



## **Terminal Evaluation**

# **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR FOREST SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (ISFSDP)**

## **Final Report**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A/R	Afforestation / Reforestation
ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Workplans
BOEF	Bureau Of Environment and Forest
CRGE	Climate Resilience and Green Economy
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EFCCC	Environment Forestry and Climate Change Commission
EFD	Ethiopian Forestry Development
ESMF	Environmental Social Management Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GIS	Geographical Information System
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ISFSDP	Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Project
KII	Key Informant Interviews
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWEE	Ministry of Water, Energy and Environment
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPCO	National Programme Coordination Office
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OFWE	Oromo Forest and Wildlife Enterprise
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PIRs	Project Implementation Reports
ProDoc	Project Document
PPR	Project Programme Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
SNNPR	Southern Nation and Nationalities Peoples Region
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TC	Technical Committee
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCBD	United Nations Framework Convention on Biological Diversity
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFCCD	United Nations Framework Convention to Combat Desertification
USD	United States Dollar

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Project description

The “Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development” project in Ethiopia is funded by Norway, Sweden, and UNDP. The goal of this project was to strengthen the capacity of the then Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and the current Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD) in particular at all levels and the Ethiopian government’s overall capacity in the forest sector at all levels to spearhead the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and the Growth and Transformation plan (GTP) targets. The total cost of the project is \$ \$11,042,652 of which \$ 2,653,000; \$1,889,651.89; \$6,500,000 Norway UNDP and SIDA contributed respectively. USD 10,502,196.18 and the project has its end and start date 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 and 31 Dec 2022, respectively. The implementing party of the project is the UNDP and EFD and the project is composed of five components namely:

- **Component 1:** Strengthening the institutional capacity of the forest sector at all levels
- **Component 2:** Forest Conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced
- **Component 3:** Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated
- **Component 4:** Science and Innovation for enhancing SFM promoted
- **Component 5:** Stakeholders engagement in forest development enhanced

## Evaluation ratings table

The table below summarizes the project ratings

Area	Rating
<b>Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) system</b>	
Monitoring and evaluation	Highly Satisfactory
<b>Project results</b>	
Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Relevance	Highly satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
<b>Gender</b>	Highly Satisfactory
<b>Environmental and social safeguards</b>	
Sustainability risk	Moderately Likely
Financial risk	Moderately Likely
Socio-political/economic risk	Moderately Unlikely
Institutional framework and governance risk	Moderately Likely
Environmental risk	Moderately Likely
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability risk	Moderately Likely
<b>Overall Project Rating</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

## Summary of findings, conclusions and lessons learned

### Project Relevance

The constitution of Ethiopia endorsed safeguarding the environment from any human-made damage and states that projects and investments or developments should not destroy nor pollute the environment (water, air and soil). Towards this direction, Ethiopia has a big dream of restoring 22 million hectares of degraded lands and forests by 2030. This was a bold and laudable pledge, made as part of the 2011 Bonn Challenge and the 2014 New York Climate Summit’s goal of restoring 350 million hectares worldwide by 2030. Ethiopia is a signatory to the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNF CBD and UNFCCD) and the government has further demonstrated commitment towards the

protection of natural resources through a number of initiatives, financed by bilateral and multilateral agencies. The Environment Policy of Ethiopia states as its goal “to improve and enhance the health and quality of life of all Ethiopians, and to promote sustainable social and economic development through the sound management and use of natural, human-made and cultural resources and the environment as a whole to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The Ethiopian Government also plans to significantly enhance the forestry sector’s contribution to environmental protection and climate change, agricultural production systems, water and energy; to improve food and nutritional security, and to create more opportunities for employment and household income. The ISFSDP was thus a direct intervention programme towards the national and global, national and regional, and local community goal to halt and reverse the effects of land degradation and safeguarding the environment.

## **Project Implementation**

### **Adaptive Management**

The Ethiopian Forestry Development was the responsible implementer of the project designed as Fast Track Investment of the CRGE Facility and National Implementation Modality (NIM) guided by UNDP NIM rules and regulations as well as the National Project Implementation Manual (PIM) approved by the government of Ethiopia. The institutional arrangement described in the Project Document presents the then MEF as the owner and controller of the project implementation. EFD is responsible and accountable for implementing this project, including operational monitoring of the project interventions, achieving the project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP resources. UNDP played a quality assurance role and worked with EFD and MOFED to mobilize resources to adequately capitalize the program. The Project Document also outlines the essential project management and governance structure in the form of a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC was responsible for making operational policies and strategic management decisions, including approving annual work plans and budgets. The steering committee comprised of representatives from MoA, MoWEE, MOFED, EFD, MoE, Norway, and UNDP plus a maximum of two from participating development partners. At the district level, District Sector Offices /Cabinets/ led by the local district administration head were members of PSCs and responsible for the implementation of the project on the ground.

### **Project finance and co-finance**

The total financing budget of the project was US\$ 22,464,942, coming from the various donors, to permit it to meet up with the achievement of its objectives. The funding for the project came from the Norwegian Government through UNDP and Climate Resilient Green Growth Facility (CRGE) with an amount of US\$ 10,600,000; UNDP US\$ 1,400,000; Swedish Government US\$ 6,400,000; in-kind contributions from the Government US\$ 1,250,000 and an unfunded budget of US\$ 2,814,942.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation was rated **Highly Satisfactory**. During the project preparation phase of the ISFSDP project, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan was elaborated with costing details and specified data collection sources to support both project management and monitoring. The programme implementation was to be monitored at the federal and regional levels, using the CRGE Facility Monitoring and Evaluation System, in accordance with the UNDP and UNDAF M & E guidelines. The estimated budget for M&E was USD\$ 2,785,204 and this was judged by the project team and the evaluators to be sufficient relative to the size of the project. Data pertaining to the progress of the different indicators were collected and reported in the project’s annual PIR, disaggregated by gender where applicable.



## Project results

**Effectiveness:** the effectiveness of the project is rated **Satisfactory**. The project made considerable progress towards achieving its outputs. Under its output 1, ISFSD project provided capacity building for most institutions in the forestry sector at both national and regional levels, capacitating them towards achieving the targets of the GTPII and CRGE strategy. As part of output 2, nine pilot districts selected from Amhara, SNNP and Tigray and clearly defined land use plans were elaborated for enhancing forest conservation and development. In output 3, ISFSDP prepared a national guideline to promote the engagement and investment of the private sector. Output 4 promoted innovation and research activities aimed at enhancing sustainable forest management practices in the forestry sector of Ethiopia. Output 5 achieved a stakeholder engagement of a total of 24,815 individuals at regional levels.

**Efficiency:** the efficiency of the project was rated **Satisfactory**. The government played a pivotal role in the delivery of the project and in the results achieved by the project. While the staffing of the project at the regional level was insufficient, the project was adequately staffed at the Woreda level and disposed of the required expertise required for the implementation of project activities. Pertaining to financial management, an integrated financial management software was put in place by the government, for the appropriate management of the project funds. In line with the Channel 2 financial system of the government of Ethiopia, funds received from the embassy by the Ministry of Finance were transferred to the Forestry Development Organization who in turn transferred the funds to the Regional Project Coordination Office. The latter takes charge of transferring project resources to the Project Offices at the Woreda level for the implementation of project activities.

**Sustainability:** the overall sustainability rating of the project is **Moderately Likely**. The restoration activities have yielded positive benefits which will serve as a motivation for actors to continue engaging in restoration activities even after the phasing out of the project. However, as the project financed restoration activities through the provision of grants, it is unlikely that actors interested in engaging in restoration will be able to do so in the absence of adequate financing. The financial risk to sustainability of the project is rated **Moderately Likely**. A major socio-political risk to the project is the political instability plaguing Ethiopia which renders it difficult for farmers to move from place to place to access inputs for forestry activities. The outbreak of pandemics such as Covid-19 could equally jeopardise the sustainability of the project. The socio-political risk to project sustainability is rated **Moderately Unlikely**. Pertaining to institutional framework and governance risk, the absence of a land use policy in Ethiopia constitutes a risk to sustainability. The institutional and governance risk to sustainability is **Moderately Likely**. Increasing temperature trends, occurrence of droughts and changes in precipitation patterns represent environmental risks to the sustainability of ISFSDP. The environmental risk to sustainability is rated **Moderately Likely**.

**Gender:** Gender mainstreaming is rated **Highly Satisfactory**. Gender considerations were integrated into the implementation of the project. During capacity building events, women received trainings on forest conservation and development. Deliberate efforts were taken by the project to ensure the participation of women in project activities such as employment and income-generating activities.

**Social and environmental safeguards:** An ESMF was elaborated for nine districts by the project. The review of project documents by the evaluators generated scant evidence relating to the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the ESMF.

## Lessons learned

**Close engagement with government and project beneficiaries is key for effective project delivery.** The project worked closely with local communities from planning all the way to implementation of activities. Similarly, a strong engagement existed between the project and the government. As a matter of fact, ISFSDP was implemented by government institutions at different levels. This strong engagement of the project with the government and local communities fostered ownership of the project by communities and the government which in turn contributed to effective project implementation.

**Securing ownership of restored sites or sites designated for restoration is important for successful restoration schemes.** Forest and land restoration tends to be unpopular in areas where land tenure rights are contested. This disincentivizes communities or individuals to engage in restoration activities as they may be stripped of any entitlements over the restored sites, in the event that they lose ownership of the land. Furthermore, communities often see restoration as conflicting to their agricultural livelihood as agricultural farmlands restored by them get adopted by the government as forest land belonging to the state. ISFSDP supported members of local communities to secure ownership over restored land so that they could reap the benefits emanating from the restored sites, serving as a motivational factor for their continuous engagement in restoration activities.

**Setting a prerequisite for subsequent transfers of project funds could encourage timely delivery of project activities but could equally retard some project actors.** For UNDP to release project funds to the Ministry of Finance, a minimum burn rate of 80% of previously disbursed funds must be justified. This enabled the project team across the different Woredas to work towards implementing project activities effectively. However, this also meant that outstanding Woredas in terms of project execution will have to suffer the consequences of other Woredas who lag behind due to a low burn rate of the budget caused by low level of implementation of project activities.

**The use of species that generates benefits in the short to medium term is an important factor towards successful restoration.** Restoration within the framework of the project employed species with economic benefits to communities and community members were therefore motivated to engage in further restoration initiatives, as they could enjoy benefits from their restoration work produced in the short-term.

## Recommendations

NO.	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Project design and Implementation</b>		
1.	The grant was the sole financial instrument employed by the project and this generated some good results. However, innovative financing was not explored within the framework of the project.	<p>Restoration activities were funded through grants provided by the project. It is recommended for subsequent projects of this nature to include innovative climate finance instruments for restoration activities. This could take the form of green lines of credits or concessional loans issued by financial institutions to individuals interested in engaging in restoration activities. For this to happen, the government will need to create the necessary enabling environments for banks and other financial institutions to engage in the process.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia  <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects</p>
2.	The use of species for restoration that could produce benefits in the short to medium term favors successful restoration	<p>The focus of restoration is often on carbon benefits which takes some years to be earned. Actors engaged in restoration are motivated to do so if the initiative can generate in the short to medium term. Hence, in designing restoration schemes targeting carbon benefits especially those involving communities, project proponents should consider including species with high potential of generating non-carbon benefits in the short to medium term in order to boost the interest and engagement of the concerned communities in the restoration activities.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia.  <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>		

NO.	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
3.	Value addition could enhance the profit margin of forestry value chains	<p>While communities have started reaping benefits from their restoration activities, their earning could be enhanced through value addition. Hence, for subsequent projects, it could be relevant for the value chain of forest products to be studied, supported and strengthened so that community members could realise higher profit margins from their restoration works.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia.  <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects</p>
4.	Support required for the creation of relevant enabling environment for restoration	<p>The absence of a land use plan constitutes a factor that may jeopardise the sustainability of the ISFSDP. EFD has been advocating for the elaboration of a land use policy through various mechanisms, but EFD does not have the mandate or political power to directly produce or implement national land use policy. This responsibility typically falls under the jurisdiction of Council of Ministers and House of People's Representatives. It is therefore important that for subsequent forestry-related projects, support should be provided towards addressing policy gaps that could negatively impact on the project. For instance, support could be provided within the framework of a future project on the elaboration of a land use policy for Ethiopia.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia.  <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects</p>
5.	Provision of certification as a solution to land tenure issues positively impacted restoration activities within the framework of the project	<p>It is important for the issued restoration certificates to be sustained. The administration should ensure that the certificates remain valid and recognised for the length of time envisaged lest actors engaged in restoration activities could be demotivated and disengage from restoration activities.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> The Government of Ethiopia  <b>Timeline:</b> From project closure into the future</p>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Purpose and objective of the TE

The purpose of the terminal evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. It will be conducted with guidelines, rules and procedures established by UNDP. More specifically, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the achievement and progress made against the planned results, assess challenges, and draw lessons learned, measure the impact of the project, and inform future orientation of the similar interventions.

The evaluation will also look into how emerging issues that were not reflected during the design of the current program document, could impact the achievement of its outcomes and make recommendations to ensure the continued alignment of UNDP assistance with national priorities to achieve robust results in the future. Results achieved this far will be assessed using commonly agreed criteria to validate relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and the impact of the overall program.

The main objectives of the evaluation process therefore are:

- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and the impact of the program in delivering on agreed outcomes and outputs and their contribution to national development efforts,
- Review validity of programme assumptions and the logic/ theory of change,
- To determine the adequacy of the existing systems and structures for implementing the program,
- Review risk assessment & mitigation measures taken for ensuring progress on implementing the programme's interventions,
- To assess if program outputs and outcomes have been achieved,
- To identify major constraints faced, document lessons learned during implementation, and make recommendations for overcoming implementation challenges and supporting results achievement going forward, and
- To identify factors that has contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended program outcomes, and outputs.

## 1.2. Scope of the TE

The terminal evaluation will consider the overall performance of the IS-FSDP from June 2015 to December 2022, and focus on examining the IS-FSDP project's overall contribution to capacity building of the forest sector at all levels in the country and piloting A/R and ANR in the selected districts including Amhara, SNNP, and Tigray National Regional States. The evaluation will cover all project interventions, except Tigray (due to security issues) to be implemented during the different phases of the project and compare planned output of the projects to the actual outputs, as well as assess associated results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the program objectives. It should also attempt to evaluate the efficiency of project management and the delivery of the outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost-efficiency of the project. Any underlying causes and issues that contributed to changes or targets not adequately achieved will also be addressed by the evaluation.

## 1.3. Methodology

The terminal evaluation of the project was carried out in accordance with UNDP Evaluation guidelines, Evaluation Norms, and ethical standards. This is a summative evaluation involving both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the project performance and make recommendations. The evaluation followed a participatory approach whereby discussions with and surveys of key stakeholders provided/ verified the substance of the findings.

The TE followed a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the Ethiopian Forestry Development; relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; the UNDP Country Office(s), the Norwegian and Sweden Embassies, Ministry of Finance as well as beneficiaries.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE. Stakeholder involvement included interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to executing agencies, senior officials and task team leaders, key experts in the subject area, REDD+ Steering Committee, local communities etc. Additionally, the TE team conducted field missions in 4 selected woredas from Amhara, and SNNP regions. Due to the security issues and accessibility challenges, data was not collected from Tigray regional and woreda project coordination offices as well as regional stakeholders.

This final TE report describes the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions/logics of the program, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

The evaluators employed innovative approaches to data collection and analysis. The methodologies for data collection included the following:

- Document review of all relevant documentation: Theory of change and results framework, Annual work plans, biannual and annual reports, monitoring reports and technical project team meeting minutes. Systematic review of monitoring data from the Recipient UN Organizations, and other key sources of data;
- Collection of primary data through the use appropriate tools in line with evaluation questions and log frame indicators;
- Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders including key government counterparts, and community members,. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions, as appropriate, with major stakeholders including Donor Agencies;
- Key Informant Interviews (KII) with program stakeholders and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with communities;
- Field visits to the implementation sites/ On-site field visits and interviews of project beneficiaries.

A three-phase review was employed including: (i) Inception phase, (ii) data collection and analysis phase and (iii) close out phase.

#### A. *Inception phase*

The objective of this phase was to gain common understanding between the programme stakeholders and the evaluator on the objectives and scope of the assignment. This started with an initial virtual meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2023, between the Consultants (international and national) and the programme evaluation commissioning team (UNDP), to exchange ideas, relevant documentation, and reach an agreement on initial timelines.

The approval of this inception report marked the end of the inception phase.

#### B. *Data collection and analysis phase*

This phase represented the core of the assignment. To carry out a full and as objective an evaluation as possible, the evaluators adopted a mixed method/approach comprising secondary data analysis, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.



### **Desk review, research and analysis:**

Initial documentary review commenced at the inception phase and continued as additional relevant information became available. Documents reviewed amongst others included:

- ④ The programme document (ProDoC)Project results framework – this will enable assessment of the actual level of attainment of the end of project targets of the outputs and outcomes indicators
- ④ Annual and biannual progress reports
- ④ Annual work plans
- ④ Quarterly progress reports
- ④ Reports of workshops and meetings
- ④ Monitoring reports
- ④ M&E plan and reports
- ④ Technical project team meeting minutes



### **Primary data collection:**

Primary data collection took place through a quantitative and qualitative approach. Regarding the quantitative approach, we reviewed the secondary data provided to assess progress, in line with the results framework. The TE ensured that a collaborative and participatory approach was applied during the data collection, and close engagement maintained with the Project teams, government counterparts, including the Ethiopian Forestry Development; relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; Ministry of Finance; donor agencies; the UNDP Country Office(s); as well as beneficiaries. The approach entailed comparing reported achievements against project baselines and working out the level of achievement of the project indicators, outputs, and outcomes. Furthermore, quantitative data was generated using questionnaires that were administered electronically to the programme stakeholders for their completion. The questionnaire contained Likert scale questions destined for assessing the performance of the programme against some of the evaluation criteria.

Regarding qualitative approach, the evaluators collected data through in-person interviews with identified key partners and stakeholders, based on the list of stakeholders agreed upon during the inception phase. The evaluation team ensured a strong engagement of stakeholders, especially those who had project responsibilities such as executing agencies, senior officials and task team leaders, key experts in the subject area, Project Steering Committee, local communities and etc. Field visits to four (04) selected project sites / Districts was also carried out and ensured that local authorities, beneficiary groups – men, women, youth perceptions of the project were captured in the evaluation assignment. Data collection was implemented through individual interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiary groups at each site. All interviews were conducted in strict confidence and anonymity. The consultants maintained the anonymity of all information provided and sought and requested the informed consent of all evaluation participants. In the case of individual interviews, while informing the interlocutor of the anonymization of all information provided, requests to record the interview were sought. In carrying out the interviews or group discussions, detailed notes were taken by the consultant. The list of stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation appended to Annex C.

During the field visits, the evaluators also assessed the impact of the programme activities on people and its contribution to environmental objectives. Obviously, the impact was reviewed in line with the indicators provided in the programme logframe, in terms of expected long term changes but also probe into unintended impacts.



**Data analysis:** Content analysis was employed in the review of secondary data. Regarding primary data emerging from interviews and discussions, recorded interviews were transcribed and translated as necessary. The transcribed information was analyzed using content analysis. The mixed methods approach adopted enabled the evaluator to triangulate the findings on the ground to ensure the reliability and robustness of the results presented.

### Evaluation criteria ratings

The rating scale employed in the rating of the evaluation criteria is presented below.

Rating	Description
<b>Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency Rating Description</b>	
6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings
5 = Satisfactory (S)	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings
4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements
<b>Sustainability</b>	
4 = Likely (L)	There are little or no risks to sustainability
3 = Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability
2 = Moderately unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability
1 = Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability
Unable to Assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability



### C. *Close out phase*

In this phase, this draft evaluation report was elaborated to be submitted to UNDP and other relevant programme stakeholders following the data analysis and write up phase. Comments on the draft reports from UNDP and relevant stakeholders will be addressed and a revised version of the reports presented to the client alongside an audit trail. A draft outline of the evaluation report is presented in Annex 2. The report provides options for strategy and policy as well as recommendations, and lessons learnt covering the scope of the evaluation and meet the requirements of the UNDP evaluation guideline.

## 1.4. Principles of design and execution of the evaluation

When designing and executing the TE, the evaluators adhered strictly to the ethical and professional requirements of the United Nations Evaluation Group, accepting and scrupulously respecting its Code of Conduct for evaluation. This included but was not limited to, impartiality, objectivity, independence, relevance, utility, credibility, measurability, ethics, and partnerships. More specifically, to ensure the highest standard of the mission, the following attitudes were observed:

- Ensuring sources all necessary confidentiality and anonymity;



- Giving equal respect to interviewed stakeholders;
- Respecting the freedom of speech of interviewees;
- Respecting the diversity of stakeholders and reflecting it in an inclusive sampling, with special attention towards women and vulnerable parties;
- Using appropriate protocols to adequately reach women and the most disadvantaged groups;
- Making it clear, at the outset, to all interlocutors that the evaluator is neither a UNDP staff member nor a member of any other stakeholder, but an external and independent professional seeking feedback on the project and its implementation, and that information shared is done so anonymously;
- Communicating with all individuals in a transparent, respectful and calm manner; and
- Refraining from any practices prohibited by law and morality.

## **1.5. Quality assurance in the evaluation process**

Quality assurance was employed at two levels within the framework of this evaluation: firstly, within the evaluation team, and secondly between the evaluators and UNDP. Within the team of evaluators, all deliverables for this assignment were elaborated in line with the terms of reference of the TE. All the deliverables were reviewed by the team leader for completeness, ensuring that the deliverables are aligned with the requirements prescribed in the terms of reference. Deliverables that pass the completeness check were submitted to UNDP. The second level of quality assurance was achieved through the review of the deliverables by UNDP, the National Project Coordination Office and the government counterparts for the project. Comments received from UNDP, National Project Coordination Office and the government on each deliverable were addressed by the evaluators, after which a revised version of the deliverable alongside a comment matrix was resubmitted to UNDP.

## **1.6. Limitations to the evaluation**

The limitations of the methodology are those of the assessments based on qualitative and quantitative tools. Secondary and primary sources whether qualitative or quantitative in nature have their respective challenges. The former, especially in the case of progress reports from which most of the statistical information is drawn, refer to authors who are not independent, in this case, internal staff involved in the implementation of the programme, who may therefore develop biases unknowingly or intentionally. The primary sources, on the other hand, even if carefully chosen and inclusive, remain a non-random qualitative sample, and therefore always a questionable representation of the general population. In other words, the extent to which the views of one or more actors are objective and/or significant of what happened in the programme as a whole can always be questioned.

Field visits, interviews, and focus group discussions applied and therefore benefit from the advantages of mixed methods. An additional strategy for mitigating the challenges identified lies in the rigour of a systematic triangulation of sources and data. In this respect, at a first level of internal confrontation, the documents are first examined in terms of their intrinsic coherence in order to determine their quality and the reliability likely to result from them. Then, on the same subject, the different documents available are compared with each other to identify a second level of consistency and possible discrepancies. The primary data are in turn called upon and their indications are compared with what emerges from the secondary data, to determine a third level of confidence.

## **1.7. Structure of the TE report**

Structurally, this TE report is divided into four main sections. The first section is the introduction which is followed by a brief outline of the project. In the penultimate section of the report, results are presented. Finally, the report ends with a conclusion, recommendations and lessons learnt.



## 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1. Project Start and Duration

The project “Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development” has as its purpose to assist Ethiopia in achieving its targets on large scale afforestation-reforestation as described in the CRGE strategy by 2025 and reach the targets on reduced emissions into sequestration of Green House gases (GHGs) from the forest sector. The project has been implemented from the 1st of February 2016 to the 31st of December 2021. The project was co-funded by The Royal Norwegian Government, The Government of Sweden, UNDP, and the Government of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has recognized the importance of the forest sector, considering the sector as one of the four pillars in the Climate Resilience and Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy and established the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF). The then established MEF urgently required institutional strengthening support at all levels to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities. Its replica in Regional States and City Administrations are also facing significant capacity constraints at systematic, institutional and individual levels. The MEF ended up being changed to the Ethiopian Forestry Development.

The Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Project (ISFSDP) has as its purpose to assist Ethiopia in achieving its targets on large scale afforestation-reforestation as described in the CRGE. The project is thus expected to enhance the institutional capacity of forest sector development to implement sustainable forest management. It targeted to enhance the capacity of the forest sector at all levels to increase forest coverage that boosts carbon sequestration and other environmental services as well as the promotion of sustainable supply of wood and wood products.

The total resource required for the project was US\$ 22,464,942 of which The Royal Norwegian Government through UNDP and CRGE facility provided US\$ 10,600,000; UNDP provided US\$1,400,000; from The Government of Sweden US\$ 6,400,000; Unfunded budget \$2,814,942 and in-kind contributions from the Government of Ethiopia US\$ 1,250,000.

As per the project document (ProDoc), ISFSDP has as start date, June 2015 and end date December 2022 and was to be implemented through five major components of development interventions namely:

- i. **Institutional development:** This component aims at strengthening the institutional capacity at all levels that include the capacity of the research and education system in the sector;
- ii. **Forest development:** This aims at creating afforestation and reforestation models at nine pilot projects districts for demonstrating sustainable forest landscape restoration practices in the degraded areas of the three regional States (Tigray, Amhara and SNNPR) of Ethiopia;
- iii. **Private sector development:** It is at promoting the role of the private sector in forest development;
- iv. **Stakeholder engagement:** This component aims at promotion of broad-based stakeholder engagement in forest conservation and development; and
- v. **Science and innovations:** Aims at strengthening the institutional capacity of the research and education system of the sector.

### 2.2. Development Context

The forest sector development has important focus in the national strategy and policy framework of Ethiopia and has mandated institutions for its implementation for which capacity building activities at all levels are required. Contextually, the development prospects for the Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Project are derived from the prerequisite of national policies and strategies relevant to forest sector and the need for institutional growth.

Forest resources are among the natural resources that have substantial socio-economic, cultural and ecological importance. They are important for soil and water conservation, watershed protection, nutrient recycling, nitrogen fixation, amenity and recreation, creation of microclimate, wildlife habitat, gene conservation and carbon sequestration from the atmosphere.

If only the formally recognized, officially reported monetary contributions of forests to the economies of the developing world are taken into account, they exceed USD 250 billion — more than double the flow of total development assistance and more than the annual global output of gold and silver combined.

The development, conservation and sustainable utilization of forests plays a significant role in the enhancement of the national economy, helps to mitigate and adapt to climate change and helps to meet the needs of the society for forest products. As such, the beneficiaries from the sector range from smallholders for firewood, soil fertility and feed improvement in agroforestry, industries from commercial forestry to the international community through REDD+ and CDM. The Tourism, Wildlife, Agriculture, Energy and Water sectors also directly or indirectly benefit from forest sector development. Ethiopia has the potential to tap into the economic benefits from industrial and fuel woods supplied by the forestry sector. In the year 2005 alone, the value of industrial wood removed from the Ethiopian forest amounted to USD 74,552,000 while that of fuel wood was USD 641,734,000<sup>1</sup>.

The contributions of non-wood forest products to the national economy of Ethiopia through the production of gums and incense, medicinal plants, honey and beeswax are also considerable. In 2005, the value of non-wood forest products extracted was estimated at USD 36,583,000 bringing the total value for the year to USD 9,000<sup>2</sup>. Between 1997 and 2010, about 6,174 tons of gum Arabic and about 33,865 tons of other gums and resins were exported from Ethiopia, which generated more than USD 72 million. Revenues from incense and gums were estimated at USD 9.6 million for 2009 alone.

Forests in Ethiopia provide households with more income than the combined income from other activities for low-income groups in northern and western Ethiopia. Studies on the value of non-timber forest products (NTFP) to the rural societies in Ethiopia indicated that most rural households use NTFPs for different purposes such as food, medicine and income generation.

Medicinal plants also play an important role in Ethiopian healthcare. About 1000 plant species are documented as being used in traditional medicines and the total value added to the economy from traditional medicine in the year 2005 was estimated at USD 210 million and about 56 000 tons of medicinal plants harvested, mainly from wild plants, are used per annum in Ethiopia<sup>3</sup>.

Forestry's contribution to employment generation is undocumented. Most forestry operations are undertaken in rural Ethiopia and many laborers are required for forest nursery operations, afforestation and for the construction and maintenance of roads. Forest industry employment amounted to about 2.2% of the total work force in the country and contributed 2.8 % to employment in the agricultural sector in 1988/1989.

Indeed, Ethiopia is endowed with diverse ecosystems in which diverse flora and fauna as well as microbial resources are found. The major ecosystems include: afroalpine and sub-afroalpine, montane dry forest and scrub, montane moist forest, acacia-comiphora woodland, combretum-terminalia woodland, lowland humid forest, aquatic, wetland, montane grassland, and desert and semi-desert ecosystems.

### **2.2.1. Prerequisite of National Policies and Strategies Relevant to Forest Sector**

The environmental policy of Ethiopia, the output of conservation strategy embraced the concept of sustainable development and aimed to improve and enhance the health and quality of life of all Ethiopians and to promote sustainable and social and economic development. It is to be attained through the sound management and use of natural, human-made and cultural resources and the environment as a whole, in the way it gets together the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this policy forest conservation and development is one of the sartorial policy provisions.

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<sup>1</sup> ProDoc

<sup>2</sup> ProDoc

<sup>3</sup> ProDoc

The forest policy and Forest development, Conservation and Utilization Proclamations were issued in 2007 to ensure sustainable supply of forest products to the society, thereby also contributing to the national economy. The policy encourages public private partnership for forest conservation and development and puts in place various incentive mechanisms to promote the private sector in forest conservation and development.

The Climate Resilience Green Economy (CRGE) strategy puts forestry as one of the four pillars to its aim of offsetting the potential impact of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions associated with Ethiopia's ambitious growth plans by 2030. The Climate Resilience Green Economy Strategy of Ethiopia (EFDRE, 2011) indicated that increased sequestration of the abatement levers for the forestry component, alone requires the coverage of 7 million hectares through large and small scale afforestation /reforestation/ area closure and forest management of woodlands and forests.

On the other hand, Growth and Transformation Plan (MoFED 2010) claimed that the total area rehabilitated through soil and other conservation work is expected to reach 10.21 million hectares and a total of 7.78 million hectares is expected to be developed through community-based watershed development. As a result, the institutional strengthening of forest sector development was mandatory and fully recognized the complementarities and synergies with initiated and implemented forest sector policy and forest development strategies of the country.

### **2.2.2. Institutional Development**

Top-down institutional arrangement in the forest sector has been made by the government of Ethiopia in establishing the Ministry of Environment and Forest at the federal level. This institution was restructured on two occasions, resulting in the creation of first Ethiopian Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission which was in turn changed to the current Ethiopian Forestry Development. The Oromia National regional State established in 2009 the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise (OFWE). OFWE manages all state forests and protected areas in Oromia, while tapping into the economic potential of forests and parks. It also manages many natural forests through Participatory Forest Management (PFM) arrangement. The Amhara Regional state also established its Amhara Forest Enterprise in 2011. In regions, the forestry development programs are implemented by bureaus of Agriculture or Natural Resource or Environmental Protection Authorities.

The institutional development efforts of the Ethiopian government requires strong local capacity and management system that can handle substantial changes as a result of emerging issues. Therefore, this Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Project (ISFSDP) was a very imperative intervention as it focuses on institutional strengthening efforts at all levels which eventually evolved into sustainable activities on the ground. It was also part of the UNDP's capacity building program for the CRGE implementation that mobilized available experts from UNDP's regional center and headquarters to efficiently implement their programs.

## **2.3. Problems that the Project Sought to Address**

Ethiopia is endowed with diverse ecosystems in which diverse flora and fauna as well as microbial resources are found. In spite of these diverse economic and ecological roles played by the forest resources, it is often hard to quantify the economic and social contribution of the services and products provided by the forest sector. Ethiopia has given recognition on the importance of the forest sector by undertaking institutional establishments, joining numerous multilateral agreements such as CRGE strategy and implementation of numerous projects and initiatives.

Despite these efforts, Ethiopia still requires institutional strengthening support at all levels so that the sector can efficiently discharge its responsibilities. Moreover, strengthening the forestry sector at all levels is vital in order to realize the forestry component of the CRGE strategy, implement REDD+ strategy, realize the targets set in the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTPI) and adequately plan and implement GTPII; the established institutions with their replica at regions that suffer with capacity constraints at systematic, institutional and individual levels. Deforestation, forest degradation and unsustainable land management practices in Ethiopia are causing significant environmental problems,

including soil erosion, loss of soil fertility and associated loss of crop productivity, flooding, sedimentation of water courses and dams, loss of carbon and biodiversity assets.

Even then, Ethiopia continues to show strong commitment and leadership to grow greener by creating resilient landscapes. This is confirmed by designing and implementing Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy embedded under its GTP. The main constraints identified were:

- Low level of institutional capacity to implement sustainable forest management; and
- Lack of innovative and holistic approaches to realize its strategic role in supporting sustainable development on the ground.

Therefore, strong local capacity and system to address institutional and individual capacity gaps is required to strengthen the country's underlying forest sector structures, to meet and sustain forest development activities on the ground.

## **2.4. Immediate and development objectives of the project**

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the government capacity (the then Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF), and later Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD) at all levels and spearhead the implementation of forestry component contained in the GTP and CRGE strategy. The project was meant to support the existing Ethiopian Forestry Development institutions and its replicas at regions to enhance their capacity in forest conservation and development.

The Specific Project Objectives were to:

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

## **2.5. Expected results**

As indicated in the Project document, the Complementary outputs of the project at the end of the project period were:

- By 2021, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels
- Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted
- Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated
- Science and innovation for enhancing Sustainable Forest Management promoted
- Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced

The details of these complementary outputs of the project under its different components compiled and presented in **Table 1**.

*Table 1: Component/outcome Expected results at end of project Component*

Component or Outcome	Expected results at the end of project
<b>Component 1: Strengthening the institutional capacity of the forest sector at all levels</b>	One National Forestry Action Plan 11 Regional forest action plans
Output 1.1: Forest conservation and management action plan at the national level prepared	Forest sector structures designed in nine regional states and two city administrations Forest sector structures established in nine regional states and two city administrations
Output 1.2: Forest conservation and management regional programs developed and implementation	Forest sector development structures become functional at all levels Put in place the required skilled human resources for federal and emerging regions
Output 1.3: MEF and Bureau of Environment and Forest (BOEF) for 11 regions equipped with office facilities	Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) Forest conservation and development database become operational at all levels
Output 1.4: BOEF structure designed with required skilled human resources developed/recruited	
Output 1.5: Regional forestry data base infrastructure established	
<b>Component 2: Forest Conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced</b>	Clearly defined and integrated rural land use plans that support forest development and conservation of forest resources in eight selected sites
Output 2.1: Integrated land use plans in the four regions developed to identify among others that suitable land for forest development and conservation	300,000 hectares of degraded land be demarcated and mapped 200,000 hectares of degraded rehabilitated 30,000 hectares mapped and demarcated
Output 2.2: The degraded areas (water towers) of the Amhara Beneshangul, SNNPR and Tigray NRs rehabilitated;	30,000 hectares covered through short rotation plantation programs One project design document on forest prepared to access carbon finance
Output 2.3: Short rotation forestry expanded or productive for fuel and construction by the community	Criteria for implementation of agro forestry system in the pilot regions developed Improved agro forestry system in four pilot regions
Output 2.4: Agricultural productivity and food security improved at household level through agro forestry systems;	One roadmap for implementation of agro forestry system in the country developed Three sites per pilot regions efficiently implemented payment for ecosystem
Output 2.5: Five diagnostic studies to enhance SFM conducted	
Output 2.6: National system to operationalize PES developed	
<b>Component 3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated</b>	Four awareness raising workshops organized Three study tours were conducted to enhance the involvement of the private sector
Output 3.1: Incentive mechanism for the involvement of the private sector for forest marketing and development establishment	Incentive mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest resources developed
Output 3.2: Series of awareness raising activities targeting the private sectors conducted	Five best practices disseminated on the involvement of the private sector in forest conservation and development
Output 3.3: Pilot technologies for value addition in high NTFP potential	Three new technologies for value addition introduced

regions by the private sectors conducted	A document on value chain and market study
<b>Component 4: Science and Innovation for enhancing SFM promoted</b>	One national forestry research strategy developed
Output 4.1:Capacity of the forestry research institution for science and innovation enhanced	Four regional and one federal research institution capacity built Revised curricula
Output 4.2:Capacity of the forestry training institutions in providing skill training strengthened	Two refreshment trainings conducted Research and academic cooperation on forest knowledge and innovation exchange through twig arrangements
Output 4.3:Vocational training on forest based enterprise development enhanced	New technologies adopted
Output 4.4: Capacity of forestry training and research institutions enhanced	One national GIS facility strengthened Two refreshment trainings conducted
	Two environmental tool kits developed 22 school environmental clubs established Five staff exchange on forest knowledge and innovation through twig arrangement 5,000 Youth trained on environmental clubs establishment and operationalization 15 green enterprises established 10 research papers published in peer reviewed journals Three PhD students through the twig arrangements
<b>Component 5: Stakeholders engagement in forest development enhanced</b>	One forestry action data base established One stake holder engagement road map developed
Output 5.1:Stakeholders involved in the forestry sector mapped	12 platforms of forestry actors established at federal and regional levels
Output 5.2:Put in platform for the engagement of stakeholders in forestry activities	One interactive website for information and knowledge sharing developed Roles and responsibilities of key actors in the forestry sector identified and communicated
Output 5.3:Stakeholder engagement road map prepared	



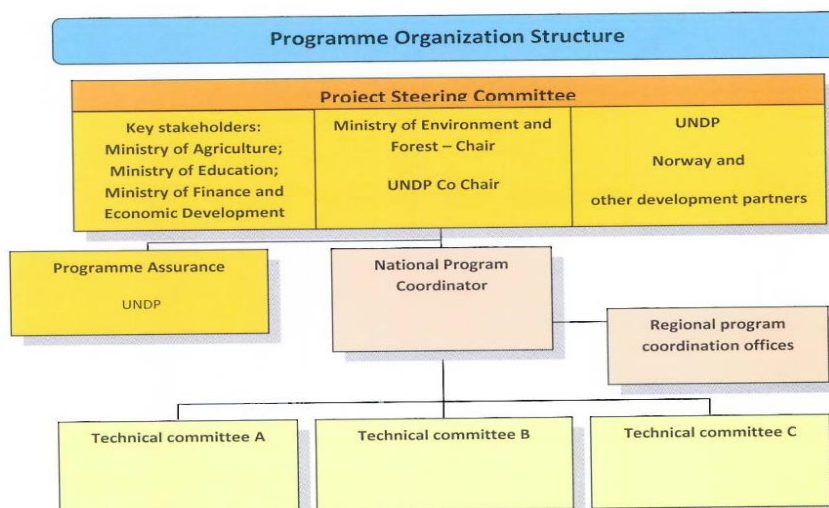
## 2.6. Main Stakeholders

The Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Program was funded by the Royal Norwegian Government through the UNDP and CRGE Facility of Ethiopia and later supported by the Government of Sweden through UNDP. The Ethiopian Forestry Development in collaboration with UNDP were the main implementing institutions. The Ministry of Finance was the Responsible Partner of the project. UNDP, the Norwegian Embassy, and the Swedish Embassy together with EFD were engaged in joint monitoring and evaluation of the program.

At regional level, there were Regional Coordination Offices and nationally, the National Program Coordination Office (NPCO). Technical and administrative bodies at regional and local level were also responsible for the implementation, monitoring and follow up of the program execution on regular basis. The project was implemented in 13 pilot districts from the regions of Amhara, SNNP and Tigray regions. Targeted beneficiaries for project activities such as Afforestation and Reforestation (A/R) and also Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) activities are jobless youths and vulnerable communities for climate change and environmental degradation. Equally, communities residing in close proximity to sites selected for implementation of project activities were targeted in order to strengthen their resilience and reduce their resilience on natural resources within their environs.

Project offices opened in the selected project woredas and these offices were linked with the National Program coordination office through the regional REDD+ coordination offices. The overall guidance of the project implementation was provided by a Steering Committee while at the District level there is an additional technical committee, which provided technical guidance including quality assurance for each project activity on the ground.

The screening committee comprised of representatives from MOA, MoWEE, MOFED, MEF, MOE, Norway, and UNDP plus a maximum of two from participating development partners. The Minister of MEF as the implementing partner appointed the steering Committee. The management arrangements of the Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development is presented in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1: Management Arrangements of the Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development (Source: Project document P-48)**

## 2.7. Theory of Change

The target of the program is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTPII and CRGE. These national and regional development plans were set to achieve environmental sustainability demonstrated through established different institutions that work in the forest sector to implement numerous projects and initiatives. The nation at large encountered several challenges hindering its ability to implement the projects and programs in the forest sector. In order to enhance the capacity of

these institutions at all levels of the structure, to meet and sustain global environmental priorities, the ISFSDP project was designed and implemented to address capacity development priorities identified in the sector.

The project design was set to develop a targeted set of systemic, institutional, and individual capacities at the national, regional and district levels. It was to induce institutions could have the necessary human resources, technical capacity, system and procedures to plan coordinate and implement forest sector development activities. Accordingly, the ISFSDP project was to introduce transformative actions under five main outputs.

- Strengthening the institutional capacity of the forest sector at all levels.
- Enhancing forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits.
- Promotion of broad-based stakeholder engagement mainly the private sector in forest conservation and development.
- Promoting science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management.
- Strengthening private sector involvement in forest development.

The expected outcomes of the project include: improve the governance systems; the use of technologies and practices; and improve financing mechanisms that promote low carbon climate-resilient economy and society at all levels. The theory of change of the ISFSDP is thus, based on the following assumptions.

- Forestry sector at all levels will be equipped with the forest conservation and development programs and action plans.
- Office facilities and equipment data bases and procedures tools, etc. to coordinate and operationalize the forestry components contained in the CRGE strategy and GTP in particular.
- Contribute for the attainment of the government vision of becoming carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2025.
- The program implementation will contribute to filling the fuel-wood deficiency gaps, which more than 80 percent of the rural population is suffering of and which aggravates the impoverishment of the environmental resources.
- The implementation of the forestry component in the CRGE strategy will place Ethiopia internationally at the forefront of successfully increasing the forest coverage, by minimizing deforestation and forest degradation and decreasing the emission level due to deforestation and forest degradation.



### **3. FINDINGS**

#### **3.1. Project design/formulation**

##### **3.1.1. Analysis of results framework**

The result framework of the project was analyzed in order to determine the extent to which the project indicators and targets are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). As presented in **Table 2** with the exception of output 1 with 2 non-compliant indicators, the other outputs have all indicators fully SMART compliant.

*Table 2: Terminal evaluation SMART analysis of the project's objective and outcome indicators*

Indicator	End-of-project Target	Terminal evaluation SMART analysis					Evaluators' Feedback
		S	M	A	R	T	
<b>Project Objective:</b> to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTP and CRGE Strategy.							
<b>Indicator 1 (Output 1) The institutional capacity of the forestry sector is strengthened at all levels</b>							
Indicator 1.1: Existence of sub national structures established in nine regional state and two city administrations;	Forest sector structures established in nine regional states and two city administrations						Fully compliant
Indicator 1.2: Presence of National forest conservation and development action plan;	Three volume documents prepared on the National Forest Sector Development Program that can serve as a road map for the next ten years						There is a discrepancy between the indicator and the targets. While the indicator focused on action plan, the target focused on road map. This indicator is thus questionably compliant to the specific and measurable criteria
Indicator 1.3: Presence of forest conservation and development programmes in regions and city administrations.	Initiated the preparation of similar action program documents for each region						Fully compliant
Indicator 1.4: Existence of functional offices at national and sub-national levels;	Forest sector structures become functional at all levels						Fully compliant
Indicator 1.5: Existence of forest conservation and development database operational at national and regional levels;	Forest conservation and development database established at all levels;						The indicator shows the existence of an operational database while the target indicates the establishment. This renders the indicator questionably compliant to the attainable criteria.
<b>Indicator 2 (Output 2): Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced</b>							

Indicator 2.1: Presence of clearly defined and integrated Rural Land Use plans that support the development and conservation of forest resources in pilot regional sates;	Clearly defined and integrated Rural Land Use plans that support development and conservation of forest resources in eight selected sites;						Fully compliant- land use plan in nine sites defined.
	30, 000 ha covered through short rotation plantation programmes						Plantation has been conducted on about 20,000 ha in both cases. The indicator is fully compliant to the SMART criteria
- Proportion of degraded land demarcated and mapped;	- 300,000 ha of degraded land be demarcated and mapped;						The indicator is fully compliant to the SMART criteria
- Proportion of degraded land rehabilitated ;	- 200,000 ha of degraded land rehabilitated - One Project Design Document on forest prepared to access carbon finance;						The Level of achievement is below the set number/quantity (target) which renders the indicator questionably compliant with the attainable criteria.
- Presence of project designed document on the forest to access carbon finance	- Criteria for implementation of agro forestry system in the pilot regions developed;						Fully compliant
- Existence of a roadmap for implementation of agro forestry system in the country	- Improved Agro-forestry System in four Pilot Regions						Fully compliant
- None of the pilot sites per regions effectively implemented Payment for Ecosystem Services;	-One roadmap for implementation of agro forestry system in the country developed						Fully compliant
Number of areas covered per region and city	- Three sites per pilot regions effectively						Fully compliant

administration through short rotation plantation programmes;	implemented Payment for Ecosystem Services;						
<b>Output 3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated</b>							
Number of awareness raising workshops and study tours organized to enhance the involvement of the private sector;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four awareness raising workshops were organized</li> <li>- 3 study tours conducted to enhance the involvement of the private sector;</li> <li>- Incentive Mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest resources developed;</li> <li>- 5 best practices disseminated on the involvement of the private sector in forest conservation &amp; development</li> <li>- Three new technologies for value addition introduced;</li> </ul> A document on value chain and market study						Fully compliant
Existence of Incentive Mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest resources;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of Study tours conducted outside the country</li> <li>- Number of best practices disseminated</li> <li>- Number of technologies with value addition;</li> <li>- A document on market study;</li> <li>- Amount of seed money provided for local communities for new technology</li> </ul>						Fully compliant
<b>Output 4: Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National forestry research strategy put in place</li> <li>- Number of research institutions supported</li> <li>- Number of technologies adopted;</li> <li>- Number of revised curricula</li> <li>- Number of professionals who received refreshment training;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One National forestry research strategy developed;</li> <li>- Four regional and one federal research institutions capacity built</li> <li>- Revised curricula;</li> <li>- two refreshment trainings conducted;</li> <li>- Research and academic cooperation on forest knowledge and innovation exchange through twinning arrangement</li> </ul>						Fully compliant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of toolkits for environmental training produced,</li> <li>- Number of forestry enterprises established;</li> <li>- Number research papers published</li> <li>- Number of staff exchange in the context of south-south and north-south cooperation framework</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New technologies adopted;</li> <li>- One national GIS facility strengthened;</li> <li>- Two refreshment trainings conducted;</li> <li>- Two environmental education toolkits developed;</li> <li>- 22 school environmental clubs established</li> <li>- 5 staff exchange on forest knowledge and innovation through twing arrangement -5,000 youth trained on environmental clubs establishment and operationalization</li> <li>- 15 green enterprises established</li> <li>- 10 research papers published in peer reviewed journals</li> <li>- Three PhD students through the twig arrangement</li> </ul>						
<b>Output 5: Stakeholders engagement in forest development enhanced</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of forestry action data base established;</li> <li>- Presence of plat forms for the engagement of stake holders in forestry</li> <li>- Web site established for information and knowledge sharing.</li> <li>- Stake holder engagement road map developed</li> <li>- Annual conferences conducted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One forestry action data base established;</li> <li>- One stakeholder engagement road map developed;</li> <li>- 12 plat forms of forestry actors established at federal and regional levels</li> <li>- One Interactive website for information and knowledge sharing developed;</li> <li>-Roles and responsibilities of key actors in the forestry sector identified and communicated</li> </ul>						Fully compliant

### ***Legend***

SMART criteria compliant	Questionably compliant to SMART criteria	Non compliant to SMART criteria

### 3.1.2. Assumptions and Risks

The initial risk analysis conducted during the project design culminating in the identification of project risks. Covid-19 emerged as a new risk in the course of the implementation period of the project. The pandemic retarded the implementation of outreach activities with short term restrictions by the government. However, at UNDP and national level, the project team continued working at home through technological relay for some time outside the office during the lock-down. Eventually, options were explored for devising new ways to ensure project continuity, especially pertaining to the community mobilization on the field work. The project explored the option of organizing community mobilization in small groups per session and replicating the session in another direction with precautions supplied as much as possible.

Zonal and district administrative restructuring in the Southern Nation and Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR) and the unexpected war in the northern part of the country (Tigray and Amhara) were also a new risk in the course of the implementation period of the project. In due course, the project also explored alternatives of optimal administrative support from the neighboring district organizing community mobilization ensuring a programme progress Report (PPR) to be submitted to the assigned Steering Committee.

The decision to invest in forests by the private sector was risky since it depended on the expected returns on investment and perceived degree of risk. Access to funds, land and planting material to investors to establish a large enough area of plantation was limited. Information on market price for forest products and costs of silvicultural practices was also imperfect, which reduced the incentives for plantation establishment.

It was learnt that during project implementation, the risk register of the project was reviewed and modified as required through information on quarterly/biannual monitoring. A Programme Progress Reports (PPR) shall be submitted by the Program Manager to the Program Steering Committee through Program Assurance, using the standard report format available in the Executive Snapshot. A programme lesson-learned regularly updated to ensure on-going learning and adaptation within the project, and to facilitate the preparation of the lessons-learned reports.

The initial risk analysis assumptions risks and liabilities related to the project implementation were presented in the following **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Project risks and Proposed Mitigating Measures**

<b>No</b>	<b>Risk description Category /</b>	<b>Rating (R)</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
1	Inadequate participation and ownership by the local communities including lack of incentive mechanism	Operational R: Medium	Conduct series of meetings with local communities and local authorities and reach consensus and demarcate the degraded lands for the programme activities and get endorsement of the local leaders and local authorities. Design and implement incentive mechanism for the active involvement of the local communities.
2	Delay in the approval process of incentive mechanism for the active involvement of the private sector in the conservation and management of forest resources as well as marketing with forest products.	Political R: Medium	Awareness raising and effective communication strategy including collating, analyzing and availing the experiences of other countries in involving the private sector in the forestry sector.
3	Implementing the programme in very competitive environment	Operational R: Medium	Putting in place working modality on how different development partners operate without duplication of efforts.
4	Data on the forestry sectors not available or is more costly than anticipated	Operational R: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider multiple sources and combine a bottom-up and top-down data gathering and identify least cost option.</li> <li>• Establish appropriate data gathering and analysis tools to reduce cost and improve scalability;</li> </ul>
5	Delay in procurement process	Operational R: Medium	Procurement by delegation and direct payment modalities
6	Low survival of planted seedlings	Operational R: Medium	Proper species-site match, plantation site management, protecting free grazing on plantation areas

It is the opinion of the evaluators that the project risks were adequately identified, and the provided mitigation measures were appropriate. Risks encountered during the implementation of the project were timely identified and measures were taken to minimize the incidence of the risks.

### **3.1.3. Lessons from other Relevant Projects**

This ISFSDP in Ethiopia has followed policies and baseline projects of Ethiopia that include:

- Environmental Policy of Ethiopia approved in 1997 by the Council of Ministers, which is one of the outputs of the Conservation Strategy of the country;
- Policy and Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization proclamation of 2007;
- Growth and Transformation Plan, 2010;
- Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy of Ethiopia, 2011;
- Household livelihood strategies and forest dependence in the highlands of Tigray, Northern Ethiopia;
- Forest Plantation and Wood lands in Ethiopia, African Forest Forum 2011;
- Ethiopian Forestry Action Plan, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development 1992;
- Policy brief Forum for Environment, 2009; the need for Strengthened Institutional set up;
- Policy Forum for Ethiopia, 2010. Green Accounting Puts Price on Ethiopian soil erosion and deforestation.

The project design was mainly informed by Country Programme/UNDAF Results and Resources Framework, which is Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy which took forestry as one of the four pillars and Agriculture focused Climate Resilient Strategy in which forestry is one of the focus areas. It was part of the UNDP's capacity building programme for the CRGE implementation. The experiences gained from the implementation of forestry programmes under the UN-REDD in Africa and elsewhere were targeted in the implementation of the program. The program was also in line with the UNDAF three strategic priorities: enhanced economic growth and poverty reduction; democratic governance and capacity development; and development of a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

There were several baseline projects implemented in Ethiopia, ranging from small initiatives implemented at the household level, geared at enhancing the resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change to climate change adaptation programmes of all regional states and city administrations. These adaptation programmes served as a basis during the formulation of CRGE strategy and provided past experiences and highlighted needs in terms of information and knowledge, which informed the design of the capacity building activities. The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Programme fully recognizes the complementarities and synergy with Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) + initiatives. REDD+ has defined scope and outputs mainly focused on readiness.

Therefore, this new institutional strengthening program, which has got; institutional development, forest development, private sector involvement, stakeholder engagement and science and innovations were important pillars that complement REDD-readiness and the actual REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia and understood as a base for "Green Legacy Initiatives".

### **3.1.4. Planned Stakeholder Participation**

The ISFSDP project had an elaborated stakeholder engagement component. The engagement of stakeholders including the local communities were defined and communicated before the program implementation. The duties and responsibilities of all stakeholders were defined and set for the project implementation at national, regional and district levels. At the project sites frameworks such as land use rights, tenure arrangements, and safeguards and benefit sharing arrangements were identified and proper safeguard mechanism adopted for the project implementation. Local program arrangements were agreed and signed at different levels to build confidence and ensure sustainability of land use changes mainly at project site as the result of the afforestation/ reforestation and re-vegetation program.

The stakeholders participated in the implementation of the project include:

- Government of Ethiopia (GoE):



- Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD) then known as Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF);
  - Ministry of Agriculture MoA;
  - Ministry of Education (MoE);
  - Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED);
  - Ministry of Water Energy and Environment (MoWEE);
  - Project Steering Committee (PSC) at National, Regional and District levels;
  - Regional Governments;
  - Project Coordinator at National and Regional Levels;
  - Project Coordination Office (PCO) at District level;
  - Civil Society Organizations (CSOs);
  - Research Organizations;
  - Higher learning Institutions;
  - Community Based Organizations (CBOs); and
  - Professional Associations such as Ethiopian Forestry Association.
- UNDP

## **3.2. Project Implementation**

### **3.2.1. Adaptive Management**

The Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF) (currently the Ethiopian Forestry Development) was the responsible implementer of the project designed as Fast Track Investment of the CRGE Facility and National Implementation Modality (NIM), guided by UNDP NIM rules and regulations as well as the National Project Implementation Manual (PIM) approved by the government of Ethiopia. The institutional arrangement described in the Project Document presents MEF as the owner and controller of the project implementation managed by Ethiopian Forestry Development. It is responsible and accountable for implementing this project, including operational monitoring of the project interventions, achieving the project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP resources.

UNDP played a quality assurance role and worked with EFD and MOFED to mobilize resources to adequately capitalize the program. The fiduciary role of UNDP was critical in building credibility and confidence in the project implementation. In addition, UNDP provided institutional and capacity building support and institutional capacity development necessary to promote Sustainable Forest Management and equipping the sector at all levels with necessary equipment and technical skills to enhance the organizational, systemic and individual capacity.

The Project Document also outlines the essential project management and governance structure in the form of a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC was responsible for making operational policies and strategic management decisions, including approving annual work plans and budgets. The Steering Committee meets regularly, at least quarterly, and on an extra-ordinary basis to provide immediate guidance on urgent operational and strategic matters under the overall executive oversight of the State Minister of Environment and Forests who also chairs the SC. The SC appoints a Technical Committee (TC) with the representation of development partners, key government ministries, private sector, civil society, and other non-state actors.

The Technical Committee was to review the operational policies and progress on program outputs, provide project assurance, and provide regular reports to the SC. In this capacity, the Technical Committee supports the technical implementation of the project. The Program Steering Committee monitors functions and delivery of program outputs, ensuring that the program is on-source towards achieving the overall outcomes. Additional specific responsibilities include ensuring beneficiary needs and expectations are being met or managed; risks are being controlled; the program remains viable;

internal and external communications are working; quality management procedures are properly followed; and that the Program Steering Committees decisions are followed and revisions are managed in line with procedures laid-down in the PIM.

The steering committee comprised representatives from MoA, MoWEE, MOFED, MEF, MoE, Norway, and UNDP plus a maximum of two from participating development partners. The Minister of MEF as the implementing partner appoints the Steering Committee. At project level District Sector Offices /Cabinets/ led by the local district administration head were members of PSCs and responsible for the implementation of the project on the ground. These PSCs in some districts empowered community-based organizations and shared the responsibility of implementing and owning the project. For example, Sodo Guragie District of SNNPRS transposed power on community-based institutions locally known as “Iddir”. “Iddir” is a community-based organization (CBOs) established by the community members to help each other during funerals and social livelihood risks. It is led by elected members from the community associated with it. Accordingly, eight “Iddir” members of the two adjacent kebeles of the project contributed two “Iddir” leaders to form the project management team. This team has developed bylaws and management guidelines, rules and regulations to which the communities abide. The project is then made to be managed by these CBOs.

### 3.2.2. Actual Stakeholder Participation and Partnership Arrangements

The Project Document identified an array of the project stakeholders and presented analysis of their potential involvement in the project. The list includes key stakeholders the Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; Ethiopian Forestry Development – Chair and UNDP Co Chair and Norway. The key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities relevant for the project are summarized in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Project Stakeholder Participation and Partnership Arrangement**

Name	Type	Specialization	Role In The Project
Ministry of Environment and Forest (MEF)	Government	National environmental and forest development policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementer, coordinates the project, appoints the Steering Committee</li> <li>- Supports national training conducted under the project</li> <li>- Chairs the Project Steering Committee (PSC)</li> <li>- Provides technical support to the legislation review</li> <li>- Operational monitoring of the project interventions and effective use of UNDP resources</li> <li>- Monitoring and follow-up of the Program</li> </ul>
Ministry of Agriculture MoA	Government	Undertake the management and regulation of agricultural resources, both crop and livestock production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member of the PSC</li> <li>- Supports the regulatory and implementation aspects of the project</li> </ul>

Name	Type	Specialization	Role In The Project
Ministry of Education (MoE)	Government	National environmental and forest education policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member of the PSC</li> <li>- Involve education sector institutions to research and education</li> <li>- Provide technical support at grassroots project level</li> </ul>
Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED)	Government	National environmental and forest education policy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member of the PSC</li> <li>- Mobilize resources to adequately capitalize the program</li> <li>- Monitoring and follow-up of the Program</li> </ul>
Ministry of Water Energy and Environment (MoWEE)	Government	Undertake the management and regulation of water resources, medium and large-scale irrigation and electricity resources in Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member of the PSC</li> <li>- Supports the regulatory aspects of the project</li> <li>- Participates in the inventory and coordinates the utility sector</li> </ul>
Regional Governments	Government	Undertake the management and regulation of regional resources, administration management and project coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementer, coordinates the project implementation, supports regional trainings conducted under the project</li> <li>- Provides technical support to the legislation review</li> <li>- Achieving the project outcomes</li> </ul>
Project Steering Committee (PSC) at National, Regional and District	Government	Make operational policies and strategic management decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approving annual work plans and budgets</li> <li>- Meets regularly and provide immediate guidance on urgent operational and strategic matters</li> <li>- Appoints a Technical Committee (TC)</li> </ul>
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs);	NGOs	Supports activities, and promotes ecologically sound development intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in community development and awareness raising activities</li> </ul>
Research Organizations	Government	Innovation, research and dissemination of educative information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project partner</li> <li>- Participates in the inventory and provides technical details of the forest development</li> <li>- Possibly supports the community with innovative skills and knowledge</li> </ul>
Higher learning Institutions;	Government	Learning and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project partner</li> <li>- Participates in the inventory and provides educative/ learning on forest development</li> <li>- Possibly supports the community with knowledge and experience sharing</li> </ul>
Local	Civil society Community	Knowledge of the needs and interests of local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participates in awareness raising campaigns; meetings, forums, seminars,</li> </ul>

Name	Type	Specialization	Role In The Project
communities	Based Organizations; and Professional Associations	communities	etc. - Decision-making on the project's implementation plans; training workshops, where appropriate; and moderated discussion forums.
Norway	Government	Support to the Government of Ethiopia	- Member of the PSC - Donor investor
Sweden	Government	Support to the Government of Ethiopia	- Donor investor
UNDP	UN	Support to the Government of Ethiopia	- Co-Chairs the Project Steering Committee (PSC) - Donor investor - Plays a quality assurance and fiduciary role - Mobilize resources to adequately capitalize the program - Monitoring and follow-up of the Program - Institutional and capacity building support - Equipping the sector at all levels with the necessary equipment and technical skills

All stakeholders participated in the project in events including but not limited to consultations, capacity building workshops, learning-by-doing events, inception workshops and steering committee meetings. The day-to-day management of the Project has been carried out by the Project Coordination Office (PCO), under the overall guidance of the PSC and the daily supervision of the Project Coordinator. The PCO has been institutionally configured within the existing MEF structures and at project Districts.

### 3.2.3. Project finance and co-finance

The total financing budget of the project was US\$ 22,464,942, coming from the various donors, to permit the project to meet up with the achievement of its objectives. The funding for the project came from the Royal Norwegian Government through UNDP and Climate Resilient Green Economy Growth Facility (CRGE) with an amount of US\$ 10,600,000; UNDP US\$ 1,400,000; Swedish Government US\$ 6,400,000; in-kind contributions from the Government US\$ 1,250,000 and an unfunded budget of US\$ 2,814,942.

### 3.2.4. Monitoring and evaluation

During the project preparation phase of the ISFSDP project, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan was elaborated with costing details and specified data collection sources to support both project management and monitoring. The programme implementation was to be monitored at the federal and regional levels, using the CRGE Facility Monitoring and Evaluation System, in accordance with the UNDP and UNDAF M & E guidelines. The M & E package comprised of the following elements:

- Inception workshop and the workshop report;
- Quarterly progress reports (both technical and financial);

- Annual Performance Assessment Report;
- Risk Log
- Programme Progress Reports (PPRs)
- Monitoring Schedule Plan in project results framework;
- Annual Review Report;
- Monitoring of environmental and social risks, and corresponding management;
- Lessons learnt and knowledge generation;
- Project steering committee meetings;
- Stakeholder engagement plan;
- Gender action plan;
- Annual UNDAF Review;
- Oversight and supervisory missions; and
- Terminal evaluation.

The M & E plan outlined the responsibilities of the different parties involved in the project as presented in Table **Table 5**<sup>4</sup>

**Table 5: ISFSD M & E roles and responsibilities**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>M&amp;E Responsibility</b>
Project Coordination Office	In charge of day-to-day project management and regular monitoring of project results and risks, including social and environmental risks Ensures the timely reporting of project progress to the Royal Norwegian Government Supports the implementing agency in the procurement of required expert services Ensure annual monitoring of framework indicators, risks and strategies to support project implementation
Project Coordinator	Responsible for mobilizing national technical experts within the Ethiopian Forestry Development, making sure implementation is effectively carried out. Provide technical support and facilitate capacity building Supports MEF in the procurement of the required expert services and administers required contracts Supports coordination and networking with other related initiatives and institutions in the country
Project Steering Committee	Provide policy guidance and strategic management support to help achieve greater coherence and consistency in the programme's implementation Ensure adequate flow of funds Approve annual work plans and budgets Monitor performance of M & E systems Ensure consistency in reporting as well as transparency

## **M & E implementation**

The estimated budget for M&E was USD\$ 2,785,204 and this was judged by the project team and the evaluators to be sufficient relative to the size of the project. Data pertaining to the progress of the different indicators were collected and reported in the project's annual PIR, disaggregated by gender

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<sup>4</sup> ProDoc

where applicable. Overall, M&E during the project implementation occurred through the following activities:

*Inception*

- Organization of inception workshop and elaboration of inception report

*Planning*

- Annual Workplans (AWPs) preparation; and
- Organization of project steering committee meeting to validate the AWP and budget

*Monitoring and review*

- Project steering committee meetings to take stock of project implementation progress and for the provision of recommendations and/or endorsement of any changes; and
- Field monitoring missions

*Quality assurance*

- Spot check - implementing partner's technical and financial reports

*Evaluation*

- Project terminal evaluation

*Reporting*

- Project specific reporting (PIRs)

While the M&E activities of the project unfolded as planned, this was not without some challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic culminated in lock down measures and restrictions imposed by the Government of Ethiopia in 2020 and this compelled the project to readjust the planned activities of the AWP and budget for 2020 and 2021.

Overall, project M&E provided feedback for enhanced delivery of the project. The project organized quarterly evaluation workshop and sometimes, this workshop is held biannually. During the workshop, relevant representatives are invited, and the achievements and challenges of the project are presented to the workshop participants. Participants brainstorm to identify possible solutions to the challenges faced by the project. The evaluation meetings were therefore important for the delivery of the project as it enabled corrective measures or solutions to be adopted for an enhanced delivery of the project. The project team at the national level embarks on regular field monitoring visits to the project sites. At the end of such visits, the team from the national level will meet with the steering committee and the project office to discuss specific issues emanating from the monitoring visits and propose measures for an improved project implementation.

*Table 6: M&E design and implementation rating*

<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
M & E Design	Highly Satisfactory
M & E Implementation	Highly Satisfactory
<b>Overall M &amp; E</b>	Highly Satisfactory

### **3.2.5. Project implementation and execution**

#### **UNDP Implementation oversight**

UNDP implementation oversight role is rated as **Satisfactory**.

The UNDP and its implementing partners played a significant role in providing oversight to the implementation of the ISFSD project by closely following throughout the implementation process and

making sure that the activities are run as expected. It was also the responsibility of the UNDP to recruit project staff and ensure the project's financial and technical bi-annual reports are elaborated and submitted to the PCO, and this was done. It also provided technical support where necessary in the adaptive management of the project activities with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the unexpected coming of the pandemic during ISFSD's implementation, the Government of Ethiopia, like many others governments, imposed restrictions and lockdown measures to help fight the disease. Such measures included the organization of physical meetings or limiting the number of people who could participate in physical meetings or gatherings. These measures affected the timely implementation of some project activities as per the established timelines. Capacity building activities and/or workshops that were supposed to be carried out at the time when the lockdown was imposed, could not be organized as planned. They had to be pushed to a later date which warranted that the annual workplan and budget needed to be revised accordingly. Procurement of consultants which was also to be done by the UNDP was delayed because of the pandemic. This delay in implementation made the UNDP and its agencies to put in place the necessary measures to aid the transition to virtual meetings and communication between the PCO, PSC and other actors.

Prior to the pandemic, other challenges that were highlighted included problems on project sites with problems of soil depth, water stress and rainfall variability, limited diversity in available tree species, high staff turnover within the project, occurrence of frost, as well as difficulty in finding tree seeds in the quality and quantity that is needed by the EFD<sup>5</sup>. Delays in budget transfer and/or shortage to run activities as planned also came as a challenge to the smooth-running of the project. Low wage rates for labour had a consequence of labour shortage and this slowed down activities within tree nurseries<sup>6</sup>.

At the start of the project, the geographical positioning system (GPS) coordinates for the project sites designated for the implementation of restoration activities were noted and this was communicated to the donors. During project implementation, these initially designated sites for restoration activities were found to be unsuitable as their restoration would be capital intensive. For this reason, UNDP modified the sites for the restoration activities and did not notify the donors<sup>7</sup>. As part of the evaluation conducted by the donors, consultants were contracted to conduct a geospatial assessment of the impact of the restoration work undertaken under the project. The consultants procured satellite images using the initial coordinates of the designated restoration sites and proceeded with the treatment and analysis of the images. Their analysis did not identify any change in vegetation cover brought about by the restoration activities of the project. At this juncture, the donors were unsatisfied with the outcome of the geospatial analysis and suspended project funding. At this juncture, UNDP declared to the donors that the initial sites had been changed. The donor requested UNDP to contract consultants to conduct ground truthing for the new sites at UNDP's expense, but this did not happen<sup>8</sup>. The donors had to later make available additional resources for the ground truthing exercise to take place and the results revealed that the new sites had actually been restored. The donor then had to resume disbursement of funds for the project. It is likely that all these challenges would have been avoided if UNDP had notified the donors of the change in the modified sites for restoration at the onset.

The evaluators rate the oversight role of the UNDP in project implementation as **Satisfactory**.

### **Implementing Partner execution**

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<sup>5</sup> AMM, 2018

<sup>6</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> QR, 2020

<sup>7</sup> Interview with a staff of the donor organization

<sup>8</sup> Interview with a staff of the donor organization

The main Implementing Partner for the ISFSD project was the Ethiopian Forestry Development, in close collaboration with UNDP, the Ministry of Economic and Finance Development (MoEFD), Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources Directorate, Mekelle University, Hawassa University, Norwegian Forest and Landscape Research, and the Norwegian Forest Group. These partners were expected to work closely with the PCO which was tasked with preparing the consolidated annual and quarterly work plan for the Joint Programme, M & E plans with the indicators to be used by the Government and UN agencies to monitor the progress of the programme.

Communication between the different partners involved in the project execution was well coordinated as each of them tried to meet up with their various roles and responsibilities and in a timely manner.

### 3.2.6. Risk management

In the course of project implementation, the project risks identified at the project design phase were monitored on a rolling basis in order for mitigative measures to be implemented for triggered risks. Based on the review of the project implementation reports, few of the identified risks at project design occurred during project implementation. However, other risks emerged in the course of project implementation which were not earlier identified. These were identified by the PCO and where possible, adequate mitigation measures were implemented to address the risks (**Table 7**)

**Table 7: Risks identified in the course of project implementation<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation measure</b>
Covid-19 pandemic – this impeded the implementation of project activities in 2020, especially activities that warranted movements and in-person presence.	A risk management plan was developed to help stakeholders mitigate the impacts. Trainings and outreach activities scheduled for implementation were rescheduled
Late approval of the annual workplan at the start of the year caused delays in project activities	
Political unrest and security issues in various parts of the country negatively affected afforestation and reforestation (A/R) activities, as well as monitoring and supervision at various levels	
Delayed reporting and weak implementation capacity <sup>10</sup> from some woreda offices on progress in project activities <sup>11</sup>	
Delay in funding from the Norwegian embassy delayed project activities	SIDA provided support on field costs during the delay period

## 3.3. Project results

### 3.3.1. Relevance

#### *Relevance to Global and Ethiopian National Priorities*

The constitution of Ethiopia endorsed safeguarding the environment from any human-made damage and states that projects and investments or developments try not to destroy and pollute the environment (water, air and soil). Towards this direction, Ethiopia has big dream of restoring 22 million hectares of

<sup>9</sup> From project PIRs

<sup>10</sup> 2022 APR

<sup>11</sup> 2021 AR



degraded lands and forests by 2030<sup>12</sup>. This was a bold and laudable pledge, made as part of the 2011 Bonn Challenge and the 2014 New York Climate Summit's goal of restoring 350 million hectares worldwide by 2030.

Ethiopia is a signatory to the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNFCBD and UNFCCD) and the government has further demonstrated commitment towards the protection of natural resources through a number of initiatives financed by bilateral and multilateral agencies. For example, with UNDAF cooperation Ethiopia developed/updated its policies, strategies, plans and coordination mechanisms that promote climate resilient green economy considering the sector as one of the four pillars in the Climate Resilient Green Growth (CRGE) strategy. In order to realize the forestry components of the CRGE strategy, implement REDD+ strategy, significant and systemic, institutional and individual level capacity building was also in line with the realization of the targets set in the GTPI and GTPII.

The Environment Policy of Ethiopia states as its goal “to improve and enhance the health and quality of life of all Ethiopians and to promote sustainable social and economic development, through the sound management and use of natural, human-made and cultural resources and the environment as a whole to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In addition, forest conservation and development is one of the ten sectorial policy provisions of the Environmental policy of Ethiopia. The ISFSDP was fully relevant to global and Ethiopian national priorities.

### ***Relevance to Regional Focal Area and/Operational Program Strategies***

The Ethiopian Government also planned to significantly enhance the forestry sector's contribution to environmental protection and climate change, agricultural production systems, water and energy; to improve food and nutritional security, and to create more opportunities for employment and household income.

The forest sector needs an innovative and holistic approach to realize its strategic role in supporting the sustainable development plan of the country. The ISFSDP project was relevantly focused on strengthening the capacity of national and regional actors to deliver environmental outcomes to meet the national and international targets. The project was further demonstrated through its alignment with regional and district level visions, plans and strategies of the local community and the 10 years plan of the country to bring change in economic, social and environmental aspects in line with the theory of change. It was also the government's local development approach of intervention in that it increases awareness of smallholders on the need to responsibly manage land and other natural resources and systematically mobilize these rural communities to provide free labor for landscape restoration tasks through annual soil and water conservation work and tree planting campaigns.

The ISFSDP was thus a direct intervention program towards the national and global, national and regional, and local community goal to halt and reverse the effects of land degradations and safeguarding the environment. The institutional strengthening component of the project has helped the then Ministry of Environment and Forest which has undergone three structural changes - Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change: Environment Forest and Climate Change Commission and then Ethiopian Forestry Development. It also trained several workers mainly government structures and enhancement of the engagement of the local community to forest work.

The project has also played a great role in stakeholder mobilization, coordination with regional steering and technical committee, communities at large at grass root level and other actors. Forest land use exercise, community mobilization and addressing cross cutting issues such as gender, the engagement of youth / girls and women in many activities such as nursery, soil construction and benefit from the forest

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<sup>12</sup> <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/57465/ethiopias-new-forestry-law-a-win-for-landscapes-and-livelihoods?fnl=en>

inputs and outputs, are relevant to the project goals and objectives. Due to serious engagement of the government structures, the risk has been minimized and implemented on a deserted land and brought change in plant replenishment, improved climate, improved productivity of land, improved vegetation coverage, and created job opportunities to youth in line with natural resource development sector and REDD+ targets.

The project sites are faced with deteriorating soil quality, excessive soil erosion and biodiversity loss which negatively impacts the livelihoods of communities. The ISFSDP addressed communities' needs through the implementation of activities including but not limited to nursery establishment and restoration, which in some sites addressed the soil erosion issue. Also, the restoration activities culminated in the generation of income from the sales of grass and improved institutional capacity of CBOs in forest management. Hence, ISFSDP has a high local relevance as it aligns with the needs of local communities in the project sites.

It is the opinion of the evaluators that the project's relevance is **Highly Satisfactory** as there are clear links between the project and Ethiopia's national priorities as well as the GTPII.

### 3.3.2. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the ISFSD project is rated **Satisfactory** since considerable progress was made by the project towards achievement of its outputs.

**Table 8** compares the end-of-project target of the output indicators vis-à-vis the actual achievement at TE.

**Table 8: Results analysis of level of attainment of output indicators**

Indicator	End-of-project Target	Actual achievement at TE	Rating
<i><b>Project Objective: The objective is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTPII and CRGE.</b></i>			
<b>Indicator 1 (Output 1): The Institutional capacity of the forestry sector strengthened at all levels</b>			
Indicator 1.1: Existence of sub national structures established in nine regional state and two city administrations	-One National Forestry Action Plan - 11 Regional Forest Action plans	- One national and nine woreda forest sector development offices were established and operationalized through the deployment of 92 skilled personnel and fulfilling office facilities	Achieved
Indicator 1.2: Presence of National forest conservation and development action plan	-Forest structures designed in nine regional states and two city administrations -Forest sector structures established in nine regional states and two city administrations	- The 10 years NFSDP developed and ready to be launched	Achieved
Indicator 1.3: Presence of forest conservation and development programmes in regions and city administrations	- Forest sector development structures become functional at all levels	- Forestry data bases infrastructure established and the required facilities at national and regional levels fulfilled	Achieved
Indicator 1.4: Existence of functional offices at national and sub-national levels	- Put in place the required skilled human resources for federal and emerging regions	-11 Regional and city administrations RFSDP under preparation	Achieved
Indicator 1.5: Existence of forest conservation and	- ESMF Produced -Forest conservation and	- ESMF for fast rotation plantation and rehabilitation	Achieved

development database operational at national and regional levels	development database become operational at all levels	<p>of degraded lands for nine districts prepared;</p> <p>- Coordination Mechanism to lead the forest conservation and development exists and regions and city administrations have also established offices with different naming</p> <p>- Coordination Mechanism to lead the forest conservation and development exists and regions and city administrations have also established offices with different naming</p> <p>- 92 project staff deployed and are currently working at federal and regional levels</p>	
<b>Indicator 2: Forest Conservation and Development for Their Multiple Benefits Enhanced</b>			
Indicator 2.1: Presence of clearly defined and integrated Rural Land Use plans that support development and conservation of forest resources in pilot regional states	- Clearly defined and integrated Rural Land Use plans that support development and conservation of forest resources in eight selected sites;	- In nine pilot districts selected from Amhara, SNNP and Tigray clearly defined land use plans prepared for conducting forest conservation and development;	Achieved
Indicator 2.2: Proportion of degraded land demarcated and mapped	- 300,000ha of degraded land be demarcated and mapped -30,000ha mapped and demarcated	-174.81 km Bench terrace constructed	Underachieved
Indicator 2.3: Proportion of degraded land rehabilitated	-200,000ha of degraded land rehabilitated  - 30,000 ha covered through short rotation plantation programmes	<p>-434.96 Hillside terrace maintenance</p> <p>-2,558 m Brush wood check dam constructed</p> <p>-101.00 km Bund maintained</p> <p>-10,574.60 m3 Cut off drain constructed</p> <p>-2,384.93 km Deep trench constructed</p> <p>-21,129 Eye brow basins constructed</p> <p>-1,298,010 Micro basin construction</p> <p>-66.45 km Fany juu bund constructed</p> <p>-928.15 ha of Gully reclaimed</p> <p>-2,560 Half-moon constructed</p> <p>-2,003 Herring bones constructed</p> <p>-5 HH pond constructed</p> <p>-3268.68 Hillside terrace constructed</p>	Achieved

		-1670.43 Hillside terrace with trench constructed -760.67 Hillside terrace +trench maintenance -875.20 km of Soil bunds have been constructed -58,628.50 m3 Stone check dam constructed -11,079.92 km Stone faced bunds constructed -Plantation has been conducted on 14,021.19 ha of land which is 130% of the project target. -In the project lifetime, the project helped to increase employment and income generation opportunities for 128,024 (F = 47,945) -Rehabilitation of 148,493 ha of land is achieved which is 100% of the project target	
Indicator 2.4: Presence of project designed document on forest to access carbon finance	- One Project Design Document on forest prepared to access carbon finance		
Indicator 2.5: Existence of a roadmap for implementation of agroforestry system in the country	- Criteria for implementation of agroforestry system in the pilot regions developed		
Indicator 2.6: Number of pilot sites per region effectively implemented payment for Ecosystem service	- Improved Agroforestry system in four pilot regions		
Indicator 2.7: Number of areas covered per region and city administration through short rotation plantation programme	- One roadmap for implementation of the agroforestry system in the country developed  - Three sites per pilot region effectively implemented payment for Ecosystem		
<b>Indicator 3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated</b>			
Indicator 3.1: Number of awareness raising workshops and study tours organized to enhance the involvement of the private sector	- Four awareness raising workshops organized - 3 study tours were conducted to enhance the involvement of the private sector	-Awareness creation workshops organized	Underachieved
Indicator 3.2: Existence of Incentive Mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest resources	- Incentive Mechanism to promote the involvement of the private sector in the conservation and development of forest resources developed	-Assessment of Opportunities, Challenges and Incentives for Private sector studied	Achieved
Indicator 3.3: Number of Study tours conducted outside			

the country			
Indicator 3.4: Number of best practices disseminated	-5 best practices on disseminated on the involvement of the private sector in forest conservation and development		
Indicator 3.5: Number of technologies with value addition	- Three new technologies for value addition introduced		
Indicator 3.6: A document on market study	- A document on value chain and market study	-A study on value chain conducted	
Indicator 3.7: Amount of seed money provided for local communities for new technology			
<b>Indicator 4: Science and Innovation for Enhancing Sustainable Forest Management Promoted</b>			
Indicator 4.1: National forestry research strategy put in place	- One National forestry research strategy developed	-A strategy for one national forestry research developed	Achieved
Indicator 4.2: Number of research institutions supported	- Four regional and one federal research institutions capacity built	-Academic exchange and joint research and education programs initiated -MoU signed with Wondo Genet College of Forestry & NR and Mertule Mariam ATVET College to initiate demand-driven skill training in forestry	Achieved
Indicator 4.3: Number of technologies adopted	- New technologies adopted		
Indicator 4.4: Number of revised curricula	-Revised curricula	-knowledge and facility gaps assessment conducted	Underachieved
Indicator 4.5: Number of professionals who received refreshment training	- Two refreshment trainings conducted		
Indicator 4.6: Number of toolkits for environmental training produced	- Research and academic cooperation on forest knowledge and innovation exchange through twing arrangement - One national GIS facility strengthened - Two environmental education toolkits developed - 22 school environmental clubs established - 5,000 youth trained on environmental clubs establishment and operationalization	-National and regional GIS infrastructure put in place.  -School environmental clubs established	Underachieved
Indicator 4.7: Number of forestry enterprises established	- 15 green enterprises established		
Indicator 4.8: Number of research papers published	- 10 research papers published in peer reviewed journals	-13 research conducted	

Indicator 4.9: Number of staff exchanges in the context of south-south and north-south cooperation framework	- 5 staff exchange on forest knowledge and innovation through twinning arrangement - Three PhD students through the twinning arrangement	-procurement of key laboratory facilities supported -postgraduate training supported	Underachieved
<b>Indicator 5: Stakeholders Engagement In Forest Development Enhanced</b>			
Indicator 5.1: Number of forestry action databases established	- One forestry action database established		
Indicator 5.2: Presence of platforms for the engagement of stakeholders in forestry	- 12 platforms of forestry actors established at the federal and regional level	-Stakeholders engaged at all levels	Underachieved
Indicator 5.3: Website established for information and knowledge sharing	- One interactive website for information and knowledge sharing developed		
Indicator 5.4: Stakeholder engagement roadmap developed	-One stakeholder engagement roadmap developed - Roles and responsibilities of key actors in the forestry sector identified and communicated		
Indicator 5.5: Annual conferences conducted			

**Source: 2021 APR; 2022 APR**

### ***Indicator 1 (Output 1): The Institutional capacity of the forestry sector strengthened at all levels***

Output 1 of the ISFSD project was focused on capacity building for most institutions in the forestry sector at both national and regional levels, and bringing them to speed towards achieving the targets of the GTPII and CRGE strategy. Under this output, the national forest conservation and development action plan, as well as region-specific programs will be elaborated and/or updated to serve as guiding documents to forest conservation and development, with the aim of improving on food security and attainment of the GTP and CRGE targets. Through this project, a national and regional forestry database infrastructure has been successfully established in all regional states, containing information that will help in the sustainable management of plantation and natural forest resources, help the country address the knowledge gaps that existed before and provide indigenous knowledge on the use of tree species by local communities. Capacity building activities were also carried out at existing institutions such as a one-week training provided to over 251 frontline extension workers (7 females and 244 males) on issues related to geo-informatics and product value chain among others<sup>13</sup>. A Coordination Mechanism was created to lead the forest conservation and development, and regions and city administrations have also established offices. At the regional level, about 25000 community members and other project actors have benefitted from workshops and training activities under this output.

### ***Indicator 2 (Output 2): Forest Conservation and Development for Their Multiple Benefits Enhanced***

Output 2 aimed at improving forest conservation and development through rehabilitation activities, preparation of land use plans for watershed areas, rotation plantation forestry, careful selection of tree

<sup>13</sup> ISFSDP 2014 E.C. 6 month Report (July 2021 – December 2021)

species and the establishment of fast-growing species that will reduce the pressure on wood products as well as preserve the remaining natural forests and woodlands. Nine pilot districts selected from Amhara, SNNP and Tigray have clearly defined land use plans prepared for enhancing forest conservation and development, under the project. The afforestation / reforestation (A/R) activities helped plant trees on almost 11,000 hectares of land, while over 154,308 hectares of land have been delineated, rehabilitated and demarcated under the rehabilitation activities of the ISFSD project. Pre-planting site management activities were conducted with the construction of 357 km of terraces and trenches, 145,237 basins (in number), 1,770 m<sup>3</sup> check dams and 4,000 m<sup>3</sup> of waterways/cut-off drains.

Income generating activities and opportunities were also created as part of the project under output 2, for over 258,671 people (106,773 females and 151,898 males)<sup>14</sup> living around the target areas. This was done through their engagements in forest sector activities and other livelihood options. Project tree nurseries in the highlands were provided with over 250 kgs of bamboo seeds as part of this output.

### ***Indicator 3 (Output 3): Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated***

This output sought to encourage private sector involvement and encourage public private partnerships in funding the development of commercial plantations, as private farmlands are being converted to forest lands. To this effect, a national guideline has been prepared to encourage the private sector, awareness raising has been done to disseminate information that will promote the engagement of the private sector in forest activities, as well as incentive mechanisms and opportunities. A study on the forest product value chain was also conducted to help project beneficiaries understand the opportunities for the private sector in forest activities.

### ***Indicator 4 (Output 4): Science and Innovation for Enhancing Sustainable Forest Management Promoted***

Output 4 focused on promoting innovation and research activities geared towards enhancing sustainable forest management practices. This was done in close collaboration with forestry research and higher learning institutions, research articles and theses have been published in research areas on the forest value chain, dryland livelihood, improving management and performances of smallholder's forest plantations, identification of pilot intervention measures, profitability of smallholder woodlot production systems, resources status, and regeneration status among others.

### ***Indicator 5 (Output 5): Stakeholders Engagement in Forest Development Enhanced***

Output 5 focused on enhancing and supporting the meaningful participation of more stakeholders in forest development such as civil society organizations (CSOs), research organizations, higher learning institutions, community-based organizations, and relevant professional associations such as the Ethiopian Foresters Association. At regions level 24,815 (F = 7,804) community members and other stakeholders engaged in different workshops and trainings.

### **3.3.3. Efficiency**

The efficiency of the project is rated **Highly Satisfactory**

#### ***Role of government in successful delivery of the project***

The ISFSDP is characterized as a very successful project because of its overachievements recorded in the creation of new forests and the restoration of degraded areas. The overachievements would not have been possible without the engagement and the support of the government at different levels<sup>15</sup>. The project is

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<sup>14</sup> ISFSDP 2014 E.C. 6 month Report (July 2021 – December 2021)

<sup>15</sup> Interview with a project staff

embedded under the government structures and therefore received day-to-day government support. The government through the regional steering committee facilitated the resolution of challenges affecting the delivery of the project, some of which required policy interventions. Furthermore, the project was not exposed to unintended corruption and misuse of financial resources since the government's financial procedures were used in the management of the project's finances. Overall, the project leveraged the capacity of the government for its delivery and this culminated in effective project implementation.

### ***Sufficiency of human and financial resources for project delivery***

Overall, the ISFSDP was adequately staffed. Compared to the phase 1 of the REDD+ investment programme currently under implementation with just four staff – Project Coordinator, Forestry Expert, Socio-Economist, and an Accountant, the ISFSDP project was more staffed with some project districts having seven staff while others had nine. The project team across the project districts had strong financial expertise, forestry expertise and project managers among others. At the federal level, the project disposed of the following personnel: One Project Manager, two forestry experts, one soil and water conservation expert, one planning and delivery officer, one finance officer, one cashier, one office assistant and three drivers.

Pertaining to recruitments, this was done at district and national levels. At the district level, most of the initial recruitments were done by the national coordination office and this was done in strict adherence to the rules and regulations of the government recruitment procedures and processes. Lately, the national coordination office delegated the regional coordination offices to undertake their own recruitment whenever there is a staff turnover or existence of vacant positions. The recruitments conducted by the regional coordination offices were also done in line the government recruitment regulations and procedures.

When compared to other projects or budget of the government allocated for forestry-related activities, the budget for ISFSDP was relatively sufficient for its planned activities. Moreover, communities engaged in the project provided in-kind support through labor in the construction of soil and water conservation structures, seedling transportation, pitting and planting, all of which could be expressed in monetarily. If additional financial resources were allocated to the project, more remarkable results would have been obtained by the project since there were some activities which were not implemented due to insufficient budget. For instance, the activity related to the strengthening of district offices through the provision of computer databases and IT equipment could not be completed due to budgetary constraints. Also, if the project had access to more financial resources, experience sharing exchange visits and workshops would have been organized to communicate the project results to a wider audience and enable the good practice and results from the project in one Woreda to be adopted and replicated by other Woredas.

### ***Financial management***

The government has put in place an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) which is being used by the institutions involved in project implementation to record expenditures and transactions under the project which is used to generate a financial report submitted to the Ministry of Finance and UNDP. The government sees the ISFSDP as a government-led initiative and consequently, the government counterpart institutions leading the implementation of project activities are required to report to the Ministry of Finance which is the institution that receives project funds from the donor on behalf of the government.

Concerning the flow of funds, two methods were used to transfer the project funds from donor to the implementing partners. The first method was using Channel 2 of the Ethiopian financial system and was used for transactions within the framework of the project. As part of the Channel 2, the Norwegian Embassy in Addis channels part of the project funds to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Finance in turn transmits the funds to the Ethiopian Forestry Development (EFD). The EFD then transfers



the funds received to the regional project coordination offices. Funds are then released from the regional coordination offices to the Woreda project offices for implementation of project activities. The Channel 2 approach is more efficient than the Channel 1 since the latter is more complex as it will entail funds transfer from the Ministry of Finance to the Finance Bureau at the regional level instead of transmitting the funds to the EFD. The regional offices prepare technical narrative and financial report which is submitted to the National Coordination Office. The second method which was used by both donors was that the funds were transferred from donors to UNDP, from UNDP to EFD, and finally from EFD to regional project coordination offices.

Interviews with a staff of the National Project Coordination Office revealed that the efficiency of the project would have been enhanced if more budget and forestry tools (such as MRV system) were provided to the implementing partners. Also, the project would have been more efficiently implemented in the absence of the policy challenges that were encountered during project delivery such as access to land, low private sector engagement in the forestry sector, and inadequate access to credit facilities for forest development. Also, if the bureaucratic hurdles faced by the project in some instances including delays in procurement and funds were avoided, the efficiency of the project would have been enhanced.

### **3.3.4. Country Ownership**

Country ownership of the ISFSDP was ensured through the involvement of national stakeholders from project design to implementation. The project was aligned with the needs and priorities of Ethiopia related to environment and climate change mitigation, forest and land degradation development and rehabilitation of Rio Conventions and implementation of programs and project activities. It involved the participation of central and regional, district and community level decision-makers and this was key responsibility in ensuring the country ownership of the project.

The project is based on Ethiopia's development agenda that is governed by two key strategies: the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP-II) and the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE). Both strategies emphasize on agriculture and forestry by prioritizing the attainment of middle-income status by 2025 and, through the CRGE Strategy, to achieving this by taking low carbon, resilient, green growth actions. The CRGE Strategy targeted 7 million hectares (ha) for forest expansion. GTP-II Goal 15 aims to: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems by managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss.

Country ownership of the project was also demonstrated through the integration of some of the project's outputs into existing government and community-based organizational structures. Besides the responsibility of the sector development government structures including district cabinets and kebele administrations, communities were organized and involved their community-based institutions to own the output/ outcomes of the project revealing community ownership.

### **3.3.5. Gender**

Gender mainstreaming is rated **Highly Satisfactory**.

Gender considerations were mainstreamed into project implementation in different ways. Firstly, during capacity building trainings and workshops, women were trained on forest conservation and development. Secondly, the project took deliberate steps to foster the participation of women in the project activities, such as employment and income generation opportunities within A/R. Out of the 269,944 beneficiaries of income generation and employment activities, there were 107,244 females. The midterm review for the ISFSD project, over 40% of the alternative livelihood participants were females, 86% of the poultry production and 97% of the improved stoves were done by females. Temporary jobs were created as a result of the project activities, about 45% of the beneficiaries who gained employment were females.

Women were also encouraged to take part in community engagement in different activities, out of the 358,848 community members, 99,520 were females. Women also take a major role in nursery site work, watering of planted seedlings, mulching to protect the seedlings from frost, seedling plantation and transportation of seedlings. The use of clean and efficient fuel-saving stoves benefitted women by preserving their health, since they were the main users in households.

Women took part in project activities and project progress reporting took gender into account as project results were disaggregated by gender where applicable **Table 9**.

*Table 9: Participants at project events disaggregated by gender*

Activity	Participants disaggregated by gender
Community engagement and mobilization	358,848 individuals (including 99,520 women)
Income generation and livelihood activities	269,944 individuals (including 109,977 women)

### 3.3.6. Social and Environmental Standards

Interview with a staff of the National Coordination Project Office revealed that social environmental safeguard studies were conducted for the project and as per the findings of the conducted studies, it was determined that the project will not have negative social and environmental impacts. The staff interviewed also mentioned that environmental and social safeguard plans and instruments were implemented to guard against any impacts. Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared for fast rotation plantation and rehabilitation of degraded lands for nine districts. However, the evaluators did not come across the reports of the environmental and social risk screening conducted for the project during its design phase. Equally, review of the annual progress report by the evaluators did not generate evidence pertaining to the monitoring of the implementation of the ESMF.

### 3.3.7. Sustainability

The Sustainability of the ISFSD project is rated **Moderately Likely**.

Since the project has been implemented by government institutions, the government at different levels is aware of the state of project implementation, and this will favor the sustainability of the project. The communities were engaged at different stages of the project, from site selection, securing ownership and throughout the implementation process. Hence, it is likely that following the phasing out of the project, communities will be in the position to continue the activities of the project. Ownership of the land where restoration has taken place is clear and uncontested and land ownership constitutes a key factor that may jeopardize the sustainability of the project. Restoration has mostly taken place on privately owned plantations and by default, the concerned private sector actors are the owners of the new forests. For communal areas restored, local communities were organized into associations and cooperatives, so that they can legally own restored areas and continue to do the restoration and get benefits from the restored areas. In most cases, the benefit sharing mechanism of the cooperatives are in place as part of their rules and regulations. Consequently, private actors and cooperatives will very likely continue to engage in restoration activities after the life of ISFSDP, since land ownership conflict which could pose a sustainability challenge has been eliminated. Also, the benefits from the restoration activities accruing to community members is an incentive for them to continue with restoration activities. In a Woreda for instance, money earned from restoration activities was channeled towards the construction of a High School within the community, eliminating the need for students within the community to cover long distances to attend schools elsewhere. Such a benefit will likely motivate the concerned community members to continuously engage in restoration works.

In the project document, there was no exit strategy but after Covid, an exit strategy was drafted for the project in 2021 in consultation with the donors. We had plans of implementing the exit strategy but as Norway funded the investment program and SIDA commenced another program - catalyzing forest sector development program in other 19 districts and few Woredas were not covered by the new SIDA programme. The exit strategy was therefore only implemented in those Woredas not covered by the new SIDA programme.

The risks to the sustainability of project results are discussed below.

### **Financial risk**

Consultations with stakeholders as part of the TE indicated that financial sustainability of the project is ensured, since the project is anchored on the GTP II and CRGE strategy representing some of Ethiopia's national forestry priorities. However, financial reports provided during annual progress indicated that the available funds were sufficient to ensure the achievement of most of the project results.

The trainings and capacity building activities of the project conducted at the regional levels enhanced the understanding of actors (including associations) on forest conservation and development issues, as well as improve knowledge on private sector opportunities within the forest sector.

Since the project financed restoration activities in the form of grants and the project has phased out, inadequate access of financial resources by actors interested in engaging into restoration activities could be challenge.

The evaluators rate the financial risk to project sustainability as **Moderately Likely**.

### **Socio-political risk**

The Covid-19 pandemic presents a socio-economic risk to the sustainability of the project. Lockdown measures imposed by the Government of Ethiopia during the heart of the pandemic retarded the organization of in-person events. The recurrence of such lockdown measures in the future could impede national and regional actors from engaging in outdoor forest activities. Despite the delays caused by civil unrest and the pandemic, most project activities seem to have been achieved beyond expectations<sup>16</sup>.

A major risk to the ISFSDP is the political instability faced by Ethiopia. This restricts the movement of people from place to place, rendering it difficult for farmers to access inputs for forestry activities. Also, instability limits market access by farmers, translating into reduced market values for their products. Wars could also cause community members to abandon their activities including restoration.

The project's socio-economic risk to sustainability is rated **Moderately Likely**.

### **Institutional framework and governance risk**

The forest management and conservation plans that have been developed, launched and operationalised within the lifespan of the project requires regular monitoring or follow-up. This will require close collaboration among the various stakeholders involved, a lack of which may hinder the sustainability of forest activities according to the established plans.

The project supported the training of local, regional and national authorities and the development of regional forest conservation and development plans. Some of these regional authorities are elected into their positions with a mandate of a fixed term. In the event that they are voted out of their positions and new individuals are voted in, the new authorities may lack knowledge and awareness on forest

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<sup>16</sup> 2021 PR

conservation and development issues and may not be committed to the implementation of the forest development plans.

The absence of a land use plan in Ethiopia is a key risk to sustainability of restoration activities. The inexistence of a land use plan creates land use conflict, rendering the identification and allocation of sites for restoration activities challenging.

Regarding policies regulations, the government of Ethiopia is trying its best to fill existing policy gaps. Initially, farmers could access credit for their forestry-related activities from commercial banks. Farmers can now provide their standing forest certified by the government as collateral to get credits and this catalyzes the expansion of forest-related activities.

The Institutional framework and governance risk is rated **Moderately Likely** by the evaluators.

### **Environmental risk**

Climate change represents a risk to the project. Increasing temperature trend, changes in precipitation patterns and occurrence of droughts could negatively impact on the restored sites, possibly leading to the death of some of the planted trees. Equally, the outbreak of diseases and pest could negatively impact the restored sites. The Environmental risk of the project is **Moderately Likely**.

**Table 10: ISFSDP sustainability rating**

<b>Sustainability dimension</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Financial risk	Moderately Likely
Socio-political risk	Moderately Likely
Institutional risk	Moderately Unlikely
Environmental risk	Moderately Likely
<b>Overall Sustainability ranking</b>	Moderately Likely

### **3.3.8. Progress to impact**

The project has recorded several environment, social and economic impacts during its delivery. These include:

**Environmental impacts:** through restoration, water-induced soil erosion was reduced, and groundwater recharge was enhanced. Local communities noticed longer flow periods of streams which was linked to restoration and rehabilitation work executed upstream. This eliminated the need for community members to cover considerable distances in search of potable water for themselves and their livestock. Also, the restoration activities supported biodiversity restoration, with some areas recording the return of plants and wildlife species that had departed from the area.

**Social impacts:** through the restoration activities, occurrence of floods was reduced across some communities. The trees planted upstream in Mrab Abaya helped curb flooding in this community. During occurrence of floods, the local community members were displaced and sometimes provided with humanitarian assistance. With reduced flooding due to the intervention of the project, community members are very stable and engage in the establishment of banana plantations and their produce is sold within their communities and in other local markets outside their community. This has enabled community members to be self-sufficient and more financially capacitated.

**Economic impacts:** local communities obtained considerable amount of financial income from selling grasses and forest products such as honey and poles. Through financial resources earned from restoration activities, a community was able to build a High School which is being attended by students within the

community as opposed to them attending schools in other locations which requires them to cover a considerable distance daily.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

### 4.1. Conclusions

**Project design:** the project was designed based on national priorities. An analysis of the results framework of the project against the SMART criteria revealed 2 of the 5 indicators under output 1 – indicators 1.2 and 1.5 were non-compliant to the Measurable and Achievable criteria respectively. All indicators for the other outputs (2, 3, 4 and 5) were fully compliant to the SMART criteria. The design of the ISFSDP was informed by lessons that were generated from previous projects implemented in the country.

**Relevance:** the ISFSDP is highly relevant to Ethiopia. The project aligns strongly with national priorities and needs of the nation. The forestry sector of Ethiopia has a strategic role to play in supporting the sustainable development plan of the country. The ISFSDP project was relevantly focused on strengthening the capacity of national and regional actors to deliver environmental outcomes to attain the national and international targets. Moreover, ISFSDP is aligned with key national policies including but not limited to Ethiopia's Constitution, the three Rio Conventions ratified by the country (UNFCCC, UNFCBD, and UNFCCC), CRGE NDCs, and the Environment Policy of Ethiopia.

**Effectiveness:** the effectiveness of the project is rated **Satisfactory**. The project made considerable progress towards achieving its outputs. Under its output 1, ISFSD project provided capacity building for most institutions in the forestry sector at both national and regional levels, capacitating them towards achieving the targets of the GTPII and CRGE strategy. As part of output 2, nine pilot districts selected from Amhara, SNNP and Tigray and clearly defined land use plans were elaborated for enhancing forest conservation and development. In output 3, ISFSDP prepared a national guideline to promote the engagement and investment of private sector. Output 4 promoted innovation and research activities aimed at enhancing sustainable forest management practices in the forestry sector of Ethiopia. Output 5 achieved a stakeholder engagement of a total of 24,815 individuals at regional levels.

**Efficiency:** the efficiency of the project was rated **Satisfactory**. The government played a pivotal role in the delivery of the project and in the results achieved by the project. While the staffing of the project at the regional level was insufficient, the project was adequately staffed at the Woreda level and disposed of the required expertise required for the implementation of project activities. Pertaining to financial management, an integrated financial management software was put in place by the government for the appropriate management of the project funds. In line with the Channel 2 financial system of the government of Ethiopia, funds received from the embassy by Ministry of Finance was transferred to the Forestry Development Organization who in turned transferred funds to the Regional Project Coordination Office. The latter takes charge for transferring project resources to the Project Offices at the Woreda level for the implementation of project activities.

**Sustainability:** the overall sustainability rating of the project is **Moderately Likely**. The restoration activities have yielded positive benefits which will serve as a motivation for actors to continue engaging in restoration activities even after the phasing out of the project. However, as the project financed restoration activities through the provision of grants, it is unlikely that actors interested in engaging in restoration will be able to do so in the absence of adequate financing. The financial risk to sustainability of the project is rated **Moderately Likely**. A major socio-political risk to the project is the political instability plaguing Ethiopia which renders it difficult for farmers to move from place to place to access inputs for forestry activities. The outbreak of pandemics such as Covid could equally jeopardise the sustainability of the project. The socio-political risk to project sustainability is rated **Moderately Unlikely**. Pertaining to institutional framework and governance risk, the absence of a land use policy in Ethiopia constitutes a risk to sustainability. The institutional and governance risk to sustainability is **Moderately Likely**. Increasing temperature trends, occurrence of droughts and changes in precipitation

patterns represent environmental risks to sustainability of ISFSDP. The environmental risk to sustainability is rated **Moderately Likely**.

**Gender:** Gender considerations were integrated into the implementation of the project. During capacity building events, women received trainings on forest conservation and development. Deliberate efforts were taken by the project to ensure the participation of women in project activities such as employment and income-generating activities.

**Social and environmental safeguards:** An ESMF was elaborated for nine districts by the project. The review of project documents by the evaluators generated scant evidence relating to the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the ESMF.

## 4.2. Lessons learned

**Close engagement with government and project beneficiaries is key for effective project delivery.** The project worked closely with local communities from planning and the way to implementation of activities. Similarly, a strong engagement existed between the project and the government. As a matter of fact, ISFSDP was implemented by government institutions at different levels. This strong engagement of the project with the government and local communities fostered ownership of the project by communities and the government which in turn contributed to effective project implementation.

**Securing ownership of restored sites or sites designated for restoration is important for successful restoration schemes.** Forest and land restoration tends to be unpopular in areas where land tenure rights are contested. This disincentivizes communities or individuals to engage in restoration activities as they may be stripped of any entitlements over the restored sites in case they lose ownership of the land. Furthermore, communities often see restoration as conflicting to their agricultural livelihoods as agricultural farmlands restored by them get adopted by the government as forest land belonging to the state. ISFSDP supported member of local communities to secure ownership over restored land so that they could reap the benefits emanating from the restored sites, serving as a motivational factor for their continuous engagement in restoration activities.

**Setting a prerequisite for subsequent transfers of project funds could encourage timely delivery of project activities but could equally retard some project actors.** For UNDP to release project funds to the Ministry of Finance, a minimum burn rate of 80% of previously disbursed funds must be justified. This enabled the project team across the different Woredas to work towards implementing project activities effectively. However, this also meant that outstanding Woredas in terms of project execution will have to suffer the consequences of other Woredas who lags due to a low burn rate of the budget caused by low level of implementation of project activities.

**The use of species that generates benefits in the short to medium term is an important factor towards successful restoration.** Restoration within the framework of the project employed species with economic benefits to communities and community members were therefore motivated to engage in further restoration initiatives as they could enjoy benefits from their restoration work produced in the short-term.

## 4.3. Recommendations

NO.	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Project design and Implementation</b>		
1.	The grant was the sole financial instrument	Restoration activities were funded through grants provided by the project. It is recommended for subsequent projects of this nature to include innovative climate finance instruments for restoration activities. This could

NO.	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
	employed by the project and this generated some good results. However, innovative financing was not explored within the framework of the project.	take the form of green lines of credits or concessional loans issued by financial institutions to individuals interested in engaging in restoration activities. For this to happen, the government will need to create the necessary enabling environments for banks and other financial institutions to engage in the process.  <b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects
2.	The use of species for restoration that could produce benefits in the short to medium term favors successful restoration	The focus of restoration is often on carbon benefits which takes some years to be earned. Actors engaged in restoration are motivated to do so if the initiative can generate in the short to medium term. Hence, in designing restoration schemes targeting carbon benefits especially those involving communities, project proponents should consider including species with high potential of generating non-carbon benefits in the short to medium term in order to boost the interest and engagement of the concerned communities in the restoration activities.  <b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia. <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects
<b>Sustainability</b>		
3.	Value addition could enhance the profit margin of forestry value chains	While communities have started reaping benefits from their restoration activities, their earnings could be enhanced through value addition. Hence, for subsequent projects, it could be relevant for the value chain of forest products to be studied, supported and strengthened so that community members could realize higher profit margins from their restoration works.  <b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia. <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects
4.	Support required for the creation of relevant enabling environment for restoration	The absence of a land use plan constitutes a factor that may jeopardise the sustainability of the ISFSDP. EFD has been advocating for the elaboration of a land use policy through various mechanisms, but EFD does not have the mandate or political power to directly produce or implement national land use policy. This responsibility typically falls under the jurisdiction of Council of Ministers and House of People's Representatives. It is therefore important that for subsequent forestry-related projects, support should be provided towards addressing policy gaps that could negatively impact on the project. For instance, support could be provided within the framework of a future project on the elaboration of a land use policy for Ethiopia.  <b>Responsibility:</b> UNDP, Government of Ethiopia. <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects



NO.	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
5.	Provision of certification as a solution to land tenure issues positively impacted restoration activities within the framework of the project	<p>It is important for the issued restoration certificates to be sustained. The administration should ensure that the certificates remain valid and recognised for the length of time envisaged lest actors engaged in restoration activities could be demotivated and disengage from restoration activities.</p> <p><b>Responsibility:</b> The Government of Ethiopia  <b>Timeline:</b> From project closure into the future</p>

## ANNEXES

### Annex A: Terms of reference of the terminal evaluation

ETHIOPIA

#### TERM OF REFERENCE (ToR) FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTOR (IC)

##### GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Services/Work Description:</b>	Recruitment of individual consultants for terminal evaluation of the institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Project
<b>Project/Program Title:</b>	Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development
<b>Post Title:</b>	<b>1 National Consultant</b>  Group of Individuals and/or Firms are not eligible for this consultancy assignment (only for individual level application)
<b>Consultant Level:</b>	<b>Level C (Senior Specialist)</b>
<b>Duty Station:</b>	Addis Ababa
<b>Duration:</b>	35 working days distributed over 2 months
<b>Expected Start Date:</b>	November 1 <sup>st</sup> 2022

## 1. BACKGROUND AND COUNTRY CONTEXT

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

The country's fast and stable economic growth creates opportunities for the forestry sector. These opportunities should be captured in forest sector development planning process to increase the contribution of the sector to the country's economic development. Some of the key opportunities include: i) Political commitment of the government to build a green economy based on renewable resources such as sustainably and domestically produced wood products; ii) Investment in public infrastructure, particularly in roads, railways and energy, which helps the forestry sector to become more productive and competitive; iii) The booming construction sector creates huge demand for raw and processed wood products (the construction sector accounted for nearly 50% of the share of industry in GDP during GTP I); iv) Clean and cheap energy supply enhances the completeness of wood-based manufacturing industries compared to neighboring countries in the region; v) The ongoing rural electrification program reduces pressure on forests for energy and creates significant opportunities for the production of utility poles; vi) A continued rise in the working age population provides the opportunity for labor intensive forestry programs and projects; viii) The growing economy of the country increases the purchasing power of citizens, which in turn increases demand for quality wooden furniture and construction materials.

### BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

**The purpose of the project was to** assist Ethiopia in achieving its targets on large scale afforestation-reforestation as described in the CRGE strategy by 2025 and reach the targets on reduced emissions into

sequestration of Green House gasses from the forest sector. The project has been implemented from 2015-2022

**The Overall objective of the project** is to strengthen the capacity of the then Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and the current EFD in particular at all levels and the Ethiopian government's overall capacity in the forest sector at all levels to spearhead the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and the Growth and Transformation plan (GTP) targets.

The project was supporting the then Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the existing Ethiopian Forestry Development and its replicas at regions to enhance their capacity in forest conservation and development

The project has also been through an adjustment process (time extension) to respond to the unprecedented COVID 19 pandemic and No Cost Extension granted until 13th December 2021 by Ministry of Finance.

**The Complementary outputs of the project are:**

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

**The Specific Project Objectives are:**

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

### GEOGRAPHIC AND BENEFICIARY TARGETING

The project has been implemented in 13 pilot districts selected from Amhara; SNNP and Tigray regions. The targeted beneficiaries for Afforestation and Reforestation as well as Assisted Natural Regeneration activities are jobless youths and vulnerable communities for climate change and environmental degradation.

### IMPELEMENTING PARTNERS

At federal level the then Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission and the current Ethiopian Forestry Development is the Implementing Partner of the project and Ministry of Finance is the Responsible Partner of the project.

<b>PROJECT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Project title</b>	Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development
<b>Atlas ID</b>	
<b>Corporate outcome and output</b>	The complimentary out puts of the project are: ❖ By 2020, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is

	<p>strengthened at all levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits promoted</li> <li>❖ Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated</li> <li>❖ Science and innovation for enhancing Sustainable Forest Management promoted</li> <li>❖ Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced</li> </ul>	
<b>Country</b>	Ethiopia	
<b>Date project document signed</b>	2/06/2015	
<b>Project dates</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Planned end</b>
	2/06/2015	31 Dec 2022
<b>Project budget</b>	\$ \$11,042,652 of which \$ 2,653,000 \$1,889,651.89; \$6,500,000 Norway UNDP and SIDA contributed respectively.	
<b>Funding source</b>	Norway; Sweden and UNDP	
<b>Implementing party</b>	UNDP and EFD	

UNDP is now seeking the services of qualified and experienced consultant to undertake terminal evaluation of Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development project.

## 2. Evaluation purpose scope and objectives

### Objective/ Purpose

The purpose of the Terminal evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP.

More specifically, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the achievement and progress made against the planned results, assess challenges, and draw lessons learned, measure the impact of the project and inform future orientation of the similar interventions. The evaluation will also look into how emerging issues that were not reflected during the design of the current program document could impact the achievement of its outcomes and make recommendations to ensure the continued alignment of UNDP assistance with national priorities to achieve robust results in the future. The evaluation will assess the program results achieved thus far using commonly agreed criteria to validate the continued relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability and the impact of the overall program.

The main objectives of the evaluation process therefore are:

- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and the impact of the program in delivering on agreed outcomes and outputs and their contribution to national development efforts,
- Review validity of programme assumptions and the logic/ theory of change

- To determine the adequacy of the existing systems and structures for implementing the program,
- Review risk assessment & mitigation measures taken for ensuring progress on implementing the programme's interventions.
- To assess if program outputs and outcomes have been achieved,
- To identify major constraints faced, document lessons learned during implementation, and make recommendations for overcoming implementation challenges and supporting results achievement going forward,
- To identify factors that has contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended program outcomes, and outputs.

## SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The evaluation will consider the overall performance of the ISFSDP from June 2025 to December 2022. The scope of the evaluation will focus on examining the ISFSDP project overall contribution to capacity building of the forest sector at all levels in the country and piloting A/ R and ANR in selected districts in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Tigray, Somali and Benshangul Gumuz National Regional States. The scope of the program evaluation will cover all interventions of the project planned to be implemented during the project phase. The evaluation should compare planned output of the projects to actual outputs and assess associated results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the program objectives. It should also attempt to evaluate the efficiency of project management including the delivery of the outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost efficiency of the project. The evaluation should also address the underlying causes and issues that contributed to changes or targets not adequately achieved.

Overall the consultant will be responsible for:

- Carrying out a thorough desk review of available progress, go through the program document, annual review quarterly reports and analyze the overall achievement against the program action plan (Approved Annual Work Plans),
- Visit some of the project sites that will be determined after initial review and assessment of the documents and consultations with government partner and UNDP,
- Review all relevant sources of information including national strategic and legal documents and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment,
- Assess the program performance against expectation. The evaluation shall at a minimum cover the criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact,
- The evaluation should assess the key financial aspects of the program including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project costs and funding data need to be required, including annual expenditure. Variances between planned and actual expenditure will need to be assessed and explained,
- The evaluation needs to assess the extent to which the projects were successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities,
- The evaluation should assess the extent to which the projects are achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts,
- assess the feasibility of the logic of the project/TOC and the associated risks and assumptions
- Gender considerations mainstreamed and had been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project.
- The report must include a chapter providing a set of conclusions, recommendations and lesson learned. Conclusion should build on findings and backed by evidence, and;

- Recommendations should be prioritized, specific, relevant and targeted and given that this is the final stage of the pilot program phase, recommendations must be useful for future programming and new project development in same or similar areas for UNDP and the government.

### **3. APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

The terminal evaluation of the project will be carried out in accordance with UNDP Evaluation guideline, Evaluation Norms, ethical standards. This is a summative evaluation involving both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the project performance and to make recommendations. The evaluation must follow participatory approach whereby discussions with and surveys of key stakeholders provide/ verify the substance of the findings. The Evaluators should review the project theory of change, and the programming logic.

The TE is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the Ethiopian Forestry Development; relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP, the Norwegian and Sweden Embassies as well as beneficiaries

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

The final TE report should describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions/logics of the program, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

The findings of the TE will be presented to key stakeholders for further validation, enrichment, and endorsement.

- The evaluators expected to employ innovative approaches to data collection and analysis. Proposals should be clear on the specific role each of the various methodological approaches in helping to address each of the evaluation questions. In general, the approach and methodology will be The methodologies for data collection may include but not necessarily be limited to:
- Conduct desk review
- Document review of all relevant documentation: Theory of change and results framework, Annual work plans, biannual and annual reports, monitoring reports and technical project team meeting minutes. Systematic review of monitoring data from the Recipient UN Organizations, and other key sources of data.
- Collect primary data using appropriate tools in line with evaluation questions and log frame indicators
- Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders including key government counterparts, community members, and representatives of key civil society organizations (CSOs). Key informant interviews and focus group discussions, as appropriate, with major stakeholders including Donor Agencies
- KII with program stakeholders and FGD with communities
- Field visits to the implementation sites/ On-site field visits and interviews of project beneficiaries,

### **4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS**

## Relevance

- ❖ Review the project in line with the national development priorities, the projects outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs;
- ❖ Review to what extent the project contributes to the theory of change for the relevant country Programme outcome.
- ❖ Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during design and implementation of the project?
- ❖ Review to what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design
- ❖ Review to what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country

## Effectiveness

- ❖ Review to what extent did the project contribute to the country Programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities
- ❖ Review to what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective and what factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements; and what have been the supporting factors
- ❖ Review to what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results.
- ❖ To what extent did project achieve its envisioned outcomes/outputs contribute to the project's strategic vision?
- ❖ To what extent did the project mainstreamed a gender dimension and support gender-responsive programing
- ❖ How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?
- ❖ Was the project monitoring system adequately capturing data on the project results at an appropriate outcome level?

## Impact

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

## Sustainability and ownership

- ❖ How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives, especially women's participation in decision making processes, supported under PBF Project?

- ❖ How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in order to ensure suitability of efforts and benefits?
- ❖ How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of the project and continuing any unfinished activities?
- ❖ To what extent were the participation and ownership of the programme by the IPs and other key stakeholders for ensuring sustainability of achieved results & lessons learned after end of the current programme?

## EFFICIENCY

- ❖ How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project?
- ❖ How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the project?
- ❖ How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders, and project beneficiaries on its progress?
- ❖ Overall, did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?
- ❖ Review to what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective.
- ❖ Review to what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes
- ❖ Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic?
- ❖ Has the project funding been used to scale-up other forestry /REDD+ initiatives?

## GENDER:

- ❖ To what extent have gender considerations mainstreamed and had been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?
- ❖ Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?
- ❖ To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in women participation in the forest conservation and development activities?
- ❖ Human rights
- ❖ To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

## 5. EVALUATION PRODUCTS (DELIVERABLES)

The evaluation team expected to deliver the following

- **Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** The consultants/Evaluators will prepare an inception report which details the consultants/ evaluators understanding of the evaluation and how the evaluation questions will be addressed. This is to ensure that evaluators and the stakeholders have a shared understanding of the evaluation. The inception report must include the evaluation matrix summarizing the evaluation design, methodology, evaluation questions, data sources and collection analysis tool for each data source and the measure by which each question will be evaluated.

The inception report should include the following key elements:

- Overall approach and methodology
- Evaluation Matrix – summarizes and visualizes the evaluation design and methodology for discussion with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer,



data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

#### Sample evaluation matrix

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

- Key lines of inquiry & interview protocol
- Data collection tools and mechanisms
- Proposed list of interviewees
- A work plan and timelines to be agreed with relevant PBF focal points

The Inception report will be reviewed and approved by both UNDP and EFD

- **Presentation/validation of preliminary findings to relevant in-country stakeholders and EFD.** Immediately following an evaluation, the evaluator is expected to provide preliminary debriefing and findings before sharing the draft report.
- **Draft evaluation report** (30 – 50 pages including annexes). The draft evaluation report will be submitted to the UNDP for review and comments. Comments from the stakeholders will be provided within 10 days after the reception of the Draft Report. The report will be reviewed to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria. The report expected to provide options for strategy and policy as well as recommendations.
- **Final evaluation report.** The final report (30 to 50 pages): This will include comments from the Programme stakeholders. The content and the structure of the final analytical report with finding, recommendations and lessons learnt covering the scope of the evaluation should meet the requirements of the UNDP evaluation guideline.
- **Presentations of the evaluation key findings and lesson learned to stakeholders and/or the other relevant project partners**

## 6. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION REQUIRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATION

### Corporate competencies

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards.
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality, and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism.

### Functional and technical competencies

- Ability to work in a diverse and multi-cultural environment.
- Self-motivated and ability to work under pressure and to meet strict and competing deadlines.
- Demonstrated familiarity with the United Nations and its Agencies, Funds and Programmes;
- Demonstrated understanding of gender issues and gender mainstreaming
- Ability to plan effectively, prioritize, complete tasks quickly, adapt to changing context and demonstrated leadership in managing a team.
- Strong analytical skills, including with qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- Excellent communication skills, written and oral, including in cross-cultural contexts;
- [Required Skills and Experience - National consultants](#)

- Master's degree or equivalent in forest conservation, urban development and development or other closely related fields
- At least 5 years of professional experience in project/Programme evaluations, specifically in the area of forestry and natural resource management
- Sound knowledge of results-based management systems, and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation methodologies.
- Knowledge and experience of the UN System and the UN Reform process.
- Fluency in English is mandatory;

## 7. EVALUATION ETHICS

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

## 8. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The international and local consultants will work closely with ISFDP project manager, UNDP M&E specialist and the overall guidance of the Team Leader for Climate Resilient Environmental Sustainability (CRES). The UNDP CO and EFD will provide the required logistical facilities such as DSA; field vehicle, etc.

## 9. TIME FRAME FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The schedule of the evaluation is expected to be as follows

Activity	Deliverable	Time allocated
Desk review, briefings of evaluators, Finalizing the evaluation design and methods and preparing the detailed inception report	Inception report	10 days (September 10 2022)
Data collection and analysis (visits to the field, interviews, questionnaires), sharing preliminary findings, and Preparing the draft report	Draft report	20 days ( September t 30/2022)
Validation workshop – the draft report will be reviewed (for quality assurance) and comments will be incorporated in the final evaluation report	Final report	5 days ( September October 052022)

## 10. LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO PROSPECT IC (IF ANY)

The Consultants are expected to cover any transport service cost that they may be incurring during the 35 days.

## 11. DURATION OF THE WORK

Each consultant is expected to take 35 working days including for the number of days required to produce the inception report, data collection, draft report, and final report.

## 12. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE BEST OFFER

Upon the advertisement of the Procurement Notice, qualified Individual Consultant is expected to submit both the Technical and Financial Proposals. Accordingly, Individual Consultants will be evaluated based on Cumulative Analysis as per the following scenario:

- Responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation. In this regard, the respective weight of the proposals is:
  - a. Technical Criteria weight is **70%**
  - b. Financial Criteria weight is **30%**

Criteria	Weight	Max. Point
<b>Technical Competence (based on CV, and Proposal,</b>	<b>70%</b>	100
<b>Criteria a.</b> [Understanding the Scope of Work (SoW); comprehensiveness of the methodology/approach; and organization & completeness of the proposal]		50 pts*
		5 pts**
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>National consultant</u> - At least 5 years of professional experience in project/Programme evaluations, specifically in the area of forestry and natural resource management</li> </ul>		10 pts **
<b>Criteria b.</b> [Extensive knowledge and understanding of evaluation methodologies, data analysis issues forestry and forest conservation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven expertise and experience in conducting/managing evaluations.</li> <li>• Proven experience in data analysis as well as report writing.</li> <li>• Technical knowledge and experience in UNDP thematic areas, and cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, rights-based approach and capacity development.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the national/regional situation and context.</li> </ul>		5 pts**
<b>Financial (Lower Offer/Offer*100)</b>	<b>30%</b>	30
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Technical Score * 70% + Financial Score * 30%</b>	

\* It is mandatory criteria and shall have a minimum of 50%

### 13. PAYMENT MILESTONES AND AUTHORITY

The prospective consultants are expected to indicate the cost of services for each deliverable in US dollars **all-inclusive**<sup>17</sup> **lump-sum contract amount** when applying for this consultancy. The consultant will be paid based on the effective UN exchange rate (where applicable), and only after approving authority confirms the successful completion of each deliverable as stipulated hereunder.

Installment of Payment/ Period	Deliverables	Approval should be obtained	Percentage of Payment
The payment will be made to the consultant up on approval and acceptance of the Inception report	Inception Report	EFD/UNDP	30%
The payment will be made to the consultant up on approval and acceptance of the Draft report	Draft Report	EFD/UNDP	40%
The payment will be made to the consultant up on approval and acceptance of the Final report	Final Report	EFD/UNDP	30%

### 14. RECOMMENDED PRESENTATION OF TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Interested consultants should submit cover letter expressing their interest and outlining their qualification and motivation for the consultancy together with CV and brief proposal on the methodology, approach for the assignment with financial quotation to the UNDP.

### 15. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROPRIETARY INTERESTS

The Individual Consultants shall not either during the term or after termination of the assignment, disclose any proprietary or confidential information related to the consultancy service without prior written consent. Proprietary interests on all materials and documents prepared by the consultants under the assignment shall become and remain properties of UNDP.

15 Annexes

- a) Intervention results framework and theory of change.
- (b) Key stakeholders and partners.
- (c) Documents to be reviewed and consulted.
- (d) Evaluation matrix template.

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

<sup>17</sup> The term "All inclusive" implies that all costs (professional fees, travel costs, living allowances, communications, consumables, etc.) that could possibly be incurred by the Contractor are already factored into the final amounts submitted in the proposal

(e) Outline of the evaluation report format.

Standard outline for an evaluation report.

Annex 1 provides further information on the standard outline of the evaluation report. In brief the minimum contents of an evaluation report include:

1. Title and opening pages with details of the project/programme/outcome and of the evaluation team.
2. Project and evaluation Information details: project title, Atlas number, budgets and project dates and other key information.
3. Table of contents.
4. List of acronyms and abbreviations.
5. Executive summary: a stand-alone section of maximum four pages including the quality standards and assurance ratings.
6. Introduction and overview. What is being evaluated and why?
7. Description of the intervention being evaluated. Provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and evaluability analysis result, assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results.
8. Evaluation scope and objectives. The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation's scope, primary objectives and main questions.
9. Evaluation approach and methods. The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis.
10. Data analysis. The report should describe the procedures used to analyse the data collected to answer the evaluation questions.
11. Findings and conclusions. Evaluation findings should be based on an analysis of the data collected and conclusions should be drawn from these findings.
12. Recommendations. The report should provide a reasonable number of practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make.
13. Lessons learned. As appropriate and as requested in the TOR, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation of the intervention.

14. Annexes

**This TOR is approved by:**

**Name:** Berhanu Alemu

**Designation:** M&E Specialist

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex B: Stakeholders consulted

	Name	Position	Telephone	E-mail
1	Mrs Belaynesh Zewdie	Project Coordinator- Sodo Guragie ISFSDP	(25191) 682-2122	belayneshzewdie@gmail.com
2	Mr. Deginet Cherinet	Socio-Economic Sxpert -Sodo Guragie ISFSDP	(25191) 341-0061	
3	Mr. Dembi Balcha	Forest Expert-Sodo Guragie ISFSDP	(25191) 064-6085	
4	Mr. Million Amare	Forest Expert-Sodo Guragie ISFSDP	(25191) 343-7249	
5	Mr. Feleke Cherinet	Head, Sodo District Job Creation and Entrprise Development Office	(25192) 222-4267	
6	Mr. Daniel Shifa	Community Coordinator, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25192) 330-9533	
7	Mr. Bitew Sete	Group Leader, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project		
8	Mr. Samuel Cherinet	Community Officer, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25191) 928-3319	
9	Mr. Ibsa Taye	Community Cashier, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25191) 957-7409	
10	Mr. Indale Adugna	Community Nurfery Worker, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25198) 709-9973	
11	Mr. Indalkachew Fikir	Community Forest Guard, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25190) 477-4472	
12	Mr. Abule Hunde	Forest Outcome Sales Person, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25193) 471-9264	
13	Mr. Tilahun Mekbib	Community Memembr User, Sodo District, Dugda Goro Forest Project	(25199) 671-8198	
14	Mr. Kasa Bayisa	Manager, Dugda Goro Kebele (lower level administrative structure)	(25094) 816-8423	
15	Mr.Behayilu Bekele	Officer , Dugda Goro Kebele (lower level administrative structure) Rural Job Creation and Entrepreneurship		
16	Mr. Tarekeny Shimekit	A/Head, Sodo District Natural Resource Office	(25191) 670-4287	
17	Mr. Gosaye Wedi	Head, Sodo District Forest & Environment	(25191) 003-4313	

	Name	Position	Telephone	E-mail
		Protection Office		
18	Mr. Wolde Negash	Secretary, Sodo District Administration Office	(25191) 049-2974	
19	Mr. Belete Asmir	V/Head, Sodo District Government Finance Office	(25191) 013-4770	
20	W/t Emebet Jembola	Women League, Sodo District Women and Children Office	(25192) 259-8723	
21	Mr. Teramaj Bezabeh	Project Coordinator-Mierab Abaya ISFSDP	(25192) 250-0106	<a href="mailto:tera1921@gmail.com">tera1921@gmail.com</a>
22	Mr. Memiru Morka	Forest Expert-Mierab Abaya ISFSDP	(25191) 655-1566	
23	Mr. Ayifera Anjulo	Forest Expert-Mierab Abaya ISFSDP	(25191) 289-3020	
24	Mr. Aseffa Balcha	Finance Expert -Mierab Abaya ISFSDP	(25119) 129-0227	
25	Miss Alemensh Biter	Office Assistant-Mierab Abaya ISFSDP	(25192) 564-7297	
26	Mr. Temesgen Belta	Cashier, Mierab Abaya District Finance Office	(25191) 640-1287	
27	Mr. Yohanis Melesse	Coordinator, Mierab Abaya District Job Creation and Enterprise Development Office	(25191) 675-8390	
28	Mr. Sintayehu Deresse Kassa	Amhara Regional Coordination Unit	251(0)911065433	<a href="mailto:sintayehud@gmail.com">sintayehud@gmail.com</a>
29	Dr. Teshale Woldeamanuel	SNNP Regional Coordination Unit	251(0)916822346	<a href="mailto:twamanuelh@gmail.com">twamanuelh@gmail.com</a>
30	Dr. Mesele Negash	Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources	251(0)911713329	<a href="mailto:meselenegash72@gmail.com">meselenegash72@gmail.com</a>
31	Mr. Kibruyesfa Sisay	Ethiopian Forestry Development - Program Manager	251(0)993530105	<a href="mailto:kibruyesfa.sisay@undp.org">kibruyesfa.sisay@undp.org</a>
32	Mr. Tilahun Tegene	Ethiopian Forestry Development - Project Expert	251(0)911098952	<a href="mailto:ttegene65@gmail.com">ttegene65@gmail.com</a>
33	Mr. Ababu Anage	United Nations Development Programme - CO	251(0)911843801	<a href="mailto:ababu.anage@undp.org">ababu.anage@undp.org</a>
34	Mrs. Martinsen Mari	Norway		<a href="mailto:mari.martinsen@mfa.no">mari.martinsen@mfa.no</a>

## **Annex C: List of documents reviewed**

- Project Document
- Annual quarterly progress reports
- Minutes of steering committee meetings
- Reports of conducted technical studies



## Annex D: Evaluation question matrix

Evaluation Questions	Sources	Methods/Informants
<b>1. Relevance: The extent to which project objectives and design meet the needs of the country/recipient and continue to do so if circumstances change; the degree of alignment with country needs, UNDP mandate, existing national strategies and policies, international conventions and SDGs.</b>		
To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the projects outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs ?	Project documents Interviews and FGDs with beneficiaries and stakeholders	Documentary Review: Interviews with beneficiary groups and stakeholders
To what extent did the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country Programme outcome?	Project documents Interviews	Documentary Review: Interviews with project partners
Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during design and implementation of the project?	ProDoc	Documentary Review:
To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design?	ProDoc	Documentary Review:
Review to what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country	Interviews and FGDs with beneficiaries and stakeholders	Documentary Review: Thematic analysis of primary data from interviews and FGDs
<b>2. Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to meet its objectives and outcomes</b>		

Evaluation Questions	Sources	Methods/Informants
To what extent did the project achieve its envisioned outcomes and outputs ?	PIRs, progress reports ProDoc Project teams, partners, beneficiaries	Documentary review: comparison of project targets (indicators) and level of realization Interviews and FGDs
To what extent did the project contribute to the country Programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?	ProDoc Progress reports Project teams	Documentary review: Interviews
What are the facilitating and constraining factors for success?	Progress reports Project teams, partners, beneficiaries	Documentary review: Interviews
To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective and what factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements; and what have been the supporting factors?	ProDoc Progress reports	Documentary review Interviews with stakeholders and partners
To what extent did project achieve its envisioned outcomes/outputs contribute to the project's strategic vision?	ProDoc Progress reports	Documentary review Interviews with stakeholders and partners
To what extent did the project mainstreamed a gender dimension and support gender-responsive programming?	ProDoc Progress reports Annual Work plans	Documentary review Interviews with stakeholders and partners
How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?	Progress reports ProDoc Project teams, partners, beneficiaries	Documentary review Interviews and FGDs

Evaluation Questions	Sources	Methods/Informants
Was the project monitoring system adequately capturing data on the project results at an appropriate outcome level?	PIRs, progress reports ProDoc Project teams, partners, beneficiaries	Documentary review Interviews and FGDs
3. Efficiency: To what extent was the project delivered in an efficient manner in terms of outcomes, outputs and goals		
How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project?	UNDP and executing entity Project team members Financial reports Progress reports	Documentary review – Interviews:
How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the project?		
How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders, and project beneficiaries on its progress?		
Overall, did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?		
To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results.		
To what extent has the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective have.		
To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?		
Were the projects financially and/or programmatically catalytic?		
Have the projects funding been used to scale-up other forestry and city beautification initiatives?		
4. Sustainability: To what extent are project achievements likely to continue beyond the project and what risks could constrain extension, replicability and up scaling of this project		
How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in order to ensure suitability of efforts and benefits?	Government agencies Project team	Documentary review –

Evaluation Questions	Sources	Methods/Informants
How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of the project and continuing initiatives, especially women's participation in decision making processes, supported under the project?	UNDP team Project stakeholders Project reports	Interviews: Focus group discussions
To what extent were the participation and ownership of the programme by the Ips and other key stakeholders for ensuring sustainability of achieved results and lessons learned after end of the current programme?		
How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of the project and continuing any unfinished activities?		
<b>5. Coherence</b>		
Were the inputs and strategies identified appropriate and adequate to achieve the results? Were they realistic? To what extent do the implementing partners participating in the joint programme have an added value to solve the development challenges stated in the programme document?	Project document, PIR Project stakeholders	Documentary Review: Interviews with project stakeholders Interviews with all stakeholders
Did the project interventions duplicate existing similar interventions in the targeted areas, and were there any collaborations with similar interventions?	Project document, PIR Project stakeholders	Review Interviews with all stakeholders
<b>6. Gender and rights-based approaches: To what extent were gender, vulnerable or marginalised groups involved in project implementation?</b>		
To what extent have gender considerations mainstreamed and had been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the projects?	Project document, Project stakeholders	Documentary review Interviews Focus group discussions
Is the gender marker data assigned to this projects representative of reality?	Gender action plan Results framework Project stakeholders	Documentary Review: Interviews with

Evaluation Questions	Sources	Methods/Informants
		beneficiary groups and stakeholders
To what extent have the projects promoted positive changes in women participation in the forest conservation, city beautification and development activities?	Quarterly and annual project reports Project stakeholders	
Human rights: to what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?	Quarterly and annual project reports Project stakeholders	
7. Progress to Impacts: What evidence exists that the project is contributing to project and UNDP strategic goals and targets		
To what extent – and how – project investments contributed to helping improve the lives of beneficiaries?	PIRs ProDoc	Interviews Documentary review
What were the effects of the intervention on participants’ lives?	Project progress reports Project stakeholders	Interviews Documentary review
Did a specific part of the intervention achieve greater impact than another? Were there unintended (positive or negative) effects of assistance for participants and non-participants?	Project progress reports Project stakeholders	Interviews Documentary review
Were there any gender-specific impacts? Did the intervention influence the gender context? • Were there impacts on institutions? Did the intervention contribute to long-term intended results?	Project progress reports Project stakeholders	Interviews Documentary review
8. Lessons to be learned to inform future programming: To what extent have the lessons learned been documented and available to inform future project design?		
To what extent have the lessons learned been documented and available to inform future project design?	Project stakeholders Project teams PIRs, progress reports	Interviews Documentary review

## **Annex E: Data collection tools used**

**Interview guide for implementing partners of the project (UNDP, Government Ministries, Embassies, etc)**

### **Respondent's Information**

Respondent's Name:

Institution:

Job title:

Email:

Gender:

Country of institution:

What has been your institution's role in the project?

### **Relevance**

1. To what extent was the project aligned with national development priorities and the SDGs?
2. How appropriate was the project design in delivering the expected outcomes?
3. To what extent did Covid-19 limit the project from achieving its objectives to the optimal level?
4. Was the project document revised? If so, were the needed changes integrated into the document?
5. To what extent did the project intervention and activity design adequately respond to the gender needs and gaps identified through the gender analysis?
6. To what extent did the project provide support to government institutions?
7. To what extent were the risks and assumptions of the project's theory of change valid during project implementation?

### **Effectiveness:**

8. To what extent were human rights, gender and disability issues mainstreamed in the project strategies and implementation?
9. To what extent did the project achieve its envisioned outcomes/outputs and what were the contributing factors to project success?
10. What were the constraining factors to project success (*internal or external to the project – political, economic, social, technological, environment, environmental?*)
11. What measures were taken to address shortcomings?

12. What synergistic relationships were established with other ongoing initiatives? Give examples
13. Were there any modifications and/ or changes to proposed outputs? If so, why?
14. How effective has the project strategies been in the delivery of the project and in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, especially the vulnerable population, women and, youth?

### **Efficiency**

15. How would you assess the role of government in the delivery of this project and how did it affect the achievement of the project objectives. Please explain briefly.
16. What are the administrative, financial and managerial challenges faced by the project and how did this affect efficiency of the project?
17. Did the project team have sufficient human resources for efficient delivery of project outcomes?
18. Was the budget sufficient in line with the expected results?
19. What financial management controls<sup>18</sup> were in place to ensure good financial management of project funds?
20. How did the project adjust and adapt to the changing context (Covid, fuel price increases etc.) and how did this affect project results?
21. Could the project be implemented more efficiently?
22. How aligned did the project remain to its theory of change?

### **Sustainability**

23. Was there an exit strategy? If yes, how effective were these strategies to phase out assistance provided by the project? What were the constraints and contributing factors?
24. How do you assess the likelihood of the achievements of this project to continue beyond the end of the project – give some examples of why you think so?
25. What are the most likely risks to sustainability?
26. How well were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level and how could this favor sustainability?
27. How would you assess the level of government ownership and commitment to this project?
28. What are recommendations for similar interventions in future to ensure sustainability?

### **Impact**

29. What in your view are the long-term impacts of this project:
  - a. At individual level
  - b. at the level of your community?

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<sup>18</sup> For instance budget monitoring, timely flow of funds and payment of satisfactory project deliverables

c. at national level?

30. Are there any negative or unintended consequences of this project at any of these levels? Please explain

### **Coherence**

31. How consistent and complementary has the project been to other interventions focused on sustainable forest management in Ethiopia?

32. To what extent did the project interventions duplicate existing similar interventions in the targeted areas, and were there any collaborations with similar interventions?

### **Assessment of Monitoring & Evaluation Systems**

33. Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan?

34. Did the M&E plan undergo revision in the course of the project implementation? If yes, comment on the timeliness of the revisions.

35. To what extent did the M&E system/mechanism of the project contribute to the attainment of the project results?

36. How effective was updated data used to manage the project?

37. Were the resources allocated for M&E sufficient?

### **Assessment of the Environmental and Social Safeguards**

38. Please explain how environmental and social concerns were taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?

### **Gender**

39. To what extent was gender mainstreamed into the project cycle?

a. At design phase? – 1 to the least extent and 5 to a great extent

b. During implementation: – 1 to the least extent and 5 to a great extent

c. During monitoring and evaluation: – 1 to the least extent and 5 to a great extent

Please explain with some examples.

40. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and women's empowerment

41. Has there been any unintended effects on women, men and vulnerable groups?

### **Disability**



42. Were people with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation?

43. What barriers did the project face in this process and what actions were undertaken by the project

#### Stakeholder engagement

44. In what ways did the project engage with national stakeholders to deliver on this action? Were there any challenges?

45. What actions were taken to ensure no one was left behind?

#### Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)

46. Was there an established AGM for the project?

47. What measures were put in place to ensure stakeholders were aware about the project's grievance mechanism if at all?

48. Were any grievances received and dealt with?

#### **Other Assessments**

##### Knowledge Management

49. Please kindly explain how knowledge management took place in this project.

50. Were there opportunities for experience sharing, were lessons documented?

51. How did the project share its results and lessons?

##### Lessons learned and recommendations

52. In your view, what are some of the lessons that can be learned from this project?

53. What are your recommendations for the future?

## **Interview guide – for other stakeholders**

### **Respondent's Information**

Respondent's Name:

Institution:

Job title:

Email:

Gender:

Country of institution:

What has been your institution's role in the project?

### **Relevance**

1. In what ways was the project trying to address national priority needs?
2. Do you think the project addressed your priority needs as an organization/community? In what ways if at all?

### **Effectiveness:**

3. To what extent were human rights, gender and disability issues mainstreamed in the project strategies and implementation?
4. What were the contributing factors to project success?
5. What were the constraining factors to project success (*internal or external to the project – political, economic, social, technological, environment, environmental*)?
6. What measures were taken to address shortcomings?

### **Efficiency**

7. How would you assess the role of government in the delivery of this project and how did it affect the achievement of the project objectives. Please kindly explain briefly.

### **Sustainability**

8. In what ways do you think the achievements of this project will continue after it ends?
9. What are the most likely risks to sustainability??
10. What are recommendations for similar interventions in future to ensure sustainability?

### **Impact**

11. What in your view are the long-term impacts of this project:
  - d. At the individual level

- e. at the level of your community?
  - f. at national level?
12. Are there any negative or unintended consequences of this project at any of these levels? Please explain

### **Coherence**

13. How consistent and complementary has the project been to other interventions focused on sustainable forest management in Ethiopia?

### Gender

14. To what extent was gender mainstreamed into the project cycle?
- a. At design phase? – 1 to the least extent and 5 to a great extent
  - b. During implementation: – 1 to the least extent and 5 to a great extent
  - c. During monitoring and evaluation: – 1 to the least extent and 5 to a great extent

Please explain with some examples.

15. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and women's empowerment
16. Has there been any unintended effects on women, men and vulnerable groups

### Disability

17. Were people with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation?
18. What barriers did the project face in this process and what actions were undertaken by the project

### Stakeholder engagement

19. In what ways did the project engage with national stakeholders to deliver on this action? Were there any challenges?
20. What actions were taken to ensure no one was left behind?

### Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)

21. Was there an established AGM for the project?
22. What measures were put in place to ensure stakeholders were aware about the project's grievance mechanism if at all?
23. Were any grievances received and dealt with?

### **Other Assessments**

#### Knowledge Management

24. Please kindly explain how knowledge management took place in this project.

25. Were there opportunities for experience sharing, were lessons documented?

Lessons learned and recommendations

26. In your view, what are some of the lessons that can be learned from this project?

27. What are your recommendations for the future?

## **Questionnaire for IS-FSDP – for implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders**

**Name of Respondent:**

**Institution:**

**Position :**

### **Relevance**

1. How would you rate the overall relevance of this project in terms of alignment with national priorities and international commitments of the country? – use table below

<b><i>Relevance</i></b>	<b><i>Level of achievement</i></b>	<b><i>Explanation/justification of factors that affected achievement</i></b>
The extent to which program objectives and design meet the needs of the country/recipient and continue to do so if circumstances change; the degree of alignment with country needs, existing national strategies and policies and SDGs	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	

### **Effectiveness:**

2. In your opinion, how satisfied are you with the project's progress towards its outputs (use the Table below)?

<b><i>Outputs</i></b>	<b><i>Level of achievement outputs</i></b>	<b><i>Explanation/justification of factors that affected achievement</i></b>
By 2021, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	
By 2021, the institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	
Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	
Science and innovation for enhancing Sustainable Forest Management promoted	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	
Stakeholder engagement in forest development enhanced	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	

3. Considering the above answers, how would you rate the overall effectiveness of this project?

<b><i>Effectiveness</i></b>	<b><i>Level of achievement</i></b>	<b><i>Explanation/justification of factors that affected achievement</i></b>
How would you assess the level of achievement of the project goals and objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	

### **Efficiency**

4. How would you rate the overall efficiency of the project? Use Table below

<b><i>Efficiency</i></b>	<b><i>Level of achievement</i></b>	<b><i>Explanation/justification of factors that affected achievement</i></b>
How satisfied are you with the efficiency of the project in delivering on its outcomes, outputs and goals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	
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5. In your view, how efficient were the management and accountability structures of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	Justification:
6. What is your assessment of the collaboration between the MPTF and UNDP, national institutions, development partners?	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Unsatisfactory	Justification:

### Sustainability

7. Kindly rate the sustainability of the project using the table below

<b><i>Sustainability</i></b>	<b><i>Level of achievement</i></b>	<b><i>Explanation/justification of your rating</i></b>
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available to sustain the project's outcomes once the	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely – there is little or no risk to sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Likely – there are moderate risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unlikely – there are significant risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely – there are severe risks to sustainability.	
To what extent are there social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely – there is little or no risk to sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Likely – there are moderate risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unlikely – there are significant risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely – there are severe risks to sustainability.	
To what extent do legal frameworks, policies, governance structures in Ethiopia pose risks that may jeopardize the sustenance of project benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely – there is little or no risk to sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Likely – there are moderate risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unlikely – there are significant risks to sustainability.	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely – there are severe risks to sustainability.	
To what extent are there environmental risks that may jeopardize the sustenance of project outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely – there is little or no risk to sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Likely – there are moderate risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Unlikely – there are significant risks to sustainability. <input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely – there are severe risks to sustainability.	



## UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators<sup>19</sup>

Independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence or pressure by any party (including the hiring unit) and providing evaluators with free access to information on the evaluation subject. Independence provides legitimacy to and ensures an objective perspective on evaluations. An independent evaluation reduces the potential for conflicts of interest which might arise with self-reported ratings by those involved in the management of the project being evaluated. Independence is one of ten general principles for evaluations (together with internationally agreed principles, goals and targets: utility, credibility, impartiality, ethics, transparency, human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacities, and professionalism).

### Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

### Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Evaluator: Kevin Enongene

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ Ottawa, Canada \_\_\_\_\_ (Place) on \_\_\_\_\_ April 25, 2023 \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)



Signature:

## Annex G: TE Audit trail (submitted as a separate file)

<sup>19</sup> Source: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>