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**Final Report**

**On**

**Terminal Evaluation of The Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project**

**(ETH10 - ETH4051)**

**Submitted to:**

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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**8 AUGUST June 2023**

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# **Acronyms and abbreviations**

BoEd Bureau of Education

8oEF Bureau of Environment and Forest

CRGE Climate Resilient Green Economy

EFAP Ethiopian Forestry Action Programme

FAO Food and Agricultural Qrganization

FCPF Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GHG Green House Gas

GTP Growth and Transformation PJon

NIEF Ministry of Environment and Forest

MoFED Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

MRV Measuring, Reporting and Verification

NFAP National Forestry Action Programme

NICFf kto way's International Climate and Forest initiative

NTFPs Non-Timber Forest Products

OFWE Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise

PFM Participatory Forest Management

REDD Reducing Emission yearn Deforestation and Forest Degradation

R-PP Readiness Preparation Plan

SFM Sustainable Forest Management

WBISPP Woody Biomass Inventory Strategic Plan Project

UNDP United nations development program

BOA: Bureau of Agriculture

CIFOR: Centre for International Forestry Research

CPD: Country Program Document

CRGE: Climate Resilient Green Economy

CSA: Central Statistics Agency

EBI: Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute

EEFRI: Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute

ECRA: Ethiopia Customs and Revenue Authority

ETB: Ethiopian Birr

FCPF: Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FLR: Forest Landscape Restoration

GEF: Global Environmental Facility

GTP: Growth and Transformation Plan

GVP: Gross Value of Production

IS-CFSDP: Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Program

LULUCF: Land use, Land-use Cover change and Forestry.

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

MOA: Ministry of Agriculture (previous Ministry)

MOANR: Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources

MOLF: Ministry of Livestock and Fishery

MPFT: Multi-purpose Fodder Trees

NFPA: National Forest Priority Area

NDC: Nationally Determined Contributions

NFPA: National Forest Priority Area

NFSDP: National Forest Sector Development Programme

NRM: Natural Resource Management

NTFP: Non-Timber Forest Product

PES: Payment for Ecosystem Services

PFM: Participatory Forest Management

PPP: Private Partnership Participatory

PRM: Public Resource Management

REDD+: Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest degradation

RET: Rural Energy Technologies

RIF: REDD+ Investment Framework

SUPFMP: Scaling up Participator Forest Management Project

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SFM: Sustainable Forest Management

TBL: Tree-Based Livelihood

ToC: Theory of Change

TOT: Training of Trainers

WRI: World Resource Institute

WGCFNR: Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources.

# **Executive Summary**

This is a terminal evaluation report om the Institutional strengthening for catalyzing forest -sector project. Of the UNDP. The evaluation focused on the performance of the project in executing the following eight project interventions that have 36 variables in total. The evaluation was conducted by considering the project performance in each of these variables each grouped in eight project-performance measuring criteria that are listed below.

1. the participatory nature of the ***project formulation*** in percent
2. the project on the participatory nature of the ***project implementation*** in percent
3. ***the result-prone conception of the project in percent***.
4. the p***roject relevance score*** in highly satisfactory level in %
5. the ***project effectiveness*** of the project
6. the ***project impact*** at an excellent level in percent
7. the **project sustainability** at an excellent level in percent
8. the ***project efficiency*** as rated in highly satisfactory” level in percent
9. the project’s strength in “**accommodating gender concerns**” level in percent.

The performance of the project, as it stands now, is highly satisfactory. When anyone looks into the project performance indicating variables, one could intelligibly attest that the has achieved its expected results at a “highly satisfactory” level. We share the same belief. Please refer to Table One below, where you could easily convince your self of this truth.

**Table 1: Project performance measurement criteria and the corresponding score of the project as evaluated by KII, FGD, and QI process**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Cumulative Project performance evaluation criteria | Cumulative total |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project on the participatory nature of the project f**ormulation** in percent | 1. 94.60 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project on the **participatory nature** of the project **implementatio**n in percent | 100.00 |
|  | Result-oriented ness of the percent | 100.00 |
|  | The cumulative average total of the **p*roject relevance*** *score* at a highly satisfactory level in % | 92.60 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the ***project effectiveness***the project | 98.60 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the ***project impact*** at an excellent level in percent | 94.66 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the **project sustainability** at excellent and level in percent | 100.00 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the ***project efficiency*** as rated in highly satisfactory” level in percent | 87.70 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project in “accommodating **gender concerns**” at a “Highly satisfactory level” in percent of total | 86.02 |
| 10 | a cumulative average total score of the project performance from 900 points in percent | **94.91** |

Having a project success at 94.91% is indeed very pleasing. We are sure that every actor of the project would like such great success to continue for many years to come. Therefore, the scope of the terminal evaluation and the ambitions of the project actors and we are taking a predictive approach by considering every bit of information obtained from the project beneficiaries. In this regard, examining the answers we got from the focus-group discussants for the questions raised during the focus-group discussions is vital. Normally, individuals are not giving such information because they think they will be held accountable for their opinion especially when it is against what the influencers like. In this regard, when the focus group discussants were requested about the likely conditions of the project continuity, they raised their concerns in that the sustainability of the project may be at stake on two fronts.

They attest that one emanates from the achievement of the area closure in land rehabilitation and reforestation to the extent that it has become effective in sheltering baboons and warthogs that feed on their crops. The other is the fact that livestock keeping has become exclusionary of on-site grazing while there is no alternative in securing livestock feed provision at a satisfactory level.

Still, we believe that both issues are not killers to the project's success. Remedies could be sought through the inclusion of a sub-project by which the communities could secure the availability of livestock feed by the inclusion of a sub-project that dwells on livestock feed farming. Producing silage and hay that can be kept for months if not years is easily achievable. In such a case livestock feed provision will be secured and cattle could be fed in their sheds instead of continuing free ranging which could damage the success achieved in area closure. At the same time, we additionally recommend that the area closure be helped by the project for making its rehabilitation quicker and more massive through best-suited land rehabilitation technologies instead of living it to nature to take its course which is normally slow.

The other is the concern of the communities on the re-emergence of baboons and other livestock predators such as monkeys, warthogs, and other primates that threaten their crops and livestock. This also could and could have been solved by having a well-thought land use plan instead of counting on a land development plan that equally fosters the environmental, economic, and social gains to be implemented by weaning interventions. We recommend that this project shall be helped by bringing the project districts under integrated land use planning where areas of wildlife and agriculture could be sustained and can become beneficial in their settings.

# **Introduction and overview**

The major focus of the study is to investigate and evaluate the catalyzing forest sector project. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design that combined the collection and analysis of qualitative information and quantitative data.

## **What is evaluated?**

Forests provide goods and services such as the supply of timber, non-timber forest products and ecosystem services that are the basis for Ethiopia's sustainability of agriculture and energy. For instance, the consumption of wood products is increasing and was estimated at 124 million m³ in 2013 in Ethiopia. In the same period, the gap between supply and demand reached 38.8 million m³ in 2013 (MEFCC 2015). It is forecasted that the supply gap for industrial round wood could reach 4.4 million cubic meters over the next 20 years (MEFCC 2015). So far, part of the gap has been filled by the unsustainable harvesting of the natural forests and woodlands, and by wood product imports. Ethiopia's fast economic growth is taking place but conserving its forests with an increasing forest products demand has become a persisting challenge. The country well recognized the key role forestry plays in setting a sustainable and green development path. However, the resource is under pressure facing high rates of deforestation and forest degradation. The increased pressure from agricultural land expansion is expected to result in the deforestation of nearly nine million hectares of forestland by 2030. At the same time, Ethiopia aims to increase forest cover from the current 15.5% to 30% by 2030. Barriers to achieving this are partly due to the limited institutional capacity of forestry agencies, and limited engagement with the private sector and civil society partners who can create sustainable and cost-effective forest sector development models.

The forest sector has various opportunities to develop, like the political commitment of the government to build a green economy, huge demand for raw and processed wood products, and cheap energy supply to enhance the completeness of wood-based manufacturing industries, significant opportunities to produce utility poles and growing economy of the country, increases the purchasing power of citizens, which in turn increases demand for quality wooden furniture. Accordingly, the Government of Ethiopia is interested in strengthening the contribution of the forest sector at the macro-level achieving economic growth to ensure social and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the Climate Resilient Green Economy plan set the forest to have a vital role to contribute to green economic development and climate change mitigation in Ethiopia. For the implementation of the plan, the government has designed national programs, policies, and strategies to strengthen the development of forestry. Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project has been designed 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.

Being supported by Sweden and the UNDP, the project has implemented Institutional Strengthening initiatives for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to learn if the capacity of the then Ethiopian Environment Forestry and Climate Change, and the current Ethiopian Forestry Development in particular the project ideals has effectively spearheaded the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and the Growth and Transformation plan (GTP) targets. The Project has been implemented from 2019-2022.

The overall goal of the UNDP Project “Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project is to strengthen the forest sector and promote a resilient social, economic, and ecological system. The focus area for this proposed forest sector development program is structured in four components: 1) Enhancing enabling environment for forest sector development program, 2) promoting sustainable forest production through forest landscape restoration, 3) enhancing forest environmental services, and 4) fostering model environmental stewardship in selected urban areas. The overall objective of this program is to promote a sustainable and competitive tree-based production system in the rural and urban landscape of Ethiopia through which community and ecosystem resilient is promoted successfully. The Project Document was signed between the Ministry of Finance and Economic cooperation of Ethiopia, United Nations Development Program, and the implementing partner the then Environment and Forest Climate Change Commission in 2018, and accordingly, the first disbursement signaling project start was in 2019. Though, sadly, the actual beneficiary farmers were not available organized as tree growers and processors for marketing, the effort was proved successful.

## **Objective and Outcomes of the project**

The Project Objective was “The overall objective of this program is to promote sustainable and competitive tree-based production system in the rural and urban landscape of Ethiopia thereby for community and ecosystem resilient. It also had three Outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1: “Advance poverty eradication in all its form and dimension”

Outcome 2: “Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development”

Outcome 3: “Strengthen resilience to shock and crises.

## **Main stakeholders**

The main stakeholders in the project are UNDP, Ethiopian Forest Development, WGCF-NR, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, SLU, and CIFOR. In addition, a broad range of regional and local stakeholders were involved in project implementation.

## **The reason why the project is evaluated**

Following the completion of the project execution, UNDP has mandated the evaluation tram to assess the Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project. To this effect, the evaluation was conducted to know whether the Project has achieved its intended objectives or not. Therefore, 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. It is hoped that the overall enhancement of UNDP programming would be supported. The TE is conducted according to the guidance, rules, and procedures established by UNDP. More specifically, the purpose of this evaluation had been to assess the achievement and progress made against the planned results, assess challenges, draw lessons learned, measure the impact of the Project, and inform future orientation of similar interventions. The evaluation will also investigate 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 scope of the program evaluation will cover all interventions of the projects planned to be implemented during the project phases. The evaluation will compare the planned output of the projects to actual outputs and assess associated results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the program objectives. It will 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 will also address the underlying causes and issues that contributed to changes or targets not adequately achieved. Under this general framework, the terminal evaluation will have the following specific objectives:

The main purpose of the evaluation process was therefore to:

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

# **Description of the interventions evaluated**

The Institutional strengthening for catalyzing the forest development sector (ISFCSP) of Ethiopia has been designed to support capacity-building efforts. The goal of this Project is to create a strengthened forestry sector and resilient social, economic, and ecological systems. The focus areas for this proposed forest sector development program are structured in four components. These are:

* Enhancing the enabling environment for forest sector development programs,
* Promoting sustainable forest production and Forest land scape restoration, and
* Enhancing Forest environmental services, and
* Fostering model environmental stewardship.

The ISFCSP’s main objective was to enable Ethiopia to promote sustainable and competitive tree-based production systems in its rural and urban landscapes. By doing so, making effective contributions to community and ecosystem resilience was the focus. Specifically, the project intended to strengthen the capacity of the forest sector at strategic and operational levels; create multi-functional landscapes in rural and urban areas; substantially reduce the vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events.

The Project was implemented in selected districts in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Tigray, Somali, and Benshangul Gumuz National Regional States. However, the evaluation verdict if the team was based on its findings from Southern regions and Addis Ababa. The overall objective of this evaluation is to strengthen the forest sector and improve resilience to climate change through a sustainable tree-based production system. This terminal evaluation aims at assessing the effects of the projects' intervention on cross-cutting issues of environment and climate change.

**Main project Components**

* Enhancing the enabling environment for the forest sector development program
* Promoting sustainable forest production and Forest land scape restoration
* Enhancing Forest environmental services
* Enhancing Forest environmental services

# **Evaluation Scope and objectives**

The theory of change of this Project would effectively support the national efforts of overcoming the development challenges of the forestry sector such as increased deforestation and forest land degradation, drought, and vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

The effort will not only contribute to generating strong technical capacities at federal, state, and district levels but also establish a sustainable and competitive production industry, and market linkage, and make efforts to pilot proven models that enable immediate inception of the next-generation change models in the forestry sector. Thus, the evaluation framework has indicated the evaluation questions which were used to evaluate the achievements, constraints, and lessons learned from the Project's implementation. The terminal evaluation of the Project was carried out following the UNDP evaluation guideline, evaluation norms, and ethical standards. The evaluation gets framed using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender, and impact for conducting terminal evaluations. In the following Table 2, each of the criteria was used for having their own corresponding key evaluation questions.

**Table 2 Evaluation Matrix**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relevant evaluation criteria | Key questions | Specific sub questions | Data sources | Data-collection methods/tools | Indicators/ success standard | Methods for data analysis |
| Relevance | To what extent the projects were suited to the priorities of the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs, the theory of change, target beneficiary group(s), stakeholders, and the socioeconomic context of the country? | * To what * extent are the outcomes of the Project still valid to Project stakeholders and beneficiaries? * Was the Project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? * Were they consulted during the design and implementation of the Project? * Did the Project's theory of change articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change? * Was the theory of change grounded in evidence? * Were the project approaches and methodologies appropriate to the respective socio-cultural and institutional context(s)? | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Document review project progress reports, national and regional strategy and policy documents | * Desk review * Interviews, Field visits | * Level of coherence between project objectives and stated priorities of local stakeholders | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |
| Effectiveness | To what extent were the objectives achieved or are likely to be achieved contribute to the country's Programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities, mainstreamed a gender dimension? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? | * To what extent did the ISCFSDP project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the Project's strategic vision? * Did the Project achieve its outcomes and outputs and what progress did it make against its indicators? * What has impacted the achievement of results? * Have there been any unintended consequences? * To what extent did the ISCFSDP project substantively mainstream gender capacity building? * To what extent were the outcomes achieved? * How did the Project contribute to the achievement of these outcomes? * How have the Project's implementation strategies, tools, unique partnerships, and innovations contributed to the achievement of these outcomes? * What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes? * What were the main factors for the success or failure of the different project components? | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Project documents * Project staff * Project stakeholders | * Desk review * Interviews (HH, FGD, and KII) * Field visits | * Institutional and individual capacities * Financial risks | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |
| Efficiency | Were activities cost-efficient? Were objectives achieved on time? Was the Project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? | * How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the Project (including between the implementing agencies and with stakeholders)? * Have project funds and activities been delivered promptly? * Were resources effectively utilized? * Were outputs achieved on time and on budget? * What were the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the project implementation process? * Did the project activities overlap and/or duplicate other similar interventions, funded nationally and/or by other donors? * To what extent did the Project collaborate with the consortium, national and sub-national partners, and stakeholders (technical, advocacy, funding, etc.) to achieve results? | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Project documents * Project staff * Project stakeholders | * Desk review * Interviews (HH, FGD and KII) * Field visits | * Efficient utilization of project resources | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |
| Impact | What are the positive and negative changes produced by the Project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended contributed to helping improve the lives of beneficiaries? | * What has happened as a result of the capacity building, multifunctional landscape development and reduction of vulnerability either as intended or unintended, positive or negative? * According to beneficiaries, what difference has the projects made in their lives? * How many people have benefited? (Capacity training, poor people vulnerability reduction) * How many areas of land have been identified for multifunctional landscape | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Project documents * Project staff * Project stakeholders | * Desk review * Interviews (HH, FGD, and KII) * Field visits | * A verifiable number of experts strengthen their capacity * Verifiable multifunctional landscape improvements * Verifiable reductions in the vulnerability of poor | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |
| Sustainability | How has the Project enhanced and contributed to the development of the national capacity to ensure the suitability of efforts and benefits?  To what extent the benefits (outputs, outcomes) of the Project are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn? | * What is the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of project outcomes and benefits after completion of the Project? * What are the major external factors that may influence, positively or negatively, the sustainability of the project results contributed to the sustainability of project results? * To what extent has the Project's design, implementation, stakeholder management etc. contributed to the sustainability of the Project? * What actions are taken to ensure sustained benefits for young people beyond the project's lifetime? * Are the measures implemented adequate to guarantee sustainability and improve the lives of targets? | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Project documents * Project staff * Project stakeholders | * Desk review * Interviews (HH, FGD and KII) * Field visits | * Verifiable outputs that will continue after the phaseout of the Project? | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |
| Lessons learnt |  | * Are current partnerships adequate to deliver on the outcomes and impact as described in the resulting framework? | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Project documents * Project staff * Project stakeholders | * Desk review * Interviews (HH, FGD, and KII) * Field visits | * Effective stakeholder involvement * Effective partnerships | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |
| Crosscutting Issues |  | * How do the projects deal with gender, strengthening capacity, climate change, and reduction of vulnerability? * Is gender issue is considered across the whole course of the project's intervention? | * Primary and secondary sources * Local stakeholders * Project documents * Project staff * Project stakeholders | * Desk review * Interviews (HH, FGD, and KII) * Field visits | * Verifiable gender-related project outputs | * Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data * Discourse and descriptive analysis of primary data (HH interviews/ FGD/KII) |

# **Evaluation approaches and methods**

## **Evaluation approach used**

The terminal evaluation is conducted by a team of international and national experts who used different data collection tools, report writing, and recommendations by UNDP’s evaluation guidelines, evaluation norms, and ethical standards. A summative evaluation method was used involving both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the project performance and to make recommendations. The evaluations used a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Teams, government counterparts (the Ethiopian Forestry Development; WGCFNR, relevant regional and Woreda bureaus, UNDP Country Office(s), SLU, CIFOR, Sweden Embassies as well as beneficiaries. The evaluation was framed using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender, and impact for conducting terminal evaluations. The evaluation used both primary and secondary sources of data. Various data collection tools were used to obtain the required qualitative information and quantitative data. Data collection methods included desk review, collect secondary data, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, semi-structured household interviews, and field visits. The evaluation team was working with the implementing agencies to identify the intervention areas and the beneficiaries. At the field level, the consultants visited sample districts and PAs and discussed with project beneficiaries, government partners, and implementing officers to trace and record what worked well and what did not from the theories and assumptions stipulated during the project design.

## **Target woredas considered in the evaluation assessment**

The consultant team conducted field-level investigations in two selected Woredas (Mirab -abaya and Sodo Gurage woredas of Southern National Regional State). The findings obtained from this evaluation are given under each of the evaluation criteria.

## **Types of data gathered and data collection methods**

As mentioned above, different data collection methods were used. Both primary and secondary data were collected to address the objectives and issues under the evaluation matrix. The terminal evaluation of the project involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

## **Field visit to sample project sites:**

To verify the information collected through desk review and the interviews with project staff, the evaluation consultants visited sample project sites and met with project beneficiaries, implementing partners as well as government offices in the respective districts. Specifically, the evaluation mission visited the different sites where the project was implemented and discussed with relevant stakeholders supported by the project. The sites visited were selected purposely based on the accessibility, security, presence of different types of activities in the area, and availability of target beneficiaries.

## **Document review**

Various important documents were reviewed from published and unpublished sources, such as the theory of change and results framework, annual work plans, biannual and annual reports, monitoring reports, and project team meeting minutes. The information/data extracted from the documents was integrated and used in the report's various sections as appropriate.

## **Collection of primary data using appropriate tools**

Key Informant Interviews and Focus group discussions were conducted by engaging the community and the project facilitation staff in the two selected woredas of the project site. In this evaluation, a total of 23 key informant interviews (7 at Federal and International experts, 16 at the field level) were conducted. The key informants include government, HQ-level government and staff, and non-governmental officials who were involved in the interview. Also, the opinion of the Royal Swedish Embassy and experts engaged in the project implementation were included. Three focus group discussants were conducted at the field level. The focus groups were organized along gender, such as women's groups (consisting of both adult women and female youths) and male groups (consisting of both adult men and male youths). The checklist (annex 2) was used as a guide for the investigative discussion. The discussion points include: how the Project came to its place and what it has been doing; whether they are participating in the Project and how; whether they are getting some benefits from the Project right now; what improvements/changes they have observed in their capacity, did the Project contribute to the involvement of women and youth, livelihoods, community or environment as a result of the Project; whether they are satisfied with the approach and activities so far; etc. The discussions were conducted in local languages. For the household survey, a random sampling technique was employed. The sampling covered, farmers in the project intervention area. A purposive sampling technique was made by the selection of Kebeles at the first stage followed by a random selection of farmers in the Kebele. Accordingly, 30 project beneficiary’s household interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview questionnaires survey in the Mirab-Abaya and Sodo Gurage project intervention woreda. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data that investigates the project's performance in addressing the nine deliverables. Please refer to Table 3 below for the data collection methods and approaches as well as the number of respondents considered in the evaluation.

**Table 3: Number of KII, FGD, and Case Stories**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Project* | Qualitative Data Collection Method | Sample Size |
| *Catalyzing* | Focus group discussion (FGD) | 3 |
| Key informant interview | 23[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| Household questionnaire survey | 30 |

## **Data analysis**

The consultants undertook a comprehensive analysis of the information or data collected to evaluate the project in terms of quality and relevance, efficiency, outputs and inputs, lesson learned, and sustainability. Data analysis techniques mainly depend on the nature of the data and the method of data collection employed. The qualitative data collected from secondary sources, key informant interviews, and the focus group discussion were summarized and analyzed. The quantitative data collected through the formal survey was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. Descriptive statistics (Mean, frequency) were used to describe the variables used in the evaluation. As for the analysis of the beneficiary idea, an evaluation criterion to score different responses from respondents was made. With the scoring mechanism in place, the beneficiary opinion for every output was analyzed alongside the analysis of the monitoring data.

## **Limitations of the evaluation**

The project coverage has been very broad and covers several administrative regions. Given In addition, we have learned, from our literature reviews, that the project has been implementing diversified intervention areas. Unfortunately, the evaluation consultants have practically realized that the current security situation could not allow us to conduct field-level observations and appreciations. Consequently, the field-level review and evaluation work was limited only to the southern part of the country.

The field-level evaluation activities in these Sothern Parts of Ethiopia included a wide range of assessment methods such as data collection, gathering opinionated information from focus-group discussions with a range of stakeholders at different levels, and collecting information on diverse issues. We wish we had experienced and recorded success stories in all those areas that we were not able to access.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, our literature reviews, focus-group discussions, and questionnaire interviews have revealed that the project has exerted maximum effort and achieved unprecedented success in implementing the project.

# **Findings**

## **Relevance of the project**

***Relevance to the country and beneficiaries.*** This project is highly relevant as Ethiopia pledged to rehabilitate 15 million hectares of degraded lands and 7 million hectares of forest by 2025 as part of the Bonn Challenge. This project is designed to address rehabilitating degraded areas and to build national capacity in modern forestry. The project was further very relevant to the work of the EFD and Green legacy initiative. The capacity building training on action research to the researchers and more specifically, the community is trained to engage in tree planting activities in their farmland, develop soil and water conservation practices, and started to use fuel wood from their plantations. Not only it contributed to increased awareness of the rehabilitation of degraded land amongst the local stakeholders, but it also catalyzed the enforcement of the practice. In terms of the appropriateness of the project's initial consultations with, and participation of local key stakeholders like local government authorities and target beneficiaries during the project’s design, the project is found to be satisfactory. The previous experiences and lessons from the preceding project Institutional strengthening for Forests Sector Development had also informed the project’s design to be realistic and demand driven.

The ISCFSDP proved to be highly relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries. The forest degradation and deforestation have created a shortage of rainfall, soil erosion, and landslide in the area thereby negatively influencing their livelihood sources like livestock and crop production. Thus, these project intervention areas have increasingly become dependent on food assistance either in the form of direct food aid or the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Hence, ISCFSDP strived to address these problems by improving their natural resources bases through afforestation and assisted regeneration and looking for reinforcing alternative livelihood systems.

The project ownership of the country, the project was hosted at the UNDP in collaboration with the Ethiopian Forestry Development. The involvement of government officers (e.g. EFD, EEFRI, WGCFNR, EBI, Woreda administrative, woreda level government office) as well as their active participation in project activities such as project steering committee meetings, technical committee, and training was very satisfactory, and contributed to the successful implementation of the project. The national counterparts have strong ownership of the project.

The UNDP woreda project office is the main leading agency for project implementation, the project office indicates that the agricultural office (forestry department) as a major partner. The other government offices are the main partners like the Woreda Administrative Office, Woreda social affairs office, Woreda job-creation Office, and Woreda Women’s affairs office are major partners in the forestry project’s implementation. The project is monitored and implemented by the steering committee and technical committee. The member of the steering committee is the head of the six mentioned above government offices. The woreda administrative has been the leader of the steering committee to follow up on the implementation of the project. The main task of the steering committee is to follow up on the proper implantation of the project and monitor the project activity plan and achievements and budget use.

The relevance of the project is assessed through quantitative data received from the beneficiary household surveys that were undertaken during the assessment. According to the result from our evaluation of three of the five issues, the respondents claim that they are highly satisfied (100%). Only one of the five issues that measure “the extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to political legal and economic institutions” scored highly satisfactory by 66.7%. The average cumulative relevance score at a highly satisfactory level is 92.6%. Please refer to the issues raised and scores obtained as presented in Table 3 above.

In evaluating the project’s relevance, five issues that are shown in Table 4 on the following page were considered. For each of the five issues, three choices were given and these were Highly satisfactory, Satisfactory, and moderately satisfactory. Even when we rated the judgment of the respondents who rated the relevance of the project as “highly satisfactory) the cumulative score is 92.6%. From the total of 5 relevant measuring concerns of the project, the lowest score is “The extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to political legal and economic institutions is 66.7%.” Please refer to Table 4 below and witness that the cumulative average relevance score is 92.6, which is highly satisfactory.

**Table 4: Project Relevance to the Beneficiaries attested by its satisfying level.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issues considered for measuring the relevance of the project |  | Frequency | Percent |
| 1. The extent to which the project objective was in line with the national devolvement priorities | Highly Satisfactory | 29 | 96.7 |
| Satisfactory | 1 | 3.3 |
| 1. The extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to political legal and economic institutions | Highly Satisfactory | 20 | 66.7 |
| Satisfactory | 7 | 23.3 |
| Moderately satisfactory | 3 | 10.0 |
| 1. The extent to which the project was formulated according to national and local strategies to advance gender equality | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | 100.0 |
| 1. The extent to which relevant stakeholders participated in the project | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | 100.0 |
| 1. The extent to which the project was formulated according to the need and inters of all targeted | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | 100.0 |
| Average cumulative relevance score in highly satisfactory level in % | |  | **92.6** |

## **Effectiveness**

Achievement of expected outcomes. As stated in the project document, four outputs were expected to be delivered that would contribute to three outcomes. The following paragraphs discuss the achievement of outputs and outcomes during implementation.

## **Outcome**

Outcome 1.1: The capacity of the forest sector strengthened at the strategic and operational levels.

Outcome 1:2 Multi-functional landscapes created in rural and urban

Outcome 1:3: The vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events reduced

**Table 5. Contributions of outcome 1.1 – 1.3 indicated above**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outcomes | Baselines /targets | Achievement Indicator |
| 1. Strengthening the capacity of the forest sector at strategic and operational levels; | * 85,000ha of dryland forests established * 3,500 ha of land restored with community forests | 1. 78,504ha of dry forests which is 92% of the total project target, have been managed 2. 2,345ha of land are covered with Afforestation Reforestation (A/R) as community forest (TBL) which accounts for 62 % of the planned target. |
| 1. Creating multi-functional landscapes in rural and urban areas; | * Two Botanical Gardens established. * 500 ha of pre-urban forests created | The Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) has provided capacity building support for two existing botanical gardens (Jimma and Shashemene) and two other new botanical gardens are being established in Amhara and Gambella which accounts 200% of the planned target. |
| 1. Substantially reduce the vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events | * 3 forest-based cooperatives supported * Forest management plan prepared for 3 NFPAs | Guideline on how to establish and support tree growing cooperatives produced  CIFOR has provided awareness creation on forest product for 23 participants who came from six regions and criteria will be set to select 3 best performing ones.  In Amhara region, 5 certified cooperatives with total members of 1,310 are formed and one group with total members of 28 is established and its certification process is underway. |

If the targeted support is provided to the project to continue at this rate of success until 2025, the project evaluation team believes that the contribution of the cumulative outcomes of 1.1 to 1.3, in letting all Ethiopian live in a society resilient to environmental risks and adapt to climate change would be inevitable by 2025.

## **Output**

1. Enabling the environment for strong forest sector delivery enhanced
2. Sustainable forest production promoted
3. Forest ecosystem services enhanced
4. The [[2]](#footnote-2)Model environmental stewardship fostered in the selected urban area

## **Out Put Level Achievements**

The overall achievement of the project is summarized in the following tables below that each present the achievement obtained under each of the output targets.

**Table 6. Output 1: Enabling Environment for Strong Forest Sector Delivery Enhanced**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Baseline Value** | **Indicators** | **Target** | **Target accomplished** | **Overall Achievement in %** |
| * Absence of strong institutional set- up especially at the grass root level * Weak capacity of forest training centers to provide skill training * Lack of skill- based training for forest extensionists * Limited skilled experts in forest management and forest business * Limited forest information system | * Number of institutions with   Strong and  functional set-up   * Number of training centers capacitated * Number of tailored skill trainings provided * Number of trained participants with enhanced awareness * Number of forest information systems | * Strong delivery unit established at federal level * At least three training centers capacitated with facilities * TOT provided for 35 experts and skill training provided for one thousand extension agents * Provide training for one thousand (100 female) extension workers   (Development Agents (DAs))   * Tailored training on urban green landscape design offered to 13 experts * 60 regional experts trained on forest governance * Forestry yearbook produced | * Strong delivery unit established at federal level * Three colleges such as Wondo Genet College of Forestry, Holeta Polytechnic College and Mertulemariam TVET have been capacitated through provision of different forest tools and equipment procured abroad via UNDP. This capacity development plan is 100% achieved. The procured and distributed forest tools and laboratory engagements   equipment are 65 by type and 1,495 in total number.   * Forestry institutions are capacitated with a targeted study on forestry resource governance gap by SLU. * Manuals of 6 Modules and Lesson Plans prepared for the TOT and experts training * Same as 2020 * performance | 80% |

**Table 7. Output 2. Promoting Sustainable Forest Production**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Baseline Value** | * **Indicators** | * **Target** | * **Target accomplished** | **Overall Achievement in %** |
| degraded highland and dryland areas to be restored   * Poor participation of women in the sector * Limited PPP and TBL pilots in the forest sector | * Extent of key challenges of women in the sector identified * Number of PPP and TBL initiated * Hectares of dry forests restored | * 85,000ha of dry forests managed properly * 2,000 new jobs generated through sustainable dry forest management * 1,000 Youth and Women supported to pilot tree-based livelihoods (TBL) as forest- entrepreneurs on private land holdings. * document produced on challenges and opportunities of PPP | * 78,504ha of dry forest is mapped and demarcated for PFM scheme which is 92 % of the target dry forest management. 19,248ha of   community forest is demarcated for restoration through Assisted Natural  Regeneration. The total area of  restoration and management scheme covers 97,751.8ha   * New jobs are created for 10,856 (Female = 4,385) beneficiaries. * 7,589 different tree and fruit seedlings brought from different places and provided to   311 households of Basona-Warana and Wolmera woredas for TBL   * On challenges and opportunities for PPP national workshop   organized and document preparation is on the making.  One small-scale wood processing machinery is procured and installed at Wood Technology Research Institute (WTRC) of EEFRI. SLU had  offered a tailored training for 17 experts at WTRC but subsequent trainings planned have been halted due to Covid challenge. The remaining two small scale wood processing machines are procured and delivered to Ethiopia. The machines are about to be given the already selected recipients. 100% achievements.  CIFOR has provided awareness creation on forest product cooperatives for 23 participants who came from six regions and criteria will be set to select 3 best performing ones.   * In Amhara region, 5 certified cooperatives with total members of 1,310 are formed and one group with total members of 28 is established and its   certification process is underway. | 92% |

**Table 8. Output 3. Forest Ecosystem Services Enhanced**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * **Baseline Value** | * **Indicators** | * **Target** | * **Target accomplished** | **Achievement in %** |
| * Degraded forest landscapes * Limited information on   trade-offs and  impact of  landscape | * Hectares of Forest landscape restored * Extent of clear understanding on trade-offs in new production systems * number of new | * 3,500 ha of land restored with community forests * Forest management plan prepared for 3 NFPAs * 2 botanical gardens established. * Scientific study on trade- | * 2,345ha of land are covered with Afforestation Reforestation (A/R) as community forest (TBL) which accounts   62 % of the planned target. | 200% |
| changes on biodiversity   * Limited botanical gardens to   support future FLR efforts   * Covid vulnerable communities | botanical gardens   * Number of Covid vulnerable HH supported | offs and systems dynamics delivered   * Hygienic support provided for 5,000 Covid vulnerable community members | * 78,504ha of dry forests which is 92% of the total project target, have been managed * The Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) has provided capacity building support for two existing botanical gardens (Jimma and Shashemene) and two other new botanical gardens are being established in Amhara and Gambella which accounts 200% of the planned target.   .ll the 19 woredas in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia regions are supported by this plan and Covid response activities have been  implemented as per the plan. Accordingly,  356 (all female) beneficiaries are engaged in poultry production; 145 (all female) beneficiaries on vegetable farming;  391 (173 Female) beneficiaries on fruit farming; 40 (10 female) on apiary; and  176 (68 female) on shoat production. Altogether, 1,108 (752 female) beneficiaries are provided with hygienic facilities. Out of the 5,000 plan to   * provide a hygienic support, only 22% could be attained. This is mainly due to COVID restrictions. It was estimated that a total of 1,905,391 ETB of an income were generated by the beneficiaries., SNNPR, Somali and Benshangul, Gumuz regions |

**Table 9. Output 4. Model Environmental Stewardship Fostered in Selected Urban Areas**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | * **Baseline Value** | * **Indicators** | * **Target** | * **Target accomplished** | **Overall Achievement in %** | | * eak green infrastructure and facilities in cities * Limited trained personnel on urban greening * Limited urban green infrastructure and no comprehensive guideline for implementation * Scarce pre-urban   forests around cities | * Number of cities with better   capacities for greening   * Number of trained urban experts with enhanced skills/knowledge on urban greening * Hectare of land covered with pre- urban forests. * Number of pilot   designs and guideline document on urban greening | * 15 experts trained on urban green landscape design * 500 ha of pre-urban forests created * 1 national guideline prepared for integration of green facilities in city planning   Three Pilot cities with better capacities for greening initiatives | * 33 trainees are trained on urban greening at WGCF * 1 national guideline prepared for integration of green facilities in city planning * SLU through Addis Ababa University and WGCF have developed one national guideline (100% of the target) on urban Green Space Planning, Development and Management.   2 towns (66.7% of the target) | 100% | |

**Outcome 1**: The capacity of the forest sector facilitation staff strengthened at the strategic and operational level, delivery of outputs for this outcome has been very satisfactory as discussed in the following paragraphs. The output on enabling environment for strong forest sector development project implementation enhanced. Directives and regulations are formulated to operationalize the forest sector policy and proclamation.

Training had been given on forest governance, forest administration, and forest extension planning. Capacitate the training centers and Colleges with the required facilities and tools. The site for the clonal nursery and greenhouse establishment was selected to be at Gefersa, near Addis), the site was cleared and made ready for the purpose with the support of UNDP, and equipment was purchased and installed. Conduct development-oriented action research at the landscape level. More than 60 researchers were trained in what Action Research is and how it is conducted, by conducting follow-up training workshops to align training with project research areas. Currently, Development-oriented action research is being implemented by all research teams albeit at different paces of engagement. Substantial capacity is created at the then Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC) and its replica at the regional levels. Training of Trainers (ToTs) for 28 (Female: 5) trainees have been provided. The duration of the training was two months and the trainees were drawn from Amhara, Oromia, and SNNP regions as well as from WGCF-NR, Holeta Polytechnic College, and Mertulemariam Colleges. The ToT was facilitated by WGCF and SLU be developing six modules (Soft-skill in Forestry extension; Agroforestry; Small-scale and community plantation; Restoration of degraded land; Silviculture and Natural forest management; and Commercialization of forest products). The trained ToTs have further provided training for 308 (271 male and 27 female) Development Agents (DAs) for one month.

**Outcome 2**: Multi-functional landscapes created in rural and urban. As indicated the multi-functional landscape was created in rural and urban areas. Sustainable forest production and value chain promoted. Forest business enterprises were established, and the governance system was enhanced. Establish and support tree growers’ cooperatives. In collaboration with the Federal Cooperatives Promotion Agency, EFD,+ and CIFOR refined the developed manuals and guidelines for forest cooperatives.

A discussion was held with the Federal Cooperatives Promotion Agency to show limitations in the existing cooperatives' establishment guidelines, and a series of engagements were made for the Agency with a model guideline. And operational manual specifically tailored for establishing forest cooperatives. Finally, a national validation workshop to enrich the guideline and the operational manual and revised versions of the two documents in Amharic were produced. Processing machines and equipment to promote the value addition of wood and bamboo were purchased to support a total of 8 cooperatives. In addition, one large-sized logos wood processing machine to process high-value wood products +because of reducing wood product imports was imported. All machines were handed over to EFD. A study was conducted to identify challenges and opportunities for Women and youth to engage in Forestry.An extensive national survey was conducted on 36 communities and 1080 HHs from 9 woredas selected from 5 regional states. A comprehensive report was produced from this study to inform policy makers and development partners.

TBL Transitioning options were piloted with smallholders who opted for minimal integration of trees into farming systems by working with more than 500 farmers in two Woredas. Pilot technologies for processing and value addition of forest products. A team of experts from Sweden identified a wood processing equipment (Logosol) that if properly used could enable the processing of logs of Eucalyptus and other species commonly grown in Ethiopia into high-quality processed wood products. One set was purchased by SLU and the other set by CIFOR. CIFOR facilitated the importation of both machines to Ethiopia duty-free. The two machines have been handed over to EFD through CIFOR to use these machines to train entrepreneurs in wood processing. A training of trainers was conducted on how to operate the machine by experts from Eco-innovation (partner to SLU) to experts of Wood Research Centre.

**Forest ecosystem services enhanced**. A total of 2,345 ha of land was covered with Afforestation Reforestation (A/R) as community forest (TBL) which accounts for 62 % of the planned target. 78,504 ha of dry forests which is 92% of the total project target, have been managed. The Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) has provided capacity-building support for two existing botanical gardens (Jimma and Shashemene) and two other new botanical gardens are being established in Amhara and Gambella which accounts for 200% of the planned target. All the 19 woredas in Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali,, and Benshangul Gumuz regions are supported by this plan and Covid-19 response activities have been implemented as per the plan. Accordingly, 356 (all female) beneficiaries are engaged in poultry production; 145 (all female) beneficiaries on vegetable farming; 391 (173 Female) beneficiaries +on fruit farming; 40 (10 female) in apiary; and 176 (68 female) in shoat production. Altogether, 1,108 (752 female) beneficiaries are provided with hygienic facilities. Out of the 5,000 plans to provide hygienic support, only 22% could be attained. This is mainly due to COVID restrictions. It was estimated that a total of 1,905,391 ETB of income were generated by the beneficiaries. Forest landscape restoration and biodiversity conservation promoted. A check list of thematic areas that must be considered in evaluating FLR undertaking was produced, and using the same field assessment of selected EFD restoration sites was conducted. Establish permanent monitoring of landscapes to describe biodiversity and hydrology dynamics over time for various production systems.

According to feedback gathered during the field mission, the beneficiary was generally highly satisfactory 98.6% with the project performance. The issue of the extent to which the project was formulated according to the need and inters of all targeted is highly satisfactory by 100%. Given the quality outputs that have been delivered and that there is an indication of longer-term impact, the rating on effectiveness is Highly Satisfactory. The effectiveness of the project is summarized in Table 10.

**Table 10: Effectiveness measure of the project**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issues considered for measuring the effectiveness of the project | Level of effectiveness | Frequency | Percent | |
| 1. The extent to which the project's actual outcome was commensurate with what was planned | Highly Satisfactory | 24 | | 80.0 | |
| Satisfactory | 5 | | 16.7 | |
| Moderately satisfactory | 1 | | 3.3 | |
| 1. Areas in which the project had the greater and fewest achievements | Highly Satisfactory | 19 | | 63.3 | |
| Satisfactory | 11 | | 36.7 | |
| 1. The extent to which the intervention achieved | Highly Satisfactory | 23 | | 76.7 | |
| Satisfactory | 7 | | 23.3 | |
| 1. What is the extent to which the project contributes to gender equality, the empowerment of women, and human right based | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | | 100.0 | |
| 1. The extent tow which a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach | Highly Satisfactory | 20 | | 66.7 | |
| Satisfactory | 10 | | 33.3 | |
| 1. The extent to which the project was formulated according to the need and inters of all targeted | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | | 100.0 | |
| The cumulative average total score of the *project effectiveness* at “Highly Satisfactory level” in % | |  | | 98.6 | |

## **Efficiency**

The project was originally planned to start in September 2018. The actual start date was delayed, with the inception workshop being held in 2019, in Addis Ababa. Due to various reason delays that the project encountered, the project was closed in March 2023 instead of 2022, the official closure date. To allow for completion of project activities a no-cost extension was granted. The delays were mainly due to various constraints, including security and COVID-19 challenges among others to undertake field data collection and implementation of the project in selected woredas. Due to COVID-19 annual work plans were revised during activities of the component and were rescheduled accordingly. As noted earlier the project could accommodate COVID-19 in support of the provision of masks, sanitizer, and food items (maize and wheat, oil for the poor farmers in the area to cope with the challenges in the pandemic. Under the scenario of not being able to contain COVID-19 in the short term, more than half a million dollars has been repurposed from the SIDA-supported forestry projects. This resource is primarily targeted for awareness creation, hygienic facilities, and COVID-19-responsive livelihood activities at the project locations. All the 19 SIDA-supported project woredas in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali, and Tigray regions are supported by this plan and COVID-19 response activities have been implemented as per the plan. The COVID-19 responsive livelihood activities are planned to target vulnerable community members to offer economic relief as a result of worsening income conditions triggered by the pandemic. It will have the additional advantage to increase the post-COVID-19 resilience of the local communities. Otherwise, in general, the disbursements and project expenditures were in line with the planned budgets. The EFD director attended annual project evaluation meetings, and the guidance and assistance he provided for project implementation was highly appreciated by all the stakeholders. Please refer to the issues raised, and scores obtained as presented in Tables 11 and 12.

**Table 11. Financial summary metrics and additional time and budget sharing cause.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cer. No. | **Project interventions** | **Planned execution time** | **Delayed execution periods[[3]](#footnote-3)** |
| 1 | Start of the project implementation and forced change of focus areas | September 2018 | Inception 2019 |
| 2 | Closure of the project March | March 2022 | March 2023 |
| 3 | Inclusion of COVID-19 mitigating initiative | None was foreseen and planned at the onset of the project | awareness creation and hygienic facilities such as more than half a million dollars have been repurposed from the SIDA-supported forestry projects worth half a million dollars. |
| 4 | Planned and released budget even when additional activities are considered | ***US$ 3,991,448.00*** | ***[[4]](#footnote-4)US$ 2,166,541.86*** |

**Table 12: Efficiency Performance of the project**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issues considered in measuring the efficiency of the project | Level of performance | Frequency | Percent |
| 1. The extent to which there was an efficient and economic use of financial expenses and benefits | Highly Satisfactory | 21 | 70.0 |
| 1. Comparison of the project cost and benefits in the allocated time | Highly Satisfactory | 28 | 93.3 |
| 1. The extent to which the allocation of resources to the size and vulnerability of the targeted group was correlated | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | 100 |
| The cumulative average total efficiency score of the project impact at highly satisfactory” level in percent | |  | 87.67 |

In general, considering cumulative average efficiency variables used above for the beneficiary of the project survey, the project was generally found to be highly satisfactory by 87.6%. Project efficiency was measured in five levels of rating. These levels are: 1) Highly Satisfactory,2) Satisfactory, 3) moderately satisfactory, 4) moderately unsatisfactory, and 5) Unsatisfactory. The following are the issues raised by the respondents.

## **Sustainability of project outcomes**

Local authorities and communities have jointly implemented the activities with the project staff at the woreda level. Local authorities’ commitment up to the end of the project was commendable. In addition, there was better community ownership as they participated in the process of site selection, preparation, and implementation of the project activity. Different activities have been done to ensure that project activities are sustainable even after the phasing out of the projects. The major ones are: the projects closely worked with the government structure so that the government shares practices, experiences, and lessons from the project along with their implementation. Strong steering and technical committees are established at all levels and these committees have been involved in every step of the activities. These arrangements ensure that the government structures will take over the project activities after the phasing out and take it to wider scopes. Despite more that has to be done, cooperatives/CBOs of developers and alternative livelihood beneficiaries are established/empowered. The organization of developers to cooperatives gives strengths and increases their bargaining power so that they will sustain and evolve to the next organization's levels and processing stages. Value chain supported (small wood processing machines imported and being transferred and will be used as training and technology sharing centers).

The sustainability of the project is mainly attributed to the commitment by the community to keep the activities. For instance, in Sodo Gurage, the community members have taken ownership of the rehabilitated lands they established 8 committee members and developed by laws for the management of the resource. The community already understood the benefits of the project intervention. They started to gain rainwater, grass, shade, and crop production. To keep the project activity continued the project was working to create an understanding of the importance of the project output to the community for instance the frequent and availability of rainfalls, the introduction of wild animals, and climate change. And, the community developed bylaws to penalize those who encroach on the project intervention area. The following Table 9: shows the sustainability response of the beneficiary.

**Table 13: Table that depicts the sustainability of the project.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sustainability of the project and ownership of the communities | Level of performance | Frequency | Percent |
| 1. How has the project developed appropriate institutions capacity for Sustainability | Highly Satisfactory | 30 | 100 |
| 1. Is there sufficient public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? | Yes | 30 | 100 |
| The cumulative average total score of the project sustainability at excellent and level in percent | |  | 100 |

Overall, the sustainability of this project was found to be highly satisfactory by 100% of the respondent in terms of the project developed appropriate institutions' capacity for sustainability and stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project. Overall, the sustainability of this project is rated as highly satisfactory in a five-scoring (1-5) scale where: 1 = Poor; 2 = Less than Satisfactory; 3 = Good/Satisfactory; 4 = Very Good; and 5 = Excellent.

## **Impact of the projects**

In addition to the direct results of project activities, some very important impacts have already been observed in the project implementation districts. The evaluation process identified some worthy and promising impacts. Overall, in terms of the level of observed impacts or promising/potential impacts of the initiatives to contribute to creating awareness on rehabilitation activity of the degraded land.

* 1. Biodiversity improved: as a result of area closures created for Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) areas, plant species regenerated from the seed bank. Some of the restored plant species are: - *Albizia schimperiana*, *Croton macrostachyus*, *Dodonaea angustifolia*, *Acacia abyssinica*, *Juniperus procera*, *Olea africana*, *Grewia ferruginea*, *Maytenus arbutifolia*, *Allophylus abyssinicus*, *Erica arborea* etc. Wildlife restored: as a result of area closure created for Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) wild animals returned to the areas which were historically known to the area. Some of the returned wild animals are: *Spotted hyena, Leopard, common jakal, common bushback, diker, serval cat, Caracal* , etc

Farmers’ sources of income diversified and increased: For instance, in the Amhara region local communities gained 29,746,959 Birr from sheep and goat fattening and production, selling of eggs, production of fruits, grass collection, fuel-saving cook stove production, and wood harvesting. In Oromia, 1305 egg-laying chickens were distributed to 261 farmers. 29360 ETB obtained from selling eggs. 52 sheep and 52 goats were distributed to 26 and 52 farmers respectively for fattening and production purposes and farmers received an additional income of 312000 Birr from selling sheep and 312000 birr from goat production. Modern beehives have also been distributed to 60 honey producers and 180000 Birr have been obtained from selling honey.

The project introduced the production of tree seedlings with plastic bags with better management practices. Before the project intervention, the productions of tree seedlings were bare root. As a result of knowledge and skill transfer from the project to other nurseries in the project district, the quality of seedlings and thereby their survival has improved by 80%. In frost-prone areas, the survival of tree seedlings barely reaches 50%. The project introduced different pre and post-planting management practices to improve the survival of seedlings. One of the strategies used by the project to escape the worst frost period is planting seedlings around March and April. The second one is the construction of soil and water conservation structures, proper site selection i.e species site matching, standard pit preparation, early planting with healthy and vigorous seedlings, weeding and hoeing, application of compost and mulches, low thinning and pruning, avoiding free grazing, played a vital role for seedling survival and growth. As a result, the average seedling survival in project areas reached was greater than 85 %.

As part of the introduction of livelihood options by the project, modern beehives have been introduced. After the intervention, the amount of honey harvested from modern beehives has increased and reached 17 - 20 kg/hive/harvest. Before intervention traditional hives were used by communities and the amount of honey used to be harvested was between 4-5 kg/hive/harvest with 13-15 kg/hive/harvest improvement.

Construction of Schools in Sodo Gurage woreda, people generated additional money from their area closures by selling grasses, producing honey and cattle production, and fattening. As a result of improved community income from proper forest resource conservation, beneficiary communities have built 250,000 ETB worth of high schools which is the first of its kind in the area. Previously, children both boys and girls traveled to other towns when they joined high school causing additional expenses and even dropouts. This school has solved the problems and reduced the number of school dropouts.

Improved groundwater recharge: the downstream of ANR sites have their ground waters recharged by preventing surface runoff and improving the percolation rate of the soil. The recharge of ground waters has increased potable water for the people as well as their cattle and significantly reduced the women's and girls' time to fetch water. Conversion of private farmlands to commercial plantations encouraged: in the project sites, the project offices are receiving additional applications from farmers to get tree seedlings so that they can grow commercial forests by converting their farmlands into forest lands. This is also one of the preliminary signs of the sustainability of the project activities. In the Amhara region, 729 farmers converted 100.98ha of their farmlands to commercial tree plantations because of the positive influence of a neighbor who has benefited from commercial tree plantations.

The field-level interview showed that the impact of the project was like creating awareness in tree planting, and rehabilitation of degraded land, private nursery development, and soil and water conservation practices (Gabion, terrasse and bench terrace, Fanyajuu, fruit tree planting (Avocado) on their land, chicken rearing was not common before the project but after the intervention large number of farmers engaged in the chicken to use for sale and consumption. Honey production was started by the project to provide modern hives, nowadays the community started to have hives on their land for the production of honey. Please refer to the summary of the impact of the project in Table 10 below.

**Table 14: Table that depicts the impact of the project**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sub-variables that define the impact of the project cumulatively | Level of impact | Frequency | Percent |
| 1. Was the project relevant? | Yes | 30 | 100.0 |
| 1. Did the project contribute to a collaborative approach? | Yes | 30 | 100.0 |
| 1. Were the target group involved in setting priority | Yes | 30 | 100.0 |
| 1. Did the project contribute to the involvement of women and youth | Yes | 30 | 100.0 |
| 1. How do you rate project implementation | Excellent | 22 | 73.3 |
| Very good | 5 | 16.7 |
| Good | 3 | 10.0 |
| The cumulative average total score of the project impact at excellent and level in percent | | | 94.66% |

According to the result from our evaluation of four of the five issues, the respondents claim that they are highly satisfied (100%). Only one of the five issues that measure “How do you rate project implementation” scored highly satisfactory by 73.3%. The average cumulative relevance score in highly satisfactory level in 94.6%. Please refer to the issues raised and scores obtained as presented in Table 11 above.

## **Project Response gender issues**

Given the national challenges and the long way to go about ensuring gender balance, the project has contributed a lot by participating women and youth in different training, workshops, livelihood activities, and jobs. Among all the participants in the aforementioned activities of the project, the proportion of women was 41% (total 29313, Female 11,888) which is a good start in ensuring gender balance. The project has also researched “*Identifying opportunities and challenges for youth and women to engage in forest-based entrepreneurship in Ethiopia*” and “*Pro-poor bamboo value chain development*” and identified entry points to support and empower women in the forest entrepreneurship and bamboo value chains.

According to field-level interviews, the project supports women and youths. The women usually engaged in nursery sites, tree planting and soil and water conservation, provision of chicken (some of the women started with 20 chickens and now have sheep and even cattle, in the production of art for Injera bakery. The youth mainly engaged in tree planting, pitting a hole, and physical works in soil and water conservation activities. Further, the youth established a nursery and produce seedlings for sale in the communal land. The youth mainly engaged in tree planting, pitting a hole, physical works in soil, and water conservation activities. The project supports women and youths.

The nature of the project in accommodating gender issues was rated by using the results from the questionnaire interviews, scores obtained are presented in Table 15. Similar to other project performance evaluation variables, the project’s response in accommodating gender issues was measured in five levels of rating. These levels are: 1) Highly Satisfactory,2) Satisfactory, 3) moderately satisfactory, 4) moderately unsatisfactory, and 5)Unsatisfactory. The following are the issues raised to the project-beneficiary-respondents.

**Table 15: Sub-variables considered in judging the project performance in addressing gender issues in the project.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sensitivity of the project to gender issues | Level of equality | Frequency | Percent |
| 1. Contribution of the accommodation of gender in the project in advancing the project’s environment, climate, and/or resilience outcomes in % | Yes | 30 | 100 |
| 1. Existence of potential negative impact of the project activities on gender equality | Yes | 15 | 50 |
| 1. Contribution of the project in closing gender gaps | Highly Satisfactory | 29 | 96.7 |
| 1. Improving women’s ability for effective participation and decision-making | Highly Satisfactory | 29 | 96.7 |
| 1. Targeting women and youth in socio-economic benefits and services for women | Highly Satisfactory | 26 | 86.7 |
| The cumulative average total score of the project in responding to the gender issues at “Highly satisfactory level” in percent of total | | | 86.02 |

The result from our evaluation in four of the five issues was the average cumulative relevance score at a highly satisfactory level of 86.02%. Please refer to the issues raised and scores obtained as presented in Table 15 above.

## **Findings on the overall performance of the project**

Overall. The project performance is very good. The project could have easily scored less score when evaluated by targeting multiple stakeholders who could have exerted various, often different project execution modalities. The same could have become true for this project whose implementers covered training, research, and development that must have used different issue-specific implementation/use modalities.

As depicted in Table 16 below and referring to the cumulative percentage total score of the project is 94.9%. Only the cumulative percentage score of the relevance of the project to the communities scored 92.6 % and this is because of the area closure and prohibition of on-site grazing that forced the communities to reduce their livestock procession due to limited on-site grazing fields. We hope this may be remedied when lands that qualify for area closure are partitioned to individual households that implement every rehabilitation measure possible that quickens their recovery and becomes more productive that supports larger feedstock.

**Table 16: Sub-variables considered in judging the overall performance of the project.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Cumulative Project performance evaluation criteria | Cumulative total score |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project on the participatory nature of the project formulation in percent | 94.6 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project on the participatory nature of the project formulation in percent | 100 |
|  | The cumulative result of the project on result orienteers | 100 |
|  | The cumulative average total of the p***roject relevance score*** at a highly satisfactory level in % | 92.60 |
|  | Cumulative average total score of the ***project effectiveness*** of the project | 98.6 |
|  | Cumulative average total score of the ***project impact*** at excellent level in percent | 94.66 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project sustainability at excellent and level in percent | 100 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the ***project efficiency*** as rated in highly satisfactory” level in percent | 87.70 |
|  | The cumulative average total score of the project in “**accommodating gender concerns**” at a “Highly satisfactory level” in percent of total | 86.02 |
|  | **Grand cumulative total score from 100 percent (total of 854.18/900)** | **94.9** |

## **Assessment of monitoring and evaluation systems**

The monitoring and evaluation plan proposed in the project is adequate and allows for monitoring progress and results at the product level. The proposed objectively verifiable indicators and their sources of verification seem adequate to monitor progress. Moreover, the overall approach to monitoring progress and project evaluation in terms of activities and deliverables described in the project document is adequate and linked to project reporting, oversight, and governance. Following this, Project Steering Committees (PSC) are established at the Federal, Regional, and Woreda levels. The woreda steering committee chaired by the woreda administration chief closely follows reviews and approves the physical implementation and financial delivery of the project. Furthermore, regular quarterly meeting meetings chaired by the then Deputy Commissioner of EFD are being held regularly to review project implementation. In the quarterly meetings, all district administrators, project managers, and UNDP are participating. Regular field monitoring and evaluations are hugely affected by the onset of the COVID-19 public health crisis. Despite the Covid-19 challenge, tangible progress has been made by the national program coordination office in improving the overall M&E system with particular attention given to the improvement of the quality of the data, data management, and reporting. The physical monitoring and reporting by the project have improved but there is still more work to be done to ensure consistency in reporting system at lower levels. Moreover, the national Program Coordination office has established a continuous (every 15 days) telecommuting arrangement with both local and international stakeholders (UNDP, CIFOR, and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), WGCF-NR, EBI, and EEFRI).

## **Catalytic facilitation works and achievements**

The project has effectively catalyzed tree planting rehabilitation of degraded lands and soil and water conservation practices, especially on their farmlands, by way of extension, awareness creating. The rehabilitated areas are used for recreation, research, and educational field trip.

The project catalyzed sustainable and successful land management by creating awareness in tree planting, and rehabilitation of degraded land, private nursery development, and soil and water conservation practices (Gabion, various kinds of terrasse ), fruit tree planting (Avocado) on their land, chicken rearing, honey production by the provision of modern beehives,

The project’s lasting investment is the awareness created among the community in understanding that degraded land can be rehabilitated by enclosure and tree planting activities. The community has now started planting trees on their land, constructing water ponds, and introducing new species such as lie lowland bamboo, *Grevillea robusta* and fruit trees (Avocado), nursery establishment in their land, etc.

## **Status of the stakeholder’s involvement in the implementation of the project**

The project has involved different stakeholders including Government through the operating Ministries, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations. A wide representation of governmental partners collaborated proactively in the forestry project implementation.

There are steering committees from six sectors (Woreda Admin., Agric. Office., Youth and Women off., Woreda finance, ) that mainly follow up on the project implementation activities and support the project implementors. Further, monitor and evaluate the project in terms of the time and budget activity implementations. Similarly, there are technical committees from the same sectors that provide technical support to the project office while implementing the project in respective of their office responsibility.

UNDP woreda project office has served as the main/leading facilitation agency for project implementation. The project office from the agricultural office (forestry department) acted as a major partner. The other government offices that served as main partners are the Woreda Administrative Office, Woreda social affairs office, Woreda job-creation office, and Woreda women’s affairs office which served as partners for the forestry project’s implementation. The project is monitored and implemented by the steering committee and technical committee. The member of the steering committee is the head of the six mentioned above government offices. The woreda administrative has been the leader of the steering committee to follow up on the implementation of the project. They formed a steering committee and followed up on the proper implantation of the project and monitored the project activity plan, achievements, and budget usage.

## **The main challenges of the project**

Some of the challenges of the project are related to seedlings (low survival rate of seedlings, and transportation while planting), difficulty in getting the budget on time, and forcing the purchase of seeds after the planting season has passed, which forces us to buy seeds at an increased price.

Difficulty in convincing the community to get their communal land under area closure at least at an initial period. It has been hard work involving communities at the grass root level and sometimes there has been a lack of participation because of a lack of trust, and competing interests. Similarly, in the initial stage, the difficult task of coordinating meetings across the various sectors at all levels of governance was also challenging.

There is a limitation in forest associations to develop legal cooperatives. The cooperatives lack well-defined ownership, lack office, are not strong to bargain, are not established following the business model, and inclusiveness of the community (for instance in some areas they were established using the traditional EDIR, but entire members are only those who have established families not anyone above 14 years so, in that case, some societies are not being part of the entire.

The initial plan of the project finance was 22 million USD but only received 8 million USD. This was a challenge to properly conduct the stated activities in the project document. The forestry institutional re-arrangement as it was at the Ministry level when the project started then to the commission level and now to the Ethiopian forestry development under the Ministry of Agriculture.

## **The negative impact of the project intervention in the community?**

The project has prohibited free grazing,. Instead, it has encouraged the use of cut and carry system. However, this has become a serious challenge for the communities because it has forced households to shrink their large number of livestock into a few.

Due to the regeneration of the forest, the ire-emergence of wildlife such as the monkeys and the warthog has created destruction on crop production while the re-emergence of hyenas has created a problem on livestock rearing to the extent that it comes to the homestead.

# **Conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned**

## **Conclusions**

This project is highly relevant as Ethiopia pledged to rehabilitate 15 million hectares of degraded lands and 7 million hectares of forest by 2025 as part of the Bonn Challenge. The effectiveness of the project is considered highly satisfactory. The activities implemented indeed have shown a positive change in the lives and livelihoods of target communities and reduced the level of vulnerabilities of targeted communities in enhancing the availability of rainfall and reducing soil erosion. Despite the COVID-19 impact to conduct the project accordingly, the project accomplished most of its activities, and the qualities of the project outputs were found to be good and encouraging to realize the intended purpose and objective.

The approach originally agreed upon by stakeholders was adopted for the implementation of the project. At a national level, the coordination and supervision of activities were satisfactorily done by UNDP. Active involvement of national stakeholders in all the project activities contributed to high ownership and successful delivery of outputs.

The project has been successful in its implementation. Achievements on targeted activities and approaches are at a highly satisfactory level. The facilitation (catalytic) approach was very good. The effort made in training and building the capacity of the project owners/beneficiaries was a very good approach. Most of the activities that have been planned are executed successfully.

It has been reported that the project had been facing a serious challenge that it has overcome over time. It is usual when one introduces a new approach in land management especially on privately owned lands and on lands of communal use. The same has happened to the project implementation. What is rewarding here is the project has solved the problems and managed to facilitate the implementation of activities at a “highly satisfactory” level.

Great effort is made to guarantee the continuity of the achievements made after the project's lifetime ceases. The establishment of resident committees at steering, technical, and community levels would guarantee the continuity of the project's success.

In Ethiopia, agriculture and livestock are inseparable life components of the rural farming communities. Farmers use their livestock for manipulation of the land and bringing their livelihood income when cropping fails. Therefore, the issues related to livestock keeping must have been addressed more than feeding in the cut-and-carry system. To this effect, we realize that the major factor in the continued success and sustainability of the project rests on finding alternatives on feeding their livestock. The project beneficiaries report that the major drawback of the is the fact that:

* The project prohibits free grazing. Instead, it has encouraged to use of cut and carry system. This has become a serious challenge because those households have to reduce their large number of livestock to very few.
* Due to the regeneration of the forest, the ire-emergence of wildlife such as the monkeys and the warthog has created destruction on crop production while the re-emergence of hyenas has created a problem on livestock rearing to the extent that it comes to the homestead.

Had the project not been terminated, remedying this problem could have become a sub-project by itself. Please refer to the recommendations of this evaluation report discussed earlier. The project has been very important and was planned by the engagement of decision-makers, knowledge brokers, facilitation organizations, donors, and beneficiaries jointly. Creating and engaging a steering committee, technical committee, grassroots beneficiaries, and training in mindset change and know-how, is an important model for conducting integrated development. This is an important model that has exhibited project performance at a “Highly satisfactory” level.

The approach that the project considered in bringing all the important project actors or partners together in a binding agreement is equally appreciable. However, if this project is to be replicated a million times, it is necessary to have a strong and continued bondage between these partnering actors. The fact that has happened in Gurage Sodo, where there was an absence of either one of the partners and the untimely release of funds needs to be avoided.

It is also possible to conclude that no new technology is used in both land rehabilitation and afforestation methods and approaches of the project. The same kinds of terraces, seedling-raising methods, and planting techniques are reported. As a result, there is a tendency towards using, at large part, exotic species instead of indigenous trees and shrubs.

## **Recommendations**

Data and information that we have gotten from literature reviews, key informant interviews, and focus-group discussants have indicated that several project elements are implanted at a ***highly satisfactory***” level. In addition, the success rate of achievements of the project on quantitatively planned interventions is reported to be over 90 percent (There is no doubt that the project has been successful in executing what it had been planned).

However, our findings on ‘the negative impact of the project in the community” and “the main challenges of the project to the community”, the future is worrisome on the sustainability of the project. The concerns emanate from two sources: 1) prohibition of onsite grazing and the reemergence of predators to their livestock and crop from the rehabilitated lands. In these regards, we would like to recommend a few additional approaches and interventions for whoever is to consider the case in the future for+ adding value to the achievements of this project.

* Rehabilitation through area closure alone is a slow process that challenges the beneficiaries. Unless one keeps a paid guard (which is impossible at the agrarian community level), defaulters will likely conduct on-site-grazing in the future especially after the project financing terminates. They may even decide communally to have on-site grazing. This is what was the case for ages before. Instead, the project may quicken the rehabilitation and productivity of the area closed from on-site grazing by seeding/planting by way of the “reach the viable spot” approach. One best alternative could be allocating the lands to individual farmers by letting the group have bylaws that each could be responsible for avoiding defaulting. Please refer to Bekele-Tesemma A. 1997[[5]](#footnote-5). The formerly degraded Tikurso watershed, which was being guarded by paid guards in the name of area closure, is partitioned to every land user by removing the paid guards and managed by the landowners who are signatories to communally approved safeguarding bylaws that guarantee healthy co-existence between the land and the beneficiary people..
* The other alternative could be to include a sub-project that deals with livestock feed production and management. It is a pity that such an approach had not been in use in Ethiopia everywhere. Ethiopian farmers are known for keeping much livestock but with meager/inferior feed resources. Most of the feed is dry crop residue mainly teff. Production of livestock feed such as hay and silage has not been considered. This is why livestock keeping remained under a free-roaming and grazing system. If the success of such projects has to continue unchallenged, this segment needs to be considered anew. When this project becomes operational, farmers will have enough feed for their livestock that can be kept in their shelters. The problem of hyenas and others such as leopards to their goats and sheep will be solved if the feed is secured.
* The other problem which has been challenging Ethiopia at large emanates from the absence of an integrated land use plan. This is not to say that the project did not use land development planning by the name of LUP. However, had there been integrated land use and development plan, crop farming could not have been practiced in degraded watersheds that are put under area closure? Therefore, one basic project component would have become conducting integrated land use planning that must have prescribed land uses in consideration of addressing environmental sustainability, social acceptability, and economic viability at the same time. lands allocated for reforestation of degraded lands and steep slopes could have been allocated for wildlife sanctuaries where baboons and warthogs could not have become a problem. Crop cultivation could not have been practiced there; alternative land uses that can sustainably contribute to economic benefits could be sought.
* At the same time, from the discussions with project beneficiaries and facilitators, it was easy to assume that entrepreneurship training could benefit the project beneficiaries at large.

## **Lessons learned and suggested future actions.**

1. Starting awareness creation to the communities, building the capacity of the beneficiaries, providing training in land management and land rehabilitation know-how, and creating facilitatory organs such as steering committees, and technical committees down to Kebele level, are very important for catalyzing land rehabilitation and production initiatives effectively, especially in the Ethiopian setting. Supporting organized individuals within the rural communities and establishing innovation facilitation organs could create weaning precedence in land rehabilitation and reforestation from which multiple benefits could be realized. Such efforts would result in important lessons for advancing large-scale and value-added forest development that may involve agrarian communities. Therefore, future donor support may be tailored to include improved land-husbandry from which multiple and inter-related benefits could be obtained.
2. The other lesson learned from the project evaluation is the complexity of rural development that each need to be addressed both jointly and separately. Had the project been implemented on lands that are examined and appropriated regarding addressing economic, social, and environmental benefits at equal footing (through an integrated land use plan), the farmers would have not been there to grow crops along with rehabilitated forests that harbor baboons and other livestock predators. To this effect, we assume that the future funding by Sida and facilitation by UNDP would focus on integrated land use planning in all the districts where the projects are to be implemented.
3. The third lesson learned is the fact that beneficiaries in the farming communities lack training in basic skills such as even small-scale logging and sawmilling. This has become an issue to the extent that sawmills that can process the largely and commonly available Eucalyptus species are given to government-affiliated forest enterprises and government-owned training institutions instead of directly to the communities. To this effect, we highly recommend that organizing the youth and training them in forest processing skills, and providing them with jump-start funds may be the focus of future funding by Sida.
4. The fourth lesson that came out of the project intervention was the fact that the intention of the project which wished to intensify the commercialization of forests and contribute to the food-security agenda could be exemplary. The project wished to prove that food security could be won better through the assurance of having economic access to food by private individuals who grow, process, and market trees and their products as opposed to producing food itself. The evaluation team has learned that such an approach was meant to be tested as a weaning strategy to be followed in this UNDP-facilitated Sida-funded project. Unfortunately, this did not work because there is no clear strategy by which organized private individuals could be made beneficiaries of the funding and material support.. As a result, the project-purchased wood processing sawmills remained to be in the hands of government-affiliated institutions that cannot process wood for marketing but use them for training and research. To this effect, the evaluation team strongly suggests that the future focus of the Sida-funding shall be spent on the development of a strategy by which educated jobless individuals could be given 1) tailored training, 2) become organized as wood processing entrepreneurs, and 3) be given jumpstart fund for processing and adding value to the trees that are being grown by individual farmers. The evaluation team strongly believes that exemplary forest enterprising and effective land-husbandry business models could be born from such efforts.
5. As much as there are many areas where very good site-species matching is observed, there are also sites where such matching is violated. It was not the mandate of this evaluation team to study and report why this happened. However, our educated guess is that seedlings raised in nurseries were not raised for sites and end-uses that are known in advance. We strongly recommend that types of species to be raised in tree nurseries need to be decided based on who needs them, where, and for what purpose.

# **Annexes:**

**Annex 1. *Name of responsible parties’ interviewed*.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of the interviewee | Organization |
| Ato Elmi Nure | Royal Sweden Embassy |
| Dr Habte Mariam Kassa and Dr Abdu Abdulkadir | CIFOR |
| Ato Ababu Anage | UNDP |
| Dr Kibruyesfa Sisay | UNDP/EFD |
| Dr Mesele Negash | WGCF-NR |
| Dr Erik Karltun | SLU |
| Dr Karl-Erik Johansson | SLU |

**Annex 2.** ***Key Informant Interview and FGD members involved in the evaluation process in the two sample Woredas.***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Key Informant Interviewees** | **Morab-Abaya** | **Sodo Gurage** |  | |
| 1. Tarekegne Shenkut |  | „ „ | Agricultural officer | |
| 1. Likensh Kebede |  | „ „ | Youth and women office | |
| 1. Feleke Shimeket |  | „ „ | Women and youth job creation office | |
| 1. Tariku Shiferaw |  | „ „ | Key informant | |
| 1. Adugna Tsege |  | „ „ | Key informant | |
| 1. Adugna Tsege |  | „ „ | Key informant | |
| 1. Deginet Chernet |  | „ „ | Key informant | |
| 1. Adugna Tsige |  | „ „ | Key informant | |
| 1. Million Amare |  | „ „ | Forestry expert | |
| 1. Bezabih Zewde |  | „ „ | Project Coordinator | |
| 1. Memihire | „ „ |  | Forestry expert of the project | |
| 1. Temesgen Balta | „ „ |  | Woreda Finance head/ | |
| 1. Ayafera | „ „ |  | Forestry expert of the project | |
| 1. Teramaje | „ „ |  | Project coordinator of the Woreda | |
| 1. Yohannes/ | „ „ |  | Job creation | |
| 1. Memhere | „ „ |  | Forestry expert of the project | |
| **Focus Group Discussants** | | | | |
| **Women Focus Group Discussants** | | | |  |
| 1. Shege Tesfaye; |  | „ „ | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Fasika Taye |  | „ „ | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Bayush Admasu, |  | „ „ | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Beletu Belay |  | „ „ | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. **Men Focus Group discussants** | | | | |
| 1. Gericho Aman, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Legese Jember, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Medefin Fiseha, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Anbesa Gesses, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Asefa Belete | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Belesho Mena, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Wogaso Shenka, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Kebede Kasato, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Wardo Wana, | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |
| 1. Demsie Tina | „ „ |  | Focus Group Discussants | |

**Annex 3: *General investigative tools modified and used as they fit to different tools (KII, FGD and QI)***

The investigative tools include focus-group discussion checklists and key-informant interviews. In addition, there will be important feedback from workshop presentations and comment from the draft report to be submitted. The checklist for the key-informant interviews, focus group discussion and household-level questionnaires for interviewing the project beneficiaries is given below.

**Checklist for key informants**

**Relevance**

1. Were the planned interventions relevant to the priority needs of the beneficiaries? Did the project do the right activities?
2. To what extent are the objectives, planned activities, and planned outputs of the program consistent with the intended outcomes and impacts?
3. To what extent gender aspects and the separate needs of women and men were considered in the program design and minority groups in the implementation process?
4. What major challenges were you faced during the project implementation?
5. What lessons can be learned from the project implementation?

**Coherence**

1. To what extent do the project interventions have linkage and integration with other stakeholders?
2. To what extent the project interventions were consistent with other actors’ interventions in the same context?
3. Has the communication/ collaboration between the EFD, UNDP and the donor been adequate?

**Efficiency**

1. To what extent planned activities of the project have been delivered? Were there any delays in activity implementation?
2. Were the input supports received by the beneficiaries adequate?
3. Was the training support adequate, appropriate, and delivered on time?
4. How would you rate the overall efficiency of the project? What factors facilitated/hindered this?

**Effectiveness**

1. To what extent were the objectives achieved/are likely to be achieved?
2. What is a positive outcome of the women's traning in leadership skills and self-confidence development of women in the project area? What are the community perception and attitudinal changes towards the changes in the women's roles?
3. What is the short or medium-term (intended and/or unintended) outcome of the project?
4. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

**Impact**

1. What has changed as a result of the project intervention? (Intended and unintended impacts, capacity building, catalyzing forest sector development, improvement of social and economic condition, poverty reduction, cross-sector impact, or other relevant cross-cutting issues).
2. What is the significant difference has the project brought about for the social, economic, and healthy lives of the beneficiaries?
3. How many people have been affected?

**Sustainability**

1. To what extent will the positive impacts or changes of the program (are likely to) continue to be sustained?
2. Which measures should be maintained to support sustainability?
3. To what extent community knowledge and capacity is enhanced?
4. To what extent the program intervention is institutionalized and to what extent builds the local institution's capacity building to run the project after the departure of the field project officer?
5. What is the relevant stakeholder engagement in the project implementation?
6. What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of set project outcomes?
7. How far has the project assisted in the creation/strengthening of local structures, (formal and informal)?
8. Have adequate techniques for project activities been identified, promoted, and transferred?
9. How does the project fit and contribute to local/regional planning and other development efforts?

**Cross-cutting Issues**

1. To what extent gender aspects and the separate needs of women, men, and other key stakeholders were considered in the project design and implementation process?
2. To what extent did the gender-sensitive approach impact the differing needs and priorities of gender groups?
3. Have environmental factors been considered adequately in the project design? Were mitigation measures put in place?
4. To what extent and how are we delivering appropriate and effective strategies for persons with disability?

**The checklist used for Focus Group Discussion (FGD )**

Could you please tell us what were your problemsbefore receiving support (capacity building, training) from the project?

Could you please tell us about your interactions with the projects and the support that you received from the project?

Was the project design appropriate in your area?

What do you think of the support that you have received as part of the project? Have you participated in training on women empowerment in forest sector development, forest products production?

Did the project contribute to greater involvement of women and youth in conflict prevention and mitigation?

To what extent are you benefited from the community capacity development activities of the project? In what activities did you participate?

In what way did the ISCFSD project benefit you?

What has changed in your life/activity as a result of the project?

What other changes did you witness in your community as a result of the project?

Did the project contribute to increased collaboration between local communities and local institutions due to project activities?

What would have happened without the project?

Are there any negative effects of the project on your community?

Did communities consider that the project had a positive impact on the forest development in the area?

Do you think that you will be able to maintain the positive results brought about by the project?

**Beneficiaries' household survey questionnaire**

**General Background:**

1. Questionnaire No: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Survey area: Woreda/Kebele \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Age:\_\_\_\_ Sex:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Family size of the household: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Educational level of the respondent and schooling years attained\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Marital status 1) Single 2) Married 3) Widowed 4) Separate
8. Occupation?..............................................
9. Household income last year? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Issue 1 :** effective **Project Formulation issues (6)**

1. Was the Project design relevant for your area? 1. Yes 2. No
2. How were the target groups involved in setting priorities for the Project? Were all subgroups (sex, ethnicity, production modes, age) included in a participatory processes? 1. Yes 2. No
3. Did the Project contribute to increased collaborative capacities within and between communities? 1. Yes 2. No
4. Did the Project contribute to the greater involvement of women and youth in tree planning and decision-making? 1. Yes 2. No
5. What were the challenges in the project formulation and lessons learned?
   1. ............................................................................................................................
   2. ............................................................................................................................
   3. ............................................................................................................................
6. What is your overall assessment of UNDP'S involvement in this Project? ..................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................

**Issue 1I:** **Project Implementation (5)**

1. How do you rate the project implementation? 1: Excellent. 2: Very good. 3: Good. 4: Not good. 5: Bad
2. Please list: (i) What went well with the project implementation arrangements (strengths) ………………………………………,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

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1. What didn't work well with project implementation arrangements (weaknesses)

Please list:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Are the budget and work plan appropriate for the goals of the Project? And have they been effective? 1. Yes 2. No
2. What were the constraints, challenges, delays, and difficulties in project implementation?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………….

**Issue III: Project result (5)**

1. Do you think the Project achieved its Outcomes and Outputs?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. How well has the catalyzing Project achieved capacity building?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. How well has catalyzing been intergraded into policies and decision making in your area?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. What has been the most valuable result(s) of the catalyzing Project?

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1. How effective has the project coordination and communication been with relevant stakeholders?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Issue IV: Project Relevance (5)**

* 1. The extent to which the Project's objectives were in line with the national development priorities

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU),2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

* 1. The Extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

* 1. The Extent to which the Project was formulated according to national and local strategies to advance gender equality.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

* 1. The Extent to which relevant stakeholders participated in the Project.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

* 1. The extent to which the Project was formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted and/or relevant stakeholder groups

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Issue V: Project Effectiveness (8)**

1. The Extent to which the Project contributed to the country program outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities; and factors that contributed to the achieving or not achieving intended outcomes and outputs?
2. The Extent to which the Project's actual outcomes/outputs were commensurate with what was planned.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. Areas in which the Project had the greatest and fewest achievements; and the contributing factors;

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. The Extent to which the intervention achieved, or expects to achieve, results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts, including global environmental benefits), taking into account the key factors that influenced the results;

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. Constraining factors, such as socioeconomic, political, and environmental risks; cultural and religious festivals, etc. and how they were overcome; ……………………………………………………………………………………………..
2. Any alternative strategies that would have been more effective in achieving the Project's objectives; ……………………………………………………………………………
3. What is the Extent to which the Project contributes to gender equality, the empowerment of women and a human rights-based approach?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. The Extent to which a gender responsive and human rights-based approach were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Issue VI: Project Efficiency (3)**

1. The Extent to which there was an efficient and economical use of financial and human resources and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) to achieve outcomes.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. Comparison of the project cost and time versus output/outcomes equation to that of similar projects.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. The Extent to which the allocation of resources to targeted groups takes into account the need to prioritize those most marginalized.

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Issue VII: Project Sustainability (4)**

1. What is the risk level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) on sustainable continuity of the project outcomes/benefits? ………………………………………………

……………………………………………………

1. Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? What can undermine the longevity of project outcomes?.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................
2. Is there sufficient public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the Project? 1. Yes 2 No
3. How has the Project developed appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?
   1. 6=Highly Satisfactory , 5=Satisfactory , 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Issue VIII: Project status in responding to Gender Issues (5)**

1. Did the Project contribute to gender results advanced or contributed to the Project's environment, climate and /or resilience outcomes? 1. Yes 2 No
2. Is there any potential negative impact on gender equality and women's empowerment? 1. Yes 2 No If so, what can mitigate this? …………………………………………….
3. Are they contributing to closing gender gaps in access to and control over resources?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance;

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (

MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

1. Are they targeting socioeconomic benefits and services for women?

6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

**Annex 4: ToR of the terminal evaluation**

**ETHIOPIA**

TERM OF REFERENCE (ToR)

FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTOR (IC)

**GENERAL INFORMAION**

**Services/Work Description:** Recruitment of individual consultants for terminal evaluation of the institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project

**Project/Program Title:** Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development

**Post Title:** **1 National Consultant**

Group of Individuals and/or Firms are not eligible for this consultancy assignment (only for individual level application**)**

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

**Duty Station:** Addis Ababa

**Duration:** 45 working days distributed over 2 months

**Expected Start Date:** November 1st 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 in-crease 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 re-sources 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 prod-ducts (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; vii) 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 2019-2022.

**The Overall objective of the project** is to strengthen the capacity of the then Ethiopian Environment Forestry and Climate Change, and the current Ethiopian Forestry Development 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 Environment Forest and Climate Change Commission and its equivalent at regions l 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 31st December 2022 by Ministry of Finance.

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

* Institutional capacity of the forest sector is strengthened at all levels
* Creating multi-functional landscapes in rural and urban areas created,

**The Specific Project Objectives are**:

* Strengthen government capacity and spearhead implementation of the ten years national program

**GEOGRAPHIC AND BENEFICIARY TARGETING**

The project has been implemented in 19 pilot districts selected from Amhara; Tigray, SNNP, Oromia, Benshangul Gumuz and Somali 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.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PROJECT INFORMATION | | |
| **Project title** | Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development | |
| **Atlas ID** |  | |
| **Corporate outcome and output** | The complimentary out puts of the project are:   * Enabling environment for strong forest sector delivery enhanced. * Sustainable forest production promoted * Forest Ecosystem Services enhanced * Model environmental stewardship fostered in selected urban areas | |
| **Country** | Ethiopia | |
| **Date project document signed** | 24/10/2018 | |
| **Project dates** | **Start** | **Planned end** |
| 01/01/2019 | 31 Dec 2022 |
| **Project budget** | $8.7m and $1.25m contributed by SIDA and UNDP respectively. | |
| **Funding source** | Sweden and UNDP | |
| **Implementing party** | UNDP and EFD | |

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

1. 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 ISCDP has partially funded a program called “A programmatic approach to beautifying Sheger through sustainable urbanization and urban resilience” that aims at supporting implementation of the prime minister initiative “Beautifying Sheger Project” through human and institutional capacity building and an integrated urban planning and watershed management approach. The evaluation will therefore include assessment of gaps, performance, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for the project. This project has been under implementation since 2020 with USD 2 Million budget in Addis Ababa. Two TE reports are expected to be produced by the consultants one each for ISCFSDP and Beautifying Sheger Project.

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 ISCFSDP from January 2019 to December 2022. The scope of the evaluation will focus on examining the ISCFSDP and Beautifying Sheger Projects 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 and to the beautification of Addis Ababa. The scope of the program evaluation will cover all interventions of the projects planned to be implemented during the project phases. 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) of both projects,
* Visit some of the projects’ 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 programs including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Projects 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 projects/TOCs and the associated risks and assumptions
* Gender considerations mainstreamed and had been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project.
* The reports must include a chapter providing a set of conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. Conclusions 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.

1. **APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

The terminal evaluation of the projects 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 projects performance and to make recommendations. The evaluations must follow participatory approach whereby discussions with and surveys of key stakeholders provide/verify the substance of the findings. The Evaluators should review the projects’ theory of change, and the programming logic.

The TEs are expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Teams, government counterparts (the Ethiopian Forestry Development; relevant regional and woreda bureaus in Amhara, SNNP and Tigray; Addis Ababa City Municipality-Mega Projects Implementation Office; the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP, the Norwegian and Sweden Embassies as well as beneficiaries.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to successful TEs. 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, Catalyzing Project Steering Committee, local communities etc. Additionally, the TEs team is expected to conduct field missions in selected 4 woredas and Addis Ababa.

Two TE reports are expected to be produced by the consultants one each for ISCFSDP and Beautifying Sheger Project. The final TEs report should describe the full TEs 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 TEs 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. 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 workplans, 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,

1. **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
* To what extent did project achieve its envisioned outcomes/outputs contribute to the project’s strategic vision?
* To what extend did the project mainstreamed a gender dimension and support gender-responsive programming?
* 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?
* To what extent were the objectives achieved or are likely to be  
  achieved contribute to the country Programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

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 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?
  + Are there any financial and political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs?
  + To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained
  + 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 was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results.
* Review to what extent the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective have.
* 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
* Were the projects financially and/or programmatically catalytic?
* Have the projects funding been used to scale-up other forestry and city beautification initiatives?

GENDER**:**

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

1. This includes 16 at woreda level, and 7 consortiums of project implementers [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please note that there was no environmental stewardship fostered by the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Please note that the delay was due to the inclusion of additional interventions that caused execution delays and crowded the originally planned interventions because of unplanned reallocation of budget time for accommodating unplanned project interventions**.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This budget difference between what was planned and what is released is **US$ 1,824,906.14** [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bekele-Tesemma, A. A participatory Agroforestry Approach for Soil abnd Water Cionservation in Ethiopia. Tropical resources management papers # 17. Wageningen, The Netherlands. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)