Annual Report 2024/25

Contract partner: Wageningen Environmental Research

Project Name: CommonGround

Total project duration: 01/11/2022 till 31/10/2026

Annual report covering: 01/07/2024 till 30/06/2025

Date: 30/09/2025



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Background on CommonGround

CommonGround is a 4-year project implemented by Wageningen Environmental Research (WENR) with Integrated Seed and Sector Development (ISSD) as local implementing partner with funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Kampala, Uganda. The project aims to build resilient farmer communities and watersheds in the highlands of Uganda, based on sustainable farming systems (Pathway 1), restored watersheds (Pathway 2), and improved marketing opportunities (Pathway 3). See also Figure 1. CommonGround is supported by Agriterra implementing Pathway 3, and is further engaged in local partnerships with Africa 2000 Network (A2N), Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), Albertine Intervention for Development (AID), and CARITAS Kabale Diocese for community engagement. The project is rolled out in the highlands of Uganda: Rwenzori (Ntoroko and Bunyangabu), Kigezi (Kabale, Rubanda and Kisoro) and Elgon (Bududa).

Project name: Restoring resilience of highland communities (CommonGround) Project
Total project duration: 1 November 2022 – 31 October 2026

CommonGround has headquarters in Fort Portal and regional offices in Mbale and Kabale.

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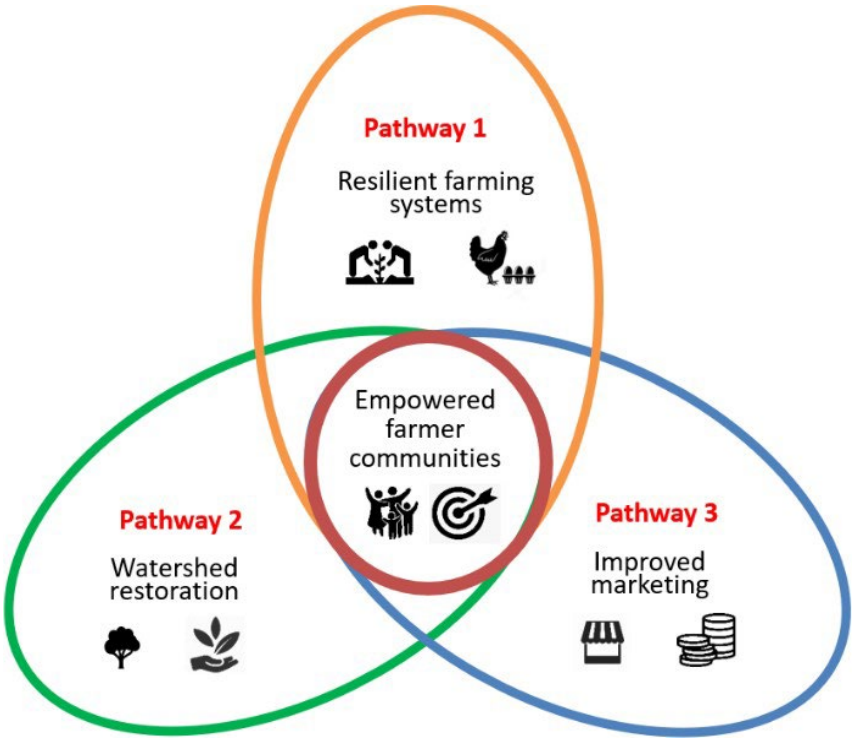


Figure 1: CommonGround Pathways toward resilient farmer communities

Executive summary

The CommonGround project (2022 – 2026), implemented by Wageningen Environmental and Research (WENR) and Integrated Seed and Sector development (ISSD), Uganda, with funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda. The project continues to strengthen the resilience of highland communities in Rwenzori, Kigezi, and Elgon. The third year of implementation (July 2024 – June 2025) registered notable progress across resilient farming systems, watershed restoration, and market opportunities, despite uneven pacing across Pathways. The project remains focused on achieving its goal and outcomes. Continuous monitoring as well as regular reflection sessions inform adaptive strategies.

Strategic decisions outlined in the annual plan last year have led to key adaptations, of which the major ones include: 1) transfer of most Pathway 3 activities to Agriterra, with CG mandated to monitor activities. Support for developing road infrastructure remains under CG. 2) Strengthened collaboration with the A-GRIP project by developing contracts for lower local government (LLG) support. We see this instrument being helpful in scaling of PIP and supporting work on restoration sites. 3) Preparations are made for organizational improvements, based on lessons learnt from the Midterm report.

Under Pathway one this year, we have onboarded 27,109 additional households with Participatory Integrated Plans (PIPs) and Integrated Plot Plans (IPPs). This has been largely due to the onboarding of first-generation farmers reached through farmer-to-farmer training. Substantial scaling has started to bear fruit, with a large cohort of G2 farmers in sight. Moreover, PIP visions and action plans were made in all 117 communities, a third of which are finalized. Community strengthening in terms of support trainings for governance, gender, advocacy, and WASH are being prepared. Investments such as tools and equipment are starting to support communities to do collective actions. Last, CG managed to equip all 59 schools with environmental education programmes.

Under Pathway two, we have managed to establish 528 restoration sites with committees and ensured 309 sites are brought under sustainable management. These sites, stemming from the community PIP developed under Pathway 1, are a combined 7,725 hectares which are now under (at least two) conservation practices, additional to 3,090 hectares of steep slopes stabilized against erosion. We have also established 98 tree nurseries which have propagated over 1.1 million seedlings. This has led to the planting of nearly half a million seedlings in communities, with the remaining batch earmarked for planting prior to the next rainy season. While this local action has proven effective, legislative work with watershed stakeholder has stalled due to slow administrative processes and duplicative efforts in existing workflows at watershed level. Therefore, CG decided to discontinue efforts in effectuating ordinances and by-laws and continue to focus on restoration activities and LLG engagement.

For Pathway three, now under more responsibility by Agriterra, results are promising. CG facilitated the signing of 9 MoUs for road maintenance, improving 7.6 km of roads and assessing 50 roads for improvement. Furthermore, over UGX 750 million was mobilized for farmer financing, including UGX 500M for Lyamujungu SACCO and UGX 189.6M accessed by 159 individuals. More than two hundred entrepreneurial groups have been trained in Module 6 of the PIP approach, with the majority already having developed business plans.

Intentional effort is made to support tree nursery committees with entrepreneurial skills training to stimulate their future viability. Last, 78 VSLAs were strengthened with kits to boost their financial viability.

In terms of budget, the project has significantly increased expenditure from last year, though it remains underspent at 57%. This is seen across pathways for activities, personnel, and operational costs. While systems are in place to fast-track expenses, it is proving difficult to put this into action when processes are slow. Most of our engagements, across pathways, are process-oriented, and depend on availability and cooperation of (local) stakeholders. We must see this as a necessary investment that yields sustainable results in the end through targeted intervention and (investment) support. Furthermore, CG operates in particular hard-to-reach areas, which are prone to experience inaccessibility. This has caused some delays in implementation. Year 3 expenditure and explanations for budget deviations are provided in Annex A.

Reflecting on the past year, we see that learning is most effective when combined with hands-on experiences like demonstration plots, nurseries, and peer-to-peer visits. These practical approaches build confidence and encourage quicker adoption of sustainable farming practices among farming communities. Involving youth, landowners, and local governments early in the intervention process eases uptake and creates a sense of shared ownership. Visible successes, such as those of restoration activities as well as public celebrations (graduation days), inspire neighboring farmers to follow suit. At the same time, community-led monitoring and continuous engagement with stakeholders ensures longevity of capacity building efforts and sustainability of intervention uptake.

Challenges to project management and organization have been suggested in the midterm review report and from discussions during the annual reflection session in Q2 of 2025. Key issues identified relate to bureaucratic overhead; pathway engagement and integration; communication for planning and follow-up, applicable to finance, HR, Management and MEL departments; and team collaboration and guidance. An organizational restructuring is being planned for implementation from September to maximize implementation efficiencies and address the issues identified in the mid-term review.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

A2N: Africa 2000 Network

BOQ: Bills of Quantities

CDO: Community Development Officer

CG: CommonGround

CMC: Catchment Management Committee

CS: Community Strengthening

CVC: Community Vision Committee

DLG: District Local Government

EE: Environmental Education

EKN: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

FtF: Farmer to Farmer

G1: Generation 1 (farmer) or first-generation (farmer)

G2: Generation 2 (farmer) or second-generation (farmer)

HH: Household

IPP: Integrated Plot Plan

ISDAP: Integrated Smallholder Dairy Program

ISSD: Integrated Seed and Sector Development

JESE: Joint Effort to Save the Environment

LG: Local Government

LLG: Lower Local Government

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

MWE: Ministry of Water and Environment

PIP: Participatory Integrated Planning

PIs: PIP Innovators

SACCO: Savings And Credit Cooperative Organization

S/C: Sub-County

SCMC: Sub-Catchment Management Committee

SLM: Sustainable land management.

SLU: Sustainable land use.

SNV: Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Foundation of Netherlands Volunteers)

T/C: Town Council

TNG: Tree Nursery Group

VSLA: Village Savings and Loans Association

WASH: Water Sanitation and Hygiene

WENR: Wageningen Environmental and Research

ZARDI: Zonal Agricultural Research And Development Institute

1. Introduction

This Annual Report presents the progress of project activities and interventions implemented during the reporting period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, in line with the commitments and deliverables outlined in the contract between WENR and EKN. The report provides a comprehensive account of achievements against the approved annual plan for 2024/2025, submitted to EKN-Kampala on 5 December 2024, including updates on outputs delivered, outcomes achieved, and financial utilization within the approved budget framework. The narrative and accompanying data in this report is the result of a collaborative process between WENR and ISSD Uganda.

In accordance with the donor's reporting requirements, this report reviews the planned and implemented activities and highlights any substantial changes in approach, budget, or timelines that may have influenced the realization of the project's objectives. Where such deviations occurred, the rationale and implications are clearly explained to ensure transparency and facilitate adaptive management.

Chapter 2 describes progress for the three pathways and how they are aligned. We expand on key achievements, the targets for FNS, and key pathway indicators in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, we provide a more detailed narrative and analysis of this progress. Chapter 5 discusses organizational development, followed by Chapter 6 describing how we aim to manage potential risks to the project. In Chapter 7 the key monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken in this financial year are briefly discussed. Possible changes in our approach are presented in Chapter 8. Key lessons learned and related actions are further elaborated on in Chapter 9 and what has been done to ensure integrity is reported on in Chapter 10. The report is concluded by providing a financial overview in Chapter 11.

2. Project alignment to goals

This section provides an account of the realized progress, including success factors or reasons of failure, as well as aspects that proved to be challenging, in which case we offer our reflections.

Pathway alignment

During year 3, the overarching goal of CommonGround to contribute to building the resilience of 150,000 smallholder farmer households and healthy agroecosystems in the highlands of Uganda through sustainable farming systems, restored watersheds, and improved marketing opportunities remained firmly within reach. The project continued to advance its objectives of fostering social, environmental, and economic resilience by delivering on the seven outcomes outlined in the Results Framework. These outcomes remain fully aligned with the original project proposal, and no substantive modifications were considered necessary.

We reaffirm that project outcomes are not exclusively tied to a single Pathway. The result framework shows that results achieved under Pathway 1 directly contribute to all goals and outcomes, as is the case for Pathway 2 and 3. Furthermore, pathway 1 is the basis for pathway 2 and subsequently pathway 3, as efforts in these pathways build on each other, and efforts are being made to strengthen the connection between these pathways even more. We recognize that progress for Pathway 2 (watershed restoration) and Pathway 3 (improved marketing) has been slower than expected. Yet, the midline assessment indicated

measurable progress across all resilience dimensions, including environmental and economic aspects. This suggests that outcomes remain within reach.

In strategic terms, the alignment between the project's planned outcomes, achieved outputs, and overarching goal remains intact, in line with the results framework and the annual plan. Progress across all three Pathways was collectively steering the project toward its intended impact without the need for altering the core outcomes. Strategic adaptations to overcome challenges and speed up progress, especially for Pathways 2 and 3, are outlined in the Annual Plan for 2025-2026. The focus moving forward remains on optimizing resource use and maintaining coordinated efforts across Pathways. This includes, amongst others, a strengthened organizational culture, strategic engagement with watershed stakeholders and governing bodies, continuous efforts in community support, and the implementation of clear, improved strategies for e.g., watershed engagement and tree nursery management.

Key achievements

Below, the key achievements per pathway are described for the financial year 2024/2025. Cumulative results for a selection of key pathway indicators are provided in Annex B.

Pathway 1

- Trained 27,109 households (10,843 men; 16,266 women) with PIPs and IPPs;
- Strengthened 117 communities with PIP training and initiated support with tools, equipment, and training in governance, gender, advocacy, and WASH;
- Supported 59 schools with environmental education, trained 236 teachers, and 4626 learners who contributed to the development of school PIPs.

Pathway 2

- Established 528 restoration sites with committees;
- Brought 309 sites under sustainable management. This includes 7,725 hectares under conservation practices and an additional 3,090 hectares of steep slopes stabilized against erosion;
- Established 98 tree nurseries, producing over 1.1 million seedlings; planted 446,789 seedlings in communities.

Pathway 3

- Signed 6 MoUs for road maintenance (improving market access), supported the improvement of 7.6 km of roads, and assessed another 50 roads for improvement;
- 21 Agreements were signed for addressing bottlenecks for key commodity crops;
- Mobilized UGX 750M for farmer financing, including UGX 500M for Lyamujungu SACCO and UGX 189.6M accessed by 159 farmers;
- Profiled 207 entrepreneurial groups have of which 150 developed business plans, with 104 groups already profitable;
- Strengthened 278 VSLAs with kits distributed to boost financial viability.

3. Indicators, achieved results

FNS indicators

Implementation of the Results Framework delivered notable progress across food and nutrition security, productivity and income, and sustainable farmland use. As stated earlier,

a total of 27,109 households were supported in the PIP approach over the past year, bringing the total to 65,301 farmers directly reached with the project until June 2025. CG interventions act as building blocks for strengthening household resilience, improving nutrition, promoting climate-smart farming practices, enabling market linkages and stimulating collective actions. Additionally, 10,815 hectares of farmland were brought under at least two SLM practices, reflecting promising gains in sustainable land use.

While we recognize the importance of the FNS indicators, they are not monitored annually. Therefore, we can only publish values for indicators that concern numbers reached with an intervention (Table 1), and not those that are result-based (i.e. a result of implementation). While indicators await endline verification (as also stipulated in the log frame), the results so far demonstrate strong foundations for resilience, improved livelihoods, and long-term food security, pointed out by results from the midline assessment conducted in Q1 of 2025.

Table 1 FNS indicators: targets vs realized values (cumulative)

Result area	Result indicator	Target Value	Realized
A. Malnutrition	Outcome A.1.2. Number of people whose nutritional situation became more resilient to shocks	100,000 HH	Awaiting endline monitoring
	Reach A.2.1. Number of people directly reached with activities aimed at structural/systemic improvement of their nutritional situation	100,000 HH	65,301 (29,585 men and 35,716 women)
B. Productivity and Income	Outcome B.1.2. Number of SSFPs (disaggregated for male/female) who progressively decrease the yield gap	120,000 HH	Awaiting endline monitoring
	Outcome B.1.4. Number of SSFPs (disaggregated for male/female) whose livelihoods became more resilient to shocks	100,000 HH	Awaiting endline monitoring
	Reach B.2.1. Number of SSFPs directly reached with activities aimed at structural/systemic improvement of their agricultural performance	100,000 HH	65,301 HH (29,585 men and 35,716 women)
C. Sustainable farmland use	Outcome C.1.1. Number of hectares of SSFPs' farmland under at least 2 conservation practices	40,000 ha	Awaiting endline monitoring
	Outcome C.1.2. Number of hectares of SSFPs' farmland that agro-ecologically became more resilient to shocks	28,000 ha	Awaiting endline monitoring
	Reach C.2.1. Number of hectares of SSFPs' farmland directly reached with activities aimed at structural/systemic	28,000 ha	10,815 ha directly reached through site groups

	improvement of agro-ecological sustainability		

Key Logframe indicators

We provide an overview of key pathway indicators and their cumulative targets and values in Annex B. This selection is drawn from the long-list of Logframe indicators by means of identifying the most relevant indicators for this reporting period. In brief, we see that we are getting close to reaching targets for 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1 and 3.2. In some cases, targets have been exceeded such as for training of trainers or establishing tree nurseries. Regarding 2.2 and 2.3, we have adjusted our approach and have diverted our energy from high-level policy changes to local implementation. Specific to 1.1, 1.2, scaling in year 4 is foreseen to reach the targets. For 3.3, we envision the support provided to entrepreneurial groups by Agriterra to take effect over year 4 as well.

4. Pathway narratives

In this section we expand on the narrative per pathway and intermediate outcome. Where feasible we provide an analysis of activity progress. For a complete overview of activities and their targets for Year 3 we direct the reader to Annex C.

Pathway one: Resilient farming systems

Overall, Pathway 1 saw good progress over Year 3 across most of the planned activities. All 117 communities were reached, and we solidified our engagement with PIs, G1s, schools, and other stakeholders. The PIP approach isnow well-established in all regions and becoming a core pillar from which to draw activities both individually and community-wide.

Intermediate outcome 1.1: Enhanced household performance

Building on the foundation of PIs and selection of G1s done last year, the project prioritized consolidation of PIP creation in terms of Modules 2 and 3 for PIs and G1s in both old and new cohorts, targeting a total of 117 communities. With the roll-out of the PIP Modules at the level of PIs across the target communities completed, we have reached the intended scaling base to act as PIP advocates who continue training others. All PIs were equipped with skills in PIP creation, and supported with tailored training resources (leaflets, training materials), which they used to cascade to G1 farmers through farmer to farmer (FtF) training sessions, reaching >25,000 farmers. We integrated Modules 2 and 3 to swiften and streamline training on PIP and IPP. Feedback on this integration has been positive so far: farmers appreciate the reduced time it takes to ‘come to action’, and scaling is quickened. Continuous support from our field staff was provided to guide the PIs throughout Year 3. In some communities, G1 farmers have commenced the training of G2s and PIs have started training an additional group of G1 farmers. This voluntary scaling is highly welcomed and shows the motivation of farmers to spread the word and share their knowledge.

In terms of knowledge sharing, 84 open days were attended by >15,000 community members, offering PIs the opportunity to showcase skills, mobilize new farmers, and promote adoption of the PIP approach. These events generated strong momentum and eased the recruitment of G2 farmers for farmer-to-farmer trainings. Graduation Days further celebrated the achievements of the PIP farmers, with most graduation days completed for G1 groups from the initial cohort. Due to staff unavailability graduations for 2nd and 3rd cohort communities were pushed to Year 4: to facilitate quality knowledge transfer from PIs to next-generation farmers, we wanted to ensure staff presence.

The project also facilitated peer learning and innovation through structured exchange visits for first cohort communities. A total of 793 top-performing farmers (388 men and 405 women), were selected by the community on the basis of their PIPs, willingness to teach others, and good implementation of their action plans, to visit another community to learn from. These activities not only strengthened technical capacity but also deepened the farmers' networks and enhanced local ownership of good practices for farmers to draw from. Feedback from participants about the exchange visits has been very positive with testimonies outlining that the interaction with fellow farmers, and seeing methods put in practice to motivate action.

Intermediate outcome 1.2: Enhanced farm performance

Participatory assessments were conducted in the Rwenzori, Elgon, and Kigezi regions to identify key issues such as limited access to quality inputs, soil erosion on steep slopes, and poor market access. These assessments informed direct interventions, including strengthened linkages with agro-input suppliers, partnerships with seed producers, and the establishment of demonstration plots that showcased improved agronomic practices. We were able to install at least one demo site per community - hosted by a community-appointed farmer - showcasing soil and water conservation, fertility management, and sustainable farming systems. These plots have proven very useful in knowledge transfer and inspiring adoption of good practices among farmers.

Hands-on training sessions were delivered in 108 communities and equipped farmers with practical skills in crop management, erosion control, and soil fertility improvement. Only 9 communities remain to be trained in Year 4 on these topics. A final two sessions will be delivered to all communities in Year 4, following the finalization of the training strategy. These workshops strengthen farmers' ability to implement practices for their IPPs and contribute to sustainable land use and productivity enhancement.

Intra-community learning visits to top-performing IPPs were facilitated by CG staff for the first (24) cohort communities. This engaged 2,135 farmers (1,003 men and 1,132 women). This reinforced technical skills and fostered innovation within the community. Additionally, 142 PIs (94 men and 48 women) took part in exchange visits to national agricultural research institutions, including Rwebitaba ZARDI and NaSARRI. Such learning visits prove to be inspiring and will be carried out in Year 4 too.

The CG midline assessment suggests that the vast majority of farmers (>85%) experience an increase in crop productivity compared to 2023. The most commonly mentioned reasons for improvement include improved fertilization, erosion control and pest and disease management. Knowledge exchange, in this regard, cannot be undervalued.

Furthermore, crop management trainers (now called Integrated Farm Trainers) were selected to go through a series of workshops to facilitate knowledge exchange and build capacity within communities. A detailed strategy note was developed at the end of the year.

Intermediate outcome 1.3: Enhanced social cohesion in communities

Engaging with all 117 communities, CG continues to strengthen communities. On the basis of awareness-raising meetings and PIP trainings, all communities (including local leaders) were engaged in developing shared visions and action plans. This participatory process led to 84 draft community visions and action plans and the formation and validation of 81 Community Vision Committees. In 33 communities, the final versions are already established. Notably, 1,540 participants from 24 first-cohort communities refined their community visions and four-year action plans even further, drawing on implementation

experience to prioritize investments. We see this as a big success, since the intention is for plans to be reflected on, revised based on lessons learnt, and updated for future activities.

The facilitation of collective action, on the basis of assessing visions and action plans, was done by CG and resulted in support in the form of assorted tools and equipment for several communities. This allowed for communities to commence collective actions, e.g. toward the opening of access roads, protection of water sources, and establishment of trenches. Targeted investments will continue in Year 4 following priority assessments.

Community-strengthening trainings were initiated in Year 3, though we noticed that not all communities were ready for these trainings since awareness about PIP was still building. To reinforce our efforts, we drafted training manuals for the 4 training topics, namely community leadership/governance; gender mainstreaming/domestic violence/human rights; advocacy/stakeholder engagement for collective action; WASH practices. Finalized manuals are ready for distribution, providing context-specific resources to guide capacity building in Year 4. These resources will ensure training remains consistent, relevant, and practical for community needs.

The number of schools implementing the Environmental Education component has grown from 42 to 59. 249 teachers (157 men and 92 women) and 4,626 (M=1,975 and F=2,651) learners were trained on the PIP approach and environmental education. Schools finalized their PIPs and action plans, and received materials such as dustbins, live fencing, barbed wire, and water tanks. With 678 “talking compounds” and other educational tools in place, schools are now active hubs of environmental stewardship. As part of the project’s exit strategy for Environmental Education, each school will receive support for one targeted investment aligned with its action plan, focusing on environmental entrepreneurship to help ensure the sustainability of activities beyond the project’s lifespan. The priorities have been mapped by CG.

Pathway two: Watershed restoration

Overall, progress for Pathway 2 was most pronounced in terms of local implementation. Difficulties in execution arose mostly in relation to activities and targets not being realistically set at the start of the project, and being overly ambitious, specifically in terms of institutional engagement. What was missing was the alignment with existing watershed frameworks and plans of the MWE. We encountered the slow progress inherent to such processes of engaging institutions, and the efforts needed to gain trust and momentum. Moreover, the back-and-forth of the Year 3 workplan, and its late acceptance in December 2024, stalled engagements with MWE, while the intent was to maintain the frequency of interactions held in Year 2. In the second half of Year 3 it finally became clear what was needed for the effective implementation of intermediate outcomes 2.2 and 2.3 through unwavering engagements with the ministry. This led to the development and formulation of a strategic note on Watershed (Restoration) Management, including catchment management plans. However, EKN urged the discontinuation of watershed and sub-watershed activities in Q2 2025. The below text clarifies progress for the 3 intermediate outcomes.

Intermediate outcome 2.1: Better managed slopes and land degradation hotspots

In Year 3, the project made significant strides in promoting community-based reforestation and sustainable land management by engaging site groups and training them in visioning and action planning (PIP Module 4). We acknowledge that this process took longer than expected due to field officers being engaged in Pathway 1. Nevertheless, after months of raising awareness, communities identified 528 restoration sites (which were validated by CG staff), and 528 site groups and committees were established, engaging 3,563 farmers (2,149

Male; 1,414 Female). These groups served as platforms for mobilizing local participation and ownership of restoration activities. A total of 433 visions and action plans were developed with the involvement of >6,000 stakeholders, providing community-driven roadmaps for restoration. The rest are earmarked for finalization in Year 4. Development of these maps was aided by PIs and G1 having been trained on PIP practices under Pathway 1, as we saw these farmers often leading the development of restoration plans.

To complement this, a total of 1,110 nursery group members (588 Male; 522 Female) across 84 communities were trained in nursery establishment and management, resulting in the creation of 83 new tree nurseries. With support in the form of tools, seeds, seedlings, and grasses, these nurseries collectively produced over 1.1M seedlings, of which nearly half were already transplanted to restoration sites, while the rest remains cared for in nurseries for future planting. To support implementation, we made an inventory of site priority needs and supported specific training and seed propagation of tree species (grevillea, musizi, mahogany) and grasses (vetiver, super napier, panicum Mombasa). Practical training and peer learning were facilitated through intra-site exchange visits involving 176 farmers, alongside the training of 642 farmers (335 Male; 307 Female) in grass and tree planting. An improved nursery management strategy as well as a site restoration strategy were finalized at the end of the year, to support promising nurseries in the best way possible and structurally support with site restoration. Both strategies will be rolled out in Year 4.

Intermediate outcome 2.2: Sub-watersheds managed effectively

Awareness raising and visioning exercises were conducted at both sub-county and sub-watershed levels. At the level of district local government (DLG), we continued to engage with the LLGs selected in Year 2. As such, awareness meetings were conducted in Bunyangabu and Ntoroko, engaging 133 stakeholders from DLG and partner institutions. These efforts resulted in the development of six new district visions and action plans. Workshops were also held across nine sub-counties in Bududa, engaging 380 participants, including local leaders, technical staff, and community representatives. These sessions resulted in the development of sub-county and district visions and action plans, alongside the formation of vision committees to oversee implementation and accountability. The establishment of district vision committees will guide long-term, coordinated planning and secure local ownership of restoration initiatives, further institutionalizing PIP.

Participatory awareness meetings reached >500 stakeholders including sub-county officials and PIP innovators (bridging activities under Pathway 1 and 2). Participants analyzed root causes of degradation, explored solutions, and articulated aspirations by mapping their current situations. The participatory creation of sub-watershed visions and action plans are carried across communities, acting as the base for collaboration at both sub-county and district levels.

For inspiration and alignment we picked lessons learnt from the MWARECOP platform instigated under the MWARES project and engaged stakeholders in Bududa District. A strategic planning meeting with the MWE initiated the development of a sub-catchment management plan for Upper Manafwa, addressing 162 degraded sites in line with national guidelines. The Upper Manafwa Sub-Catchment Management Committee (SCMC) was formed through an inclusive process involving 219 participants, and 60 members received capacity-building training on governance, stewardship, advocacy, and planning.

Moreover, the Mpologoma Catchment Management Committee (CMC) was reconstituted in collaboration with MWE. The CMC engaged 211 stakeholders to restore institutional governance and strengthen participatory catchment planning.

Collectively, these initiatives revitalize watershed platforms, strengthened leadership, and positioned committees to spearhead effective restoration and water resource management in alignment with MWE's Catchment Management Organization procedures. It is a lengthy process for CommonGround, but the efforts are bearing fruit. Yet, we stress that the ultimate responsibility for watershed management plans rests with MWE. There remains high potential to further link community restoration efforts to sub-watershed restoration plans.

Intermediate outcome 2.3: Watersheds managed effectively

In the annual plan for Year 3, we outlined that CG regards the Directorate of Water Resources Management (DWRM) as a key player in fostering collaborative planning and stakeholder engagement. Moreover, MWE, DWRM, and CG all actively encourage community participation in watershed restoration. This shared commitment drives CG to continue involving local communities in both planning and implementation. Our standpoint is that by adopting a participatory approach, restoration efforts are better aligned with local priorities and gain stronger community support — factors that are essential for ensuring their long-term sustainability. As such, engagements with MWE continued in Year 3, though experienced delays due to procedural set-backs and lessons learnt about existing frameworks of MWE.

The main activity lines of formulating/revamping natural resource management ordinances, and the setting up of watershed committees, were developed without necessarily scrutinizing the already existing frameworks. We noticed that our intentions sometimes duplicated already ongoing efforts and therefore rather difficult to get off the ground, if not counter-productive. While we facilitated some workshops with key watershed stakeholders, the targets for 2.3 are out of reach and consequently we decided to continue engaging with watershed stakeholders under 2.1 and 2.2.

Pathway three: Improved marketing

Year 3 has been a turbulent undertaking for this Pathway, but with a strong outlook. Staff-turnover in the first half of the year saw 3 marketing experts leave the team. This led to a lack of leaders to push for marketing activities being integrated into the weekly and monthly workplans. Since field-officers were engaged across pathways, the activities under Pathway 3 were not prioritized and progress stalled. Up till the first half of the year, the work from Year 2 was only progressed slowly. Speed was picked up when the team was strengthened with new marketing experts coming on board in Q1 2025. After capacitating staff and field officers, and engaging with the various groups (planning, capacity building, stakeholder interaction), the path was paved toward regaining momentum for Pathway 3. The ground was fertile since groups were already formed and people were willing to participate. And while Agriterra's work on SACCOs, VSLAs and cooperatives was progressing steadily – onboarding groups for capacitating - this Pathway truly found its footing once the agreements were clear around the responsibility for implementation of most Pathway 3 activities. The team notes that the transition has been professional and swift, and integration of workflows very fruitful. The below sections are populated on the basis of Agriterra report and CG monitoring.

Intermediate outcome 3.1: Improved market access

The project made significant progress, particularly in 2025, in tackling structural barriers to market access through improvements in poor road infrastructure. A lot of effort was put into organizing community meetings and stakeholder sensitization. This was instrumental to gain traction from LG and agree to co-investing in road works by providing machinery and/or materials (gravel). The team continued mapping exercises for available bulk

materials as well as land ownership and terrain. With road improvements being high on the list of local priorities and included in most community PIPs, our efforts led to nine MoUs being signed with relevant stakeholders—five in Bunyangabu and four in Ntoroko—formalizing commitments to improve rural connectivity and sustain road upkeep. Additionally, comprehensive assessments were conducted on 50 priority roads, with Bills of Quantities (BOQs) prepared and submitted for budget approval.

These promising developments, with road works planned for across communities in the three regions, were follow-up by the communities' road task force and initiated road works themselves through collective action. In cases of larger stretches of road, engineer consultants were hired, LGs actively supported activities with machinery, and communities cooperated with voluntary work. In most cases, land owners offered a small strip of land to the cause – benefitting the entire community. Only in Kigezi we had 2 landlords stubbornly refusing to allow for roadworks on their land, but this was a only a minor speck in the speedy progress for this activity. And as off June 2025, maintenance works in Ntoroko District reached 75% completion on four targeted roads. Activities included road opening, widening, rock excavation, leveling, and murram spreading. A total of 7.6 km of community access roads have been improved, with more kilometres actively worked on, are directly benefitting Nyambigha, Itojo, Nyakatooke, and Musandama communities by easing transport and supporting economic activity.

We explicitly link here with Pathway 1, referring to the market-access challenge experienced by many rural communities. Improved access to inputs and better linkage to output markets is often prioritized in their vision.

Beyond infrastructure, the project enhanced the organizational capacity of farmer groups across the Elgon, Rwenzori, and Kigezi regions. Through Agriterra's Start. COOP training, 334 participants (131 men and 203 women) from nine groups completed a four-module program on cooperative formation. This training improved governance, organizational skills, and laid the foundation for professional, market-oriented cooperatives capable of engaging competitively in agricultural markets.

Intermediate outcome 3.2: Improved income opportunities from key crop commodities

CG continued to support smallholder farmers and cooperatives to engage more effectively in key crop commodity value chains. Workshops that brought together stakeholders last year to identify and prioritize bottlenecks affecting e.g. maize, cocoa, coffee, banana, cassava, cowpeas, etc. were followed up. Key challenges including poor infrastructure, weak market linkages, and limited access to finance were explored further and proposed interventions were explored on the basis of their feasibility, e.g. improved storage for produce preservation, collective marketing, enhanced distribution, and expanded access to credit—providing a clear roadmap for strengthening value chains.

Partnerships are central to addressing these bottlenecks. Therefore, Agriterra actively sought formal linkages between cooperatives and major agribusinesses such as East-West Seed International, Grain Pulse, Bukoola Chemical Industries Ltd, Kilimo, and several cooperatives, traders and research stations. While the private sector actors were initially slow to respond to our call, we managed to facilitate eight MOUs being signed between producer cooperatives and input dealers. These agreements improve access to reliable, high-quality inputs, reduce risks of counterfeit supplies, and position cooperatives as strong service hubs for their members. Note that improvements along one value chain not only alleviate challenges for a specific crop, but likely has positive impacts across other value

chains. Growing trust in cooperatives was demonstrated by new farmer groups joining to benefit from these partnerships.

To further strengthen financial inclusion, over UGX 750 million was mobilized through partnerships with financial institutions. Disbursements included UGX 500 million to Lyamujungu SACCO and UGX 200 million to Kigezi Potato Farmers' Cooperative, with additional financing extended to Kanaba Onion Cooperative, Kisebere Mabwe, and Karugutu Women's Cooperative. By June 2025, UGX 189.6 million (EUR 47,400) had been accessed directly by 159 smallholder farmers, averaging UGX 1.19 million (EUR 298) per farmer for on-farm investments. This significantly strengthened cooperative-led financial systems and expanded smallholder capacity to scale production and engage competitively in markets.

Intermediate outcome 3.3: Viable entrepreneurial groups

Last year, the project mapped and profiled entrepreneurial groups across target communities, covering enterprises such as poultry, dairy, apiary, aquaculture, coffee and onion marketing, hospitality, bull fattening, and tree nursery operations. This exercise laid the groundwork for targeted technical support and market linkages to strengthen group viability and competitiveness. CG explicitly links to Pathway 1 and 2 here, insofar that entrepreneurial groups can take advantage of community plans stipulating for example opportunities of bulking commodity crops, or a profitable tree nursery.

Initially, groups were not well organized. There was little practice of bulking and engaging with off-taker market actors. Again, this was compounded by the lack of leadership under pathway 3 and field officers being engaged in other pathways. But after refresher trainings and staff capacitation, every field officer knew who to support and how. Capacity building was delivered by means of rolling out PIP Module 6, consisting of a three-day Training of Trainers. We engaged 59 stakeholders (35 men and 24 women), including Community Development Officers, Agricultural Officers, and Field Officers, enhancing their ability to guide groups in action planning and business development. Using this model, 150 groups developed or refined business plans, with 57 receiving targeted technical training in enterprise management, financial record-keeping, indigenous practices, and hands-on demonstrations. In Q2 2025, several groups were bulking produce for e.g. potato, onions, cabbages, coffee, etc., and proactively engaging off-takers.

In parallel, financial inclusion was advanced through the strengthening of 278 VSLAs. Training in financial literacy, savings, and record-keeping enhanced group management and financial discipline. To support sustainability, 229 VSLA kits were procured and distributed, complemented by the development of an abridged VSLA manual tailored to the project context. Additionally, Group Management Committees were trained, enabling them to mentor their members and ensure consistent application of the methodology. By integrating these groups into broader financial inclusion frameworks, the project laid a robust foundation for grassroots entrepreneurship and community-led financial resilience.

Conclusion on progress

CG is pleased to report that this year has been marked by notable progress. Pathway 1 is developing as planned and with targets in sight. Pathway 2 has shifted focus from high-level (policy) engagement to more on-ground implementation (i.e. restoration sites and LLG collaboration), which is a promising avenue. Strategic documents outline the way forward for Year 4 and make explicit the links to Pathway 1 (e.g. community plans) and Pathway 3 (business opportunities). While Pathway 3 had experienced delays in 2024, results are now promising with activities well underway under close collaboration with Agriterra. Substantial effort has been made with regards to addressing shortcomings and leveraging

on lessons learnt during the previous year (stipulated in the annual plan 2024/2025). CG remained underspent at 57% overall for Year 3, but budget expenditure has increased substantially for all Pathways when compared to Year 2 (Annex A). The lower-than-budgeted spending is seen across the board in terms of activities, operational costs as well as personnel. Nevertheless, the increase in spending from last year indicates that CG has increased its operational capacity and is poised to deliver quality work and investments based on actual needs. For details of operations in Year 3, we refer to Annex C. Overall, we see high potential for solidifying efforts over the next year, through targeted effort and sound investments.

5. Organizational Development

In terms of organizational development, CommonGround retains a strong emphasis on a culture of collaboration and coherent work. We are happy to report that the team now sees a low staff-turnover, high ambition to succeed, and collaborative spirit in and around the offices. Recognizing that a healthy organisation requires continuous effort, and learning from reflection sessions, CG has made several strategic adaptations over the past year.

The most notable organizational change was the transferal of the majority of activities under Pathway 3 to Agriterra. Having come on board last year to support Pathway 3, Agriterra's responsibility has been further expanded as of July 2025, with the partnership now clearly outlined. The transfer process, including the contractual agreements and organizational changes associated with this transfer took substantial coordination and effort to realize. While we welcome the outcome of this process, it has had the result of negating the organizational progress of Pathway 3 in Q4 2024 and Q1 2025 and compounding the already-slow progress in Q1 and Q2 of 2025. A promising strategy was formed in Q2 of 2025 stipulating CG's focus on road works and Agriterra's lead for the other activity clusters. CG will remain involved in the planning and monitoring processes of all activity clusters under Pathway 3.

Responding to the recommendation in the midterm review to harmonize the integration of Pathways more, CG has initiated preparatory work for a restructuring process of project administration, approval, planning, and communication. Concretely, this led to simultaneous multi-day reflection workshops organized in July 2025 in each of the three regional CG offices. The MEL team facilitated these all-staff reflection sessions with the aim to harvest lessons learnt, discuss challenges, and propose actions moving forward. The synthesized outcomes of these sessions were input to a core-staff annual reflection, planning and team building workshop organized in Kampala and facilitated by WENR on 29-30 July. The secondary intent of these sessions was to boost the current work culture and improve the level of cooperation between CG staff. Key outcomes of these sessions are discussed in Chapter 9, Lessons Learnt and Related Actions.

In Q1 2025 CommonGround underwent an external midterm review. On 19-05-2025 we responded to the main findings and recommendations of the MTR report by submitting a response letter to EKN. Table 2 iterates the main points.

Table 2: Main MTR findings and CG response, in line with submission to EKN on 19-05-2025

MTR finding	Main points from CG response
Challenges in coordination and	- Enhanced in-country technical support by WENR - Longer and more regular visits

strategic governance of the project.	- Enhanced MEL and adaptive management support by WENR - Proactive technical and analytical input by WENR - Continuity and communication improvements
The need to reduce bureaucracy and improve structure	- New SOPs - Faster approval of ToRs - Effort-based planning - Hiring of independent HR consultant
Concerns about scaling and measurement of impact	- Faster logarithmic scaling - No-cost extension to ensure capacitating last cohort PIP-farmers - Tailored resilience study (with farmer-based indicators)
Limited field presence and farmer guidance	- Increase technical support through Integrated Farm Trainers - Improve general support through Community Coordinators
Quality of land conservation measures	- New strategic implementation briefs - Staff refresher trainings (including trainers from WUR)
Underperformance in Pathway 2	- Revision of Pathway 2 strategy - Focus on local implementation and restoration
Underperformance in Pathway 3	- Revision of Pathway 3 strategy - Outsourcing nearly all activities to Agriterra - Integration & monitoring by CG

6. Risk management

The contextual risks (refers to events, factors or dynamics occurring in the broader environment which affect programming or operations yet are beyond the control of organizations or individuals) were identified by the project and the Embassy at the start of the project as attached to this plan. The table is included as Annex D to this report.

The risk matrix has continued to serve as a tool in guiding our strategic decision-making processes throughout the year. By systematically assessing potential risks and opportunities, it has provided a framework for reflection and ongoing monitoring. This has allowed us to pick up emerging issues from an early stage and evaluate their potential impact. In some cases, this led to adapting our strategies.

As part of our management strategy to heed political risks, we engaged local administrations and non-political leaders—such as sub-county chiefs and Chief Administrative Officers—through collaboration workshops over the year, to ensure their awareness and in some cases active involvement in watershed actions, committees, and project activities. The general elections in Uganda scheduled for January 2026 have led to campaigns being initiated, but no real inference has been experienced so far. We will continue to monitor this closely as our engagement within local administrations might be influenced (e.g. by political stakeholders claiming their partaking).

With regards to climatic risks being ever-present, we continue to strive for increased resilience at household and community level. Elgon experiences especially challenging situations with regards to landslides pestering the slopy lands. This has recurringly led to media coverage, using titles such as 'To stay or go?' – a reference made to the uncertainty of disaster[1]. CommonGround has been mentioned multiple times in national media outlets as a project that drives (landscape) resilience through increased soil cover, improved farming practices, and tree planting efforts. We continue to push for integrated solutions that reduce climate-related risks and improve the resilience of households.

7. Monitoring & evaluation

During the reporting period, the MEL team implemented strategic activities to strengthen project monitoring, learning, and accountability. This included joint field monitoring visits with local partners to assess progress and bottlenecks, verify data, and provide on-site technical support. MEL was also engaged in assessing Agriterra-led activities to ensure alignment with CommonGround's Results Framework. Community-led monitoring mechanisms were supported, enabling local stakeholders to track agreed action plans and provide feedback for adaptive management. Peer-monitoring exercises brought partners together assess view implementation quality, share lessons, and identify improvement areas, with selected visits joined by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, whose feedback enabled CG to strengthen its approach and reach greater results.

Two key evaluations were undertaken: a midline review conducted internally to assess progress project results (Annex E), and an externally-led midterm review that generated valuable lessons and recommendations for corrective action and adaptive management (see Table 2 in Chapter 8 for key findings and response by CG). Reflection processes included quarterly partner review meetings and semi-annual sessions with WENR management to analyze findings, track action points, and make course corrections. The MEL team prioritized the improvement of digitized data collection tools, provided refresher trainings for field officers and field supervisors to address integration of MEL and Pathways, and began preparing for a tailored household-level resilience study in response to MTR recommendations (to be further developed in Q3 2025). These efforts ensured credible reporting, adaptive learning, and strengthened collaboration between MEL, communications, Pathway experts, IPs and local government.

Specific to PIP, we are continuously researching the approach altogether by means of different studies and assessments. As such, new data from an MSc thesis-student comparing the PIP approach between CG and BRIGHT has shed light on important factors to consider for maintaining/increasing the quality of PIP in terms of Awareness, Planning and Action. Key insights include, 1) gradual, holistic approaches enhance training effectiveness and foster stronger farmer engagement, 2) material support provides quick benefits but is less sustainable over time, 3) farmer's awareness, planning and action does not follow a fixed sequence and so requires adaptive support, 4) field officers are the key to successful implementation, 5) refresher trainings are necessary for knowledge embedding.

We follow-up this thesis with an in-depth, structured and more pronounced study to be conducted by external consultants with the intention to learn more about the differences in implementation of the PIP approach between CG and BRIGHT, specifically intending to, a)

[1] The New Humanitarian. To stay or go? The dilemma confronting Uganda's climate displaced. Published 14-07-2025. URL: To stay or go? The dilemma confronting Uganda's climate displaced

Assess the strengths, limitations, and trade-offs of the two PIP implementation strategies of BRIGHT & CommonGround Projects in relation to project reach, depth of change, and resource use; and b) Assess the effects (and try to find out why it has this effect) of both implementation strategies on the target groups to date.

Key reflections drawn from the annual reflection workshop include:

- Data Collection Tools: The standardized and digitized data collection tools have improved the quality and consistency of data collected across the regions; more attention is required in aligning PW3 tools to the revised AGRITERRA KPIs.
- Quarterly and Annual Reviews: Fully integrated in the workplan and effective. Further improvements include documenting, sharing, and follow-up of outputs and key action points in each quarter.
- Timely sharing of feedback: Evidence-based feedback between MEL and technical teams is now active. There remains the need to strengthen mechanisms for real-time monitoring and reporting, to help teams quickly correct course, improve learning across Pathways and to support timely decision-making at management level.

8. Possible changes in approach

On the basis of this year's project implementation we see no substantial deviations in the approach altogether. Lessons drawn from the speed, ease and achievability of implementation do lead to adjustments in the workplan, as is integrated into the Annual Plan for 2025-2026. Analysis of the MTR findings and recommendations therein are explicitly linked to actions that are also outlined in the new AP. Furthermore, strategic adaptations aimed at improving or quickening the process of project implementation in line with project goals are described. These include making efficient use of resources, choosing to phase-out most of the activity clusters under intermediate outcome 2.2 (Sub-watersheds managed effectively) and 2.3 (Watersheds managed effectively), and harnessing implementation strategies for key activities (e.g. tree nurseries, restoration sites, integrated farm trainers). Last, we retain the intermediate outcomes of Pathway 3 as they are integral to the scope of the project and form the basis of collaboration with Agriterra.

In the next Chapter we expand on the lessons learnt for this year, and the proposed actions.

9. Lessons learned and related actions

This section presents key lessons learnt and proposed actions. We first briefly touch upon general lessons learnt throughout the year on the basis of regular reflections before diving deeper into the lessons harvested during the all-staff reflection workshops in July 2025.

General lessons learnt from project implementation

- *Experience-Based Learning Drives Change*: Farmers learn best by doing. Practical exposure through demonstration plots, tree nursery training and peer-led visits proved far more effective than theory alone. These hands-on experiences built confidence, sparked curiosity, and led to quicker adoption of sustainable farming practices.
- *Inclusion and Collaboration Strengthen Impact*: Engaging youth with structured, skill-oriented opportunities empowered them as active contributors to community

change. Likewise, early involvement of landowners and close collaboration between local government staff and project teams fostered ownership, reduced resistance, and ensured smoother, more effective implementation.

- *Visible Success Inspires Wider Adoption*: Tangible results from restoration efforts and peer innovators motivated neighboring farmers to replicate and adapt successful practices. Public events such as graduation ceremonies amplified this effect, turning moments of celebration into powerful mobilization platforms for scaling up sustainable solutions. We draw synergies with the common saying 'When Ugandans pick up something, we run with it".
- *Resilience Requires a Holistic Approach*: A balanced investment across economic, environmental, and social dimensions strengthens community resilience more effectively than focusing on a single aspect. This integrated approach ensures that livelihood gains are more sustainable and widely valued by beneficiaries.
- *Local Ownership Drives Sustainability*: Community-led monitoring not only enhances accountability but also embeds local priorities into project delivery, fostering long-term ownership and reducing dependency on external actors.
- *Stakeholder Engagement Accelerates Progress*: Meaningful and regular engagement with governance bodies and watershed stakeholders can turn governance structures into active drivers of change, enabling faster instigation of critical change processes in communities.

Lessons learned related to pathways

Improved integration between Pathways

The integration with other Pathways is going quite well (both 1-2 and 1-3). This is due to improved communication, shared planning meetings, and an improved collaboration (including clearer roles) in the team. Additionally, the collaboration with local leaders, community stakeholders and with school administrators is going well.

Further improvement is proposed along the following suggestions to explore further:

- Linkage to Pathway 1 & 3:
    - Whilst Pathway 3 is already connected to the household and community vision (PW1), this linkage needs to be strengthened, so that the services provided by the farmer organizations supported under PW3 can become more needs-based.
    - Demo gardens included in the PIP plans are useful for the 5 priority commodities that are selected per region and can be leveraged for PW3 trainings.
    - There is (potential) overlap in the technical training provided under PW1 and the training for farmer organizations under PW3. These trainings need to be aligned to ensure complementarity and enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
    - Under PW1 the issue of access to agricultural inputs has come up and an effort is being made to link farmers to input providers. Under PW3, agro-input shops are being set up and linkages to input providers are strengthened.

- Linkage PW 2 & 3:
    - Restoration sites can be linked to PW3 so that increased volumes of production through improved soil fertility management and collective cropping on these restoration sites can be sold for higher profit on the market.
    - There is an opportunity to include the site groups as part of IGPs under PW3 to facilitate access to agro-inputs as well as training as part of sustainable land management (SLUM). Hence, the site groups implementing (restoration) activities harness complementary market opportunities.

- Promising nurseries under PW2 can be supported by PW3 to turn into a business, so that these tree nurseries become sustainable and self-supporting over time and contribute to resilient landscapes and households.

- Linkage PW 1-2-3:
  - Joint activities between pathways should be complementary and effective. For example, training sessions covering more than one pathway are more efficient in terms of resources, and it can help to provide a better linkage between the Pathways.
  - Joint monitoring missions are more efficient and can strengthen learning across Pathways.
  - MEL and COMMs need to be engaged in the development of compelling narratives - comprehensive stories that consider more than one pathway.

In-depth PIP studies

PIP being an interactive process altogether, hinging on assumptions of attendance, acceptance and alignment with stakeholders, it makes good sense to gauge whether the theory of change of PIP holds. Different projects have various angles of engagement, and as such it is valuable to understand what (approach) works well both qualitatively and quantitatively. As such, this year we started preparations for a comparative PIP study to be performed for BRIGHT and CG. To this end, we have engaged with external consultants to produce an inception report and prepare the study to be conducted in Q3 of 2025. The study will assess key factors such as motivation, adoption of practices, quality of scaling, etc.

Moreover, we are developing a resilience-based study to be rolled-out in Year 4, that strives to capture resilience attributes of farmers, based on their own prioritization.

Consider those who are indirectly PIP'ed

We are currently only focusing on capturing direct reach (PIs, G1, G2). But the project team has indirectly trained other groups of people. For instance, farmers on the restoration sites (Pathway 2) and the group members as part of IGPs (Pathway 3), as well as lower local government and environmental club leaders, have all attended a variety of PIP sessions. We intend to further train the afore-mentioned restoration site groups and IGP group members in the PIP approach in order for them to become full advocates of the PIP and streamline with our direct beneficiaries, i.e, PIs, G1s, and G2s.

Facilitation of IFTs

In alignment with the project logframe under Output 1.2 (500 Crop Management Trainers Capacitated), the project has adopted the term Integrated Farm Trainers (IFTs) to reflect a broader and more holistic role that supports both crop and livestock smallholder farmers. The initial plan was to capacitate 500 trainers across the originally planned 84 target communities (36 in Elgon, 24 in Kigezi, and 24 in Rwenzori), with each community having six trainers. However, as the project expanded to 117 target communities (45 in Elgon, 36 in Rwenzori, and 36 in Kigezi), the project now capacitates 702 IFTs, assigning six trainers per community. These trainers received continuous capacity-building and support throughout year 3. IFTs have been selected based on their commitment, vigilance, and motivation to share knowledge with fellow farmers. They acquired skills in crop, livestock and land management practices and are intended to play a pivotal role in scaling best practices within and beyond the target communities. Their primary responsibility is to support farmers in adopting sustainable farming practices, ensuring that at least 80% of PIP households establish and implement sustainable farming practices on their IPPs and restoration sites.

As key agents of change, these trainers will drive the expansion of sustainable integrated management practices within their communities and neighboring communities. A key strategic document was drafted by our expert to outline the guidelines for IFT facilitation.

A question raised during the reflection workshop concerned how the selected IFTs will be facilitated without causing conflict that may demotivate other training of farmers. The team suggested the need for strategic awareness raising among PIs, G1s and community members on the role and magnitude of work to be done by the IFTs. Emphasis was put among others on the need for hands-on training, providing continuous support, and considering the travel distances. During our discussions, it was clarified that the facilitation of IFTs to ensure effective training delivery and knowledge dissemination is based on longer training hours and travels to adjacent communities. The team also discussed the exit strategy. It was agreed that IFTs will be linked to agro-input dealers while being deployed within existing village structures (including explicit links to community vision committees).

Sustainability of tree nurseries

Training the tree nursery groups (TNGs) on business planning and development is ongoing and aims to enhance the sustainability of the tree nurseries. The focus is on operations, marketing, financial management, leadership, and record keeping. This is expected to equip TNG members with business skills for tree nursery management. Linking TNG with potential buyers/enablers, e.g. public sector actors, i.e., DFO, UWA, NFA, NaFORRI, DCO, and Private Sector actors: i.e., NGOs, other commercial nursery operators, learning institutions, Vi-agroforestry. We collaborate with Agriterra to support PW2 in implementing this. Additionally, we aim to link the tree nurseries to the District Commercial Officers.

Ensuring land restoration at scale

Currently, there are physical land restoration interventions being implemented, but these sometimes do not cover entire restoration sites. While land restoration requires time, we face several limitations including low interest/motivation by landowners to participate in collective restoration activities. Limited availability of labour, especially for larger sites, coupled with absentee landlords, make the work very difficult and strenuous for the few landowners who are actually willing. On larger sites, it is harder to mobilize all members and maintain the intrinsic motivation needed to implement the action plan. So how do we take land restoration to scale in this scenario?

We will look into the following options: further strengthen at community level by training committees on social cohesion; cluster one large restoration site into smaller parts where possible; improved link to agro-input dealers; link community restoration plans to one another; explore opportunities for byelaws on restoration; assign multiplication plots for planting materials; conduct more learning visits between communities; improve awareness raising through community dialogue/radio); explore stakeholder coupling e.g. partnerships with private actors like MTGE; engage government for providing training inputs (seedlings), e.g. NARO.

Scaling of PIP proceeds well, but challenges remain

The scaling processes of PIP - both ‘scaling in/up’ (reaching the target of 150,000 households) and ‘scaling out’ (expanding to neighboring, non-targeted communities) – is progressing. Participants indicate that the cascade approach (FO>PI>G1>G2) and farmer-to-farmer training (PIP competitions) is more difficult to complete than intended.

The CG midline findings suggest that the average number of first-generation (G1) farmers trained by PIs vary from East (5.3) to West (7.2) Uganda. While numbers arelower than intended, since we had intended for 10 trainees per PI, we have used conservative numbers in the scaling calculations included in the Annual Plan for this year. Therefore, approximately 27,000 G1s have developed their household PIPs and IPPs this year through training by PIs. This number is higher than planned for in the Annual Plan for this year, namely 22,320.

What remains a challenge is that PIs and G1s train fewer farmers than intended, training sessions are shorter, and the resulting PIP visions and plans are of lower quality. Staff attribute these shortcomings to several factors, including trainers' low confidence (often tied to limited literacy), lack of motivation, negative community perceptions, trainers being undermined by participants (G1s/G2s), absence of compensation for time and costs, and long travel distances. For scaling out, the fact that there are no awareness raising meetings further complicates engaging new communities. While these challenges are cause for concern, they are not surprising, and we have correctly anticipated the lower-than-expected scaling by using conservative numbers. Nonetheless, we learn by doing and have internally discussed potential approaches to further strengthen PIP scaling, such as by:

- Initiating a sustainable reward system that does not rely on handouts to engage farmers, but fairly addresses issues that limit their ability and willingness to train others. Specifically, these 'rewards' would be given when farmers (PIs, G1s) can prove they have trained a specific number of G1s/G2s and the quality of these trainings have been validated.
- Ensuring additional backstopping and practical trainings to enhance farmers' confidence. Important that these are tailored to their needs/concerns/insecurities.
- Harnessing capacitated IFTs to support scaling out processes. Explicitly training a selection of the (702) IFTs on PIP will solidify the link between the PIP approach (particularly visioning and action plans) and technical know-how.
- Connecting with partner projects. We should explore more in-depth inclusion and alignment to e.g. A-GRIP and BRIGHT projects.

Actions for management and support functions

Key insights on management and operational support were gained during the annual reflection workshop. These include:

- Matrix structure: Management has followed a line of command via Pathways and Regions. Currently the process is ongoing to make that structure more effective and impact oriented. In general, open communication will be further improved. And where appropriate, stakeholders will be involved in decision making.
- Contacts with partners: The project is intensively cooperating with partners in the field. The field officers are partly employed by these partners. That needs attention for proper and effective coordination and speeding up activities implementation and monitoring.
- Cooperation with ISSD: The management is led by WENR and ISSD, both have a representative in the daily management of the project. That needs proper streamlining of work to organize and do. The intention is to have a clearer separation of roles between the COP and the DCOP. Gender inclusive management will also be further considered. And particularly with the HR team in Kampala communication will be strengthened.
- Cooperation with Experts: The Experts for each Pathway play an important role in the project for the proper steering of project activities in cooperation with the project members in the regions. That means also for the project management well-

thought coordination and communication is sought with the Experts based on ongoing consultation.

- For Finance, it shall be the aim to improve tracking of payments and prepare payment schedules well in advance.
- For HR, attention will be paid to staff development, staff orientation needs, reviewing the organizational policy and producing HR schedules.
- For Procurement, focus will be directed toward effective delivery of items to end users, revision of prices, and improved alignment with other functions through direct communication and collaborative planning.
- For Communication, actions include enriching impact stories with quantitative data and compelling narratives with support from experts and WENR staff, organizing refreshers on communication, and increasing CG visibility.
- For MEL, please see Chapter 7.

10. Integrity

During the reporting period, no cases of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct or the Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) policy were reported anonymously. The project team reaffirmed its zero-tolerance stance on misconduct by strengthening preventive and accountability measures. Key actions include ongoing staff training, reinforcement of anonymous reporting mechanisms, and community sensitization efforts related to these topics. These initiatives collectively ensure a safe, respectful, and accountable environment for all stakeholders while minimizing risks of potential violations.

11. Annual Financial Report

EKN approved an initial project budget of Euro 11,512,976 and in May 2023, revisions were made to provide for CommonGround project expansion to Elgon region increasing total project budget to Euro 17,882,714. The report presented below however, reflects progress made in implementing the year three (July 2024 – June 2025) activities based on the approved budget for year three by EKN. Activities during the year were implemented based on the pathways as presented in Annex A.

Annex A: Financial overview Year 3

Table 3: financial overview Year 3: budget, expenses, budget balance and deviation

	Project Pathways & Instruments	Approved Budget Jul. 24 -Jun. 25	Actual Expend. Jul.24 - Jun.25	Budget Balance	Deviation from budget
P1	**Resilient Farming Systems**				
P1.1	Activities	1,813,315	907,258	906,057	50%
P1.2	Operational costs	77,156	27,540	49,615	36%
P1.3	Personnel	237,959	187,784	50,175	79%
P1.4	Contractual services	355,710	370,489	(14,779)	104%
	Subtotal	**2,484,140**	**1,493,071**	**991,069**	**60%**
P2	**Restored Watersheds**				
P2.1	Activities	1,614,260	536,047	1,078,213	33%
P2.2	Operational costs	52,978	30,641	22,337	58%
P2.3	Personnel	168,247	138,092	30,155	82%
P2.4	Contractual services	191,930	190,850	1,080	99%
	Subtotal	**2,027,415**	**895,630**	**1,131,785**	**44%**
P3	**Improved marketing**				
P3.1	Activities	903,350	420,046	483,304	46%
P3.2	Operational costs	28,347	12,604	15,743	44%
P3.3	Personnel	80,598	67,836	12,762	84%
P3.4	Contractual services	98,150	93,980	4,170	96%
	Subtotal	**1,110,445**	**594,466**	**515,979**	**54%**
P4	**Project / Administration**				
P4.1	Personnel	302,013	297,515	4,498	99%
P4.2	Operational costs	124,508	142,126	(17,618)	114%
P4.3	Travel costs	38,874	30,931	7,942	80%
P4.4	M&E and communication	113,175	64,403	48,772	57%
	Subtotal	**578,570**	**534,976**	**43,594**	**92%**
	Total budget ISSD Uganda	**6,200,569**	**3,518,142**	**2,682,426**	**57%**
P5	**WENR-TA**				
P5.1	Personnel	508,622	475,980	32,642	94%
P5.2	Travel & material costs	87,358	45,357	42,001	52%
	Subtotal	**595,980**	**521,337**	**74,643**	**87%**
	Budget total	**6,796,549**	**4,039,480**	**2,757,069**	**59%**
	Overhead ISSD (5%)	310,028	175,907	134,121	57%
	Unforeseen (4%)	330,254	-	330,254	0%
	Grand total	**7,436,831**	**4,215,387**	**3,221,444**	**57%**

Explanations for significant budget deviation

Here below are the explanations per budget line for substantial deviations from the approved budget for Y3 (1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025)

P1. Resilient Farming Systems (60%)

The main activities were PIP creation with PIs in target communities, Out-scaling of PIP creation in each target communities, Farmer-to-Farmer Trainings , Graduation Days , Exchange Learning Visits , In-depth assessment of existing farming systems in the regions , Training PI groups on locally-relevant crop/land management topics , Establishing and monitoring Integrated Plot Plans (IPPs) with PIs , Out scaling IPP creation & best practices to 1st generation PIP farmers , conducting Community vision activities in target communities , Developing and printing Community strengthening manuals, Facilitation of implementation of Community Visions, environmental education in primary and secondary schools.

P1.1 Activities (50%)

The project planned to develop five agri-technical videos to support training leaflets on crop and land management topics. However, after carrying out an inventory, we identified relevant existing videos and utilized them for trainings instead of developing new ones. This reduced the planned production costs and resulted in lower expenditure. Secondly, workshops on crop and land management practices were implemented in 108 out of the 117 target communities. The nine second-cohort communities in Elgon region had not received the trainings during the reporting period as they were still engaged in the PIP and IPP processes. Since training in these communities was scheduled to follow PIP and IPP completion, the funds allocated for these activities were not spent within the period. In addition, follow-up activities such as monitoring the implementation of IPPs and workshops for feedback sessions and capacity building for PIs on IPPs were also affected in the nine communities. The facilitation of targeted investments to support community Visions, Co-investment in activities that were prioritized by the communities to benefit the wider community were not done at levels that were previously planned leading to low expenditure. In Environmental Education 17 activities were planned and 12 activities were implemented. This was due to limited time in school terms as most of the schools already had planned activities by the Ministry of Education and sports. Monitoring activities of environmental clubs, refresher training with Field Officers, training in eco-friendly income generating activities, and review of school PIPs were not done in all the regions.

P1.2 Operational costs (36%)

During the period, there were combined travels of the technical team under pathway 1. Travel arrangements involved combining more than one activity using the same transport.

P1.3 Personnel (79%)

During the year, we budgeted to spend Euros 40,000.00 on two PhD students. However, we were only able to spend about half of the planned expenditure because one of the students was discontinued.

P1.4 Contractual (104%)

Within the required budget limit

P2. Restored Watersheds (44%)

The main activities were to support the establishment of tree nurseries in target communities, establishing organized site groups at restoration sites, developing visions and action plans for the restoration sites, facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the action plans. Awareness raising at sub-county level in effective watershed management, awareness-raising at sub-watershed

level and at district level, a watershed platform was established to strengthen watershed governance in Elgon Region.

P2.1 Activities (33%)

The low spending is primarily attributed to the nature and scope of activities implemented during the reporting period. Most activities under pathway 2 were process-oriented and repetitive in nature (such as community mobilization, landowners meeting, awareness creation, and follow-up on visions and action plans, engagement meetings on formulation of bye laws). These activities, while essential for achieving project objectives, did not require significant financial input, thus further contributing to the low budget utilization.

P2.2 Operational costs (58%)

During the period, there were combined travels of the technical team under pathway 2. Travel arrangements involved combining more than one activity using the same transport.

P2.3 Personnel (82%)

The personnel budget included staff capacity building which was differed to year 4 because of competing activities on the project.

P2.4 Contractual (99%)

Within the required budget limit

P3. Improved Marketing (54%)

The major activities under Pathway 3 were: development of business plans for Entrepreneurial groups, technical trainings tailored to different businesses, trainings on financial literacy, savings, records and availing kits to VSLA groups, signing of MOUs to address bottlenecks and implementation of road works on community access roads in Ntoroko district.

P3.1 Activities (46%)

Implementation of pathway 3 activities was affected by process activities e.g. PIP module 6 for developing business plans this affected access to revolving funds that had been planned for. Under this pathway 3, there was a budget to build stores, machinery which was also not implemented because of delays in initial assessments of potential groups that could benefit. The implementation of roads was delayed by several unforeseen engagement meetings that involved communities, sub-county and district stakeholders. Areas of discussion included; roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, land compensation, mode of operation, allocated budget per road verses the scope of work.

P3.2 Operational costs (44%)

During the period, there were combined travels of the technical team under pathway 3. Travel arrangements involved combining more than one activity using the same transport.

P3.3 Personnel (84%)

The personnel budget included staff capacity building which was differed to year 4 because of competing activities on the project.

P3.4 Contractual (96%)

Within the required budget limit

P4. Project Administration (92%)

P4.1 Personnel (99%)

Within the required budget limit

P4.2 Operational costs (114%)

We paid for rent in advance for offices (Fortportal and Kabale) whose costs cut across into the 4th year.

P4.3 Travel costs (80%)

During the period, there were combined travels of the monitoring & supervision team. Travel arrangements involved combining more than one activity using the same transport. In addition, maintenance costs for Motor vehicles were low because the vehicles are still in good working condition.

P4.4 M&E and communication (57%)

This mainly involved routine project quarterly reviews and annual planning meetings. The communication side involved documentation, showcasing project visibility and progress through media outlets (electronic & print), newsletters and online publications shared with stakeholders. The annual review & reflection was held in August; therefore, this expenditure will be reported in Year four. Also worth noting is that the project's quarterly reviews were done through a mix of physical and online meetings for efficient use of the project staff time, which also contributed to lower expenditure.

P5: WENR (87%)

The budget supports involvement of WENR team providing technical assistance and backstopping to the project team in Uganda including overall project leadership, monitoring & evaluation, technical expertise in the pathways and finance.

P5.1 WENR-Technical Assistance and Backstopping (94%)

Within the required budget limit

P5.2 Travel & Material costs (52%)

The budget mainly covers travel of WENR staff to Uganda for technical assistance and backstopping. WENR staff aims to reduce on expenditures made during travels, and therefore less was spend than initially anticipated for in the budget. This however allows for more physical support to materialise in the coming period.

Fund Accountability Statement

Table 4: Overview of Actual Revenue and Expenditure to 30th Jun 2025

Details	**Amount (Euro)**
1st instalment received in Oct 2022	2,629,075
2nd instalment received in Oct 2023	4,122,345
3rd instalment received in Jul 2024	3,283,565
Total received from EKN to 30th Jun 2025	**10,034,985**
Less: Expenditure	
Yr 1 expenditure (audited)	1,091,006
Yr 2 expenditure (audited)	2,718,511
Yr 3 expenditure (unaudited)	4,215,387
Total expenditure	**8,024,904**
Funds balance as at 30th June 2025	**2,010,081**

Interest statement

Period	**Amount at WENR (euro)**	**Amount at ISSD Uganda (euro)**
November 2022 - June 2023	25,705.93	23.38
July 2023 - June 2024	93,868.60	286.76
July 2024 - June 2025	107,029.88	231.99
Total	**226,604**	**542.13**

Table 5: Approved overall budget and cumulative expenditure compared

	Project Pathways & Instruments	Approved Budget (2022-2026)	Yr 1 Expend. (audited)	Yr 2 Expend. (audited)	Yr 3 Expend. (unaudited)	Total Expend. to Yr 3	Total Budget Bal.	Total % Expend.
P1	**Resilient Farming Systems**							
P1.1	Activities	3,056,599	47,822	289,134	907,258	1,244,213	1,812,386	41%
P1.2	Operational costs	397,591	93,171	32,937	27,540	153,649	243,942	39%
P1.3	Personnel	875,344	31,296	185,415	187,784	404,495	470,849	46%
P1.4	Contractual services	1,147,932	84,272	348,529	370,489	803,290	344,642	70%
	Subtotal	**5,477,466**	**256,561**	**856,016**	**1,493,071**	**2,605,647**	**2,871,819**	**48%**
P2	**Restored Watersheds**							
P2.1	Activities	2,540,800	-	120,984	536,047	657,031	1,883,768	26%
P2.2	Operational costs	256,942	41,718	51,666	30,641	124,024	132,918	48%
P2.3	Personnel	606,711	31,727	129,375	138,092	299,194	307,517	49%
P2.4	Contractual services	744,652	20,991	196,909	190,850	408,750	335,902	55%
	Subtotal	**4,149,105**	**94,436**	**498,934**	**895,630**	**1,489,000**	**2,660,105**	**36%**
P3	**Improved marketing**							
P3.1	Activities	1,550,000	-	33,840	420,046	453,886	1,096,114	29%
P3.2	Operational costs	164,284	61,649	16,003	12,604	90,256	74,027	55%
P3.3	Personnel	284,041	13,306	57,233	67,836	138,376	145,665	49%
P3.4	Contractual services	318,634	16,604	70,5043	93,980	181,087	137,547	57%
	Subtotal	**2,316,959**	**91,559**	**177,579**	**594,466**	**863,605**	**1,453,354**	**37%**
P4	**Project / Administration**							
P4.1	Personnel	1,232,180	156,982	268,788	297,515	723,285	508,896	59%
P4.2	Operational costs	560,403	86,287	156,512	142,126	384,925	175,478	69%
P4.3	Travel costs	157,112	20,784	27,813	30,931	79,528	77,584	51%
P4.4	M&E and communication	297,232	16,449	89,729	64,403	170,581	126,651	57%
	Subtotal	**2,246,927**	**280,502**	**542,841**	**534,976**	**1,358,319**	**888,608**	**60%**
	Total budget ISSD Ug	**14,190,457**	**723,058**	**2,075,371**	**3,518,142**	**6,316,571**	**7,873,886**	**45%**
P5	**WENR-TA**							
P5.1	Personnel	1,989,153	308,028	497,836	475,980	1,281,844	707,309	64%
P5.2	Travel & material costs	333,074	23,767	41,536	45,357	110,660	222,414	33%
	Subtotal	**2,322,227**	**331,795**	**539,372**	**521,337**	**1,392,504**	**929,723**	**60%**
	Budget total	**16,512,684**	**1,054,853**	**2,614,742**	**4,039,480**	**7,709,075**	**8,803,609**	**47%**

	Overhead ISSD (5%)	709,523	36,153	103,769	175,907	315,829	393,694	45%
	Unforeseen (4%)	660,507	-	-	-	-	660,507	0%
	Grand total	**17,882,714**	**1,091,006**	**2,718,511**	**4,215,387**	**8,024,904**	**9,857,810**	**45%**

Annex B: Key pathway logframe indicators

Key Indicators	Cumulative Target	Realized overall	Explanation / Comment
Pathway One			
Intermediate outcome 1.1: Enhanced household performance			
(farm) Household PIPs created (FNS B.x.1.1)	150,000	65,301	29,585 men and 35,716 women
PIP trainers capacitated	15,000	15,178	
Intermediate outcome 1.2 Enhanced farm performance			
Household Integrated Plot Plans (IPPs) established (FNS A.x.1.1)	120,000	65,301	29,585 men and 35,716 women
Crop management trainers capacitated	500	702	
Intermediate outcome 1.3: Enhanced social cohesion in communities			
Community action plans created based on community visions	360	117	Initial target assumed 1 village to be a community. Several villages are merged to form one community. This target is therefore reached.
Communities strengthened with better, organization, structure and leadership	360	117	Community strengthening trainings remain ongoing.
Investments made to support implementation of community visions	360	360+	Investments include assorted tools, equipment, water wells, tanks, etc.

Schools capacitated on Environmental Education and using PIP curriculum	58	59	
Pathway Two			
Intermediate outcome 2.1: Sustainably managed restoration sites			
# of restoration sites sustainably managed by collaborative slope groups.	200	309	
Hectares of land collaboratively managed by site groups with land conservation practices implemented (FNS.C.x.1.1)	10,000	7,725	
Hectares of land with a slope of >30% where soil erosion is controlled	4,000	3,090	123 sites
Site groups established with action plan	528	433	100 in Elgon, 193 Kigezi, and 140 Rwenzori.
Site vision committees established / revamped with action plan	360	433	100 in Elgon, 193 Kigezi, and 140 Rwenzori.
Tree nurseries established	60	84	Total of 97 assessed and 62 selected for continued support in Year 4.
Intermediate outcome 2.2 Sub-watersheds managed effectively			
Sub-watershed committees established/revamped with concrete action plans and with organized leadership structures	20	22	Targeted: LLG and DLG

By-laws created and implemented by the sub-watershed committees addressing sustainable land use	20	1	Original target was unrealistic (confirmed by MTR), and decision was made to drop this activity
Restoration activities implemented in the sub-watersheds based on action plans	40	40+	
Intermediate outcome 2.3: Watersheds managed effectively			
Watershed committees revamped or strengthened including a vision, action plan, stewardship agreements etc.	4	1	Mpologoma watershed.
Pathway Three			
Intermediate outcome 3.1: Improved output market access			
# MoU's actively being implemented to address market access bottlenecks	9	6	1 in Elgon, 2 in Rwenzori, and 3 in Kigezi at the district level, for road opening and maintenance
Districts with at least one intervention implemented to address market access bottleneck(s)	6	6	
Sub counties with at least one intervention implemented to address market access bottleneck(s)	29	43	More than one intervention per sub-county
Agreements made to address market access bottlenecks	35	21	5 in Rwenzori, 7 in Elgon, and 9 in Kigezi
Intermediate outcome 3.2: Improved income opportunities from key crop commodities			

MoU's actively being implemented to address value chain bottlenecks for key crop commodities	15	10	6 cooperatives and 4 SACCOs signed contracts to support the farmers' access to credit, quality inputs, and produce
Key local crop value chains whose bottlenecks are identified and addressed	15	11	Maize, beans, coffee, potato, onions, cabbage, banana, Cocoa, cow peas, apiary and dairy
Intermediate outcome 3.3: Viable entrepreneurial groups			
Entrepreneurial groups that achieved to implement their Integrated Group Plans (IGPs) by at least 80%	528	TBD	Business plans were developed, validated, and are under implementation by at least 30-40% based on adoption level.
Entrepreneurial groups capacitated with visions and action plans for income generating activities	528	207	
Group PIP (IGP) trainers capacitated	252	36	Activity is planned for Year 4
Entrepreneurial groups that have accessed finance for start-up/expansion of their enterprises	528	4	Activity is planned for Year 4

Annex C: Key project output indicators Year 3

The table below presents a synapse of how CG performed on the basis of key project output.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT				
REVIEW PERIOD	2024/2025			
RELATED ACTIVITIES	**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**	**PLANNED TARGETS 2024/2025**	**ACHIEVED TARGETS 2024/2025**	**%ACHIEVED vs planned targets 2024/25**
Pathway 1 - Resilient farming systems				
Result 1.1: Empowered and motivated households				
1.1.2. Out-scaling of PIP creation in each target communities and beyond	# of communities that participated in Open days	66	84	127%
	# of PIs/IPP farmers trained	2.790	3.496	125%
	# of household PIPs created (PI training farmers)	22.320	27.109	121%
	# of PIs graduated	3.390	3.348	99%
	# of communities that held graduation days	117	84	72%
	% of households implementing their PIP action plans	100	93	93%
Result 1.2: Better performing farming systems				
1.2.1 In-depth assessment of current farming systems in the regions.	Needs assessment report (priority setting for crops)	3	3	100%

	# of PIs capacitated /participated in the workshop (PIs)	2.790	3.496	125%
	# of communities trained (57 new plus 24 target communities in Rwenzori and Kigezi)	81	84	104%
1.2.3. Establish and monitor Integrated Plot Plans (IPPs) with Pis	# of IPPs created	27.900	27.109	97%
	# of PIs/IPP farmers that are implementing IPPs	2.790	3.496	125%
	# of feedback sessions and capacity building workshops conducted	117	84	72%
1.2.4. Outscaling IPP creation & best practices to 1st generation PIP farmers	# of learning visits conducted to research institutes (3 learning visits per region)	9	9	100%
	# of farmers who participated in the learning visits to research institutions	180	793	441%
	% of households with established IPPs (implementing their IPPs)	80	92	115%
Result 1.3: Empowered and motivated farmer communities				
1.3.1. Community vision activities in target communities	# of final community visions and plans drawn in target communities (12 target communities Kigezi, 12 target communities in Rwenzori and 36 Elgon (27 MWARES and 9target)	60	33	55%
	# of communities that have completed awareness raising workshops	57	84	147%

	# of households that participated in the awareness raising workshops (150hh/community)	8.550	6.711	78%
	# of PIs validated in the new target communities	1.710	3.496	204%
1.3.2. Community strengthening (CS) activities in target communities.	Training materials on social resilience/ community strengthening developed	5	5	100%
	# of communities trained on at least one community strengthening topic	117	84	72%
1.3.3. Facilitation of implementation of Community Visions	Assessment report with Recommendations	1	1	100%
	# of communities with assessed visions, action plans and prioritised investments	117	84	72%
	Amount invested to support community visions and action plans 10,000,000	10.000.000	9.500.000	95%
	# of communities in which investments were made	117	84	72%
1.3.4. Environmental Education (EE) at primary and secondary level	# of schools clubs capacitated on good farming practices and IPP creation (LGF) Module 3	42	59	140%
	# of schools with club PIPs	42	59	140%
	# of patrons trained in the PIP approach	32	249	778%
Pathway 2 - Watershed restoration				
Result 2.1: Restored degradation sites				

2.1.1. Support establishing tree nurseries in each target community	# of Staff and Field officers trained on nursery establishment & management	33	36	109%
	# of tree nursery groups trained on establishment and management of tree nurseries	135	83	61%
	# of community members trained on tree nursery establishment (25/community)	3.375	1.110	33%
	# of tree nurseries established in communities	135	83	61%
	# of tree seedlings distributed by tree nurseries (disaggregated by species)	1.170.000	1.145.201	98%
2.1.2. Establish a well organized site group at each degradation site	# of restoration sites validated	363	528	145%
	# of field Officers & staff trained	33	36	109%
	Acres of land covered by restoration practices	14.520	7.725	53%
	# of restoration site groups	363	528	145%
	# of sites committees established	363	528	145%
	# of restoration sites with validated site PIPs	363	433	119%
2.1.4. Facilitate/monitor the implementation of the action plans	# of sites that received materials and tools	363	309	85%
	# of field staff, sub-county officials, district officials trained on SLM technologies & practices	59	380	644%

	# of site groups trained on land restoration practices	404	433	107%
	# of restoration sites that are sustainably managed (30%)	109	309	283%
	Acreage of land collaboratively managed by site groups	11.616	7.725	67%
	Acres of land with a slope >30% where soil erosion is controlled	1.452	3.090	213%
Result 2.2: Sub-watershed managed effectively				
2.2.1. Awareness raising at sub-county level	# of sub counties which conduct awareness and develop action plans	21	21	100%
	# of Sub county visions and action plans reviewed	16	-	0%
2.2.2. Awareness-raising at sub-watershed level	# of engagement workshops conducted in sub-watersheds	48	2	4%
	# of sub-watershed committees established /revamped	16	2	13%
2.2.3 Facilitate and promote the implementation of sub-watershed/sub catchment management plans in collaboration with MWE	# of sub-watershed with management plans developed	9	2	22%
Result 2.3: Improved watershed management				
2.3.1. Awareness raising at district level	# of workshops conducted	6	6	100%
	# of districts with visions and action plans developed	6	6	100%
2.3.2. Establish a watershed platform	# of workshops	8	1	13%

	# of watersheds where stakeholders mapping was conducted.	4	1	25%
2.3.3 Develop watershed visions and action plans	# of watershed committees with developed visions and action plans	3	-	0%
	# of review workshops held	6	1	17%
2.3.4 Strengthening the functioning of watershed Committee	# of watershed committees members trained	120	60	50%
2.3.5 Facilitate and promote the implementation of the watershed action plans	# of engagement consultative workshops and district council sittings	10	-	0%
	# of ordinance formulated or revamped	2	-	0%
Pathway 3 - Improving Market Opportunities				
Result 3.1: Improved market access				
3.1.3 Form partnership and sign agreements to address market access bottlenecks	# of MOUs signed for implementation	16	9	56%
	# of agreements made to address market access bottlenecks	30	20	67%
3.1.4 Implementation of measures to address general market access bottlenecks	# of MOUs being actively implemented to address market access bottlenecks.	9	9	100%
	# of Cooperatives and SACCOs trained	41	5	12%
Result 3.2: More farmers generating income from key crop commodities				

3.2.2 Partnership formation and awareness creation	# of workshops held	75	9	12%
3.2.3 Develop and sign partnership agreements	# of MOU signed to address value chain bottlenecks for key commodities	13	8	62%
3.2.4 Implementation of agreed measures & partnerships	# of key crop value chains whose bottlenecks are identified and addressed	13	12	92%
	# of MOUs actively being implemented to address value bottlenecks for key crop commodities	13	8	62%
Result 3.3: Viable entrepreneurial groups				
3.3.2 Train selected entrepreneurial groups in developing Integrated Group Plans (IGPs)	# of entrepreneurial groups capacitated with visions & group plans for income generating activities	326	208	64%
	# of IGPs validated	326	104	32%
3.3.3 Provide support to assure implementation and viability of the IGPs	# of workshops conducted with SACCOs	22	3	14%
	# of cooperatives and SACCOs that have established a revolving fund	9	-	0%
	# of Entrepreneur groups that have accessed finance for start-up/expansion of their enterprises	326	4	1%
	# of entrepreneurial groups that are operating their business at a profit	105	104	99%

3.3.4 Establishing and or strengthening of VSLAs	# of VSLAs mapped and profiled	420	278	66%
	# of VSLA manuals developed & printed	1	1	100%
	# of Field Officers, CG staff trained	66	36	55%
	# of VSLAs trained on VSLA methodology	177	278	157%
MONITORING, EVALUATION, LEARNING				
Review, reflection and monitoring activities	# of Quarterly reflection reviews conducted with action points and key lessons documented	12	8	67%
	# of meetings held to review annual project performance.	1	4	400%
	# of visits conduted targeting district and subcounty based stakeholders.	12	8	67%
Surveys and studies	# surveys/ studies commisioned	6	3	50%
	# of midterm reviews conducted	1	1	100%

Annex D: Risk Matrix for CommonGround

Political and Institutional risks				
Normal situation	**Risks**	**Probability**	**Severity**	**Risk Management Strategy**
Closure of the borders between Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan Rwanda or DRC due to conflicts, do not disrupt project activities	Instable market access and insecurity in the region cause a disruption in the opportunity structure and access to institutions and markets for farmers	Medium	High	The project focuses on local market access and aims to include various commodities with the aim of not depending on cross-border instabilities.
Changes in public institutions will not Impact project implementation	Frequent changes of staff and priorities in institutions interrupt the Development of Communities and Watersheds	Medium	Medium-high	Develop strong relations with multiple people at these public institutions, with workshops and capacity building, and link well to Development plans of local governments, taking into account The Parish Development Model from the inception phase.
Presidential elections in 2026 do not influence project activities	Political disturbances impact implementation of the project and project outcomes will be linked to political parties, halting implementation of the project	Medium	Medium-high	Strong collaboration will be sought with non-political leaders, like the sub-county chiefs, as well as the Chief Administrative Officers, with frequent workshops to involve them in (sub) watershed actions, committees & project activities.
Land rights or issues are not creating conflicts	Land conflicts arise during the implementation of project activities	Medium	Medium-high	Land issues are discussed during group meetings, especially at the village level. Other stakeholders having a stake in the landscape are engaged from the beginning and good communication at all levels is stimulated, to stimulate open discussions when issues arise.
Climatic risks				
Normal situation	**Risks**	**Probability**	**Severity**	**Risk Management Strategy**
There is no crop failure due to extreme weather events or (new) emerging pests and diseases	Emerging pests or diseases or extreme weather events disturb the farmers' activities, affect the production and decrease their income	Medium	High	This is expected to be managed by all the project activities where farm resilience is created, through diversifying income, and creating awareness and adaptation capacity to expected risks like changes in weather patterns and the emergence of pests and diseases.
Economic risks				
Normal situation	**Risks**	**Probability**	**Severity**	**Risk Management Strategy**
Farmers immediately enjoy economic benefits from implementing their activities on	Farmers get de-motivated that the extra effort they put in their farm does not provide	Low	Medium	Initial focus in technical trainings of the project is on quick wins in production, where farmers stay

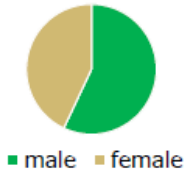
their farm	any additional income and they abandon the project.			motivated and where more resilience is created, while creating more income and while being environmentally conscious (enhanced stewardship)
Farmers are available for implementation of collective activities at the watershed level.	Farmers are working on their own activities and are not able to put much labor in community activities	Low	Medium	Intrinsic motivation is stimulated from the beginning. Village action plans are created and combined with responsible committees, resulting in community engagement for collective activities. Where possible collaboration is sought with local governments and youths engaged where possible.
Risks related to project implementation				
Normal situation	**Risks**	**Probability**	**Severity**	**Risk Management Strategy**
Farmers are willing to work with the project without given them any monetary incentives	Project implementation is undermined because people don't want to cooperate with the project or demand incentives to participate in trainings	Low	Medium	The right expectations are set from the beginning, at the initial awareness raising moments at village level and during the selection of the PIs, leading to a change in mindset and intrinsic motivation to get/stay involved.
Stakeholders in the different project areas will actively participate in project activities	Stakeholders do not engage in project activities	Low	Medium	Intensive workshops and awareness raising is done with different stakeholders and the project invites stakeholders from different levels already from the beginning to project activities
Exchange rates are stable	Exchange rate from euro to UGX is volatile and impacts the budget for implementation	High	Medium	Budgets are prepared on a conservative side, and the exchange rates are closely monitored; concrete activities are planned in yearly work plans based on the available budget.
There are no outbreaks of diseases (like Ebola) or pandemics (like Covid-19)	Movements of the field staff become limited and WENR staff is unable to travel because of local or regional lockdowns related to the spread of diseases.	Low	Medium	Field staff and activities are stimulated to be done from the respective areas, WENR staff engaged within the project is partly based in Uganda and do not need to travel from the Netherlands

Annex E: Summary of Midline Assessment

Background: CommonGround initiated a Midline Assessment in the months of February and March of 2025, to accompany the (externally conducted) Midterm Assessment. A field campaign took place that specifically targeted the PIP farmers and Generation 1 farmers of the CommonGround project. A total of 400 surveys were completed as well as 15 KIIs and 15 FGDs to triangulate the quantitative data. The surveys are a representative sample of the combined 3,500 PI and G1 farmers, so results can be interpreted to reflect this group altogether.

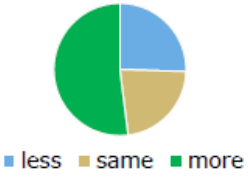
Sample characteristics

Gender distribution of PIP farmer sample



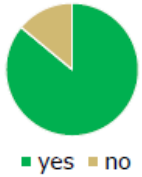
Region	Respondents
Eastern	145
Western	255

Current use of crop land compared to before PIP



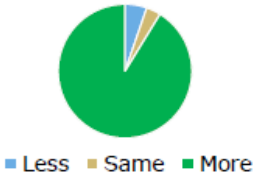
Farmer legacy

Experiencing on-farm soil quality issues

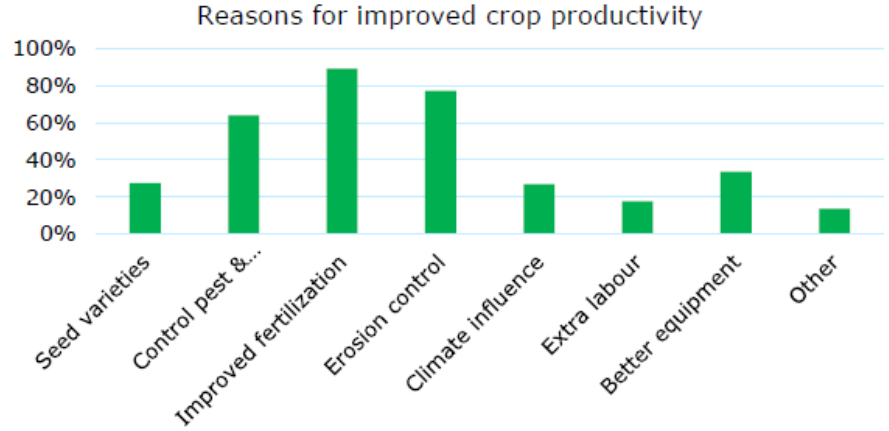


Region	Average # trained
Eastern	5,3
Western	7,2

Current crop harvest per field compared to 2023

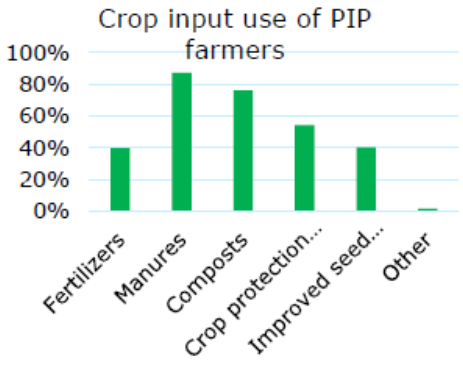


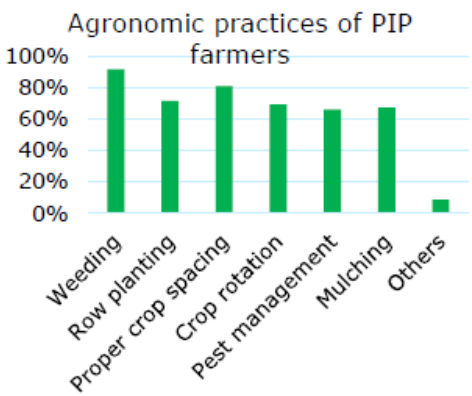
Farmer narratives



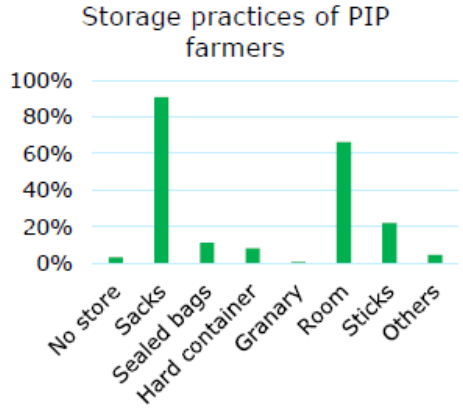
- Average total farmer income was **3,09** million UGX.
- For **44%** of households, female and/or youth are engaged in off-farm income generating activities as a group, mostly in retail and trade, small business ventures, or food processing.

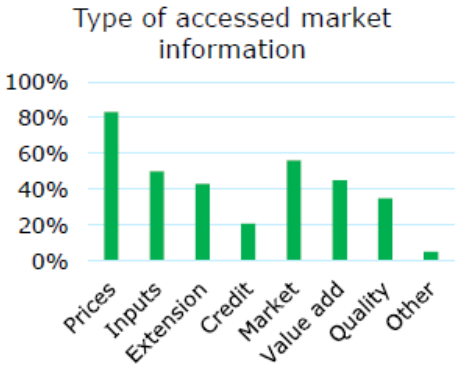
Farm operations





Crop handling & marketing





- **16%** of PIP farmers practice secondary value addition while **50%** is (somewhat) satisfied with the available value addition opportunities.
- **19%** sells their produce as a group instead of only individually.
- **23%** is satisfied with general conditions for marketing crop produce.
- **62%** is satisfied with the received market information, against **26%** satisfaction of the road-to-market infrastructure and **50%** satisfaction of the working relationship with market buyers.

Results and outcomes

- **69%** of famers have additional sources of income outside crop production. **59**% have significant income from these sources.
- **93%** of farmers is member to a VSLA, of which 97% actively saves.
- On average **605,000** UGX was saved over the past year.
- **72%** of farmers is able to pay an emergency fee of 150,000 UGX.
- **88%** has a drawn-up long-term plan, of which **83%** developed this together with other household members.
- **89%** of farmers make time to contribute to community activities.

