Institutional Strengthening of the Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia

Mid Term Evaluation

Final Report

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Acknowledgement

Executive Summary

Project Background

The government of Ethiopia has a strong commitment to and recognition of the importance of the forest sector. It is one of the four pillars in the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, a national strategy to achieve middle-income status by 2025 in a carbon neutral climate-resilient green economy path of development. To that end, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF) was established in 2013 tasked to oversee, among other matters, the implementation of the CRGE strategy. Immediately after the establishment of MEF the government decided to rename the new ministry as the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change (MEFCC) reflecting the heightened role of the ministry to deal with climate change issue. As a relatively new ministry, there is a need to strengthen its capacity at federal and regional levels to deliver on its mandates. During the time of writing this report MEFCC has been restructured to Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC) having the same mandates. This report will hereafter use EFCCC in place of MEFCC. The Institutional Strengthening of the Forest Development Project in Ethiopia is designed to support the strengthening of institutions and stakeholders in the Ethiopian forest sector and to pilot afforestation and reforestation activities to assist Ethiopia in attaining the targets set in the CRGE Strategy and GTP II.

Objective of the Mid Term Evaluation (MTE)

The objective of the MTE is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTE also aims to review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

Scope of the MTE

In line with the MTE ToR, the evaluation reviews four categories of evaluation criteria namely, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project using UNDP's standard definitions of evaluation criteria. The MTE provides ratings of the project's results with brief descriptions of the related achievements in terms of the four evaluation criteria employing UNDP's evaluation rating system as follows.

Rating scales for relevance, efficiency and effectiveness:

Highly satisfactory (HS)
Satisfactory (S)
Moderately satisfactory (MS)
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)
Unsatisfactory (U)
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)

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Rating scales for sustainability:

Likely (L)
Moderately Likely (ML)
Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Unlikely (U)

MTE Approach and Methodology

The MTE collected primary data and evidence through review of progress reports, Mid Term Review (MTR) report, UNDP documents, project documentaries and other related documents, direct observations and consultations/discussions/interviews with stakeholders that answer the evaluation questions. The followings methods were used:

Desk Review

Desk review enabled the MTE team to collect relevant data/information which would be useful for the MTE. The reported project progress delineated through desk review was verified through project site visits and drawing upon recently conducted MTR data.

Interviews with Key Project Stakeholders

The MTE team conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants, stakeholders, including the donors, project partners and beneficiaries at the national, regional, woreda and local level. A list of stakeholders consulted/interviewed is attached as Annex 6

Field Visits to Project Sites

The MTE ToR stipulated field visits to four implementation sites in selected four woredas of Amhara, Tigray and SNNP regions. Given the number of days allocated for field visit under this MTE, distance between project regions and travel time required, it was not feasible to cover all the three project regional states. A Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Result Based Payment to the CRGE facility – Partnership Agreement for REDD+ commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) was conducted in May-June 2018. Since the MTR mission covered two project regions namely Amhara and Tigray and MTR provides considerable information on the six selected woredas in the two national regional states, the MTE team proposed to give due emphasis on SNNPR by limiting field visits to this region, which was not covered by MTR and to draw upon MTR data for the other two regions. Accordingly, in order to observe field interventions, validate reported progress and assess project progress on the ground the MTE mission undertook field visits to four project sites, namely Mirab Abaya, Lemo, Shashogo, and Sodo Woredas in SNNPR.

In the selected woredas, the MTE team conducted consultations with the project team and beneficiaries. At least two consultations or/and focus group discussions with local communities, where at least one consultation/focus group discussions with women groups per site were carried out to obtain the views of the beneficiaries and local

communities. The MTE team put a particular emphasis on collecting gender-related data from on the ground during the MTE mission.

Limitations of MTE

During the MTE team visit to Mirab Abaya a youth protest march in Arba Minch and neighbouring areas in the Zone turned violent. As a result the MTE mission could not conduct the schedules focus group discussions with local communities and project beneficiaries in the woreda. The team drew upon information collected during discussions held with locals present during seedling nurseries and private plantation site visits.

The project carried out a baseline study in March 2018 – after the mid-life of the project. Although the study provides some insights into the status of project, it offers little support to assess project results since inception.

Findings of the MTE

Relevance

The environmental problems are addressed by the project where particular emphasis has been given on land degradation and its driving causes. Reversing land degradation in the absence of the right institutions is impossible. Cognizant of this fact the project put an emphasis to strengthen institutions for sustainable forest development and enhanced ecosystem services. As a result, 129,761 ha of degraded land has been rehabilitated through afforestation and reforestation and 9,017 ha of has been covered with short rotation plantation with average 77.4% survival rate.

The relevance of the problems addressed by the project and the underlying assumption is rated as 'Highly Satisfactory (HS)'.

The National Steering Committee of the project as the apex body provides overall guidance for implementation coordinated by the National Programme Coordination Office with the support of the nine woreda project offices through the Regional REDD+ Coordination Offices. EFCCC, MoFEC, UNDP, the Norwegian Embassy and the Swedish Embassy conduct joint monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This is of particular importance as the experience from the Sustainable Land Management project suggests that conducting regular meetings improve implementation towards intended results.

The project has employed a participatory, inclusive and collaborative approach where key project partners work closely at different phases of the project cycle. Through the project's bottom up approach, local communities are engaged in identifying the areas for rehabilitation, afforestation and reforestation, short rotation plantation and other allied interventions. The provision of forest/rehabilitated area tenure right to the local community is a major incentive that would contribute to expected results. The project

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has reviewed the lessons learnt from relevant project including REDD+, Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project, Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions (MERET) project during the project designing.

The relevance of the project strategy and route towards expected/intended results is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

The project addresses both the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and Growth and Transformation Plan-II (GTP-II). The project plans to rehabilitate large areas to improve agro-ecosystems for food security, forage production, fuel wood and construction material production and other non-timber forest products production to improve livelihoods in addition to fulfil indicators of CRGE and GTP.

The project is implemented with full participation and ownership of the stakeholders at national, regional, woreda and community levels. The government and local communities demonstrate a great sense of ownership of project interventions and achievements.

The project contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; and
Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

The relevance of how the project addresses country priorities and country ownership is rated as 'Highly Satisfactory (HS)'.

The project uses bottom-up participatory decision-making process. Project has taken on board the perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could influence the project outcomes and those who could provide resource support during the project design phase. Local communities are directly involved in project interventions planning e.g. selection of rehabilitation sites for tree and shrub plantation, beneficiary selection for alternative livelihoods interventions etc.

The relevance of the decision-making process is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

Although the project plans to include women and men equally throughout the process, the project document doesn't specifically mention gender targets and there is no gender-sensitive indicator included in the project framework. However, project partners and stakeholders recognize the importance of gender role and the need of equal gender participation in project activities. Project reports include some gender disaggregated data.

At local level decision making on project interventions planning and community participation starts with community consultations. The MTE mission observed active participation of women and youth in project interventions at woreda and kebele levels. Women have been included, albeit less in numbers than their male counterparts, in different community level committees formed under the auspices of this project. It emerged through community consultations that at times women's reproductive role and responsibilities for household chores limit their participation.

The project has created income generating opportunities for local population including rural women through seasonal employments in forest development (nursery, plantation), rehabilitation work (soil and water conservation practices), planting high value tree crops such as Mango and Avocado, and a range of alternative livelihood interventions, such as bee keeping and poultry production.

Through the promotion of energy saving improved stove the project is also helping to reduce tree cutting for fire woods, reduce firewood collection time and improve women health.

The relevance of gender and cross-cutting issues is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.

*The overall **relevance** of the project is rated as **'Satisfactory (S)'.***

Effectiveness

The project logical/results and resource framework is clear, detailed, well laid out and aligned with the project outcomes. The project indicators and midterm and end-of-project targets are *SMART* - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound. However, gender-sensitive indicators across the project outputs should be included to gauge the gender dimensions of project results. Some targets particularly under output 3 – Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated, Output 4 – Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted and Output 5 – Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced were not met as planned.

The effectiveness of the project's indicators and targets is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.

The project's objectives and outputs are clear and practical. From a slow start in early 2016, the project accelerated its implementation speed. While Output 1 – Institutional capacity of forest sector is strengthened and Output 2 - Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted registered considerable achievements, the remaining three outputs experienced slow delivery. As of June 2018, outputs 1 and 2 achieved the targets, outputs 3 and 4 were on target and output 5 was set to kick start planned interventions. Therefore, the project objectives and outcomes are feasible within the remaining timeframe (by 2019) provided planned activities are implemented, coordinated and monitored with an accelerated pace and sheer focus of

the key stakeholders involved in the project at different levels under the result-based management framework.

The effectiveness of project's objectives, outcomes and feasibility is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

The project has created income generating opportunities for local population including rural women through seasonal employments in forest development (nursery, plantation), rehabilitation work (soil and water conservation practices), planting high value tree crops such as Mango and Avocado, and a range of alternative livelihood interventions, such as bee keeping and poultry production.

Through the promotion of energy saving improved stove the project is also helping to reduce tree cutting for fire woods and improve women health .Though it is difficult to quantify the exact contribution in terms of job creation, to establish 9000 ha of plantation at least 2,700,000 person days are required (approximately 300 person days/ha). The plantations were supported by soil and water conservation practices that further created job opportunities for the local communities. The soil and water conservation practices assisted to control flooding and conserve moisture which has positive effect on plant growth and flood hazard to downstream agriculture and settlements. The various capacity building activities, as part of output 1 and 2 will help the development objectives of the forestry sector at large. The project so far rehabilitated 129,761 ha of degraded lands which will contribute to water development and provision of ecosystem services.

The effectiveness of project's development effects is rated as 'Highly Satisfactory (HS)'.

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

The project contributes towards UNDAF 2016-2020 outcome 5: By 2020, key government institutions at federal level and in all regions and cities are able to plan, implement and monitor priority climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and sustainable natural resource management

Overall, the project has demonstrated mixed results across all five outputs. Output 1- *Institutional capacity of the forest sector strengthened* and Output 2 - *Forest conservation and development enhanced* demonstrated considerable achievements. Output 1 has seen completion of the National Forest Sector Development Programme (NFSDP), baseline study and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). Eleven regional Forest Sector Action Plans are being prepared. Under output 2, the project achieved 90 percent of target forestry plantations and 87 percent of target degraded land rehabilitation), Output 4 -*Science and innovation for enhancing forest management* has attained some progress including capacity gap identification and forestry sector knowledge exchange and experience sharing visits to South Korea, China, India and Sweden participated by forest planners, policy makers and experts, and signed MoUs with South Korea and India to develop national science, research and innovation capacity. However, planned targets of development of a national forestry research

strategy, revision of curricula and building capacity of four regional and one national institutions remain to be accelerated before the end of the project period, Output 3 - *Private sector engagement in forest development* has made slow progress since majority of targets- four awareness workshops organized, incentive mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest development, five best practices disseminated on the involvement of the private sector in forest conservation and development, three new technologies for value addition introduced and a document on value chain and market study are not yet achieved Implementation of planned activities under Output 5 - *Stakeholder engagement in forest development* are yet to start.

Ethiopia has developed and enforced the climate-resilient green economy (CRGE) strategy that emphasises on development and management of forest resources and reduction of emission from biomass based energy use. The country has set targets of considerably reducing deforestation and forest degradation and increasing afforestation, reforestation and forest management to increase carbon sequestration by carrying out afforestation (2 million ha) and reforestation (1 million ha), and by managing 5 million ha of forests and woodlands. As a result, the country aims to create 50% of the total domestic abatement potential by 2025..In order to maximise the forestry sector contributions to the CRGE strategy and GTP II the institutional capacity of the newly formed Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission and its outfits in regional states and city administrations needs to be significantly strengthened, which this project purports to attain. Hence, the logic of the project is feasible provided an enabling environment exists.

The effectiveness of project's progress towards outcomes is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

EFCCC has established a National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) to manage the project at national, regional through to local level through its regional and woreda level outfits using a well-coordinated and seamless adaptive management mechanism. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) established for REDD+ with the memberships of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC), Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resource (MoALR), Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity (MoWIE), chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, EFCCC provides oversight to the project. PSC meets quarterly to make operational policies and strategic operational decisions including approval of workplans and budget. It also meets as and when needed to discuss/decide on any urgent project matters. The National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) is headed by a highly qualified, experienced and committed National Programme Coordinator to lead and manage the project.

The responsibilities and reporting lines are very clear to project staff and respective departmental officials and the project makes timely decisions in a transparent way under its adaptive management framework For example, when some sites selected for afforestation demonstrated environmental constraints and required additional costs in site amelioration efforts the project following extensive consultations decided to

proceed with increased investments in order to reduce the risk of poor results and quality. The project also weighed the potential risks of community land displacement if better lands were to be used for afforestation...

The effectiveness of project's implementation and adaptive management is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

EFCCC has showcased efforts in quality implementation of the project. Given the technical and functional capacity gaps of EFCCC, it has shown considerable uptake of global and regional good forestry practices in activity planning and implementing. A technical committee at national, regional and woreda levels and a range of technical experts provide backstopping for quality implementation of the project.

During its early life, the project encountered difficulties in producing and transmitting reports on time and it was addressed in the second part of the project. High-level supervision missions were fielded to provide implementation support to implementing entities. Such missions involved decision makers, donors, senior technical experts and researchers. These missions and regular (quarterly) monitoring of the project by the Commission enhanced implementation as well as reporting of progresses significantly.

The effectiveness of quality of execution of implementing agency is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

The UNDP Ethiopia Country Office has an excellent Climate Resilient Green Growth/ Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development team of well qualified and experienced professionals. UNDP provides first-rate support services through a dedicated Programme Manager/Focal Person, who is a veteran Climate Change Specialist.

UNDP has been instrumental in providing support to the project for quality assurance, technical and functional capacity building of the project team/EFCCC for implementing planned activities and achieving considerable results.

The effectiveness of quality of support provided by UNDP is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

The project has experienced some implementation delays in the early part because of delay in budget disbursements, capacity need, high staff turnover, civil unrest and excessive frost and drought problems in some project sites. UNDP has contributed 1. 4 million USD from its core resources to overcome the project implementation delay due to the delay in the signing of the Standard Administrative Arrangement(SAA) and fund transfer. Subsequently, it gained momentum and increased the pace of implementation.

The project's uses the results framework as a management tool. However, the costed AWPs should be aligned with the results framework. Some targets in AWPs are linked to the global targets included in the project logframe. In addition, there are targets in the AWPs not mentioned in the logframe.

The effectiveness of the use of the project's results framework/log frame as a management tool is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.

*The overall **effectiveness** of the project is rated as **'Satisfactory (S)'**.*

Efficiency

A wide-ranging capacity development initiatives of the project purports to improve the institutional capacity at all levels. Considering the short-term costs and long-term gains of capacity development, rehabilitation of extremely degraded lands in harsh terrains and areas of forest plantation achieved up to the MTE, the project interventions are cost-effective.

The participatory and bottom-up approaches followed by project required a fairly significant amount of investments. Due to different capacity development efforts including awareness building and close Consultations made at all level, communities are willing to contribute to the project and have contributed already in kind. The MTE team learned that payments made to labourers in afforestation and reforestation are significantly lower than the market value.

The efficiency of the project's financial management is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

In response to a request for additional funding, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to provide an additional funding of NOK 22,500,000 to increase reforestation and forest rehabilitation and increase short rotation forestry plantation coverage, and to showcase the Ethiopian CRGE at COP21 in Paris. Against the national target and global commitment for afforestation and reforestation and rehabilitation of rehabilitated area, Ethiopia wanted to expand the pilot afforestation and reforestation and rehabilitation activities that required additional funding.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through a Third Party Cost Sharing Agreement signed on 2 December 2016 agreed to contribute SEK 43,000,000 to UNDP for the implementation of the project. This has reduced the funding gap from USD 10,191,226 (as per original project document) to USD 2,814,00 as mentioned in the cumulative project progress report July 2015-June 2018 prepared by NPCO/EFCCC.

The efficiency of the project's budget revision is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

The project is implemented as per the National Project Implementation Manual. The project's annual work plans and budgets are prepared based on relevant cost information and reviewed by the project management.

The financial reports provided by the project need to include more details information on project expenditures covering the whole project period. The financial reports should depict expenditures at activity levels under each output instead of providing output level total expenditures.

The efficiency of the project's financial controls is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

The project is jointly monitored by EFCCC, MoFEC, UNDP and regional and woreda administrations at national, regional and woreda levels. The CRGE Facility, EFCCC and UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines are used in monitoring the project. The Project is also jointly monitored by the donors.

At woreda level, monitoring is more regular and systematic as reported by woreda level stakeholders during the MTE mission. A considerable volume of information is collected through this monitoring effort. However, compiling this data and presenting them in an orderly fashion didn't happen in the initial stage of the project.

M&E assesses the progress made from the baseline and particularly it evaluates the indicators. Quality of activities executed to respond to the project outputs are evaluated both on the ground and in the office. The MTE team witnessed some technical drawbacks in plantations in which the way plantations are managed including the size of tree seedlings planted as well as the pit sizes where the seedlings are planted. This needs closer monitoring and technical backstopping to the implementers.

Mirab Abaya project office requires some improvements. The MTE team saw the project tractors parked in office premises in all project woredas in SNNPR. Some challenges reported include, but not limited to, lack of tractor operators.

EFCCC in its June 2018 progress report highlighted the need for more work to ensure consistency in reporting systems at all levels. Data are generated by the project staff. There are experts dedicated for different activities and are responsible for the implementation as well as reporting. Project Coordinators at woreda level are responsible for data compilation, data quality assurance and reporting.

Project experts trained in GIS and remote sensing are responsible for mapping of plantation and rehabilitation sites. In most cases they apply Google earth and GPS. However, the MTE team could not get shape files of some of the plantation sites. More capacity building may be required to enable them to produce quality data Recently EFCCC has developed uniform and simplified reporting format.

The efficiency of the Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems is rated as 'Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.

The overall **efficiency** *of the project is rated as '***Satisfactory***'.*

Partnership Strategy

Since, partnership is anchored in activities across all project outputs to varied extent, the project has successfully developed partnerships with a wide array of direct and

indirect stakeholders for successful project delivery employing different mode of partnership – contractual, collaborative, and consultative partnerships. The project aims to foster partnerships with climate change players in the country for successful implementation of the project for desired impacts and sustainability. The project partners include donor community, Civil Society Organization (CSOs), Research Organizations, Higher Educational Institutions, training providers, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), allied Professional Associations such as Ethiopian Foresters Association, etc will be supported by the project. The project has forged partnership with some of these partners.

Donor partners such as the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Sweden Embassy provided significant amount of financial resources to the project. Without this financial resource it would be impossible to run the project.

The political commitment of local governments in the intervention woredas mobilized local community to dedicate the necessary time, land and other resources for the implementation of the project.

Stakeholder Engagement

As stakeholder engagement is crucial for successful implementation of the planned activities for greater impacts, the project has successfully developed partnerships with a wide array of direct and indirect stakeholders employing different modes of engagement
Both the national and local government stakeholders strongly support the objectives of the project. The local and national government stakeholders continue to play an active role in project decision making process through the established project management structure – PSC and Technical Committees at different levels.

Stakeholder involvement has been pivotal in achieving project results. For example, the Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute (EEFRI) has helped the project in selecting project sites, Mertolemariam College has joined the project's skills development training programme and private sectors has helped with the project input supply, e.g. planting materials.

Communications:

The project maintains close and frequent communication among internal stakeholders. This has accelerated project delivery after a slow start.
Several government and non-government organisation, research and academia and private sectors attended the project launch. The event was broadcasted to wider public through different media.
The Project has produced two video documentaries both in Amharic and English highlighting the project best practices for greater project success. A project brochure has also been produced and circulated among wider communities. The UNDP Ethiopia website provides snapshot information on this project.

Recently, the launch of the National Forest Sector Development Programme was attended by donors, academia, research organisation, private sectors as well as international organisation (multilateral and bilateral agencies). Some of the high level participants delivered speech on the significance of the project to achieve the national and international commitments such as GTP-2, CRGE and SDGs. Media interviewed high level decision makers attended the event. Media attendance to the launch included:

- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
- EBS
- AFRO FM
- Daily Monitor
- Addis Ababa News Agency
- Ethiopian News Agency
- Xinhua
- Addis TV
- OBN
- African Economist
- Amhara Mass Media Agency

The partnership strategy of the project is rated as 'Satisfactory (S)'.

Sustainability

The project has established forest management offices at regional and woreda levels, contributed to the forest sector human resource capacity, and provided related material resource support to national, regional and woreda level government offices for sustainable forest development in Ethiopia. The institutional capacity developed at the national and regional levels and project woredas has started extending its outreach to other neighbouring woredas. The project has developed a National Forest Sector Development Programme, which has got three volumes - Situation Analysis; Programme Pillars and Action Areas and Synthesis Report. Preparation of Regional Forest Sector Development Programmes for the regions and city Administrations has also started. With the government's strong commitment to the environment, forest and climate change issues the sector capacities developed will contribute to the forest sector sustainability and subsequently to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as discussed above

When implemented, the land use plan developed under the auspices of the project will contribute substantially to its forest and assisted natural regeneration conservation and development objectives. The rehabilitation of degraded land, protection of natural regeneration and expansion of fast rotation plantations have progressed very well and will contribute to national and global environmental sustainability. The participatory and bottom-up approach to forest development and assisted natural regeneration, and certification of land use rights of local communities for rehabilitated and afforested and reforested areas will reinforce the sustainability of the project outcomes. The technical capacity gain of the communities in rehabilitation and afforestation and reforestation in project areas has been commendable to uptake and upscale project interventions.

Alternative livelihoods options initiated by the project will add to the project's long-term sustainability.

The project has laid foundation for country's capacity development in forest science, research and innovation. As part of this initiative a good number of academics/researchers have received training on sustainable forest management. Academic exchange and specialised training programmes have been arranged with universities and training institutes within and outside of the country.

The project has witnessed active participation of a wide range of stakeholders in project implementation at national through to community owned fast rotation plantation and rehabilitated degraded lands contributing to project impacts and sustainability.

*The **sustainability** of the project is rated as '**Likely (L)**'*

The overall rating of the Project is 'Satisfactory (S)'.

Recommendations

The MTE suggests the following recommendations for successful project delivery, improved project management, greater project communication and visibility, and enhanced sustainability of the project outcomes.

- Since the project has completed its baseline survey just prior to the MTE, it could not be used to assess progress against the baseline data for this evaluation. Therefore, the project should update the logframe with the baseline information collected in the survey and track project progress from now onwards using the updated logframe.

- The project logframe should include gender sensitive indicators to delineate women participation in the project and assess how the project contributes to gender equality and women empowerment, among others.

- Project financial reports should include more detailed expenditure statement. In other words, it could be in the similar format like the costed annual work plan where expenditures are shown against the respective budget lines.

- The project had inception workshop and the maiden annual project progress report included a brief narrative on the workshop. However, no inception report has been produced. An inception report should be prepared and archived.

- The project should prepare report for each training programme it conducts highlighting training objectives, participants category, training schedule and brief description of training topics covered/training curriculum. The reports should be annexed with annual progress reports.

- In order to gauge the effect of learning/training programme, the project should use the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey following each training course. KAP survey will enable the project to ascertain the degree to which knowledge and skills acquired by the training participants are put into practice.

- The project should consider to increase the remuneration the project pays to participating women in project sites.

- The project should have more joint monitoring involving relevant stakeholders.

- The project should put a mechanism in place to validate/verify the reported area under rehabilitation and plantation.

- Availability of quality seeds poses constant challenge for the project. The project should consider to include a start-up fund scheme under the Private Sector Participation output. Under this scheme aspiring entrepreneur(s) with relevant technical knowledge and skills and business acumen would receive grants from the project to produce quality seeds under the strict protocol of the project.

- Project communication and visibility should be strengthened. As part of communication strategy the project could produce monthly newsletter and one pager on project success stories/best practices. The signposts in project sites should be erected/improved.

- The project should, where feasible, encourage planting more indigenous species in land rehabilitation for better ecosystem health.

- The government should consider absorbing project staff in EFCCC's regular staffing structure after the end of the project to retain the capacity gain for long term sustainability.

Lessons Learned

- Strengthening of government institutions without frequent restructuring can be more sustainable.

- Degraded areas can be better rehabilitated when a combination of technologies is used. Soil and water conservation practices assisted the rehabilitation as well as plantations significantly.

- Commitments of communities as well as local government can determine the quality of implementation and results. However, incentives such as land and forest tenure certificates can be major sustainability factor.

- Local schools can be involved in project interventions by allocating a parcel of land to each school for fast rotation plantations under 'Junior Forest Club' for increased outreach and impacts.

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANR	Afforestation and Reforestation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBOs	Community based Organizations
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EEFRI	Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute
EO	Earth Observation
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ISFSDP	Institutional Strengthening of Forest Sector Development Programme
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KLD	Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment
LUP	Land Use Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest
EFCCC	Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission
MERET	Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions Project
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoALR	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources
MoFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoWIE	Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Fund
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid Term Review
NFSDP	National Forest Sector Development Plan
NICFI	Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative
NIM	National Implementation Modality

NOK	Norwegian Kroner
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPC	National Programme Coordination
NPCO	National Programme Coordination Office
PES	Payments for Environmental Services
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SAA	Standard Administrative Agreement
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEK	Swedish Kroner
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
SNNP	Southern Nations Nationalities' and People
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities' and People
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

The government of Ethiopia has a strong commitment to and recognition of the importance of the forest sector. It is one of the four pillars in the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, a national strategy to achieve middle-income status by 2025 in a carbon neutral climate-resilient green economy path of development. To that end, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF) was established in 2013 tasked to oversee, among other matters, the implementation of the CRGE strategy. Immediately after the establishment of MEF the government decided to rename the new ministry as the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change (MEFCC) reflecting the heightened role of the ministry to deal with climate change issue. As a relatively new ministry, there is a need to strengthen its capacity at federal and regional levels to deliver on its mandates. During the time of writing this report MEFCC has been restructured to Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC) having the same mandates. This report will hereafter use EFCCC in place of MEFCC. The Institutional Strengthening of the Forest Development Project in Ethiopia is designed to support the strengthening of institutions and stakeholders in the Ethiopian forest sector and to pilot afforestation and reforestation activities to assist Ethiopia in attaining the targets set in the CRGE Strategy and GTP II.

1.2   UNDAF Outcome and Project Outputs

The project contributes towards UNDAF 2016-2020 outcome 5: By 2020, key government institutions at federal level and in all regions and cities are able to plan, implement and monitor priority climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and sustainable natural resource management

The overall objective of the Project is to strengthen the capacity of EFCCC, and the Ethiopian government's overall capacity in the forest sector at all levels to spearhead the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and the Growth and Transformation plan (GTP) targets.

The specific objectives of the Project are to:

- Enhance and stimulate sustainable forest development in line with GTP and CRGE
- Foster institutional strengthening at all levels
- Promote popular participation
- Strengthen Science and Innovation
- Promote private sector engagement

Ethiopia has developed and enforced the climate-resilient green economy (CRGE) strategy that emphasises on development and management of forest resources and reduction of emission from biomass based energy use. The country has set targets of considerably reducing deforestation and forest degradation and increasing afforestation, reforestation and forest management to increase carbon sequestration by

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carrying out afforestation (2 million ha) and reforestation (1 million ha), and by managing 5 million ha of forests and woodlands. As a result, the country aims to create 50% of the total domestic abatement potential by 2025. In order to maximise the forestry sector contributions to the CRGE strategy and GTP II the institutional capacity of the newly formed Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission and its outfits in regional states and city administrations needs to be significantly strengthened, which this project purports to attain. Hence, the logic of the project is feasible provided an enabling environment exists.

Project Outputs:

1. By 2020, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels
2. Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted
3. Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated
4. Science and innovation for enhancing Sustainable Forest Management promoted
5. Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced

The project outputs will strengthen government forestry institutions at all levels with the ability to plan, implement and monitor forest, environment and climate change programmes and thereby substantially contributing towards UNDAF outcome.

1.3 Project Funding

Following the signing of a joint declaration statement regarding joint collaboration on international climate change policy and strategic support for Ethiopia's CRGE in Durban in December 2011 and subsequent request of the then Ethiopia's Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) to Norway for support to the CRGE Facility for investment in an Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Programme at the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF), the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment (KLD) agreed to provide a grant of Norwegian Kroner (NOK) 60,000,000 under the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) in December 2014 for implementation of the programme during its planned period 2015-2019.

In November 2015, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) agreed to provide an additional funding of NOK 22,550,000 for increased coverage of rehabilitation of degraded lands and short rotation forestry area and showcasing CRGE at COP21 in Paris making the total Norway grant of NOK 82,550,500 (US$ 10,600,000) for the programme.

While the initial funding of NOK 60,000,000 are channelled directly to the CRGE Facility under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) as per the original funding agreement, the additional funding of NOK 22,550,500 are passed through the Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office of UNDP under the Standard Administrative

Agreement (SAA) signed between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNDP in November 2016.

In December 2016, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) agreed to support the project implementation on a Third Party Cost-sharing basis with a grant of Swedish Krona 43,000,000 (US$ 6,400,000). This additional funding support helped the project in scaling up selected project interventions and best practices and thereby increasing the geographical coverage for greater impacts and sustainability.

UNDP's contribution is US$ 1,400,000 while the Government of Ethiopia contributes US$ 1,250,000 in kind towards the total project budget of US$ 22,464,942.

1.4   Project Areas

The project started implementing field interventions in early 2016 in nine woredas in Amhara, Southern Nations Nationalities' and People (SNNP) and Tigray National Regional States. Later on following the additional funding from Sweden another woreda of SNNPR was included as project area. Figure 1 shows the location of project woredas.
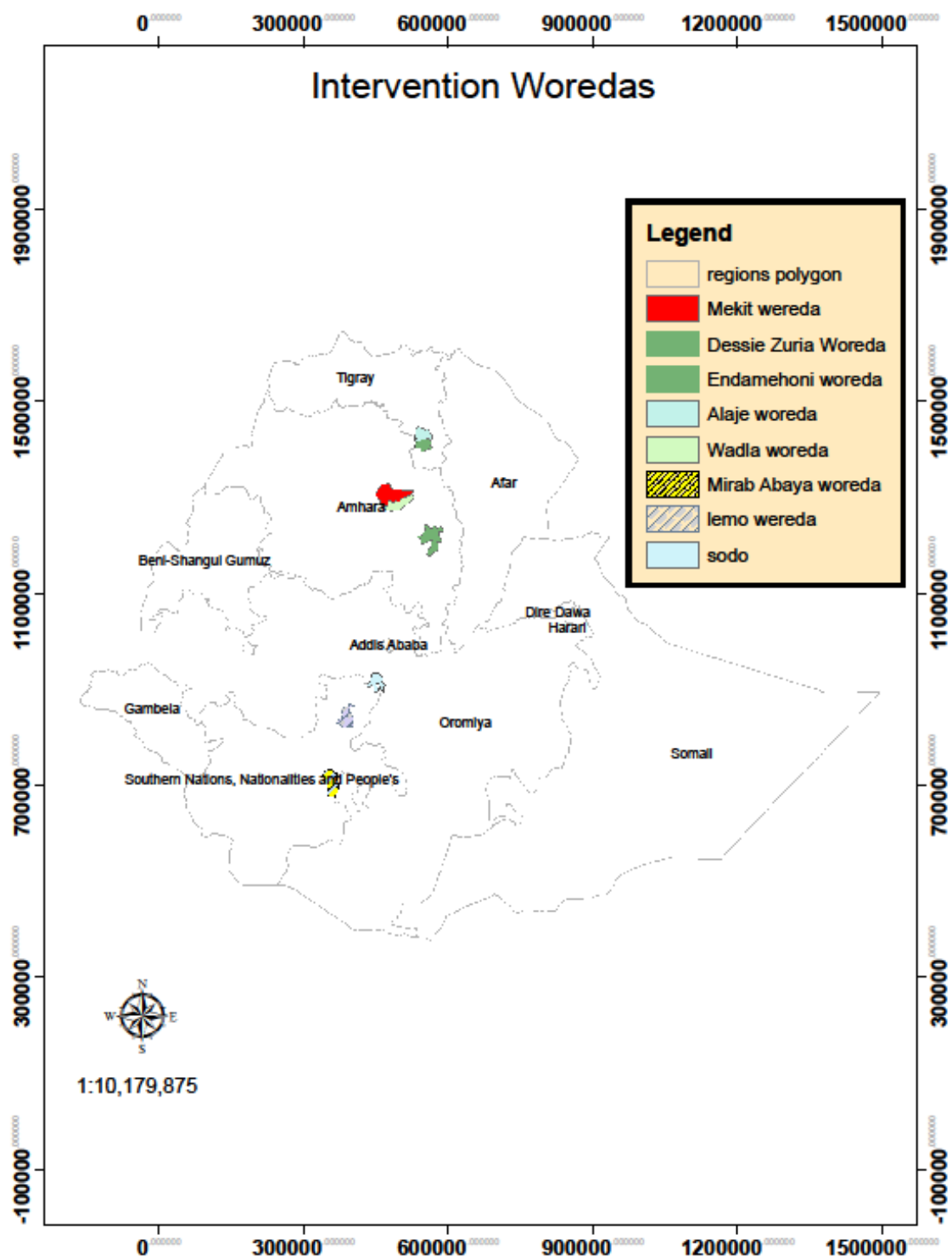
Figure 1: Map showing nine project woredas in three national regional states

2.   Mid Term Evaluation (MTE)

2.1   Objective of the MTE

The Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) is a requirement of this UNDP project and accordingly was included in the project work plan during the project design.

The objective of the MTE is to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTE also aims to review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

2.2   Scope of the MTE

In line with the MTE ToR, the evaluation reviews four categories of evaluation criteria namely, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project using UNDP's standard definitions of evaluation criteria (presented in Annex 2). The review is based on the available documents such as the project documents, progress reports, minutes of the meetings, contract agreements and amendments with the donors and implementing partners, and field visits to four selected project woredas.

The MTE provides ratings of the project's results with brief descriptions of the related achievements in terms of the four evaluation criteria employing UNDP's evaluation rating scales as follows.

Rating scales for relevance, efficiency and effectiveness:

Highly satisfactory (HS)
Satisfactory (S)
Moderately satisfactory (MS)
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)
Unsatisfactory (U)
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)

Rating scales for sustainability:

Likely (L)
Moderately Likely (ML)
Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Unlikely (U)

UNDP's standard evaluation rating scales are attached as Annex 3.

The MTE team consists of one international consultant and one national consultant recruited by UNDP Ethiopia. The Terms of Reference for International Consultant and National Consultant are attached as Annex 4a and Annex 4b respectively.

2.3   MTE Approach and Methodology

The MTE employed a collaborative, participatory and empowerment evaluation approach ensuring close participation of all relevant stakeholders including the project team, government counterparts - the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC), Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC), relevant regional and woreda bureaus in the project National Regional States, UNDP, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Embassy of Sweden and different beneficiary groups. The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

The MTE approach used desk review, primary data collection, key informant interviews with project stakeholders, focus group discussions with local communities and beneficiary groups and field visits to four selected woredas.

The MTE used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The evaluation drew upon multiple lines and levels of evidence.

The MTE collected primary data and evidence through review of progress reports, Mid Term Review (MTR) report, UNDP documents, project documentaries and other related documents, direct observations and consultations/discussions/interviews with stakeholders that answer the evaluation questions. The followings methods were used:

2.3.1   Desk Review

Desk review enabled the MTE team to collect relevant data/information which would be useful for the MTE. The reported project progress delineated through desk review was verified during project site visits and drawing upon recently conducted MTR data. The team had already obtained a number of relevant documents from the UNDP Country Office. Further to initial desk review and other data collection exercises during the MTE mission, the evaluation team requested for further documents. A list of documents reviewed is attached as Annex 5.

2.3.2   Interviews with Key Project Stakeholders

The MTE team conducted semi-structured interviews with key informants, stakeholders, including the donors, project partners and beneficiaries at the national, regional, woreda and local level (executing agencies, senior officials and task team leaders, key experts in the subject area, REDD+ Steering Committee, local communities etc). MTE team developed interview protocols and a check list in line with the scope of the MTE as outlined in the ToR at the beginning of the MTE mission. A stakeholder mapping for the purpose of MTE was undertaken with the support of the project team, Government and UNDP to obtain answers to evaluation questions. A list of stakeholders interviewed and/or consulted is presented in Annex 6.

2.3.3 Field Visits to Project Sites

The MTE ToR stipulated field visits to four implementation sites in selected four woredas of Amhara, Tigray and SNNP regions. Given the number of days allocated for field visit under this MTE, distance between project regions and travel time required, it was not feasible to cover all the three project regional states. A Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Result Based Payment to the CRGE facility – Partnership Agreement for REDD+ commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) was conducted in May-June 2018. Since the MTR mission covered two project regions namely Amhara and Tigray and MTR provides considerable information on the six selected woredas in the two national regional states, the MTE team proposed to give due emphasis on SNNPR by limiting field visits to this region, which was not covered by MTR and to draw upon MTR data for the other two regions. Accordingly, in order to observe field interventions, validate reported progress and assess project progress on the ground the MTE mission undertook field visits to four project sites, namely Mirab Abaya, Lemo, Shashego, and Sodo Woredas in SNNPR. The MTE mission programme is attached as Annex 7.

In the selected woredas, the MTE team conducted consultations with the project team and beneficiaries. At least two consultations or/and focus group discussions with local communities, where at least one consultation/focus group discussions with women groups per site were carried out to obtain the views of the beneficiaries and local communities. The MTE team put a particular emphasis on collecting gender-related data from on the ground during the MTE mission.

The MTE team employed participatory approach to ensure stakeholders have full opportunity to meaningfully engage in the review, conducting their own assessment and analysis without any bias. This included identification and engagement of stakeholders who have decisive power to influence forest policies and strategies and stakeholders who are implementing policies, strategies and plans.

Figure 2: Women Focus Group Discussion in Sodo

The MTE involved all key stakeholders with a special attention given to the most affected – least influential stakeholders, so they have a strong voice in the evaluation. Fully participatory methods were used to ensure that analysis is grounded in the realities of stakeholders and stakeholders have 'ownership' over the findings and recommendations. Triangulation was done to verify results using different complementary methods. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered underpins its validation and analysis.

Figure 3: Men Focus Group Discussion in Lemo

2.4   Limitations

During the MTE team visit to Mirab Abaya a youth protest march in Arba Minch and neighbouring areas in the Zone turned violent. As a result the MTE mission could not conduct the schedules focus group discussions with local communities and project beneficiaries in the woreda. The team drew upon information collected during discussions held with locals present during seedling nurseries and private plantation site visits.

The project carried out a baseline study in March 2018 – after the mid-life of the project Although the study provides some insights into the status of project, it offers little support to assess project results since inception. It contributes to the project evidence and learning, and can be used for routine project monitoring since its completion.

3.   Findings of the MTE

3.1   Relevance

i.   *Review the problems addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document*

Over the last five decades Ethiopia has witnessed a substantial reduction in highland forest cover. The increasing population of the country creates higher demand for food, fuel and fibre, which subsequently leads to deforestation and forest degradation. It is challenging to quantify the economic value of the forest resources despite the recognition of wide ranging economic and environmental roles of forest resources. Unless urgent actions are taken to alter the traditional development path the economic and environmental costs of the declining forest resources would be immense.

Due to declining forest resources and widening demand and supply gap for wood and wood products, the government is spending a large sum of money on importing forest and forest products. Furthermore, there is a paucity of forestry data, including data on non-timber forest products. The absence of forest data and information systems impedes informed decision making for sustainable forest sector development.

In order to exploit the full potential of Ethiopia's forest resources there is a need to invest in institutional capacity development, science and innovation and private sector participation. All these entail relevant policy and strategy development and implementation.

Against this backdrop, Ethiopia remains committed and demonstrates leadership for green economy by adopting Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy under its Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II). Since the forest sector is a lead pillar of the CRGE strategy, the government formed the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF) that was renamed as the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MFCCC) and recently became Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC) to oversee afforestation-reforestation and other allied forestry sector programmes. Since EFCCC needs capacity boost, this project aims to strengthen the capacity of EFCCC and the Ethiopian government's overall capacity in the forest sector at all levels to spearhead the CRGE strategy and GTP targets.

Environmental problems are addressed by the project where particular emphasis has been given on land degradation and its driving causes. Reversing land degradation in the absence of the right institutions is impossible. Cognizant of this fact the project put an emphasis to strengthen institutions for sustainable forest development and enhanced ecosystem services. As a result, 129,761 ha of degraded land has been rehabilitated through afforestation and reforestation and 9,017 ha of has been covered with short rotation plantation with average77.4% survival rate.

The **relevance** of the **problems addressed** by the project and the **underlying assumption** is rated as '**Highly Satisfactory (HS)'.**

ii. Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?

The project is under the umbrella CRGE strategy and MoFEC hosts the CRGE Facility. MoFEC provides the fund delivery platform for project funding channelled directly from donor and passed through the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office of UNDP.

EFCCC is the implementing agency of the project with technical support of UNDP. EFCCC, regional bureaus, woreda administrations and local bodies are responsible for implementation, coordination and monitoring of field interventions. The project has collaborative partnerships withthe Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy.

The National Steering Committee of the project as the apex body provides overall guidance for implementation coordinated by the National Programme Coordination Office with the support of the nine woreda project offices through the Regional REDD+ Coordination Offices. EFCCC, MoFEC, UNDP, the Norwegian Embassy and the Swedish Embassy conduct joint monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This is of particular importance as the experience from the Sustainable Land Management project suggests that conducting regular meetings improve implementation towards intended results.

The project has employed a participatory, inclusive and collaborative approach where key project partners work closely at different phases of the project cycle. Through the project's bottom up approach, local communities are engaged in in identifying the areas for rehabilitation, afforestation and reforestation, short rotation plantation and other allied interventions.The provision of forest/rehabilitated area tenure right to the local community is a major incentive that would contribute to expected results. Integration of water harvesting for production of trees is another innovative strategy followed by the project.

The project has reviewed the lessons learnt from relevant project including REDD+, Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project, Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions (MERET) project during the project designing.

The **relevance** of the **project strategy** and **route towards expected/intended results** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

iii. Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?

Deforestation and unsustainable land management practices in Ethiopia have led to several unintended environmental and socio-economic consequences, including poor soil health, soil erosion, reduced crop productivity, flooding, sedimentation of water

courses and dams, loss of carbon and biodiversity assets. As a result the forest sector receives important attention in the national development strategy.

Ethiopia has developed the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy that focuses on development and management of forests and reduction of emission from the use of biomass based energy since March 2014. Under the CRGE framework, the country has set targets of significantly reducing deforestation and forest degradation and increasing afforestation, reforestation and forest management to increase carbon sequestration through afforestation (2 million ha), reforestation (1 million ha) and managing 5 million ha of forests and woodlands. This would create 50% of the total domestic abatement potential. The institutional capacity strengthening of the forest sector to implement sustainable forest management is critically important.

The project addresses both the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and Growth and Transformation Plan-II (GTP-II). The project plans to rehabilitate large areas to improve agro-ecosystems for food security, forage production, fuelwood and construction material production and other non-timber forest products production to improve livelihoods in addition to fulfil indicators of CRGE and GTP.

The project is implemented with full participation and ownership of the stakeholders at national, regional, woreda and community levels. The government and local communities demonstrate a great sense of ownership of project interventions and achievements.

The project contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Goal 2:   End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;

Goal 13:   Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; and

Goal 15:   Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

The **relevance** of how the **project addresses country priorities** and **country ownership** is rated as '**Highly Satisfactory (HS)'**.

> iv.   *Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered during project design processes?*

The project uses bottom-up participatory decision-making process. Project has taken on board the perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could influence the project outcomes and those who could provide resource support during the project design phase. Local communities are directly involved in project interventions planning e.g. selection of rehabilitation sites for tree and shrub plantation, beneficiary selection for alternative livelihoods interventions etc,

At national, regional and woreda levels project Steering Committees steer the project towards its goal. Project technical committees at woreda level further aid in decision making process.

The **relevance** of the **decision-making process** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

> v.   *Review the extent to which relevant gender and crosscutting issues were raised in the project design.*

Gender equality and women empowerment is a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5). Ethiopia has strong gender policies. UNDP puts a particular emphasis on targeted, gender-focussed programmes and projects around the globe.

Although the project plans to include women and men equally throughout the process (as mentioned in the Fast Track project proposal), the project document doesn't specifically mention gender targets and there is no gender-sensitive indicator included in the project framework. However, project partners and stakeholders recognize the importance of gender role and the need of equal gender participation in project activities. Project reports include some gender disaggregated data.

At local level decision making on project interventions planning and community participation starts with community consultations. The MTE mission observed active participation of women and youth in project interventions at woreda and kebele levels. Women have been included, albeit less in numbers than their male counterparts, in different community level committees formed under the auspices of this project. It emerged through some community consultations that at times women's reproductive role and responsibilities for household chores limit their participation.
The project has created income generating opportunities for local population including rural women through seasonal employments in forest development (nursery, plantation), rehabilitation work (soil and water conservation practices), planting high value tree crops such as Mango and Avocado, and a range of alternative livelihood interventions, such as bee keeping and poultry production.

Through the promotion of energy saving improved stove the project is also helping to reduce tree cutting for fire woods, reduce firewood collection time and improve women health.

The project involves communities in identifying and mapping degraded lands and gullies that can be converted into productive areas which should not be occupied by the local community or under any economic activity at the time of intervention planning to ensure no displacement of the people and their benefits as the result of the project. People who are likely to lose benefits from the watersheds to be rehabilitated will be targeted to be direct beneficiaries in the process In this regard, the project has conducted Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and developed the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

The **relevance** of **gender and cross-cutting issues** is rated as '**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.**

*The overall **relevance** of the project is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)**'.*

3.2   Effectiveness

i. *Undertake a critical analysis of the project's indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.*

The project logical/results and resource framework is clear, detailed, well laid out and aligned with the project outcomes. The project indicators and midterm and end-of-project targets are *SMART* -Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. However, gender-sensitive indicators across the project outputs should be included to gauge the gender dimensions of project results. Some targets particularly under output 3 – Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated, Output 4 – Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted and Output 5 – Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced were not met as planned. The readiness of government experts, project staffs, donors and target communities at various levels would accelerate the target achievements.

The **effectiveness** of the project's **indicators and targets** is rated as '**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.**

ii. *Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?*

The project's objectives and outputs are clear and practical. From a slow start in early 2016, the project accelerated its implementation speed. While Output 1 – Institutional capacity of forest sector is strengthened and Output 2 - Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted registered considerable achievements, the remaining three outputs experienced slow delivery. As of June 2018, outputs 1 and 2 achieved the targets, outputs 3 and 4 were on target and output 5 was set to kick start planned interventions. Therefore, the project objectives and outcomes are feasible within the remaining timeframe (by 2019) provided planned activities are implemented, coordinated and monitored with an accelerated pace and sheer focus of the key stakeholders involved in the project at different levels under the result-based management framework.

The **effectiveness** of project's **objectives, outcomes and feasibility** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

iii. Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

The project has created income generating opportunities for local population including rural women through seasonal employments in forest development (nursery, plantation), rehabilitation work (soil and water conservation practices), planting high value tree crops such as Mango and Avocado, and a range of alternative livelihood interventions, such as bee keeping and poultry production.

Women Focus Group Discussions in project sites revealed that since the implementation of the project, women have an increased access to income and household-decision making. The male household members allow and or encourage the female members of the family to get into gainful employments for extended hours that contribute to household food security and livelihoods.

Through the promotion of energy saving improved stove the project is also helping to reduce tree cutting for fire woods and improve women health .Though it is difficult to quantify the exact contribution in terms of job creation, to establish 9000 ha of plantation at least 2,700,000 person days are required (approximately 300 person days/ha). The plantations were supported by soil and water conservation practices that further created job opportunities for the local communities. The soil and water conservation practices assisted to control flooding and conserve moisture which has positive effect on plant growth and flood hazard to downstream agriculture and settlements. The various capacity building activities, as part of output 1 and 2 will help the development objectives of the forestry sector at large. The project so far rehabilitated 129,761 ha of degraded lands which will contribute to water development and provision of ecosystem services. It is anticipated that in the near future there would be micro, small and medium size enterprise development opportunities along the forest value chains including non-timber forest value chains.

It would be useful to include gender-sensitive indicators in the result framework to capture and monitor data on natural resource-based income generating activities and alternative livelihoods intervention outcomes. The recommended indicators for inclusion in the result frameworks include:

- Number of women & men engaged in plantation activities
- Number of women & men engaged in rehabilitation work
- Number of women & men engaged in seedling nurseries
- Number of women & men engaged in post-plantation practices
- Number of women & men with enhanced knowledge and skills in bee keeping, poultry rearing, improved stove production, fruit tree production etc)

The **effectiveness** of project's **development effects** is rated as '**Highly Satisfactory (HS)'.**

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

The project contributes towards UNDAF 2016-2020 outcome 5: By 2020, key government institutions at federal level and in all regions and cities are able to plan, implement and monitor priority climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and sustainable natural resource management

Overall, the project has demonstrated mixed results across all five outputs. Output 1- *Institutional capacity of the forest sector strengthened* and Output 2 - *Forest conservation and development enhanced* demonstrated considerable achievements. Output 1 has seen completion of the National Forest Sector Development Programme (NFSDP), baseline study and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). Eleven regional Forest Sector Action Plans are being prepared. Under output 2, the project achieved 90 percent of target forestry plantations and 87 percent of target degraded land rehabilitation), Output 4 -*Science and innovation for enhancing forest management* has attained some progress including capacity gap identification and forestry sector knowledge exchange and experience sharing visits to South Korea, China, India and Sweden participated by forest planners, policy makers and experts, and signed MoUs with South Korea and India to develop national science, research and innovation capacity. However, planned targets of development of a national forestry research strategy, revision of curricula and building capacity of four regional and one national institutions remain to be accelerated before the end of the project period, Output 3 - *Private sector engagement in forest development* has made slow progress since majority of targets- four awareness workshops organized, incentive mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest development, five best practices disseminated on the involvement of the private sector in forest conservation and development, three new technologies for value addition introduced and a document on value chain and market study are not yet achieved Implementation of planned activities under Output 5 - *Stakeholder engagement in forest development* are yet to start.

As per the updated project progress report covering the period July 2015 – June 2018 prepared by the National Programme Coordination Office, the project has achieved the following key results under different outputs.

Output 1: Institutional capacity of the sector strengthened

- NPC established and functional;
- Nine (9)Project Coordination Offices established and functional;
- Ninety one (91) project staff hired at various levels;
- Sixteen (16) field vehicles and nine (9) tractors procured and distributed;
- Procurement process of one dump-truck is in progress;
- Three-volume National Forest Development Programme document prepared and launched;
- Regional Forest Sector Development Programmes for all regions and city administrations are being prepared;
- Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Baselines prepared for each project site; and
- Key database infrastructure facilities procured and distributed.

Output 2: Forest conservation and development enhanced

- Targeted micro-watersheds with management and use plan prepared and approved;
- Rehabilitation of 129,761ha degraded land through ANR;
- 1568.81km of terraces and trenches, 8801 basins, 2917.1m3 check dams, 1053.1km bunds constructed;
- 1,132,280 seedlings planted in rehabilitation sites to assist natural regeneration;
- 15 water harvesting ponds and mini-dams constructed;
- 394.5kg of tree seeds used to raise 15,138,171 seedlings in 53 nurseries;
- 9,016.85ha of land is covered with short rotation plantation, out of which 6,264.68ha of land covered with new short rotation plantation (average survival rate 77.4%)
- Weeding, mulching, composting and watering conducted in 4660.87ha of plantation
- Required polythene tubes and other nursery material purchased;
- 94,416 apple, avocado, mango and coffee seedlings distributed to 2122 beneficiaries (27female);
- 166 beneficiaries (46female) on beekeeping, 44 solar lantern, 165 households on poultry farming, 173 improved stoves distributed, and 6 biogas facilities locally built;
- 7667 people benefited (2898 female) from seasonal job opportunities through the programme; and
- 7,529,050 individuals (1,509,677 female) are engaged in free community participation and the monetary value of this is estimated as 301,677,239 birr.

Output 3: Private sector engagement in forest development

- Private sector targeted awareness raising activities at national and regional levels planned;
- Manual on private sector incentive schemes is being prepared;
- 1556participants (280female) received training on tree-based forest business; and
- 849 individuals (189 female) are engaged in various tree-based businesses.

Output 4: Science and innovation for enhancing forest management

- Key laboratory facilities procured by the project support;
- Key knowledge gaps in the research system identified and postgraduate training initiated to fill the gap - one female MSc student is perusing her study in India on forest bio-technology and tissue culture, and another female candidate is preparing to study wood science in Finland;
- Academic exchange and joint research and education programme initiated with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU); and
- MoU signed with Wondo Genet and Mertolemariam Colleges to initiate demand-driven skill training.

Output 5: Stakeholder engagement in forest development

- Interventions planned for implementation

Table 1 presents progress towards end-of-project targets using traffic light system color coding where green indicates 'target achieved', yellow indicates 'on target' and red indicates 'not yet achieved'.

Table 1: Progress Towards End-of-Project Targets

Programme Outputs	Indicators	Planned Targets during the Project Period	Achieved up to June 2018	Remark
1. Institutional capacity of the forest sector strengthened	Forest management offices established at Regional and National levels	Establish National Programme Coordination (NPC) and nine District offices	National Programme Coordination (NPC) office established Nine project coordination offices established in consultation with the regions	
	Preparing National and regional forest sector development programme	Design one National and 11 regional forest development programmes	Ten years National Forest Sector Development Programme (NFSDP) prepared. Following the NFSDP as framework document, eleven regional action programmes are under preparation for 9 regional states and 2 city administrations	
	Skilled human resources developed/recruited	Recruitment of project staff	91 project staffs recruited and deployed to support the implementation of the programme at various levels	
	Preparing ESMF for the rehabilitation and afforestation sites	Prepare ESMF and baseline for all the nine sites	ESMF and Baseline studies completed	
	Establish national and regional forestry database infrastructure	Support the establishment of national and regional database	Database unit is being established at the Ministry Some of the required database infrastructure facilities procured and distributed to regions for similar set-up	
2. Forest conservation and development enhanced	Define integrated rural land use plans	Design pilot local LUP for all the nine sites	Land use planning is done for 22 targeted micro watersheds	
	Rehabilitate degraded areas	Rehabilitate 150,000ha of degraded land	129,761ha of degraded land demarcated for rehabilitation	Through ANR Various physical and biological measures are done mainly through community participation

Programme Outputs	Indicators	Planned Targets during the Project Period	Achieved up to June 2018	Remark
	Establishing plantations	Create 10,000ha new short rotation plantation	6,264.68ha of land covered with new short rotation plantation during this fiscal year 2,752.20ha of previous plantation under post-planting management Additional 3,836.83 ha of land is prepared for the next planting season	Nursery activities, pre- and post-planting management practices underway
	Nursery establishment and management for seedling production Site preparation to establish plantations, terraces, trenches and basins Pitting	17.5million seedlings 10,000ha 10,000ha	Well over 15million seedlings produced in 53 nurseries Terraces, basins and pits prepared on 4321.91ha area	3,836.83ha of land is prepared for the next planting season
3. Promote private sector engagement	Awareness of Private sector Support the private sector for technology piloting	Trainings	Awareness creation and national level TOT provided for regional and project offices on forest establishment and management including establishing forest business enterprises	More activity was planned during the season but constrained by the civil unrest
4.Promote Forest based Science and Innovation	Building capacity of the forestry research and education institutions	Gap identification	Critical gaps in lab facilities defined and procurement of lab. facilities Key knowledge gaps in the research system identified and postgraduate training initiated on forest biotechnology. Academic and education exchange initiated with Swedish university of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) Research initiated on selected thematic topics	
5. Enhance Stakeholder involvement	Mapping stakeholders involved in forestry Establish Stakeholder platform and network		Implementation of planned activities of this output not started yet	Activity was planned during the season but constrained by overlapping tasks and

Programme Outputs	Indicators	Planned Targets during the Project Period	Achieved up to June 2018	Remark
	Prepare Future Engagement road map for forestry sector actors			civil unrest
6.Project management	Project management and administration		Project is well managed in collaboration with UNDP and MOFEC	
	Vehicle purchase	Purchasing vehicles and tractors	16 field vehicles and 9 tractors purchased, field vehicles and tractors deployed for the project activity	
	Monitoring and evaluation, including communication	Field M&E	National mission tasked every quarter and evaluated the project activities on the ground. Mission report synthesized	This activity was constrained by the civic unrest
	Communication		One brochure produced and circulated Documentary production finalized	

Ethiopia has developed and enforced the climate-resilient green economy (CRGE) strategy that emphasises on development and management of forest resources and reduction of emission from biomass based energy use. The country has set targets of considerably reducing deforestation and forest degradation and increasing afforestation, reforestation and forest management to increase carbon sequestration by carrying out afforestation (2 million ha) and reforestation (1 million ha), and by managing 5 million ha of forests and woodlands. As a result, the country aims to create 50% of the total domestic abatement potential by 2025..In order to maximise the forestry sector contributions to the CRGE strategy and GTP II the institutional capacity of the newly formed Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission and its outfits in regional states and city administrations needs to be significantly strengthened, which this project purports to attain. Hence, the logic of the project is feasible provided an enabling environment exists.

The **effectiveness** of project's **progress towards outcomes** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

   i.   *Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.*

The project is implemented by EFCCC under the National Implementation Modality (NIM). EFCCC has established a National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) to manage the project at national, regional through to local level through its regional and woreda level outfits using a well-coordinated and seamless adaptive management mechanism. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) established for REDD+ with the memberships of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC), Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resource (MoALR), Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity (MoWIE), chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, EFCCC provides oversight to the project. PSC meets quarterly to make operational policies and strategic operational decisions including approval of workplans and budget. It also meets as and when needed to discuss/decide on any urgent project matters. The National Project Coordination Office (NPCO) is headed by a highly qualified, experienced and committed National Programme Coordinator to lead and manage the project. The MTE team was impressed with his passion for sustainable forestry and his vision for a reinvigorated forest sector in Ethiopia.

During the project stakeholder consultations, it has become evident to the MTE Mission that the responsibilities and reporting lines are very clear to project staff and respective departmental officials and the project makes timely decisions in a transparent way under its adaptive management framework For example, when some sites selected for afforestation demonstrated environmental constraints and required additional costs in site amelioration efforts the project following extensive consultations decided to proceed with increased investments in order to reduce the risk of poor results and

quality. The project also weighed the potential risks of community land displacement if better lands were to be used for afforestation.

The project management conducted joint field missions as planned and held periodic programme review meetings in different locations with the participation of all relevant stakeholders to discuss project interventions implemented, assess the progress made towards targets and plan/revise activities for implementation based on the forest resource management needs and ecosystems functioning. Any changes made are shared with relevant stakeholders and forwarded to PSC for approval.

The **effectiveness** of project's **implementation and adaptive management** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

ii. *Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.*

EFCCC - that was exclusively established to steer sustainable growth and development of the country's forest sector - as the lead implementing agency has showcased efforts in quality implementation of the project. Given the technical and functional capacity gaps of EFCCC, it has shown considerable uptake of global and regional good forestry practices in activity planning and implementing.

A technical committee at national, regional and woreda levels and a range of technical experts provide backstopping for quality implementation of the project.

During its early life, the project encountered difficulties in producing and transmitting reports on time and it was addressed in the second part of the project. High-level supervision missions were fielded to provide implementation support to implementing entities. Such missions involved decision makers, donors, senior technical experts and researchers. These missions and regular (quarterly) monitoring of the project by the Commission enhanced implementation as well as reporting of progresses significantly.

The **effectiveness** of **quality of execution of implementing agency** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

iii. *Review the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.*

The UNDP Ethiopia Country Office has an excellent Climate Resilient Green Growth/ Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development team of well qualified and experienced professionals. UNDP provides first-rate support services through a dedicated Programme Manager/Focal Person, who is a veteran Climate Change Specialist. During discussions with the Programme Manager, the MTE team closely observed his deep interests in and outlook on climate change and sustainable forest resource management challenges and opportunities in the country.

UNDP has been instrumental in providing support to the project for quality assurance, technical and functional capacity building of the project team/EFCCC for implementing planned activities and achieving considerable results up to the MTE particularly under outputs 1 and 2.

In addition to providing technical support and facilitating institutional capacity development of target groups, UNDP assists the project in project procurement, monitoring and reporting of the project in line with the agreements with the CRGE facility and donors.

The **effectiveness** of **quality of support provided by UNDP** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

iv. *Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.*

Although the project was launched in October 2015, the actual implementation of project field interventions didn't commence until early 2016. The project has experienced some implementation delays in the early part because of delay in budget disbursements, capacity need, high staff turnover, civil unrest and excessive frost and drought problems in some project sites. UNDP has contributed 1. 4 million USD from its core resources to overcome the project implementation delay due to the delay in the signing of the Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA)   and   fund transfer. Subsequently, it gained momentum and increased the pace of implementation. Table 2 depicts the varied degree of project progress under different outputs.

v. *Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?*

The project aims to use result-based work planning under the result-based management framework. The costed annual work plans (AWP) are prepared following advice of the technical committees, technical experts, project staff, beneficiary and other stakeholders' feedback for PSC approval.

vi. *Examine the use of the project's results framework/ log frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.*

The project's uses the results framework as a management tool. However, the costed AWBs should be aligned with the results framework. Some targets in AWPs are linked to the global targets included in the project logframe. In addition, there are targets in the AWPs not mentioned in the logframe.

While progress against targets is reported in the project reports, the AWPs show budget allocation per quarter and total budget requirements for the planned activities. It is not clear whether carry over targets and budget balance from the previous year are

factored in next year's AWB. The results frameworks indicators, targets and activities should be streamlined and kept updated.

The **effectiveness** of the **use of the project's results framework/ log frame as a management tool** is rated as '**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.**

*The overall **effectiveness** of the project is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.***

3.3   Efficiency

i.   *Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.*

The Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Facility at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a national financial mechanism to support the implementation of Climate Resilient Green Economy initiatives of the country. The CRGE Facility has to date executed a number of climate change and forest sector projects and programmes of various sizes funded by different bi-lateral and multilateral donors.

The GRCE Facility receives and disburses funds for this project. The funding support for the project from Norway and Sweden is channelled to the CRGE Facility in two different routes – a part of the funds is directly channelled to the Facility and another part is passed through the Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office of UNDP (see section 1.3). As per the funding agreements, the Norwegian Embassy requires audited financial statement for each calendar year from both CRGE Facility and UNDP, while the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency requires a certified annual financial statement from UNDP for each calendar year.

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of a nascent ministry recently formed with considerable capacity gaps. A wide ranging capacity development initiatives of the project purports to improve the institutional capacity at all levels. Considering the short-term costs and long-term gains of capacity development, rehabilitation of extremely degraded lands in harsh terrains and areas of forest plantation achieved up to the MTE, the project interventions are cost-effective. In estimating the efficiency of the project delivery, one has to consider the outputs of the project that not only contribute to the capacity development at all levels, rehabilitation of degraded lands and expansion of forestry plantation, it also develops rural institutional capacity, and improve climate-resilient livelihoods and inclusive food security in project areas.

The participatory and bottom-up approaches followed by project required a fairly significant amount of investments. Due to different capacity development efforts including awareness building and close consultations made at all level, communities are willing to contribute to the project and have contributed already in kind. The MTE team learned that payments made to labourers in afforestation and reforestation are significantly lower than the market value.

The project has produced a wide array of products/documents including a 3-volume National Forest Sector Development Programme for the next 10 years – a landmark product. All these outputs will contribute to global public goods, which further justifies the expenditure of this pilot project.

The **efficiency** of the project's **financial management** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

ii. *Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.*

The Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment (KLD) through an agreement signed on 8 December 2014 committed to provide a grant of NOK 60,000,000 to the CRGE Facility to implement the project against the project budget and work plan included in the original project development.

In response to a request of EFCCC on 19 October 2015 for additional funding, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through an addendum signed on 26 November agreed to provide an additional funding of NOK 22,500,000 to increase reforestation and forest rehabilitation and increase short rotation forestry plantation coverage, and to showcase the Ethiopian CRGE at COP21 in Paris. Against the national target and global commitment for afforestation and reforestation and rehabilitation of rehabilitated area, Ethiopia wanted to expand the pilot afforestation and reforestation and rehabilitation activities that required additional funding.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through a Third Party Cost-Sharing agreement signed on 2 December 2016 agreed to contribute SEK 43,000,000 to UNDP for the implementation of the project. This has reduced the funding gap from USD 10,191,226 (as per original project document) to USD 2,814,00 as mentioned in the cumulative project progress report July 2015-June 2018 prepared by NPCO/EFCCC.

The **efficiency** of the project's **budget revision** is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)'.**

iii. *Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?*
What are the options for improving the cost efficiency of the program?

The project is implemented as per the National Project Implementation Manual. The project's annual work plans and budgets are prepared based on relevant cost information and are approved by PSC following reviews by the project management.

The financial reports provided by the project need to include more details information on project expenditures covering the whole project period. While greater details on project expenditures, procurement procedures, supporting documents could be looked into during the project audit, the financial reports should depict expenditures at activity levels under each output instead of providing output level total expenditures. This will

further support project financial controls and ensure that expenditures consistent with the project budget and in accordance with value for money and good financial practices. There is a need for capacity development of the concerned officials involved in project costs and budget management.

Multiple Reporting requirements and absence of agreed standard and simplified reporting templates pose considerable challenges and increase workload of the project management. The reporting requirement and format need to be streamlined through the PSC to expedite project delivery and improve efficiency.

Considering UNDP's stringent procurement process, the project should keep the procurement plan updated and place procurement requests well in advance to avoid any delay in project implementation

The **efficiency** of the project's **financial controls** is rated as '**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.**

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

    i.   *Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?*

The project is jointly monitored by EFCCC, MoFEC, UNDP and regional and woreda administrations at national, regional and woreda levels. The CRGE Facility, EFCCC and UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines are used in monitoring the project. The Project is also jointly monitored by the donors. During the MTE field mission SIDA, EFCCC and UNDP went to SNNP on a region wide visit to see the project activities and progress first hand. Earlier UNDP and EFCCC conducted joint monitoring in three woredas of Amhara namely Meket ,Wadla and Dessie Zuria.

At woreda level, monitoring is more regular and systematic as reported by woreda level stakeholders during the MTE mission. A considerable volume of information is collected through this monitoring effort. However, compiling these data and presenting them in an orderly fashion didn't happen in the initial stage of the project.

M&E assesses the progress made from the baseline and particularly it evaluates the indicators. Quality of activities executed to respond to the project outputs are evaluated both on the ground and in the office. The MTE team witnessed some technical drawbacks in plantations in which the way plantations are managed including the size of tree seedlings planted as well as the pit sizes where the seedlings are planted. This needs closer monitoring and technical backstopping to the implementers.

Mirab Abaya project office requires some improvements. The MTE team saw the project tractors parked in office premises in all project woredas in SNNPR. Some challenges reported include, but not limited to, lack of tractor operators.

EFCCC in its June 2018 progress report highlighted the need for more work to ensure consistency in reporting systems at all levels

In response to concerns raised by the donor, the NPCO has taken initiative to address the monitoring and reporting aspect, particularly the content, style and quality issues of reporting. As part of this step, SNNP Regional Coordination Office has recently recruited a dedicated person for reporting which would improve the future quality of the reporting. Enhanced monitoring activities have taken place since. The senior management of the three project regional administrations has assigned dedicated staff members to monitor the project. The monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the project need to be further streamlined.

MTE team was informed that at woreda level, the project and woreda officials make separate monitoring visits to project sites. It would be rather advisable to have joint monitoring visit which will be more cost effective and improve the coordination and feedback loop at woreda level. The project should use the project logframe adequately populated with baseline, targets and milestones as the M&E tool. Project progress should be tracked against the planned targets and milestones,

Data are generated by the project staff. There are experts dedicated for different activities and are responsible for the implementation as well as reporting. Project Coordinators at woreda level are responsible for data compilation, data quality assurance and reporting.

Project experts trained in GIS and remote sensing are responsible for mapping of plantation and rehabilitation sites. In most cases they apply Google earth and GPS. However, the MTE team could not get shape files of some of the plantation sites. More capacity building may be required to enable them to produce quality data Recently EFCCC has developed uniform and simplified reporting format.

The Back to Office Reporting should be enforced at all levels as a monitoring tool. Whenever a project personnel or government official visits the project should prepare a brief Back to Office Report highlighting purpose, activities, observations and recommended actions. Any subsequent visits by a project staff/government official will follow up on these actions, and document and archive the efforts. Although the project should employ result oriented monitoring system, it should collect credible data on both process and result monitoring and discuss the findings of analysis of monitoring data in monthly programme meetings at national, regional and woreda levels.

The **efficiency** of the **Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems** is rated as '**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)'.**

ii. *Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?*

The project has included sufficient funds for monitoring and evaluation activities in the annual work plans. The back to office reporting will improve the effectiveness of the

project monitoring. The expenditure of this budget line will also indicate the monitoring effort of the project.

*The overall **efficiency** of the project is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)**'.*

3.4 Partnership Strategy

Since, partnership is anchored in activities across all project outputs to varied extent, the project has successfully developed partnerships with a wide array of direct and indirect stakeholders for successful project delivery employing different mode of partnership – contractual, collaborative, and consultative partnerships. The project aims to foster partnerships with climate change players in the country for successful implementation of the project for desired impacts and sustainability. The project partners include donor community, Civil Society Organization (CSOs), Research Organizations, Higher Educational Institutions, training providers, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), allied Professional Associations such as Ethiopian Foresters Association, etc will be supported by the project. The project has forged partnership with some of these partners.

Donor partners such as the Royal Norwegian Embassy and Sweden Embassy provided significant amount of financial resources to the project. Without this financial resource it would be impossible to run the project.

The political commitment of local governments in the intervention woredas mobilized local community to dedicate the necessary time, land and other resources for the implementation of the project.

Stakeholder Engagement

   i.   *Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?*

Forest sector development entails active multi-stakeholder engagement throughout the process. A broad based stakeholder engagement is crucial for long-term forest conservation, management and marketing. This Forest Sector Strengthening Project has two dedicated outputs on stakeholder engagement. Output 3 focuses on participation of private sector in forest development through backward and forward linkages. Private sector provides very strong impetus for forest industry development. Output 5 is exclusively on stakeholder engagement for forest development. Activities under this output aims to create platforms to facilitate participation of a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organizations (CSOs), research organizations, tertiary education providers, training institutes, community based organizations (CBOs), relevant Professional bodies in forest development in the country. Implementation of activities under output 3 has been slow and activities under output 5 are being planned for implementation. As stakeholder engagement is crucial for successful implementation of the planned activities for greater impacts, the project has successfully developed partnerships with a wide array of direct and indirect stakeholders employing different modes of engagement

ii. *Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?*

Given the Government of Ethiopia's commitment for green economy, CRGE strategy and roadmap and role of forest sector in the local and national economy both the national and local government stakeholders strongly support the objectives of the project. This became evident during the MTE consultations with government stakeholders at national, regional, woreda and kebele levels.

The local and national government stakeholders continue to play an active role in project decision making process through the established project management structure – PSC and Technical Committee at different levels.

iii. *Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?*

Stakeholder involvement has been pivotal in achieving project activities. For example, the Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute (EEFRI) has helped the project in selecting project sites, Mertolemariam College has joined the project's skills development training programme and private sectors has helped with the project input supply, e.g. planting materials.

The project organised different awareness raising events. Public awareness has in main informed the wider community about the project, triggered community interests in project affairs and reinforced the participation of local communities in project activities, which in turn contributed towards achievement of project objectives.

Communications:

i. *Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?*

The project maintains close and frequent communication among internal stakeholders. This has accelerated project deliver after a slow start**.**

ii. Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)

Several government and non-government organisation, research and academia and private sectors attended the project launch. The event was broadcasted to wider public through different media.

The Project has produced two video documentaries both in Amharic and English highlighting the project best practices for greater project success. A project brochure has also been produced and circulated among wider communities. The UNDP Ethiopia website provides snapshot information on this project.

Recently, the launch of the National Forest Sector Development Programme was attended by donors, academia, research organisation, private sectors as well as international organisation (multilateral and bilateral agencies). Some of the high level participants delivered speech on the significance of the project to achieve the national and international commitments such as GTP-2, CRGE and SDGs. Media interviewed high level decision makers attended the event. Media attendance to the launch includes:

- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
- EBS
- AFRO FM
- Daily Monitor
- Addis Ababa News Agency
- Ethiopian News Agency
- Xinhua
- Addis TV
- OBN
- African Economist
- Amhara Mass Media Agency

It is expected that the project external communication will be further enhanced and streamlined once Output 3: Private Sector Participation in Forest Development and Output 5: Stakeholder Engagement in Forest Development are in full implementation phase. Overall, the communication strategy of the project needs to be strengthened.

*The partnership strategy of the project is rated as '**Satisfactory (S)**'.*

3.5   Sustainability

The project has established forest management offices at regional and woreda levels, contributed to the forest sector human resource capacity, and provided related material resource support to national, regional and woreda level government offices for sustainable forest development in Ethiopia. The institutional capacity developed at the

national and regional levels and project woredas has started extending its outreach to other neighbouring woredas.

The project has developed a National Forest Sector Development Programme, which has got three volumes - Situation Analysis; Programme Pillars and Action Areas and Synthesis Report : Preparation of Regional Forest Sector Development Programmes for the regions and city Administrations has also started. With the government's strong commitment to the environment, forest and climate change issues the sector capacities developed will contribute to the forest sector sustainability and subsequently to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as discussed above

The land use plan developed under the auspices of the project will contribute substantially to its forest and assisted natural regeneration conservation and development objectives. The rehabilitation of degraded land, protection of natural regeneration and expansion of fast rotation plantations have progressed very well and will contribute to national and global environmental sustainability. The participatory and bottom-up approach to forest development and assisted natural regeneration, and certification of land use rights of local communities for rehabilitated and afforested and reforested areas will reinforce the sustainability of the project outcomes (Figure 4). The technical capacity gain of the communities in rehabilitation and afforestation and reforestation in project areas has been commendable to uptake and upscale project interventions. Alternative livelihoods options initiated by the project will add to the project's long-term sustainability.

Figure 4: Land Use Certificate issued to Forest Cooperatives in Shashogo Woreda, SNNPR

Recognising the importance of private sector across the forest value chains the project has included activities to attract the private sector to champion forest development in the country. To that end, a manual on incentive scheme for private sector is being prepared. Private sector participation through supply of seeds for example is a good beginning of the project's sustainability journey.

The project has laid foundation for country's capacity development in forest science, research and innovation. As part of this initiative a good number of academics/researchers have received training on sustainable forest management. Academic exchange and specialised training programmes have been arranged with universities and training institutes within and outside of the country. This will make substantial contribution to project sustainable and sustainable development.

The project has witnessed active participation of a wide range of stakeholders in project implementation at national through to community owned fast rotation plantation and rehabilitated degraded lands contributing to project impacts and sustainability.

The government at all levels has demonstrated a strong ownership of the project. The Project stakeholders participated in project implementation including the local communities have shown a high degree of ownership that resulted in the project success it has achieved to date. The provision of land use certificates for participating local communities has considerably increased the sense of community ownership. All these stood out during the MTE mission's stakeholder consultations and focus group discussions.

The risks identified in the Project Document and ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important risks and the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date.

Financial risks to sustainability:

> i. *What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the donor assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?*

Considering the government's strong commitment for green economy, environment, climate change and forest conservation and development, it is highly likely that the government will invest its own resources for this landmark initiative once the donor support ends in order to continue the momentum gained with follow up activities to sustain the project outcomes. The government may also embark on scaling up programme. These are the views shared by the government and UNDP. This is possible as the delivery infrastructure and human capacity developed by this project will reduce future implementation costs.

Local community groups are likely to pool financial resources and start and/or continue with project interventions at local level since they have gained necessary knowledge and skills through the project.

It is that the project forges public-private partnerships under the project framework for investments in forest sector development initiatives.

    ii.   *What are the issues of scale and the options/economic models for the sustainability of the project?*

The project has developed a National Forest Development Programme outlining national forest action plans for the next 10 years. Regional forest action programmes are being prepared. The success and potential of the model and approaches practiced in this pilot initiative have attracted the attention of wider stakeholders including the government and donor community. The Government of Norway has committed to fund US$ 35 million for afforestation and reforestation in additional 54 woredas. By showcasing the pilot model and approaches on different platforms the government might be able to find donors to support the government's up-scaling effort.

The Second Amendment to the Third Party Cost sharing Agreement signed with Sweden to provide (79 million Swedish Krona (8,729,500 USD) to support the implementation of Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia, which is the 2nd phase of the existing Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development project. The project aims to sustain the good achievement of the existing project by focusing on building technical capacities at various levels thereby catalyzing large scale investments in wider areas to realize the long-term development planning benefits from a carbon-intensive to a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient development pathway. The Institutional strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia will take a four-pronged approach to: i) Enhance an enabling environment for strong forest sector delivery; ii) Promote a sustainable forest production; iii) Enhance the forest ecosystem services; and iv) Foster model environmental stewardship

The per district project staff costs, logistics and other associated costs could become expensive to scale up the project. The project could consider cluster coordination mechanism for woreda level implementation. At present, coordination of project activities in Shashogo woreda from the Lemu project based proved effective. Project staff, logistics per district/woreda might be expensive to scale up the project.

    iii.   *Analyze the concept of mobilizing "free labor". What is meant by this? How "free" is it? Is it replicable or problematic?*

'Free labor' from community aims to contribute to government's effort in mass mobilization to reverse land degradation in the country. It gives community a great sense of ownership. 'Free labour' is free in the sense that this is not included in project budget/expenditure. Since it is a contribution from the community to the project it is not free in absolute sense as the 'free labor' providers expect returns from their labor in the form of social, economic or environmental gains. It can be replicated in similar contexts and initiatives like community access road construction, community water harvesting and other community infrastructures.

iv. How can we make sure that Government/UNDP/donors can assist the tree felling and sale of timber products in the future in accordance with desirable principles (including support to marketing etc.)?

The project needs to develop Forest management plan for the plantations and management & Use Plans for the rehabilitated watersheds. The forest plantations management plan will comprise standard procedures and implementation plans dedicated to the rotation periods of each plantation sites. Among which the management guides when/how/where to harvest (utilize)and market forest and non-forest products. There should be aggressive awareness campaign& training sessions on these issues and the communities need to be empowered with relevant information to ensure guidelines and good practices are adhered to at all levels.

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

The MTE has not identified any social or political risks that might jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes. However, political protests/civil unrests could slow down project delivery. Since the forestry activities are season sensitive, sometimes interruptions in planned activities by such event can significantly undermines project progress.

The MTE has not identified any risk of falling the current high level of stakeholder ownership of the project. It is expected that the level of stakeholder ownership will increase with the full implementation of project outputs.

The key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow.

The project has held some awareness raising events on the long-term project objectives. However, more public/stakeholder awareness campaigns should be held for increased outreach and impacts.

The Project Team should document the lessons learned on a regular basis as part of evidence and learning and share with relevant parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future.

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

The project has a solid institutional framework and governance structure guided by the CRGE Facility of MoFEC and EFCCC frameworks. A Project Steering Committee, as the apex project body provides oversights for project implementation at national, regional and woreda level. Technical committees vet and recommend on technical matters. Similar structures exist at regional and woreda levels.

During the time of writing this report MEFCC was restructured to EFCCC. This may affect the morale of the Commission's management, staff and key stakeholders with participation and productivity implications. Considering the importance of the country's forest sector and role and remit of foresters and forestry professionals, the government

should ensure to uphold the spirit and commitment of EFCCC staff and core stakeholders for long term development goals.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

Drought and frost have negatively affected project delivery in some project sites. The MTE team saw firsthand how frost has adversely impacted on seedling survival at high altitude locations of Sodo woreda.

The MTE team raised questions about plantations and enrichment plantings in some of the sites. The majority of species planted are exotic species which may have indirect effect on water budget as well as biodiversity. The field project officials explained that the exotic species would pave ways to the indigenous ones once rehabilitation is effective as the intervention areas are once highly degraded, the likelihood of the indigenous trees to survive may be impossible.

The **sustainability** of the project is rated as '**Likely**'

The overall rating of the Project is 'Satisfactory (S)'.

4.   Conclusions

The project has demonstrated mixed delivery across all five outputs. Activities under Output 1- *Institutional capacity of the forest sector strengthened* and Output 2 - *Forest conservation and development enhanced* have yielded significant results, where as Output 4 - *Science and innovation for enhancing forest management* has attained some progress towards project targets, Output 3 - *Private sector engagement in forest development* has made slow progress and Output 5 - *Stakeholder engagement in forest development* is yet to kick start implementation of planned activities. The project objectives and outcomes are feasible within the remaining timeframe provided planned activities are implemented, coordinated and monitored with an accelerated pace and with sheer focus of the key stakeholders involved in the project at different levels under the result-based management framework. This entails timely availability of funds, financial delivery and regular reporting.

The project has created income generating opportunities for local population including rural women through seasonal employments in forest development (nursery, plantation), rehabilitation work (soil and water conservation practices), planting high value tree crops such as Mango and Avocado, and a range of alternative livelihood interventions, such as bee keeping and poultry production.

There has been active and high level of participation of women and youth in project interventions at woreda and kebele levels. Women have been included, in different community level committees formed under this project. Women have an increased access to income and household-decision making. The male household members allow and or encourage the female members of the family to get into gainful employments for extended hours that contribute to household food security and livelihoods. Through the promotion of energy saving improved stove the project is also helping to reduce tree cutting for fire woods and improve women health. It is anticipated that in the near future there would be micro, small and medium size enterprise development opportunities along the forest value chains including non-timber forest value chains.

EFCCC has showcased efforts in quality implementation of the project. During its early life, the project encountered difficulties in producing and transmitting reports on time and it was addressed in the second part of the project. While there has been considerable improvement in implementation capacity since the inception of this project, EFCCC needs to improve its reporting quality particularly financial reporting against the costed work annual workplan and results framework.

UNDP has been instrumental in providing support to the project for quality assurance, technical and functional capacity building of the project team/EFCCC, implementing planned activities and achieving considerable results up to the MTE particularly under outputs 1 and 2.

Considering the short-term costs and long-term gains of capacity development, rehabilitation of extremely degraded lands in harsh terrains and areas of forest plantation achieved, the project interventions are cost-effective.

The project is jointly monitored by EFCCC, MoFEC, UNDP and regional and woreda administrations at national, regional and woreda levels using the CRGE Facility and EFCCC Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines. At woreda level, monitoring is more regular and systematic as reported by woreda level stakeholders during the MTE mission. A considerable volume of information is collected through this monitoring effort. However, compiling these data and presenting them in an orderly fashion didn't happen in the initial stage of the project.

The project has established forest management offices at regional and woreda levels, contributed to the forest sector human resource capacity, and provided related material resource support to national, regional and woreda level government offices for sustainable forest development in Ethiopia. The institutional capacity developed at the national and regional levels and project woredas has started extending its outreach to other neighbouring woredas. The project has developed a National Forest Development Programme highlighting 10 year forestry action plan. Regional forestry action plans are being developed by the project. With the government's strong commitment to the environment, forest and climate change issues the sector capacities developed will contribute to the forest sector sustainability and subsequently to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The land use plan developed under the auspices of the project is expected to contribute substantially to its forest conservation and development and conservation of assisted natural regeneration objectives. The rehabilitation of degraded land, protection of natural regeneration and expansion of short rotation forest plantations have progressed very well and will contribute to national and global environmental sustainability. The technical capacity gain of the communities in rehabilitation and afforestation and reforestation in project areas has been commendable to uptake and upscale project interventions.

As part of capacity development in forest science, research and innovation, a good number of academics/researchers have received training on sustainable forest management. Academic exchange and specialised training programmes have been arranged with universities and training institutes within and outside of the country.

The government at all levels has demonstrated a strong ownership of the project. The Project stakeholders including the local communities have shown a high degree of ownership that resulted in the project success it has achieved to date. The provision of land use certificates for participating local communities has considerably increased the sense of community ownership.

5.   Recommendations

The MTE suggests the following recommendations for successful project delivery, improved project management, greater project communication and visibility, and enhanced sustainability of the project outcomes.

- Since the project has completed its baseline survey just prior to the MTE, it could not be used to assess progress against the baseline data for this evaluation. Therefore, the project should update the logframe with the baseline information collected in the survey and track project progress from now onwards using the update logframe.

- The project logframe should include gender sensitive indicators to delineate women participation in the project and assess how the project contributes to gender equality and women empowerment.

- Project financial reports should include more detailed expenditure statement. In other words, it could be in the similar format like the costed annual workplan where expenditures are shown against the respective budget lines.

- The project had inception workshop and the maiden annual project progress report included a brief narrative on the workshop. However, no inception report has been produced. The project final evaluation will ask for the inception report and its inclusion will improve the rating of the evaluation. This could be easily done by drawing upon the proceedings of the inception workshops and updating the results framework and annual work plan.

- The project should prepare report for each training programme it conducts highlighting training objectives, participants' category, training schedule and brief description of training topics covered/training curriculum. The reports should be annexed with annual progress reports.

- In order to gauge the effect of learning/training programme, the project should use the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey following each training course. By employing KAP questionnaires, the project will collect both qualitative and quantitative data on learning/training activities. KAP survey will enable the project to ascertain the degree to which knowledge and skills acquired by the training participants are put into practice. KAP survey will examine three key points: whether the trainees have understood and retained the main points of the training (knowledge), whether the trainees have found imparted knowledge and skills are useful for them or not (attitude), and whether they have used these knowledge and skills (practice).

- The project should consider to increase the remuneration the project pays to participating women in project sites. It is more relevant for women working in seedling nurseries as their source of livelihoods as opposed to working in activities

where part of the labor provided by the participants could be considered as their contribution to the project.

- The project should have more joint monitoring involving relevant stakeholders. At nation level it could involve EFCCC, MoFEC, UNDP and donors. At woreda level the woreda administration, Forest office and technical committee members should be part of joint monitoring.

- The project should put a mechanism in place to validate/verify the reported area under rehabilitation and plantation.

- Availability of quality seeds poses constant challenge for the project. The project should consider to include a start-up fund scheme under the Private Sector Participation output. Under this scheme aspiring entrepreneur(s) with relevant technical knowledge and skills and business acumen would receive grants from the project to produce quality seeds under the strict protocol of the project.

- Project communication and visibility should be strengthened. As part of communication strategy the project could produce monthly newsletter and one pager on project success stories/best practices. The signposts in project sites should be erected/improved.

- The project should, where feasible, encourage planting more indigenous species in land rehabilitation for better ecosystem health.

- The government should consider absorbing project staff in EFCCC's regular staffing structure after the end of the project to retain the capacity gain for long term sustainability.

6.   Lessons Learned

- Strengthening of government institutions without frequent restructuring can be more sustainable.

- Degraded areas can be better rehabilitated when a combination of technologies is used. Soil and water conservation practices assisted the rehabilitation as well as plantations significantly.

- Commitments of communities as well as local government can determine the quality of implementation and results. However, incentives such as land and forest tenure certificates can be major sustainability factor.

- Local schools can be involved in project interventions by allocating a parcel of land to each school for fast rotation plantations under 'Junior Forest Club' for increased outreach and impacts.

Annex 1: ISFSDP Project Regions and Woredas

National Regional States	Selected Woredas
Amhara	Dessie Zuria, Wadla, Delanta and Meket
SNNP	Sodo, Lemu, Mirab Abaya and Shashogo
Tigray	Alaje and Endamehoni

Annex 2: UNDP's Definitions of Evaluation Criteria[1]

Relevance concerns the extent to which a development initiative and its intended outputs or outcomes are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. Relevance also considers the extent to which the initiative is responsive to UNDP corporate plan and human development priorities of empowerment and gender equality issues. Relevance concerns the congruency between the perception of what is needed as envisioned by the initiative planners and the reality of what is needed from the perspective of intended beneficiaries. It also incorporates the concept of responsiveness—that is, the extent to which UNDP was able to respond to changing and emerging development priorities and needs in a responsive manner.

An essential sub-category of relevance is the criteria of **appropriateness**, which concerns the cultural acceptance as well as feasibility of the activities or method of delivery of a development initiative. While relevance examines the importance of the initiative relative to the needs and priorities of intended beneficiaries, appropriateness examines whether the initiative as it is operationalized is acceptable and is feasible within the local context. For example, an initiative may be relevant in that it addresses a need that intended beneficiaries perceive to be important, but inappropriate because the method of delivery is incongruent with the culture or not feasible given geographic or other contextual realities. In applying the criterion of relevance, evaluations should explore the extent to which the planning, design and implementation of initiatives takes into account the local context.

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which the initiative's intended results (outputs or outcomes) have been achieved or the extent to which progress toward outputs or outcomes has been achieved.

Evaluating effectiveness in project evaluations involves an assessment of cause and effect—that is, attributing observed changes to project activities and outputs—for example, the extent to which changes in the number of voters can be **attributed** to a voter education project. Assessing effectiveness in outcome evaluations will more likely examine UNDP contributions toward intended outcomes. For example, an outcome evaluation might explore the extent to which the observed outputs from a voter education project—along with other UNDP outputs and those of other partners, such as professionalizing the electoral administration—contributed towards achieving stated outcomes relating to inclusive participation measured by international observers and other reputable experts.

Assessing effectiveness involves three basic steps:

1. Measuring change in the observed output or outcome
2. Attributing observed changes or progress toward changes to the initiative (project evaluation) or determining UNDP contributions toward observed changes
3. Judging the value of the change (positive or negative)

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[1] UNDP (2009). Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Development Results. New York: UNDP

Efficiency measures how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to results. An initiative is efficient when it uses resources appropriately and economically to produce the desired outputs. Efficiency is important in ensuring that resources have been used appropriately and in highlighting more effective uses of resources.

As the nature and primary purposes of project and outcome evaluations differ, the application of criterion will also differ. For example, in assessing efficiency, a project evaluation might explore the extent to which resources are being used to produce the intended outputs and how resources could be used more efficiently to achieve the intended results. An outcome evaluation may involve estimates of the total UNDP investment (all projects and soft assistance) toward a given development outcome. The application of this criterion, particularly in UNDP outcome evaluations, poses a challenge as the nature of UNDP initiatives (for example, soft assistance), does not always lend itself to conventional efficiency indicators. In such cases, some analysis of delivery rates, the reasons some initiatives are implemented more quickly than others, and overall management ratios at the programme level might be considered. It is also important to assess how the partnership strategy has influenced the efficiency of UNDP initiatives through cost-sharing measures and complementary activities.

Sustainability measures the extent to which benefits of initiatives continue after external development assistance has come to an end. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating the extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional and other conditions are present and, based on that assessment, making projections about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the development results in the future. For example, an assessment of sustainability might explore the extent to which:
_ A sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, has been developed or implemented.
_ There are financial and economic mechanisms in place to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the assistance ends.
_ Suitable organizational (public or private sector) arrangements have been made.
_ Policy and regulatory frameworks are in place that will support continuation of benefits.
_ The requisite institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) exists.

Annex 3:   UNDP's Standard Evaluation Rating Scales[2]

Ratings for Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Highly Satisfactory (HS):   The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency

Satisfactory (S):   There were only minor shortcomings

Moderately Satisfactory (MS):   There were moderate shortcomings

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):   The project had significant shortcomings

Unsatisfactory (U):   There were major shortcomings in the achievement of project objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency

 Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):   The project had severe shortcomings

Sustainability ratings

 Likely (L):   Negligible risks to sustainability

Moderately Likely (ML):   Moderate risks

Moderately Unlikely (MU):   Significant risks

Unlikely (U):   Severe risks

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[2] UNDP (2012). Project-Level Evaluation: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluation of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects. New York: UNDP Office of Evaluation

Annex 4a: Terms of Reference for MTE – International Consultant

Mid Term Evaluation on Institutional Strengthening of the Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia

Project/Program Title: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia
Post Title: International Consultant
Consultant Level: TBD
Duty Station: Addis Ababa
Expected Places of Travel: 4 selected project sites of the Project of which one site will be from the SNNP
Duration: Thirty-five working days
Expected Start Date: Immediately after Concluding Contract Agreement

II.	BACKGROUND / PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The government of Ethiopia has a strong commitment to and recognition of the importance of the forest sector. It is one of the four pillars in the Climate Resilient Green Growth (CRGE) strategy, a national strategy to achieve middle-income status by 2025 in a climate-resilient green economy. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EFCCC) was established in 2013 tasked to oversee the implementation of the CRGE strategy. As the ministry is relatively new, there is need to strengthen EFCCC's capacity on federal regional levels to deliver on its mandate. The Project is designed to support the strengthening of institutions and stakeholders in the Ethiopian forest sector and to pilot afforestation and reforestation efforts to assist Ethiopia in reaching the CRGE Strategy's to attain the goals for afforestation, reforestation and forest management – and consequently increased carbon sequestration as indicated in the CRGE strategy.

The Project Purpose is assisting Ethiopia in achieving its targets on large scale afforestation-reforestation as described in the CRGE strategy by 2025 and reach the targets on reduced emissions into sequestration of Green House gasses from the forest sector.

The Overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the new ministry, EFCCC, and the Ethiopian government's overall capacity in the forest sector at all levels

to spearhead the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and the Growth and Transformation plan (GTP) targets.

The Specific Project Objectives are:

• Enhance and stimulate sustainable forest development in line with GTP and CRGE

• Foster institutional strengthening at all levels

• Promote popular participation

• Strengthen Science and Innovation

• Promote private sector engagement

The Programmed Outcomes are:

• By 2020, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels

• Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted

• Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated

• Science and innovation for enhancing Sustainable Forest Management promoted

• Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced

III.   OBJECTIVE OF THE MID TERM EVALUATION

The MTE will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTE will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability.

IV.   MTE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTE is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP, the Norwegian and Sweden Embassies as well as beneficiaries

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to: executing agencies, senior officials and task team leaders,

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key experts in the subject area, REDD+ Steering Committee, local communities etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions in selected 4 woredas from Amhara, Tigray and SNNNP regions.

The final MTE report should describe the full MTE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions/logics of the program, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review. The findings of the MTE will be presented to key stakeholders for further validation, enrichment and endorsement.

In general, the approach and methodology will be

- Conduct desk review
- Collect primary data using appropriate tools in line with evaluation questions and log frame indicators
- KII with program stakeholders and FGD with communities
- Field visits to the implementation sites
  Approach and methodology can be adjusted based on consultants' experience and on the details of the information required

V.   DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTE

The MTE team will assess the following four categories of evaluation criteria

i)   Relevance

vi.   Review the problems addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.

vii.   Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?

viii.   Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?

ix.   Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered during project design processes?

x.   Review the extent to which relevant gender and crosscutting issues were raised in the project design.

xi.   Review underlying assumptions/logics of the program

xii.   If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

ii)   Effectiveness

❖ Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log frame indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.

❖ Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?

❖ Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

❖ Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

❖ Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported Projects; color code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved.

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

❖ Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project by reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

vii. Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.

viii. Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.

ix. Review the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.

x. Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.

xi. Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?

xii. Examine the use of the project's results framework/ log frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

iii)	Efficiency

❖ Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

❖ Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.

❖ Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

Are program activities cost effective and has planned targets been achieved on time

Is the expenditure justifiable when compared to the plans, progress and outputs of the program?

What are the options for improving the cost efficiency of the program?

Is the program's strategic, financial, and administrative management efficient in reaching the objectives

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

❖ Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or

mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?

❖ Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

iv)   Partnership strategy

Stakeholder Engagement

❖ Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

❖ Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?

❖ Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

❖ Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.

❖ Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by development partners.

Communications:

❖ Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?

❖ Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended

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impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)

❖ For reporting purposes, write half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

v)   Sustainability

- Is there any indication of ownership with in government and stakeholders?

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why. In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the donor assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

- What are the issues of scale and the options/economic models for the sustainability of the project?

- Analyze the concept of mobilizing "free labor". What is meant by this? How "free" is it? Is it replicable or problematic?

- How can we make sure that Government/UNDP/donors can assist the tree felling and sale of timber products in the future in accordance with desirable principles (including support to marketing etc.)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:
Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned to be documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/

transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:
Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:
- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Impact
- Identify early signs of impact
- What tangible impact has the program had on the programs beneficiaries to date?

Conclusions & Recommendations
- ❖ The MTR team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, considering the findings.
- ❖ Recommendations should be succinct with suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported,
- ❖ Lessons learned; The midterm evaluation is expected to extract lessons and successes of the program

Ratings
The MTE team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a MTE Ratings & Achievement in line with the 4 evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness; efficiency and sustainability)

VI   TIME FRAME
The total duration of the MTE will be approximately 35 days over a time of 12 weeks.

VII.   MIDTERM EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
MTE Inception Report	MTE team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	Within 2 weeks after the commencement of the consultancy service	MTR consultant submits inception report to UNDP and MoEFCC
Presentation	Initial Findings	Within 4 weeks after the commencement	MTE expert presents to UNDP and MoEFCC

		of the consultancy service	
Draft Final Report	Full report	Within 8 weeks of the MTE mission:	Sent to the UNDP and MoEFCC
Final Report	Revised report with table detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTE report	Within 12 weeks of receiving UNDP comments on draft:	Submitted to UNDP and MoEFCC

VIII.   INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT / REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The international consultant will work under the daily supervision of the ISFDP project manager   and the overall guidance of the Team Leader for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development Unit

IX.   LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The UNDP CO and the MoEFCC will provide the required logistical facilities such as DSA; field vehicle, etc.

X.   QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL   CONSULTANT

a. Academic Qualifications:

Master degree or equivalent in forest conservation and development or other closely related fields

b. Years of experience:

A minimum of 8 years in evaluation of similar projects

XI.   Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weight	Max. Point
	70%	100
▪ MSc or equivalent in forest conservation and development or other closely related fields	**30%**	30
▪ Experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs	**30%**	30
▪ Minimum 8 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects	**30%**	30
▪ Understanding of the ToR	**10%**	10
Financial (Lower Offer/Offer*100)	30%	30
Total Score	Technical Score * 70% + Financial Score * 30%	

c. Competencies:

❖ Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;

❖ Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;

- ❖ Competence in adaptive management, as applied to forest conservation and management

- ❖ Experience working in Ethiopia;

- ❖ Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;

- ❖ Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and climate change adaptation; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.

- ❖ Excellent communication skills;

- ❖ Demonstrable analytical skills;

- ❖ Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;

d. Language and other skills:
Proficiency in both spoken and written English

e. Compliance of the UN Core Values:
- ❖ Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards

- ❖ Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;

- ❖ Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability

- ❖ Treats all people fairly without favouritism;

- ❖ Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment

Annex 1: Evaluation Rating Table

0.1   Evaluation Rating Table**

Criteria	Rating	Comments
RELEVANCE		
EFFECTIVNESS		
EFFICIENCY		
SUSTAINABILITY		

** The detail under each criterion is elaborated in section V.

Annex 4b: Terms of Reference for MTE – National Consultant

Mid Term Evaluation on Institutional Strengthening of the Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia

I.	GENERAL INFORMAION

Project/Program Title: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia
Post Title: National Consultant
Consultant Level: TBD
Duty Station: Addis Ababa
Expected Places of Travel: 4 selected project sites of the Project of which one site will be from the SNNP
Duration: Thirty-five working days
Expected Start Date: Immediately after Concluding Contract Agreement

II.	BACKGROUND / PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The government of Ethiopia has a strong commitment to and recognition of the importance of the forest sector. It is one of the four pillars in the Climate Resilient Green Growth (CRGE) strategy, a national strategy to achieve middle-income status by 2025 in a climate-resilient green economy. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EFCCC) was established in 2013 tasked to oversee the implementation of the CRGE strategy. As the ministry is relatively new, there is need to strengthen EFCCC's capacity on federal regional levels to deliver on its mandate. The Project is designed to support the strengthening of institutions and stakeholders in the Ethiopian forest sector and to pilot afforestation and reforestation efforts to assist Ethiopia in reaching the CRGE Strategy's to attain the goals for afforestation, reforestation and forest management – and consequently increased carbon sequestration as indicated in the CRGE strategy.

The Project Purpose is assisting Ethiopia in achieving its targets on large scale afforestation-reforestation as described in the CRGE strategy by 2025 and reach the targets on reduced emissions into sequestration of Green House gasses from the forest sector.

The Overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the new ministry, EFCCC, and the Ethiopian government's overall capacity in the forest sector at all levels

to spearhead the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and the Growth and Transformation plan (GTP) targets.

The Specific Project Objectives are:
• Enhance and stimulate sustainable forest development in line with GTP and CRGE
• Foster institutional strengthening at all levels
• Promote popular participation
• Strengthen Science and Innovation
• Promote private sector engagement

The Programmed Outcomes are:
• By 2020, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels
• Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted
• Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated
• Science and innovation for enhancing Sustainable Forest Management promoted
• Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced

III.   OBJECTIVE OF THE MID TERM EVALUATION

The MTE will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTE will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability.

IV.   MTE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTE is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP, the Norwegian and Sweden Embassies as well as beneficiaries.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to: executing agencies, senior officials and task team leaders, key experts in the subject area, REDD+ Steering Committee, local communities etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions in selected 4 woredas from Amhara, Tigray and SNNNP regions.

The final MTE report should describe the full MTE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions/logics of the program, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review. The findings of the MTE will be presented to key stakeholders for further validation, enrichment and endorsement.

In general, the approach and methodology will be

- Conduct desk review
- Collect primary data using appropriate tools in line with evaluation questions and log frame indicators
- KII with program stakeholders and FGD with communities
- Field visits to the implementation sites
  Approach and methodology can be adjusted based on consultants' experience and on the details of the information required

V. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTE

The MTE team will assess the following four categories of evaluation criteria

i) Relevance

xiii. Review the problems addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.

xiv. Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?

xv. Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and

plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?

xvi. Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered during project design processes?

xvii. Review the extent to which relevant gender and crosscutting issues were raised in the project design.

xviii. Review underlying assumptions/logics of the program

xix. If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

ii)   Effectiveness

❖ Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log frame indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.

❖ Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?

❖ Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

❖ Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

❖ Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported Projects; color code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved.

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- ❖ Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project by reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

xiii. Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.

xiv. Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.

xv. Review the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.

xvi. Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.

xvii. Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?

xviii. Examine the use of the project's results framework/ log frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

iii)	Efficiency

- ❖ Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- ❖ Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- ❖ Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

  Are program activities cost effective and has planned targets been achieved on time

  Is the expenditure justifiable when compared to the plans, progress and outputs of the program?

  What are the options for improving the cost efficiency of the program?

Is the program's strategic, financial, and administrative management efficient in reaching the objectives

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:
- ❖ Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- ❖ Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

iv)   Partnership strategy

Stakeholder Engagement
- ❖ Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- ❖ Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- ❖ Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:
- ❖ Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- ❖ Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by development partners.

Communications:
- ❖ Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are

there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?

❖ Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)

❖ For reporting purposes, write half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

v) Sustainability

- Is there any indication of ownership with in government and stakeholders?
- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why. In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:
- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the donor assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?
- What are the issues of scale and the options/economic models for the sustainability of the project?
- Analyze the concept of mobilizing "free labor". What is meant by this? How "free" is it? Is it replicable or problematic?
- How can we make sure that Government/UNDP/donors can assist the tree felling and sale of timber products in the future in accordance with desirable principles (including support to marketing etc.)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:
Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including

ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned to be documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:
Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:
- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Impact
- Identify early signs of impact
- What tangible impact has the program had on the programs beneficiaries to date?

Conclusions & Recommendations
- ❖ The MTR team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, considering the findings.
- ❖ Recommendations should be succinct with suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported,
- ❖ Lessons learned; The midterm evaluation is expected to extract lessons and successes of the program

Ratings
The MTE team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a MTE Ratings & Achievement in line with the 4 evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness; efficiency and sustainability)

VI   TIME FRAME
The total duration of the MTE will be approximately 35 days over a time of 12 weeks.

VII.   MIDTERM EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
MTE Inception Report	MTE team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	Within 2 weeks after the commencement of the consultancy service	MTR consultant submits inception report to UNDP and MoEFCC
Presentation	Initial Findings	Within 4 weeks after the commencement of the consultancy service	MTE expert presents to UNDP and MoEFCC
Draft Final Report	Full report	Within 8 weeks of the MTE mission:	Sent to the UNDP and MoEFCC
Final Report	Revised report with table detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTE report	Within 12 weeks of receiving UNDP comments on draft:	Submitted to UNDP and MoEFCC

VIII.   INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT / REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The national consultant under the supervision of the international consultant will accomplish the following major tasks:

❖ Organize series of meetings with government and non-government organizations and other stakeholders as deemed necessary;

❖ Provide support in the collection and analyzing of the required data from primary and secondary sources;

❖ Provide support in the organization of field works in the selected sites including the logistic arrangement;

❖ Provide support in the preparation of inception, draft and final reports;

❖ Undertake additional tasks related to the consultancy service given by the International Consultant

IX.   LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The UNDP CO and the MoEFCC will provide the required logistical facilities such as DSA; field vehicle, etc.

X.   QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL   CONSULTANT

a. Academic Qualifications:

Master degree or equivalent in forest conservation and development or other closely related fields

b. Years of experience:

A minimum of 5 years in evaluation of similar projects

XI.   Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weight	Max. Point
	70%	100

▪ MSc or equivalent in forest conservation and development or other closely related fields	**30%**	30	
▪ Experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs	**30%**	30	
▪ Minimum 8 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects	**30%**	30	
▪ Understanding of the ToR	**10%**	10	
Financial (Lower Offer/Offer*100)	30%	30	
Total Score	**Technical Score * 70% + Financial Score * 30%**		

c. Competencies:

- ❖ Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;

- ❖ Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;

- ❖ Competence in adaptive management, as applied to forest conservation and management

- ❖ Experience working in Ethiopia;

- ❖ Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;

- ❖ Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and climate change adaptation; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.

- ❖ Excellent communication skills;

- ❖ Demonstrable analytical skills;

- ❖ Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;

d. Language and other skills:
Proficiency in both spoken and written English

e. Compliance of the UN Core Values:

- ❖ Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards

- ❖ Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;

- ❖ Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability

- ❖ Treats all people fairly without favouritism;

- ❖ Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment

Annex 1: Evaluation Rating Table

0.2   Evaluation Rating Table**

Criteria	Rating	Comments
RELEVANCE		
EFFECTIVNESS		
EFFICIENCY		
SUSTAINABILITY		

** The detail under each criterion is elaborated in section V.

Annex 5: List of Documents Reviewed

1. Cumulative Project Progress Report, July 2015 – June 2018, EFCCC

2. Lemo-Shashogo SNNPR Progress Report, January-June 2018

3. Lemo-Shashogo SNNPR Quarterly Progress Report, April-June 2018

4. Consolidated Annual Financial Report, CRGE Facility Fund (Jan-Dec, 2017), Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, UNDP, 2018

5. Lemo-Shashogo SNNPR Quarterly Progress Report, January-March 2018

6. ISFSDP Video Documentary highlighting the Project Best Practices, UNDP 2018

7. ISFSDP Short Video Documentary, UNDP 2018

8. Sodo SNNPR ISFSDP Visibility-Exhibition 2018

9. Lemo SNNPR Presentation on Swedish Component Progress, September 2018

10. Final Report of the Mid Term Review of the Result Based Payment to the CRGE Facility – Partnership Agreement for REDD+, 2018

11. Earth Observation (EO) Draft Report for the Mid-Term Review of the Result Based Payment to the CRGE Facility – Partnership Agreement for REDD+, 2018

12. Draft Final Report of Mid Term Review of the Result Based Payment to the CRGE Facility – Partnership Agreement for REDD+, 2018

13. MTR Final Report-Back Presentation, June 2018

14. Lemo SNNPR Presentation on Mid Term Project Progress, June 2018

15. Project Procurement Plan 2018

16. Annual Work Plan 2018-2019

17. Project Audit Report 2017

18. Annual Project Progress Report 2017

19. Lemo SNNPR Annual Progress Report, 2017

20. ISFSDP Planning Workshop Proceedings, November 2017

21. Draft Script for ISFSDP Video Documentaries

22. ISFSDP Programme Review Workshop, 2017

23. Norwegian Component Expenditure Statement, 2017

24. Project Progress Report for July 2015 – July 2017

25. Norwegian Grant Agreement for CRGEF – REDD+ Phase II, July 2017

26. National Forest Sector Development Program, Ethiopia, Volume I: Situation Analysis, 2017

27. National Forest Sector Development Program, Ethiopia, Volume II: Program Pillars, Action Areas and Targets, 2017

28. National Forest Sector Development Program, Ethiopia, Volume III: Synthesis Report, 2017

29. Annual Work Plan 2017-2018

30. Project Progress Report for July 2015 – June 2016

31. Report of the Ethiopian Delegation Visit to the Republic of India, March 2017

32. ISFSDP UNDP Component - Budget and Expenditure for 2015-2017

33. Project Procurement Plan 2017

34. Lemo SNNPR Annual Progress Report 2016

35. ISFSDP Project Quality Assurance

36. Swedish Third-Party Cost-Sharing Agreement, 2016

37. UNDP Request for CRGEF Fund Transfer, 2016

38. ISFSDP Agreement on Reporting to Donor, 2016

39. CRGE Facility-UNDP MoU on Pass-Through Fund Management, 2016

40. CRGE Facility Standard Administrative Arrangement, 2016

41. Project Progress Report, March-September 2016, EFCCC

42. MoFEC Request for Budget Revision, 2016

43. ISFSDP Programme Review Workshop, 2016

44. Project Status Report March-June, 2016

45. Lemo SNNPR Progress Report, January - June 2016

46. Lemo SNNPR Project Progress Report up to May 2016

47. Lemo SNNPR Project Financial Report 2015-2016

48. Report of the Ethiopian Delegation Visit to the Republic of Korea and Peoples Republic of China, March 2016

49. Project Status Report January-March, 2016

50. Project Procurement Plan 2016

51. Report on the Site Suitability and Feasibility Study for Short Rotation Plantation and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands in Tigray, Amhara and SNNP Regions, November 2015

52. ISFSDP Back to Office Report, EFCCC-UNDP, August 2015

53. UNDP Memo on Fund Disbursement and Project Implementation, 2015

54. Norwegian Fund Disbursement Advice, 2015

55. UNDP Memo on Project Delivery and Fund Transfer, 2015

56. MoFEC Request for CRGEF Fund Transfer, 2015

57. MoFEC Request for Addendum Signing 2015

58. MoFEC Request for Agreement Addendum, 2015

59. CRGE Facility Agreement Addendum, KLD - MoFEC, 2015

60. EFCCC Request for Addendum for UNDP Budget Component, 2015

61. Fast Track Project Proposal - ISFSDP

62. Annual Work Plan 2015-2016

63. UNDP CRGEF Project Budget

64. ISFSDP Project Document, 2015

65. UNDP Memo on Project Fund Channeling, 2014

66. CRGE Facility Agreement, 2014

67. CRGE Facility and UNDP MoA, 2012

68. CRGE Facility ToR, MoFEC, 2012

Annex 6: List of Stakeholders Interviewed /Consulted

Name	Organization	Position
Addis Ababa		
Dr. Tefera Mengistu	Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission	National Programme Coordinator, ISFSDP
Mr Zerihun Getu	MoFEC	Climate Resilient Green Economy Facility
Mr Gizachew Sisay	UNDP	Team Leader, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development
Mr Ababu Anage	UNDP	National Climate Change Specialist
Mr Berhanu Alemu	UNDP	M&E and Reporting Specialist
Mr. Bezabih Abebe	UNDP	Progamme Implementation Support Officer
Dr. Marianne Johansen	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Counselor, Climate Change and Forest
Mr Lulu Likassa	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Programme Officer
Mr Elmi Nure	Sweden Embassy	Programme Officer
SNNP Region		
Dr. Teshale Woldeamanuel	Regional REDD+ Secretariat	Regional REDD+ Coordinator
Mr Shibeshi Dejene	Environment, Forest and Climate Change	Forest Expert & Steering Committee Member
Mr Sintayehu Petros	ISFSDP Regional Office	Finance and procurement Officer
Mirab Abaya Woreda		
Mr Teramaje Bezabeh	ISFSDP Project Office	Project Coordinator
Mr Memiru Morka	ISFSDP Project Office	Forester
AyferaAnjilo	ISFSDP Project Office	Forester
Lemo Woreda		
Mr Alemu Anbiko	Woreda Administration	Steering Committee Member
Mr Habte Asrat	Environment, Forest and Climate Change	Head
Mr Assefa Batole	Environment, Forest and Climate Change	Forester
Mr Desalegn Assbesa	ISFSDP Project Office	Socio-economic Expert
Mr Petros Lodebo	ISFSDP Project Office	Forester
Ms Letusal Cherenet	ISFSDP Project Office	Finance officer
Mr Abaynesh Ayele	ISFSDP Project Office	Forester

Mr Sololo Etibo	Amarkaba Shamo Kebele Administration	Finance officer
Mr LeboroTedisso	Amarkaba Shamo Kebele Administration	Secretary
Mr Eyassuwenweso	Amarkaba Shamo Kebele Administration	Chairperson
Mr Tekalegn Hordo	Amarkaba Shamo Kebele Administration	Manager
Mr Tarekegn Selso	Molelicho Kebele Administration	Finance officer
Mr Alemu Bushra	Molelicho Kebele Administration	Secretary
Mr Elias Kotina	Molelicho Kebele Administration	Chief Administrator
Mr Abayneh Feyesa	Molelicho Kebele Administration	Manager
Mr AbebeDabero	Forest Users Association Molelicho Kebele	Chairman
Mr Abebe Shuga	Forest Users Association Molelicho Kebele	Vice Chairman
Sodo Woreda		
Ms Belaynesh Zewde	ISFSDP Project Office	Project Coordinator
Mr Million Amare	ISFSDP Project Office	Forest Expert

Annex 7:   ISFSDP MTE Mission Programme

Date/ Time	Activities	Location	Remarks
Wednesday, 12 September 2018			
13:00 hrs	Introductory meeting and discussions with UNDP Ethiopia CRGG/IGSD Team	UNDP, UNECA Addis Ababa	
16:30 hrs	MTE Team meeting	UNDP, UNECA Addis Ababa	
Thursday, 13 September 2018			
09:30 hrs	UNDSS Briefing	UNDSS, UNECA Addis Ababa	
11:00 hrs	Meeting with SIDA/Swedish Embassy	Embassy of Sweden Addis Ababa	
14:00 hrs	Meeting with National Programme Coordinator, ISFSDP	EFCCC Addis Ababa	
16:00 hrs	Meeting with Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE)Facility	MoFEC Addis Ababa	
Friday, 14 September 2018			
09:15 hrs	Meeting with Royal Norwegian Embassy	Norwegian Embassy Addis Ababa	
11:15 hrs	Travel to Hawassa		
16:15 hrs	Meeting with Regional Programme Coordinator, ISFSDP	Regional REDD+ Secretariat, Hawassa	Overnight stay
Saturday, 15 September 2018			
08:30 hrs	Discussions with Regional Programme Coordinator, ISFSDP	Regional REDD+ Secretariat, Hawassa	
11:30 hrs	Travel to Arba Minch		Overnight stay
Sunday, 16 September 2018			
Visit Mirab Abaya plantation, land rehabilitation and seedling nursery sites Consultations with communities Discussions with ISFSDP Project Team		Mirab Abaya Project Office, project sites	
Monday, 17 September 2018			
Meeting with Project Coordinator, ISFSDP Mirab Abaya		Arba Minch	
Tuesday, 18 September 2018			
Travel to Lemu Meeting with Project Coordinator, Lemu Woreda Visit plantation, rehabilitation and nursery sites		Lemu Project Office and project sites	Overnight stay
Wednesday, 19 September 2018			
FGDs with community/beneficiary groups in 2 Kebeles		Lemu woreda	2 women FGDs & 2 Men FGDs

Thursday, 20 September 2018		
Discussions with Project Coordinator, Lemu Consultations with experts and woreda administration Travel to Hawassa	Lemo Woreda	Overnight stay
Friday, 21 September 2018		
Stakeholder meeting at Hawassa Debriefing with Regional Programme Coordinator, Hawassa Travel to Butajira	Regional REDD+ Secretariat, Hawassa	
Saturday, 22 September 2018		
Consultation with expert and kebele administration Visit land rehabilitation and nursery sites 2 FGDs with local communities and beneficiary groups	Sodo woreda	
Sunday, 23 September 2018		
Discussions with Project Coordinator, Sodo woreda Visit plantation, land rehabilitation and nursery sites 2 FGDs with local communities and beneficiary groups	Sodo woreda	
Monday, 24 September 2018		
Travel back to Addis Ababa Follow up discussions Prepare initial finding presentation	Addis Ababa	Overnight stay
Tuesday, 25 September 2018		
MTE team meeting Prepare initial finding presentation	UNDP, UNECA Addis Ababa	
Wednesday, 26 September 2018		
MTE Mission's debriefing with EFCCC, MOFEC/CRGE Facility, UNDP, Embassies of Norway and Sweden and presentation of initial findings	EFCCC Addis Ababa	