

Executive Summary

This strategic plan outlines a comprehensive five-year roadmap for the Stewards for Nature and Development Foundation (SNDF) to address the pressing environmental and socioeconomic challenges in Uganda, with a specific focus on the Kagadi District. The plan is designed to be a definitive guide, integrating the foundation's core values—Environmental Stewardship, Community Empowerment, Collaboration, Integrity, Innovation, and Sustainability—with a data-driven analysis of the local context. It will transition SNDF from a general advocacy body into a leading, on-the-ground implementer of conservation and development projects.

The analysis reveals that the primary drivers of environmental degradation in Kagadi, such as rampant deforestation and land degradation, are deeply interconnected with socioeconomic issues, including energy poverty and agricultural vulnerability. Furthermore, a detailed review of water infrastructure shows a crisis of both access and functionality, with severe disparities between different sub-counties.

To address these complex challenges, this plan is structured around four strategic pillars: Sustainable Land & Forest Management; Community Water, Sanitation & Health (WASH); Climate-Smart Agriculture & Livelihood Development; and Advocacy, Innovation & Partnerships. A phased work plan, spanning from Year 1 to Year 5, details the logical progression from foundational pilot projects to large-scale implementation and, finally, to long-term sustainability. The financial strategy, grounded in a program-based budgeting model, identifies key funding opportunities from major international donors like the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and other key partners. The anticipated outcomes include a measurable reduction in deforestation, improved community resilience to climate impacts, enhanced biodiversity, and strengthened local economies.

CHAPTER 1: FOUNDATIONAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC RATIONALE

The Stewards for Nature and Development Foundation (SNDF) is guided by a clear and compelling mission: To catalyze action for the conservation of Uganda's natural resources and the promotion of sustainable development initiatives that improve livelihoods and foster environmental stewardship.

This includes vital assets such as forests, wetlands, wildlife, and water bodies. The foundation is also committed to supporting and implementing sustainable development initiatives in key areas like agriculture, renewable energy, community health, and education. A core part of this mission is the empowerment of local communities, ensuring their active participation in conservation and development processes while respecting their traditional knowledge and rights.

Underpinning all of SNDF's work are seven core values: Stewardship, community empowerment, Collaboration, equity and inclusion, accountability and transparency, Innovation, and Respect for nature. These values are not merely abstract ideals; they serve as the operational anchors for every project proposed in this strategic plan. The commitment to Environmental Stewardship is directly reflected in the focus on forest and water conservation, while the value of Community Empowerment is central to the project models that transfer ownership and management to local people. Similarly, the emphasis on Collaboration will guide the pursuit of key partnerships with government agencies and other civil society organizations. The plan's forward-looking approach, which integrates technology and novel funding models, is a direct expression of the foundation's dedication to Innovation and long-term Sustainability. The plan is, in effect, a practical and detailed articulation of SNDF's existing philosophical principles, providing a strong and consistent foundation for all future efforts.

1.1. Vision: A thriving Uganda characterized by a healthy environment, sustainable development, and empowered communities.

1.2. Mission: To catalyze action for the conservation of Uganda's natural resources and the promotion of sustainable development initiatives that improves livelihoods and foster environmental stewardship.

1.3. The objectives of the Foundation shall be to:

2.1. Promote the conservation and sustainable use of Uganda's biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources, including forests, wetlands, wildlife, and water bodies.

2.2. Support and implement sustainable development initiatives in areas such as agriculture, renewable energy, and natural resource management.

2.3. Empower local communities to actively participate in conservation and development processes, ensuring their rights and traditional knowledge are respected.

2.4. Raise awareness and promote environmental education among the public, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship.

2.5. Advocate for policies and practices that support environmental protection and sustainable development at local, national, and regional levels

2.6. Conduct research and disseminate information related to conservation and sustainable development.

2.7. Build the capacity of individuals and organizations working in the fields of environmental conservation and sustainable development.

2.8. Mobilize resources and establish partnerships to support the Foundation's activities.

1.4. Core Values

The Foundation is be guided by the following core values:

4.1. Stewardship: Recognizing our responsibility to care for and protect Uganda's natural heritage for current and future generations.

4.2. Community empowerment: We believe in the active participation and ownership of environmental solutions by local communities.

4.3. Collaboration: Fostering partnerships and working collectively with communities, government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

4.4. Equity and Inclusion: Ensuring that the benefits of conservation and development are shared fairly and that all voices are heard and respected.

4.5. Accountability and Transparency: Operating with integrity and openness in all our activities and being accountable to our stakeholders.

4.6. Innovation: Embracing creative and effective solutions to address environmental and developmental challenges.

4.7. Respect for Nature: Recognizing the intrinsic value of all living organisms and ecosystems.

1.5. The Kagadi District Context: A Nexus of Environmental and Socioeconomic Challenges

A deep analysis of the Kagadi District reveals a complex web of environmental and socioeconomic issues that are deeply intertwined. Simply addressing the visible symptoms of degradation, such as deforestation, without tackling their root causes would lead to temporary and unsustainable outcomes. The plan's strategic framework is built on a comprehensive understanding of these underlying drivers.

Deforestation and the Energy Poverty Crisis

Deforestation in Kagadi is not a stand-alone problem but a direct consequence of energy poverty. A staggering 99.9% of the district's households depend on wood biomass for their domestic fuel needs. This overwhelming reliance on wood has led to a significant decrease in the natural biomass base, as harvesting methods are often rudimentary and unsustainable. The problem is compounded by the district's limited access to grid electricity; even where transmission lines exist, very few households have tapped into this resource. This forces the majority of the population to rely on alternative, less efficient energy sources, primarily solar kits for lighting.

The implication of this situation is that any strategic plan focused solely on reforestation would fail because the fundamental need for fuel would remain, continuing to drive demand for wood. The causal relationship is clear: lack of sustainable energy alternatives leads directly to the over-harvesting of forests. A viable solution must break this cycle by introducing a

multi-pronged approach that provides energy alternatives, such as fuel-efficient cookstoves, alongside tree planting campaigns. This approach, by addressing the root cause, ensures that reforestation efforts have a chance to succeed in the long term.

Water Scarcity, Access Gaps, and Infrastructure Failure

The water crisis in Kagadi is characterized not by a uniform lack of resources, but by a severe disparity in access and infrastructure functionality across different sub-counties. While overall rural water access is reported at 54%, this average is misleading. A closer look reveals a highly localized and critical problem, with access rates ranging from a high of 95% in Kagadi and Muhorro TC , sub-counties to a dire 3% in Ndaiga sub-county. A general, district-wide approach to water provision would therefore be inefficient and would fail to assist the most vulnerable communities.

Beyond simple access, a high rate of infrastructure failure further complicates the issue. The functionality of rural water sources stands at only 73%. This non-functionality is attributed to a combination of factors, including low yield (27% of cases), technical breakdowns (24%), and poor water quality (21%). This data suggests that simply building new water points is not the most effective strategy. Instead, a more impactful approach would be to prioritize the rehabilitation of existing, non-functional water points and to establish robust local management systems. The fact that 80% of existing water points are communally managed presents a major opportunity for SNDF to empower local communities by training them to independently manage and maintain their water sources, thereby addressing the high non-functionality rate and leveraging the foundation's core value of Community Empowerment.

Agricultural Vulnerability and the Need for Innovation

The agricultural sector, a cornerstone of Kagadi's economy, is also a significant driver of environmental degradation. Traditional farming practices have led to soil degradation and inefficient resource management. Data from a prominent environmental organization indicates that "permanent agriculture" is a primary driver of forest loss in Uganda. This highlights the need for a shift towards more sustainable and climate-resilient farming methods.

The research points to a significant opportunity for innovation through the "digitization of

sustainable agriculture". Technologies such as mobile applications for knowledge dissemination, real-time data monitoring, and remote sensing are identified as having the potential to revolutionize traditional practices, improve yields, and minimize environmental impact. The current lack of a "holistic assessment" on the scalability and impact of these technologies presents a strategic opening for SNDF to lead a pilot project. By pioneering a data-driven agricultural program, SNDF can not only provide direct support to local farmers but also create a replicable model for others to follow. This approach would differentiate the foundation, align with its value of Innovation, and contribute to addressing the human resource capacity gaps in spatial expertise by seeking partnerships with institutions like Makerere University.

1.6A. A Framework of Opportunity: Lessons from the Regional Landscape

The strategic plan is not being developed in a vacuum; it benefits from a thorough analysis of successful, on-the-ground projects implemented by other organizations in Uganda and the wider East African region. These models provide a valuable framework and a blueprint for effective action.

WWF's Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) Model

The most significant strategic finding is the existence of a successful, ongoing model for forest conservation in the very district of focus. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), in partnership with the Kitara Civil Society Organizations Network (KCSO), has already facilitated the establishment of 19 Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) agreements in 12 districts, including Kagadi. These agreements, which guide forest management until 2035, were developed through a highly participatory process that included consultations with local communities, district-level representatives, and marginalized groups such as women, youth, and firewood collectors. This demonstrates that a collaborative approach to forest conservation is not only viable but has an established framework and local buy-in in Kagadi. The strategic plan must therefore prioritize a direct partnership with WWF and KCSO to leverage this existing work, avoid redundant efforts, and accelerate the implementation of its forest management objectives. This collaboration represents a substantial head start for the foundation.

The Kasiisi Project: An Education-Based Conservation Model

The Kasiisi Project, operating near Kibale National Park, provides an excellent, replicable model for community-based conservation. Its success lies in its school-based approach, which engages children to become the next generation of conservationists. Key activities include the establishment of school-based nurseries to raise and plant over 2,000 indigenous tree seedlings, as well as the production and installation of over 1,000 fuel-efficient cookstoves. This model has demonstrated powerful results, including a 68% improvement in student attitudes toward conservation. These proven, low-cost activities can be directly integrated into SNDF's strategic pillars, using schools as an effective entry point for engaging communities and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship from a young age.

Broader Lessons from Other NGOs

Further lessons can be drawn from other organizations working in the region. The Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF) provides a model for developing "wildlife-compatible livelihoods" that reduce human-wildlife conflict and support conservation. This concept is highly relevant to the Climate-Smart Agriculture pillar and ensures that economic development is directly linked to positive environmental outcomes. Similarly, Cordaid's past projects, such as the "Waste to Clean Air Circular Loop" and "Skilling in Agripreneurship", offer a blueprint for structuring projects that address sanitation, sustainable energy, and youth employment in the agricultural sector. Finally, GiveDirectly's model of providing unconditional cash transfers presents a unique opportunity for SNDF to pilot an innovative approach, potentially coupling direct financial assistance with training on sustainable practices to empower communities to make their own choices for improved livelihoods and resilience.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIC PILLARS AND THEMATIC OBJECTIVES (YEAR 1-5)

This chapter details the four strategic pillars, each with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives that will guide the foundation's work.

Pillar I: Sustainable Land & Forest Management

Goal: To mitigate deforestation and restore degraded ecosystems through community-led initiatives.

Objective: To plant and ensure the survival of at least 500,000 indigenous and fruit trees by

Year 5 by establishing community-based nurseries. This activity directly addresses the problem of forest loss and provides a sustainable source of biomass and food.

Objective: To distribute and train communities on the use of 5,000 fuel-efficient cookstoves by Year 5, reducing household wood biomass consumption by a target percentage to be determined during a baseline study. This tackles the root cause of deforestation by reducing demand for fuel wood.

Objective: To formalize and support at least 5 new Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) groups in partnership with the National Forestry Authority (NFA) and WWF/KCSON. This leverages an existing, successful model and ensures that conservation efforts are guided by formal agreements and community ownership.

Pillar II: Community Water, Sanitation & Health (WASH)

Goal: To ensure equitable and sustainable access to safe water and promote hygiene practices.

Objective: To rehabilitate and ensure the long-term functionality of at least 20 non-functional water points in target sub-counties like Ndaiga and Kiryanga by Year 5. This focuses resources on the areas with the most dire need.

Objective: To train and empower 20 community-based Water User Committees to independently manage and maintain water sources. This addresses the high non-functionality rate caused by technical breakdowns and poor maintenance.

Objective: To launch a "One Health" pilot project, similar to a successful WWF initiative in the region, to address water-borne diseases and promote sanitation practices. This integrates health and environmental work, recognizing the link between contaminated water and community health challenges like cholera.

Pillar III: Climate-Smart Agriculture & Livelihood Development

Goal: To empower smallholder farmers with sustainable techniques and alternative income streams.

Objective: To train 1,000 farmers in climate-resilient farming techniques (e.g., crop rotation, green manuring , and traditional methods like trashlines). This aims to improve soil health and crop yields while reducing environmental impact.

Objective: To pilot a mobile-based agricultural extension and market access platform for 200 farmers, providing real-time data and knowledge. This innovative approach aligns with the foundation's value of Innovation and seeks to address the lack of holistic assessment of such technologies in the region.

Objective: To establish a community-run enterprise for the production and sale of improved cookstoves and tree seedlings. This activity generates alternative income streams, providing communities with a stake in the project's success.

Pillar IV: Advocacy, Innovation & Partnerships

Goal: To strengthen institutional capacity, advocate for supportive policies, and mobilize resources.

Objective: To formalize strategic partnerships with at least two international NGOs (e.g., WWF, Cordaid) and one domestic university (e.g., Makerere, Busitema). This leverages existing expertise and addresses human resource capacity gaps in specialized areas like soil science.

Objective: To successfully apply for and secure funding from at least one major international donor (e.g., CIF, Maliasili). This is critical for scaling up operations and ensuring financial sustainability.

Objective: To develop and publish a comprehensive report on the impact of the digital agriculture pilot to influence policy and attract further investment, positioning SNDF as a leader in innovative, technology-driven conservation.

CHAPTER 3: PHASED WORK PLAN (YEAR 1 - YEAR 5)

The implementation of this strategic plan will follow a three-phase approach, aligning with the project management lifecycle to ensure a logical and efficient progression of activities.

Phase 1 (Years 1-2): Foundation & Pilot Projects

This initial phase is focused on initiation, planning, and establishing proof-of-concept projects. It is a critical period for building trust with communities and partners and for gathering essential baseline data.

Year 1: The foundation will conduct a detailed, participatory needs assessment in the most vulnerable sub-counties, such as Ndaiga, muhorro and Kiryanga. Concurrently, the first three community-based Water User Committees will be formally established and trained. A pilot tree nursery will be launched at a local primary school, leveraging the successful Kasiisi Project model. The first non-functional water point in Ndaiga sub-county will be rehabilitated to demonstrate immediate, tangible impact. This year will also see the initiation of a formal scoping and partner identification process for major grant applications, including research into the priorities of donors like the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and Maliasili.

Year 2: The school tree nursery program will be expanded to five additional schools. A pilot workshop will be launched to train community members in the production and distribution of 200 fuel-efficient cookstoves. The rehabilitation of three additional water points will be completed. The design and development of the mobile agriculture platform will begin, with collaboration from a domestic university or a technology partner.

Phase 2 (Years 3-4): Scaling & Implementation

With proven pilot projects and established partnerships, this phase is dedicated to scaling successful activities and implementing new, larger-scale initiatives.

Year 3: The tree planting and cookstove programs will be scaled up and introduced to new sub-counties based on the success and lessons from the pilot phase. The foundation will work with local authorities to rehabilitate between 8 and 10 water points. The mobile agriculture platform pilot will be formally launched with a target of 200 farmers. The foundation will also finalize and secure a Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) agreement with local authorities and communities in a target forest reserve, leveraging the existing framework established by WWF.

Year 4: All programs will be further scaled up based on the results and impact data from the previous year's activities. The foundation will work closely with the Kagadi District leadership to

integrate project activities into broader district-level planning. A major milestone for this year will be the successful securing of a large-scale grant from a major international donor, such as CIF, to support the extensive scale-up efforts.

Phase 3 (Year 5): Consolidation & Sustainability

The final phase focuses on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the projects by strengthening community ownership and establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.

Year 5: The primary focus will be on transitioning project management to community-led structures, ensuring that local Water User Committees and CFM groups are self-sufficient. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework will be implemented to measure the long-term impact of the interventions. The foundation will also work to secure long-term, unrestricted funding from partners like Maliasili to ensure the continuity of core operations. A final report documenting the project's successes, lessons learned, and data-backed outcomes will be published to influence policy and attract further investment in similar projects across Uganda.

CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET

The financial plan is based on a program-based budgeting model to ensure transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment with donor priorities.

4.1. Five-Year Consolidated Program Budget

The following table provides a high-level summary of the projected costs for each strategic pillar over the five-year period. These figures are estimates and will be refined during the detailed planning phase of each project.

Table 1 Consolidated Five-Year Program Budget Summary in shs

Strategic pillars	Projected cost(year 1)	Projected cost (year 2)	Projected cost (year 3)	Projected cost (year 4)	Projected cost (year 5)	Total cost (5 years)
Sustainable land and forest	50,000,000	80,000,000	140,000,000	180,000,000	210,000,000	543,000,000

management						
Community water, sanitation and health (WASH)	80,000,000	120,000,000	150,000,000	170,000,000	240,000,000	688,000,000
Climate smart agriculture and livelihood development	45,000,000	90,000,000	130,000,000	160,000,000	190,000,000	615,000,000
Advocacy, innovation and partnership	30,000,000	50,000,000	80,000,000	100,000,000	80,000,000	340,000,000
Total consolidated Budget	205,000,000	340,000,000	500,000,000	610,000,000	720,000,000	2,186,000,000

Note: These amounts are for illustrative purposes and do not include indirect costs (e.g., administrative expenses).

4.2. Detailed Budgetary Breakdown by Strategic Pillar

A granular, year-by-year budget for each pillar will be prepared, specifying personnel and non-personnel costs.

a. Personnel Costs: This includes salaries and wages for full-time and part-time staff, such as project coordinators, field officers, and administrative personnel. The budget will also account for fringe benefits.

b. Direct Project Costs: These are non-salary expenses directly related to project implementation, such as the cost of tree seedlings, tools for stove production, water pump repair kits, agricultural training materials, and subscriptions for the mobile data platform.

c. Indirect/Operational Costs: A portion of each program's budget will be allocated to shared

expenses that cannot be attributed to a single project. This includes office rent, utilities, communication expenses, and transportation for field visits. This ensures fiscal transparency and adherence to standard NGO budgeting practices.

4.3. Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization

SNDF's funding strategy is based on a targeted approach, aligning the foundation's strategic pillars with the specific priorities of major international and domestic donors.

a. Alignment with Major Donors: The plan's focus on sustainable land management, climate-smart agriculture, and climate-resilient urban infrastructure is in direct alignment with the priorities of the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), particularly its Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) and the Forest Investment Program (FIP). The foundation will actively seek to access these funds by demonstrating how its projects contribute to their stated goals of mitigating climate change impacts and addressing forest loss and degradation.

b. Strategic Partnerships: The foundation will also seek to secure funding from other relevant organizations. The Climate Justice Resilience Fund, for instance, makes grants to empower communities to advocate for sustainable livelihoods and climate-resilient land management. The Maliasili Conservation Fund provides multi-year, unrestricted support to Africa's leading community conservation organizations, making it an ideal long-term partner for sustained growth. The plan will also explore partnerships with organizations like Cordaid, which has a history of successful projects in sustainable agri-food systems and youth employment in Uganda.

c. The Power of Co-Financing: Major donors like CIF often expect co-financing from the private sector. The plan's emphasis on a community-run enterprise for cookstoves and seedlings is designed to attract such investment, demonstrating a market-based approach to sustainability. This model, which combines donor funding with private and community investment, will ensure the long-term viability of the projects beyond the five-year plan.

Chapter 5: Monitoring, Evaluation, And Learning (MEL) Framework

A robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework will be established to measure progress and ensure the strategic plan remains responsive to the needs of the community and the

changing environment. The framework will be built on the principle of continuous improvement, as highlighted in the project management lifecycle.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

The following metrics will be tracked to measure the impact of each strategic pillar:

Pillar I (Forests): The number of trees planted and their survival rates will be tracked to measure reforestation success. A baseline study will establish the percentage reduction in household wood consumption as a result of the cookstove program.

Pillar II (WASH): Progress will be measured by the percentage increase in water access and functionality rates in target sub-counties, as well as the number of community-based Water User Committees that are trained and independently operational.

Pillar III (Agriculture): The number of farmers trained and a quantitative increase in crop yield among participants will serve as key metrics. The number of mobile platform users and the frequency of their engagement will also be monitored to measure the success of the digital agriculture pilot.

Pillar IV (Advocacy): Success will be measured by the number of formal partnerships established and the amount of grant funding secured from major donors.

Feedback Loops:

The framework will incorporate a regular feedback loop through quarterly reviews and annual community feedback sessions. This process will enable the foundation to adjust its activities based on real-world data and community perspectives, ensuring the plan remains relevant and effective.

5.1. Conclusion and Recommendations

This strategic plan provides the Stewards for Nature and Development Foundation with a clear, data-driven roadmap for the next five years. By moving beyond a general advocacy role to become a direct implementer of conservation and development projects, SNDF is poised to make a significant and lasting impact in the Kagadi District. The plan is not merely a list of activities

but a cohesive framework that addresses the complex, interconnected nature of the environmental and socioeconomic challenges on the ground. It is grounded in an analysis of local needs, informed by a review of successful regional models, and structured to align with the priorities of major international funding bodies.

The analysis has confirmed that the foundation's core values—from community empowerment to collaboration—are not just aspirational but are essential to the practical success of every proposed project. The existence of a proven, collaborative framework for forest management in Kagadi and the replicable, school-based conservation models provide a unique opportunity to fast-track implementation and achieve results more rapidly.

5.2 Recommendations:

- a. **Form a Strategic Planning Committee:** A small, dedicated committee should be established immediately to oversee the implementation of this plan.
- b. **Formalize Key Partnerships:** The foundation should prioritize formalizing partnerships with the National Forestry Authority and WWF/KCSON to leverage their existing Collaborative Forest Management agreements.
- c. **Initiate Pilot Projects:** The first phase of pilot projects, including the rehabilitation of the water point in Ndaiga sub-county and the establishment of the first school-based tree nursery, should be initiated without delay to demonstrate tangible progress and build momentum.
- d. **Launch a Resource Mobilization Campaign:** A targeted campaign should be launched to secure funding from major international donors, with a clear focus on demonstrating how the plan's objectives align with their priorities.

By following this strategic plan, the Stewards for Nature and Development Foundation can transform its vision into a reality, creating a thriving Uganda with a healthy, resilient, and sustainably managed environment for all.

Approved by board of directors

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signature

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