# Mid-Term Review – ISCFSD, Ethiopia

# Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development (ISCFSD)

A project of:

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Sweden

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Evaluation Consultants would like to expresses special thanks for the assistance of the following individuals during in undertaking the Evaluation:

Mr. Ababu Anage and Ms. Eden Habtemariam at the UNDP Country Office.

Dr. Tefera Belay and Dr. Kibruyesfa Sisay from the national project coordination office at EFCCC.

Many key experts from the different project implementing institutions that have provided information and spent their time with the evaluation team for the interviews. We thank them all for their time. Our special thanks go to Dr. Habtemariam Kassa from CIFOR.

### ABBREVIATIONS

A/R	Afforestation/Reforestation
AWP	Annual Work Plan
ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
CFSDP	Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CPD	Country Program Document
DBMS	Database Management System
EFCCC	Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EBI	Ethiopia Biodiversity Institute
ECAE	Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE)
EEFRI	Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute
CRGE	Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FSDP	Forest Sector Development Project
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
ID	Identification
IP	Implementing Partner
ISCFSDP	Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project
Msc	Master of Science
MTR	Mid Term Review
MoA-NR	Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAG	Monitoring and Evaluation Advisory Group
NFSDP	National Forest Sector Development Program
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OFWE	Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PSI	Policy Study Institute

PPP	Private Public Partnership
ProDoc	Project Document
Q	Quarter
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SaaS	Software as a Service
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
SC	Steering Committee
SFA	Swedish Forest Agency
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ToR	Terms of Reference
ТоС	Theory of Change
ТоТ	Training of Trainers
TBL	Tree Based Livelihoods
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UGI	Urban Green Infrastructure
UX	User Experience
UI	User Interface
VoIP	Voice of Internet Protocol
WGCF-NR	Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources
WTRC	Wood Technology Research Centre

## EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

While the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ethiopia's Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development (ISCFSD) used best-practice evaluation methods and included a comprehensive desk-top review of relevant documents, combined with virtual and in person meetings with key stakeholders (by the national evaluator), the MTR was still subject to a number of non-trivial limitations. These were as follows:

*COVID19:* Global and local restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to the evaluation team. The collection of primary data from project stakeholders, which would normally be done by in-person interviews, ended up being undertaken virtually. VoIP technologies were used to conduct most interviews. This worked surprising well, even for the district actors.

*Cross-sectorial inputs*: Given the strategic political significance of the project and the need to enhance and strengthen inter-ministerial and cross-sectorial coordination and cooperation on the catalysation of Ethiopia's Forestry Sector, it was essential that the MTR process included consultation meetings with other important sectors - such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture etc, and with private sector bodies. This did not occur.

*Physical verification*: The anticipated field visit to select regional centres did not occur. There were limitations due to site security. Thus, the evaluators could not verify the outputs/outcomes of any field activities undertaken by the project.

*Financial data*: In accordance with UNDP evaluation guidelines the evaluation includes an overall assessment of the financial aspects of the Project. However, it's important to understand that the contracted evaluators are not accountants nor financial auditors. No attempt was made by the evaluation team to verify the project financial data provided by UNDP. Financial data was therefore accepted at face value.

The findings in this report should be considered in light of the above limitations.

## INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of the Mid-Term Project Evaluation (MTR) for the Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia (ISCFSDP), is to provide insights and feedback on the progress of the project to-date.

The ISCFSDP was formulated to strengthen the technical capacities of central and local level government institutions in an effort to create strengthened forestry sector and resilience social, economic and ecological system in Ethiopia's forest sector. To this end, the project first seeks to build Ethiopia's forestry sectors enabling environment, by technically advising key government institutions, and undertaking scientific and action-based research to guide decision makers in the formulation of enabling policies that promote Tree-Based Livelihoods (TBL).

Improving the overall governance and strategic direction of Ethiopia's forestry sector will play an important role in Ethiopia's economy and rural livelihoods - through sustained ecosystem goods and services that broadly come in the form of wood, water retention, soil conservation, carbon sequestration (climate change mitigation) and in the provision of non-forest timber products. Thus, the rehabilitation of degraded forest landscapes and the planting out of new forest areas - using new technologies and competitive based production systems remain key areas for many forestry projects, such as the ISCFSDP. In addition, promoting the adoption of alternate non-destructive livelihoods are also important value adding activities for the forestry sector. These include although not limited to nursery operations, planting and maintaining seedlings, collecting and marketing non-timber forest products – such as bamboo, honey and poultry farming which can provide forest landscapes with much needed relief. They can also assist communities to diversify livelihoods, secure higher quality jobs, enhance income streams and improve community and ecosystem resilience.

This evaluation aims to elaborate on the best practices used to guide evidence-based changes to the project's implementation. The evaluation will assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of project results, as well as how the project works with others to build partnerships. The evaluation will assess the intended and unintended outcomes of the ISCFSDP and recommend strategies for future operational and programmatic effectiveness. The evaluation includes an assessment of project design, implementation and monitoring. It also provides national stakeholders and partners with an impartial assessment of results.

*Brief History of ISCFSDP*: began implementation in 2018. The project underwent some adjustments in response to the COVID19 pandemic, with a no cost extension granted up until December 2021 by the Ministry of Finance. The majority of project funding originates from the Sweden's government agency for development cooperation (SIDA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with in-kind support from the Government of Ethiopia. The main Implementing Partner (IP) is the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, with responsible parties consisting of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute and Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources (WGCF-NR), Eco Innovation Foundation (EIF) and Swedish Forest Agency (SFA). Other partners at the grassroot level were the regional states that included Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia, Somali, Southern Nations and Nationalities and Tigray national regional states. For capacity building trainings, Mertule Mariam and Holeta TVET colleges were also involved.

The UNDP, SIDA, the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, responsible parties, including beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project as defined in the ProDoc are the target audience for this Mid-Term Review (MTR).

#### **Objective of Evaluation**

This draft MTR has been prepared and submitted for review/comments by UNDP and the overall project team (See list of project team members - page 27/28). The report describes in detail the findings of the evaluation, which includes an assessment of project design, management, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and indicators. On the latter, the review specifically addresses progress against project indicators and the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress. This MTR covers the implementation period between October 2019 to October 2021. And finally, the MTR addresses all comments received by project team members. A full list of comments and evaluator responses can be found in Annex 1.

In addition to assessing the projects relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, the evaluation:

- Explores key factors contributing to achieving or not achieving desired results;
- Determines the extent the project has contributed to building knowledge;
- Examines the crosscutting area of gender mainstreaming, and;
- Explores partnerships and intra project collaboration at different levels (government agencies, donors, bi-laterals, non-government organisations (NGOs) and communities).

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation can be found in Annex 2.

#### Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Evaluation Norms and Standards of Evaluation, UNEG Ethical Standards, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines evaluation criteria and criteria defined in the ToR<sup>1</sup>. Criteria are aligned with the evaluation criteria for assessing projects associated with development assistance. These include Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability, while ascertaining all aspects of project intervention related to project strategy, progress towards results, project implementation, adaptive management and sustainability. These areas are all considered when interviewing stakeholders that were either directly and indirectly associated with the project. Considering this evaluation is for a mid-term evaluation, project impacts will not be a major focus – although any meaningful impacts will be duly reported.

#### Approach to Evaluation

As the project is essentially now over midway through its second phase of development, the Project now requires a Mid-Term Review (MTR). The evaluation will provide constructive insights on how best the project could be improved across the four outputs and their corresponding activities. In additional, the review also provides an opportunity to refine project activities, and provide advisory on how best the project team can strengthen routine monitoring against ProDoc indicators. Thus, the evaluation will help inform the project board with the refocusing of efforts (where applicable). In particular, the evaluation will provide clear recommendations on how best to move forward.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Term of Reference for Evaluation - <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hm9MOyRHMRyoWWefWWr">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hm9MOyRHMRyoWWefWWr</a> syhCDzarnrKo/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115925136724879788724&rtpof=true&sd=true

- Assess current achievements
- Examine sustainability issues
- Recommend actions to better ensure outcomes

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outputs as specified in the ProDoc, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to set the project on-track to achieve intended results. This will also have a bearing on risks to sustainability. Therefore, this MTR will focus on the following:

- Assess the level of achievement against key indicators
- Drawing the lessons learned going forward, and
- Propose recommended actions for the remainder of the project period

The evaluation seeks to provide information based on solid evidence that has come from credible reliable sources. The evaluation process began with a short briefing by the UNDP and an initial meeting between the two-person evaluation team. This was later followed by interviews with all the relevant stakeholders that included the Commission, regional coordinators, implementing districts and key project partners (see interview section on proceeding page). Where possible, information collected was disaggregated by sex, location (urban/rural) and topical area.

Information sourced for the MTR were captured by undertaking comprehensive desk reviews, collecting data from reports, workshops, trainings and conference presentations, as well as triangulating interviews with urban and rural stakeholders.

The following documents were examined:

#### **Documentation Reviewed**

The following documents were reviewed as part of this evaluation:

- 1. Ethiopia Country Strategic Plan (2020-2025)
- 2. Ethiopia 2030: The Pathway to Prosperity
- 3. 10-year Economic Development Plan
- 4. AWP CFSDP 2021 plan Final
- 5. CFSDP 2019 Annual Report
- 6. CFSDP 2020 Annual Report
- 7. CFSDP Project Document Signed
- 8. Ethiopia CRGE strategy
- 9. Ethiopia Forest Sector Rev iew\_ April 2015
- 10. Studies Socio-economic value of forests
- 11. NFSDP Volume I 20.6.2017
- 12. NFSDP Volume II 20.6.2017
- 13. NFSDP Volume III-final
- 14. 2020 Financial SIDA Report
- 15. Baseline Afforest/Re-Afforest & Rehab
- 16. Catalyzing\_FSDP\_2020\_Audit\_Report
- 17. Environmental and Social Review Revised
- 18. ESIA Delanta Revised
- 19. ESIA Mirab Abaya Revised
- 20. ESIA Amba Alage Revised Draft
- 21. ESIA Dessie Zuria Revised

- 22. ESIA Endamehoni Revised Draft
- 23. ESIA Lemo Revised Draft
- 24. ESIA Meket Revised Draft
- 25. ESIA Sodo Revised Draft
- 26. ESIA Wadla Revised
- 27. Ethiopia CRGE strategy
- 28. Ethiopia Forest Sector Review\_ Final
- 29. SC minute FSDP and REDD investment
- 30. Ethiopia Country Strategic Plan (2020-2025)
- 31. Ethiopia 2030: The Pathway to Prosperity
- 32. CIFOR workshops, dates, participants
- 33. CIFOR Progress Report on Research
- 34. Catalysing the Ethiopian Forest Sector Development: Gender gap analysis and gender mainstreaming
- 35. Gap analysis and proposed modules for forestry extension training in Ethiopia
- National Capacity Gap analysis for governance, research, information and networking for transforming the Ethiopian forest sector
- 37. SLU progress reports

#### Interviews

A series of virtual<sup>2</sup> and physical one-on-one meetings were held with relevant stakeholders using a casual interview type setup. This approach allowed each interviewed party to be at ease when elaborating on their areas of expertise. In most cases, interviews extended well beyond the allocate timeslots. This was likely a result of the many open-ended questions used, leading to the application of snowball methodology for the collection of project information. Furthermore, an important part of interviewing was to triangulate key discussion points. This ensured the evaluation team had a solid understanding of different stakeholder perspectives regarding issues of note. This is an essential part of any evaluation process, allowing evidence to be fact checked and later confirmed.

The following organisations were interviewed as part of this evaluation:

- Addis Ababa University,
- Amhara Region REDD+
- CIFOR
- Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute
- Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute
- Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development
- Oromia Region
- Policy Studies Institute
- Royal Norwegian Embassy
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Ethiopian Regions: Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Somali, SNNP and Tigray.
- Wondo Genet College

Most project woredas/ districts: Delanta, Wadla and Sinan in Amhara; Kurmuk in Benishangul Gumuz; Ameya, Dubuluk, Goro and Welmera in Oromia; Ararso in Somali; and Chorso, Shashego and Sodo in SNNP. A list of individuals interviewed from each of the above organisations has been presented in the Annex 3.

#### **Regional Centres**

The national consultant completed virtual interviews with Amhara region (Delanta, Wadla and Sina woredas); Benishangul Gumuz region (Kurmuk woreda), Oromia region (Ameya, Dubuluk, Goro and Welmera woredas), Somali region (Ararso woreda) and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (Woreda's: Shashego, Sodo and Chorso). This allowed the evaluation to gain direct insight from the regions. However, it would have been far better to visit project sites to confirm actual implementation e.g., TBL, alternative livelihoods, etc and meet targeted beneficiaries.

Based on virtual interviews, the following project activities were noted:

Woreda	Project Activity
Delanta- Amhara	Afforestation/ Reforestation (A/R), livelihood interventions
Wadla- Amhara	A/R, livelihood interventions
Dawunt- Amhara	A/R, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)/ PFM, livelihood interventions
Sinan- Amhara	A/R, ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Jawi- Amhara	ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Virtual meetings were held using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx and WhatsApp. It's noted a number of interviewees that WebEx uses less bandwidth when operating from home. However, MS Teams worked very well in most cases. Teams provided good connectivity, scheduling and sound quality when using VoIP technology.

Kumru- Benishangul Gumuz	ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Welmera- Oromia	A/R, ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Ameya- Oromia	A/R, ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Goro- Oromia	A/R, ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Dubuluk- Oromia	ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Chorso- SNNP	A/R, ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Shashego- SNNP	A/R, livelihood interventions
Sodo- SNNP	A/R, livelihood interventions
Mirab Abaya- SNNP	A/R, livelihood interventions
Yem- SNNP	ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Somali - Ararso	ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions
Enda Mehoni- Tigray	A/R, ANR, livelihood interventions
Ofla- Tigray	A/R, ANR, livelihood interventions
Kafta Humera- Tigray	ANR/PFM, livelihood interventions

#### Assessment of Data for Evaluation

The lion's share of data analysed came from qualitatively processes with quantitatively data sourced from documents e.g., workshop, trainings, reports, publications and conferences. All qualitative data was evaluated using validation, triangulation, interpretations processes. Information captured were validated and where possible, later triangulated to match the different data sources. This technique is particularly important when trying to determine data inconsistencies. Thus, the evaluators made every effort to unbiasedly interpret opinions, collate, interpret findings and agree on positions to form consensus.

## DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

The ongoing rapid expansion of Ethiopia's population - with a growth rate of 2.5% pa – is one of the leading causes of deforestation and degradation of essential ecosystem goods and services. Since the majority of Ethiopians live in rural settings and are heavily reliant on the continuous supply of environmental goods and services, the combined situation of high population growth and rapid economic development has placed surmountable pressure on Ethiopia's already fragile forest landscape. This ongoing challenge is destroying the very services the people rely upon. In response, rural communities are now having to travel further and wider to collect firewood and other forest-based products. This has resulted in the quick disappearance of forests, the loss of soil structure, eroded lands and once productive landscapes becoming drylands. To fully understand the extent of this problem, Ethiopia has lost around 92 percent of its forest cover since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Needless to say, deforestation and the degradation of forest landscapes in Ethiopia is arguably one of the most pressing matters today.

#### Response to Challenge

The Institutional Strengthening for Catalysing Forest Sector Development Project aims to substantially contribute to the targets set forth in the National Forest Sector Development Program (NFSDP), the Climate Resilient Green Growth Strategy, the national REDD+ strategy and Ethiopia Nationally Determined Contribution.

In particular, the ISCFSD project seeks to technically support the following areas:

- a. Inadequate technical and technological capacities at federal and local level
- b. Limited research capacities and research direction
- c. Lack of forest resource cooperatives
- d. Limited technological innovation and application in forestry

e. Lack of private sector engagement across the forestry sector value chain

#### Theory of Change

The projects Theory of Change (ToC) has been design based on the following construct:

**Main Barriers**: Limited Capacity and function of key institutions; Lack of forest governance systems; Limited incentives for private sector engagement; Lack of Sustainable Forest Management Systems; Limited competitive forest business related enterprises; lack of green infrastructure in urban centres and urban planning system

This general situation has resulted in increased deforestation, forest degradation, drought and vulnerability to climate related change. To overcome the above barriers the following output related activities were identified. These would eventually lead to desired outcomes and eventual impacts with the targeted beneficiaries.

**Output 1**: Undertake a gap analysis to determine institutional capacities for effective delivery. This is followed by activities that aim to build research capacities for applied action-based research and where possible training rural extension services. These interventions are structured and delivered (where possible) in accordance to relevant national guidelines and policies. The successful implementation of the above package would result in improved *capacity of the forest sector at strategic and operational levels (Result Outcome 1)*.

**Output 2**: Forest landscapes are enhanced by engaging in forest restoration, conserving biodiversity across production landscapes and through the establishment of numerous forest-based cooperatives designed to enhance production and marketing of key forest products. This would create multifunctional landscapes across both rural and urban centres to improve the sustainability of tree-based production systems.

**Output 3**: To strengthen environmental stewardship and promote the adoption of urban greening, a number of pilot best practice green infrastructure projects in at least three model cities will showcase how green spaces can enrich urban biodiversity, reduce air pollution, improve water storage, noise pollution and greatly assist cooling during warmer month. Model green practices will add to the climate-proofing of urban centres and reducing the overall impacts of extreme weather events.

**Output 4**: The promotion of sustainable forest production is designed around the development of a forest governance system that will in part assist the creation of strong enabling Private Public Partnerships (PPP), or attract lead firm operating across the forestry value chain. Market driven forest-based interventions will eventually create much needed employment for over 400,000 women and youth, especially when engaging in Tree-Base Livelihoods (TBL). This output will improve the adoption and scaling of tree-based production systems.

#### Project Outputs and Indicators

The results framework provides the following four outputs, accompanying output indicators and baselines in the 24/10/2018 signed Project Document. The 10 indicators are listed below.

Output	Indicator	Baseline
	1.1 Number of enforced proclamations	New forest proclamation but not well enforced
1		due to lack of directives and regulations
1	1.2 Number of strong and functional	No strong institutional setup, especially at the
	institutional set-up	grass roots level

	1.3 % of appropriate forest-based Forest based technologies are not strong enoug	
	technologies generated and adopted	
	2.1 Hectares of forest landscape restored	No capacitated training centre that provides skill
2		training in forestry
2	2.2 % financial markets explored and	There are degraded areas to be restored
	utilised to assist biodiversity conservation	
	Number of model cities with environmental	Weak green infrastructure in model cities
3	stewardship fostered and piloted through	
	enhanced capacities and facilitation	
	4.1 % of strong and functional forest	NA
	business enterprises established for	
	enhanced economic return from forests.	
	4.2 Number if PPP facilitated in forest-based	There is no strong PPP scheme so far
4	business	
	4.3 Number of market linkage and value	There is no strong market linkage on important
	chain on key forest products created	forest products
	4.4 Number of Forest-based employment	The employment opportunity of the sector is not
	opportunities generated	clear

However, the 2020 Annual Work Plan (AWP) provided a new results framework that consists of 17 new indicators. These are shown below. Considering the AWP for 2019 and 2020 implemented project related activities in accordance to the new results framework, the updated indicator set is used for this MTR.

Output	Indicator	Baseline
	1. Number of institutions with strong and	Absence of strong institutional setup especially at
	functional set-ups	the grass root level
	2. Number of training centres capacitated	Weak capacity of forest training centres to provide
		skill training
1	3. Number of tailored skill trainings	Lack of skill-based training for forest extensionists
	4 Number of trained participants with	Limited skilled experts in forest management and
	enhanced awareness	forest husiness
	5 Number of forest information systems	Limited forest information system degraded
		highland and dryland areas to be restored
	6. Extent of key challenges of women in the	Poor participation of women in the sector
	sector identified	
2	7. Number of PPP and TBL initiated	Limited PPP and TBL pilots in the forest sector
	8. Hectares of dry forests restored	Degraded forest landscapes
	9. Hectares of Forest landscape restored	Degraded forest landscapes
	10. Extent of clear understanding on trade-	Limited information on trade-offs and impact of
	offs in new production systems	landscape changes on biodiversity
2	11. NFPAs with management plan	No management plan for NFPAs
5	12. number of new botanical gardens	Limited botanical gardens to support future FLR
		efforts
	13. Number of Covid vulnerable HH	Covid vulnerable communities
	supported	
	14. Number of cities with better capacities	Weak green infrastructure and facilities in cities
4	for greening	
	15. Number of trained urban experts with	Limited trained personnel on urban greening
	enhanced skills/knowledge on urban	
	greening	
	16. Hectare of land covered with preurban	Limited urban green infrastructure and no
	torests	comprehensive guideline for implementation

17. Number of pilot designs and guideline	Scarce pre-urban forests around cities
document on urban greening	

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the detailed findings of the MTR. The analysis and discussion are intended to assess the overall project progress and performance towards achieving outputs and output indicators. Again, this employs key evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability. As partnerships play a key role in ensuring that primary stakeholders achieve outcomes, all evaluation criteria will also cover relevant aspects of partnerships. For instance, how are they relevant; how effective have they been for the achievement of project outcomes etc.

#### UNDP and Project Partner Comparative Advantages

The evaluators found that the project had benefitted from UNDP's comparative advantage as a development enabler. This comparative advantage is based on the long-standing physical presence of the UNDP Country Office, with a long history of UN support to a wide range of political, governance, social, economic and sustainable development issues. As a UN agency, UNDP is trusted in Ethiopia as a neutral, impartial, objective, a-political development partner, backed by an enormous global body of technical expertise and experience in international development. Further, the UNDP Country Office has well established and effective working relationships with Government departments, and an indepth understanding of Ethiopian laws, policies and procedures.

A good example is UNDP engagement of SLU in the project which would not have resulted without UNDP leadership in this area. It's also recognised that UNDP partners have used "their" comparative advantages in a highly complementary way. UNDP facilitated international procurement of good and services, eco-innovation identified appropriate wood processing machines and the CIFOR procured and imported wood processing machines duty free.

#### Progress Against Project Indicators

The project logic envisaged that the overall objective will be achieved by attaining four key results. A set of four interrelated outputs have been identified to achieve project specific objectives which contribute to achieving the new CPD 2020- 2025/ UNSDCF OUTCOME: By 2025, all people in Ethiopia benefit from an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economy.

The four outputs are as follows:

- **Output 1**: Enabling environment for strong forest sector development
- Output 2: Forest ecosystem services enhanced
- Output 3: Model environmental stewardship in select urban areas
- Output 4: Sustainable Forest production and value chain promotion

Since beginning the second phase of the project, implementing partners have made ongoing efforts to position an extensive range of interventions to achieve outputs, notwithstanding the ongoing challenges presented by COVID 19, the Tigray People's Liberation Front that has greatly influenced project implementation, the unfortunate loss of at least one key project team member, and now a change in institutional arrangements governing Ethiopia's forestry sector.

This section provides a detailed assessment on the project teams achievements and effectiveness against each of the project indicators.

#### Indicator 1: Number of institutions with strong and functional set-ups

Solid progress was made towards building the knowledge and improved function of national and subnational forestry institutions. Current achievements are mostly attributed to the finalisation of various gap analyses that are being used to guide targeted interventions. This will ultimately support a thriving and vibrant Ethiopian forestry sector. Evaluators felt this work will be foundational to the overall longer-term success of the overall project.

**Governance Gap Analysis:** It was found that the forestry sector (i) lacks a clear path towards integration of key government institutions. This was particularly evident for agriculture, forestry and conservation. Interestingly, the government has recently placed forestry back under the remit of the agricultural sector. Value addition within the forestry sector was described as limited. The study noted the importance of (ii) building internal forest value chains to gain economic traction. However, with the (iii) lack of incentives, it will be an uphill battle to attract private sector investments to the sector. Even with private sector engagement, considerable planning is required, especially with respect to (iv) land use planning. Effective planning requires (v) up-to-date quality statistics to support fact-based decision making and planning processes. And finally, (vi) the best forest management practices need to be identified through documented research. These six areas will require institutions operated by knowledgeable technicians, along with well-defined and applied administrative and governance processes across all responsible institutions.

The five key recommendations from the study were:

- Establish an *analytical hub* for analysis, reporting, statistics and dialogue
- *Integrate* forestry with the agriculture and water sectors to encourage "one map policy"
- Promote value chains to drive entrepreneurship and workable tenure arrangements
- Encourage sector interactions for coordination, platforms, systems, programs and strategies
- Enhance *forest-based knowledge* to improve production forestry, piloting and evaluations

In addition to the governance gap analysis, the project team held a multi-stakeholder workshop on forest sector cross-cutting issues on the 23 August, 2019. This was an important milestone in the project with over 35 forest sector institutions/actors participating. Evaluators did not see/review any documentation related to this workshop.

**Forestry research and extension Gap analysis'**: Forest extension is an important component of achieving the goals set forth in the National Forest Sector Development Plan. The first strategy is to disseminate best forestry practices, ultimately delivered by well-informed forest extension agents. This requires the employment and retention of agents that have the tools and capacities to promote best land use practices that will improve the socio-economic wellbeing of communities, reduce environmental degradation and enhance ecosystem function.

Gaps at the federal level included the need for: (i) a responsible office to organise forest extension activities at the EFCCC; (ii) a clear division of responsibility between the MoA-NR directorate and the EFCCC at kebele and district level - this was especially evident for woodlots and small-scale forestry; (iii) formal linkages between research and extension to create demonstration plots that promote the adoption of new technologies and introduce activities that encourage value additions, and (iv) a largely revised Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) forestry curriculum that balances theory and practical exercises.

The above studies e.g., Governance Gap Analysis & Forestry research and extension Gap analysis', are being used to develop training plans and corresponding training modules that focus on forest

governance, forest administration and forest extension planning. At the time of this evaluation, no modules have been shared with the evaluation team for assessment.

#### Indicator 2: Number of training centres capacitated

Numerous "centres" have been capacitated on forest related knowledge across the fields of governance, administration and techniques. A number of the institutions identified below are likely not officially categorised as training centres however, the evaluators believed the smaller grassroot organisations are important "centres" for building forest sector knowledge, and for the strengthening of much needed technical skills.

*Wondo Genet College of Forestry (WGCF)*: Six training modules were prepared in partnership with local institutions (such as CIFOR) and the SLU. The modules are:

- Module 1: Soft skills in forestry extension
- Module 2: Small scale and community forestry
- Module 3: Agroforestry
- Module 4: Rehabilitation of degraded land
- Module 5: Silviculture and natural forest management
- Module 6: Commercialization of forest products.

The Training of Trainers (ToT) event was completed on two separate occasions. The first three modules were delivered (despite the COVID-19 challenge), and the second training launched for the remaining three modules. These trainings occurred from the 4 April to May 2, 2021 for 28 senior federal and regional experts. The trained trainers provided follow on training for more than 330 development agents that joined from their respective regions at Wondo Genet, Mertole Mariam and Holeta. This took place between September and October 2021.

*Small Scale Wood Processing*: A two-week training of technicians on the use of Chainsaw–based sawmills was organised and conducted by Eco Innovation Foundation in collaboration with the Wood Technology Research Center (WTRC) and held at the WTRC campus in January 2020. The WTRC under EEFRI was targeted for the ToT on "how to" operate a mobile wood processing machinery. This activity was led by the Eco-Innovation Foundation who led the technology pilot project.

As part of this work the following equipment was procured for wood processing. This procurement was made possible through SLU, with the support of the EIF.

#### Chainsaw–based sawmills

• Two complete Logosol chainsaw mills (one Logosol F2+ and on Logosol Big Mill with corresponding chainsaws from Stihl) – delivered to WTRC.

#### Mobile bandsaws

- Two complete mobile bandsaws (Logosol Bandsaw B751), one petrol driven and one electric.
- 1 Logosol Board Edger C210
- 1 Panel Planer PH260
- 1 Soloplaner SH410

These items are currently kept at ILRI campus awaiting transfer to the WTRC. Training is planned but unfortunately postponed due to travel restrictions for Swedish and US based trainers.

In addition to SLU and EIF supported equipment, the CIFOR procured:

- Three complete Logosol chainsaw mills (two Logosol F2+ and one Logosol Big Mill with corresponding chainsaws from Stihl)
- Two complete mobile bandsaws (Logosol Bandsaw B751)

This equipment is also being kept at ILRI campus awaiting transfer to the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise. Again, training is planned but postponed due travel restrictions for Swedish and US based trainers.

**Regional Centres/Weredas**: Regional coordinators have been employed at five regional states and 19 Weredas. Further, nine project vehicles were purchased. These are expected to significantly enhance delivery in the latter half of the project.

**Laboratory**: Its understood laboratory equipment was purchased for the project and supplied to research and training institutions. However, no information was provided by project stakeholders on what was actually supplied or what institutions benefited.

**Clonal Nursery**: The project engaged an international expert to design a clonal nursery which included the identification of materials for cloning, and the materials and equipment to establish a greenhouse and nursery operations at Gefersa (about 20 km from Addis).

#### Indicator 3. Number of tailored skill trainings provided

Despite the ongoing pandemic, lockdowns and limited physical appearance of institutional staff, the project team persevered with the capacitation of key central and local institutions. As a result, steady progress was made against this indicator due to the use of digital VoIP technologies to deliver trainings. With the upcoming emergence of Web 3, it highly probable virtual trainings will become mainstreamed in the future – think a combination of mobile devices, accessible internet <u>www.starlink.com</u> and the upcoming emergence of the metaverse. Such innovations will greatly assist governments to avoid exorbitant national extension programs, and better ensure farmers (irrespective of gender) are able to access knowledge on demand.

*Skills Training Forest Extension*: A curriculum development workshop was held on the 11- 15th of November, 2019 in Addis Ababa to initialise ToT activities. As a result, ToT work began at Wondo Genet College of Forestry with a two-month ToT package delivered to 28 (5 women) senior regional experts and college teachers on six newly designed skill-based modules. These include (i) Soft skills in forestry extension, (ii) Small scale and community forestry, (iii) Agroforestry, (iv) Rehabilitation of degraded land, (v) Silviculture and natural forest management and (vi) Commercialization of forest products. These individuals that joined ToT training went onto train 330 development agents in the first phase, at three centers. This is planned to continue in 2022. Other training modules were designed for urban Green Space Planning, Development and Management. Tailored training on urban green infrastructure was conducted twice. Altogether it was reported that 33 individuals were trained from federal and regional states.

*Wood Processing and Drying*: A tailored ToT package was designed to build the capacity of staff from WTRC of EEFRI on the operation of equipment. Training is to be extended to OFWE and interested youth groups working in wood processing.

**Development Research**: A total of 20 researchers at EEFRI and 32 researcher at Wondo Genet College have received personal mentorship to undertake action-based research. Development-oriented action research is in progress although it has been challenging for supervisor to transition thinking from academic based research to more action-based development research. There's still a strong domineering mindset by researchers to change. Insight provided on researchers indicated more

training is needed to position action-based research. This will require closer collaboration among researchers for the exchange of lessons learnt and the integration of research findings. Evaluators did not have the contact details of any student researchers involved in the project.

Researchers have so far observed the following preliminary findings:

#### 1. Research Topic: Best approaches to Tree-based livelihoods (TBL)

The researchers are anticipating two major TBL categories to result from the study. These include those that desire to shift directly to TBL in full or part thereof, and secondly those who desire increased tree cover and tree-based incomes, but while maintaining diversified income streams from cash crops and livestock. These people will have different preferences and support needs. There are also landless youth that could be engaged in TBL. This would require participating districts to organise interested stakeholders into associations, and provide these individuals with sufficient land to make a living. Researchers plan to further explore these options.

#### 2. Research Topic: Best practices for dry forest management

Research provided options for improved management of dry forest resources in Jawi district. This includes the improvement of forest ownership through the issuance of forest land use certificates, and opening up access to participatory forest management. This approach would be complemented by focusing on specific tree-based products to produce gum/resin, fire wood, charcoal and timber. It would also require business development across the forest value chain e.g., nursery, processing etc. to generate employment opportunities.

#### 3. *Research Topic:* Value addition and processing Bamboo

Bamboo charcoal, and semi-processed bamboo culms were identified as promising products for piloting. This would require the identification of existing cooperatives or producers (or processor groups), and building the capacities of cooperative members. The establishment of lowland bamboo management demonstration sites and treatment plants would follow. The effective implementation of such activities is expected to increase bamboo income by about 60-70% for rural communities. It's also expected that at least 50% of the beneficiaries would be women.

#### 4. Research Topic: Value addition and marketing of frankincense

The study has so far found that the natively occurring species *Boswellia papyrifera*, a tree prized for the essential oil "frankincense", could well have commercial value as an export - or possibly as a potential new essential oil industry for Ethiopia. This is based on the global frankincense market to reach over US\$ 405 million by 2028. Researchers will explore different essential oil extraction methods, continue engaging the Global Frankincense Alliance and approach the Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE) to begin discussions on frankincense quality standards.

#### 5. *Research Topic*: Functionality of best model cooperatives (for scale up)

Criteria have been formed for the selection of 2-3 "best practice" forest-based cooperatives. Research will inform needs-based technical training on managerial and marketing skills. It will also examine coop infrastructure requirements and prospective local and international buyers.

#### 6. *Research Topic*: Opportunities and challenges for youth and women to engage in forestry

The research team demonstrated that 11% of youth and 14% of women had a forest-based business. The main constraints for conducting business in this area included lack of access to financial services, land, electricity, wood technologies, technical training, distance from economic centres and

prohibitive government regulations. More specifically, access to training was one of the determining factors for youth established forest-based businesses.

7. *Research Topic*: Managing trade-offs between agriculture and forestry, and improving landscape restoration

The research team aims to work towards developing a decision tool to better evaluate the impact of agricultural land expansion into (i) forest land and ii) plantation expansion on agricultural lands. This will be complimented by an evaluation of EFCCC forest landscape restoration efforts, and the preparation of a policy brief to inform planners and decision makers.

The above seven topics will continue in 2022 with five masters' students<sup>3</sup> engaged to directly support the research teams, especially on the collection of rural household data. The master students will be guided by CIFOR and EEFRI and eventually publish a series of research papers.

#### Other development-oriented interdisciplinary thematic action research projects

A total of 32 researchers were technically support by WGCF-NR to undertake Development oriented interdisciplinary action research on three thematic areas or topics. The research topics included:

- Ecotourism potentials and local people's socioeconomic benefits around the Wondo Genet Forest catchments
- Resource Use Conflict Management (Trade-off Management Approach) of Wondo Genet Catchment, Central Ethiopia
- Ecosystem Services of the Wondo Genet Forest Catchments to the surrounding communities, Wondo Genet Sidama Regional State. This included an assessment of services, co-management with the community and valuation of ecosystem services.

Some of the experts from WGCF-NR have also participated on the tree-based livelihood studies at Chorso site in SNNP, collaborating with the EEFRI team.

*Clonal Nursery*: Technicians were trained on how to identify materials for cloning, and the equipment required to establish a greenhouse nursery operation.

#### Indicator 4. Number of trained participants with enhanced awareness

Evaluators did not interview any participants engaged in trainings although a number of reports prepared by trainees were reviewed. These proved to be of good quality with clear capacities demonstrated. However, evaluators did not have a starting baseline for any of the individuals.

#### Indicator 5. Number of forest information systems

Some progress made on the development of forest information system. Evaluators were not able to log into the beta version of the proposed ISCFSD supported system. Furthermore, the questionnaire used to collect household level data to produce the first forest statistics booklet was not shared with the evaluation team.

**Database Management System**: An interactive web-based Database Management System (DBMS) is currently being developed. Evaluators were informed the system is at a beta stage. The knowledge management tool is being designed to allow the institution to effectively manage spatial and non-spatial information from the ISCFSD Project. The DBMS is described to have a dedicated reporting system and a web function that supports public outreach. However, despite the details provide, and the sharing of a web link <u>https://fsdp.efcccc.gov.et</u>, the system link presents the following message

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Four from Wondo Genet College and one from Addis Ababa Universities

"This site can't be reached. Check if typo in fsdp.efcccc.gov.et, if spelling is correct, try running windows network Diagnostics. NS\_PROBE\_FINISHED\_NXDOMAIN. The evaluation team was unable to assess the systems User Interface (UI) nor assess User Experience (UX) e.g., operability and functionality. However, the front end <a href="https://fsdp.efccc.gov.et">https://fsdp.efccc.gov.et</a> web-based database system is functional and currently presents some information related to ISCFSD, as well as REDD+ Investment Plan and CFSDP projects.

**Forest Statistics**: The ongoing collection of quality forest statistics will eventually make form an important part of the database management system. This project activity looks to be moving forward gradually. The Swedish Forest Agency (SFA) has been working with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to investigate and present partial solutions on how data on forest cover change (restoration, afforestation and deforestation) in relation to time, programs and land classes (ownership, tenure, biophysical class, etc.) can be handled. SFA also explored the application of various technologies related to relative or total sampling, cost and time perspective.

The SFA had eventually assisted to determine what data is possible to collect within the sector, and at reasonable effort and cost, like for example information on price development and regional/local production and markets (volumes, market actors etc.). There were also discussions on what data and relevant statistics could be sought outside the sector such as land-use and landscape development, water availability, biodiversity and rural economic development. It was eventually agreed to gather bulk forestry statistics by including targeted questions in the national census questionnaire. This approach would save a lot of time and money. As part of this process, it was reported to evaluators that forestry specific questions were developed and commented on by SFA. These suggestions were incorporated into the working document. The Central Statistics Agency (CSA) now needs to be fully on-boarded to better ensure the institutionalisation of this important activity. Furthermore, Commercial data is being collected by central statistics agency, with household data collection to begin in March, 2022.

It's also noted that the EFCCC worked with the Central Statistics Agency to develop data collection instruments. It's reported that a series of meetings were organized and CIFOR contributed technically and logistically to make this happen. This was a major development as after piloting same in 2022. It will form part of the Annual Agricultural Survey. This will allow for the collection of information on tree planting activities, planting niches and objectives, as well as income from tree and forests at household level. Similar effort is also being made to collect data from forest-based enterprises.

It's understood a workshop was arranged to discuss forest statistics and develop a roadmap for the design and eventual publication of a forestry statistics yearbook. The commission agreed that both Central Statistical Agency and EFCCC would lead these activities jointly however, an MoU between CSA and EFCCC is yet to be signed.

It's also reported to evaluators that the project team had provided training to over 230 ISCFSDP and other sister project staff on GIS, land use planning, geodata recording to facilitate collection and communication of forestry data.

#### Indicator 6. Extent of key challenges of women in the sector identified

An extensive survey was undertaken that cut across five regional states and nine woredas to survey a total of 36 communities consisting of 1080 households. A further gender gap analysis was finalised with an upcoming validation workshop in Q4, 2021. The team plans to prepare a policy brief on gender mainstreaming in Ethiopia forestry sector and publish a number of journal articles.

*Gender gap analysis and gender mainstreaming*: This study was prepared to guide what further knowledge base is required for institutions to effectively regulate gender related aspects of Ethiopia's

forestry sector. The analysis provides a national overview with a specific focus on governance, research, education, training, extension services/producer incentives and value chain development. Recommendations are provided on how to integrate gender perspectives and sensitive actions into the forestry sectors transformation – particularly in relation to sustainable forest production, value chain development and marketing.

The gender study concluded that rural women:

Are generally not involved in extension programs. This results in limited decision-making power and limited visibility to extension and rural development programs – attributed to socially constructed gender bias of mostly male agents and/or limited control over land and resources;

Have limited involvement across the forestry value chain with most management positions dominated by males. However, the production of planting material and associated activities including urban greening and forest enterprises were predominately dominated by females;

Have limited opportunity in high school and therefore limited ability to engage in higher education and specialisation. This situation was a likely result of limited institutionalisation of the governments gender policy.

The authors' main concluding recommendations were:

- Rural development agents should be exposed to intensive gender sensitization and training
- More female extension agents are required for outreach to female farmers
- Greater effort needed to rollout government gender policy
- Efforts required to promote women participation in secondary and higher education to stop women educational disparity

#### Indicator 7. Number of PPP and TBL initiated

Progress is being made towards the development of Private Public Partnerships and the establishment of Tree Based Livelihoods. It's anticipated much of the foundational work undertaking in 2020-2021 will play a key role in guiding implementation in 2022.

**PPP Focus:** One day workshop hosted to discuss how to better engage the private sector in forestbased investments. Over 100 participants attended to discuss issues ranging from experiences of forest based private sectors, challenges and opportunities, future prospects, legal and policy issues, forestry with the eyes of cooperative agency and lessons learnt from Sweden's Forest entrepreneurship program.

**Tree Based Livelihoods**: The project team prepared a review of global and national experiences for smallholder tree plantings and the transition to tree-based livelihoods. This work was followed by field visits to Yem and Chorso (SNNP Region), Walmara (Oromia region) and Sinan and Basona Warana (in Amhara region) which supported the identification of three groups for transitioning to tree-based livelihoods. These included: (i) households that would like to engage in complete and immediate transitioning to tree growing; (ii) households that prefer step wise or gradual or partial transitioning to tree growing; and (iii) households who opt for optimal tree integration into their farming system using fruit, timber, or other species. However, due to time limitations, unknown longer term support structures and budget availability, the team felt it was only possible to pilot option three with 500 farmers. The approach will be scaled to a further two Woredas in 2022. There's also a plan to produce a TBL guideline for development practitioners.

The current PPP aspect of TBL work includes the need to define the legal and financial barriers to bridge the lengthy time span between planting and harvesting. The project team mentioned the need for out grower schemes and the possible involvement of state enterprise. An Msc student's work on "Determinants of smallholders' commercial plantation establishment: challenges and opportunities to promote tree-based livelihoods in Walmara and Choroso districts, Ethiopia" will provide direction on the way forward for public private engagement.

**Wood Processing**: In partnership with Logosol, a Swedish based international company that develops wood processing and woodworking machines (that are both innovative and affordable to own and operate) are being deployed as part of the projects work to engage private public partnerships. Due to Logosol's simple, reliability, and efficient designs, it is envisaged that if the appropriate entrepreneurs are targeted and receive the appropriate professional training, it would be possible to scale up the adoption of small wood processing machines in Ethiopia. This would target the milling of Ethiopian grown timbers into higher quality domestic products.

**Frankincense**: The project team is currently exploring the feasibility of frankincense as "one of the "TBL options in Ethiopia. To determine if Ethiopian grown frankincense has the desired attributes for international markets, samples will be collected from three regions, with alternative oil extraction methods piloted by the university in 2022.

**Bamboo**: MSc thesis research work on pro poor value chain development in Highland Bamboo (*Yushania alpina*) was completed. The writeup is progressing well. Value addition options for highland bamboo were identified. Processing and value addition equipment list prepared and procurement is underway. Training of bamboo processors on how to use improved sets of tools and produce better quality bamboo products will be conducted in 2022. The gains in product quality, productivity and income of wood processors will be assessed and findings documented when completed.

**Cooperatives**: A joint collaboration between the Federal Cooperatives Promotion Agency and EFCCC, EEFRI and CIFOR was established to work collectively to design selection criteria for the identification of model cooperatives. The draft criterion was shared at a workshop to gain critical feedback which was later incorporated into the final endorsed selection criteria. The criteria will now be used to select three model cooperatives in 2022. During this process the project team found limitations in the current cooperative establishment guidelines. As a results, the project team has now begun to develop cooperative guidelines that will be customised for forest-based cooperatives. The first draft of the guideline is planned for 2022.

#### Indicator 8. Hectares of dry forests restored

Initial assessments by the project team, and a university post graduate, have provided the basis to inform the best way forward for dryland forest management. Current progress will support improved dryland forest management.

The team assessed the current options available to improve dry forest management with a specific focus on the use of *Acacia polyacantha* to increase sustained incomes from community managed dry forests. This included the adoption of wood processing equipment to promote added value following the cultivation of *Cordia africana*. An MSc student has recently completed studies on the contribution of dry forests to local livelihoods in Jawi district northwest, Ethiopia. Results from this work will be used to guide the preparation of a dry forest management plan for Jawi district in 2022.

Up to now over 57,000 ha of dry forests in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, SNNP and Somali regional states were demarcated, and the surrounding community are being organized into PFM cooperatives to restore and manage the forests.

#### Indicator 9. Hectares of Forest landscape restored

The main output of work surrounding Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) centred around the preparation of a literature review of available published information. At this stage, 1,639 ha of land has been restored through afforestation/reforestation, out of the total 2063 ha targeted in five regional states (Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, SNNP and Somali). The status in Tigray is not known due to lack of information, affected by security problems in the region. The mentioned FLR review was not shared with the evaluation team, therefore no comment could be made on the quality of the document. The Forest Landscape Restoration literature review is said to include a checklist of issues observed during a field mission to EFCCC restoration sites. The project team's idea going forward is to consolidate the results of the overall review process (which covers the impact of land use change on biodiversity, hydrology and degraded forest restoration) to eventually produce a federal and regional institutional "how to" guideline that standardises the options for effective land restoration. It's understood equipment was sourced to allow researchers to study hydrological impacts as a result of land use change.

#### Indicator 10. Extent of clear understanding on trade-offs in new production systems

To understand the trade-offs for different production land uses, the project team is investigating trade-offs between agricultural encroachment into natural forests and agricultural lands converted to a forest plantation. Two students engaged in the research are exploring the following topics: (i) Trade-offs in forest conservation and agricultural expansion linked to land use change: the case of Gura-ferda district, Bench-Sheko Zone, south west Ethiopia. And (ii) Land use changes and major drivers of land use change in the Awi Zone of Amhara Region, Ethiopia. These studies will provide the necessary biophysical and socioeconomic data to better understand the trade-offs of different production systems.

#### Indicator 11. NFPAs with management plan

The evaluators did not see any information pertaining to project work on National Forest Priority Areas. Evaluators were made aware that under the new forest proclamation, there are in fact no designation of forest as National Forest Priority Areas (refer to the proclamation).

#### Indicator 12. number of new botanical gardens

Work has started on the creation of a seed gene bank and the establishment of one botanical garden (135 ha received from Gambella region). There are now ongoing discussions to establish another botanical garden in Bahir Dar (43 ha) as well as strengthen existing botanic gardens in Shahemene and JImma town.

#### Indicator 13. Number of Covid vulnerable HH supported

Evaluators did not see an information pertaining to COVID service responses by the project to vulnerable households.

#### Indicator 14. Number of cities with better capacities for greening

Work is steadily progressing in the areas of greening urban centres however, COVID-19 has resulted in significant delays. Further ground work is needed before urban green planning experts can provide practical advisory on how Ethiopia could push forward with this segment of work. Over the course of the project implementation, the team has undertaken two field visits to familiarised themselves with Ethiopia's Urban Green Infrastructure (UGI), planning and testing protocols and institutional frameworks. They also engaged with three cities to understand current situations, future greening needs to maintain critical ecosystem services, as well as identify the key challenges for the design and later implementation of UGI. Evaluators were informed that the green space planning work was dedicated to urban planning experts and is a separate programme and results area. The plan was to train 15 individuals, but evaluators were told that over 30 members were capacitated on the subject.

It's understood that the project team has started drafting the following:

- Mapping UGI (Cities of Adama, Addis Ababa and Kombolcha)
- UGI framework and methodology

The above-mentioned documents were not shared with the evaluation team and therefore evaluators were not able to review this work. It's understood the UGI team had conducted two of three planned workshops with the cities of Addis Ababa and Kombolcha (Adama remaining), to provide input into the design of green plans, peri-urban forest planning and model recreation parks. Training activities in collaboration with Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Addis Ababa University are also planned, but travel bans and closure of the university - COVID pandemic - has caused delays.

#### Indicator 15. No. of trained urban experts with enhanced skills on urban greening

Two workshops were organized with the urban greening component, one in Addis Ababa (25 participants, April 2019) and one in Kombolcha (35 representatives with participants from all three cities, November 2019). Furthermore, work is underway to finalise materials related to green structure plan, peri-urban forest plan and model recreation park design. It was also stated by the project team that 33 regional experts trained in Urban landscape design for two weeks at Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources. However, as stated above, the evaluation team did not cite any draft greening frameworks, UGI mapping or corresponding notes.

#### Indicator 16. Hectare of land covered with pre-urban forests

The project has yet to plant out any pre-urban forests.

#### Indicator 17. Number of pilot designs and guideline document on urban greening

With the allocated budget for this activity, designing pilot green urban infrastructure was not possible. Instead, the project focused on preparation of plan for green space. The plan is being finalized. Preurban forest site shall be indicated on the plan. The national guideline for use by cities during master plan preparation/ revision is also being developed. It will be finalized before the end of 2021.

#### Project Management

**REPORTING**: The project management section of the ProDoc states that the IP will produce joint quarterly reports for follow up and evaluation<sup>4</sup>. The review process found no evidence of formal quarterly reporting although annual reports had been produced. These contained limited financial breakdowns of expenditures against outputs/activities, and didn't report against the indicator framework.

**MONITORING & EVAULATION**: The M&E plan should be clearly linked to the resource framework by using the results framework targets and indicators as the basis for M&E. The evaluation found no such linkages in the M&E plan. The planned M&E activities were also quite limited. It therefore appears that the project team had limited dealings with the initial results framework as a project planning, management and monitoring and evaluation tool. Thus, the implementation of M&E was not fully effective.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Page 26 of signed Project Document.

Irrespective of these short comings, the project team and supporting UNDP staff have achieved some impressive results – obviously through innate project management skills, driven by personality, commitment, strong work ethic and natural intelligence. However, the true measure of project success is not how much money has been spent, how many activities carried out, how many documents produced, or how many training courses or workshops held, but whether or not the project has had the desired impact - in terms of building capacity and achieving the reforms needed for a resilient forestry sector. At least one stakeholder group that reviewed the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the MTR agreed (see Annex 1) with this evaluators comment. The reviewer stated that the persistent message from SIDA and UNDP during the project has been that the resource liquidation has been too slow. Project partners believed this situation led to unrealistic implementation timeframes. Project partners said they were led to believe by SIDA that all funds should be consumed before July 2020, but later it became clear that no further funding would be available until after 2021. Evaluators believe it's critical for UNDP and donors alike to place "equal focus" on the achievement of impacts as well as expenditure targets.

In closing, it would be useful for relevant UNDP staff and IPs to receive formal training in project design and management, including the development and use of project resource frameworks and linked M&E plans as project planning, management and monitoring tools. This will better ensure project(s) have strong, clear and well-articulated result frameworks and M&E plans. Needless to say, these are powerful tools for managing and monitoring project implementation.

## **PROJECT RATINGS**

This evaluation provides ratings across the various project elements and for each of the key performance indicators. Rating scales are provided below.

Rating Scales

Relevance	Project Design, Effectiveness, Efficiency & Execution	Sustainability	Indicators
A Highly Relevant	A Highly Satisfactory: No	A Likely: Negligible risks.	A Highly Satisfactory: No
B Relevant	Shortcomings.	B Moderately Likely: Moderate	
C Partly Relevant	B Satisfactory: Minor shortcomings.	risks.	B Satisfactory: Minor shortcomings.
D Not relevant	<b>C Moderately Satisfactory</b> : Some shortcomings.	C Moderately Unlikely: significant risks.	<b>C Moderately Satisfactory</b> : Some shortcomings.
	<b>D Moderately Unsatisfactory</b> : Significant shortcomings.	b onincity. Severe risks.	<b>D Moderately Unsatisfactory</b> : Significant shortcomings.
	E Unsatisfactory: Major problems.		E Unsatisfactory: Major problems.
	F Highly Unsatisfactory: Severe problems.		F Highly Unsatisfactory: Severe problems.

Assessment of project achievements and performance was based on the expectations set out in the Project Results Framework. As mentioned previously, the results framework e.g., indicators, have changed from the original signed ProDoc. To assess the project, ratings were provided for project relevance, design, effectiveness, efficiency, execution and sustainability. Furthermore, to supply a more targeted critic, ratings have also been given for each newly created project indicator.

*Project Design*: Project Design is such an important aspect of any project. Without good solid design there is no structure. The ultimate success of a project is very much dependent on overall project design.

Relevance & Project Design		
Rating	Reasons for Rating	
с	<i>Project Design</i> : The current project is overly complex and consists of too many activities and too many partners to target clear achievable impacts. More careful consideration should be applied to project design to ensure the level of resourcing and implementation timeframes are better aligned to the objectives and overall scope of the project. Furthermore, more careful consideration to ensuring a strong, clear and well-articulated resource framework and M&E plan are needed to ensure the project is on track to deliver against donor "agreed" indicators. Without donor support this project would not have been a reality.	
В	<i>Relevance</i> : The ISCFSD project is highly relevant to Ethiopia's development context and is generally well aligned to the broader national development priorities, policies and plans of Ethiopia's forestry sector. Overall, project commitments provide adequate institutional basis and frameworks at national, regional and district levels for the implementation of project activities. However, despite these strengths, there is very limited coherence amongst responsible government institutions to fully harness the massive potential of the sector. This critical aspect could easily be a project in itself due to the overall importance of institutional coherence, messaging and unified direction.	

*Project Effectiveness*: The concept of efficiency and effectiveness are commonly used when evaluating projects. Since projects often struggle with the balance between time, cost and quality, it's important to undertake activities efficiently and effectively, with the latter defined as 'value-formoney', or more simply put, how much is achieved for each dollar invested. With efficiency and effectiveness in mind, the project team can strive to ensure activities are performed in the best possible way to deliver the best outcome for the end client. The ISCFSDP uses the Direct Implementation Modality to manage the project funds which essentially means funds are not provided directly to Government. There were complaints about the funding mechanism and the time taken to receive finances. This was evident at the central level, with regional centers experiencing slow and often limited financing which hampered speed and progress.

Project	Project Effectiveness			
Rating	Reasons for Rating			
С	<i>Effectiveness</i> : Overall, the ISCFSD delivered a wide range of activities and outputs across the project outputs despite the loss of key project staff, reduce budgets, the COVID pandemic and the ongoing conflict. However, there were still opportunities to increase project delivery if removing some of the frictions attached to financial disbursement. During interviews there were complaints on the time taken to receive project finances. This was particularly evident at regional centres who all reported slow and often highly limited budget allocations that were seemingly detached from the ambitious workloads. Slow disbursements were likely one of the contributing factors for reduced project effectiveness. At the mid-term, most if not all projected activities under the project are yet to be finalised. It could be concluded that without full implementation and operationalisation of outstanding activities, much of the investment made so far may be wasted.			

*Project Efficiency*: Total resources required for the project amounted to US \$46,544,881 out of which \$23,000,000 was to be provided by Sweden and a further 1,250,000 from UNDP TRAC allocations. The GoE provided 5,000,000 in-kind contributions. The total budget for Years 1 (2019), 2 (2020) and 3 (2021) were originally projected in the ProDoc to be 7,784,717, 4,219,978 and 10,826,829 USD respectively. However, the actual reported budgets for year 2 was 3,399,305. After reviewing the

2020 EFCCC report and the 2020 financial audit report prepared by Solomon Shewaye, it's understood that total expenditures for year 2 (2020) was \$1,684,187. Thus, the project team was able to deliver 49.5 percent of the reduced allocated budget. Expenditures (USD) by project outputs are graphically illustrated below for the 2020 AWP.



It's acknowledged that the original signed ProDoc was for 46 million while the Annual Workplan and agreements that EFCCC signed with partners - notably SLU and CIFOR - is based on about 8 or 9 million. CIFOR believed that the change in indicator framework was a likely result in the change of project financing. Again, the evaluators did not see any formal documentation regarding the agreed change of project indicators.

Project Efficiency		
Rating	Reasons for Rating	
C+	<i>Efficiency:</i> Overall, given the challenges experienced by the project e.g., staff changes, time constraints from the ongoing COVID pandemic and a significantly reduced budget, the project could be considered as fairly efficient against delivered workload and denounced results (high delivery to resources ratio = efficient). Efficiencies were also improved via virtual technical trainings which saved on logistics and travel costs. It's noted that stakeholders were surprisingly pleased with the results of virtual training. However, project efficiencies could be improved by ensuring partners, particularly top performers received financing in a timely manner. Further, a clear actionable monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be designed and actively implemented. As per the most recent financials of the project, over 315,000 USD was spent on M&E (page 9 of the 2020 financial report), this is despite no monitoring plans, or any formalised monitoring programme for evaluation purposes.	

*Project Execution and Management*: The project utilises the Direct Implementation Modality to manage project funds. As for UNDP handling of funds, there were complaints on the time taken for partners to receive funding at central and regional centres. In particular, regional actors felt the slowness of budget disbursements had seriously hampered progress and the ability to deliver beyond what was reported. The project steering committee chaired by the GoE is responsible for making operational policies and strategic management decisions, including the approval of annual work plans and budgets. Although the committee meets annually, with the one meeting covering the catalysing project and the Norwegian financed Forest Sector Development Project, there was not mention of delayed financing in the meeting notes. However, project technical meeting held fortnightly at the beginning of the project (and sporadically thereafter) did provide some insight into delayed financing.

Team member	Position	End date
Mr. Ababu Anage	Project Manager at UNDP	Still active
Dr. Tefera Mengistu	National Project Coordinator	April 2021
Dr. Tefera Belay	Program Officer & National Project Coordinator	Still active
Dr. Kibruyesfa Sisay	GIS Specialist	Still active
Mr. Teshale Lamboro	M & E Expert	Still active
Mr. Sintayehu Derese Kassa	Amhara region coordinator	Still active
Mr. Yohannes Tame	Benishangul Gumuz region coordinator	Sill active

The project consisted of the following team members\*:

Mr. Debela Tesfaye	Oromia region coordinator	Still active
Dr. Teshale Woldeamanuel	SNNP region coordinator	Sill active
Mr. Hilal Mohamed	Somali region coordinator	Still active
Mr. Mulugeta Gebresilassie	Tigray region coordinator	Sill active, out of reach
Mr. Habtamu Asres	Delanta Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Melaku	Wadla Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Nigus	Dawunt Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Kurabachew Tenaw	Sinan Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Amansew Tilahun	Kurmuk Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Tamiru Kapitano	Welmera Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Megersa Gebisa	Ameya Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Teferi Zawuge	Goro Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Jatani Garbole	Dubuluk Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Mekonnen	Chorso Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Dereje Articho	Shashego Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mrs. Belaynesh Zewdie	Sodo Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Teramaje Bezabih	Mirab Abaya Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Andinet Bezabih	Yem Woreda coordinator	Still active
Mr. Hilal Mohamed	Ararso Woreda coordinator	Still active
Dr. Mesele Negash	Focal person at Wondo Genet CFNR	Still active
Dr. Erik Karltun	Focal person at SLU	Still active
Dr. Habtemariam Kassa	Focal person at CIFOR	Still active
Dr. Agena Anjulo	Focal person at EEFRI	Still active
Dr. Shasho Megersa	Focal person at WTRC	Still active
Mr. Hailu Atnafu	Focal person at EBI	?
Mr. Getachew Chibsa	Focal Person Holeta Polytechnic college	?
Banchamlak Kassie	Focal Person Mertule Mariam TVET College	?
Dr.Anders Malmer	SLU	Still active
Dr.Erik Sollander	SFA	Still active
Dr.Gun Lidestav	SLU	Still active
Dr.Kalle Johansson	SLU	Still active
Dr.Klas Bengtsson	EIF	Still active
Dr.Åsa Ode Sang	SLU	Still active
Dr.Ishi Buffam	SLU	Still active

\*Individuals that played an active role delivering the various project activities.

Project Execution & Management			
Rating	Reasons for Rating		
С	Considering the loss of key project staff, the COVID pandemic and conflict which has now escalated into a state of emergence, project execution has been reasonably good. However, the management of the project requires a higher level of coordination through commonly used project management tools such as regularly occurring meetings and quarterly reports (with financials). The financial disbursement mechanism also needs reviewing.		

*Project sustainability* involves both individual and organisational responsibility to ensure outputs, outcomes and benefits are sustainable over life cycles and during their creation, implementation and closure of projects. Building sustainability into the vision at the very start of the project is the best way of planning for success. Applying this approach ensures sustainability is core to any project.

*Financial risks to sustainability*: Due to the limited financial resources of the national government, external financial support will be required to fully implement the project and eventually replicate in all regions. During discussions on sustainability with stakeholders, the reduced funds were sighted as a point of concerns by central bodies, where regional counterparts were more concerned by the limited availability of finances. Although these concerns are noted and obviously in need of attention, they both focus on the continued generous contribution of donors and bi-laterals to sustain forestry projects. This alone brings a major risk since implementing partners focus much of their attention and dependence on the continued supply of donor funds. This will ultimately lead to failure unless the most promising activities are scaled to become part of the local economy. This requires not only political buy in, but also the buy in from all industry actors e.g., technical colleges, forestry businesses, financial institutions, etc.

Institutional frameworks and governance risks to sustainability: The project is aligned to the broader national development priorities, policies and plans of Ethiopia's forestry sector. Overall, these commitments provide adequate institutional basis and frameworks at both the national, regional and district level for the implementation of the project. However, despite having a solid forestry strategy and a reasonably well-developed policy framework, there is still very limited coherence amongst responsible government institutions to fully harness the massive potential of Ethiopia's forestry sector. If this is not improved going forward, it will be extremely difficult for the project to sustain any of the enabling activities undertaken by the catalysing project, along with the piloted activities at the grassroots. On the latter, without government involved its highly likely many activities would finish once the project ends. Nonetheless, the project team members have made efforts to improve coordination among stakeholders – particularly at the regional level – but with the unfortunate loss of key senior staff members, COVID, the cancelation of flights and the lockdown of institutions e.g., universities etc, this has brought considerable challenges.

Other strategic risks to sustainability: The original project document outlines a number of strategic risks along with the measures to be taken for their mitigation (Page 53 ProDoc). The table below provides a summary of these risks, mitigation measures and the current status of each risk at the mid-term. Status updates below were prepared by the evaluators based on stakeholder consultations and the evaluators overall understanding of risk areas.

Risk No.	Description	Countermeasures	Status
1	Political and governance failure of the law enforcement and competing interest for land	Conduct series of meetings with stakeholders and local authorities and reach consensus on law enforcement	P = 4 I = 4
2	Lack if harmony on strategies and policies of sectors for coordination	Awareness raising and effective communication strategy.	P = 5 I = 4
3	Insufficiency in institutional capacity for implementing programme and attract funding	Put in place working modality on how to reach different development partners	P = 3 I = 5
4	Public unrest and low public support	Ensure public participation and bottom-up approach.	P = 3 I = 3
5	Delay in procurement process	Procurement by delegation and direct payment modalities	P = 4 I = 5
6	Gender inequality	Outreach to women groups in the various components, build their capacity and organise	P = 3 I = 3

Project Sustainability			
Rating	Reasons for Rating		
С	Due to the limited financial resources of the national government, external financial support is required to fully implement and scale the more promising aspects of the project. Reduced funding was cited as a significant point of concern amongst central bodies, whereas regional counterparts were more perplexed by the limited availability and speed of securing finances. Although these concerns are noted and obviously in need of attention, it's obvious the project as it stands would not continue without continued and generous donor contributions. This alone raises serious concern on the sustainability of project outputs and desired outcomes. The heavy dependence on donor funds will ultimately lead to failure unless project activities become economically viable business models. This will require entrepreneurship, working capital attached to a more sustainable financing mechanism e.g., revolving funds, linked to a business incubator that has connections with lead firm(s) working across forest enterprise value chains. At the midpoint, project activities will likely not be sustained if the project was to end in 2022.		

*Indicators Ratings*: Indicators are important markers that qualitatively or quantitatively assess aspects of a project to demonstrate how near a project team is to the intended path and outcomes. Indicators form the link between theory and practice and allow teams to know whether ongoing project implementation is making a difference. Thus, indicators provide the evidence that something has happened – whether an output is being delivered, if an immediate effect occurred or a longterm change has been observed.

Indicator	R*	Reason for Rating
Number of institutions with strong and functional set-ups	C+	Progress made. The various gap assessments prepared will assist in the identification of needs to further improve the strengthening of institutional setups. Further, trainings provided to senior experts and extension agents to strengthen capacity will hopefully remain.
Number of training centres capacitated	В	A good number of trainings have taken place since the project's inception. In particular, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources has received support to prepare 6 modules and offer Training of Trainers, Extension agents and experts in urban planning. Furthermore, Holeta Polytechnic and Mertule Mariam TVET colleges were supported to train extension agents.
Number of tailored skill trainings provided	B+	A large number of trainings have been undertaken. This ranged from targeted ToT for senior experts, extension agents urban greening, forestry equipment e.g., saw mills and action-based research. This was all achieved despite the COVID -19 pandemic. Job well done.
Number of trained participants with enhanced awareness	C+	As mentioned above, a large number of participants have been trained across numerous thematic areas. In many cases – such as research – trainees had received highly focus training and for lengthy period of time. However, evaluators were not able to speak with any training beneficiaries to evaluate "enhanced awareness". Evaluators recognise the extent of trainings and saw quality reports coming from critical work areas.
Number of forest information systems	C-	Progress made. It will be important for the project team to push forward with the forestry database, as well as the capture of "quality" forestry related statistics.
Extent of key challenges of women in the sector identified	В	Good progress made. With the gender gap analysis and mainstreaming strategy complete, it's now a matter of putting the learnings into action by showcasing how gender mainstreaming

The section below evaluates each of the 17 indicators designed by the project team.

		within critical segments of the value chain can bring improved equity and economic prosperity.
Number of PPP and TBL initiated	с	Progress made. PPP workshop a good starting point to launch further private sector work. It would be favourable for the project team to establish some key business partnerships during the remaining time of the project.
Hectares of dry forests restored	B+	The project has managed to demarcate more area than targeted. This is progressing well leading to the establishment and strengthening of community forest management groups through the PFM approach. Strengthening the PFM forest users' group and establishing forest users' cooperatives has continue to better ensure sustainability.
Hectares of Forest landscape restored	в	It was reported by project stakeholders that they had achieved around 80% of the target to restore forest landscapes through A/R, excluding the Tigray region for which data is lacking. They expected to achieve the target by the end of the current phase.
Extent of clear understanding on trade-offs in new production systems	с	Progress made on the development of a decision tool to better evaluate trade-offs within different production systems. This work will continue in 2022.
NFPAs with management plan	E	No intervention in NFPA. Only low land dry forests were considered for intervention.
Number of new botanical gardens	C-	Demarcated sites for two botanic gardens, but it is not yet established, and needs construction of infrastructure and collection and planting of representative species of the ecoregions
Number of Covid vulnerable Household supported	D	There were efforts to support vulnerable households in some woredas. However, there is lack of clarity among key actors at different levels when it comes to the kind of support to be provided.
Number of cities with better capacities for greening	с	The project identified multiple interventions to build capacity in greening like training, green infrastructure design and guideline for three cities. Trainings were offered, guidelines drafted (not seen) and technical support provided for green space planning. However, resources allocated did not allow for further design work.
Number of trained urban experts with enhanced skills on urban greening	B-	The project has planned training for 15 experts from the three pilot cities. This was apparently exceeded by training 33 experts – some from regional states.
Hectare of land covered with pre-urban forests	D	Potential areas for pre-urban forest development are being identified as part of the plan for target cities. Development of such forests have not yet started
Number of pilot designs and guideline document on urban greening	C-	No design is expected since the allocated budget is not adequate. Plan indicating potential sites for pre-urban forest site and the national guideline for use by the cities during master plan preparation is being finalised. Draft documents not cited by evaluators.

\*R = Rating

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the detailed analysis from the evaluation, the following are the main Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound recommendations:

No.#	Recommendation
R.1	Sustained Financing: Availability and access to adequate funding remains one of the main barriers
	for scaling and sustaining project interventions. Further external financial support is required.
	Recommendations:

	A. UNDP along with partners should develop a robust resource mobilisation strategy. This will be used to source further external resources to replicate and scale successful areas of the project;
	<ul> <li>and</li> <li>B. Hold a donor coordination meeting to discuss successful aspects of forestry project(s) to-date<sup>5</sup>.</li> <li>A refocusing of efforts would greatly assist in the re-conceptualisation of forest project activities following the new institutional arrangements.</li> </ul>
R.2	Access to Finance: Availability of financing to ISCFSD regional partners has become a bottleneck for increased outputs and eventual outcomes of the project. A change in the time taken and the way regional partners receive financing is required.
	<ul> <li>Recommendations:</li> <li>A. Finance regions based on performance. Assessing performance by bundling all regions (and IP) together disincentivises performance.</li> <li>B. Prioritise financing to regions that are delivering against project agreed targets. This approach would produce healthy competition amongst regional stakeholders – assuming it's attached to a well-functioning project monitoring and evaluation plan.</li> </ul>
R.3	<b>Project Indicators</b> : Key performance indicators used to determine the overall success of the project have seemingly been unofficially changed. The original 10 indicators in the 2018 signed ProDoc are now replaced by 17 new indicators.
	<ul> <li>Recommendations:</li> <li>A. Next project board meeting must officially review the new indicator framework and confirm what indicators are in play to determine project success.</li> <li>B. Keep project indicators at or below 10 to focus project and reduce the cost/time of monitoring performance indicators.</li> </ul>
R.4	Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E): The appropriate M&E system needs to be in place to actively monitor and periodically evaluate project performance.
	<ul> <li>Recommendations:</li> <li>A. UNDP to secure necessary funds to undertake eight monthly spot checks against a well-defined senior management approved M&amp;E plan</li> <li>B. Form a project M&amp;E Advisory Group (MEAG) that consists of at least one external member to actively M&amp;E project approved indicators.</li> <li>C. Enact documented monthly M&amp;E quality assurance meetings and report to project management.</li> </ul>
R.5	<b>Risk log</b> : A project risk log needs to be developed, monitored and reported to capture risks to the overall programme. This process can greatly assist in the identification of issues and mitigating actions.
	Recommendation: A. Update project risk log and report quarterly.
R.6	<b>Reporting</b> : Regular reporting is a key aspect of any public, private or development orientated project. Reporting keeps all stakeholders informed with respect to progress, delays and any upcoming needs etc.
	<ul> <li>Recommendations:</li> <li>A. Agree on reporting template structure – involve donor.</li> <li>B. Ensure completion of quarterly reports (or at the least six-monthly reports).</li> <li>C. Align report submission to UNDP calendar year quarterly reporting timelines e.g., Jan-Mar Q1; April-June Q2; July-September Q3 and Oct-Dec Q4. This will require donor agreement.</li> <li>D. Ensure to include M&amp;E progress, risk log and financials in quarterly reports.</li> </ul>
R.7	<b>Theory of Change (ToC)</b> : Project ToC is important for effective project delivery and in assessing the merits of the programme and its framework to achieve the desirable outcomes e.g., impacts.
	Recommendations:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Projects include but not limited to (1) Institutional strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Project of Ethiopia (2) The Oromia Forested Landscape Project (3) Scaling Up Participatory Forest Management project (4) Promote Sustainable Rural Energy Technologies for Household and Productive Uses (5) REDD+ Investment Program in Ethiopia.

	A. After review of project key performance indicators, revisit the ToC by hosting a virtual
	workshop with IPs and relevant stakeholders.
	workshop. Due to the size and complexity of the project, it would be wise to separate different
	project outputs into different ToC with one high level ToC bringing workstreams together.
	C. Prepare highly visual ToC from the outcomes of B. See inspiration here -
	D. ToC revision would also be an opportunity to refocus project efforts based on current learnings.
	Do deeply consider reduced funding and the donors desire to see greater private sector
	involvement across the forestry sector value chain when undertaking revisions.
R.8	Project Coordination: The project has a large number of different sub projects that are on many
	parts siloed. This situation has occurred because the project has many different activity streams. If
	this level of activity is to continue, it's paramount that all sub projects become truly integrated.
	Recommendations:
	A. The ToC revision process will help determine how best sub projects are integrated and how best "impacts" will be seen when programming as one. Good results over the remaining year will
	bear fruit. This requires a good team leader.
	taken and shared.
	C. Bi-monthly meetings must be arranged to review progress against ToC.
	D. Create an account for the project and upload all documents to a shared drive. Ensure all
	documents are unlocked and accessible to all team members.
R.9	Sector Coordination: In addition to project silos, there are also ministerial and sector silos impacting
	that are directly or indirectly involved in forestry likely require extensive reforms to improve
	performance against mandates.
	Recommendation
	A. As per the final recommendation listed for Private Sector Engagement (R.15), it's suggested the
	project only works on cross-institutional coordination efforts on a very targeted needs basis.
	Lots of time and resources could spent on breaking down silos.
	B. Considering partnering with Ethiopia's National Planning Commission when a specific issue
	requires cross-ministerial coordination e.g., an issue that's highly detrimental to the success of suctaining an economically resilient forestry sector.
R 10	Gender: Take the opportunity to make improvements however, execute some caution and avoid
1.10	too drastic changes across the value chain. The idea of gender mainstreaming should be to
	investigate and identify the most critical needs for change.
	Recommendation:
	A. Identify the low hanging fruit for gender mainstreaming by concentrating a few targeted
	activities that will really showcase how changes in gender for a specific activity can bring
	opportunities across "certain" researched areas of the forestry value chain. Evaluators believe a
D 11	small win here would be a big win for the project – especially if paired with good marketing.
N.11	revolutionisation of Ethiopia's forestry sector. It's important to ensure any new technologies are
	quickly provided to the targeted individuals that intend to create a new forest related business i.e.,
	entrepreneurs along the value chain. Furthermore, this identification process must be fully
	transparent with checks and balances in place.
	Recommendations:
	A. Establish committee of 5-6 people represented by private sector, bilateral, NGO, Government
	etc. Nepotism must be avoided at all costs.
	B. Identify entrepreneurs across the value chain and determine who are most suitable to engage in
	the programme. Where possible, work with existing initiatives that have forest related
	C. Develop agreements that ensure technologies reach intended users.
	D. Monitor the adoption of new technologies - include in M&E Plan.

R.12	Forest Database: To advance Ethiopia's forestry sector, the collection and storage of forestry
	statistics will become essential. Efforts are ongoing to develop a database system at the commission,
	but it's likely the system won't be ready any time soon.
	Recommendation:
	A. Purchase an off-the-shelf, Software As A Service (SaaS) product. This approach would be less
	risky, ensure software stability and essentially FastTrack the completion of the product. The
	project team is encouraged to explore software products that are fit for purpose. In many
	instances new IT systems established by Overseas Development Assistance projects tend to fail
	after project closure. The purchase of a SaaS product would prove less risky on the basis of time
	and cost to the project. Further, using an off-the-shelf product allows for greater time on
D 12	product training.
N.15	improve best practices across all forestry related work streams is paramount to sector advancement
	The project is supporting many research teams to advance our understanding and identification of
	practical scalable solutions e.g., using action-based research. However, its recognised that most
	project supported research is yet to be completed.
	Basammandations
	A Ensure all project supported research is published - where possible - in international peer
	reviewed journals. Would be ideal to publish in open-source journals to guarantee free access to
	all.
	B. Authors should also attempt to publish in relevant magazines to improve readership and the
	dissemination of results.
	C. Although likely beyond the current scope of the ISCFSD, it would be advantageous for a media
	entrepreneur to establish an independent online media business for Ethiopia's forestry sector –
	see example from South Africa <u>https://saforestryonline.co.za/</u> . Six monthly magazines would
	actively promote Ethiopia's forestry sector and its opportunities, along with commercially
	applicable research. Can't stress enough the importance for the media house to be a business
R 1/	Project length: The projects focus on Tree Based Liveliboods will require more time to see results. It
1.14	will be difficult for the project team to gain the data to truly understand the economic feasibility of
	many of the TBL solutions put forward.
	Pacammandation
	A. The project team must be critical and determine which TBL activities are best to focus on for the
	remainder of the project. This recommendation takes into consideration reduced funding, the COVID
	pandemic, the changes to institutional arrangements e.g., forestry now under the Ministry of
	Agriculture, and the ongoing conflict that is now a state of emergency.
R.15	Private Sector Engagement: Involvement of the private sector in the forestry sector is a key area of
	the ISCFSD project. To promote a thriving economically resilient forestry sector, the Government of
	Ethiopia needs to encourage the development of well-managed professional businesses across each
	segment of the forestry value chain.
	Recommendations:
	A. Start small. Don't overdesign and be too ambitious. Don't try and create a national business
	development program, rather start small by developing a complete value chain for one specific
	region/district that presents that best opportunity.
	B. Identify the business types needed across the value chain – again, think small and scale as and
	when succession.
	businesses are needed.
	D. Using the committee established under the "Forest Technologies" recommendation, identify
	entrepreneurs across the value chain segments. Entrepreneurs to run start-ups that are initially
	financed (grant repaid/revolving fund) and have access to free business advisory. Use similar
	approach to Ycombinator <u>https://www.ycombinator.com/</u> ). Again, start small. Don't take on too
	many businesses at once. Pick critical areas across chain and build up slowly.
	E. Revised forestry policies and incentive structures should be designed as the industry develops.
	Any policy agenda would ideally be driven by the appropriate business chamber - not a bilateral.

## **KEY LESSONS LEARNT**

Forest development efforts in Ethiopia have focused on conservation and restoration of degraded areas, focusing on environment aspects. The current project has included a number of innovative initiatives, which are good lessons/models for integrated forest development that also address the management of forests for economic development. These include:

(1) Development oriented action research: the project has integrated research in order to cogenerate scientific knowledge and evidence with beneficiaries. The research works are conducted on different thematic areas of the forest sector development, including considerations of ecological/ ecosystem differences. Researchers do not design their research proposal in offices like traditional academic research. Rather, they identify research issues or problems related to forest development in the target geographic area with the community. They also prioritise and separate development problems that already have known solutions and researchable problems that need action research. The team of researchers (representing different disciplines) and community members identify solutions and test these solutions jointly with the community. This makes the research truly transdisciplinary.

(2) Capacity building training- engaging specialised institutions. One of the problems in the forestry sector is lack of human resource capacity at different levels, especially extension services and technical forestry practices. The project has conducted capacity gaps at the beginning, and then design strategies to fill the identified gaps. Trainings were designed for different levels: senior management of the forest sector at federal and regional states levels, and development agents at community levels. The trainings were given by specialised institutions like Wondo Genet College of Forest, Holeta Polytechnic College and Mertule Mariam TVET College. Material preparation and delivery involved different universities in Ethiopia, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the participating at specialized technical training colleges, not just the forest sector institutions.

(3) Integration of livelihoods component: past forestry projects rarely integrate livelihoods aspects, and mainly focused on conservation and restoration functions of forest development. The current project has integrated livelihoods aspect in two ways: (i) tree-based or forest based livelihoods-where tree species that have high economic potential (fruit trees or commercial timber trees) and that have short rotation period are identified and promoted in areas selected for A/R intervention, or sustainable non-timber forest products like gums and resins, honey and bamboo are promoted in areas targeted for sustainable management of dry forests through PFM and ANR; and (ii) diversification of alternative livelihoods that generate interim income like poultry, fattening and improved agricultural practices, since forest products take longer time till the first harvest.

(4) Private sector initiative: the current and previous forest development efforts are expected to increase production of forest products, including timber. The forest products market chain and formal private engagement in local forest products is not well developed. For the forest sector to contribute to the economy through increased income for the smallholder farmers and farmers groups, it is important to strengthen private sector engagement and improve wood processing and product quality, value addition and enhance supply to the consumers. This also involves strengthening the capacity of smallholder producers through establishment of forest users' groups and cooperatives in order to increase their aggregation capacity, bargaining capacity and primary processing capacity for value addition and higher income. The project has identified gaps and challenges in establishing forest users' cooperatives, and proposed steps towards establishing such cooperatives. Besides, the project has developed materials and strategies for forest

entrepreneurship development. This has to be mainstreamed and implemented as part forest development in the country.

(5) Mobile or portable saw mills for wood processing initiative: the project has initiated introducing portable sawmill that is simple, reliable and easily movable from one place to another and used in wood processing, in order to add value to forest products at the forest gate. This has great potential in increasing income for the producers or producer's cooperative. The project has partnered with a Swedish forestry machinery producer and procured portable sawmill through SLU and CIFOR to pilot test at the Wood Technology Research Institute (WTRC) of EEFRI before wide distribution and implementation.

(6) Clonal nursery initiative: though not yet implemented, this is an important initiative that has great potential to transform forest trees propagation, especially native trees for which propagation methods are not well developed. Clonal nursery technology enables propagation of genetically identical individuals through asexual reproduction from genetically superior trees that have essential attributes like fast growth, high yield and disease tolerance with desirable qualities that leads to higher productivity. This technology has the potential to transform development of many native tree species in commercial forest plantations. The project has identified site for clonal nursery development and has engaged an international expert in the design and development protocols.

(7) Urban greenery and pre-urban forestry: past forest development projects have focused only on rural areas. This project has initiated urban greening and pre-urban forest development in selected cities and towns. The project interventions include pilot urban green infrastructure design and implementation, and planning pre-urban forestry, focusing on three cities: Addis Ababa, Adama and Kombolcha. The project intervention has included trainings on integration of urban green space in urban planning and implementation. The training has benefited experts from selected cities of all regional states and major cities in Ethiopia. It is also preparing guidelines that can be used all types of urban areas, including metropolitan cities like Addis Ababa, medium town and small woreda towns.

Forest business mentorships	Help build forest specific start-ups by working with individual entrepreneurs to develop a business. This would be supported by providing a full range of services starting with management training and office space and ending with venture capital financing to those that have the most promising pitches.		
Forests on the blockchain	Digitise forest information to help forest owners unlock capital and use financial technologies such as "blockchain" to digitise forest assets for trading on financial markets. This new innovative system would allow any investor to invest in a forest e.g., carbon storage.		

#### FUTURE PROJECT IDEAS

#### ANNEX

#### **ANNEX 1: Reviewer's comments and Evaluator Responses**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jRVnfW3Kb8TWI07rD303i9RjLhNypvbT/view?usp=sharing

#### **ANNEX 2. Terms of Reference**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hM9MOyRHMRyoWWefWWr\_syhCDzarnrKo/edit?usp=shari ng&ouid=115925136724879788724&rtpof=true&sd=true

**ANNEX 3. Individuals Interviewed** 

No.	Person	Organisation	Position	Location
1	Mr. Elmi Nure	Embassy of Sweden	Environment and Climate Change	Addis Ababa
			Program Manager	
2	Dr. Tefera Belay	EFCCC	National Project Coordinator	Addis Ababa
3	Mr. Hailu Atnafu	EBI	Project focal person	Addis Ababa
4	Dr. Abebe Damitie	ECRC, PSI	Research Fellow	Addis Ababa
5	Dr. Erik Karltun	SLU	Project focal person	Sweden
6	Dr. Mesele Negash	WGCFNR	Asso. Prof and project focal person	Addis Ababa
7	Dr. Kumlachew Yeshitela	Addis Ababa University	Asso. Prof and project focal person	Addis Ababa
8	Dr. Habtemariam Kassa	CIFOR	Country Director and project focal person	Addis Ababa
9	Dr. Agena Anjulo	EEFRI	Deputy Director General	Addis Ababa
10	Dr. Abdu Abdelkadir	EEFRI	Researcher and project focal person	Addis Ababa
11	Dr. Abayneh Derero	EEFRI	Researcher and project focal person	Addis Ababa
12	Dr. Teshale Woldeamanuel	SNNP region BoEFCC	Regional Program coordinator	Hawassa
13	Mr. Shimeles Sima	World Bank ET Office	Senior Forestry Specialist	Addis Ababa
14	Mr. Sintayehu	Amhara Region BoEFCC	Regional Program coordinator	Bahir Dar
	Deresse			
15	Mr. Habtamu Asres	Delanta Woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	Delanta
16	Kurabachew Tenaw	Sinan woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	Sinan
17	Mr. Amansew Tilahun	Kumruk	Woreda Project Coordinator	Kumruk
18	Mr. Debela Tesfaye	Oromia EFCCA	Regional Program Coordinator	Addis Ababa
19	Mr. Tamiru Kapitano	Welmera Woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	Holeta
20	Mr. Megersa Gebisa	Ameya Woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	Ameya
21	Mr. Teferi Zawuge	Goro Woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	Goro
22	Mr. Jatani Garbole	Dubuluk Woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	Dubuluk
23	Mr. Mekonnen	Chorso Woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	
24	Mr. Dereje Articho	Shashego woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	
25	Mrs. Belaynesh Zewdie	Sodo woreda	Woreda Project Coordinator	
26	Mr. Hilal Mohamed	Somali Region BoEFCC	Reginal project focal person	Jigjiga

#### **ANNEX 4. Interview Guidance Questions**

#### **Birds Eye View Questions**

- What do you see as the most important or impactful achievements of the ISCFSD?
- What should the team focus on going forward?
- What's the greatest challenges or gaps of the ISCFSD?
- What are the main opportunities?
- Is the project well placed in Ethiopia's development agenda?
- Any projects doing similar work to ISCFSD?
- What key innovations have come from the work of ISCFSD?

#### Other more specific questions:

- What were the main outputs you worked on?
- What were your main focus areas?
- What products did you produce?
- Did you deliver any trainings? If yes, what training and who attended?

- Please provide list of workshops organised
- Were you involved in the projects design? What stage?
- Did UNDP communicate effectively with you?
- Is the project good value for money?

#### ANNEX 5: Workshop titles and participants

Workshop title	Total	Ŷ
Project launching meeting: Introducing project objectives and expectations of EFCCC, May 30- 31, 2019, Adama, Ethiopia	50	5
Aligning activities of CIFOR and EEFRI in implementing the research activities to ensure complementarity and building capacity, June 17-19, 2019, Adama	25	5
Introduction to Action Research: What it is and how to make it an integral part of the project, August 22-23, 2019. Addis Ababa	25	5
National workshop on Dry Forest of Ethiopia: opportunities and challenges for improving their management, Dec 2, 2019, Addis Ababa	53	10
National workshop on Frankincense production, value addition and marketing, Dec 2019, Addis Ababa	35	7
Aligning research activities to project objectives: working towards achieving conservation and livelihood outcomes in the research teams, Dec 23-24, 2019, Bishoftu,	25	5
Discussing on teams, tasks and deliverables and refining the 2021 Annual plan, 17-18 April 2020, Bishoftu	38	5
Taking stock of Teams' progress, May 21-22, 2020, Adama	38	5
Annual Project Progress and Planning for 2020 and refreshment training on action research, Nov 6 -8, 2020, Addis Ababa	38	5
Review of Annual Project Progress and Planning for 2020, Dec 2, 2020, Bishoftu	38	5
Discussing the study plan of graduate students, 5 Dec 2020, Addis Ababa	5	0
Consultative meeting on forest coops in Ethiopia to jointly set criteria for selecting three coops to be supported by the Project, 8 Dec 2020, Addis Ababa	55	10
Training on planning and implementing Action Research for the Staff and graduate students of Wondo Genet College of Forestry, March 20, 2021, Wondo Genet	30	3
Workshop to revise the 2007 Forest Policy and strategy and produce a revised version for EFCCC, 1-10 April 2021, Bishoftu	12	0
Discussing findings and presenting comments on findings of graduate students, 3 August 2021, Addis Ababa	4	0
Urban greening: Addis Ababa (25 participants, April 2019)		
Urban greening: Kombolcha (35 representatives with participants from all three cities, Nov. 2019)		own
Catalysing the Ethiopian Forest Sector Development: An international multi-stakeholder workshop on forest sector cross-cutting issues		
International Livestock Research Institute, ILRI, Addis Ababa, 22nd-23rd August, 2019		
Trainers of Trainers curriculum development write-shop. 12 - 15th November Addis Ababa		