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

Reporting period: Until December 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 & Ofla

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 ws 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 3,049 ha of land rehabilitated by Sida support, 550ha is in SNNPR, 516ha is in Tigray and the rest 1,983ha 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 run-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: **7,136.82** ha of land is covered with new short rotation plantation during this season, out of which **1,739ha** 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 labour. 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	Plantation sites
SNNPR	Shashego	300	356	83	Plantation is covered by three different species	Amelkeba & Mololcho
	Sodo	250	436	77		Fato, Ashegede & Damu 1
	M/Abaya	-----	156	91		Shongole & Zalabarena
Tigray	Ofla (Endamehoni)	500	137	92		Selam- Bekalsy (kebele) sites(Zewa, Emba-Awata and Aweshera
	H/Wujirat (Alaje)	-----	53	90		Kinchlat(Waza))
Amhara	Meket	460.15	185.74	93		014 (Aymate- Shinkurt wuha), 032 (Arbit- Jebe Dene), 033 (Akat- Jebe Dene)
	Wadla	----	71	75.5		Timtimat (019) Hamusit (020)
	Delanta	-----	206.6	71.4		Menekusit (03), Yegug (010), Lebasie Daget (011), Chewu Molel (012) Kebeles
	Dessie Ketema	897	137.7	53.3		Misreta and siro (015), Endod Ber and Kaboch (016
Total		**2,353**	**1,739.04**	**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*, *Grevillea robusta*, *Acacia decurrens* and *Cupressus lusitanica)* 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 labor (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 Mertulemariam 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.

Annexes

Annex 1. Pictures of the various activities through Sida support




Sida supported Nurseries in Sodo

Private Nursery (*Eucalyptus globulus*, *Cupressus lusitanica & Gravillea robusta*) in Sodo project site

Improved cookstove production by women user group in Sodo Woreda