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The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program in Ethiopia (ETH-13/0021 and Addendum No.1)



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Reporting period: July 2015-June 2018

National Program Coordination Office, MEFCC

Addis Ababa

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Acronyms

CRGE	Climate Resilient Green economy
REDD+	Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest degradation
NFSDP	National Forest Sector Development Program
FSDP	Forest Sector Development Program
MEFCC	Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change
MoFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation
GTPII	Growth and Transformation Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
A/R	Afforestation and Reforestation
EEFRI	Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute
NPC	National Program Coordination

Executive Summary

The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program of Ethiopia is designed to support such capacity building efforts and has been co-funded by Norway, Sweden, UNDP, and Government of Ethiopia. The overall objective of this program is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTPII and CRGE Strategy.

At the national level, the project mainly concentrated on institutional capacity building as well as in developing roadmaps dealing with the forest sector strategies and action programs. The program has undertaken excellent review on best practices in the country and elsewhere to design a national forest sector development program. This is followed by regional action programs for all regional states and city administrations. At regional level, the program has concentrated on piloting model afforestation and reforestation (A/R) programs through short rotation plantation or assisted natural regeneration (ANR) practices.

In general, the "Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program of Ethiopia" has effectively achieved several of the expected results. Recently, the overall performance of the program has been reviewed by external experts and substantial success is reported in achieving its targets with the participation of multiple stakeholders while using a flexible approach to implementation. The achievements both at strategic and piloting levels have gained trust to be a showcase for scaling-up and horizontal exchanges to other similar government efforts on afforestation and reforestation activities. Farmers are getting interested and supported to expand similar activities on their own private land holdings in various ways. The program has been very successful in engaging with local actors (beneficiaries as well as government authorities at various levels). Strong government and community ownership on the ANR and A/R initiatives is expected to be sustained when the Project phases out. Local bylaws and ownership certification system have been established at site level to increase local ownership with direct implication on sustainability. As this project has been designed to be result based, national strategic documents have been prepared and well over 140,000 hectares of land have been covered with either new plantations (average survival rate of 77.4%) or managed with ANR. So far, the entire exercise at local level was translated into important outcomes of increased employment, income generation while arresting land degradation and reducing greenhouse gas emission; the main targets in the

GTPII. The program will also contribute to biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation efforts of the country.

Moreover, piloting model afforestation and rehabilitation approaches has been critically important for learning and future scaling up to other areas in the country including through the private sector. The level of commitment by field experts, participation of stakeholders at various levels and the leadership provided for the project implementation has been encouraging.

This report covers achievements from July 2015 to June 2018. Considering the existing progress of implementation during the reporting period, the program is well positioned to deliver the outcomes envisaged in the program design over time. However, the program is facing some implementation regress due to delay in budget release, high staff turnover, frost and drought challenges. Moreover, large number of activities are targeted to be achieved over a brief three-year period, posing stretch beyond capacities on the ground. Sustaining the existing momentum of financial and technical support throughout the project period will be vital to achieve the envisaged outcome.

Project information table

Program title	Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia
Program	ETH-13/0021 and Addendum No.1
Executing	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Reporting	July 2015 – June 2018
Program	2015-2019
Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Total Program Budget required: USD22,464,942○ Budget secured<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Norwegian Government through UNDP and the CRGE Facility \$10,600,000● UNDP: \$1,400,000● Swedish Government 6,400,000○ Unfunded budget: \$2,814,942○ In-Kind contributions from the Government: \$ 1,250,000

1. Introduction

Deforestation and unsustainable land management practices in Ethiopia are causing significant environmental and socio-economic problems, including soil erosion, loss of soil fertility and associated loss of crop productivity, flooding, sedimentation of water courses and dams, loss of carbon and biodiversity assets. Even then, Ethiopia continues to show strong commitment and leadership to grow greener by creating resilient landscapes. This is confirmed by designing and implementing Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy embedded under its growth and transformation plan (GTPII). The forest sector has got important focus in the national strategy and has a mandated institution for it. However, the new institution requires capacity building activities at all levels.

The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program of Ethiopia was designed for a period of 5 years and has been partially co-funded by Norway, Sweden, UNDP, and Government of Ethiopia. The program is designed to contribute towards reversing such negative effects through institutional capacity building and piloting activities. The program is targeted to achieve its goals through strong commitment of the Government of Ethiopia and the involvement of key stakeholders, in particular the local communities.

Component I and V of the program aims at strengthening the institutional capacity; including the capacity of the research and education system of the sector. Component II aims at creating afforestation and reforestation models at nine pilot projects woredas for demonstrating sustainable forest landscape restoration practices in the degraded areas of the three regional States of Ethiopia. Component III aims at promotion of broad-based stakeholder engagement in forest conservation and development while component IV aims at promoting the role of the private sector in forest development.

The “Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development Program” was officially launched in October 2015 and represents a key investment program initially funded by the Royal Norwegian Government through the UNDP and CRGE Facility of Ethiopia and later supported by the Swedish Government through UNDP. The main implementing institution of this program is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Ethiopia in collaboration with UNDP.

This progress report of the program is prepared based on field assessments and report compilation from pilot areas, regional coordination offices and the National Program Coordination Office (NPCO). Evaluation has been made against the targets indicated in the project documents. This report presented a brief account of the achievements since July 2015 and the progress made until June 2018.

Program Components and Planned budget

Components	Planned Budget (USD)	Funding source
Component 1: Strengthening Institutional capacity of the forest sector	4,668,374	Norway, Sweden, UNDP
Component II. Piloting forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits in selected areas,	8,544,125	Norway, Sweden, Government of Ethiopia in-kind
Component III. Strengthening private sector involvement in forest development	608,500	Norway, Sweden
Component IV. Promotion of broad-based stakeholder engagement in forest conservation and development,	872,000	Norway, Sweden
Component V. Strengthening science and innovation in the forest sector	1,627,000	Norway, Sweden
Project management and Admin	2,430,001	Norway, Sweden, UNDP, Government of Ethiopia in-kind
Total	18,750,000	

1.1 Objective of the Program

The overall objective of this program is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTPII and CRGE.

1.2 Components of the Program

As stated, the program has five main components. It is expected that the implementation of the outputs of these components will result in the outcomes of the intervention:

- i. Institutional capacity development;
- ii. Forest development for multiple benefits;

- iii. Private sector engagement;
- iv. Stakeholder engagement; and
- v. Strengthening Science and Innovation.

1.3 Duration of the Program

The overall program duration is from 2015-2019. However, Norwegian funding support is secured for the first 2-3 years. The Swedish Government has provided additional funding to support the implementation of the program up-until 2020. Mobilization of additional finance is still required for the remaining targets as per the original program design. There are positive feedbacks from the recent Mid-Term-Review (MTR) to further support the implementation of the next phase of the program.

1.4 Program Target Areas

Capacity building is planned for the forest sector at all levels in all regions while piloting forest conservation and management will be made in selected areas of the degraded areas of Tigray, Amhara and SNNPR National Regional States.

2. Implementation arrangement

The lead organization for the implementation of this program is MEFCC technically supported by the UNDP. MoFEC, UNDP, the Norwegian Embassy, the Swedish Embassy together with MEFCC are expected to conduct joint monitoring and evaluation of the program. Technical and administrative bodies at regional and local level are also responsible for the implementation, monitoring and follow up of the program execution on regular basis. The project will be monitored based on the Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines of the CRGE Facility and the MEFCC. Nine project offices are opened in the selected project woredas and these offices are linked with the National Program coordination office through the regional REDD+ coordination offices. The overall guidance of the project implementation is provided by a Steering Committee while at District level there is additional technical committee, which provides technical guidance including quality assurance for each project activity on the ground.

3. Implementation status

Ethiopia continues to show strong commitment for projects in the green sector and this demonstrates the country's global leadership on resilient landscapes. The regional states of Amhara; Tigray; Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) are equally committed to support the project implementation, except delays in achieving interim targets for this fiscal year also due to the civil unrest in the country that made it difficult to intensify, supervise and monitor implementation in the field.

Summary of the project key output-based achievements are presented below.

3.1 Preparatory phases;

Despite the delay in the inception of the program, commendable progress has been achieved in advancing the preparatory activities required to fast-track the program implementation. This includes: (i) feasibility study; (ii) inception workshop; (iii) project pilot area selection; and (iv) awareness creation at various levels. The details of each of these inception phase activities was presented in the previous reports.

3.2 Output I: strengthening the institutional capacity of the forest sector

As a baseline, the Ministry has limited capacity at all levels with outdated action program and poor database infrastructure in the forestry sector. Therefore, activities under this output focused to strengthen national and regional implementation capacity at strategic and functional levels in order to realize the forestry target contained in the GTPII and CRGE.

At the national level, the program mainly concentrated on strategic engagements and institutional capacity building as well as in developing roadmaps and data base facilities. Accordingly, three volume documents is prepared on the National Forest Sector Development Program that can serve as a road map for the next ten years. Firstly, a very good situation analysis report is prepared on gaps, opportunities and challenges. Secondly, recommendations are formulated with major pillars and action programs. Finally, a synthesis report is prepared with summarized information and investment options.

In order to provide implementation impetus for the National documents mainstreaming has been the focus. In the next phase, mainstreaming these national documents to regional circumstances

and respective capabilities is required. Therefore, the program now has initiated the preparation of similar action program documents for each region. These strategic documents, if implemented properly, will elevate the forestry sector, its production systems and landscapes to be more vibrant and economically and environmentally feasible.

National and Regional forestry data-base infrastructure is lacking, and the sector suffers from forestry related data fragmentation and inconsistency. Regions should have facilities to keep, avail and process forestry related data for future forest conservation and development planning. This will further help to make the forestry institutions at various levels to be information centers and training hubs. Therefore, local data-base infrastructure was planned to be established for regions and the federal ministry. Accordingly, purchase of new computers (servers, desktops and laptops) and related data base facilities were made to assist data archiving in all regional states and at national level. The procurement of additional IT equipment, which will help to make the facility up and running, is made through UNDP. The Ministry has started setting up the database units.

Moreover, project experts were hired at national and regional levels to spearhead the implementation of this program and showcase model activities, should the new ministry cascade its structure down to the grass root level.

During the reporting period, the following key results were achieved under this output. Comparison of achievements of the reporting period against the planned activity results for this output is highlighted in table 1 and annex 1.

- NPC established and functional since August 2015;
- 9 project coordination offices established and functional since February 2016;
- 91 project staff hired at various levels;
- 16 field vehicles and nine tractors procured through UNDP CO and distributed;
- One dump-truck is on procurement process
- National Forest Development Program document prepared and ready for launching;
- Regional Forest sector development program is under preparation for all regions and city administrations
- ESMF and baselines prepared for each project site.
- Key database infrastructure facilities procured and distributed.

3.3 Output 2: Forest conservation and development enhanced

Ethiopia's forest conservation and development activities are not yet guided by proper planning. Despite the fragmented efforts made so far, mountainous areas have been degraded and their economic and environmental role has been threatened. Therefore, the program has created a very good penetration at local level through its designed pilot A/R and ANR activities in targeted micro-watersheds. In so far, the Program has been implemented in 13 project districts out of which only 4 are supported by Swedish government, 4 others are supported by Norwegian government and the rest 5 are jointly supported by both. Active A/R and ANR efforts have been planned in selected priority areas are initiated as community forestry scheme, which include primarily plantation establishment of the fast-growing species to fill the pressing need on wood products while sustaining the environment. This all requires careful selection of species, raising seedlings and plantation establishment. The program has achieved a strong level of support at the local levels both from beneficiaries and at the local level (Woredas).

During the reporting period, the following main results were achieved. Further comparison of achievements of the project against the planned activity results is highlighted under table 1 and annex 1, 2 and 3.

- Targeted micro-watersheds with management and use plan prepared and approved;
- Rehabilitation of 133,208ha degraded land through ANR out of which 41,227ha is achieved during the fiscal year.
- 1568.81km of terraces and trenches, 8801 (number) basins, 2917.1m³ checkdams, 1053.1km bunds constructed during the fiscal year;
- 1,132,280 seedlings planted in rehabilitation sites to assist natural regeneration
- 15 water harvesting ponds and mini-dams constructed
- 394.5kg of tree seeds used to raise 15,138,171 seedlings in 53 nurseries
- A total of 9,016.85ha of land is covered with short rotation plantation, out of which 6,264.68ha of land covered this year (average survival rate of the previous year plantation stands at 77.4%)
- 4660.87ha of plantation covered by weeding, mulching, composting and watering
- Required polythene tubes and other nursery material purchased

- 94,416 apple, avocado, mango and coffee seedlings distributed to 2122 beneficiaries (27female)
- 166 beneficiaries (46female) on beekeeping, 44 solar lattern, 165 households on poultry farming, 173 improved stoves distributed, and 6 biogas facilities locally built
- 7667 people benefited (2898 female) gained seasonal job opportunities through the program
- About 7,529,050 (1,509,677 female participants) have been participating in the free community participation and the monetary value of this is estimated as 301,677,239 birr so far

Detailed descriptions of achievements of each activity result are presented as follow.

3.3.1 Integrated land use plans piloted in the selected woredas of the regions

Land use planning requires intensive engagement with specialized expertise. As part of this, the project staff started with preliminary data and reconnaissance survey to understand the local land uses. During the reporting period, draft local level land use plan was prepared for 22 targeted micro watersheds (Figure 1 as an example) but further capacity building effort is required to do these land use planning activities to get the required standard and approved by the responsible body.

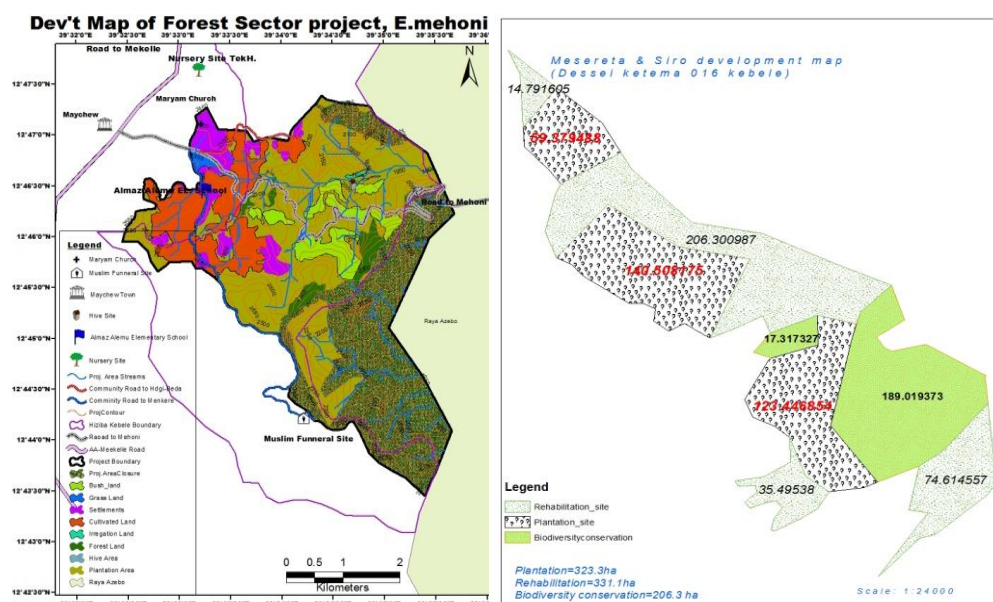


Figure 1. Development map at one of the project site (Endamehoni and Dessie Z.)

3.3.2 Degraded areas in selected regions rehabilitated

The program envisages rehabilitation of 150,000ha degraded lands in Tigray, Amhara and SNNPR during the project period. To achieve this target, each project office prepared action plan and conducted demarcation and delineation of plantation and rehabilitation sites with active community participation. Accordingly, 133,208ha of degraded lands have been demarcated for rehabilitation until now and various rehabilitation activities including soil and water conservation and enrichment planting. Out of this total ANR 41,227ha is achieved in this fiscal year. The already existing mass mobilization effort by the government, which should be considered as part of the in-kind contribution from the Ethiopian people, supported the rehabilitation effort especially by engaging in various physical and biological rehabilitation measures. This approach not only facilitates the process of rehabilitation and afforestation it also helps create awareness and build capacity amongst the participating communities. It is expected that the community participation in the rehabilitation and afforestation will ensure sensitization about improved land use practices and also provide guidance to future development projects working in these communities. The monetary value of the free community contribution through participating in various activities amounted 301,677,239 birr so far.

3.3.3 Short-rotation forestry expanded for fuel and construction wood supply

The program has planned for afforestation and reforestation of 10,000ha of forests in the three Regional States during the project period. In this regard, each project woreda prepared action plan and conducted demarcation and delineation of plantation sites together with local stakeholders and communities. All project sites have managed to undertake plantation in the previous planting seasons. Accordingly, over 15mln seedling of various species were raised in 53 nurseries and 6264.68ha of land is covered with new plantation. The average survival rate of the planted seedling in the previous year is about 77.4% and there is an ongoing post-planting management including weeding, mulching, composting and watering. The short rotation plantations are established mainly on communal lands and hence will be managed in the form of ‘community forestry’ model to be managed and used by certified community members. This model is being revitalized as one ownership in the forestry sector of Ethiopia and is believed to be more sustainable.

Detailed activities achieved until this period are indicated in table 1; Annex 1, 2 and 3 for some of the nursery and site preparation techniques.

3.4 Output3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated

Sustainable forestry can be achieved through leveraging from private funding, arranging grants and soft loans. However, plantations should be attractive financially and technologically to motivate local investors. In Ethiopian context, the definition of the private sector might extend to the level of engaging farmers as investors in tree growing. Accordingly, a series of private sector targeted awareness raising activities was planned at national and regional levels. The scope of the private sector engagement in this program ranges from the development of short rotation plantations to marketing of forestry products preferably in non-timber forest products. However, the role of the private sector especially in the forestry sector is so low and require careful analysis of the challenges and opportunities. Apart from the awareness creation and training activities made at local level, the NPC is preparing manual to start incentive schemes to the private sector. This manual will be finalized in the coming season and once approved by the responsible body will be shared to the regions for piloting incentives. Trainings have been provided for 1556 participants (280 female) on tree-based forest business.

As the result the trainings, some are encouraged to start forestry business on their own plot of land by establishing either short rotation plantation or practicing agroforestry businesses.

Most trainees were committed to start the business after the training with minimum inputs provided by the project (e.g. eucalyptus plantation in Wadla and Delanta and home garden fruit tree planting in Sodo). In so far, 849 (189 female) have been engaged in various tree-based businesses.

3.5 Output 4: Forest Science and Innovation promoted

There is a critical need to strengthen focused research that can directly feed into the current forest-based development efforts. In this regard, the program is designed to build and support existing national training and research capacities by providing facilities and technical support. During the reporting period, the following key results were achieved. Comparison of achievements of the reporting period against the planned activity results for this output is highlighted under table 1 and annex 1.

- key laboratory facilities procured by the project support
- Key knowledge gaps in the research system identified and postgraduate training initiated to fill the gap (one female MSC student is perusing her study in India on forest bio-

technology and tissue culture) and another female candidate is preparing to study wood science in Finland

- Call for research proposals initiated by academic staff from various local universities and research institutes on seven key priority areas of the sector
- Academic exchange and joint research and education program initiated with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)
- MoU signed with Wondo Genet and Mertolemaria Colleges to initiate demand-driven skill training

Detailed description of activities conducted under each activity result is presented as follows:

3.5.1 Capacity of the Forest Research Institute and Higher Education

Rehabilitating degraded lands and existing forest management practices requires knowledge-based engagements. Therefore, technology packaging and dissemination was planned to be coordinated mainly by the Ethiopian Environment and Forestry Research Institute (EEFRI). The institute has conducted in-house gap assessment and identified critical needs in laboratory facilities and skilled human resources. Clear capacity gaps were identified on tissue culture and wood science field. Accordingly, procurement of key laboratory facilities is supported, and postgraduate training is provided for one female expert in the area of biotechnology to fill the knowledge gap identified. The project is also prepared to support another female candidate for her study on wood science in Finland.

Moreover, an academic exchange and education program is initiated with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). This program will be anchored within local training institutions and MoU is signed with Mertolemaria Colleges to support demand-driven skill training in the sector for the coming years. This initiative is part of the target set in the NFSDP of Ethiopia.

3.6 Output 5: Stakeholders engagement in forest development enhanced

In the context of Ethiopia, broad based stakeholder's engagement in forest conservation, management and marketing is highly required. Therefore, meaningful participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Research Organizations, Higher learning Institutions, Community Based Organizations, relevant Professional Associations such as Ethiopian Foresters Association

was planned to be supported by the program. However, the implementation of this component was not yet started during the reporting period. More activity was planned during the season, but implementation is constrained by overlapping tasks and civil unrest.

3.7 M&E and Communication

Noted progress was made by the national PCO in improving the overall M&E system with particular attention given to the improvement of the quality of the data reported and data management and reporting. The physical monitoring and reporting by the project has improved due to the hard work and various actions undertaken by the national PCO, but there is more work to do to ensure consistency in reporting system at all levels. Detailed Mid-Term Review is initiated by the Norwegian Embassy and evaluation is underway by independent consultants. This will soon provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation.

That said, the national PCO, in collaboration with UNDP, has started documentation of best practices through documentaries and brochures to reach out the public and wider stakeholders. In this line, a documentary production will soon be open to the public while the NPCO has already produced one brochures showing the summary of activities during the implementation period so far. Higher level government officials closely supporting the program by leading quarterly joint discussions with regional and woreda level stakeholders on the progress of the project implementation. This is believed to ensure strong government ownership and will benefit future scaling-up and out.

Table 1. Program outputs, activities and achievements as of June 2018

Program Outputs	Activity Description	Activity		Remarks
		Planned	Achieved as of June, 2018	
1. Institutional capacity of the sector strengthened	Established Forest management offices established at Regional and National levels	Establish NPC and nine District offices	National Program Coordination (NPC) office established Nine project coordination offices established in consultation with the regions	
	Preparing National and regional forest sector development program	Design One National and 11 regional forest development programs	Ten years National Forest sector Development Program (NFSDP) is designed. Following the NFSDP as framework document, eleven regional action programs are under preparation for 9 regional states and 2 city administrations	
	Skilled human resources developed/recruited	Recruitment of project staff	91 project staffs recruited and deployed to support the implementation of the program at various levels	
	Preparing ESMF for the rehabilitation and afforestation sites	Prepare ESMF and baseline for all the nine sites	ESMF and Baseline studies completed	
	Establish national and Regional Forestry data base infrastructure	Support the establishment of national and regional database	Database unit is being established at the Ministry	Some of the required database infrastructure facilities procured and distributed to regions for similar set-up
2. Forest development enhanced	Define integrated Rural Land Use plans	Design pilot local LUP for all the nine sites	Land use planning is done for 22 targeted micro watersheds so far	
	Rehabilitate Degraded areas	Rehabilitate 150,000ha of degraded land	133,208ha of degraded land demarcated for rehabilitation, out of which 41, 227ha is only this year	Through ANR Various physical and biological measures are done mainly through community participation

	Establishing plantations	Create 10,000ha new short rotation plantation	6,264.68ha of land covered with new short rotation plantation during this fiscal year 2,752.20ha of previous plantation under post-planting management Additional 3,836.83 ha of land is prepared for the next planting season	Nursery activities, pre-and post-planting management practices underway
	Nursery establishment and management for seedling production Site preparation to establish plantations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terraces, trenches and basins • Pitting 	17.5million seedlings 10,000ha 10,000ha	Well over 15million seedlings in 53 nurseries Terraces, basins and pits prepared on 4321.91ha area	3,836.83ha of land is prepared for the next planting season
3. Promote private sector engagement	Awareness of Private sector Support the private sector for technology piloting	Trainings	Awareness creation and national level TOT provided for regional and project offices on forest establishment and management including establishing forest business enterprises	More activity was planned during the season but constrained by the civil unrest
4.Promote Forest based Science and Innovation	Building capacity of the forestry research and education institutions	Gap identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical gaps in lab facilities defined and procurement of lab. facilities • Key knowledge gaps in the research system identified and postgraduate training initiated on forest biotechnology. • Academic and education exchange initiated with Swedish university of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) • Research initiated on seven thematic topics in the forestry sector 	
5. Enhance Stakeholder involvement	Mapping stakeholders involved in forestry		We have not started implementation of this output yet	More activity was planned during the season but constrained by overlapping tasks and civil unrest
	Establish Stakeholder platform and network			
	Prepare Future Engagement road map for forestry sector actors			

6.Project management	Project management and administration		Project is well managed in collaboration with UNDP and MOFEC	
	Vehicle purchase	Purchasing vehicles and tractors	16 field vehicles and 9 tractors purchased, field vehicles and tractors deployed for the project activity	UNDP
	Monitoring and evaluation, including communication	Field M&E	National mission tasked every quarter and evaluated the project activities on the ground. Mission report synthesized	This activity was constrained by the civic unrest
	Communication		One brochure produced and circulated Documentary production finalized	

4. Reasons for Major Deviations from Plans

This program was officially launched in October 2015 and actual implementation on the ground started afterwards. Significant progress has been made on the activities planned in this program except the first-year delay. The second year has substantial achievement to capture the first-year delay. The implementation of the second-year plantation activity also suffered from delayed budget release from Norwegian support for various reasons. This gap was filled by the fund transferred from the Swedish support during the first quarter of the Fiscal year. The second quarter of the year was still challenged by funding shortage.

In addition, the civil unrest in some parts of Ethiopia, has seriously affected the planned activities on the ground. By any measure, this year achievement is not comparable with the plan and achievement of the preceding year. Despite these challenges, considerable progress have been made so far and this evidently showed the commitment of the people and government institutions at various levels.

5. Project Management and Administration

At Federal level, the program implementation is guided by the Ministry of Environment; Forest and Climate Change through the National Program Coordination Office. UNDP is supporting international procurement of items and consulting entities.

At Regional level, REDD+ Coordination Units are supporting the implementation of the program. The program activities in each Districts is monitored, supported and evaluated by the respective regional authorities. Regions have conducted separate and joint field missions with the national experts to evaluate the project activity on the ground.

At District level, all the nine Districts have established Technical and Steering Committees. These committees also oversight the implementation of other mega projects like SLMP and PSNP wherever available, and this has created good opportunity for synergy and collaboration. The Chairman of the District Steering Committee is the government Administrative head of each District. The overall guidance of the project implementation is provided by the Steering Committee while the District technical committee provided technical guidance including quality assurance for

each project activity on the ground. Noted progress was made by the national program coordination office (NPC) in improving the overall M&E system with particular attention given to the improvement of the quality of data handling and reporting. The physical monitoring and reporting by the project has improved due to the hard work of the NPC and support provided by the Ministry and its regional replica. However, more work is required to ensure consistent and satisfactory financial management of the program.

6. Financial Utilization

The fund utilized during the reporting period from Norwegian Government through The CRGE Facility is summarized in the following table

Table 2 Financial utilization of the project during this Fiscal year

Output	2010 E.C Norwegian Support (MoFEC)	
	Financial Plan (Br)	Actual Expenditure
Output 1: The institutional capacity of the forestry sector is strengthened at all levels	4,600,000	-
Output 2: Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced	44,324,478	23,907,494
Output 3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated	2,300,000	-
Output 4: Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted	7,015,000	3,197,800
Output 6. Project management	2,305,487	576,817
Total budget	60,544,965	27,682,112

Table 2 Program outputs and budget plans against expenditure for the project period

Output	Activity	Financial Plan (Br)	Actual Expenditure
Output 1: The institutional capacity of the forestry sector is strengthened at all levels		10,700,000	4,766,000
1.1 Program/project Mgt. offices established at regional national level		1,500,000	166,000
1.4. BOEF structure designed and required skilled human resources developed/recruited	a)Prepare a long term human resource development plan for the sector b)Develop regional organogram	5,100,000	2,800,000
1.6.Office facilities	a)Procurement of Office facilities	4,100,000	1,800,000
Output 2:Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced		94,631,953	69,716,763
2.1 Integrated land use plans piloted in the selected woredas of the regions	a)Build capacity of stakeholders on integrated land use planning b)Prepare local level land use plan for pilot areas in the four regions	2,464,690	2,026,573
2.2 Degraded areas mainly (water towers) of the Amhara, SNNPR and Tigray NRS rehabilitated	a)Develop criteria for the selection of the degraded areas b)Prepare restoration map for the degraded areas of each region c)Support the rehabilitation of some of the identified areas	29,003,604	19,635,284
2.3 Short rotation forestry expanded for fuel and construction wood consumption	a)Prepare identification criteria for site selection b)Prepare sites to establish plantations c)produce required seedlings in nurseries and Establish plantations d)Post-planting handling	57,887,671	45,222,483
2.4. Agroforestry	a)Select HH for AF/food security b)technology packaging & extension c)undertake d/t AF practices	1,146,549	657,266
2.5. Woreda Project management, administration and capacity building	a)Project management and administartion b)capacity building	3,072,733	1,618,451
2.6. Regional and Zonal M&E support		1,056,706	556,706
Output 3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated		5,720,000	2,529,183
3.1 Awareness of Private sector enhanced on various issues around forest sector development	a)Organize awareness raising workshops b)Organize study tours for key private sectors c)Disseminate best practices in country	2,720,000	420,000

3.2. Support the private sector for technology piloting for value addition in high NTFP potential regions	a) Promote investment and technology transfer b) Conduct value chain analysis of NTFP including technology adoption and c) market linkages d) Technology selection, demonstration & Piloting e) Conduct market study before and after value addition	3,000,000	2,109,183
Output 4: Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted		17,975,000	10,880,759
4.1 Capacity of the forestry research institutions for science and innovation enhanced	a) Identify gaps b) Support Developing the national forest research strategy c) Screening of indigenous and exotic tree species/genotypes for plantation d) expansion	5,000,000	3,000,000
4.2 The capacities of forestry training institutions in providing skill training strengthened	a) Support curriculum revision to prepare graduates for “green jobs” b) Support in-service refreshment training for professionals and skill training for farmers	1,360,000	1,360,000
4.3. Connect the country to forest knowledge and innovation through a twinning arrangement (Norway, Ethiopia and one s-s institution) for continuous capacity building	a) Staff exchange between Ethiopian and Norwegian partner institutions b) Develop capacity building model among environment, research and training c) institutions in Ethiopia and Norway d) publish and disseminate research findings	1,600,000	640,000
4.4. Support research relevant to forest policy development and forest management, tree improvement	a) Joint Research support	8,015,000	4,197,800
4.5. Vocational training for forest based enterprise development provided	a) Provide short term vocational training on green jobs and forest based business	2,000,000	1,682,959
Output 6. Project management		5,298,223	3,638,928
6.2 Monitoring and evaluation, including communication		2,785,204	1,172,370
6.3 Project management and administration cost, including vehicle running cost		2,513,019	2,466,559
total budget		134,325,175	91,531,634

In-Kind contributions from the Ethiopian government is also substantial with staff time and facilities during the reporting period

7. Assessment of Achievement with Purpose

The main purpose of the program is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTPII and CRGE. The work carried out during the reporting period represents a significant contribution towards the achievement of this purpose. Activities conducted under the different components of the projects and the results achieved in a relatively short implementation period are encouraging. Through the result-based payments approach, the program is assisting Ethiopia to achieve its targets for A/R and reach targets for reduced emission and increased sequestrations of greenhouse gases.

Moreover, piloting and field testing of afforestation models including the trainings and discussions of the progress at various workshops were excellent avenues for learning and scaling-up and out to other areas in the country. The level of stakeholders' engagement and support provided by the people and government institutions at various levels signifies a promising sustainability of the program. Professionals from national research institutions, local communities and government institutions have mobilized efforts to fast track the implementation of the program. Higher government officials at various levels and donors have made direct field visits to project sites and routinely guided the delivery of the program.

The project experienced a delay at start-up and financial release delay in the middle but caught up well especially in Outputs 1 and 2. There has been some progress on Output 4 (Science and innovation for enhancing forest management). Output 3 (private sector engagement in forest development) has so far been slow and Output 5 (Stakeholder engagement) in terms of the development of sector platforms and networks for stakeholders at other levels has yet to be realized. Without undermining the effects of delayed commencement of implementation and the 2010 budget release delay, it is safe to conclude that the program is on a right track to achieve its purpose.

8. Assessment of Efficiency of the Program

This program is designed in the result-based scheme and resources are especially targeted towards supporting delivery of activities on the ground. Most of the resource was planned for field level A/R and rehabilitation works including livelihood activities and hence significant focus and resource support is provided accordingly. This program has ample evidence already to show that

efforts from different stakeholders were quickly mobilized for the actual implementation of the program. This indicated that afforestation in Ethiopian landscapes (even on degraded ones) can be achieved shortly if the assumed conditions are in place, i.e. good site rehabilitation conditions, guaranteed quality of plant material, proper management, reasonable investment and access to markets for products. In practice, the entire exercise was translated into important outcomes of increased employment, income generation while arresting land degradation; the main targets in the GTPII. The program is also likely to contribute to biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts of the country. In order to promote the participation of the wider public and other stakeholders while at the same time maintaining a reasonable level of efficiency in financial disbursement, the program implementation manual set a certain level of free labor participation from the community for various field activities. Top Regional leaders in the three regions have directly dedicated personnel and institutions to monitor this program and provided guidance on the selection of sites for its implementation and its implementation approaches. Previous experiences in other similar projects like (e.g. SLM, PSNP etc) have helped to quickly start the implementation of this one. In many cases, the steering committee for the other programs similarly led the implementation of this program. The flow of funds and its reporting was directly to the regional replica of MEFCC and this has helped the project to reach pilot sites within limited time while maintaining acceptable financial expenditure procedure.

On the other hand, a positive competition is created among implementing institutions and project offices to increase efficiency. Rewards and recognitions were provided from the Ministry for best achieving woredas of each year.

9. Key problems and Challenges

1. Political unrest in various parts of the country has created a challenge to intensify field A/R efforts including monitoring and supervision at various levels.
2. Some of the sites selected for afforestation have environmental constraints and demanded extra investments in site amelioration efforts. This call for extensive consultations and costs on the ground in order to reduce the risk of compromised results and quality. However, these costs should be managed to the acceptable levels going forward.

3. There was budget release delay from Norwegian Embassy in the previous year hampering scheduled project activities. Most of the field costs during the delay were covered from SIDA support.
4. Delayed reporting from woreda project offices on physical and financial progress was a challenge

Conclusion

The Programme is making major contributions to the Partnership agreement between Ethiopia and Norway. This program is a key mechanism to pilot new approaches on rehabilitation and afforestation by triggering more stakeholders' engagement in the forest sector. It supports governments' national green growth strategy, CRGE. Although inception of the program was delayed, the implementation is on good progress.

Noted progress was made by the NPCO in improving the overall M&E and communication system with particular attention given to the improvement of the quality of the work in the field. There is more work needed to ensure consistency and satisfactory financial reporting system.

Good progress was noted in the overall project management with key staff in place at both national and regional levels. The commitment of the government staff at various levels, the participation of communities in project sites; the leadership by the government bodies at various levels and support provided by the Norwegian and Swedish Governments, UNDP and MoFEC is encouraging. Considering the time since the inception on the ground activities, the program is well positioned to deliver the outcomes and targets as per the plan.

If the Programme is to scale up effectively and provide further opportunities for farmers, strengthening market linkages and establishing incentive mechanisms to encourage the private sector will very soon be needed. Local level staff at woreda level will need salary remunerations and additional training in business management and marketing aspects as well as in direct forestry skills.

Summarized status of the project in effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and sustainability

Criteria	Status
Relevance	The Programme is making major contributions to the Partnership agreement between Ethiopia and Norway
	It is well on its way to meeting the goals
Effectiveness	Ethiopia has in the past had a history of poor quality plantations with low survival rates. The technical quality of this Programme has been much higher than that which went before.
	Much more work is needed to engage the commercial Private Sector in forestry
Sustainability	The programme is strongly integrated into the regular programme of the ministry
	at local level, there is high and continuing enthusiasm of the community which requires technical support
Efficiency	Greater cost efficiency in the future will be needed when the Programme is scaled up

Source : Mid-term review of the project

Annexes

Annex 1.

Output1	Activity result	Achievement	Remark
Output 1. Institutional capacity building	Activity Result1.1 Forest management offices established at Regional and National levels	1 NPC and 9 woreda offices up and running	
	Activity Result1.2: National Forest Action plan prepared	Ten years NFSDP plan prepared	Three volumes
	Activity Result 1.3 Regional Forest Action Plan prepared	Work in progress	Consulting firm selected for 9 regional States and 2 Cities
	Activity Result 1.4: BoEF structure designed	Work in progress	TOR prepared
	ActivityResult1.5 Environmental, social management framework for the rehabilitation and afforestation program prepared	ESMF prepared	Final draft
	Activity Result 1.6 Regional forestry data base infrastructure established	Facilities procured and distributed	
Output 2. Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced	Activity Result 2.1: Integrated land use plans piloted in the selected woredas of the regions	Land use plans for 22 micro-watersheds prepared	
	Activity Result 2.2: Degraded areas rehabilitated	133,208.53 ha rehabilitated	89.7%
	Activity Result 2.3: Short-rotation forestry expanded	9,031ha short rotation plantation established	90.3%
	Activity Result 2.4 Agricultural productivity and food security improved	4,873 beneficiaries through alternative livelihoods	
	Activity Result 2.5Under take diagnostic studies to enhance SFM	National Diagnostic study underway through UNREDD, including	

		possibility for piloting at BG region	
	Activity Result 2.6 National system to operationalize PES developed	Not started yet	
Output 3. Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated	Activity result 3.1: Promote Private Sector Participation in Forest Sector Development	TOT provided for 283 experts	17,686 farmers trained on forest management and forest business Much more work is needed to engage the commercial Private Sector in forestry
	Activity Result 3.2: Incentive mechanism for active involvement of private sector	Draft manual prepared to establish incentive mechanism	
	Activity Result 3.3 Technologies for value addition in high NTFP potential regions by the private sectors piloted		
Output 4: Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted	Activity Result 4.1 Capacity of the forestry research institutions for science and innovation enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge and facility gaps assessment conducted • Review of Forestry research outputs of the last 40 years supported • Procurement of key laboratory facilities supported • postgraduate training supported • 14 research topics selected for funding support 	
	Activity Result 4.2: The capacities of forestry training institutions in providing skill training strengthened	Discussion initiated with the Ministry of education 14 research topics selected for funding support	

	Activity Result 4.3: Vocational training on forest-based enterprise development enhanced	School environmental and public outreach supported New project designed to implement this at scale MoU signed with Mertolemaria college	
	Activity Result 4.4: Capacity of forestry training and research institutions enhanced	Academic exchange and joint research and education program initiated MoU signed with Wondo Genet and Mertolemaria Colleges to initiate demand-driven skill training in forestry	
Output 5: Stakeholders engagement in forest development enhanced	Activity Result 5.1: Stakeholders involved in forestry sector mapped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not done so far 	Was partly delayed by budget transfer delay Will be a focus in the coming year
	Activity Result 5.2: Put in place platform for the engagement of stakeholders in forestry activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not done so far 	
	Activity Result 5.3 Engagement road map prepared for forestry sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not done so far 	

Annex 2. Achievements under output 2

Region	Target (ha)	Achievement (ha)	% achievement
Rehabilitation of degraded lands			
Tigray	33,000	31,000	93.94
Amhara	66,000	61,750.53	93.56
SNNPR	49,500	40,458	81.73
Total		133,208.53	89.70
Short rotation Forestry			
Tigray	2400	2478	103%
Amhara	4800	4793	99.8%
SNNPR	3600	1760	48.9%
Total	10,800	9,031	83.6%

Alternative livelihood activities

Alternative Livelihood Activities	SNNPR		Amhara		Tigray		Grand Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male:Female
Sheep and goat fattening		35	30	8	0	0	30:43
Fruit-based Agroforestry practices	593	89	353	61	79	17	1025:167
Poultry Production		35	19	33	8	103	27:171
Beekeeping	58	9	106	32	26	19	190:60
Alternative energy sources	0	10	5	299	8	188	13:497
Tree Seedling Production	10	0	0	0	56	80	66:80
Tree plantation/production	0	0	90	39	100	28	190:67

Animal fodder production	0	0	1117	396	0	0	1117:396
Beef fattening			26	4	277	435	303:439
Total	661	178	1746	864	554	870	2961:1912
Grand Total							4,873

Key Activities by Swedish support

Some of the nursery activities in the three Regional States









Annex 3. Public participation and some of the plantation site preparation activities





Plantation site activities



Annex 2 Separate report prepared for Sida Support



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program in Ethiopia (ETH-13/0021)



Reporting period: Until June 2018

**Report submitted by National Program Coordination Office,
MEFCC**

Report Submitted to: SIDA

Programme geographic areas:

Regions: Amhara, SNNPR & Tigray

Woredas: Meket, Wadla, D/ketema, Delanta, Sodo-Guragea, Shashego, M/abaya, H/wajirat & Ofra

Addis Ababa

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Executive summary

The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Project of Ethiopia is designed to support capacity building efforts of the sector in the nation and has been co-funded by Norway, Sweden, UNDP, and Government of Ethiopia. The project has developed three volume documents of National Forest Sector Development Program that can serve as a road map for the next ten years. In order to provide implementation impetus for the National documents, Sida has provided support for the preparation of similar action program documents for each regional state. These strategic documents, if implemented properly, will elevate the forestry sector to be more viable option for the local and national economy.

Apart from the strategic support, the program has created a very good penetration at local level through its designed pilot A/R, ANR and livelihood activities in targeted micro-watersheds. In so far, the program has been implemented in 9 project districts out of which only 4 are supported by Swedish government only, and the rest 5 are jointly supported by both Swedish and Norwegian governments. A total of 6,763,602 seedlings were raised during the season. Model afforestation is piloted on 1109.7ha of land with average survival rate of seedling at 80.7%. Rehabilitation of 41,227ha of degraded land that was implemented by Norwegian support is further re-vitalized through assisted natural regeneration (ANR) by the Sida support. Further, a total 2,353 ha of land has been rehabilitated by exclusively Sida support.

Moreover, different livelihood activities have been piloted on individual, communal and cooperative schemes. Strong government and community ownership on the ANR and A/R sites supported by local bylaws and ownership certification systems indicated direct implication on sustainability.

Recently, Mid-term evaluation has been conducted by external experts to evaluate the overall performance of the program and good success is reported in achieving the targets originally set using a flexible implementation approaches.

Introduction

In its Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE), Ethiopia aims to achieve middle-income status by 2025. It has started to transform the strategy into actions in collaboration with domestic and international partners. The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program of Ethiopia is designed to support capacity building efforts and has been co-funded by Norway, Sweden, UNDP, and Government of Ethiopia. The overall objective of this program is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of the forestry component contained in the GTPII and CRGE Strategy.

This report exclusively covers the plan & achievements of the SIDA supported program activities in the nine woredas of the three regional states.

Output level result-based report

Output 1: The institutional capacity of the forest sector strengthened

Forest management offices established

- **Target:** Establish one National program coordination office and nine district offices
- **Achievement:** one national program coordination office and 9 project coordination offices have been supported and strengthened with human resources and material resources
- **Result:** strengthened forest management offices at various levels with improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the forest sector initiatives. Further, these offices have become good showcases for the government on the potential of strong forest sector institution at different levels.

National and Regional Forest sector development Program developed

The Ministry has limited capacity at all levels with outdated action program and poor database infrastructure in the forestry sector. Therefore, the program targeted to strengthen national and regional implementation capacity at strategic and functional levels.

- **Target:** Design one National Forest Sector Development Program
- **Achievement:** National Forest Sector Development Program Documents Prepared and similar regional action programs initiated. With the assistance of the project and active

consultation of various stakeholders, a ten years National Forest management program has been prepared by Norwegian support and the document is now available, which once launched, will guide the sustainable conservation and management of the forest resources. It will guide the different stakeholders on national priorities, pillars, action programs and investment requirements. SIDA support has contributed for the finalization of the National Forest Sector Development program, which is scheduled to be launched in October 8, 2018. Sida is also providing additional support for the preparation of similar regional action programs, which will provide implementation impetus for the National roadmap.

- **Results:** A successful analysis of the current situation of the forest sector focusing on the intended effects beyond the existing challenges. Strengthened forest sector institutional capacity with clear national roadmap, implying clearer vision and targets for the coming ten years. Forest sector is in a better position to pursue different strategies and approaches for the implementation of the national plan

Output II. Forest Development Enhanced for their multiple benefits

Despite the efforts made so far, Ethiopian mountains have been degraded and their economic and environmental role has been threatened. One of the limitations of the previous efforts was the fragmentation of the development practices and weak institutional capacity of institutions involved in forest development. Cognizant of the prevailing institutional capacity limitations of local government institutions and to fill the technical gap of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the program, different awareness raising workshops, conferences and trainings were provided on different thematic areas. Therefore, awareness raising has been provided for 1705 participants in various local workshops and conferences. Finally, this program has created a very good penetration at local level through its designed pilot A/R and ANR activities in targeted micro-watersheds. This initiative will start from designing local level land use planning.

Land use planning for micro-watersheds

- **Target:** Land use planning is expected to be pilot on intervention sites
- **Achievement:** First, training is provided for field experts and both socio economic and bio-physical data is collected by the project staff together with woredas experts. Training is

provided for 906 participants on alternative livelihoods, local land use planning and various other thematic topics. Further, continuous consultations are conducted with local communities regarding the land use planning, participation, ownership and certification. Accordingly, development maps are prepared for most of the selected micro watersheds with clear local by-laws for implementation.

- The delineation and mapping of the areas is then completed using GPS. Local level land use plan is prepared and re-consulted with communities for their approval. Regarding ownership, land certificates are prepared and provided to forest users' groups indicating that the new plantations will be administered through community forestry scheme. The land certification is provided by the authorized woreda level government institution. Finally, community based written by-laws are prepared by the user groups. The SIDA project support facilitated the discussions and documentations of the by-laws. The forest user groups, with both the certificate and agreed by-laws at hand, developed better trust and belongingness to the overall forest development activities, which also entails vested role and responsibility before they get the final benefit. This will ensure sustainability of the project activity even after the project has phased out.
- **Results:** Community ownership improved on A/R and ANR sites supported by local bylaws. Forest land use right of the community is legally secured through certification systems with direct implication for sustainability. The effectiveness of local by-laws and forest user groups revealed the need for robust forestry institutional arrangement at local level.

Degraded areas rehabilitated

Due to population pressure and the associated demand for cultivated land, biomass energy, grazing land and others; forests were cleared even from the steep slopes and areas were converted to agriculture. As a result, severe land and vegetation degradation is prevailing in the country, which ultimately reduced the productivity of the land. One among the interventions to rehabilitate such vast degraded lands in the country is exclusion of livestock free grazing and limiting excessive human interference through area ex-closure approach. Area closure should further be strengthened through various practices to assist the natural process.

- **Target:** Rehabilitate 150,000 ha of degraded lands primarily with Norwegian support
- **Achievement:** Through the project, over 129,761ha of degraded lands have been rehabilitated with assisted natural regeneration (ANR) scheme. 2,353ha of land is rehabilitated exclusively through Sida support (table 1), while the rehabilitation of 41,227ha of degraded land that was implemented by Norwegian support this year is further re-vitalized through assisted natural regeneration (ANR) by Sida support. From the total 2,353 ha of land rehabilitated by Sida support, 550ha is in SNNPR, 500ha is in Tigray and the rest 1303ha is in Amhara region. To facilitate the natural rehabilitation process, ex-closure sites have been supported by different physical and biological soil & water conservation structures and tree planting activities. These rehabilitated lands are managed by the community and will be used exclusively for the local community. Site guards and the required soil and water conservation structures are done by full community participation without any payments. In Tigray region, 67.6% of the soil and water conservation activity cost is covered by community free labor while the remaining 32.4% is paid by the project. In SNNPR, the project finance covered from 25%-87% of the cost for some of the labor-intensive conservation structures required at the rehabilitation sites (e.g. Shashego). The participation of women in such activities ranged from 35.5%- 46% (e.g. Shashego and Sodo). In most of these rehabilitation sites, natural regeneration of indigenous species (e.g. *Cordia africana* in Sodo and Shashego) has been promising gain, indicating the contribution of the project intervention for local floral diversity. This natural regeneration was assisted through enrichment planting, direct sowing of different acacia species, which are also selected for site amelioration and soil stabilization.
- **Result:** Further degradation of land and vegetation due to deforestation and soil erosion reduced. Landslides, downstream runn-off and flooding of lower watersheds minimized due to the physical and biological soil and water conservation measures, free grazing reduced and biodiversity of degraded areas improved. Productivity of degraded lands improved through animal forage and bee forage production. Additional income generated from selling grass and honey. Re-growth of indigenous flora and reintroduction of wildlife species witnessed in the rehabilitated areas.

New short rotation plantation established

In order to reduce the pressure on the remnant natural forests and to narrow the huge gap between demand and supply of forest products, establishment of short rotation plantation forests that can attain maximum biomass production within a reasonably short period of time is a critical need. However, since most of the areas selected for plantation are also steep and degraded, they require various pre-planting site management activities. These includes terraces, basins, pits and trenches. These activities help to improve the moisture holding capacity and thereby improve the survival rate of the planted seedlings.

- **Target:** establish 10,000 ha of new short rotation plantation by the Norwegian support a total of 4,500ha of short rotation plantation (500ha in each of the nine woredas) by Sida support.
- **Achievement:** 6,264.68ha of land is covered with new short rotation plantation during this season, out of which 866.18ha is achieved by SIDA support. 58% of the cost for plantation is covered by free community participation while the rest 42% is supported by the project (e.g. Shashego). Different post planting management activities (watering, mulching, hoeing and weeding) were going on 767.7ha of land and the survival rate of the seedlings is monitored every quarter. Depending on the project sites, the average survival rate of the seedlings ranges from 53.3 to 93% and the final count shows average survival rate of 80.7 % (table 1). For the next season, six, two and eight seedling nurseries were up and running in SNNPR, Tigray and Amhara regions respectively to raise seedling required for the Sida project activities. All nursery inputs and labor requirements were supported by the project. However, apart from the project nurseries, 12 private and one youth group (8 members) nurseries were established in Sodo woreda for the production of tree seedlings with only material and seed support by the project. A total of 6,763,602 seedlings were raised during the season (476,000 seedlings of 14 different species in Tigray, 3,096,000 seedlings of eight different species in Amhara and 3,191,602 seedlings of 17 different species in SNNPR), out of which 17% are prepared by private nurseries. In some of these nurseries 43% of the seedlings were agroforestry species (eg. M/abaya). In some of the project woredas (e.g Shashego) stronger forest user groups have been established and there is strong sense of local ownership. In order to increase the survival rate of the planted seedlings and ultimately improve the growth of the planted seedlings, appropriate post

planting seedling management activities have been undertaken starting from the early stages of the plantation establishment. To this end, weeding to avoid competition, hoeing (cultivation), supplemental nutrition through field compost application, mulching and watering have been undertaken.

- **Result:** Further degradation of forest lands due to deforestation and soil erosion reduced. Flooding of lower watersheds minimized due to the physical and biological soil and water conservation measures. Average survival rate of seedling improved to 80.7%. Community cohesion improved through establishment of forest users' association. Re-growth of indigenous flora and reintroduction of wildlife species witnessed in the new forest lands, contributing for biodiversity conservation. Additional income generated by selling grass from the new short rotation forest areas through cut-and-carry system. Income of the communities increased from casual labor. Community ownership improved on A/R sites supported by local bylaws and ownership certification systems with direct implication for sustainability. Communities are expecting better economic return from the plantations established on their previously unproductive private crop land and/or communal land, indicating better economic opportunity.
- Key innovations include constructing soil and water conservation structures before planting trees, and much post-planting care including watering during peak dry spells.

Table 1. Rehabilitation and plantation achievements by region

Region	Woreda	Rehabilitation area covered (ha)	Plantation area covered (ha)	Survival rate of the plantation (%)	Remark
SNNPR	Shashego	300	92	83	Plantation is covered by three different species
	Sodo	250	74	77	
	M/Abaya	-----	37	91	
Tigray	Ofla (Endamehoni)	500	200	92	
	H/Wujirat (Alaje)	-----	123	90	
Amhara	Meket	460.15	185.64	93	
	Wadla	----	71	75.5	
	Delanta	-----	189.36	71.4	
	Dessie Ketema	897	137.7	53.3	
Total		2,353	1109.7	80.7 (average)	

Livelihood Improvement activities

- **Target:** This activity was considered to be integrated in all phases of the above two activities during the project design. Livelihood support including agroforestry and other tree-based livelihood systems were encouraged during the project implementation.
- **Achievement:** Plantations in some of the project sites were established by organized community groups. These groups started to get early benefit from selling grass from the plantation sites. 12 private nurseries and one youth group nursery (8 members) are engaged on production of tree seedlings in Sodo. For this activity, the project provided 25 kg of tree seeds (*Eucalyptus globulus*, *Gravillea robusta*, *Acacia decerrence* and *Cupressus lustanica*) and 215 kg of polythene tubes. 1,072,610 seedlings were prepared and sold by these private nurseries. 12,195 high value fruit trees (2700 in Amhara and 9,495 in SNNPR), including apple, mango, banana, avocado and coffee were distributed for agroforestry targeted households to enhance tree-based livelihood systems. Further, 35 improved goat breeds (Konso breeds) and 300 chicken have been distributed for targeted 35 and 30 women beneficiaries for livelihood improvement. This support is highly supported by the community and government since it has brought better benefits for

communities from improved breeds and high productivity. Moreover, one beekeeping group of 10 members is organized in Sodo for Apiary and the project supported with 47 improved bee hives. Another two women group of five members each, is organized and working on improved cookstove production in the same woreda and additional 229 improved cookstoves and 112 solar panels have been distributed by the project support in Meket woreda. Moreover, the project has created additional employment opportunity through semi-permanent (453 out of which 259 are female) and casual labour (4,648 out of which 898 are female beneficiaries). The labors are screened through kebele community involvement with the objective to create job opportunity for the poorest and vulnerable community group. A total of 14,325 (Male 12,606 & Female 1719) community members have directly benefited from the different program interventions (nursery management, establishing of private forest, establishing of community forest, participating in casual labor, etc.

- **Result:** All these alternative livelihood systems have provided alternative means of income for local communities by supplementing the existing income of households, women and youth groups. The three forest user groups organize under community forestry scheme earned 20,000birr each. These groups started to get early benefit from selling grass from the plantation sites. The Youth group of eight members organized for tree seedling production have earned 40,000 ETH birr from selling seedlings. Beneficiaries who received chicken earned an average of 400-600 ETB birr per month per household. The beneficiaries have also supplemented their family nutrition from the egg. Many of the daily laborers working in the project were able to send their children to school and some of them are able to support their families through forming traditional village level saving system “EQUB”, which improves household resilience. Women and land less or unemployed Youth are benefiting from the different livelihood components such as fattening, fruit production & beekeeping.

Output 4: Promote science and innovation in the sector

There is a critical need to strengthen focused research that can directly feed into the current forestry development efforts. In this regard, Sida support is designed to contribute supporting actionable research areas. The selected thematic focus for the research have been on the management and protection of multifunctional forests, economic interactions along the forest-livelihood interface, rehabilitation of degraded forests/forest lands and biomass modelling

- few research projects on these key government priorities and thematic forestry topics are ready to be supported by the Swedish financial support
- academic exchange and joint research and education program initiated with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)
- MoU signed with SLU, Wondo Genet and Mertolemariam Colleges to initiate the implementation of the next generation program

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Federal Program coordination office and regional project coordination offices have given frequent technical support to the project woredas. In each of the field supervisions, the field missions have provided written feedback woredas woredas. The woreda steering and technical committees have also made field supervisions and performance evaluation in their respective woreda. While doing field performance evaluations, the Ministry has arranged quarterly workshops mainly with the objective of evaluating and checking the status of the projects.

Communication:

The national PCO, in collaboration with UNDP, has documented best practices through documentaries and brochures to reach out the public and wider stakeholders. Accordingly, three brochures and one documentary has been prepared. There are also additional infographic materials prepared and communicated through UNDP.

Budget

The budget utilization of the program through Sida support will be reported by UNDP Country Office.

Conclusion:

The program and SIDA support has achieved planned targets, increased employment while arresting land degradation; one of the main targets in the GTPII. The program will also contribute to biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation efforts of the country.

Considering the existing progress of implementation during the reporting period, the program is well positioned to deliver the outcomes envisaged in the program. The achievements registered in plantation establishment, rehabilitation of degraded lands and local livelihood improvement are encouraging. However, the next phase of the project period requires strong integration and result-based orientation for planning and reporting.

Moreover, new program is initiated with Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). This program will be anchored within local research and training institutions to support demand-driven skill training in the sector for the coming years. This initiative will contribute to the targets set in the recently launched NFSDP of Ethiopia.