helping farmers access price and buyer information, particularly for maize sales. However, the respondents pointed out that the platform does not explicitly support organic products. Farmers face price disparities and limited competition among buyers, often selling to single buyers who significantly increase their margins, which in turn makes production struggle to align with market demand. In addition, large buyers favour formalised cooperatives with supply agreements, which are still underdeveloped, creating a bottleneck for broader market integration and reducing the economic incentives for sustainable production.

Output 1.3 Linkages to Outcome 3

Activities under Output 1.3 in both Tanzania and Mozambique are directly linked to Outcome 3, which focuses on accelerating the transition to sustainable food systems by mobilising investment and strengthening inclusive value chains. By enhancing the market readiness, competitiveness, and organisational capacity of FFPOs and cooperatives through value addition, branding, packaging, local market linkages, and the introduction of the Kugulissa digital platform, Output 1.3 establishes the market foundation necessary for investment mobilisation.

These market-ready opportunities feed into business case development under Output 3.1 and provide clear entry points for the mixed grant scheme and other blended finance mechanisms under Output 3.2. In practice, Output 1.3 equips farmer organisations to adopt sustainable practices and engage in markets, while Outcome 3 channels the financing and partnerships needed to scale these efforts, ensuring that sustainable value chains become commercially viable and attractive to both farmers and private sector actors.

3.3.1.4. Building on Outcome 1 Achievements

Phase 1 of SUSTAIN Pro demonstrates that integrated approaches, combining sustainable practices, inclusive governance, and market development, can deliver both environmental and economic benefits.

Farmers and cooperatives across Tanzania and Mozambique are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to adopt climate-smart and NbS but scaling these practices will require additional investment in the systems and incentives that ensure long-term adoption. Phase 2 may potentially focus on scaling these achievements by embedding sustainable production into formal governance structures and unlocking the financial and market incentives that drive long-term adoption.

Expanding access to mechanisation, irrigation, and locally produced organic inputs will make it easier for farmers to apply sustainable practices across larger areas, while reinforcing soil health and water efficiency. Peer-to-peer learning, demonstration fields, and mobile farm clinics can continue to accelerate the spread of proven techniques. However, Phase 2 has the opportunity to complement these efforts with stronger local input value chains and targeted support for the production and distribution of organic fertilisers, biopesticides, and drought-tolerant seeds.

The institutional and governance foundations established during Phase 1 create a platform for a deeper and more sustainable impact. Multi-stakeholder platforms, FFPOs, AMCOS, and NRM committees are now better organised and more inclusive, with women and youth actively participating in leadership and decision-making. Phase 2 should consider embedding these governance structures within formal district and national systems, ensuring that land and water management, cooperative governance, and local bylaws remain functional and effective long after project support concludes. Continued support for leadership development, structured knowledge sharing between committees, and regular communication between community leaders and their members will strengthen local ownership and resilience, enabling cooperatives and committees to operate independently and sustainably.

Market-based interventions offer compelling opportunities for Phase 2 to turn sustainable practices into tangible economic incentives for farmers. While Phase 1 demonstrated that value addition, branding, and improved packaging can enhance product quality and visibility, Phase 2 of SUSTAIN Pro could consider unlocking premium markets, formal certification, and traceable supply chains that reward farmers for sustainable production. Deeper engagement with traders, processors, and regional buyers will be key to creating stable market agreements, reducing price disparities, and overcoming the current lack of premium pricing for organic and climate-smart products. Building on the initial use of the Kugulissa digital platform in Mozambique, future work could expand digital solutions to link cooperatives with a broader network of buyers, facilitate e-certification and reporting, and provide real-time market intelligence to help farmers align production with demand.

Financing remains a pivotal lever for scaling impact, and the potential Phase 2 should explore how to connect market-ready farmer organisations to investment at an unprecedented level. By leveraging the mixed grant scheme, Payment for Ecosystem Services models, and partnerships with development finance institutions and commercial banks, the project will provide the capital required for value chain expansion, mechanisation, and post-harvest infrastructure. Access to tailored financial products, such as cooperative-based loans, seasonal credit lines, and blended finance for agro-processing, will allow farmers to grow beyond subsistence, invest in improved practices, and achieve the economic returns needed to sustain climate-smart and nature-positive production.

Phase 2 should consider addressing post-harvest and infrastructure gaps that continue to limit farmer income potential. By investing in storage facilities, transport solutions, and cooperative-led processing, the project can potentially reduce losses, improve quality compliance, and strengthen farmer bargaining power. Combining these investments with expanded value addition and certification would transform the economic viability of sustainable production, ensuring that the environmental gains achieved through SUSTAIN Pro translate directly into durable improvements in livelihoods.

3.3.2. OUTPUT DELIVERY AND PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOME 2

SUSTAIN Pro has made steady progress towards Outcome 2, restoring land health through landscape partnerships and NbS, in both Tanzania and Mozambique.

In Tanzania, the project established and operationalised four landscape partnership agreements, enabling joint planning and coordinated implementation of NbS and restoration activities across the Ithemi and Kilombero landscapes. Activities included riparian restoration, agroforestry, tree planting, and terrace farming, supported by the LHMI to guide evidence-based decision-making. By 2025, over 3,814 hectares of land were under restoration, with visible ecological benefits such as improved forest cover, water source recovery, and wildlife return. The Soil Health Compact, signed by 60 cross-sector stakeholders, and the piloting of the LHMI reinforced institutional commitment to land and water governance.

In Mozambique, progress focused on laying the foundation for landscape-scale restoration. Two landscape partnership agreements were formalised in Barué and Vanduzi, alongside the creation of DCGs for NbS to improve coordination, community engagement, and joint planning. Early restoration included tree planting, agroforestry, and water source rehabilitation, with baseline ecological data generated through biodiversity, soil, and water assessments, identifying 164,645 hectares of priority restoration zones.

SUSTAIN Pro has strengthened multi-stakeholder coordination, produced critical land health data, and demonstrated the viability of integrated landscape restoration approaches, with Tanzania showing landscape-level impact and Mozambique establishing a strong platform for future scaling.

3.3.2.1. Output 2.1: Landscape partnership agreements in place for action and investment in nature-based solutions

Output 2.1 focuses on establishing and resourcing landscape partnership agreements to implement NbS as part of efforts to restore land health and promote sustainable ecosystem management. It brings together local government, farmer and forest producer organisations, civil society, and private sector actors to develop shared landscape visions, action plans, and formal agreements for restoration, sustainable land and water governance, and cross-sector collaboration.

Tanzania

The project had achieved its target of developing and operationalising four formal landscape partnership agreements in the Ithemi and Kilombero landscapes. The agreements brought together local governments, AMCOS, the private sector, and civil society to coordinate land restoration, improve soil health, and manage water resources. These agreements were reached through multi-stakeholder workshops, technical consultations, and joint planning sessions.

Restoration activities included a range of NbS to reverse land degradation and enhance ecosystem services. In sugarcane-producing areas of Kilombero, the project supported riverine restoration along 20 km of riparian zones, testing the effectiveness of natural regeneration versus targeted planting. A sub-catchment restoration strategy was implemented by SUSTAIN Pro along the Lukosi River in Kilolo, which combined technical workshops, community trainings, and co-developed bylaws to strengthen water and soil management. (IUCN_Annual, 2025). Other restoration activities included tree planting, agroforestry, and rehabilitation of degraded lands in Kilolo, Mlimba, Malinyi, and Kilombero, particularly in critical water catchment and biodiversity areas. By 2025, 3,814 hectares (against a target of 5,060 hectares) in Tanzania were under restoration, reflecting ongoing resource mobilisation and technical support. Interviewed community members and local leaders reported visible benefits, including greener forests, the return of water sources, and even wildlife such as leopards, reflecting improved forest health

and biodiversity¹⁶. Local authorities actively promoted tree planting and conservation, showing strong community ownership of restoration outcomes.

A collaboration with KSC and Newcastle University supported the restoration of 400 hectares of riparian land, previously used for sugarcane cultivation, and the development of IWRM plans with farmer associations. This partnership advanced riverine restoration and private-sector engagement, directly contributing to Tanzania's Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) commitments. (IUCN_Annual, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025). These partnerships demonstrated a replicable model of integrated landscape governance, linking sustainable agriculture, water management, and ecosystem restoration to policy and market frameworks.

In the Kilombero landscape, SUSTAIN Pro and SUSTAIN Eco worked jointly as part of the broader SUSTAIN Initiative to strengthen MSPs. The Kilombero Landscape NbS Strategy was developed through a joint, multi-stakeholder, and cross-sectoral process involving Pro and Eco. The strategy serves as a locally owned roadmap for restoration and investment. (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2022) (IUCN_Supervision, 2023)

Mozambique

Two landscape partnership agreements were formalised in Barué and Vanduzi, bringing together district authorities, SDAE, farmer organisations, NRM committees, and private sector actors. These agreements improved coordination and resource mobilisation for restoration activities such as tree planting, agroforestry, and water source rehabilitation, with a focus on critical areas for water catchment, soil conservation, and biodiversity.

To operationalise these partnerships, the project also established and strengthened district-level multi-stakeholder platforms: the Barué District Coordination Group (DCG) and the Vanduzi DCG. Convened by IUCN and ADEM, with active involvement from district extension services, local government, FFPOs, and private sector partners, these platforms became the primary forums for joint planning and coordination. Stakeholders met regularly to align on seasonal activities, coordinate interventions such as demonstration fields and water source restoration, and ensure efficient allocation of resources. Through these facilitated discussions, shared action plans were developed, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and timelines for each partner, and covering input distribution, training schedules, and monitoring of restoration sites. The DCGs also provide a venue for negotiating and formalising partnership agreements between local government, the project team, FFPOs, and private sector actors, clarifying commitments for resource sharing, technical support, and long-term maintenance of project investments.

Key informant respondents emphasised that these DCGs improved communication, reduced duplication of efforts, and allowed for more responsive and inclusive decision-making. They played a key role in raising community concerns, sharing feedback with project staff, and ensuring that local priorities were reflected in project activities. The platforms also helped identify and address gaps in service delivery, such as input shortages or training needs, by enabling rapid coordination among partners. The project contributed to local policy priorities by advancing collaboration with district and provincial authorities and by integrating NbS and sustainable agriculture into local development plans.

In 2025, the restoration of the Cagole water spring in Bárue was initiated under the oversight of a 25-member (8 F, 17 M) NRM committee, focusing on water source protection and sustainable use. By the time of the MTR, 3.8 hectares had been restored.

¹⁶ These changes were reported by community stakeholders. The MTR team did not conduct site visits to forest areas or verify if wildlife replenished.

3.3.2.2. Output 2.2: Land health monitoring influences permanent governance mechanisms for land and water

This output focuses on ensuring that land health monitoring directly informs and becomes embedded in land and water governance structures in both Tanzania and Mozambique, supporting the adoption of NbS in productive landscapes. It aims to generate evidence on land health, demonstrate the benefits of NbS and strengthen institutional frameworks to support sustainable agricultural landscapes.

Tanzania

In Tanzania, Output 2.2 focused on building capacity for land health monitoring and institutionalising the LHMI to support evidence-based restoration and governance.

A comprehensive Land Health Monitoring Index was designed to provide an evidence base for decision-making and to support the application of NbS and agroecological practices. The LHMI was piloted in both landscapes, where baseline conditions and landscape-specific targets were established to guide land restoration, planning, and enforcement. By 2024, the LHMI in Tanzania was nearing completion, with plans to expand its application to additional sites in 2025 and align it with biodiversity and NbS tracking systems. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) The index provides an evidence-based tool for assessing soil, water, and resilience. The rollout of the LHMI influenced both local and national policy dialogue. Learning from the LHMI piloting and rollout is intended to inform higher-level processes, including the use of IGG tools at the corridor level and the integration of land health insights into Tanzania's NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) (IUCN_Workplan, 2024).

The Soil Health Compact, launched at a national workshop in Iringa with SAGCOT, formalised joint commitments on policy harmonisation, coordinated investment, and capacity building, and supported integrating the LHMI into national planning. The compact was endorsed by over 60 stakeholders, including government agencies, non-state actors, and private companies, and now serves as a guiding framework for land and water governance, promoting cross-sector collaboration and institutional ownership. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN_Workplan, 2025) SAGCOT officer commended improvement in land policy and soil health management: *“There is improvement in land policy, we have also created a compact on soil health management with shared responsibility for different actors.”*

By the mid-term review, 28 individuals, including district extension officers, AMCOS leaders, and local government staff, had been trained in the use of LHMI, field data collection, and soil and water assessment. This practical, participatory training enabled local actors to conduct land health assessments and link data to restoration planning and sustainable agricultural practices.

Mozambique

The project developed a land health monitoring index tailored to the Mozambican context, which integrated soil health, water management, and ecological resilience indicators. The framework is designed to function at the site, landscape, and national levels, providing evidence to guide decision-making and support the adoption of NbS in productive landscapes. (IUCN_Annual, 2024)

To generate the baseline data for the index, a biodiversity and restoration assessment was completed in Vanduzi and Báruè between March and October 2024, identifying 164,645 hectares of high-priority restoration zones and producing tailored recommendations for forest mosaics, ecological corridors, and degraded farmlands (IUCN_Annual, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, 2025).

Complementing the biodiversity work, comprehensive soil and water assessments were conducted to establish a detailed baseline of land health. In 2023, 38 soil samples were collected across results demonstration fields and farmers' fields in collaboration with Solidaridad and SDAE technicians, providing critical data to inform sustainable land management and the selection of appropriate agroecological practices. (IUCN_Annual, 2024) In parallel, a water quality assessment was conducted with ARA Centro in the Belas and Samora Machel cooperatives. The assessment generated recommendations for protecting, treating, and adopting sustainable agricultural practices for water sources. It marked the first step towards establishing a water quality monitoring network for these associations. Together, these studies have created a knowledge base to support both local governance

and district-level restoration planning. (IUCN_Annual, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, 2025) These findings were also substantiated from stakeholder interviews, for instance, a respondent from ISPM also mentioned, *"a survey has been carried out on the quality of the water, allowing us to have information to measure how agricultural activity can interfere with its quality over time"*. This indicates the use of surveys to understand the influence of agriculture on water quality.

Eight extension service personnel were trained and engaged in soil sample collection, strengthening local capacity for land and water monitoring. (IUCN_Annual, 2024) In addition, agriculture extension officers and field staff received training in crop production data collection using Kobo Toolbox, enhancing their ability to collect and manage technical data for ongoing monitoring. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) Training related to the LHMI for Mozambique is scheduled for subsequent phases, indicating that the groundwork for an operational land health monitoring system is in place. (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025)

3.3.2.3. Building on Outcome 2 Achievements

In the remainder of 2025, and based on the current implementation, the project plans to focus on consolidating the achievements detailed above, scaling interventions, and continuing to embed land health monitoring into long-term governance and financing mechanisms.

Across both countries, the programme plans to extend the application of the LHMI to additional sites in 2025, including Sumbawanga under SUSTAIN Eco and the Vanduzi and Bárue districts in Mozambique. The index can be further refined to provide clear indicators, metrics, and verification methods, ensuring it functions as a decision-making tool that captures the soil, water, ecological, and socio-economic dimensions of land health. Primary data collection should continue to address current gaps in areas such as water quality, soil erosion, and biodiversity, generating an evidence base for restoration planning, policy advocacy, and investment mobilisation.

The integration of LHMI into national systems and policy frameworks will be a priority. In Tanzania, the Soil Health Compact, signed with over 60 stakeholders, will be translated into a practical, action-oriented roadmap with clear monitoring commitments. Similar frameworks are anticipated in Mozambique. This work will link local restoration actions to nationally and internationally recognised commitments, such as NDCs and NAPs, while creating pathways to climate finance, private-sector partnerships, and donor support.

The potential Phase 2 of the programme may consider prioritising water-focused NbS and riparian restoration, particularly in Tanzania's Kilombero landscape, where the programme should continue collaborating with KSC and sugar cooperatives to implement riverine restoration aligned with the IUCN NbS Global Standard. VNRCs will also potentially receive advanced training to strengthen local resource governance, law enforcement, and the uptake of NbS.

In Mozambique, the focus will shift to operationalising the Bárue and Vanduzi NbS coordination groups, finalising shared action plans, and integrating restoration into district adaptation and development plans. A financial sustainability strategy for NbS will be developed to support partnerships between farmer organisations, businesses, and local authorities, ensuring that restoration efforts can be scaled and maintained beyond project support. The programme will also implement rigorous monitoring of organic inputs on land health, adapt LHMI indicators to the Mozambican context, and document the NbS selection process, including lessons on applying the Global NbS Standard in local settings.

3.3.3. OUTPUT DELIVERY AND PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOME 3

The MTR findings for Outcome 3 are based primarily on document review and interviews with the SUSTAIN Pro project team¹⁷. By mid-2025, SUSTAIN Pro had laid the foundations for Outcome 3, which aims to stimulate investment and scale up sustainability and inclusion in agricultural value chains across Tanzania and Mozambique. By mid-2025, 17 firms/associations in total from a baseline of six had adopted agroecological approaches and practices and/or set targets (KPI) in their annual reporting. (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025) Progress has primarily been made in preparatory work, partnership building, and the development of market-ready tools, with tangible investment uptake and widespread adoption of sustainability standards still in the early stages.

In both countries, the programme has progressed from groundwork to initial implementation, involving the completion of value chain analyses, development of business cases and investment fact sheets, and engagement with cooperatives, agribusinesses, and apex institutions. These efforts have created the building blocks for financing CSA and NbS by identifying investment opportunities, designing the SUSTAIN mixed grant scheme, and initiating PES feasibility studies.

Outcome 3 is proceeding in line with its staged design, moving from groundwork toward the activation of investment pipelines. The systems, business cases, and partnerships now in place position the programme to accelerate delivery in the next phase, ensuring that the production, governance, and restoration advances of Outcomes 1 and 2 evolve into tangible, market-driven, and financially sustainable transitions to climate-smart and nature-positive food systems.

While these foundations are solid, quantitative progress at mid-term reflects the phased nature of Outcome 3. As of early 2025, three (in Tanzania) of ten planned business cases had been disseminated, no FFPOs had yet accessed the dedicated funding mechanism, only \$50,000 of the \$500,000 investment target had been catalysed, and five¹⁸ (four in Tanzania and one in Mozambique) target financial actors had invested in agroecological approaches and products. Agribusiness training reached four entities in Tanzania, with further sessions planned to expand coverage in both countries.

3.3.3.1. Output 3.1: Business cases for sustainable commodities

This output focuses on developing and disseminating business cases for sustainable agricultural commodities to demonstrate the economic viability of identifying and disseminating CSA and NbS, alongside their environmental and social benefits. These business cases are designed to guide and attract public and private investment into sustainable value chains, linking local production to financing opportunities and national policy priorities.

Tanzania

By May 2025, three developed business cases were documented for Tanzania, covering the Ihemi and Kilombero. (Metroeconomica_Tanzania, 2025) These cases were informed by the 2022 value chain scoping study, which analysed production systems, financing gaps, and sustainability challenges across priority commodities (IUCN_Annual, 2022).

In Tanzania, three business cases have been developed, each demonstrating the economic, environmental, and social potential of sustainable commodities. In the Ihemi landscape, the soybean and sunflower business case focused on waste management and circular economy solutions, including bioenergy and compost production, while also promoting reduced agrochemical use and improved access to finance for farmers. In the Kilombero landscape, the rice business case addressed sustainable utilisation of rice residues, such as bioenergy and briquette production, encouraged

¹⁷ Other stakeholders interviewed in the MTR did not supply information for Outcome 3 because the interventions were in a foundational phase at that time.

¹⁸ These include KSC, KVTC, New Forest Company and, GAPI financial institution

reduced agrochemical use, and laid the groundwork for farmer certification schemes. A forest conservation and carbon credits business case, developed for Mngeta Village in Kilombero, explored opportunities to generate revenue through voluntary carbon markets (VCMs), building on successful models like the Ntakata Mountains project (Metroeconomica_Tanzania, 2025).

These three business cases were disseminated through workshops, validation meetings, and peer-to-peer learning events targeting AMCOS, cooperative leaders, and private sector stakeholders. These business cases are complemented by market-ready investment fact sheets, which summarise the financial potential, social benefits, and environmental outcomes of each case to attract private investors, development finance institutions, and public-private partnerships. They also form the basis for policy engagement and donor outreach, linking farm-level CSA and NbS practices to broader investment pipelines under Outcome 3.

Mozambique

Between 2022 and 2023, the project conducted scoping activities and stakeholder engagements that laid the foundation for business case development. Early discussions involved apex farmer organisations, farmer federations, and microfinance institutions such as Gapi, which explored potential credit lines for farmers (IUCN_Annual, 2024).

By the end of 2024, four market-ready business cases were developed in Mozambique, which assessed the economic potential of key value chains while highlighting their role in ecological restoration (GROUND, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2025). The developed business cases focused on four priority areas that link sustainable agricultural practices with economic and ecological benefits. The maize business case focused on strengthening smallholder production by promoting drought-resistant seeds, solar-pump irrigation, and formal buyer linkages, recognising maize's central role in both food security and cultural traditions. The soy business case tackles low productivity by connecting farmers to feed manufacturers through contract farming models, thereby supporting the poultry and livestock sectors while improving soil health. The horticulture business case targets high-value crops, such as tomatoes, cabbage, and onions, addressing challenges like high motor pump costs and post-harvest losses to maximise farmer income. The Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR) business case explores the use of carbon market opportunities and agroforestry to restore degraded land, establish ecological corridors, and align local initiatives with Mozambique's national environmental and climate commitments (GROUND, 2025). The business cases are complemented by market-ready investment fact sheets designed to present "bankable, grounded opportunities" to public and private investors (IUCN_Annual, 2025). These documents highlight pathways for financing CSA and NbS through inclusive and profitable value chains.

3.3.3.2. Output 3.2: Public/private investment projects to scale up sustainability and inclusion in value chains

This output focuses on stimulating public and private investments to scale up sustainability and inclusion in agricultural value chains, thereby directly supporting Outcome 3's goal of accelerating the transition to sustainable food systems. Its primary aim is to channel financing into climate-smart, nature-positive agricultural models that enhance productivity, sustain land health, and generate economic returns.

Tanzania

By mid-2025, the project had primarily achieved preparatory and capacity-building milestones rather than its direct financial targets under Output 3.2 (IUCN, 2021) (IUCN_MEL, 2024) (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025).

The programme designed a mixed grant scheme to catalyse investment in CSA, NbS, and inclusive value chains by blending grants, credit, and community funds. This preparatory work was complemented by engagement with strategic partners, including the CEO of Tanzania and SAGCOT,

to align investment pathways with business case development and private-sector interest (IUCN_Annual, 2025).

Capacity-building efforts for farmer cooperatives implemented within Outcome 1 served as a strategic lever for unlocking investment and enhancing inclusion in value chains, aligning with the output's mandate to stimulate public and private investment for sustainable agricultural growth. Strengthening farmer cooperatives was treated not simply as a social intervention, but as a precondition for channelling finance, scaling CSA and NbS, and creating self-sustaining, market-ready entities (IUCN, 2021) (IUCN_Annual, 2025).

The output also benefited from a specialised consultancy on financing mechanisms for CSA and NbS investments, which analysed value chains in Ihemi, Kilombero, and Sumbawanga. The consultancy reviewed existing financing practices, identified gaps and opportunities, and provided recommendations to guide future investment mobilisation (Metroeconomica_Tanzania, 2025). This work directly supports Output 3.2's goal of establishing viable investment pathways for smallholders and cooperatives.

The project aims to catalyse \$400,000 in investment for Tanzania and have six FFPOs access funding. However, as of June 2025, no FFPOs had accessed investment, and no funds had been catalysed. The project will prioritise this in the second half of 2025 (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025).

Mozambique

By 2023, the project began preparatory activities to establish pathways for financing sustainable agriculture and NbS. Discussions with the Cabinet for Compact Development helped position SUSTAIN Pro's value chain work to align with the Millennium Challenge Account baseline studies, setting the stage for integrated business cases. During this period, the programme also initiated collaboration with ADVZ and BIOAGRI to advance the Organic Inputs Production Programme, aiming to strengthen the production and distribution of organic fertilisers and biopesticides as part of future investment initiatives.

The groundwork, mechanism design, partner alignment, and pipeline preparation have been established. By the time of evaluation, \$50,000 had been catalysed toward investment in Mozambique under Output 3.2, representing 50% of Mozambique's \$100,000 target (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025). No FFPOs had yet formally accessed investment opportunities through the dedicated funding mechanism, with direct disbursements and uptake expected to accelerate in 2025.

Output 3.3: Growth corridor secretariats, apex institutions and industry associations adopt targets and roll out sustainability with agribusiness and investors

This output focuses on mainstreaming sustainability and inclusion within agricultural value chains by engaging growth corridor secretariats, apex institutions, and industry associations. Its purpose is to encourage these influential bodies to adopt sustainability targets, implement NbS and CSA, and promote land-health restoration while linking agribusinesses and investors to sustainable practices.

Tanzania

As of late 2024, the project had trained four agribusinesses (AMCOS), Magulilwa, Muungano Mtitu, Matimbila, and Mkula on sustainability standards and reporting, achieving 40% of the project's target of ten agribusinesses in Tanzania (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN Pro_Database, 2025). Training sessions, organised by the project team and local partners, focused on best practices for environmental and social management, product traceability, and compliance with market requirements. These sessions were delivered through workshops and direct engagement with AMCOS, cooperative leaders, and private sector actors in Kilombero and Iringa. Project reports indicate that the training improved awareness among participating agribusinesses of the importance of sustainability standards, especially for market access and value addition. Interviewed AMCOS leaders and members noted that the training also led to tangible improvements, including enhanced environmental cleanliness, increased ecological awareness and capacity, better post-harvest handling and product quality, and improved access to

markets and income. Agriculture officers interviewed in an FGD, in Ifakara stated that the project *"helped in training on packaging, grading and branding of rice which increased the value of rice"*.

The project collaborated with the SAGCOT Secretariat to review and update the IGG Toolkits, integrating CSA and NbS into the evaluation criteria for medium and large-scale farms. (IUCN_Annual, 2022) (IUCN_Annual, 2024) The IGG tool is now positioned as a semi-quantitative framework for tracking company-level sustainability actions, providing a foundation for monitoring the adoption of green practices in the SAGCOT corridor. (SAGCOT, 2023)

Beyond direct training, the project promoted green finance and policy engagement. In 2023 and 2024, SUSTAIN Pro partnered with the CEO of Tanzania to advance a national Green Finance Campaign and supported strategic dialogues with the TBA to encourage the adoption of sustainable finance principles (Metroeconomica_Tanzania, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, 2025). The project also contributed to high-level policy processes, including the Inter-Ministerial Dialogue on Carbon Trading. It supported the alignment of agriculture with the NDCs and other climate commitments. (IUCN_Annual, 2024)

Partnerships with agribusinesses, such as KSC, demonstrate how Output 3.3 connects corporate sustainability with local community benefits. KSC has adopted Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS) and is working with SUSTAIN Pro to develop IWRM plans, restore riparian areas, and establish demonstration plots for sustainable sugarcane production. (IUCN_Supervision, 2023) (IUCN_Annual, 2025) This partnership also positions KSC as a potential champion for Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) pilots, linking private-sector investment to landscape restoration efforts.

Mozambique

The project aimed to train 15 agribusinesses in sustainability standards and reporting. As of the MTR, eleven agribusinesses had been identified and engaged; these were primarily producer associations and cooperatives working directly with SUSTAIN Pro in the Barué and Vanduzi districts. Although sustainability standards and reporting training had not yet started, these groups had participated in agroforestry field monitoring, learning techniques for assessing soil water retention and tree survival. In 2024, IIAM and ISPM completed a biodiversity and climate standards training module for cooperatives, private companies, and SDAE extension officers, linking field practices to sustainability reporting and future certification.

By mid-2025, market-ready investment fact sheets and business cases were developed for maize, soybeans, horticulture, and afforestation/reforestation to attract public and private investment in climate-smart, inclusive practices. To support these opportunities, the SUSTAIN mixed grant scheme was designed to combine grants, credit, and community funds. At the same time, a PES feasibility study began exploring private-sector financing for restoration, starting with the Cagole water spring in Barué (IUCN_Annual, 2025).

The IUCN team collaborated with CTA/PTA and FENAGRI to co-develop work plans, support the mainstreaming of sustainability, and prepare bilateral dialogues with agribusiness and financial actors. The team also participated in the Annual Private Sector Conference (CASP 2024), highlighting opportunities in the carbon market. The Ministry of Agriculture (MADER) endorsed the focus on organic input production and certification and encouraged further engagement with commercial banks to expand cooperative access to loans. (IUCN_Supervision MZ, 2024)

3.3.3.3. Building on Outcome 3 Achievements

As SUSTAIN Pro enters its final year of the current phase in 2025, Outcome 3 will transition from the preparatory and foundational work completed in the first half of the project to the activation of concrete investment pathways in sustainable value chains. The programme was deliberately designed with a time lag for Outcome 3, reflecting its dependence on the foundations laid by Outcomes 1 and 2 for production, governance, and restoration. The groundwork established to date, through the development

of business cases, design of financing mechanisms, and engagement with agribusinesses and apex institutions, positions the programme to accelerate delivery in this next stage.

In 2025, the focus will shift to finalising and disseminating market-ready business cases and investment fact sheets that are designed to translate climate-smart and nature-positive practices into bankable opportunities. These documents will emphasise circular economy solutions, carbon markets, PES models, and blended-finance approaches designed to attract both private and public investment. Dissemination will target agribusinesses, cooperatives, policymakers, and financiers, ensuring that the economic, social, and environmental value of these opportunities is clearly demonstrated.

Operationalising the SUSTAIN mixed grant scheme will be a central step in converting preparatory work into tangible investments. This blended financing mechanism, combining grants, credit, and community funds, is expected to unlock capital for CSA, NbS, and inclusive value chains. In Tanzania, this will include piloting the funding mechanism in the SAGCOT corridor, coupled with CEOrt-led outreach under the national Green Finance Campaign and the implementation of sustainability targets using the IGG toolkit. In Mozambique, similar efforts will focus on launching a funding mechanism to support cooperatives and producer associations, complemented by certification pilots, technical assistance, and corridor-level dialogues with agribusiness and financial actors to increase market access and investment readiness.

Capacity building and institutional engagement will also deepen in this next phase. Agribusinesses and cooperatives will receive targeted support to enhance governance, financial management, and sustainability reporting —essential prerequisites for accessing credit, entering certified markets, and forming durable partnerships with private-sector investors. In Mozambique, the programme will continue to work with apex institutions, such as CTA/PTA, FENAGRI, ADVZ, and BIOAGRI, to embed sustainability norms into local and corridor-level planning, while also exploring opportunities for value chains, including organic compost. In both countries, closer alignment with financial institutions, producer associations, and corridor-level initiatives should contribute towards addressing the longstanding gap in agricultural finance by integrating credit access with inputs, market linkages, and NbS investments.

3.3.4. UNINTENDED PROJECT CONSEQUENCES

The restoration of degraded habitats, riverine forests, and water sources, particularly in Kilombero and Sumbawanga (under SUSTAIN Pro and Eco), has contributed to perceived visible ecological recovery, as reported by stakeholders. Respondents also perceived increased human-wildlife interactions, with farmers reporting occasional crop damage and concerns for livestock safety near restored forest corridors and water sources. Members of the Mngeta Environmental Committee and the Water Users Community in the Lower Mgeta Valley noted that wildlife populations have begun to return to the area, stating that *"various animals, including a leopard, have been sighted again. Their presence is beneficial for forest protection, and they do not appear to pose a threat as they are not aggressive or hungry."* Respondents added that reports of crop raiding have increased, and they attributed it to the increase in animals in the area¹⁹. *"In some cases, wildlife has even been observed approaching residential areas,"* they concluded. These interactions were an unintended consequence of habitat regeneration, emphasising the need for future integration of human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures into landscape restoration and land-use planning.

The lack of clear boundaries dividing protected forests and farmland generated local disputes between conservation actors and farmers expanding agricultural activities. In Mngeta, misunderstandings arose between community members and NRM committees when enforcement actions were taken against planting inappropriate species along riverbeds. These experiences underscored the need for clearer

¹⁹ The MtR did not verify increase in wildlife. These reports were primarily based on the perceptions of the respondents interviewed in the area.

communication, transparent enforcement processes, and ongoing community engagement to strike a balance between conservation and livelihoods. The project has responded by raising community awareness through VNRCs and promoting land-use practices that reduce vulnerability; however, further collaboration with wildlife authorities and district planning offices will be key in the next phase.

While women and youth have benefited from SUSTAIN Pro activities, some have reported experiencing indirect burdens associated with broader landscape restoration efforts. In certain villages in Tanzania, restrictions on collecting firewood, mushrooms or other non-timber forest products from restored forests affected daily routines and, in some cases, dietary diversity. These limitations are not a direct result of SUSTAIN Pro interventions, as the project does not manage access to forests or enforce resource-use rules. Instead, they stem from existing legal and governance arrangements for surrounding forests, which vary by status, such as village forests, forest reserves, forests within game reserves, or areas under Joint Forest Management (JFM), Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM), or government, NGO, or private management. Each of these governance mechanisms carries different access and use rights, which may restrict resource collection even when restoration activities improve forest health. The experience highlights the importance of context-specific engagement with forest authorities and communities to ensure that livelihood considerations and communication around access rights are incorporated alongside environmental goals.

Environmental risks were also identified, such as the potential for localised pollution from the improper management of agricultural residue processing (e.g., rice husks). The project mitigated these risks by promoting organic composting, biopesticides, and establishing Kizimba units for the safe disposal of agrochemical waste.

The programme's hands-on approach, through demonstration plots, mobile farm clinics, and facilitation of multi-stakeholder meetings, was instrumental in driving the adoption of CSA and NbS. However, it also created dependency on project facilitation, as some farmer cooperatives and local committees relied on SUSTAIN staff to convene meetings, coordinate inputs, and maintain activity momentum. To mitigate this, the project increasingly embedded responsibilities within local governance structures, supported leadership training, and encouraged formal handover of processes to AMCOS, VNRCs, and district authorities to sustain momentum beyond external facilitation.

3.3.5. EXTENT TO WHICH PROJECT KNOWLEDGE IS TURNED TO POLICY AND ACTION

Sustain Pro and Eco have demonstrated a structured approach to translating knowledge into policy impact by creating and disseminating knowledge products, implementing on-the-ground actions, and engaging in policy-focused advocacy and engagement.

Firstly, the creation and dissemination of knowledge products have been critical to the projects' influence. A comprehensive communications strategy guided the production of a variety of knowledge materials, including multilingual brochures, flyers, policy briefs, investment fact sheets, and visually engaging infographics and Theory of Change graphics. Over 2,000 brochures were distributed in Tanzania to raise awareness on sustainable land use and land tenure. Storytelling, short documentaries, and high-quality photography were employed to showcase real-life transformation stories, including gender-focused narratives, such as the AMCOS election documentary in Tanzania and interviews with farmers in Mozambique. Scientific and technical tools, such as the LHMI, were developed and piloted in Tanzania to connect local restoration practices to national and international environmental commitments. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) These products were actively disseminated through online platforms, such as the IUCN Water Knowledge Platform, and radio programs, including the Pambazuko Radio FM series in Tanzania, which reached over 600,000 rural listeners. Additionally, they were promoted at public events, including the Nanenane and Kilombero exhibitions. Workshops and national seminars, such as the one launching the National Soil Health Compact, provided opportunities for face-to-face policy engagement and knowledge exchange.

Secondly, direct action on the ground has served as both evidence generation and a model for policy uptake. In Tanzania and Mozambique, the projects strengthened MSPs and village-level governance structures, including VNRCs, WUAs, and VLUMs. These bodies were trained in environmental bylaws, resource management, and participatory enforcement, providing a foundation for integrating local experiences into district and national planning. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) Restoration of degraded landscapes was demonstrated through activities like tree planting, riverine rehabilitation, agroforestry, and the establishment of organic compost units and farmer demonstration plots showcasing CSA and NbS. These ground-level interventions have generated practical lessons for land and water governance, influencing both local enforcement and higher-level decision-making.

Thirdly, advocacy and targeted policy engagement have been pivotal in embedding SUSTAIN's approaches into formal governance frameworks. A landmark achievement was the National Soil Health Compact in Tanzania, endorsed by over 60 stakeholders from government, civil society, and the private sector, which formalised commitments to policy harmonisation, coordinated investment, and the integration of LHMI into national planning and monitoring systems (IUCN_Annual, 2025). Project evidence also feeds into Tanzania's NDCs and NAPs, strengthening the link between local land restoration and global climate commitments. Engagement with key institutions, such as the SAGCOT Secretariat, CEOrt of Tanzania, and the TBA, has advanced the mainstreaming of IGG tools and sustainable finance principles. In Mozambique, collaborations with CTA/PTA and FENAGRI have facilitated the integration of sustainability in the value chain and corridor-level discussions, while supporting organic input initiatives and early explorations of PES schemes. Capacity-building for district officials and extension workers has also reinforced the policy influence of the projects by equipping local actors to advocate for and implement sustainable practices.

3.4. EFFICIENCY

Assess the effective use of project resources and the value for money achieved.

The project is assessed as **highly satisfactory** with established systems and processes ensuring accountability for project funds, timely reporting, and meeting donor requirements. Project M&E system and tools are robust, with room to improve the approach to documenting and sharing learning.

3.4.1. PROJECT GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

The project's governance system in Mozambique and Tanzania has played a key role in supporting project results. During its inception phase (January–June 2022), the project set up a multi-level governance framework with structures at the corridor, landscape, and local levels to ensure that coordination and decision-making involved not only project staff but also government representatives, NGOs, private sector actors, and community groups, aligning all activities with national strategies and local priorities. (IUCN_Annual, 2025)

The governance framework has several levels. At the strategic level, Programme Steering Boards (PSBs) in Tanzania (Ihemi and Kilombero) and Mozambique (Báruè and Vanduzi) provide strategic direction, governance oversight, and alignment with national and subnational priorities. They meet twice a year and involve key stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors. At the national coordination level, project management groups (PMGs) comprising IUCN teams oversee policy influence, inter-landscape knowledge sharing, and coordination across outputs. At the operational level, landscape hubs and multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) in landscapes such as Kilombero, Sumbawanga (Sustain Eco), and the Mozambican districts of Vanduzi and Báruè facilitate collaboration, dialogue, and alignment on natural resource governance challenges. At the local level, the project has strengthened VNRCs, VLUMs, and WUAs, equipping them with tools and training to manage land, water, and forest resources sustainably, while encouraging women and youth participation. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN, 2021)

Platforms such as DCGs in Mozambique have proven particularly important for facilitating collaboration and information exchange. Involving local organisations and community groups in governance increased ownership of project interventions and grounded decisions in local realities. In Tanzania, MSPs in Kilombero and Sumbawanga were described as “vital for inclusive governance”, driving shared planning for land restoration, biodiversity management, and climate adaptation measures, and producing policy briefs that influenced district-level decision-making.

The project’s governance framework is aligned with local and national development and environmental policies, as well as international frameworks like the SDGs and IUCN’s Global Standard for NbS. It has fostered inclusive participation, with more women taking leadership roles in cooperatives and local committees, and over 80% active participation reported in some VNRCs. It has also contributed to policy influence, notably through the LHMI, which informed the National Soil Health Compact in Tanzania, endorsed by over 60 stakeholders and integrated into national planning and monitoring systems. Learning from the LHMI is expected to feed into NDCs and NAPs.

While the governance system is strong in structure and intent, there are still areas for improvement. In both countries, interviews with respondents highlight that coordination can sometimes be hindered by the need to consult multiple layers, and not all governance bodies use the same reporting formats, which can complicate the comparison of data and tracking progress across different areas. Communication gaps persist at both the grassroots and national levels. While village-level governance structures have become functional, their sustainability beyond project support remains uncertain, as they currently rely on external facilitation and funding. In addition, cultural barriers still influence the depth of participation by women and youth, and national-level policy influence remains constrained by top-down processes and entrenched interests.

The project is actively working to strengthen its governance system for long-term impact. Planned measures include formalising MSPs within district structures, revising the communication and knowledge management strategy to improve visibility and reporting, enhancing data integration and standardisation, and developing financial sustainability mechanisms to ensure that VNRCs and WUAs can continue to operate effectively after project closure. The introduction of outcome harvesting is expected to help capture behavioural and systemic changes in governance, complementing current output-based monitoring.

3.4.2. EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES AND TRACKING PROGRESS AGAINST SPEND

SUSTAIN Pro demonstrates sound resource utilisation and a strong commitment to value for money. Supported by a NOK 45 million grant from Norad for the 2021–2025 period, the project has maintained rigorous financial procedures aligned with IUCN’s accounting standards. Expenditure is tracked by both outcome and cost category: covering staff, activities, workshops, travel, consultancies, and publications, allowing transparent monitoring and swift identification of any variances (IUCN, Budget, 2025). Financial analyses of proposed business cases demonstrate positive financial net present values (FNPVs) and financial rates of return (FRRs) above 4%, illustrating that the interventions are economically viable and provide adequate returns on capital employed. Through the financial analyses, the project has identified economic benefits, such as annual savings of 10–30 USD per farmer through more efficient agrochemical waste management, demonstrating direct cost savings at the farmer level (Metroeconomica_Tanzania, 2025) (GROUND, 2025).

Another notable feature of the project’s financial strategy is its emphasis on co-financing and leveraging resources to maximise impact. SUSTAIN Pro acts as an “aggregator of success”, using Norad’s funding to catalyse additional investment from other donors and partners in complementary activities. This includes the co-financing of demonstration sites, organic input production initiatives, and restoration interventions, ensuring that landscape-level activities benefit from shared costs and a wider reach. Examples include the mobilisation of over \$7.1 million USD from the GEF for water resource management and a prospective \$30.5 million USD investment from the GCF targeting sustainable value chains. (IUCN_Workplan, 2025) Additional co-investments include a \$3 million USD project from the

IKEA Foundation and \$10 million USD from REGEN 10, which contribute to the development of tools and regenerative agriculture. By linking financial contributions from multiple streams, the project has been able to pilot innovative approaches, such as PES feasibility studies and blended finance models, while maintaining cost-effectiveness. (IUCN_Annual, 2022) (IUCN_Annual, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, 2025)

Interviews with the project team highlight that the project has pursued efficiencies through sharing technical and financial staff work across multiple IUCN projects. This arrangement has enabled cross-learning, faster knowledge transfer, and reduced duplication of effort, particularly in areas such as landscape planning, land health monitoring, and sustainable agriculture demonstrations. For example, experience from piloting the LHMI in Tanzania directly informed preparatory work for its verification in Mozambique. However, this approach has occasionally stretched the available human resources. When key staff are required to divide their time between several initiatives, periods of high activity, or the onboarding of new grants can create bottlenecks. In such instances, technical teams have experienced temporary delays in providing hands-on support for field activities, such as farmer training, monitoring of restoration sites, or preparing demonstration plots. Similarly, financial and reporting teams have faced short-term challenges in meeting reporting deadlines or producing fully verified financial reports on schedule, particularly during periods of staff turnover or when filling vacant positions took longer than anticipated. These delays have not resulted in major compliance issues or audit concerns; however, they have at times slowed the pace of implementation and necessitated adaptive management measures. The project has responded by reinforcing country-level staffing, introducing bi-annual partner visits in Mozambique, and strengthening reporting procedures, which have improved data accuracy and reduced the risk of reporting gaps.

In terms of tracking financial performance against projected spend, SUSTAIN Pro has a total Norad grant of NOK 45 million, covering the period from December 2021 to December 2025. The project systematically tracks expenditure by outcome and by cost category (e.g., staff time, workshops, travel), allowing clear visibility on spending patterns and deviations from the plan (IUCN_Annual, 2025). As of May 2025, overall expenditure was at 78%, with Outcome 1 at 91%, Outcome 2 at 72% and Outcome 3 at 55%, and project management, communication and MEL at 93% validating SUSTAIN Pro's plans to focus on Outcome 3 activities in the remaining period in Phase 1. The project's internal financial data as of mid-2025 indicated that NOK 20,593,843 of the NOK 28,748,014 allocated to outcomes had been spent.

The total expenditure for 2022 (Year 1, 9 Dec 2021- Dec 31, 2022) was NOK 7,102,257, accounting for 58% of the total annual budget of NOK 12,261,954, as presented in the project's audited accounts. Outcome 1 total budget spent was at 69% of the budgeted amount, Outcome 2 at 40% and Outcome 3 at 51%. Project management, communication, and MEL were at 66%. In 2022, Mozambique was particularly affected by delays in conducting baselines and establishing relationships with the government at the national and provincial levels. Tanzania's informational needs for Outcomes 2 and 3 contributed to slight delays in the kick-off of related interventions.

In 2023 (Year 2, Jan 1-Dec 31, 2023), the total expenditure was NOK 12,022,535,²⁰ representing 52% of the total budget of NOK 23,273,734 for that year. A slow burn rate of projected expenses was experienced due to delays in planned activities. Outcome 1 spend was at 59%, Outcome 2 was at 46%, Outcome 3 was at 23% and project management, communication and MEL were at 71%. In Mozambique, the delays arose from the delayed contracting of the implementing partner. There were also delays experienced in reviewing IGG toolkits in Tanzania. Under Outcome 2, there was a delayed engagement of the land health consultancy and capacity building initiative (audited account management response, 2023).

²⁰ IUCN, consolidated financial report, Dec 2023.

Total expenditure in 2024 (Year 3, 1 Jan – Dec 2024) was NOK 12,595,735, representing 62% of the annual budget of NOK 20,338,575. Outcome 1 expenditure was at 70%, Outcome 2 at 71% and Outcome 3 at 41%. Project management, communication, and MEL were at 73%. A few of SUSTAIN Pro's planned activities for Year 3 were incurred in 2025, reflecting the low burn rate for Outcomes 2 and 3. For instance, consultancies with GROUND and Metroeconomica that support Outcome 3 were commissioned at the end of 2024, therefore planned under the 2024 annual budget, but completed in 2025, when the cost was incurred. Under Outcome 2, LHMI was launched in 2024, with initial assessments completed, and the rest scaling up in 2025.

In the Year 2025, an interim internal analysis of expenditure indicates that the project is 24% of the projected annual budget at mid-year.

The IUCN's accounting manual underpins the project's financial management practices, including fixed reporting templates, separation of duties, and annual audits, which have not identified any major issues in recent years. This system ensures accountability, value for money, and timely corrective action where needed. The project's ability to combine careful cost management, co-financing strategies, and shared staffing arrangements demonstrates a strong focus on resource optimisation and effective delivery, even as it continues to work on improving the burn rate and internal coordination between SUSTAIN Pro and Eco to realise efficiencies of scale fully.

3.4.3. MEL STRATEGY AND TOOLS

The MEL team is comfortable with the tools, and the project teams have a good understanding of the project's indicators and data collection methods. Training was provided to both staff and partners, including local government officers and extension staff in Tanzania and Mozambique, to build capacity in survey methods, digital data entry, and the use of the Kobo Toolbox for real-time data collection. This made it easier to collect and manage data across the project's landscapes, and the central SUSTAIN MEL database is updated regularly with output and outcome indicators. (IUCN_Annual, 2025) (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025)

SUSTAIN has 38 indicators, including shared ones for Pro and Eco, as well as specific indicators for each project. These indicators cover impact, outcome, and output levels for both Pro (16 indicators) and Eco (18 indicators). They are linked to the project's results framework with defined baselines, annual milestones, and end-of-project targets (IUCN_MEL, 2024). Digital tools such as Kobo Toolbox, together with an Excel-based SUSTAIN database with a traffic light system, allow for real-time tracking, error reduction, and simplified visualisation of progress (IUCN_Annual, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, 2025). Additional specialised tools support crop production monitoring (Crop Cut Experiments), FFPO assessments, and natural resource management, ensuring a comprehensive and multi-dimensional evidence base for decision-making.

The MEL strategy is not only focused on tracking outputs but also incorporates mechanisms for learning and adaptive management. Key learning questions are embedded in the framework to help identify what works, what does not, and what should be done differently across land health, socio-economic outcomes, and governance structures (IUCN_MEL, 2024). To capture deeper qualitative insights, particularly on gender and youth engagement, the project is rolling out outcome harvesting, a method that identifies and analyses observed changes before working backwards to assess SUSTAIN's contribution (IUCN_Outcome) (IUCN_Annual, 2025). This is expected to strengthen understanding of why changes occurred and improve the documentation of SUSTAIN's role in complex landscapes where multiple initiatives operate.

While the MEL system is effective for tracking adoption and behavioural change, it is recognised that farmers in both Tanzania and Mozambique interact with multiple projects promoting sustainable agriculture. Attribution in such a context is inherently complex. To address this, SUSTAIN Pro employs a structured and traceable approach to farmer engagement, which includes baseline assessments, demonstration plots, repeated training and mentoring, field observations, and reporting by trained lead

farmers and SDAE technicians (IUCN_Annual, 2025). This logical pathway, combining capacity building, demonstration of results, and continuous technical assistance, provides reasonable confidence in associating observed changes with SUSTAIN Pro, while recognising that outcomes reflect shared contributions among aligned initiatives. This rationale also informed the establishment of NbS dialogue and DCGs, which aim to strengthen coordination and visibility of SUSTAIN's role in multi-stakeholder landscapes.

Learning and integration are ongoing but not yet fully systematic. While there are examples of good practice, such as using farmer feedback and supervision missions to adapt activities, systematic documentation and sharing of lessons could be improved; similar findings were also reported in the review of Eco. (IUCN_Annual, Eco, 2025) Current disaggregation of data by gender and age provides a quantitative view of inclusion. Still, the project aims to move beyond numeric tracking towards qualitative narratives that better capture empowerment and behavioural change.

3.4.4. MEASURES IN PLACE TO AVOID CORRUPT PRACTICES

SUSTAIN Pro follows IUCN's established anti-corruption policies, with clear rules for approving payments, separating duties, and ensuring every financial transaction is checked by more than one person. Contracts and payment requests must be signed and verified, with approvals from both the project manager and an independent finance team member.

Procurement processes are also tightly controlled. When selecting consultants or implementing partners, the project conducts due diligence to check that partners have proper accounting systems, audited statements, and a functioning board of directors. All contracts with partners include anti-fraud clauses, and partners are required to report back regularly, ideally every three months, on how they spend project funds. This is designed to minimise risks and ensure that any irregularities are quickly identified and addressed.

Regular financial reports are prepared for donors, and annual external audits are conducted on SUSTAIN Pro accounts. Recommendations from these audits have been successfully addressed, except for the challenge of aligning project budget and work planning with annual expense reporting. According to the audit recommendation, the project would benefit from conducting these two processes at the same time. However, due to SUSTAIN Pro's contractual obligations to the donor, the workplan and budget are submitted in October/November and the annual financial report for the previous year is submitted in April/May. These audits also review internal control systems to ensure that all procedures are being followed as intended. There have been no issues concerning internal control systems that were flagged by the audit.

3.4.5. ADAPTING TO CHANGING CONDITIONS

In Mozambique, the national electoral cycle in late 2024 brought restrictions on movement and gatherings, which delayed key activities such as DCG workshops and training sessions for agrarian associations. Instead of allowing these disruptions to stall progress, the project rescheduled the activities for 2025 and maintained continuous communication with local stakeholders to ensure a quick recovery of activities once conditions stabilised. Project documentation highlights that despite these delays, relationships with local stakeholders remain strong, and a full resumption of activities took effect in early 2025. This approach helped keep the project on track and minimised the impact of external disruptions. This illustrates the project's ability to adjust schedules while sustaining engagement (IUCN_Supervision MZ, 2024).

Both Mozambique and Tanzania also faced climate-related challenges, including a prolonged dry period and delayed onset of rains that affected demonstration plots and cropping cycles. These conditions reinforced the need to adapt traditional agricultural timelines to climate variability. In response, SUSTAIN Pro prioritised water-focused NbS, including rainwater harvesting, spring restoration, and irrigation efficiency. Project reports further captured that the project also increased its visibility around

water governance work, especially in Mozambique, where the restoration of the Cagole water spring was linked to a potential PES scheme. These adaptive technical measures helped buffer the project against climate risks and kept activities relevant to current needs.

Capacity building has also been adjusted to reinforce local ownership and sustainability. While follow-up and mentoring were always part of the project's design, implementation in 2023–2024 placed greater emphasis on iterative training, mentoring, and ongoing engagement with district-level partners, ensuring that skills are not only transferred but actively applied. This was particularly important for embedding new practices and ensuring that knowledge was retained and applied. This feedback loop between field experience and project design contributed to more effective capacity-building results.

On the technical side, SUSTAIN Pro has continuously updated its MEL tools and strategies. The project introduced digital data collection tools such as Kobo Toolbox and provided training for local staff and partners, which improved the quality and speed of data gathering. The MEL system also integrates key learning questions and a traffic-light reporting framework, which enables real-time adjustments to interventions and resource allocation as conditions change (IUCN_MEL, 2024) (IUCN_Annual, 2025).

3.5. SUSTAINABILITY

Assess the project's contribution to long-term sustainability and its ability to produce lasting effects beyond the project's duration

The level of performance achieved is **satisfactory**. Project stakeholders demonstrate strong ownership of project gains and activities, appreciating and sharing in the project's objectives.

Stakeholders, including farmers, were confident that the changes realised from the project were sustainable beyond the project's life. They attributed this to the consultative approach of SUSTAIN Pro, which is built on a stakeholder-driven approach rather than a top-down approach. Stakeholders, for instance, SDAE in Mozambique and CEOrt in Tanzania, felt that because the initiatives supported were already part of their plan, they were likely to continue building on the gains they had realised with SUSTAIN Pro's support. Farmers in both countries also shared that since they mainly gained knowledge and skills related to sustainable agricultural practices, these were not likely to erode. They would continue to use them, especially as they realised benefits such as increased yield over time without having to fertilise farms between harvests, longer shelf-life, especially for cabbages, and signs of improving soil health, including increased moisture retention and soil texture.

Benefits such as those realised in restoration activities have been greatly appreciated by stakeholders, including the local government, which may be enough to incentivise them to continue protecting those gains.

Other ways in which SUSTAIN Pro has embedded sustainability within their project gains include:

- Embedding policy work into community structures and multi-stakeholder platforms beyond the project's mandate.
- Empowering regional and local governments and natural resource management and producer associations to support continuity of training and capacity building efforts, as well as maintain them.
- Exploring sustainability models such as PES, viable business cases to advance NbS, and multi-stakeholder partnerships to collaborate on shared efforts.

There was little evidence at the time of the MTR on whether coordination structures were sustainable beyond the intervention. For instance, two coordination working groups have been successfully set up in Mozambique and are engaged in the project. They have met twice since their establishment, where their meetings were impeded by the conflict situation in Mozambique in 2024. It is unclear whether the coordination groups will continue to meet and function if the project no longer champions and sustains their meetings.

SUSTAIN Pro funding has provided sufficient support for the timely delivery of planned activities. As reported in the effectiveness and relevance sections, stakeholders largely felt that funds were spent on the most impactful activities. On the other hand, some stakeholders cited funding limitations for needs that they considered a priority. For example, the implementing partner in Mozambique (ADEM) shared that the financing set aside for the revolving fund (\$50,000 at the time of the MTR) was quite a small amount to achieve the objectives set out. Some farmers from Tanzania pointed out that the project did not uphold their promises for a farmer's day initiative, which they attributed to limited funding.

Continued funding of the project over the next phase remains crucial for essential gains that are just materialising, such as the land health monitoring index, which is being piloted, and for Outcome 3, establishing mechanisms, especially financing and investments, that are geared to contribute to sustainable food systems.

3.6. GENDER, YOUTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Assess the extent of promotion of gender and youth objectives under the project to advance gender equality and/or gender responsive strategies.

The level of performance on gender, youth, and human rights achieved was **satisfactory**. There are opportunities for the project to increase engagement with youth, promote inclusion of other vulnerable groups, and strengthen monitoring and documentation of gains made towards GESI.

SUSTAIN Pro mainstreamed gender indicators at the output level through the gender and youth action plan. These indicators were designed to be collected and reported alongside the SUSTAIN Pro results framework and follow an annual monitoring cycle. This approach ensures that SUSTAIN Pro's activities consciously consider women and youth inclusion at the activity/output level, aiming for quota inclusion. Through internal staff training and guidance from a dedicated gender focal point in the project, the gender and youth action plan has been successfully mainstreamed into activity delivery, with the project collecting disaggregated data at the output level. On SUSTAIN Pro's database, data collected allows for the required disaggregation, although this is not always consistently updated".

Women and youth have been represented as part of the wider beneficiary group. SUSTAIN Pro has made intentional efforts to engage women and youth as beneficiaries. Women and youth continue to be underrepresented in leadership and technical roles, such as those of lead farmers and extension workers. The MTR team observed this when conducting lead farmer FGDs, as well as through extension worker FGDs and in reviewing the project database. These challenges are systemic (as in the case of fewer women extension workers being employed) and cultural, such as leading farmers being a male-dominated space, despite women being mostly involved in farm work. There is an opportunity for SUSTAIN Pro to continue actively pursuing the involvement of women, especially youth, through collaboration with stakeholders such as local governments, to increase the representation of women and advance the inclusion of women and youth in leadership and technical positions.

Current GESI indicators are very quantitative and focused on representation. SUSTAIN Pro has developed outcome harvesting approaches that facilitate better tracking and documentation of outcomes, including those related to inclusion. The evaluation recommends that qualitative indicators be introduced into the gender and youth action plan to strengthen implementation and monitoring.

Women engaged in SUSTAIN Pro affirmed that they felt fairly included in accessing and benefiting from project activities. They also reported feeling respected within their associations and receiving fair treatment as a result of the project. Project indicator data reported as of June 2025 shows that a considerable number of cooperatives had included women and youth in their decision-making mechanisms.

SUSTAIN Pro contributed to securing 3,648 land titles in Tanzania, of which 994 were women-owned and 358 were couple-owned. The process of formalising land tenure through CCROs faced cultural and

structural barriers, particularly affecting women and youth. The project was able to address these challenges through gender-sensitive engagement, advocacy, and awareness campaigns.

While SUSTAIN Pro is not responsible for access and user rights, it was raised that women's day-to-day lives were more likely to be impacted by the restoration of forests. Women from Mngeta, Tanzania, reported that since the forest restoration works began, they have been barred from entering the forest, which they relied on for mushroom gathering for food and the collection of twigs for firewood. They also stated that they would have appreciated the provision of alternatives for these essential food and fuel inputs for their daily lives. The MTR recommends that the project share these experiences with responsible government partners and advises that social considerations on access rights and the likely effects of restoration work on the lives of communities living around the identified areas be assessed in such efforts.

There were no reports of human rights challenges or issues arising from project interventions.

3.7. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Assess whether the project used IUCN's environment and social management systems for the identification and mitigation of risks during implementation. And whether there have been any negative effects on the environment and climate from project interventions, and if so, how they have been mitigated/addressed.

The level of performance achieved for the environment and climate change was **satisfactory**. This is because SUSTAIN Pro aims to restore nature, protect the environment, and promote productivity.

There have been no negative consequences reported related to the project and climate change, nor any environmental impacts. There have been a few reports on growing tensions between the communities living around newly demarcated areas under conservation. In one instance, community leaders noted that a water restoration project at the Cagole water stream, where the project team was engaged, was not followed up on. However, a natural resource committee had been set up for the activity, and plans are underway for a payment for ecosystems scheme (PES) and a private sector partnership for long-term sustainability. (IUCN_Annual, 2025)

SUSTAIN Pro initiatives are contributing to reforestation, restoration of vegetation and water sources, and making a perceived positive impact on soil health. According to government representatives, partners, and community stakeholders, SUSTAIN pro activities have a positive impact on the environment. For example, the SRI is known to lead to environmental benefits, including water conservation, reduced methane emissions, decreased reliance on chemicals, improved soil health, and increased crop resistance to climate change, compared to conventional rice farming methods. Forest and water restoration activities conducted in both Mozambique and Tanzania also show positive regenerative results.

The project utilises LHMI indicators related to land health monitoring to assess the project's impact. LHMI has 19 indicators (7 for soil, 5 for water, and 7 for resilience), monitoring change at the site level (farm and soil), the landscape level (assessing how site management impacts broader landscape and water systems), and at the national level (linking landscape monitoring to policy frameworks and targets). A baseline of the LHMI has been completed in Kilombero and Ihemi clusters in Tanzania. It will be rolled out to Sumbawanga landscape in Tanzania (under SUSTAIN Eco) and the Vanduzi and Bárúè districts in Mozambique.

SUSTAIN Pro's contribution to climate change resilience is not always visible or apparent to all stakeholders interacting with its various initiatives, unlike SUSTAIN Eco, where the direct contribution to climate change is more prominently highlighted for all stakeholders involved. There are opportunities to expand Pro's logical framework indicators to directly include monitoring of gains around the environment and contributions to climate change, in addition to what SUSTAIN Pro reports on against

its logframe in terms of farmer yields for both adopters and non-adopters. For instance, the measure of the extent of reduced pollution from the use of agrochemicals could be included; qualitative indicator data, such as change in stakeholder perspectives and attitudes about environmental change, and what led to the change, could also be used.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1. CONCLUSIONS

The mid-term review concludes that SUSTAIN Pro is progressing at either highly satisfactory or satisfactory levels across each of the evaluation criteria. SUSTAIN Pro remains highly relevant to key stakeholders and target groups, and is highly appreciated for its focus areas on promoting sustainable agricultural practices, land health restoration, and the ongoing work on catalysing sustainable food systems.

SUSTAIN Pro has mainly remained in alignment with its design and kept abreast of national policy changes in its work. Although many national development policies that informed SUSTAIN Pro's design phase have been updated, the project has ensured continued alignment through close engagement with government stakeholders, targeted studies and assessments, and the support of a Programme Steering Board. In preparation for the second phase, SUSTAIN Pro can draw from its insights on policy alignment and policy gaps identified from various assessments undertaken by Pro and Eco, as well as persistent challenges that governments continue to face and try to address in these policies.

SUSTAIN Pro has made significant progress in achieving its outcomes and outputs across Tanzania and Mozambique. The project has successfully expanded sustainable agricultural practices, leading to notable yield improvements and increased participation of women and youth in Tanzania, and widespread adoption of organic and climate-smart practices in Mozambique. In Tanzania, farmers reported substantial gains in yields of rice, sugarcane, maize, and horticulture following training in improved techniques, with women playing a key role as trainers and leaders. In Mozambique, 93% of the farmers who received training have adopted sustainable practices, including the use of organic manure, crop rotation, agroforestry, and water conservation, resulting in higher yields, improved soil health, and greater resilience to climate shocks.

The restoration of land health has also advanced, particularly in Tanzania, where four landscape partnership agreements²¹ were operationalised, and 3,814.4 hectares are under restoration. The piloting of the LHMI enabled evidence-based planning and monitoring, and the project's approach to multi-stakeholder coordination improved resource mobilisation and policy alignment. Mozambique made foundational progress by formalising two landscape partnership agreements in Barué and Vanduzi, bringing together various stakeholders and identifying 164,645 hectares of priority restoration zones. The development and operationalisation of land health monitoring tools have been piloted in the Kilombero and Ihemi clusters, contributing to a Soil Health Compact in Tanzania in late 2024, a landmark agreement co-convened with SAGCOT that brought together over 60 representatives from the public, private, and civil society sectors.

In Tanzania, three business cases were developed and disseminated, providing a foundation for linking sustainable production to investment opportunities. In Mozambique, business cases were prepared but had not yet been disseminated or converted into mobilised investment by the mid-term review. This aligns with the project's design, as Outcome 3 was always intended to intensify by 2025. In both countries, barriers such as limited access to finance for smallholder farmers and cooperatives, weak market incentives for sustainable products, and low technical capacity continue to influence the growth of value chains and the emergence of premium markets for sustainably produced crops.

The private sector has become an integral part of sustainable development, and its engagement is crucial for advancing gains in environmental protection, productive use of landscapes and championing economic growth. SUSTAIN Pro has achieved significant milestones, providing strong examples of how

²¹ These include land health compacts in Ihemi and Kilombero landscapes between Public Sector (Govt), Private Sector & Service Provider (NGOs, CSOs), Partnership between IUCN and CEOrt to promote sustainable business practices in Tanzania.

the private sector can contribute to advancing outcomes in natural resource restoration and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, as seen in its work with KSC and engagements with the CEOrt.

SUSTAIN Pro faced challenges with ad hoc knowledge management and limited cross-landscape communication. Lessons are captured through SUSTAIN's reporting. A culture of consistent lesson documentation and sharing across landscapes is essential, particularly cross-project, between Eco and Pro. Platforms such as the project steering boards have also served to advance knowledge creation and sharing. Embedding MEL into decision-making and formalising lesson-sharing platforms can support replication and improve adaptive management.

SUSTAIN Pro's gender and youth action plan has been mainstreamed into project activities, to reach women, men, and youth equally. Based on the gender assessments conducted and investment viability assessments and to further align with national plans and donor plans for gender mainstreaming, there are opportunities to expand SUSTAIN Pro's work on gender and youth outcomes, including through SUSTAIN Pro's focus on value chains that provide opportunities to engage women and youth (for example, horticulture, ARR value chains), expanding SUSTAIN Pro's work in advancing agricultural technologies, agro-processing and value addition and targeting youth and women-led farmer cooperatives with the intent of scaling access to training and extension services, linkages to agricultural inputs, insurance, markets and financial services.

The SUSTAIN Pro project demonstrates strong governance structures and robust financial controls, supporting effective resource use and accountability. The multi-level governance framework, inclusion of local stakeholders, and clear financial management systems have contributed to value for money and transparency. Cost-effective approaches and shared staffing have maximised reach. Challenges such as staff turnover, coordination across multiple layers, and reporting inconsistencies have been addressed through targeted hiring and process improvements.

The project's MEL system is robust, with digital tools and regular training supporting data collection and monitoring. However, the MEL framework could benefit from more qualitative indicators and better integration of learning into management cycles. Adaptation to external disruptions, such as elections and climate variability, has been strong, with the project quickly rescheduling activities and shifting technical focus to meet changing needs. Capacity building has evolved to emphasise ongoing support and mentoring, improving knowledge retention and practice adoption.

4.2. LESSONS FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAIN PRO AND SUSTAIN ECO TANZANIA

Lesson 1: Country-level Theories of Action enable strategic integration of agricultural and environmental interventions within shared outcome frameworks

A key lesson emerging from the joint implementation of SUSTAIN Pro and SUSTAIN Eco is the need to adapt the ToC more deliberately to each country's distinct landscape realities. While the current ToC provides a broad framework applicable across implementation areas, experiences from Tanzania and Mozambique suggest that a more context-specific approach, such as developing country-level Theories of Action linked to the overarching ToC, would allow for more precise articulation of localised pathways and assumptions. The integration of Eco and Pro in Kilombero, shows that outcomes are strengthened when environmental restoration and market-focused agricultural interventions are strategically aligned. This reinforces the value of embedding environmental components like those under SUSTAIN Eco into landscapes where only SUSTAIN Pro is currently active, as these linkages have proven critical in enhancing delivery under shared ToC outcomes. Future phases would benefit from reflecting these complementarities across all landscapes.

Lesson 2: Integrated landscape approaches deliver measurable environmental and livelihood co-benefits

SUSTAIN Pro and Eco have been contributing to the knowledge base that links on-farm climate-smart practices with landscape-scale restoration through NbS, creating tangible environmental and livelihood benefits. The dual implementation in Tanzania demonstrated synergies between agricultural productivity and ecosystem health that single-component approaches may not fully capture.

Lesson 3: Multi-stakeholder platforms require institutional anchoring for sustained policy influence

MSPs such as the revitalised IKLMSP and platforms in Sumbawanga proved essential for inclusive governance and dialogue. They enabled co-development of instruments like the Kilombero NbS Strategy and facilitated initiatives such as the Lake Kwela restoration effort (under SUSTAIN Eco). For long-term sustainability, MSPs benefit from formalisation within district and national structures, stronger leadership, and continued engagement to maintain their role in policy influence and scaling tested solutions.

Lesson 4: Private sector engagement depends on explicit business cases linking sustainability to market return

Engagement with SAGCOT, KSC and the CEOrt of Tanzania demonstrated that private sector actors will invest in NbS and sustainable practices when business incentives and clear value propositions exist. KSC's riparian restoration and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) initiatives illustrate how corporate sustainability efforts can align with local conservation and national Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) commitments. Lessons show that investment mobilisation relies on linking environmental goals to market benefits, such as certification, improved supply chain resilience, or access to carbon and PES markets.

Lesson 5: Local governance capacity determines the sustainability of landscape restoration beyond project lifecycles

Strengthening local governance structures such as AMCOS, VNRCs, and WUAs is central to sustaining landscape restoration. SUSTAIN Pro's capacity-building initiatives, such as training in governance, financial management, and leadership, have contributed to a strong feeling of local ownership, inclusion, and trust in local governance structures. These are essential for the sustainability of these structures and their continued functioning. Capacity building, however, is a reiterative process that requires further investment for stakeholders to confidently perform their roles and continue to champion landscape restoration. Continued capacity building and integration into district and national systems are needed for these structures to operate independently beyond project support.

Lesson 6: Evidence-based monitoring systems must be institutionalised to influence policy and investment decisions

The development and piloting of the LHMI in Ihemi and Kilombero provided a data-driven framework to track soil, water, and resilience indicators and connect local restoration to national and international commitments (e.g., NDCs, NAPs, FLR targets). The key takeaway is that credible, evidence-based monitoring tools improve policy uptake and investment alignment but must be institutionalised within governance systems for long-term impact.

Lesson 7: Systematic knowledge management accelerates innovation diffusion across landscapes

Both SUSTAIN Pro and Eco faced challenges with ad hoc knowledge management and limited cross-landscape communication. While successful innovations, such as NbS piloting in Kilombero or TARISSfupi water monitoring tools, exist, lessons have not been consistently documented or shared across landscapes. Operationalising established knowledge hubs, embedding MEL into decision-

making, and formalising lesson-sharing platforms are necessary to accelerate replication and enhance adaptive management.

Lesson 8: Dual-component programming expands intervention options but requires deliberate coordination

The comparison between Tanzania and Mozambique offers valuable insights into how the presence of an Eco component can strengthen programme outcomes. In Tanzania, the implementation of both SUSTAIN Pro and Eco created additional opportunities for integrated programming, particularly in areas such as ecosystem stewardship, water governance, and biodiversity conservation. Mozambique has primarily relied on SUSTAIN Pro to address land health within productive agricultural landscapes, which naturally resulted in a more focused emphasis on agricultural interventions. The absence of Eco also meant slower adoption of community-led ecosystem monitoring tools, such as TARISSfupi and MiniSASS, and less immediate complementarity in overlapping geographies where agricultural sustainability and ecological connectivity could have been reinforced. These differences highlight the value of layered investments where agricultural and ecological objectives intersect within the same landscapes.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. STRATEGIC

SR1. Program Sustainability and Exit Planning		
SR1a	Develop a comprehensive exit strategy with financial and operational plans, including phased funding scenarios, to ensure long-term sustainability.	SUSTAIN Pro should develop a comprehensive exit strategy that provides clear financial and operational plans for ensuring long-term intervention sustainability. The exit strategy should be forward-looking for the 10-year planned project period, incorporating scenarios for diminished funding or the premature end of the project. The design of Phase 2 can be presented with funding scenarios that cater to partial funding and full funding, along with identified priorities for each scenario.
SR1b	Prioritise consolidating SUSTAIN Pro's innovations regionally, establishing replicable models, and sharing lessons for potential expansion.	<p>Phase 2 of the SUSTAIN programme should prioritise the consolidation of SUSTAIN Pro's interventions within the existing geographical areas, with emphasis tailored to the specific context of each region (see below). The focus should be on continuing to establish robust and replicable models and sharing knowledge and lessons with stakeholders who wish to expand or replicate them in other areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Tanzania, SUSTAIN Pro should build on the successes of integrated landscape management by leveraging synergies between Pro and Eco interventions and consolidating partnerships with key private-sector actors, such as KSC and Newcastle University, to create replicable multi-stakeholder collaboration models. <u>In Kilombero</u>, these partnerships can support integrated approaches, while <u>in Ihemj</u>, emphasis should be placed on strengthening cooperative governance, enhancing female representation, and ensuring institutional accountability, alongside access to formal financing and technical support to sustain adoption of sustainable practices. <u>In Sumbawanga</u>, lessons from SUSTAIN Eco should inform broader landscape interventions in water, forest, and agriculture, generating transferable models for use in Mozambique and similar contexts. In Mozambique, efforts should focus on strengthening Development Coordination Groups (DCGs) <u>in Bárue</u> and <u>Vanduzi</u> as self-sufficient exemplars of multi-stakeholder governance and coordinated landscape management, supported by adequate technical capacity. Additionally, in Mozambique,

		the operationalisation of the LHMI across priority restoration areas should be completed to provide robust evidence for decision-making, alongside full implementation of financing mechanisms, including mixed grant schemes, to ensure economic sustainability prior to any geographic expansion.
RS2. Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement		
SR2a	Strengthen partnerships through targeted private and public sector engagement.	SUSTAIN Pro's approach to partnership and collaborations has proved pivotal to realised gains and its sustainability. The MTR recommends that SUSTAIN Pro continue to expand and deepen engagement with stakeholders, particularly in the private sector, such as manufacturers, agrodealers, and financial institutions. A similar model to engagements with KSC could be adopted for interested manufacturers in selected value chains that prove feasible for a comparable model. Agrodealers expressed their interest in creating linkages to AMCOS and farmer groups, and potentially supporting them with extension services, especially for seed suppliers. AMCOS and farmers face persistent challenges in accessing finance. Linkages to financial institutions, including microfinance, should be continued in a potential next phase. SR2b describes the approach.
SR2b	Formalise and strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms by developing operational and sustainability plans, assigning conveners, and ensuring continuity beyond project support.	It is recommended that the program continue to pursue the MSP approach, as evidence demonstrates its effectiveness in advancing collective gains and embedding them within formalised agreements. Experiences such as the Development Coordination Groups (DCGs) in Mozambique highlight the value of this model, where government stakeholders assume the convening role and provide legitimacy to the process. Lessons from the implementation of Phase I of Pro underscore the importance of formalising MSPs to strengthen their long-term sustainability. To ensure continuity beyond the project cycle, operational and sustainability plans should be developed for these platforms. For instance, following the conclusion of SUSTAIN Pro's stipend support to the DCGs in Mozambique, mechanisms should already be in place to facilitate regular meetings and maintain momentum, including cost-effective and flexible options such as virtual convenings.
SR2c	Initiate new collaborations with strategic partners to contribute to Sustain Pro in phase 2.	AGRA offers a strategic partnership opportunity for SUSTAIN Pro due to its extensive African network for developing and distributing improved, climate-resilient seeds. Its established value chains cover key crops prioritised by SUSTAIN Pro, maize, rice, soybeans, and sunflowers, and leverage agrodealer networks in the SAGCOT and Beira corridors, enabling rapid scaling. While SUSTAIN Pro has influenced national policy through initiatives like the Soil Health Compact, AGRA brings expertise in continental advocacy to integrate innovations into broader policy frameworks. AGRA supports commercial scaling, including through a USD 25 million loan guarantee facility that assists agribusinesses involving smallholder farmers.

		<p>The Mastercard Foundation represents a strategic partner for SUSTAIN Pro, given its focus on youth employment in Africa and substantial funding capacity. Its ecosystem approach—integrating training, financing, and market access for youth entrepreneurship—could complement SUSTAIN Pro support. With an established presence in Tanzania and Mozambique through digital agriculture programs, the Foundation enables rapid collaboration and a multiplier effect, extending the impact of SUSTAIN Pro’s innovations to millions of young people beyond current intervention areas.</p> <p>WISER is a FCDO-funded program that strengthens weather and climate information services across Africa, working with national meteorological agencies to deliver accessible, actionable climate data for decision-making at all levels. WISER’s expertise in meteorological services and early warning systems addresses SUSTAIN Pro’s identified gap in climate information, while SUSTAIN Pro’s established network of over 3,000 trained farmers and cooperatives provides a ready-made end-user base for climate services. The programs could jointly develop integrated solutions combining real-time weather data with sustainable agricultural practices, creating feedback loops where climate information informs farming decisions and field observations validate meteorological models. Collaboration modalities could include co-developing agro-meteorological bulletins, establishing community weather stations in SUSTAIN Pro intervention areas, and creating climate-smart advisory services delivered through existing cooperative structures. Both programs operate in Mozambique and Tanzania, but not currently in the same landscapes.</p>
SR2d	<p>Strengthen collaboration with authorities to integrate social impact and human-wildlife conflict mitigation into restoration and land-use planning.</p>	<p>In addition to the support provided in raising community awareness through VNRCs and promoting land use practices that reduce vulnerability, SUSTAIN can consider further collaboration with wildlife authorities and district planning offices in the next phase for restoration-related work to assess social impact for communities living around conservation areas, in addition to integration of human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures into landscape restoration and land-use planning.</p>
<p>SR3. Program Integration and Coherence</p>		
SR3a	<p>Strengthen SUSTAIN-Africa’s unified branding and ensure consistent messaging to avoid</p>	<p>It would be essential to place more emphasis on promoting SUSTAIN-Africa as a unified brand, rather than two separate projects. This would give stakeholders and beneficiaries a comprehensive overview of the project’s intended outcomes. Another area that requires further clarification and strong communication is the association of SUSTAIN Pro with organic agriculture by a section of farmers and producer organisations,</p>

	misinterpretation of SUSTAIN Pro's focus.	which is not the central message of the project. Consistent messaging by extension officers working with SUSTAIN Pro to address any misinterpretations will be valuable.
SR3b	Promote stronger integration between Pro and Eco through shared planning, stakeholder mapping, and regular joint meetings.	Consider holding work planning sessions and master workplans at the SUSTAIN initiative level in addition to the separate workplans for SUSTAIN Pro and SUSTAIN Eco. This will promote thinking of and approaching SUSTAIN as one initiative with interlinkages between Pro and Eco. This would also involve mapping out similar and shared activities and identifying common stakeholders. Externally, towards Pro and Eco stakeholders, including donors, it would be beneficial to hold periodic shared meetings biannually to showcase how the two projects complement and build upon each other, utilising shared resources and achieving cost efficiency, as well as projecting work plans in areas of commonality.
SR3c	Develop localised theories of change for SUSTAIN Pro that align with the overarching SUSTAIN ToC while reflecting country-specific contexts.	Develop a more localised ToC for SUSTAIN Pro (for example, a theory of action) that is situated at the national level and refers back to the SUSTAIN ToC. This could enable each country to develop more nuanced (secondary) pathways and hypotheses that take into account the specific challenges of each landscape and its unique approach to the programme.
SR4. Inclusion		
SR4	Expand participation of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups.	SUSTAIN should continue efforts to include women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups. Opportunities include expanding value chains to increase youth involvement across stages such as agro-processing, agricultural technology, and other value-added services. Engagement can also be pursued through existing mechanisms, including ministries of gender and youth, youth groups, and women- and youth-led cooperatives and businesses.
SR5. New Area of Focus		
SR5	Explore energy as a new thematic area interlinked with SUSTAIN Pro's interventions for sustainable food	Given the close intersection between SUSTAIN Pro's current thematic areas and energy, Phase 2 can consider more closely the interactions between the sectoral focus on energy and how SUSTAIN Pro's gains may benefit from sustainable energy or benefit sustainable use of energy. For example, various value chains proposed for SUSTAIN Pro's investments provide more sustainable alternative sources for energy, which advance SUSTAIN's goals for ecosystem stewardship and reforestation. On the other hand, agriculture can be energy-intensive, particularly with the mechanisation of agriculture at the farm level. Irrigation, post-harvest processes including drying, processing, and storage, can all use significant amounts of energy. This

	systems under a phase 2.	postulates a need to safeguard environmental gains by advocating for or providing linkages to sustainable energy solutions for actors involved in these value chains.
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5.2. OPERATIONAL

OR1. Project monitoring, learning and reporting		
OR1a	Introduce qualitative indicators to complement the logframe and better capture SUSTAIN Pro's broader impacts.	Consider additional qualitative indicators to complement the quantitative results framework. The evaluation recommends introducing qualitative indicators into the project logframe to strengthen implementation and monitoring. At the output level, qualitative indicators will support understanding the “why” and “how”, as well as the less tangible contextual and descriptive aspects of project outputs, that are not captured in the quantitative indicators. At the outcome level, qualitative indicators enrich quantitative indicators by providing a deeper contextual understanding of change. They respond to the “why” questions, revealing elements related to perspectives, attitudes, and behaviour change, that help to identify unexpected change, contributing to a holistic view.
OR1b	Strengthen the gender and youth action plan with outcome-level indicators.	Including gender and youth indicators at the outcome level should support teams in more innovatively addressing gender and youth integration beyond activities and representation, aligning with the original intent of the action plan. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G2(c) – percentage of households with at least one member that went hungry over the last 12 months – could be disaggregated by women-headed households or track the proportion of households where women no longer go hungry or eat less as a coping mechanism. • Track change in decision-making: Increase in women’s and youth decision-making at farm level (which crops to grow, which agricultural techniques to use) • Track resilience of women and youth-headed households to agricultural and climate-related shocks
OR1c	Ensure the SUSTAIN Pro database is complete, accurate, and timely to support reliable reporting and decision-making.	Data must be complete, clean, timely, and accurate to support reporting and decision-making. Although the database maintained a high standard, several challenges were identified. These included incomplete or delayed data submissions—most notably from Mozambique—as well as inconsistencies in data quality; for instance, participant lists were not consistently accurate. It is also good practice that data presented in annual reports is available within the monitoring tools at the time of reporting.
OR1d	Strengthen the knowledge management approach to	The project is currently strengthening its communication and knowledge-sharing efforts through a targeted media campaign, which includes the development of a dedicated landing page for SUSTAIN, a series of in-

	support lesson-sharing, replication, and enable peer-to-peer learning.	depth success stories, and video content to highlight field-level lessons and impacts. These initiatives, which will continue throughout the implementation of SUSTAIN Eco, aim to increase visibility and promote wider uptake of sustainable practices. Building on these efforts, the recommendation is for the project to strengthen its knowledge management systems by establishing a centralised platform to systematically document and share lessons across both Pro and Eco components. This will ensure SUSTAIN Pro teams and stakeholders can easily access information to adopt program interventions. This should be complemented by more inclusive storytelling that features diverse voices from the field, stronger engagement with underrepresented partners, particularly in the private sector, and regular reflection on missed partnership opportunities (see SR2a and SR2c) to inform the thematic and stakeholder focus of future phases.
OR2. Project delivery		
OR2a	Simplify communication materials and tailor channels to suit different stakeholder needs.	SUSTAIN Pro should continue to produce multiple communication and information dissemination channels tailored to various types of stakeholders and their unique needs. For example, audio and video media were appreciated by most farmer beneficiaries compared to written brochures and briefs. At the same time, stakeholders like CEOrt felt that the language used was too scientific for them.
OR2b	Strengthen collaboration with other IUCN programs to enhance landscape gains and promote knowledge sharing.	In the spirit of SUSTAIN's proposal, several areas where IUCN could leverage on, or work with other IUCN projects in-country, were identified (BIODEV2030 in Mozambique, AGSTA in Tanzania). It is recommended to leverage these opportunities to strengthen gains in relevant landscapes by tapping into other IUCN work, maintaining the One Programme approach, and especially sharing knowledge and lessons.
OR2c	Enhance learning questions to guide outcome harvesting activities as well as monitoring and annual reflections on project implementation.	For the planned outcome harvesting approach and documentation of change, SUSTAIN Pro should consider further enhancing SUSTAIN Pro's learning questions. The project's learning questions would guide outcome harvesting activities as well as monitoring and annual reflections on project implementation.
OR2d	Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the value and efficiency of SUSTAIN Pro investments.	The MTR found that SUSTAIN Pro is efficient in its use of resources due to the approach currently used, which prioritises local ownership and complements partners' and stakeholders' initiatives. The project has also increased budget spend as planned activities start to roll out and gain momentum. To strengthen the evidence for SUSTAIN Pro's benefits against cost, a cost-benefit analysis (or value for money) will be useful in the future to demonstrate the gains of SUSTAIN Pro investments.

6. ANNEXES

6.1. ANNEX A: TOR

Attached separately

6.2. ANNEX B: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Aleph Strategies. (2025). *Mid-Term Review of the SUSTAIN Eco Project*. London, England.
- Goodluck Massawe, O. K. (2023). *SUSTAIN Pro Scoping Study_SAGCOT Region*.
- GROUND. (2025). *Viability Report_Value Chain Development for CSA & NbS_Mozambique*.
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- IUCN. (2021). *Productive landscapes for inclusive growth in Tanzania and Mozambique*. Sustain Initiative.
- IUCN. (2024). *Land Health Monitoring Index Report*.
- IUCN. (2025). *Policy briefings: Value chain development for climate-smart agriculture and nature-based solutions*. Vanduzi & Barue, Mozambique.
- IUCN. (2025). *SUSTAIN Productive landscapes for inclusive growth in Tanzania and Mozambique: 2024 Annual Report*. Gland, Switzerland.
- IUCN Pro_Database. (2025). *SUSTAIN Pro database_V3*.
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- IUCN_Workplan. (2024). *Cover Note for the SUSTAIN Pro 2024 Workplan and Budget*.
- IUCN_Workplan. (2025). *Cover Note for the SUSTAIN Pro_ Workplan and Budget*.
- Metroeconomica_Tanzania. (2025). *Advance Financing Mechanisms for CSA and NbS Investments in Tanzania*.
- SAGCOT. (2023). *Greenprint Update-Context and Recommendations*.

6.3. ANNEX C: LIST OF INFORMANTS

Tanzania	Location	No.	Mozambique	Location	No.
Government stakeholders and corridor secretariats					
SAGCOT	Morogoro	1	Director of District Economic Activities Bárue	Báruè	1
National Land Use Plan Commission	Remote	1	ARA Centro	Chimoio	1
District Council: Extension officers, Agriculture officer, Forest officer, Village executive officer	Mlimba	7	ISMP	Chimoio	1
Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (TARI)	Ifakara	1	Forest extension officers and District extension officers	Vanduzi	4
District council: Agriculture officers, extension officer, forest officer, cooperative officer	Ifakara	5	Forest extension officers and District extension officers	Báruè	4
Agriculture extension officer, Irrigation officer, Cooperative officer	Malinyi	3	SDAE	Vanduzi	2
TFS	Ifakara	1			
Implementing partners					
			ADEM	Chimoio	2
Community stakeholders/beneficiaries					
Mkula AMCOS (female members)	Ifakara	12	AMCOS – Female members	Vanduzi	7
Mkula AMCOS (governing board members)	Ifakara	6	Lead farmers	Vanduzi	9
Mkula WUA	Ifakara	3	AMCOS – Female members	Báruè	26
Mngeta VLUM	Mlimba	6	Natural resource management bodies, FFPO governing bodies	Báruè	10
Mngeta VNRC	Mlimba	6	Community leaders and committee members	Báruè	3
Mngeta Village leaders	Mlimba	2	AMCOS – Male members	Báruè	9
Idunda VNRC	Mlimba	7	Lead farmers	Báruè	14
Mtimbira AMCOS (governing board)	Malinyi	10	AMCOS – Male members	Vanduzi	5
Mtimbira AMCOS (female members)	Malinyi	10	AMCOS – Female members	Báruè	8
Lead farmers (sesame, soya, rice and cocoa)	Ifakara	4	AMCOS – Male members	Vanduzi	9
Private sector					

Processers	Ifakara	5	Agrodealers, input suppliers, and traders	Vanduzi	3
Input Suppliers	Ifakara	8	SeedCo Mozambique	Chimoio	1
NMB	Ifakara	1			
Kilombero Sugar Company	Ifakara	2			
TCCIA	Ifakara	7			
Civil society, donors and partnering agencies					
Agriterra	Remote	1	Solidaridad	Chimoio	1
Donor	Remote	1			
IUCN programme staff					
In-country	Remote	2	In-country	Remote	2
HQ	Remote	4			

6.4. ANNEX D: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA RATING AND STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE

Criteria	Sub-areas	Performance Rating	Comments	Strength of Evidence
Relevance	<p>Alignment with IUCN priorities</p> <p>Alignment with national and sub-national policies</p> <p>Alignment with donor priorities</p> <p>Relevance to the needs of target groups</p> <p>ToC relevance</p>	The level of performance was assessed as highly satisfactory .	<p>SUSTAIN Pro aligns strongly with IUCN priorities, national and sub-national priorities, and stakeholder/beneficiary needs in the present, medium term to longer term.</p> <p>SUSTAIN's Theory of Change remains relevant with selected pathways demonstrating that outputs are contributing towards intended change. The project assumptions remain valid and supportive of project goals.</p>	Strong - All relevant evidence sources corroborate findings (can be quantifiable or qualitative)
Coherence	<p>Project design</p> <p>Implementing partners and stakeholders</p> <p>Synergies between SUSTAIN Pro and Eco</p> <p>Coherence with other IUCN projects and similar projects</p>	The project's approach to ensuring coherence in its delivery was found to be satisfactory .	<p>In its first phase, SUSTAIN Pro has largely followed its design, making minor adjustments that were informed through feasibility assessments and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>SUSTAIN Eco and Pro were designed with a great level of complementarity and has been reported to demonstrate enhanced gains in shared landscapes.</p> <p>There was complementarity with other IUCN projects implemented in shared landscapes.</p>	Substantial - Significant evidence sources support finding; even though there may exist alternative interpretations for them.
Effectiveness	<p>Output delivery and progress towards Outcome 1</p>	The level of performance was assessed as satisfactory .	SUSTAIN Pro shows expected level of progress towards achieving its indicators as set in the project logframe. Achievement of outputs under	Strong - All relevant evidence sources corroborate findings (can be quantifiable or qualitative)

Criteria	Sub-areas	Performance Rating	Comments	Strength of Evidence
	<p>Output delivery and progress towards Outcome 2</p> <p>Output delivery and progress towards Outcome 3</p> <p>Extent to which project knowledge is turned to policy and action</p>		<p>Outcome 1 are highly satisfactory, while outputs contributing to Outcomes 2 have made substantial progress. Outputs under Outcome 3 have also kicked off with greater progress expected in 2025.</p>	<p>Unintended consequences referenced in the report are largely anecdotal evidence (Based on largely perception or minimal reports).</p>
Efficiency	<p>Project governance system</p> <p>Effective use of resources and tracking progress against spend</p> <p>MEL strategy and tools</p> <p>Measures in place to avoid corruption practices</p> <p>MEL strategy and tools</p> <p>Measures in place to avoid corrupt practices</p> <p>Adapting to changing conditions</p>	<p>The level of performance was assessed as highly satisfactory.</p>	<p>Established systems and processes are in place and used to ensure accountability for project funds, timely reporting and meeting donor requirements.</p> <p>The project's M&E system and tools are robust, with opportunities to enhance documentation of lessons learned and learning from project implementation.</p>	<p>Substantial - Significant evidence sources support finding; even though there may exist alternative interpretations for them.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Local ownership</p> <p>Enabling environment</p> <p>Approach to identifying and mitigating project risks</p>	<p>The level of performance was assessed as satisfactory.</p>	<p>SUSTAIN Pro project stakeholders show strong ownership of project activities and the gains they have realised. SUSTAIN has anchored its programme work into regional and local structures and multi-stakeholder</p>	<p>Strong - All relevant evidence sources corroborate findings (can be quantifiable or qualitative)</p>

Criteria	Sub-areas	Performance Rating	Comments	Strength of Evidence
			<p>platforms that provide a foundational basis for long-term sustainability of project achievements, leveraging policy influence and stakeholder buy-in.</p> <p>Continued funding of the project over the next phase remains crucial for important gains that are just materialising, such as the land health monitoring index (LHMI), which has been piloted and contributed towards multi-stakeholder commitments to a soil health compact in Tanzania, and for Outcome 3, on building bankable business cases and policy pathways to unlock finance for climate-smart agriculture, NbS, and integrated landscape management (ILM), planned for 2025 and beyond.</p>	
Gender, youth and human rights	Project objectives and design advance gender equality and gender responsive strategies	Level of performance was assessed as satisfactory .	<p>SUSTAIN Pro, through its gender and youth action has ensured that project activities reflect balanced benefits for men, women and youth. These are tracked through gender indicators integrated into SUSTAIN Pro's logframe indicators.</p> <p>GESI activities were welcomed by stakeholders, particularly AMCOS, and its farmer members. The largest gains have been in achieving more GESI aware leadership within AMCOS reflected in the increasing involvement</p>	Strong - All relevant evidence sources corroborate findings (can be quantifiable or qualitative)

Criteria	Sub-areas	Performance Rating	Comments	Strength of Evidence
			<p>of women and youth in decision-making structures.</p> <p>SUSTAIN Pro has aimed to change these biases through GESI awareness and training.</p>	
Environment and climate change	<p>Project tracking of its effects on the environment and climate change</p> <p>Any negative effects on the environment and on climate change and how the project responded</p>	Level of performance was assessed as satisfactory .	The project uses project monitoring indicators, such as LHMI, to assess impact on the environment. Baselines were completed in Kilombero and Ihemi clusters and are planned to roll out in Sumbawanga, Tanzania, and in Vanduzi and Bárùè districts in Mozambique.	Substantial - Significant evidence sources support finding; even though there may exist alternative interpretations for them.

6.5. ANNEX E: EVALUATION MATRIX

Attached separately