**Terms of Reference for MTE of Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project**

**I. GENERAL INFORMAION**

**Project/Program Title**: Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia

**Post Title**: 1 International and 1 National Consultants

**Consultant Level**: Level C (Senior Specialist)

**Duty Station:** Addis Ababa and Regions

**Expected Places of Travel**: 4 selected project sites

**Duration:** Thirty-five working days

**Expected Start Date**: Immediately after Concluding Contract Agreement

**II. BACKGROUND / PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Ethiopia’s continued development is under serious threat. Rapid population growth and the concentration of most Ethiopians in rural areas is putting pressure on the country’s natural resource base. Projections indicate that unless action is taken to change the traditional development path, an area of 9 million ha might be deforested between 2010 and 2030 and over the same period. Deforestation for agricultural expansion and forest degradation for fuel wood demand remains to be the two critical drivers of change in the forested landscapes of Ethiopia. The increased pressure from agricultural land expansion (expected to increase from 12.6 million hectares in 2010 to 27 million hectares in 2030) would result in the deforestation of nearly 9 million hectares of forestland. Ethiopia’s desire to increase forest cover from the current 15.5% to 30% by 2030, technical capacities need to be expanded beyond what currently exists to support and derive innovation and stronger engagement with private sector and civil society partners who can create sustainable and cost-effective forest sector development models.

Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program of Ethiopia has been designed to support capacity building efforts. Overall, the performance of the program has been substantial in achieving its targets with the participation of multiple stakeholders while using a flexible approach to create multifunctional landscapes. However, to make the achievements sustainable, additional support was required focusing on building technical capacities at various levels thereby catalyzing large scale investments in wider areas. This proposal was then initiated as a second phase to sustain the progress made in the first phase.

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 Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia project 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 Project Purpose** The purpose of this project is therefore to create strengthened forestry sector and resilient social, economic, and ecological systems. The focus areas for this proposed forest sector development program is structured in four components: Enhancing enabling environment for forest sector development program, promoting sustainable forest production and Forest Land Scape Restoration (FLR), Enhancing forest environmental services and fostering model environmental stewardship in selected urban areas

**The Overall objective:** to promote sustainable and competitive tree-based production systems in the rural and urban landscapes of Ethiopia thereby contributing for community and ecosystem resilience

**The Outcomes are**:

Outcome 1. Capacity of the forest sector strengthened at strategic and operational levels

Outcome 2. Multi-functional landscapes created in rural and urban areas

Outcome 3. Vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events reduced

**Out puts are**

**Output 1.** Enabling environment for strong forest sector delivery enhanced.

**Output 2**. Sustainable forest production promoted

**Output 3**. Forest Ecosystem Services enhanced

**Output 4**. Model environmental stewardship fostered in selected urban areas

**III. Objectives of the mID TERM EVALUATION**

* Review and reconstruct the theory of change of the programme to map the results pathways and assess cause - effect relationships.
* Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the programme interventions.
* Identify implementation issues and challenges/bottlenecks which constrain programme and financial delivery.
* Provide evidence whether the programme implementation is on track or off-track during the mid-years period and propose measures to rectify.
* Identify lessons learned and recommendations, based on evidence, so as to improve relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of programme results, and also document knowledge basis from the programme design and implementation.
* Identify strengths and weaknesses of the programme in the application of right-based approach and gender mainstreaming and possible recommendations to apply in the remaining period of the programme.
* IV. SCOPE OF THE MTE

This mid-term evaluation will cover the implementation period of the programme extending from May 2020 to June 2022. The evaluation will cover all the 5 Responsible Partners to the IP (CIFOR; SLU: Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural resources; Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute.

Assessment on all the four outputs, and corresponding activity results as well as indications/contributions towards achievement of intended outcomes of the project will be in the scope of the mid-term review/evaluation. This mid-term review will give emphasis on the operational/implementation mechanisms and arrangements practiced in the IP and RP to the IP and their effectiveness & efficiency, perceptions towards the programme/how UNDP operates, the ownership/commitment level by the IP, etc. The analysis in the review/evaluation needs to be gender focused/sensitive with sex disaggregation of results to clearly reflect on different factors affecting or affected by gender dynamics.

**V. EVALUATION CRITERA AND QUESTIONS**

The evaluation is expected to apply the internationally accepted evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It will also look into adaptability, responsiveness, coherence and women equality and gender mainstreaming. Aligning to the evaluation criteria, the evaluation may need to include and address the following key evaluation questions, among others:

**Relevance:**

* To what extent the operations and objectives of the ISCFSDP project are consistent with the need of beneficiaries need of implementing partners, current country need, and donors’ policies and expectations?
* To what extent were/are the interventions aligned with the needs of other key stakeholders particularly government and other actors in the sectors relevant to forest conservation and development?
* Were the approaches and strategies used relevant to achieve intended sub-outputs, outputs, and outcomes of the programme/intervention?
* To what extent were the interventions respond to the needs of vulnerable groups and women?
* To what extent the programme is aligned to SDG, GTP II and UNSDCF?

**Effectiveness:**

* To what extent has this project achieved its planned objectives, outputs outcomes, and objectives?
* What are the main expected and unexpected results of the project?
* To what extent does the strategic revision for reposition the programme lead to achievement (or lack of achievement) of the -outputs, and objectives and outcomes of the project?
* Do the assumptions and the Theory of Change hold true? If not, why?
* What are the major factors influencing implementation and operations of the project for achievement or non-achievement of results?
* What are the unintended results of the changes in political landscape and the reforms underway in the country to the program implementation and achievement of results?
* What are lessons learned and good practices to take for future effective and efficient implementation of the programme?

**Efficiency:**

* Do the Project’s implementation mechanisms including institutional arrangements, partnership, support services, etc., permit utilization of resources in efficient way, and also delivery of services and achievement of results in timely manner?
* Does the programme cost efficient? Do the cost per output/sub-output the most cost effective or are there areas where savings should be made to reduce costs?
* To what extent are project management practices and tools adequate to timely and effectively implement the programme?
* Are project resources adequate and available on time to implement the activities as planed?

**Impact.**

* To what extent – and how – project investments contributed to helping improve the lives of beneficiaries.
* What were the effects of the intervention on participants’ lives? • Did a specific part of the intervention achieve greater impact than another?
* Were there unintended (positive or negative) effects of assistance for participants and nonparticipants?
* Was there any gender-specific impacts? Did the intervention influence the gender context? • Were there impacts on institutions? • Did the intervention contribute to long-term intended results?

**Sustainability:**

* To what extent are the results and positive changes from the project implementation up to this point in time likely to continue during remaining period of project implementation and there after?
* To what extent do the shift in the governance landscape and political arena of the country would affect continuity of project implementation and sustainability of results achieved?
* To what extent do the implementing partners show ownership of the project results, and lessons learned and their ability to continue with the project with limited or without intervention from UNDP?
* To what extent the project established and maintained effective partnership with development partners, government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), etc.?
* 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?

The above listed evaluation questions are not to be considered as exhaustive to address the evaluation purpose and objectives in comprehensive manner. So, the evaluation questions will be further discussed and elaborated in collaboration with the evaluation team, stakeholders (implementing partner and Responsible Partners to the IP) and UNDP during the inception phase to refine and accept.

CATALYTIC:

* Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic?
* Has the project funding been used to scale-up other forestry /REDD+ initiatives?

GENDER:

* To what extent have gender considerations mainstreamed and had been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?
* Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?
* To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in women participation in the forest conservation and development activities?

Human rights

* To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

**VITHE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

The MTE is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission ; Responsible Partners to the IP ( CIFOR, SLU) project implementers, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural resources; Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute; Selected TVETs); relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; the UNDP Country Office(s), the Norwegian and Sweden Embassies as well as beneficiaries. Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTE. 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 MTE team is expected to conduct field missions in selected 4 woredas from Amhara, Tigray and SNNNP regions.

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

**Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:**

Review the log frame 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

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

**VI 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?

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.

**VIIIConclusions & 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

Time Frame

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

Midterm Evaluation Deliverables

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 EFCC |
| Presentation | Initial Findings | Within 4 weeks after the commencement of the consultancy service | MTE expert presents to UNDP and EFCC |
| Draft Final Report | Full report  | Within 8 weeks of the MTE mission:  | Sent to the UNDP and EFCCC |
| 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 EFCC |

IX 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

Please include Duration of the work

X LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

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

Evaluation team composition required competencies and qualification

.QUALIFICATIONS

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

National 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

XII. 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
 | 40% | 30 |
| * Understanding of the ToR
 | 30% | 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 favoritisms;
* Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment

XIII Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The evaluators must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The evaluator must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

Annexes

 a) Intervention results framework and theory of change.

(b) Key stakeholders and partners.

(c) Documents to be reviewed and consulted.

(d) Evaluation matrix template.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relevant evaluation criteria | Key questions | Specific sub questions | Data sources | Data-collection methods/tools | Indicators/ success standard | Methods for data analysis |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

(e) Outline of the evaluation report format.

standard outline for an evaluation report. Annex 1 provides further information on the standard

outline of the evaluation report. In brief the minimum contents of an evaluation report include:

1. Title and opening pages with details of the project/programme/outcome and of the

evaluation team.

2. Project and evaluation Information details: project title, Atlas number, budgets, and project

dates and other key information.

3. Table of contents.

4. List of acronyms and abbreviations.

5. Executive summary: a stand-alone section of maximum four pages including the quality

standards and assurance ratings.

6. Introduction and overview. What is being evaluated and why?

7. Description of the intervention being evaluated. Provides the basis for report users to

understand the logic and evaluability analysis result, assess the merits of the evaluation

methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results.

8. Evaluation scope and objectives. The report should provide a clear explanation of the

evaluation’s scope, primary objectives, and main questions.

9. Evaluation approach and methods. The evaluation report should describe in detail the

selected methodological approaches, methods, and analysis.

10. Data analysis. The report should describe the procedures used to analyze the data collected

to answer the evaluation questions.

11. Findings and conclusions. Evaluation findings should be based on an analysis of the data

collected and conclusions should be drawn from these findings.

12. Recommendations. The report should provide a reasonable number of practical, feasible

recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or

decisions to make.

13. Lessons learned. As appropriate and as requested in the TOR, the report should include

discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation of the intervention.

14. Annexes