Integrated Landscape Management to Enhance Food Security and Ecosystem Resilience in Ethiopia

PIMS 5559, Atlas Award 00097070, Atlas Project Id: 00100923, GEF ID number: 9135

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GEF 6 - LD Objective 3 (Reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes), Program 4 (Scaling-up sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach).

Ethiopia

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change

United National Development Program (UNDP)

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Acronyms, Abbreviations and Glossary

AEZ	Agro-Ecological Zone
AF	Agroforestry
AIS	Alien Invasive Species
ANRS	Afar National Regional State
BD	Biodiversity
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
C	Celsius/Centigrade
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CDO	Cooperative Department Office
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy
CRS	Climate Resilience Strategy
CSE	Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
EBI	Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute
EFCCC	Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Commission (formerly ministry)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EoP	End of Project
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EPACC	Ethiopia's Programme of Adaptation to Climate Change
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FHH	Female-Headed Household
FSP	Full-sized Project
FYGTP	Five-Year Growth and Transformation Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSEC	Global Environment Facility Secretariat
GES	Green Economy Strategy
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographical Information System
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
ha	Hectare
RF	Results Framework (Strategic results framework)
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
JFMA	Joint Forest Management Agreement
km	Kilometre
LD	Land Degradation
LPA	Learning and Practice Alliance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal

MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest
m	Metre
masl	Metres above sea level
mm	Millimetre
MHH	Male-Headed Household
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NAP	National Adaptation Programme (for UNCCD)
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan of Action (for UNFCCC)
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (for CBD)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSC	National Steering Committee
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Service(s)
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIN	Project Inception Note
PIR	GEF Project Implementation Report
PIT	Programme Implementation Team
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
POPP	Programme and Operation Policies and Procedures
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RAPTA	Resilience, Adaptation Pathway and Transformation Assessment
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
SRS	Somali Regional State
STAP	Scientific Technical Advisory Panel
t	Tonne
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TG	Target Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP-GEF	UNDP Global Environmental Finance
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WOFED	Woreda Office of Finance and Economic Development
yr	Year

Executive Summary

Project Information Table

Project Title	Integrated Landscape Management to Enhance Food Security and Ecosystem Resilience in Ethiopia			
UNDP Project ID (PIMS)	5559	PIF Approval Date	NA	
GEF Project ID	9135	CEO Endorsement Date	Feb 21, 2017	
ATLAS Business Unit Award No.	00100923	ProDoc Signature Date	May 12, 2017	
Country	Ethiopia	Date PM hired	Sep 25, 2017	
Region:	Africa	Date project office operational	Sep 25, 2017	
GEF Focal Area/Strategic Objective	LD3, Program 4	Inception W/shop date	Aug 29, 2017	
Trust Fund	GEF	Operational closing date (Planned):	April 2022	
Executing Agency/Implementing partner	Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Commission (formerly EFCC Ministry)			
Other executing partners	12 Woreda Administrations			
Project Financing	at CEO endorsement (USD)		At MTE (USD)	
[1] GEF Financing	10,239,450		5,215,161.30	
[2] UNDP Contribution	500,000		296,128.09	
[3] Government	14465431		8,115,416 In kind contribution	
[4] Other partners	NA		NA	
[5] Total financing	14,965,431		5,511,289.39	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS	25204881		13,626,705.39	

Project Description

This five-year, and over 10 million USD[1], "UNDP-supported GEF-financed project is implemented by the Federal Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (formerly Ministry) in six regions and 12 project woreda sites. Collectively these sites provide a representative sample of the agro-ecological conditions and typical land degradation and climate change issues in the country.

The project is a "child" project of the Sub-Saharan Regional IAP[2] Program funded by GEF and lead by IFAD (with number of GEF agencies involved at country level, including UNDP in

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[1] total budget envelop of USD 10,739,450 mobilized from the GEF and UNDP and parallel financing from the government of Ethiopia in kind contribution USD 14,965,431.

[2] Regional IAP Program - Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa – An Integrated Approach GEF Program ID 9070

Ethiopia). Through this integrated approach pilot (IAP) program, the GEF is seeking to position the management of natural capital - land, soil, water, vegetation and genetic resources - as a priority in the transformation of the agriculture sector for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This program supports 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in integrating management of natural capital and ecosystem services into investments that aim to improve smallholder agriculture and food security. The implementation arrangements of the IAP Program intends to build on the existing baseline of programs and structures at national and regional levels and be implemented via a portfolio of 12 national "child" projects, of which the Ethiopian project is the focus of this MTR.

In addition to the individual child projects the *IAP Program* is creating regional cross-cutting support to capacity building and knowledge management services that are intended to ensure knowledge and capacity is transmitted between countries and will contribute to transformative change in the sustainability of agriculture, maintenance of ecosystem services, conservation of BD, and greater resilience and adaptability to climate change. In this context, the Ethiopian project has a potential impact and significance, not just at local and national level, but in the region as a whole.

The Ethiopian child project aims to enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of food production systems by addressing the environmental drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia. The project intervention combines land management choices and Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) with water- and climate-smart agriculture, value chain support and gender responsiveness.

Thus, the project stated objective is: *To enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of the food production systems by addressing the environmental drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia.* To achieve this the project is implemented through three interrelated components: component 1 ensures effective multi-stakeholder platforms are in place to support the dissemination and uptake of integrated approaches; component 2 develops specific approaches and puts in place effective mechanisms to scale up across target sites and, more widely, in the country; and component 3 establishes a systematic monitoring, assessment, learning and knowledge management mechanism that supports influencing at a wider scale in Ethiopia. Infusing all components is a commitment to gender-responsive development, in which women stakeholders within smallholder communities play a central role in economic and environmental transformations.

The project was planned as a 5-year project – the projected end of project (EOP) date is April 2022. This means that there is 28 months of project implementation remaining (i.e. just over 47% of planed 60-month duration).

Progress towards outcomes

There was a slight delay to the start of the project following the signing of the UNDP project document in May 2017. As such, the project only began in earnest following the holding of the Inception Workshop on the 29th August 2017, and with the recruitment of the NPM in September 2017.

Following the slightly slow start, the project has made remarkably fast progress by the mid-term towards the achievement of the outcomes, with a few caveats.

Noteworthy progress includes the rapid establishment of operational capacity in all 12 Worada's by mid-2018, and the initiation of Kabele/Community watershed level activities from that point onwards. A very significant achievement has been the level of ownership of project activities achieved within Worada administrations, Kabele stakeholders and communities reflected by the total integration of project supported activities into their workplans and activities. As a result, the project has achieved very tangible results even by the mid-term. However, as mentioned, there are some caveats principally related to progress in the mainly pastoral sites. This are discussed in more detail in the main report text.

Though project progress in practice has been exemplary, there were some challenges initially faced due to a project design that, while broadly sound, lacks somewhat in clarity (it is not clear from the text what the project should practically do). Additionally, the poor set of indicators in the project "Results Framework" do not provide an effective basis for a realistic or transparent monitoring of project progress and impact, and as a result make fair and meaningful progress review challenging. These issues are also discussed in detail in the report text and recommendations to address them are provided.

The first component of the project addresses "*Institutional frameworks for enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services within food production systems*" and contains 2 Outcomes, namely:

- **Outcome 1.1** (outcome 1 in PIR) Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms in support of integrated natural resources management in agricultural landscapes in place
- **Outcome 1.2 (**outcome 2 in PIR) Policies and incentives in place at national and local level to support smallholder agriculture and food value-chains

The first outcome of Component 1 of the project seeks to establish, both at national and Woreda levels, mechanisms for stakeholders from different development sectors, and also communities, to communicate, jointly plan and implement integrated land use and rural livelihood initiatives. Over the course of the past two and a half years the project has been extremely successful in this regard having established:

- Integrated multi-sector steering committees, technical committees, and gender teams in 12 Woreda and a greater number at Kebele level.
- Approx. 44 Community Watershed Management committees
- A national multi-sector project steering committee, chaired by EFCC Commission but with members from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia Biodiversity Institute, Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Agency, Six regions Environment bureau's and 12 woreda Administrations)

The second outcome is more difficult to report on as the logical link between Outcome (and indicator) and the outputs is confusing. In brief, Outcome refers to Policies and incentives being in place while outputs and targets are solely about value chains. However, in terms of the RF targets it can be said the project has in the initial 2 years of implementation exceeded expectations (all 12 districts applied one or more value chain options for small-holder farmers).

The 2nd component of the project addresses "Scaling up the Integrated Landscape Management approach to achieve improved productivity of smallholder food production systems and innovative transformations to non-farm livelihoods" and contains 2 outcomes, namely:

- **Outcome 2.1** (outcome 3 in PIR): Increased land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management and supporting significant biodiversity and the goods and services this provides
- **Outcome 2.2 (**outcome 4 in PIR)**:** Increase in investment flows to integrated natural resources management

The first outcome under Component 2 is actually the heart of the project and where the outputs and activities for implementing and demonstrating the effectiveness of the Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) "model" are contained.

Outcome 2.1 seeks to support smallholder farming households to increase the efficiency of land and water use, and to diversify their livelihood options (both on farm and off farm) in order to increase incomes, reduce dependency on high risk single livelihood activities, and increase sustainability of livelihoods (reduce environmental impact and thus maintain ecosystem services).

This approach is integrated with activities to directly impact land degradation and ecosystem service losses; including the closure by communities of areas being degraded, their rehabilitation where necessary by physical and biological means (physical including check dams, contour bunds and trenches, etc – biological includes tree and grass planting); and reduction of biomass demand for energy needs through the demonstration and replication of biogas and improved stoves.

Though the focus of these latter activities is environmental, they also produce tangible livelihood and other benefits (for example, land closure and rehabilitation with fodder plants allows increased hay production that then links positively to zero-grazing high value livestock fattening initiatives supported by the project, reduced biomass needs saves valuable dung for manure use and reduces tree cutting, reduces respiratory health issues and costs, reduced time and efforts for collection, etc).

These direct short-term benefits help ensure incentives for maintaining land degradation reversal efforts. As a result, the likelihood that such efforts have sufficient time to become established and stable with real ecosystem service and biodiversity benefits is greatly increased.

Over the course of the past two years that the project has been operational it has already achieved significant direct impacts in the field in partnership with Woreda sector departments, Kabele development workers/sector representatives, and local communities. For example:

- Approx. 44 Community Watershed Management committees mobilized communities to undertake degraded land rehabilitation actions, and to effectively prevent any grazing on at least 40,695 ha of communal and 20,968 ha of farmland (61,663 ha. in total) thus resulted in dramatic levels of recovery, increased biodiversity, and provided rich new source of livestock fodder.
- 127 Self Help groups (mainly women and youth) supported to form cooperatives and enter profitable off-farm business, including ghee marketing, flour mill, carpet, dairy, etc.
- 28 biogas digester plants and 2841 improved stoves have been constructed/produced and used by households (with signs of spontaneous replication).

The second outcome under Component 2 focuses on the leveraging investments in integrated landscape management along the lines the project is demonstrating from the private sector, multi and bi-lateral donors. Up until the current time the project has focused on facilitating Woreda administrations to tap into and initiate private sector investments by local businesses, in particular those with some basis in maintaining ecosystem service benefits (such as water bottling companies). It has also undertaken studies to assess the options in this regard (for example, through better application of environmental mitigation laws to ensure developers compensate for impacts, private sector social responsibility payments, etc.).

In terms of leveraging multi / bi-lateral investments the project has achieved little so far. This issue is discussed in detail in the report, but MTR team would highlight the opinion that targets related to this Outcome were overly ambitious generally, and particularly so in regard to the MTR target. Clearly the leveraging of multi and bi-lateral investments depends to a great extent

on being able to show results to donors that are persuasive to leveraging funds and it was unrealistic to expect the project would be in that position during its initial implementation.

The 3rd component of the project addresses "Knowledge Management, Learning, Monitoring and Assessment", and contains 1 outcome, namely:

- **Outcome 3.1** (outcome 5 in PIR): Capacity and institutions in place to monitor and assess resilience, food security and GEBs

This main aim of this outcome is to establish an effective mechanism for the monitoring project impacts on the ground and the achievement of global environmental benefits. Technologies, such as satellite imagery, geographic information systems, and big data sources, will facilitate more efficient and reliable collection of data on land cover, water usage and quality, biodiversity, and other measures of resource inventory and quality needed for sound landscape management

Over the course of the past two years the project has made the initial steps for achieving such a monitoring system including the design of a web-based integrated system accessible to all the key stakeholders at Woreda and national level, and a system for on ground data collection using available digital technology (tablets and mobile phones) that can upload geo-referenced data remotely to the system, and acquisition of suitable satellite data. The system has been launched and training on its use is ongoing.

Achievement Summary

Measure	Objective /outcomes[3]	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy		N/A	• Some significant weakness in the indicators/baseline/ targets used • Difference in nomenclature between prodoc strategy text and RF, AWP and PIR
Progress towards Results	**Objective:** To enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of the food production systems by addressing the environmental drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia	**S**	From the evidence seen by the MTR Team the project has made effective and meaningful progress in all 12 Worada sites However, there have been some shortfalls in progress
	Outcome 1: Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms	**HS**	Functional Multi-stakeholder platforms established at National, woreda and watershed (community) levels and working very effectively. In addition to originally planned also Technical Committees at Woreda level and Gender Teams.
	Outcome 2: Outcome 2: Policies and incentives in place at national and local levels	**HS**	Review complicated by confused *Outcome to output* logic and inconsistent indicator targets (change of parameters) but considered to be ahead of targets (targets exceeded) in terms of value chain application.
	Outcome 3: Increased land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management	**S**	Project is on track or exceeding targets in most cases. However, there are some shortfalls in a number of sub-targets, specifically: agropastoral, HH with increased access to food
	Outcome 4: Increase in investment flows to INRM	**MS**	One target met; one target substantially missed For this reason, the rating is MS though a rating of HU (Moderately Unsatisfactory) could also be justified. However, this has not been applied for reasons detailed in text
	Outcome 5: Capacity and institutions in place to monitor and assess resilience, food security and GEBs (Global Environmental Benefits)	**S**	This rating is based on evidence presented of the work being done to establish a web based, GIS embedded monitoring system <u>No evidence</u> of the application of the "UNDP Capacity Scorecard". Thus, the rating may be considered somewhat "generous".
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management		**S**	The project implemented in an effective and efficient way –quickly established in all the 12 Woreda sites across the country. The project is extremely cost effective -works through rather than parallel to existing state and community structures As and where necessary, the project has adapted
Sustainability		**L**	High probability of sustainability - works through the Woreda and Kebele level administration and sector staff and through community structures such as the Watershed Management committees

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[3] The Outcomes are listed in the rating table as per the PIR (outcomes 1 to 5) rather than as in the prodoc for sake of simplicity – for more detail on issue of changing numbering/nomenclature see report main text)

Note on Ratings: During the MTR mission de-briefing there was some concern expressed regarding the rating "satisfactory" as it was viewed as an unfair assessment of project progress and impact.

The MTR team agree that in a normal context / language perhaps the "satisfactory" rating seems a little unappreciative of the project progress. However, this rating is based on the UNDP GEF 6 scale rating system and in this context, it should be noted that "satisfactory" is the 2nd highest rating possible. The only higher rating is "highly satisfactory" and the definition of progress necessary to achieve this rating is "the objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed <u>all its end-of-project targets</u>, without major shortcomings".

In the real world achieving this kind of progress is extremely rare as it requires not only the project to perform faultlessly but for all other factors to be conducive (project document to be perfect, national condition and climate to stay stable, etc.). Though this project has, in the opinion of the MTR Team, performed extremely well so far, it has not met all the targets set in the project document RF. Thus, in conclusion, the "satisfactory" rating is felt to be an entirely fair one.

Summary of conclusions

The overriding conclusion is that, with a few caveats, the project is on track to achieve the main objective and outcomes, and in some cases exceeding MTR targets and achieved or exceeded EoP targets. Furthermore, the progress that has been achieved in a manner that maximizes cost-effectiveness, capacity transfer, replicability, and sustainability.

The methods and model applied to achieve integrated landscape management (ILM) within project sites seems, based on current progress, to provide an extremely effective basis for widescale scaling up and the achievement of substantial national level benefits for food security and preservation of crucial ecosystem services and global environmental benefits.

A strength of the project design was a strong emphasis on ensuring the mainstreaming of gender issues in the context of food security and diversification of livelihoods. Project implementation has effectively followed through on mainstreaming relevant gender issues and activities during implementation to date.

The fact that the project is mainly on track is a testament to the people involved in the project implementation – most particularly the PMU and local stakeholders (Woreda Administrations). This is particularly the case given the lack of clarity that existed in the original project document and the rather weak Results Framework (in terms of indicators, baseline and targets). Although indicators and targets were absent under some outcomes, the PMU has designed/planned and implemented innovative indicators and activities towards livelihood aspects of the project which highlighted initial positive impacts.

A great deal of the project's success comes from the effective application of the National Implementation modality (NIM) which has resulted in a very high level of ownership of the project activities by the national (EFCCC), and local stakeholders (target Worada Administrations).

Additionally, the MTR team would like highlight the extremely effective manner in which the PMU has engaged with local stakeholders and ensured from the start a high level of ownership, consultation and participation at all levels (Woreda, Kabele, Community Watershed Committees, women and youth groups, and individual households).

The MTR team noted that, in the face of many challenges including rising population pressure, land scarcity and climate variability, rural land users in Ethiopia have been responding over the last decades by attempting to diversify land use (i.e. pastoralists are settling and growing crops, while previously mainly arable smallholder farmers in the highlands are relying more on

livestock and less on crops, etc). However, such a transformation of livelihood approaches is extremely challenging and comes with many environmental, and subsequently, food security risks. This project aims to support this diversification and demonstrate a model for doing so in an environmentally sustainable manner through an integrated landscape management (ILM) approach. It is therefore an extremely relevant and timely intervention with potentially significant national, and regional, impact.

Despite the general good progress of the project and its high relevance, there have been some clear shortfalls in terms of reaching RF targets. These shortfalls are, in the opinion of the MTR team, mainly a product of unreasonable indicators and/or targets. However, it is also clear that the implementation faces challenges in the mainly pastoral project sites and needs to make efforts to address this.

There is less than half the project's life remaining and much still to complete. However, based on implementation to date this should be possible.

Recommendations and Key Lessons Learned

A number of suggestions and recommendations are made throughout the MTR report. In the Recommendations Table (below) the most critical recommendations are summarised. Likewise, the key "lessons" to be learned regarding future projects design and inception are indicated.

Recommendation Summary Table

Rec#	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
Monitoring Issues		
2	**Carry out a revision/clarification of Project Results Framework Indicators, Baseline and Targets:** This includes a). revision of existing indicators/baseline/ targets (clearer language, quantitative baselines, consistent parameters, remove duplication, etc.), b). inclusion of clear and quantifiable GEB and FS impact indicators for each outcome (see below for additional recommendations on strengthening impact monitoring in the project). An example revised RF table is provided in the Annex of the report. It is recommended this revision is completed by no later than end of 1st Quarter 2020.	PMU, UNDP CO, RTA
3	**Strengthen Project monitoring and assessment of GEB and FS impacts in the field and levels of replication:** as discussed in the report**,** the lack of impact indicators in the original RF has probably contributed to the fact that existing project monitoring does not sufficiently follow through on activities to assess in a meaningful way the GEB and FS impacts – for example, number of biogas and improved stoves is monitored, **but** how that translates into fuelwood or dung not consumed, number of trees saved, Co2 not released, health impact, time/effort of HH saved, etc. is not currently quantified systematically. This aspect of the internal project monitoring needs to be introduced. Likewise, there is probably a need to more systematically designate "control" areas and HH's – i.e. places and HH's **not** part of project activities that can provide a basis for comparison. Finally, the project needs to also start assessing and recording levels of replication of methods/technologies introduced within other communities / HH's. It is recommended that internal project site monitoring that incorporates impact data (including controls), and measures of replication is developed by no later than end of 1st Quarter 2020. Some suggested activities and methodologies for achieving this is provided in the annex.	PMU
Implementation Issues		

Rec#	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
4	**Midterm Planning to consolidate initiated activities and Move forward with so far uninitiated ones**: The project has been extremely effective at getting "up and running" and has demonstrated that what is trying to do works. The challenge now is to consolidate early success by: a). Revising the RF monitoring Framework (Indicators, Baseline, Targets), and strengthening the internal project monitoring to better measure impact b). replicating already tried and tested approaches and initiatives to additional watersheds, HHs and Kabele in order to meet the total area and HH targets set. c). following through and functionally establish the web-based GIS monitoring system in a meaningful way d). initiating in a timely manner the Outputs and activities so far <u>not</u> started such as: PES, insurance, Vital Signs monitoring landscapes system, etc. Multiyear Planning at this stage (mid-term) to ensure that these 4 aspects of project implementation are rolled out in the most feasibly way possible in the remaining period of the project duration will be critical to avoiding potential problems. Thus the preparation of an updated internal multi-year workplan until the project EoP is recommended in 1st Quarter of 2020.	PMU
5	**Trouble shooting Implementation barriers in challenging Project sites (Agropastoral)** and **Learning from initial experience / beneficiaries feedback:** It is recommended that at this mid-point in implementation, and in consultation with the EFCC Commission, the project needs to assess the progress and barriers faced in the agropastoral project sites and identify either ways to try and overcome those, or pragmatic adjustment of expectation / targets in these specific sites. In addition, it is recommended that Project Coordinators in each Woreda undertake a quick review with local partners and beneficiaries of the experience gained during the initial 2 years of the project and the practical lessons learned in terms improving efficiency of the further roll-out of activities during the remaining 2 years of the project. It is recommended this is done during 1st Quarter of 2020 - Any decisions in this regard can then be incorporated into the updated multiyear workplan (see above).	PMU
6	**Enhancing Impact of the School Clubs:** As described in report text, the MTR team has some concerns on both the sustainability and impact of the school clubs, particularly in terms of what real incentive exists for the members. It is recommended that to enhance both the awareness/knowledge impact and the motivation of members, the project should introduce the addition of "Field trips" – a). to areas within the Woreda that show LD issues in practice and project initiatives to address them, b). to other project sites to experience other agroecological zones and situations. Planning for this needs to be incorporated into 2020 annual work planning and budget.	PMU
7	**Additional Support to Practical Research on Temperate tree species adaption and cultivation in the Highlands:** It is recommended that the project focus more resources to this objective, including seeking practical expertise and knowhow in this regard, particularly within East Africa (notably Kenya).	PMU, FAO, National/regional Academic partner Institutions, East Africa partners
Ensuring Sustainability and Replication, Leveraging Political and Financial Commitment.		
8	**Planning in advance the Strategy and Actions Needed to effectively Communicate Project Achievements and advocating ILM approach (as applied by the project) – I.e. A Communication and Replication Plan:**	PMU

Rec#	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
	There are no specific Outcomes/outputs or activities in the project document for ensuring systematic activities in the terminal half of the project to review lessons learned and to advocate the project ILM Model to the government or other donors as an effective approach for future sustainable rural development. This is a key need if the project is to meet its targets in terms of leveraged finances from donors, and if the projects experience is to significantly influence future government policy and programs. It is therefore strongly recommended that a strategy and plan for achieving this in the final 18/12 months of the project is developed (by end of 2020) and relevant activities added to the project work planning in 2021.	
9	**Recruitment of Project Communications and Advocacy Officer**: The above additional activities bring with them additional workload and the need for skill set/experience not currently available in the project. For this reason it is recommended the project recruit a national Communications and Advocacy Officer to take direct responsibility for the overall implementation of activities and to provide support and guidance to Woreda Field Coordinators on this aspect. Ideally this officer should be recruited before preparation of the "Communication and Replication Plan" and his/her initial task would be to help in its preparation i.e. recruitment recommended mid-2020.	PMU
10	**UNDP Ethiopia to apply and Advocate the ILM Model (as applied by the Project) in other Environmental and Rural Development contexts**: As highlighted in the report, the ILM approach/model as applied by the project is applicable to a wide range of natural resource use management contexts irrespective if their primary focus is environmental (as in case of GEF projects) or sustainable rural development, etc. Thus, it is recommended that the ILM approach/model is adopted into the UNDP Ethiopia "tool-box" and applied wherever relevant in other projects and programs in the future.	UNDP CO.

Key Lessons Learned		
1	**A rigorous and in-depth Inception Report for every project:** The inception phase of any project is critical for ensuring the successful future implementation, and usually involves a). an assessment of whether any factors have changed since project development, b). finalization of baseline / target data in RF if such is needed (as in the case of this project) and the updating / refinement of the original Multi-year workplan (plus initial AWP). The key findings and recommendations can then be presented at the Inception workshop. It is unfortunate that this opportunity to deal at the start with weaknesses in the RF was not taken during the inception phase of this project and it is strongly recommended that in any future UNDP/GEF project in Ethiopia this is done carefully and systematically, even if this results in some delay in operational start up.	UNDP CO
2	**Increased effort and attention to the preparation of a clear and impact orientated project Strategic Framework during project preparation:** As highlighted in the report, the project SF has numerous limitations particularly in regard to Indicators, but also clarity of format and logic of output/activity distribution. Every effort should be made in future project development process to ensure such limitations as are detailed in the report are avoided.	UNDP CO, RTA

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the review

1. The Midterm Review (MTR) of the UNDP-GEF project "Integrated Landscape Management to Enhance Food Security and Ecosystem Resilience in Ethiopia" was carried out according to the UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Thus, it was carried out with the aim of providing a systematic and comprehensive review and evaluation of the performance of the project to date by assessing its design, processes of implementation, achievement relative to its objectives. More specifically, the MTR aimed to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document. On this basis, to assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR also reviewed the project's strategy, and risks to sustainability.

1.2 Scope & Methodology

2. The approach for the MTR was determined by the Terms of Reference (TOR, see Annex I) and by the UNDP-GEF Guidance for conducting Midterm Reviews[4]. Thus, it was carried out with the aim of providing a systematic, evidence-based and comprehensive review of the performance of the project to date by assessing its strategy and design, processes of implementation and achievements relative to its objectives. As such, the MTR determined the progress of the project in relation to its stated objectives (through the assessment of results, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, impact and efficiency), to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on the results and lessons (both positive and negative) that can be learned from the implementation of the project to date. The MTR examined whether the implementation arrangements – including the relationships and interactions among the project's partners, including the UNDP CO, the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC), Woreda Project Steering Committee members, Kabele government workers, beneficiary communities, and other partners – are effective and efficient.

3. The MTR included a thorough review of the project documents and other outputs, financial plans and audits, monitoring reports, UNDP Project Document[5] and CEO Endorsement document, GEF Sec. Review sheet, Inception Report, Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), monitoring tools (including, for example, GEF-6 Food Security IAP - Tracking Tool for Child Projects), relevant correspondence and other project related material produced by the project staff or their partners.

4. The MTR also included a mission to Ethiopia between 24 November and 11 December 2019 (see Annex II for the itinerary of the MTR mission). The mission followed a collaborative and participatory approach and included a series of structured and unstructured interviews, both individually and in small groups (see also Annex II

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[4] UNDP-GEF (2014) *Project-level Monitoring: Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects.*

[5] This is a child project under the Food Security IAP, for which the PIF stage was not required (see GEF Sec. Review Sheet, page 3, column 3)

for a list of the people met over the course of the MTR mission). Site visits were also conducted i) to validate the reports and indicators, ii) to examine, in particular, any infrastructure development and equipment procured, iii) to consult with personnel in the pilot areas, local authorities or government representatives, project partners and local communities, and iv) to assess data that may only be held locally. Particular attention was paid to listening to the stakeholders' views and the confidentiality of all interviews was stressed. Whenever possible, the information was crosschecked among the various sources. This included cross-checking feedback and opinions between different gender groups including representatives of the Woreda Gender Teams and also within beneficiary households (a significant number of female household members only interviews to ensure a representative sample of feedback on various issues and meetings with mainly women Self-help groups, etc.). In addition, the review examined the achievements of the project within the realistic political, institutional and socio-economic framework of Ethiopia.

5.   The strategic framework towards which the project is working formed an important part of the MTR review process.

6.   The review was carried out according to the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and, therefore, ratings were provided for: i) the progress towards results, by outcome and by the objective, ii) project implementation and adaptive management, and iii) sustainability (and the risks thereto) (see Annex III). Overall there was an emphasis on supportive recommendations.

7.   The MTR was conducted by one international and one national consultant. The consultants have been independent of the policy-making process, and the delivery and management of the assistance to the project; the consultants have not been involved in the implementation and/or supervision of the project.

8.   The preliminary findings of the MTR were presented at a debriefing meeting at the end of the mission on 10th December 2019 at the UNDP-CO offices in Addis Ababa.

9.   Finally, the MTR was carried out with a number of audiences in mind, including: the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC), the regional and Woreda level authorities, UNDP-CO, UNDP-GEF RTA, the regional IAP Program, and the GEF.

1.3   Structure of the review report

10. The report follows the structure of Project Evaluations recommended in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects as given in Annex 5 of the TOR. As such, it first deals with the purpose of the review and the methodology used for the review (Section 2), a description of the project and the development context in Ethiopia (Section 3), it then deals with the Findings (Section 4) of the evaluation within four sections (Project Strategy, Progress Towards Results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability). The report then draws together the Conclusions and Recommendations (Section 5).

2   Project description and background context

2.1   Development context

11.   Largely dominated by an agrarian economy and experiencing the second highest population in Africa, Ethiopia faces many development challenges. Most of the

population still relies on rain-fed production systems for food and income security. Agriculture accounts for over 40% of GDP, employs 80% of the labour force and generates some 90% of export earnings, yet most agricultural activity still occurs within small, subsistence-level farming systems. Whilst average plot sizes vary by region, many households survive on less than a hectare each.

12.   Ethiopia suffers from food insecurity with average annual food production growth an estimated 2.4%, lagging behind population growth of 2.8% per annum. Major causes of food insecurity in Ethiopia include environmental degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, recurrent droughts and pressures caused by population growth. Across the country, environmental degradation has led to loss of production capacity, leaving crop cultivation and livestock husbandry struggling to withstand the immediate impacts of climate variability, including recent El-Nino events and associated floods and droughts.

13. The MTR team noted that, in the face of many challenges including rising population pressure, land scarcity and climate variability, rural land users in Ethiopia have been responding over the last decades by attempting to diversify land use (i.e. pastoralists are settling and growing crops, while previously mainly arable smallholder farmers in the highlands are relying more on livestock and less on crops, etc). However, such a transformation of livelihood approaches is extremely challenging and comes with many environmental, and subsequently, food security risks.

2.2   Problems that the project sought to address

14. This project was designed using the *Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment* (RAPTA) approach[6].

15. Components such as Stakeholder Engagement, Theory of Change, System Description and System Assessment were used by the Project Design team to frame the project's impact pathways and respond to the following questions that the GEF requested all Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) child projects to answer: *(i) Resilience of what? (ii) Resilience to what? (iii) What are the key characteristics/determinants in targeted systems? (iv) How is the project expected to influence key determinants? (v) How will the key determinants be monitored?*

16. The use of the RAPTA approach was being tested in this project's design and implementation. In line with the RAPTA approach the main External stressors (key determinants) were identified as:

- uncertainties caused by changing climate and impacts on the spatial and temporal pattern of rainfall,
- temperature increases,
- human (and livestock) population growth and movement, and
- changes to production and market conditions.

Of these changing rainfall patterns were highlighted as perhaps the single highest stress factor

17. The Internal stressors identified include:

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[6] The RAPTA approach was developed by the *Scientific and Technical Advisory Pane*l (STAP) of the GEF to guide countries on how to integrate resilience in the Food Security Integrated IAPs. It is being tested in this project's design and implementation. See http://www.stapgef.org/the-resilience-adaptation-and-transformation-assessment-framework/

- continuing lack of income security faced by sections of the rural population,
- combined with food insecurity for millions of smallholder farmers, agro-pastoralists and pastoralists.

The reasons for this were recognized as complex, but include low asset holdings and access to resources, inherent risk and variability in rainfall-driven systems, policy changes and other external factors.

18. *Vulnerability to external shocks of rural household small holder farmers*: The project highlights the fact that, due to the above, rural agricultural dependant populations remain highly vulnerable to external and internal stressors (such as rainfall variability, political insecurity, market changes, etc.) i.e. the line between "managing" and falling into destitution is very narrow easily crossed. In this context, the most affected within communities are women and the elderly – those who have fewer asset cushions and recourse to alternative livelihoods.

19. As a result, the project identified the need to directly target, prioritise and sequence actions that support transitions away from this undesired and vulnerable state and enable new forms of rural production, including those that engage in emerging local markets and rural-to-urban value chains. These were defined as sustainable "adaptive pathways" that address both internal and external stressors and assist in restoring food and income security in an integrated fashion.

20. The project identifies three priority ways to be addressed complex human-natural system dimensions:

- through restoration, or through reducing on-going resource-related pressures, particularly household demand for natural resources;
- enhancing income security and the productive use of natural capital assets (including by farmers, pastoralists and people using natural capital for manufacturing); and
- establishing pathways for alternative (non-natural resource based) livelihoods to reduce the potential impacts of further population growth

21. The key **Barriers** to more sustainable and resilient farming practices were identified as:
- Complex long-term impacts of landscape degradation in combination with,
- gaps in knowledge on how to respond (or capacity to apply existing knowledge).

By breaking down these barriers, the project surmises that resilience and adaptation can be enhanced as climate and market conditions change, and livelihood security is achieved through more sustainable use of natural-resource endowments and greater livelihood diversification.

22. **Whole System approach**: Consultation during project design with stakeholder in project target sites revealed that in many cases, interventions to address food security over the years have been piecemeal and 'project-dependent', leading to benefits that are fairly minor in scope and limited in duration. As a result, the project proposed a 'whole system' approach that looks at the full dimensions of food security including food access, availability, sustainability and resilience.

4

2.3 Project description and strategy

23. <u>The stated goal of this project is</u>: "To enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of food production systems by addressing the environmental drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia" (as a whole).

24. The overarching focus is the using of integrated landscape management (ILM) to achieve food production resilience in landscapes under pressure. ILM is defined as combining Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) [7] with water- and climate-smart agriculture, value chain support and gender responsiveness.

25. In order to address the identified stressors and barriers at a national scale (and have wider regionally impact through IAP program) the project identified 3 <u>complimentary pathways</u>:
- effective multi-stakeholder platforms to support wider <u>uptake </u>of ILM approaches demonstrated by the project
- the scaling up of best practices and proven approaches and technologies, (at 12 sites in 6 different regions with differing agro-ecological, socio-economic, cultural, etc. conditions)
- systematic monitoring, assessment, learning and knowledge management (generation, acquisition and <u>sharing of knowledge and experience</u>).

26. In other words, the project 3-pronged approach is to:

a). put in place/test the institutional and policy mechanisms/frameworks needed at all levels (national, regional, local) for taking and applying the lessons and experiences that the project gains from site level to national scale.

b). carry out in project sites the scaling up and better integration of existing INRM and other natural resource use best practices (smart climate- and water-smart agriculture packages, etc), value adding and livelihood diversification, insurance mechanisms, energy efficiency, etc in order to have a "whole system" impact – collectively defined as Integrated Landscape Management (ILM). The logic being that <u>the whole has greater value than the individual parts</u> (as each support and enhances the others).

c). to monitor, research and document the key lessons and experiences gained so that they can be fed into the institutional and policy frameworks and efficiently replicated beyond the project sites at national scale (and through the IAP Program in wider SSA region).

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[7] No definition of NRM is actually made in the document but is assumed to mean - managing the way in which people and natural <u>landscapes</u> interact and explicitly recognising that people and their livelihoods rely on the health and productivity of our landscapes, and their actions as stewards of the land play a critical role in maintaining this health and productivity. Application requires bringing together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation, and the future sustainability of agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry, etc.

27.   Assumptions: For each of the 3 pathways the project document has articulated the critical assumptions that they are based on and the actual evidence that support these assumptions.

28. Based on the above strategy and analysis the project contains 3 Components corresponding to the three identified impact pathways, and total of 5 Outcomes (2 Outcomes under Component 1 and 2 respectively, and one outcome under Component 3)[8]. Specifically, the Outcomes under each component are:

29.   *Component 1*: Institutional frameworks for enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services within food production systems. The two Outcomes under this Component are:

- **Outcome 1.1** Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms in support of integrated natural resources management in agricultural landscapes in place

- **Outcome 1.2** Policies and incentives in place at national and local level to support smallholder agriculture and food value-chains: This will be achieved through the following outputs:

30. *Component 2*: Scaling up the Integrated Landscape Management approach to achieve improved productivity of smallholder food production systems and innovative transformations to non-farm livelihoods:

- **Outcome 2.1**: Increased land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management and supporting significant biodiversity and the goods and services this provides

- **Outcome 2.2:** Increase in investment flows to integrated natural resources management:

31.   *Component 3:* Knowledge Management, Learning, Monitoring and Assessment
- **Outcome 3.1**: Capacity and institutions in place to monitor and assess resilience, food security and GEBs **Outcome 2.1**: Increased land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management and supporting significant biodiversity and the goods and services this provides

32. The analysis of the outputs and indicators under each of these outcomes is presented below (see Section 4.1).

2.4   Project Implementation Arrangements

33.   The project is implemented following UNDP's National Implementation Modality, according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Ethiopia, and the Country Programme.

34.   The Implementing Partner for this project is the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (formerly Ministry) of the GoE. The Implementing Partner is responsible and accountable for managing this project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP and GEF resources.

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[8] See Part II: Strategy within the project document.

35.   UNDP is responsible for project assurance, ensuring that the project is implemented in accordance with the rules and procedures for managing UNDP projects. In particular as a member of the Project Board, UNDP is responsible for promoting and maintaining focus on the expected project outputs; arbitrate on, and ensure resolution of, any donor priority or resource conflicts; contribute opinions on Project Board decisions on whether to implement recommendations on proposed changes; ensure that any standards defined for the project are met and used to good effect; and monitor any risks in the implementation aspects of the project. The project organisation structure is as follows:

Figure 1:

Project Organizational Structure

Project Board

Senior Beneficiary:
Heads of the woreda hosting the project

Executive: MEFCC (Chair); UNDP (Co-chair); BoEPA, BoA, BoWIE; EBI;EWCA;

Senior Supplier:
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Project Assurance UNDP

PMU: Project Manager, M&E and Finance Officers

Project Site Committee: Zonal Admin, EPA & offices; Universities; Woreda offices; NGOs; CBOs, etc

Local Experts Team at the 12 Woredas

Pilot Site Project Office (One per site): Local Project Coordinator; Environmental & Finance

36.   The Project Board is responsible for making by consensus, management decisions when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including recommendation for UNDP/Implementing Partner approval of project plans and revisions. In order to ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. In case a consensus cannot be reached within the Board, final decision shall rest with the UNDP Programme Manager. The terms of reference for the Project Board are contained in the Annex of the Project Document.

37.   The Project Manager is responsible for running the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Implementing Partner within the constraints laid down by the Board. The Project Manager function will end when the final project terminal evaluation report and corresponding management response, and other documentation required by the GEF and UNDP, has been completed and submitted to UNDP (including operational closure of the project).

38.   The project assurance roll is provided by the UNDP Country Office specifically through the Environment Programme Officer/*GEF programme specialist.* Additional quality assurance is provided by the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor as needed.

39.   <u>Governance role for project target groups</u>: Heads of the Woredas hosting pilot sites and the beneficiary communities in each target region will nominate a competent individual or a CBO representative to represent them on the Project Board. As representatives of beneficiaries, they will prioritise and contribute beneficiaries' opinions on Project Board decisions.

40.   The project site committee at each site consist of representatives of all the project's local stakeholder institutions and beneficiaries. Site committees are responsible for catalysing and maintaining linkage between sectors (environment, wildlife, forestry, planning, land water, agriculture, etc.). The site committees shall be responsible for guiding and coordinating the delivery of site activities. They should meet at least once every quarter to review work plans, review progress, discuss implementation barriers, agree on ways of addressing barriers, forge linkages, harmonize activities, exchange information and experiences, and provide guidance for implementation. Members of site committee should include Zonal and Woreda administrators, EPA, AO, CBOs and NGOs, local university and community members (men and women including elders and the youth). The Local Coordinator should support the operations of the site committee by running day-to-day affairs of the project, ensuring development of joint work plans, receive funds, deliver activities according to work plans, prepare reports and account for the funds in a timely manner.

41.   Thus, project activities at the pilot site level should be integrated into the existing structures, in particular to the woreda and kebele extension systems, CBOs and local NGOs (for sustainability), and, as implementation progresses and capacities increase, it is expected that village associations and local organisations as well as woreda councils will take on an increasingly responsible role in decision making, with the support of the kebele and woreda technical institutions.

42.   The total cost of the project is USD 25,204,881. This is financed through a GEF grant of USD 10,239,450, USD 500,000 in cash co-financing to be administered by UNDP and USD 14,465,431 in parallel co-financing. UNDP, as the GEF Implementing Agency, is responsible for the execution of the GEF resources and the cash co-financing transferred to UNDP bank account only.

43.   <u>Parallel co-financing</u>: The actual realization of project co-financing will be monitored annually through the PIR process, during the *mid-term review* and terminal evaluation processes and will be reported to the GEF.

2.5   Project timing and milestones

44. The project was planned as a five-year project – thus, the projected end of project (EOP) date is April 2022. This means that there is 29 months of project implementation remaining (i.e. just under half total duration).

45. The other project milestones, including the project end date for the project, are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. The project milestones including the projected end date for the project.

Milestone	Date
PIF Approval	NA- No PIF
CEO Endorsement	Feb 21, 2017
UNDP Prodoc signed	May 12, 2017
National Project Manager appointed	Sep 25, 2017
Inception Workshop	Aug 29, 2017
MTR mission commences	24 Nov. 2019
Projected EOP	April 2022

2.6   Main stakeholders

46. The Project Document exhaustively identified the project's stakeholders[9]. The table in the Project Document not only identifies the stakeholders but it describes their current mandate and their role and responsibility within the project. A copy of the table listing the key Stakeholders for the project, and their role/relevance is included in the annex of this report.

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[9] See the Stakeholder Analysis presented on pg. 33 of the Project Document and stakeholder list in annex of prodoc..

3   Findings

3.1   Project Design

3.1.1   Analysis of Section 2 of Project Document: Project Strategy (ToC) and Design

This project is a "child project" under the umbrella of the regional GEF Program Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa -An Integrated Approach (IAP). This program covers 12 countries, with child projects for each under different IA partners to the program.   Following the commencement of the above Program in approx. mid 2016 the Ethiopian child project was developed by UNDP, the designated IA in Ethiopia. The project development process was atypical of GEF full size projects due to its status as a child project of the regional IAP program and no PIF was prepared (instead an accelerated process was applied – i.e. an "Expression of Interest" (EOI) was prepared and submitted to the GEF). Following the approval by GEF of the EOI UNDP Ethiopia employed 2 consultants (one national, one international) to develop the full-sized project document and CEO Endorsement document. Following GEF Secretariat review this was revised and finalized / approved by GEF on 21 February 2017. Thus, in relative terms the project development and approval process were completed in the unusually short time of only about 7 months.

47. The project context and Strategy were developed using the *Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment* (RAPTA) approach[10]. In broad terms the analysis and strategy follow closely that of the regional IAP document. Thus, as in the Regional IAP, 3 "impact pathways" are identified, namely:

-   Building institutional frameworks for resilient food systems
-   Scaling up best practices in Integrated Natural Resource Management
-   Understanding impacts and sharing evidence to influence policy and practice

48. The ToC (see below) describes the first two of the above at the 1st "immediate outcomes" level (but calls them Components 1 and 2) that result from a subset of 7 "immediate outcomes", which in turn are a product of 6 "outputs". The 3rd intervention pathway is represented as an overarching aspect on the side and is called Component 3.

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[10] The RAPTA approach was developed by the *Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel* (STAP) of the GEF to guide countries on how to integrate resilience in the Food Security Integrated IAPs. It is being tested in this project's design and implementation. See http://www.stapgef.org/the-resilience-adaptation-and-transformation-assessment-framework/

Figure 2: ToC from Project Document

Fig 1. Theory of Change

49. The Strategy (ToC) section of the project document then goes on to describe in detail the 3 "impact pathways". These 3 impact pathways are then represented in Section 3 (Results and Partnerships) of the project document as the 3 "components" of the project, under which there are a total of 5 outcomes and 16 outputs.

Table 2: Comparing ToC with Results Framework (and Section 3)

ToC	*Results and Partnership/Results Framework Matrix.*
Two 1st level Immediate Outcomes (entitled components 1 and 2)) and an overarching issue (entitled Component 3)	3 Components
Seven 2nd level immediate outcomes	5 Outcomes
Six outputs	16 Outputs

50. In the MTR team opinion, though the Strategy and design / Results sections of the product document do contain some good analysis of the "stressors" and thence the "impact pathways", the overall strategy and design ended up being a rather inconsistent mixture of different terminologies and logical progressions. As a result, the final product is a rather confused picture of what the project will do and how it will do it. This first impression on reading the document was confirmed by feedback from various stakeholders during the mission.

51. In many ways the project is quite simple- it basically consists of:

> The core component – the application of practical Integrated Landscape Management activities in the field (watershed protection, reduction of fuelwood and dung demand for energy, diversification of both on farm and off farm livelihoods to increase resilience and food security – see simple diagrammatic representation below) – this is the heart of the project that demonstrates the validity of the ILM approach/model.

> Enabling environment component - The establishment of local multi-stakeholder (Woreda, Kabele, community) coordination/collaboration mechanisms – this provides the enabling environment for above, plus national equivalent to provide enabling environment for future out-scaling and replication.

> Monitoring and learning component - The establishment of data collection and monitoring systems to allow accurate evaluation of impact and to inform future replication, plus "action research" to likewise provide a better basis for out-scaling and replication.

52. This essentially simple (but effective) project concept / strategy was obscured by the way the project strategy was presented. The two main reasons for this are assumed to be: a). an attempt to stay closely within the framework of the Regional program strategy/design, b). the relatively short design period available.

53. In practice it might seem that the lack of clarity in the Strategy section has few serious implications on the specific outcomes and outputs contained in next sections the project document. However, as described below, these had some significant weaknesses and in part this is, we believe, a product of the initial lack of strategy clarity.

54. *Supporting the already existing trend towards diversification of rural livelihoods:* One final point regarding the analysis of the situation contained in the project strategy is limited recognition of the importance of the already ongoing transition by smallholder farmers in Ethiopia to more diverse farming. This trend was noted by the MTR team in all project sites but is particularly a factor in the agropastoral sites visited where previously entirely pastoral communities have over the last few decades begun to settle and have diversified from exclusively livestock herding to also producing crops. The reverse trend is observable in the highlands where farmers are diversifying from mainly crop production to greater livestock emphasis. This trend is not highlighted in the project analysis but is an extremely significant phenomena and is assumed to be a product of rural populations self-responding to the pressures of land shortage (population increase), greater climate instability and past conflict situations.

55. Such radical transformations of livelihoods bring with them significant dangers and risks however as cultural knowledge and resource use mechanisms developed over hundreds (thousands) of years become obsolete and in some cases a barrier. Pastoralists have little historical experience of crop production and traditional arable farmers the same for more extensive livestock production, etc. In this context the project, which is demonstrating and supporting such a transition to more diverse, but at same time ecologically sustainable, land use practices has an enormously important roll. Additionally, as it is "going with the flow" of existing changes in rural resource use, and directly contributing practical knowledge to communities that they value, it has much greater potential for rapid uptake and replication.

3.1.2 Analysis of Project Results section (part 3 of project document) and the Results Framework Matrix.

56. *Unusual and Multiple Formats*: Most UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects are described in the text as having "components" but usually these are presented in the Results Framework as "outcomes" – thus the terms component and Outcome are synonymous. Thus, many projects have 2 to 3 components described in the text and 2 to 3 equivalent outcomes in the RF. This project however has 3 Components, then for each component one or more outcomes, resulting in a total of 5 outcomes altogether. This is an unusually large number of Outcomes and has the knock-on effect of resulting in an unusually large number of outputs (16).

57. It is not clear to the MTR team why this format/terminology was chosen for this project. Apart from the impact on the clarity of logical flow from output to outcome to objective, it also complicates the situation in terms of AWP and PIR preparation. For example, in the AWP and PIR formats there is no provision for "components" so only the 5 Outcomes are present, but in AWP they are numbered Outcome 1.1, 1.2, etc. while in PIR Outcome 1, 2, 3, etc. The choice of having separate Components and Outcomes was, therefore, clearly not standard and its use has not helped ensure clarity.

58. In our opinion there was no logical reason why the components could not have been represented in the RF as outcomes, the outcomes as outputs and outputs as main activities. This would have been a much clearer approach and would have help with clarity of logical flow and been compatible with existing UNDP / GEF planning and reporting instruments (AWP, PIR, etc). It is recommended that in the future this issue is avoided.

59. Apart from the above format/terminology issue, there are some curious logic chains between some *outcome to output to activities*. For example, in Outcome 1.2 the Outcome is about putting in place policy and incentives but then outputs are about implementing value chains (see table 3 below).

Table 3: Issues with Outcome 1.2

Outcome	Output	Activities	Indicators	Baseline	MTR target	Comment
Outcome 1.2 Policies and incentives in place at national and local level to support smallholder agriculture and food value-chains	*Output 1.2.1 Value chain approaches integrated with sustainable production systems, including reduction of post-harvest losses*	i. Watershed management and development programs supported in critically degraded areas in 12 woredas to strengthen natural resource base ii. Water-Smart production systems developed in critical watersheds in 12 woredas to support higher productivity and income security iii. Non-farm economic development approaches established in 12 woredas to reduce pressure on natural capital iv. Programmes to prevent animal dung energy supply and restore organic matter to soils undertaken in 10 woredas	Indicator 6: Number of policies and incentives in place at national and local level to support sustainable smallholder food value chains	None	Policy implementation supports one value chain approach (e.g. zero grazing / dairying)	*Design issues / indicators*: Confused logic- Outcome 1.2 about policies and incentives at national/local level to support smallholder agric., and food value chains - But outputs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 **not** about putting **policies** in place but about implementing policies/applying value chains in practice <u>And</u> activities under Output 1.2.1 **not** about value chains (about scaling up watershed man., water smart production, non-farm incomes, etc). *Recommendations:* 1. Would have been better at inception phase to have adjusted Output 1.2.1 to be logical basis for activities and to have had indictors on what are very important activities in terms of their impact**. If still possible** better to change output 1.2.1 at mid term point to reflect activities and have new indicator to measure them. Leave indicator 7 as measure of value chain achievement
	Output 1.2.2 Selected value-chains strengthened	v. Value chain identification undertaken with specific reference to gender-equal approaches and intensive zero-grazing and dairying	Indicator 7: Number of smallholder farmers (60% of whom should be women) benefiting from sustainable food value-chains What is the number of smallholder farmers ?	None	One selected value-chain strengthened NB- indicator about no. farmers but targets about no. value chains	*Design issues / indicators*: There is **change in parameters** to be measured between indicator and targets – in indicator it is about number of **farmers**, but in target it is about number **of value-chains** Also targets are repetition of those under indicator 6. *Recommendations:* Adjust to clarify i.e. make parameters in indicator and targets the same

60. There is also illogical location of some activities – for example, activities under Output 1.2.1 are about <u>Scaling up of Integrated Landscape Management approaches</u> (see table above) and therefore should be under Component 2, Outcome 2.1. In the 1st AWP (for 2017) this was actually the pragmatic solution applied to the problem (i.e. watershed activities etc. were transferred to Outcome 2.1)

61. *Problems and issues with SRF Indicators, baseline and targets*: There are some significant weakness in the indicators/baseline/ targets used in the Results Framework including:

- change in parameters between indicator and targets,
- unclear/confusing indicator or baseline text,
- unfeasibility of some targets by midterm (and in one case entirely)
- repetition/duplication of targets between indicators,
- unclear basis /arbitrariness of some targets(s), and
- use of mostly process rather than impact indicators

Table 4: Some examples of Problems with Indicators, baselines and targets.

Outcome	*Indicator*	*Baseline*	*MTR target*	*Comment*
Change in parameters between indicator and targets				
Outcome 1.2 *Policies and incentives in place* at national and local level to support smallholder agriculture and food value-chains	Indicator 6: *Number of policies and incentives* in place at national and local level to support sustainable smallholder food value chains	None	Policy implementation supports *one value chain approach* (e.g. zero grazing / dairying)	Indicator is policies and incentive Baseline – none (policies/incentives) **But** Target is 1 <u>value chain</u>
	Indicator 7: Number of *smallholder farmers* (60% of whom should be women) benefiting from sustainable food value-chains	None	*One selected value-chain strengthened*	Indicator is number of farmers **But** target is value chain strengthened Also – the difference between target for indicator 6 and indicator 7 not significant i.e.. *Basically, a duplication*
Unclear/confusing indicator or baseline text				
Objective: Objective: To enhance long-term	Indicator 2: Number of jobs and livelihoods created through	*The current number of jobs and livelihoods created under*	The mid-term target would be for livelihoods of 50% of the total	Baseline description is very hard to understand

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	MTR target	Comment
sustainability and resilience of the food production systems by addressing the environmental drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia	management of natural resources, ecosystem services, *chemicals and waste*, disaggregated by sex, and rural and urban	*the project in six target sites is approximately 80% of the total population given the estimates of numbers employed in agriculture*	number of beneficiaries to be based on better management of natural resources through reducing stress on ecosystem services; 30% of the total based on additional non-farm livelihoods that are not dependent on natural resource thereby reducing pressures	a). how can baseline contain "*jobs and livelihoods created under the project*" b). unclear what is actually the baseline in terms of population? Why no figure?

Unclear basis /arbitrariness of some targets(s)

Targets component 2 seem rather arbitrary – For example, <u>*Output 2.1.1: 240,000 farm households in 12 pilot sites trained in improved soil and water management.*</u>

a). "In total 10,000 ha of land will be under ILM in degraded watersheds in each woreda, leading to a total of 120,000 ha under improved ILM".

This assumes that each Woreda has similar size and similar areas of degraded land which is obviously unlikely.

b). "2,000 households in each woreda within a shared watershed will be supported in soil and water management techniques. These households will then share lessons and facilitate wider uptake of ILM within the whole woreda and across other watersheds, supporting scaling up amongst a further 8,000 households"

This again assumes an exactly similar situation across the 12 Woreda's in terms of population

Unfeasibility of some targets by mid term (and in one case entirely).

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	MTR target	Comment
Outcome 4: Increase in investment flows to INRM	Indicator 9: Amount of financial resources ($) invested in Integrated and Sustainable Land Management at woreda/ landscape level	Less than US$0.5m current level of investment in ILM in 12 target woredas	US$5.5m investment leveraged by bilateral and multilateral organizations and the private sector	EoP 11 million USD. Not clear how this very significant figure was calculated and what was the basis for its choice.

Use of mostly process rather than impact indicators and targets

They mostly measure processes such as

- "established functional multi stakeholder committees", or
- "number of households applying ILM"

but not concrete impact, such as

- "increase in fodder from degraded areas in quintal/ha", or
- "change in income of target beneficiaries in Bir" or

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	MTR target	Comment
• "number of trees not consumed due to biogas/improved stoves introduction", • etc.				

62. The impact of the above limitations and weaknesses of the indicators include:

- Confused / unclear basis for monitoring and reporting,
- poor reflection of real project impacts on GEB and Food Security,
- challenging basis to review the project fairly (PIRs, MTR, and TE stages).

63. *Lack of any dedicated Outputs/activities for documenting experience and lessons learned, and Advocacy of project ILM approach (leveraging replication and investments):* One striking limitation of the project design is the absence of any dedicated outputs or activities related to documenting the project experiences, results and lessons learned and effectively communicating these to key stakeholder's, particularly central government and potential donors in order to maximize up/out-scaling and replication. Logically such an output/ activity could have been included under Outcome 4 (Leveraging Investments) but were not. The MTR Team provide recommendations on how this could be addressed in later sections.

3.2   Progress Towards Results

3.2.1   Analysis of progress towards outcomes

64.   There was a short delay to the start of the project following the signing of the UNDP project document on 12 May 2017. The planned inception phase was 2 months, but the final Inception workshop only took place at the end of August (29 August 2017) approximately 1 month late. This is not a particularly long delay.

65.   However, more significant than this slight delay was the lack of a through set of inception phase activities. Typically, an inception phase report should be produced at the start of any project that:

a. reviews any changes in the situation since project signature and updates accordingly

b. Reviews the project Results Framework and in particular the indicators, baseline and targets to ensure they are 1). An effective basis for monitoring, 2). Accurate / meaningful, c). feasibly to collect data for. In this project this was a particularly important step as many of the baselines were provisional and it was specifically stated in the RF that they needed to be confirmed at inception phase. Furthermore, as it now transpires, many of the indicators suffered serious weaknesses of various kinds.

   c. reviews the broad expected outcomes, outputs and activities and the multi-year workplan in the project document and "operationalizes" them (i.e. clarifies and adds detail on how they will be practically implemented). On this basis a draft AWP for the starting year can be prepared for presentation and approval during the Inception workshop and subsequent Project Steering Committee meeting (if deemed necessary).

66.   Regrettably, it seems that, no specific inception report was produced or presented at the Inception workshop held on 29th August 2017. It is regrettable that no detailed review and revision of the indicators, baseline and targets was made. The inception phase would also have been an opportunity to adjust the format of components/outcomes, etc. to make compatible with the normal UNDP reporting formats (PIRs etc).

67.   Though the project Inception workshop took place at end of August 2017 and reach some important decisions, the real operational commencement can only really be considered from the point at which the Project Manager (PM) was recruited at the end of September 2017.

68.   Fortunately, from this moment onwards the pace of implementation greatly increased. This included the preparation of an initial AWP that very pragmatically "translated" the project RF into a practical plan of action (including the transfer, for example, of activities from Output 1.2.1 about scaling up of Integrated Landscape Management approaches (i.e. watershed activities etc.) to under Component 2, Outcome 2.1. In the 1st AWP (for 2017) this was the pragmatic solution to the problem were transferred to Outcome 2.1). Additionally, the PM prepared a detailed plan of activities for each Woreda site to help the local authorities initiate the correct steps which the MTR team believe was an extremely valuable initiative.

69.   In addition to the above crucial planning steps it is clear that the project PMU very quickly and effectively engaged with the large number of Woreda authorities in the 12 project sites. As a result the project managed to ensure an extremely high level of Woreda level engagement and commitment that has been critical in allowing the rapid initiation of practical field level activities, their full integration into Woreda and Kabele planning, and meaningful impacts with the relevant woreda, kabele and community even by the end of the 1st full year of implementation (2018).

70. As a result, despite the initial slow start up, it can be said that the project then proceeded to make systematic and steady progress towards the achievement of the outcomes, even exceeding targets by MTR in some cases, but with a few caveats. In order to explore the progress of the project towards its objective fully, the MTR will examine each of the project's intended outcomes and outputs.

71. The first outcome is aimed mainly at achieving the "enabling environment" for application of an Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) approach at Woreda / kabele levels, and ultimately at national level. The outcome is stated as "Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms in support of integrated natural resources

management in agricultural landscapes in place " and the target at mid-term is "At least 12 functioning (convening and decision-making) multi-stakeholder platforms in place in the project sites; plus one at national-level".

72. The project is considered to have reached and exceeded this target. This is based on the fact that 12 functional decision-making multi-stakeholders' platforms i.e. Woreda Steering Committees, have been established in each target Woreda. These are chaired by the Woreda Administrator himself and include Woreda level representatives of all key sectors, including livestock, water management, SME development, etc., as well as project site level representatives (Field coordinators and finance officers). These Steering Committees have direct oversight and control of activities and are meeting every quarter to plan the future quarter and to review results of previous quarter plans.

73. Meetings by the MTR teams with Woreda Steering Committees in 5 Woreda's provided ample proof of their full ownership of the planning and implementation of project activities, and their strong commitment to them.   project resources and activities were seen as positive additions to their normal activities that both allowed more to be done but also extended existing efforts using a new integrated approach,

74. In addition, 12 Technical Committees, 12 Gender Teams and approx. 44 Community Watershed committees were established by the project and the Woreda Steering Committees in order to best execute the activities in the field. These were not specifically identified in the project document but were established on the basis of identified need. In the case of the Community Watershed Committees these are entirely community initiatives (see more on these under Outcome 3).

75. As per the project document, there is also a national level platform – this also acts as the overall project steering committee and has met so far 4 times since project commencement.

76. In addition to all of the above, the project also initiated another new activity under this outcome in order to target wider awareness and understanding in communities, particularly of children (and through them their parents by establishing and supporting 52 school clubs (48% of members are females). Although in principle a very valuable initiative there is some concern that the School clubs lack real incentive for the volunteer children involved and the environmental knowledge gained is somewhat "abstract" and not directly relatable to their "real life" situation. In this context the MTR team believe the impact of the school clubs could be enhanced through field trips to see and understand in the field the practical implications of the issues taught and to see the practical solutions the project is applying through the ILM approach.

77. Additionally, if feasible, cross fertilization visits to other school clubs would allow a deeper understanding of the diversity of agro-ecological conditions in their country and the range of environmental issues faced. Nonetheless the school clubs is considered a valuable additional initiative and an example of the pro-active and innovative approach of the project to achieving the objective of the project.

78. In light of the above the MTR team considers the project has not just met but exceeded the targets under Outcome 1.

79. The second outcome is difficult to evaluate as there is a lack of clear logic between the stated outcome (Policies and incentives in place at national and local levels to support smallholder agriculture and sustainable food value-chains) and the MTR target (one value chain approach). However, based on a review of the target only, the MTR saw evidence that the project has greatly exceeded the target with 6 different value chains supported, with at least one in every district (12 districts applied one or more value chain options, including: Dairy value chain 3 Districts, zero grazing fattening of cattle and small ruminant 5 districts, crop and vegetable value chain 3 districts, poultry 12 districts, fish value chain 1 district, maize and haricot bean 1 district).

80. The 3rd outcome (increased land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management and supporting significant biodiversity and the goods and services this provides) is, as discussed in paragraph 52 above, the core component of this project. It encapsulates the concept that a "whole-system" integrated environmental, land use and alternative livelihood approach (i.e. the ILM model) results in greater long-term sustainability and food security results than individual and isolated such interventions can have.

Figure 3: Simplified Objective Tree for Outcome 3.
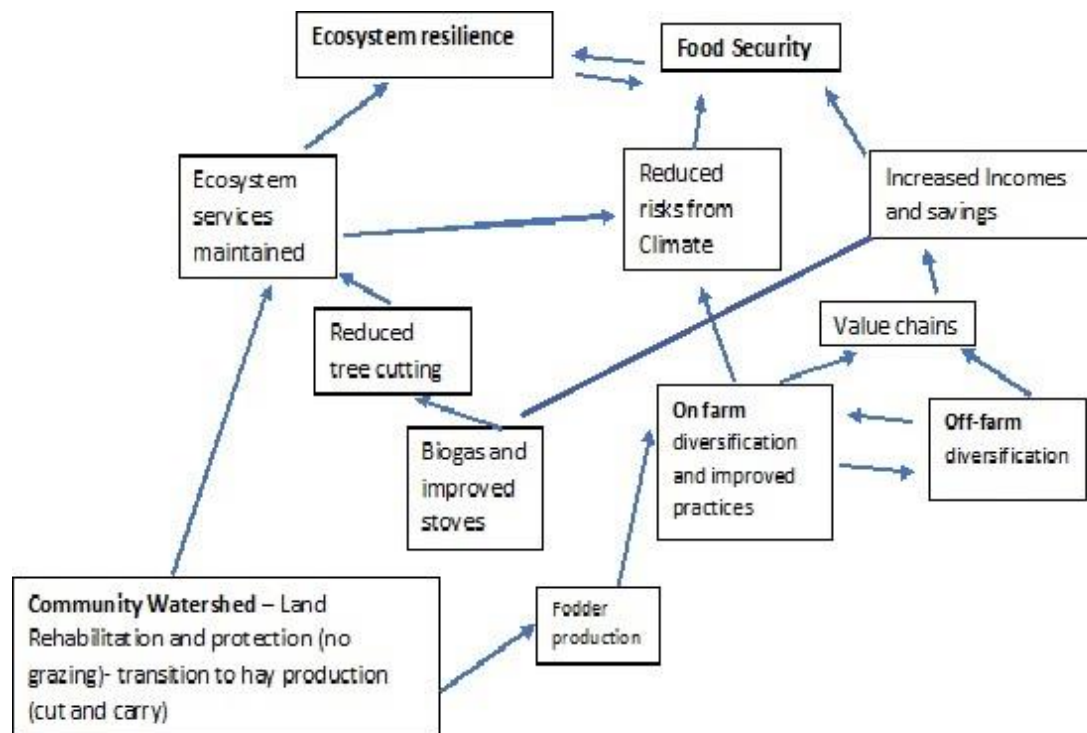
81. As can be seen from the above simple representation each of the 4 main components (community watershed rehabilitation, fuel and dung for energy reduction via biogas and improved stoves, on-farm diversification and off farm diversification) are strongly interlinked. However, for sake of clarity progress on each will be discussed below separately, but linkages also highlighted.

82. <u>Community watershed land rehabilitation:</u> Briefly this intervention involves helping communities in already deliniated watershed areas to a). identify areas degraded (suffering erosion, loss of vegetation, loss of topsoil, etc) due to overgrazing, tree cutting, etc., b). identifying and selecting viable community level methods to stop or reverse such degradation (closure and zero grazing, physical methods such as trenches, bunds, check-dams, biological methods such as tree and grass planting), c). providing training and limited material inputs (simple digging tools, wire netting for gabion preparation, tree seedlings and seeds) to build community capacity to implement selected methods, d). on-going technical advice and guidance to communities implementing rehabilitation activities, e). monitoring of impacts.

83. The project very realistically realized that initially many communities, without previous experience of the effectiveness and benefits of such rehabilitation activities, would lack the necessary commitment to undertake them. Thus as a first step in it first supported the small scale application of closure and rehabilitation (for example on 5 or 6 hectares) – the very remarkable levels of regeneration of grass cover that was quickly evident in only a short time was sufficient evidence for many Woreda authorities and communities to then designate significant larger areas (200-300 ha. for example).

84. The impacts of the community watershed land rehabilitation activities have, in the experience of the MTR team, been quite remarkable, and are an excellent demonstration of how simple low-tech solutions combined with the resilience of nature, can reverse degradation. The project has been perhaps fortunate that recent years have been relatively good in terms of rainfall, but nonetheless the effectiveness of the approach seems clear.

85. A short summary of project impact at MTR is as follows: approx. 44 Community Watershed Management committees have mobilized communities to undertake degraded land rehabilitation actions, and to effectively prevent any grazing on at least 40,695 ha of communal and 20,968 ha of farmland (<u>61,663 ha. in total</u>) thus resulted in dramatic levels of vegetation recovery, increased biodiversity (species diversity), and provided rich new source of livestock fodder. Approx. 9.3 million seedlings planted in the project woredas.

Photo 1: An initial demonstration area: left side without intervention, right side approx. 1.5 years post intervention (Dugan Fango Woreda)

Photo 2: *Part of larger area on hill slope designated for closure by Woreda and Communities post demonstration (Dugan Fango Woreda).*

86. *Importance of strong community cohesion*: An important aspect for the success of the watershed rehabilitation efforts is the capacity of communities to close areas for grazing and to self-regulate the continued adherence of all households in the watershed to this rule. In the communities with long history of permanent settlement (highlands and south) the level of community adherence and the strength of community control mechanisms seems to ensure the zero grazing rule is abided by. However, it was noted

by MTR team that in other more recently settled communities (formerly pastoralists) the coherence of communities was less and traditional mechanisms for regulating grazing not yet adapted to the new settled situation. As a result, the initial efforts by the project to establish zero grazing/closures via community watershed committees, as applied in more traditionally settled areas, proved ineffective. As a result, the project has shown commendable "adaptive management" and adjusted the approach in such areas (establishing cooperatives who have designated rights and responsibilities for the closures -i.e. rights to extract fodder but responsibilities for protection from grazing and for rehabilitation works). This situation demonstrates that such mechanisms for addressing LD have to be responsive and adaptive to different cultural contexts.

87. *Costs and Benefits and linkages to other components of ILM approach*: The establishment of closures/zero grazing areas and related rehabilitation actions have obvious short and long term costs – short term costs include the labour and time needed to undertake rehabilitation and protection, long term costs are the loss of grazing for livestock. For the approach to work there has to be sufficient benefits to incentivises communities to undertake them, and at least some of these benefits have to be reasonably quick in materializing if commitment is to be sufficient in early stages.

88. The key short-term benefit that the MTR team witnessed is the significant production of fodder grass in those areas closed to grazing – this materializes very fast (within 1 to 2 years of grazing pressure being withdrawn). This benefit can be enhanced through the proactive seeding / planting of fodder plants (suitable grasses and shrubs/trees). If at the same time the opportunity for communities to engage in a new and more productive approach to livestock management is introduced, that is directly linked to taking advantage of improved fodder supply, then a very positive incentive is quickly created. Thus, the link between this activity (rehabilitation/closure of land) and the on-farm activities related to "cut and carry" home raised livestock production is extremely important as it adds significantly to the potential benefits, and thus incentives, for the households in communities to be committed to the land grazing closures. This then ensures the closure is sufficiently maintained over enough years for the longer-term ecosystem service benefits to be achieved (better water regulation, increased biodiversity, etc).

89. *Impact monitoring and economic analysis:* As discussed in previous sections the project RF indicators are mainly process related and even those that more directly measure impact (such as ha. land rehabilitated, etc) are rather broad. In addition, the new monitoring and information system being set up by the project (see Outcome 5) will include monitoring of important real time / real life impacts (such as changes in vegetation cover over time, etc.). However, if the full and most meaningful benefits of the activities and approaches that the project is demonstrating are to be recognized and used as basis to justify further replication, then the MTR team strongly advise more in-depth assessment of impacts.

90. For example, an important aspect of the feasibility of the closure of land to grazing is that it results in fodder production, which in tern makes feasible a change to the "cut and carry" stall fed approach to livestock production. In this case it is very important to have some assessment of **how much** fodder is produced and what economic implication does that have i.e. how much of a benefit is it to household members of the watershed committee / communities?

91. More difficult but still possible is to have some level of assessment in terms of the longer-term ecosystem service benefits. If benefits are identified, then it is possible to

make a cost / benefit assessment i.e. it costs x amount / ha to undertake the watershed rehabilitation using the project approach but benefits equal x over time. This provides a much better economic basis and justification for government and donors to support replication than just providing data on how many ha. were rehabilitated by the project.

92. The same principles can be applied to many of the other project supported initiatives under this outcome. These will be briefly highlighted in further discussion in relevant paragraphs. Furthermore, the MTR team will attempt to provide some suggestions on useful additional impact assessment and monitoring the project could do and, the additional efforts this will require from the project.

93. *Reducing demand of rural households for wood and dung as fuel:* Virtually all rural households in Ethiopia still depend largely on biomass (either fuel wood or dung) as the source of energy for cooking. With increasing population and thus demand, this has obvious negative effects on the environment (tree cutting/loss of vegetation), but also an impact on availability of manure that could be used as a sustainable means to preserve soil fertility and condition. Additional costs include the health impacts, particularly for women, from smoke inhalation, and the consumption of time and labour collecting and preparing fuel wood/dung for use. Reducing demand for biomass energy is therefore an important aim in rural Ethiopia with multiple environmental, livelihoods and food production benefits. The project is building on already tried and tested technologies in Ethiopia i.e. biogas digesters and locally adapted fuel-efficient stoves. It does this by a). adding resources to existing Woreda plans for biogas dissemination and construction, b). the establishment of self-help groups, mainly of women or youth, into commercial cooperatives that produce for local sale the more efficient stoves. In total the project has supported the addition of 28 biogas digester plants and 2841 improved stoves. Evidence seen by the MTR team during field missions indicate that increased awareness and practical demonstrations of these technologies is leading to spontaneous replication within communities of biogas (increased levels of applications by households to Woreda authorities and some self-financed construction) and a rapid increase in demand for improved stoves.

Photo 3: A biogas digester in Menz Gera (highlands).

94. <u>Need for more detailed impact and GEB monitoring and Assessment</u>: As in the case of the Watershed land rehabilitation, the MTR main comment in regard to these activities is that there is a need to more meaningfully quantify and monitor impact in order to provide a better picture of impact and justification for replication. For example, the purpose of the exercise is mainly to reduce tree cutting and increase amount of dung

being used for productive purposes rather than burnt – in this case it is important to actually quantify what impact they have in these terms i.e. how much fuel wood is actually saved (compared to households not using the technologies) and what does this mean in terms of the annual reduction of fuel wood used ?. If adoption / replication is 10% /year what does that mean in terms of number of trees saved over 10 years ?.

95. This kind of analysis provides a meaningful measure of the real and potential impact of such activities and thus a basis for government and donors to assess true environmental benefits. Ideally, assessment and monitoring can go further and quantify the impacts of additional dung on productivity, reduced mortality and costs from reduced smoke inhalation, the benefits to productivity of households/women from reduced time spent on fuel preparation/collection.

96. Put together such data provides government and donors with a much clearer picture of the actual impact of such technologies and an economic basis for supporting further replication and up-scaling. It is therefore strongly advised that the project puts into place the necessary monitoring and assessment systems to allow such quantification of the full impact of such initiatives.

97. *On-farm diversification activities:* The logic behind diversifying on-farm production is that this helps ensure greater resilience of food production for mainly subsistence smallholder households (i.e. a single crop dependant household is highly vulnerable to seasonal and climate change impacts etc.). As discussed previously, many rural households/communities have already recognised the need to diversify due to the pressures of population, land scarcity, conflict, etc. and a self-driven transformation has been going on for decades – but such radical changes in livelihoods and resource use faces barriers in terms of lack of traditional knowledge and experience (and long established cultural norms). Thus, any efforts to support and make this transformation more effective and sustainable is critical.

98. The project supports this process in many ways. Specific methods / approaches are tailored to specific locations based on an initial consultation with Woreda experts (sector representatives), Kabele development workers and communities / households themselves.

99. This consultative and participatory approach is highly commended by the MTR team and is critically important in ensuring the uptake and commitment of beneficiaries, as well as helping to ensure the suitability of the support to any particular agro-ecological region and cultural context. It would not be useful to provide an exhaustive list of the various "on-farm" diversification initiatives supported by the project, but some include:

- Small scale irrigation farming using innovative technology (solar pumps, etc) and targeting high value crops on small medium scale (onions for example).
- Agro-forestry based mainly on introduction of fruit trees into arable farming systems
- Zero (or very limited) grazing systems (such as Menz sheep fattening for market, or improved milk cattle breeds).
- Introduction of new / alternative crops (vetch for fodder, improved grain varieties, vegetables, fruit and fodder trees, etc.)
- Improved bee keeping for households (i.e. the introduction of more efficient hives and awareness building / training)

100.   In summary, at the point of the MTR the project records indicated a total of 51,839 ha. of land is under more diversified production, and approx. 118,244 households are participating in more diversified production and livelihood activities. This has been achieved through a). collaborative identification of diversification options (with Woreda, Kabele and households), b). training and material inputs by project, c). identification and support to value chains.

101.   It is important to note that the economic viability of many of the above has been enhanced through support to strengthening "value chains" – by identifying markets, building trade connections and supporting producers to meet specific market demands, such value chain support by the project increases the potential benefits of the diversification. This is another good example of how the project has taken the basic "ingredients" in the project document and applied it to maximum effect.

102.   Another interesting cross-linkage reported to the MTR team during field visit was the beneficial impact that beekeeping had on the production of fruit trees planted in and around households (due to better pollination presumably). This is an example of unexpected benefits that can come from a "whole system" integrated approach and from intelligent diversification of production systems.

Photo 4: Examples of On-farm diversification – beekeeping

Photo 5: Examples of On-farm diversification – Sheep fattening

Photo 6: Examples of On-farm diversification – Onion farming with small scale irrigation

103. As in the case of previous activities under this Outcome, the MTR team identify a need to more rigorously assess and monitor the meaningful impact of the project activities in terms of the project main objectives (i.e. ecosystem resilience and food security).

104. Thus, the project needs to better evaluate a). the environmental costs/benefits and sustainability of the land use practices introduced (for example, some do have potential negative long term implications such as the solar pumps as they are increasing ground water extraction, while others such as the beekeeping seem to have only positive implications), b). the real impact in terms of food security – do the new practices increase food supply/incomes and does that translate meaningfully into beneficiary households having greater multi-year levels of food security?

105. *Off-farm diversification activities*: The logic of increasing off-farm diversification of incomes and food production is in effect an extension of the same logic as on-farm diversification i.e. the greater the variety of sources of food the greater the resilience of the households and the less likely pressure to be on natural resources/ecosystems.

106. In some cases the dividing line between on-farm and off farm activities supported by the project is quick narrow – for example, like beekeeping the support to increased household poultry farming could be considered an "on-farm" activity – however, the logic appears to be that it is a mainly women orientated activity and thus "off-farm". Other initiatives supported related more to value adding and marketing or to small scale cottage industry are more clearly "off-farm activities.

107. Again, the project is to be commended on the efforts made to collaboratively identify with local authorities and communities those off-farm initiatives most suitable and sustainable to given locations. Most off-farm initiatives are targeted to women or youth (who are the fastest growing sector of the Ethiopian population and suffer high levels of unemployment or partial low value employment).

108. The approach used by the project in the majority of cases is to a). collaboratively identify potential local income generating options, b) support to the establishment of self-help groups as legally registered cooperatives with all necessary paperwork (business licence etc), c). training on specific aspect of the cooperative activity and

inputs of equipment. This is all executed through and with the support of the target Woreda Administrations and staff (SME officer, etc). A summarised list of such activities / initiatives by cooperatives include:

- Collect, package and sell ghee in local market centres.
- Commercial operation of previously government run tree nurseries (usually integrated with other production such as poultry or fish farming)
- Flour mill
- Improved stove production and sale in local markets
- Carpet making using local resources (Menz wool) and tailor shop

Photo 7: Women Ghee Cooperative (Dugan Fango Woreda)

Photo 8: Women Four mill cooperative (Somali region)

Photo 9: Women/youth improved stove production cooperative (Menz Gera Woreda).

109.   Additional to the Self-help group initiatives, the project also supports a poultry program that is implemented in all project sites and is targeted principally at women members of households. The aim of the program is the increasing of incomes and household nutrition (surplus sold in markets). In addition to the simple supply of improved chickens and training of women in households, the project is looking at the wider system and sustainability by supporting Woreda level chick incubation and production.

Photo 10: Household poultry (egg production of householder in Menz Gera).

Photo 11: Chick production facility (Angalera-Tera Woreda)

110. *Monitoring and impact assessment*: as in the previous cases the MTR team identified a need to better assess and quantify the practical impact of the various off-farm initiatives in the context of the project objective (i.e. the environmental sustainability / benefits and impacts on food security).

111. <u>Problems and Barriers faced with Implementation of Outcome 3:</u> The most obvious problem under this outcome relates to the missed target in regard to area of agro-pastoral areas under ILM (target was 30,000 ha. and MTR reported achievement 5,528 ha.). This the MTR team believes can be related to 2 issues: a). the lower general capacity at both regional and Woreda level in the mainly pastoral areas of the country, b). the lower levels of community cohesion and less established land use system in historically pastoral areas that have been experiencing a transition over past decades to agropastoral systems. As was noted in the discussion above on activities to close grazing/rehabilitate lands, the latter issue impacts effectiveness of activities and required significant adaption of approach (from community managed to cooperative managed). Such testing and subsequent adjustment clearly delayed implementation. The former issue has meant that rolling out activities in the field has been slower. It is expected that with the increased experience achievements under this target will accelerate. However, it is also recommended to review the situation and to either adjust expectations in line with realistic forecasts of impact or make other adjustments that will improve effectiveness of activities generally in these sites, and specifically in regard to agropastoral areas rehabilitation.

112. *Outcome 4*: This outcome was based on the expectation that the project, through demonstration of results in the field and engagement with government, donors and the private sector, would leverage considerable new financing for ILM. As discussed elsewhere in the report the targets generally, and particularly for the MTR, seemed to be overly ambitious (5.5 million USD by MTR). The MTR team could find no clear basis for how this target were reached either in the project document or elsewhere. It is indeed unfortunate that they were not reviewed at project inception phase and realistically adjusted.

113. The MTR target figure is particularly difficult to understand as it seems to assume that leveraging resources would be a linear process starting from project start up and continuing at a steady rate to the project end – thus it is exactly 50% of the total EoP target. Clearly this is not how events occur in real life and it was always going to be the case that most funds would be leveraged in the latter part of the project once on-ground results were achieved and provided a justification and basis to advocate additional investments.

114. To date the project has sensibly not attempted to leverage multi or bilateral funding (as it concentrated instead on achieving results that would form a basis for such efforts in due course). However, it has made efforts to identify options for leveraging investments from the gradually emerging Ethiopian private sector and initiate some pilot efforts to put these options into practice. Two innovative funding mechanisms are applied (EMP and PSSR) to promote private sector to fund ILM activities (achievement is approx. 12,500 USD). The project is waiting "Payment for ecosystem service" legislation to pass and be enacted by the government before follow-up on this option.

115. Additional to the efforts to leverage private sector financing, the MTR team would recommend that the project needs to start collating the already significant results and lessons learned and communicating those effectively to donors as a basis for leveraging additional funds.

116.   *Outcome 5*: This outcome focuses on achieving a system of evidence-based Monitoring and Assessment, Knowledge Management and Learning within which local stakeholders will be key actors. Activities under this outcome were intended to focus on monitoring and assessment of whether institutional frameworks, integrated approaches and initiatives for transformation to new livelihoods have a positive impact on resilient food systems and the generation of GEBs. Achievements to date include a). A web based, GIS embedded system for multi scale monitoring of ecosystem services and global environmental benefits (GEB) developed and training on its application and functional operation underway - system design completed and officially launched by EFCC Commission. Training for project Field Coordinators (who will then train Woreda level staff) is ongoing, b). Action research by local Universities (examples include research into new tree species for highlands by Debre Birhan University, adaptive early maturing fruit plants by Wolaita Sodo University in Dugan Fango, research by Haremaya university in Doba woreda to improve soil fertility, research by Hawassa University on adaptability of improved maize and haricot bean verities for Bilate zuria woreda, etc).

117.   The project in collaboration with innovator of the green bag concept (non-plastic natural material bags) provided practical training on the production of green bag technology. The training was provided to environmental school clubs members in four project woredas (Angolelana Tera , Doba, Dugun Fango and Chiro woredas). Following the training school club members are making the green bag and demonstrated their product for their respective woreda community. The woreda's are also interested to scale up the technology and practice at the enterprise level.

118.   <u>Issue of Action Research on trees adaption in Highlands</u>: One feature of the Ethiopian Highlands notable to the MTR Team leader was the extremely high dominance of introduced Eucalyptus trees (mainly *Eucalyptus globulus*). Eucalyptus was introduced apparently in approx. 1895 as a way to counter widespread deforestation of slow growing indigenous species of trees and has been quite remarkable in filling the environmental and socio-economic needs (fast growing, ecologically adaptable, disease resistant, can be coppiced, good fuel, good timber for local needs, etc). There are some environmental negatives, but most recent studies suggest these are overstated (high water consumption, suppression of undergrowth and lack of habitat for indigenous wildlife). Thus, it is probably realistic to assume that Eucalyptus sp. Will remain important in the future, and rightly so. However, having such a high dependence on such a narrow species diversity for such critical services is inherently risky, especially given the likelihood of climate changes in the near future and potential for new diseases. Ideally, Ethiopia should start to promote and plant more indigenous species however its recognized that this has its barriers (mainly in terms of slow growth and less practical applications for rural populations who are the main actors for tree planting in the country). Given the climate of the highlands there would theoretically be scope for identifying and testing the viability of suitable temperate tree species that could meet some of the same environmental and socio-economic "niches" as Eucalyptus and enhance overall diversity of environmental and timber tree sector.

119.   Perhaps of greater socio-economic and food security potential would be greater research and field testing / adaption of <u>temperate fruit trees.</u> Apple trees are already been tested and seedlings are available (have been supplied by the project to some households). However, based on experience from Kenya there would seem to be the potential to greatly extend the use and introduction of other varieties of temperate fruit

tree species (in particular, plum and apricot). In this context, the MTR team would applaud the support of the Project to action research on this issue and suggest that this is an issue of significance that would be worth pursuing further.

120.   Progress on this outcome seems to be on track but evaluation is complicated by the inappropriate indicator (UNDP capacity Scorecard) and lack of clarity about if it was ever actually applied (the MTR team so know evidence this scorecard mechanism was ever applied at project preparation, inception or since). In any case there is clearly much further work required to roll out in practice the GIS based monitoring system and to initiate additional aspects (such as the "Vital Signs Landscape monitoring approach, etc).

Table 5. The Project Results Framework showing the MTR status and the MTR comments and ratings (as per required format in TOR)

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
Objective: Objective: To enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of the food production systems by addressing the environmental drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia	Indicator 1: Number of new partnership mechanisms with funding for sustainable management solutions of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste at national and/or sub-national level, disaggregated by partnership type	The Sustainable Land Management Program (1 example), funded by GIZ and implemented by the Min of Agriculture	The project started discussion with EC supported Regreening Africa project to support each other during implementation and establish partnership in the long run	The number of partnership mechanisms at a national level increases to two under the Ethiopia project (Integrated Land Management)	The continuance of the ILM program through institutional sustainability and engagement in national and regional, sub-regional institutions (the SLM Program will have closed by 2017)	Two level of partnership mechanisms developed 1.Federal level: *Project Steering Committee* (with Min. Ag., Min.Water, Irrigation & Energy, Ethiopia BD Institute, National Meteorology Agency, and Wildlife Cons. Authority. 2. District level: 12 Woreda Steering committees under W. Administrator (Agric, Env, finance, Education, Gender and youth, Coops and SME development offices) 6 Universities and one Agriculture Research Centre	S	From the evidence seen by the MTR Team the project has made effective and meaningful progress in all 12 Worada sites and is fostering an effective partnership with local administrations, sector extension workers and communities with already impressive results after only just over 2 years of real field works. These directly impact- agricultural productivity/diversity and therefore food security, as well as stopping/reversing

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[11] Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards
[12] Populate with data from the Project Document
[13] If available
[14] Colour code this column only
[15] Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achieve ment Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
	Indicator 2: Number of jobs and livelihoods created through management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste, disaggregated by sex, and rural and urban	The current number of jobs and livelihoods created under the project in six target sites is approximately 80% of the total population given the estimates of numbers employed in agriculture	The project is finalizing study to identify on farm livelihood options and nutrition sensitive agriculture. 120,000 households selected and trained to engage in the on-farm livelihood option.	The mid-term target would be for livelihoods of 50% of the total number of beneficiaries to be based on better management of natural resources through reducing stress on ecosystem services; 30% of the total based on additional non-farm livelihoods that are not dependent on natural resource thereby reducing pressures	livelihoods of 100% of the total beneficiaries to be based on better management of natural resources through reducing stress on ecosystem services; 60% of the total based on non-farm livelihoods that are not dependent on natural resources	Difficult to assess due to very unclear Indicator and baseline. Specifically, no baseline figure which makes it problematic to then calculate % change at MTR. Additionally, indicator seems to essentially be trying to track same basic thing as Indicator 3. Thus, MTR team considers the essence of the target is on track (minor % below)		LD degradation and promoting off farm livelihoods (again enhancing food security and resilience). However, there have been some shortfalls in progress, particularly in regard to leverage of additional financing and impacts in pastoral land use areas. For this reason, the overall objective rating at MTR is S (satisfactory) rather than HS.
	Indicator 3: Number of direct project beneficiaries. 1,440,000 people (12 woredas; 20,000 households in each woreda (on average six people in each HH)) [including gender disaggregated data – at least 50% of total beneficiaries will be women	10% of existing beneficiaries currently engaged in integrated landscape management	A total of 120,000 HH selected in 12 districts, trained and supported with inputs and started working on integrated landscape management activities	50% (720,000) (120,000 HHs)	100% (1,440,000) (240,000 HHs) (target of 50% of beneficiaries being women)	118244 HH based on sum table submitted at MTR. As this is 49% (i.e. only 1% short of the target) this target is assessed to be on track.		

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Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
Outcome 1: Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms in support of integrated natural resources management in agricultural landscapes in place	Indicator 4: Number of multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms in place to support integration of natural resources management in food production practices [including gender dis-aggregated data on participation]	Agricultural water management platform and one other at national level	12 decision making Multi Stakeholders platforms and 12 landscape management technical committee are in place at project sites. A national Decision-making MSP is also set up leading the project at national level.	At least 12 functioning (convening and decision-making) multi-stakeholder platforms in place in the project sites; plus one at national-level [including gender dis-aggregated data on participation]	At least 12 functioning (convening and decision-making) multi-stakeholder platforms in place in the project sites; plus one at national-level [including gender dis-aggregated data on participation]	12 functional decision-making multi-stakeholders platforms one in each district. In addition, 12 Technical Committes, 12 Gender Teams and approx.. 44 Community Watershed committes. There is one national level platform making high level decisions. The project established and supported 52 school clubs where 48% of members are females In light of the above the MTR team considers the project has not just met but exceeded the target	HS	The project has exceeded MTR targets (actually achieved EoP target)
	Indicator 5: Number of gender-responsive- & age-sensitive decision-support tools and participatory processes for INRM in food production practices in place	None	12 gender teams are organized at project sites. The gender teams conducted community conversation to identify gender issues on INRM and Food security. The project is hired a consultant to develop gender/age sensitive decision support tool.	At least one gender/age-sensitive decision-support tool and participatory process applied that leads to more gender equitable outcomes	Two gender-responsive/age-sensitive decision-support tools and participatory processes applied that lead to more gender-responsive outcomes	One gender sensitive decision support tool is developed (gender sensitive socio-economic indicators). Gender inclusiveness training provided to key community members 6394 (2547 men 4088 women). Gender Community conversations carried out and decisions reached. Gender teams active in almost all Woreda and play role in Woreda and Kabele level planning and implementation. Based on above the MTR team consider target achieved		

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
Outcome 2: Policies and incentives in place at national and local levels to support smallholder agriculture and sustainable food value-chains	Indicator 6: Number of policies and incentives in place at national and local level to support sustainable smallholder food value chains	None	The project identified HHs who can participate in the value chain development. This selection will be validated after the detailed value chain study	Policy implementation supports one value chain approach (e.g. zero grazing / dairying)	Policy implementation supports two value chain approaches	A value chain analysis study conducted in each of the 12 districts 12 districts applied one or more Value chain options, including: Dairy value chain 3 Districts, zero grazing fattening of cattle and small ruminant 5 districts, crop and vegetable value chain 3 districts, poultry 12 districts, fish value chain 1 district, maize and haricot bean 1 district. The MTR saw evidence that the project has greatly exceeded the target with 6 different value chains supported at least one in every district.	S	Under this outcome the project has exceeded 2 indicators, is on-track with 2 and has significantly under achieved on one indicator. In regard to the latter there are clear reasons and challenges facing the project and it has shown adaptive management to address them. Thus, the overall rating is considered Satisfactory rather than highly satisfactory.
	Indicator 7: Number of smallholder farmers (60% of whom should be women) benefiting from sustainable food value-chains	None	The project is conducting a value chain study to identify commodities for each project site.	One selected value-chain strengthened	Two selected value chains strengthened	See above. This target is essentially the same as previous one.		

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
Outcome 3: Increased land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management and supporting significant biodiversity and the goods and services this provides [included gender disaggregated data on land ownership / engagement in diversification / MHH and FHH requiring food assistance	Indicator 8: Extent in ha of land area and agro-ecosystems under Integrated Land Management [included gender disaggregated data on land ownership / engagement in diversification / MHH and FHH requiring food assistance]	a.10,000 ha under ILM in 12 site woredas that also enhances biodiversity		60,000 ha with improved soil and water management that also enhances biodiversity Target to be confirmed at inception phase	120,000 ha with improved soil and water management that also enhances biodiversity	61,663 ha. (40695 ha of communal and 20968 ha of farmland rehabilitated) 9.3 million seedlings planted in the project woredas.	S	The project has achieved (just over or just under) the majority of the targets under this outcome. The main exception was the target c). to achieve 30,000 ha of agro-pastoral systems under integrated land management – in practice only about 5,528 ha. were achieved. In this respect 3 factors are considered by MTR team as noteworthy: a). the target was meant to be reviewed at the inception phase but this does not seem to have occurred, b). the agro-pastarol sites are undoubtably much more challenging areas to implement change, c). the target was 50% or EoP target which was probably not realistic. In view of all of above an overall S (satisfactory) rating is given for this Outcome.
		b.10,000 ha under diversified production in 12 site woredas;		60,000 ha under diversified production Target to be confirmed at inception phase	120,000 ha under diversified production	51,839 hectares of land under diversified production (minor level below target based on PIR)		
		c.5,000 ha under ILM in agro-pastoral systems	A study to identify mechanisms to integrate pastoral and agro-pastoral systems in to landscape management. The study is covering the two pastoral regions and four districts. The total land size in the target is 10,000 ha	30,000 ha of agro-pastoral systems under integrated land management Target to be confirmed at inception phase	60,000 ha of agro-pastoral systems under integrated management	5,528 hectares of agro-pastoral system under ILM . Significantly below target		

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
		d. 30,000 households in 12 site woredas currently requiring **food security assistance** Baseline to be confirmed at inception phase	The project finalized a study to identify non-farm rural livelihood option that can be applied in the project sites.	120,000 households with **increased access to food** through enhanced production and livelihoods diversification including off-farm activities (i.e. number of households no longer requiring food aid assistance increases) Target to be confirmed at inception phase	240,000 households with increased access to food through enhanced production and livelihoods diversification (i.e. number of households no longer requiring food aid assistance increases)	118244 HH based on sum table submitted at MTR are participating in enhanced production and livelihood activities Similar target to Indicator 3. Seems baseline and targets not adjusted at inception phase		
Outcome 4: Increase in investment flows to INRM	Indicator 9: Amount of financial resources ($) invested in Integrated and Sustainable Land Management at woreda/ landscape level	Less than US$0.5m current level of investment in ILM in 12 target woredas	The project is hiring a consultant to identify investment option in integrated and sustainable land management	US$5.5m investment leveraged by bilateral and multilateral organizations and the private sector	US$11m investment leveraged by bilateral and multilateral organizations and the private sector	Project has supported the leveraging of approx. 12,500 USD Target not reached but MTR team considers was probably unfeasible and could not find a basis for it (how was calculated)		

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
		Two innovative funding mechanisms in place at local or national level, including payment for alternative energy use to reduce carbon loss within vulnerable environments	The project is hiring a consultant to study and propose the innovative funding mechanisms	Five innovative funding mechanisms / incentive schemes in place at local or national level	10 innovative funding mechanisms / incentive schemes in place at local or national level	Two innovative funding mechanisms are applied (EMP and PSSR) to promote private sector to fund ILM activities. The project is waiting Payment for ecosystem service legislation to pass and be enacted by the government Payment for alternative energy use to reduce carbon loss within vulnerable environment is not yet started. MTR team again believe there was insufficient basis to justify the targets under this indicator but, nonetheless, it was clearly not met (no change from baseline).	MS	Despite the fact that the project has significantly missed achieving the targets set under this Outcome the MTR team has decided on a MS (moderately satisfactory) rating rather than a HU (moderately unsatisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) rating. This is because in our opinion the targets were unfeasible and should have been adjusted at inception stage. Furthermore, the project has managed to apply 2 innovative mechanisms and leverage some private sector financing.

Project Strategy	Indicator[11]	Baseline Level[12]	Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)	Midterm Target[13]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[14]	Outcome Achievement Rating[15]	Justification for Rating
Outcome 5: Capacity and institutions in place to monitor and assess resilience, food security and GEBs (Global Environmental Benefits	Indicator 10: Improved score (%) in capacity of institutions to monitor ecosystem resilience and GEBs [as measured by UNDP Capacity Scorecard]	Less than 30% score in capacity of institutions to monitor ecosystem resilience, food security and GEBs (tbc at inception phase)		30% capacity score	50% capacity score	A web based, GIS embedded system for multi scale monitoring of ecosystem services and global environmental benefits (GEB) developed and training on its application and functional operation underway. System design completed and officially launched	S	The MTR team faced a problem in terms of indicator 10 as it specifies the use of the UNDP capacity scorecard to measure progress but no such scorecard seems to have been applied. Thus, progress is based on evidence seen (System training event, online resource).
	Indicator 11: Number of gender-responsive systems/ initiatives in place to monitor multi-scale ecosystem resilience, food security and GEBs at national and landscape levels sites	No gender-responsive system/initiative in place to monitor multi-scale ecosystem resilience, food security and GEBs in project/program implementation in the 12 sites		At least one gender-responsive multi-scale monitoring of ecosystem services, food security and GEBs system/initiative established at national and landscape levels	At least two gender-responsive systems/initiative in place to monitor multi-scale ecosystem resilience, food security and GEBs established at national and landscape levels	36 district level gender team members trained on gender responsive socio-economic indicators. The 12 districts developed gender mainstreaming plan. Gender teams integrated into Wordeda Steering committee'sdecision making process.		In terms of the gender aspect ample evidence was seen on paper and in practice at field level to justify the rating.

3.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving project objectives

121. Broadly, the project is progressing well towards achieving its objectives, as discussed above. However, the MTR identify 3 sets of potential barriers to achievement of the project results:

122. *Capacity and Cultural / traditional land use experience barriers in mainly Pastoral Woreda's*: this has already been discussed in previous sections.

123. *Impact monitoring*: likewise, the need for more in-depth and meaningful assessment and monitoring of project activities impact has been discussed previously. Its importance lies in a). achieving an accurate picture of real impacts and, b). providing a powerful basis for advocacy and ensuring replication / investment of the ILM approach as applied by the project.

124. *Lack of dedicated outputs/activities dedicated to documenting experience and lessons learned as basis for advocating replication / leveraging additional resources*: As discussed briefly under the project Strategy and design section, the project lacks specifically dedicated outputs/activities related to documenting results, experience and lessons learned, and packaging these in a way that effectively communicates them to the government/donors and thereby helps ensure the adoption of the ILM model at wider scales (replication within government and donor financed support to government).

125. In the MTE team's experience, the effective undertaking of these activities is a great deal more time consuming and difficult to do than generally perceived by PMU's and IA's. However, their importance to the level of awareness, uptake and replication of project results, and thereby long-term impact and sustainability, can be very profound.

126. The MTR team therefore identify the lack of such outputs / activities as a serious potential barrier to the long-term impact of the project and would strongly advise the addition of concrete pre-planning to ensure this aspect is addressed systematically and effectively.

3.2.3 Management arrangements

127. The implementation arrangements are described in Section 3.4. The project is being implemented in 6 different regions and 12 different Woreda's so faced an extremely challenging task. Despite these challenging circumstances, the project is being implemented in a very effective way and the levels of stakeholder involvement seem, on the basis of the MTR team's meetings, to be extremely high.

128. Indeed, the fact that the project *is* being implemented so effectively is a testament to the commitment and hard work of people at all levels involved in the implementation of the project. Commendation needs to be given in particular to the PMU, specifically the PM, who have successfully managed to "bring on board" so effectively and in such a brief period the widely distributed stakeholders at Woreda level.

129. The national Project Steering Committee has met three times over the life of the project. The PSE is proving an effective mechanism for project oversight.

130. The Project Management Unit has established itself in the EFCC Commission offices in Addis Ababa, and project coordination offices established in each of the target Woreda's with the exception of Somali Region. In the latter case, due to Woreda

capacity limitations, a single regional coordination office was established to support activities within the two Woreda's to be targeted in the Somali Region. Each of the coordination offices is staffed by a "Field Coordination Officer" and A "Finance Officer". The role of the FCO is to coordinate between project and Woreda Administrations and to support the development, review and reporting on annual and quarterly workplans by the Woreda Steering Committee, as well as other ad hoc support. The role of the Finance Officer is to support Woreda finance dept. in processing project related financial process and to ensure additional financial oversight.

131. The PMU in Addis Ababa consists of the NPM, a Program Officer, and M&E officer, a Finance Officer, and 2 drivers. In the project document it was envisaged to have a part time national "Technical Adviser" but this was deemed unnecessary and position switched to a full time Program Officer (assistant for NPM).

132. *Communications:* Currently the project has no staff specifically responsible for communication and organization of project publicity, awareness materials etc. As discussed in recommendations section this may be a requirement in the future.

Table 6. The members of the Project Implementation Unit and field coordination staff, including position and period within the position.

Name	Position	Employment dates - From	Employment dates - To
At PMU level			
Tesfaye Haile	PM	Sep 25, 2017	Sep 24, 2020
Birara Checol	PO	Aug 2018	Aug 2010
Belayneh Kebede	M&E	Dec 2017	Dec 2020
Amsalu Zerihun	Finance Officer	January 2017	Jan 2020
Gezahegni Tadesse	Driver	April 2018	April 2020
Wondimagen Fekadu	Driver	Sep 2018	Sep 2020
District level			
Dawud Elema	Abaala Field Coordinator	Oct 2017	Oct 2020
Berhanu Berhe	Abaala finance officer	May 2018	May 2020
Abyi Ahmed	Amiabar field coordinator	Oct 2017	Oct 2020
Anteneh Abera	Amibara Finance officer	May 2018	May 2020
Sintayehu Kare	Boricha (Bilate Zuria) F. Coordinator	Sep 2017	Sep 2020
Kare Kakawo	Boricha (Bilate Zuria) Fin. Officer	May 2018	May 2020
Dereje Dae	Duguna Fago F Coor.	Feb 2017	Feb 2020
Tigatu Dana	Duguna Fago Fin off.	May 2018	May 2020
Chula Worku	Chiro F coordinator	Oct 2017	Oct 2020
Mesaye Abayneh	Chiro Fin. Office	May 2018	May 2020
Chali Keneni	Doba F. Coordinator	Oct 2017	Oct 2020
Fikadu Worku	Doba in F. Officer	May 2018	May 2020

Belayneh Melak	Angollela F. Coordinator	Oct 2017	Oct 2020
Sisay Belege	Angolleal Fin Off	May 2018	May 2020
Yirga Mashile	Menz gera F. Coordinator	Nov 2017	Nov 2020
Giram Asrat	Menz gera Fin offi	May 2018	May 2020
Adis Michael	Raya Azebo F. Coor	Oct 2017	Oct 2020
Mesele Haftu	Raya Azebo Fin. Off	May 2018	May 2020
Gebre libanos Gebere Michael	Tanakua Abergele F. Coor	Oct 2018	Oct 2020
Gebremariam Gebremichael	Tanakua Abergele F. Coor	May 2018	May 2020
Abdi Mohammed	Tuli Guled F. coordinator	Aug 2017	Aug 2020
Ahmed Ali umar	Gurdum F. coor	Aug 2017	Aug 2020
Farhan Abdurhaman	Tuliguled and Gursum Finance officer	May 2018	May 2020

133.   In addition, the UNDP-CO's Energy & Environment Portfolio Team provides vital and active support to the project.

134.   This was particularly the case during the project inception phase when the E&E Team played a very active role is initiating and leading the Inception Workshop thus ensuring that, despite the lack of a at Project Manager at that stage, the project stakeholders were fully informed about the project, had an opportunity to provide their inputs and idea, and there was a good basis for then moving forward. An important contribution at this stage was ensuring that the Gender mainstreaming aspects of the project were highlighted, and their importance understood.

135.   In addition to this support at the inception phase the E&E team has provided consistent support to the PM in terms of implementation guidance and in ensuring reporting and M&E processes are carried out.

136.   Evidence of this strong interest in the project is the extensive and detailed knowledge members of the E&E team had of its activities and the stated intention to use the project as a "model" or "best practice" both within the context of the Regional IAP project and UNDP E&E Program in Ethiopia. The E&E team has also been active in ensuring the project accesses opportunities for cross-fertilization with other national IAP projects through the Regional IAP Program framework.

137.   There have however been some limitations and difficulties in the support provided by the UNDP CO, For example, there was some concerns raised by national partners during the initial implementation regarding the length of time required to undertake procurement and recruiting, as demonstrated by the fact it took until September 2017 to recruit the PM. This, together with the lack of a systematic inception report that would have addressed the important issues with the project Strategic Framework were unfortunate and should be recognized as "lessons learned" during the start up of future projects. More details on support provided in terms of reporting and M& E are given in relevant other sections of the report.

138.   The UNDP Regional Hub in Addis Ababa has been supportive of the UNDP CO efforts discussed above. The main limitation that could be considered is the fact that the significant weaknesses in the project SF (particularly the indicators etc.) were not recognized and questioned sufficiently. There is some discrepancy in the 1st PIR in

terms of how realistically the reporting reflected the project start up. More recognition by the Regional Hub of the slight delays and inception "teething" issues would have been potentially helpful in addressing some issues raised in this report at an earlier stage.

139. From the evidence gleaned during the MTR mission the support and commitment of the project national implementing agency (Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Commission) has been exemplary. Meetings with both the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, and the Head of the international project monitoring team, provided very clear evidence of their interest, knowledge and commitment to the project.

140. Furthermore, it is clear that their active and pragmatic support during the initial months of practical implementation (post inception workshop) has been crucial in project achieving the rapid establishment of implementation capacity at the Woreda level and the effective basis for financial management.

141. The effectiveness of their management during that early stage would appear to have continued with only minor and non-critical issues reported during the MTR field mission by Woreda Administrators (slight delays in fund transfers, etc). In the opinion of the MTR Team the NIM modality has worked very positively in this particular case and has a significant role in ensuring the very real ownership and commitment of the national implementing agency, and the capacity of the project to have impact on the ground via the strong integration into local government structures.

3.2.4 Work planning

142. As is usual for UNDP-GEF projects, budgets and workplans are developed on an annual basis and are approved by the Project Steering Committee.

143. The project Manager and E&E team made a pragmatic "translation" of the Project document into a workable 1st AWP that overcame the issues discussed previously in regard to activities under Output 1.2.1 (see para. 60).

144. Additionally, the PMU are to be commended for their effective efforts to develop clear and pragmatic system of work planning at the Woreda level. It is likely that this greatly facilitated the rapid Woreda level understanding and commitment to implementation and the on-going effectiveness of field level implementation.

3.2.5 Project Finance and Co-finance

145. At the, time of the MTR (November 2019), the project had spent a total of 5,163, 295 USD out of a total budget of 10,739,450 – in other words just under half (48%) of the total.

Table 7: Total project expenditure to date relative to the budget in the Project Document.

Components	TOTAL by MTE			total budget	% spent
	Budgeted	Actual	% spent		
1	915,917	1,049,120.67	114.5	1,475,917	71
2	4,450,000	2,959,454.58	66.5	7,524,083	39
3	474,858	558,936.26	117.7	751,858	74
Pro.Man	650,155	595,783.13	91.6	987,592	60

| Total | 6,490,930 | 5,163,295 | 79.5 | 10,739,450 | 48 |

146.   The project Budget is divided on the basis of the Components rather than outcomes and thus has 3 implementation sections and 1 Project Management section.

147.   Financial delivery (actual compared to budgeted) is 79%. This is mainly due to a significant under delivery of Component 2[16] - 66.5% of the originally budgeted amount, a slight under delivery of Project management costs, and an over delivery of Components 1 and 3.

148.   The under delivery of Component 2 would be concerning except for the fact that the project is actually achieving (and in some cases exceeding) expected results in the field. This suggests that implementation of Component 2 has been highly cost-effective and achieved savings.

149.   A closer assessment shows that the main reason behind the overall low delivery of Component 2 by MTR was mainly a very significant under delivery in the initial year of implementation (only 38% of amount budgeted). The MTR Team would consider that in reality the very significant budget allocated in that 1st year under this component was unrealistic (2,765,000 USD) and failed to recognize that the 1st year is mainly devoted to establishing the capacity and conditions for implementing field activities, which, though crucial for future delivery, are not financially intensive in themselves.

150.   Financial Audit: To date one financial audit was undertaken in February 2019 for the financial year ending 31 December 2018. The audit covered the government managed financial resources only (1,683,475 USD), not those done directly by UNDP - (244106 USD). The audit identified no issues and expressed the opinion that all UNDP rules and regulations had been met.

151.   Given that the project M&E Plan specified and budgeted for an annual audit, the expectation is that the following audit will be carried out in early 2020.

152.   Co-financing: This project has a very substantial Government co-financing contribution of 14,465,431 USD, however this is all "in-kind". In addition, there is 500,000 of UNDP TRAC resources in cash. The latter is entirely allocated towards covering project management costs in the approved budget.

153.   The government "in-kind" contribution is mainly in the form of Woreda personnel and equipment. Given that a large extent of project field activities is mainly managed by the Woreda, with organizational, technical and financial management support of the project, this "in-kind" contribution is very real and substantial. The calculations of the government in-kind co-financing contribution is thus based on a relatively simple and meaningful basis (i.e. Woreda and EFCCC budgets and audit reports).

154.   At the time of the MTR the government co-financing contribution was estimated as 5% of the total commitment, and UNDP cash contribution 59%.

Table 8. The planned value and actual expenditure, to date, of co-finance (all figures in USD)

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[16] Scaling up of Integrated Landscape Management Approach Achieves Improved Productivity of Smallholder Food Production Systems and Improved Household Access to Food and Nutrition

Sources of Cofinance	Name of Cofinancer	Type of Cofinance	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement (USD)	Actual Amount at MTE	Actual % of Expected Amount
National Government	Government	In kind contribution	14465431	7816416	54%
	UNDP	Cash	500000	299000	59.8
Total co-financing			144,965,431	8115416	54.22 %

Table 9. The project expenditure by Outcome by MTR - All figure in USD.

Outcome	YR1 2017 and 2018		% spent	YR2 2019		% spent	Grand Total	G/Total Spent	G/Total % spent
	Budgeted	Actual		Budgeted	Actual		Budgeted		
1	610,000	562,576	92.2	305,917	486,544	159.0	915,917	1,049,120	114.5
2	2,765,000	1,053,351	38.1	1,685,000	1,906,103	113.1	4,450,000	2,959,454	66.5
3	309,000	320,918	103.9	165,858	238,017	143.5	474,858	558,936	117.7
Prj.Man.	463,815	571,487	123.2	186,340	24,295	13.0	650,155	595,783	91.6
Total	**4,147,815**	**2,508,333**	**60.5**	**2,343,115**	**2,654,961**	**113.3**	**6,490,930**	**5,163,294.64**	**79.5**

3.2.6 Project-level Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

155. The project's M&E framework is similar to the majority of all UNDP-GEF projects with a USD 342,000 allocated for project monitoring. This is a substantially larger than normal figure but includes all funds allocated to Outcome 4 (knowledge management).

156. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in the M&E Plan. There is some lack of clarity in the way resources are allocated as some significant items are actually outputs/activities under Outcome 4 (knowledge management). In the MTR Team opinion, it would have been better to have not directly included these in the M&E plan table and to have ensure the M&E plan clearly focused on the principle M&E tasks and their budget.

157. The project is generally being monitored effectively and efficiently according to the existing indicators. As discussed elsewhere the weak RF in terms of indicators has caused challenges and, in many ways, do not well reflect actual project progress and results.

158. It is noteworthy and commendable that the project has followed through on ensuring gender related monitoring data and has developed additional gender monitoring tools during implementation that are likely to provide more meaningful measure of impact in this regard.

159. One aspect of the existing monitoring system being applied to this project, that the MTR evaluators had some concerns about, is the tracking tools being applied. The number and complexity of the different tracking tools applied, together with changes that apparently occurred during the project duration in formats (GEF 6 to 7), combined with already unclear set of project indicators/targets, actually resulted in them being of marginal value (at least in terms of the MTR process).

160. As discussed in previous sections, the discrepancy in formats between the Project document SF / Strategy section (Components, Outcomes, Outputs) and the standard format (Outcomes, Outputs) created a problem when preparing the PIRs – thus the PIRs had the rather unusual situation of 5 Outcomes to report on. This together with the problematic indicators/targets, etc. has significantly reduced the effectiveness of the PIRs as a basis to clearly understand the meaningful progress of the project. It is unfortunate that the challenge of the format differences and indicators were "managed" at the time of the first PIR rather than being recognised and raised as an issue needing redress.

161. In summary, the M&E processes was executed with good intent but was hamstrung from the start by the weakness discussed with the SF (the ultimate basis for meaningful monitoring). Thus, the M&E System is considered only marginally satisfactory, and recommendations are included for addressing issues identified.

3.2.7 Stakeholder engagement

162. Stakeholder analysis is contained within the Project Document and the main stakeholders are identified, with a broad description of their mandate, as well as their identified role and responsibilities within the project.

163. As described previously, there are many stakeholders and the project is correspondingly complex (see table of key stakeholders in annex). However,

stakeholder engagement and inclusion are considered by the MTR Team to be very satisfactory with the needs and concerns of stakeholders taken into account through each of the project steps and processes.

164.   As described in Section 2 of this report (para. 70 onwards) an important focus of the project was the initial establishment of multi-stakeholder frameworks. The outcome is stated as "Multi-stakeholder and multi-scale platforms in support of integrated natural resources management in agricultural landscapes in place " and the target at mid-term is "At least 12 functioning (convening and decision-making) multi-stakeholder platforms in place in the project sites; plus one at national-level".

165.   The project is considered to have reached and exceeded this target. This is based on the fact that 12 functional decision-making multi-stakeholders' platforms i.e. Woreda Steering Committees, have been established in each target Woreda. These are chaired by the Woreda Administrator himself and include Woreda level representatives of all key sectors, including livestock, water management, SME development, etc., as well as project site level representatives (Field coordinators and finance officers). These Steering Committees have direct oversight and control of activities and are meeting every quarter to plan the future quarter and to review results of previous quarter plans.

166.   Meetings by the MTR teams with Woreda Steering Committees in 5 Woreda's provided ample proof of their full ownership of the planning and implementation of project activities, and their strong commitment to them. Project resources and activities were seen as positive additions to their normal activities that both allowed more to be done but also extended existing efforts using a new integrated approach,

167.   In addition, 12 Technical Committees, 12 Gender Teams and approx. 44 Community Watershed committees were established by the project and the Woreda Steering Committees in order to best execute the activities in the field. These were not specifically identified in the project document but were established on the basis of identified need. In the case of the Community Watershed Committees these are entirely community initiatives (see more on these under Outcome 3).

168.   In addition to all of the above, the project also initiated another new activity under this outcome in order to target wider awareness and understanding in communities, particularly of children (and through them their parents by establishing and supporting 52 school clubs (48% of members are females).

169.   As per the project document, there is also a national level platform – this also acts as the overall project steering committee and has met so far 4 times since project commencement. There was not strong evidence, apart from their attendance to the meetings that the "non-active" members of the national steering committee (i.e. those members not directly involved in implementation), are fully committed to the future national adoption and scaling up of the project "model" – however, at this stage of the project implementation, when field level results are still at an early stage, this is to be expected.

170.   As discussed in recommendations section, the project will need to actively work on the communication of its results during the next stage of implementation and on building the awareness, endorsement and commitment of key national stakeholders.

171.   In conclusion, the MTR team considers the project management approach has been highly successful at engaging Woreda and sub-woreda stakeholders but perhaps greater emphasis now needs to be focused at the national level in order to ensure ongoing support and investment in the approach being demonstrated.

3.2.8   Reporting

172.   The project reporting requirements are covered under Section 6 Monitoring and Assessment Plan (there is no specific section as in previous project document formats specifically addressing reporting). It is stated that "project-level monitoring and assessment will be undertaken in compliance with UNDP requirements as outlined in the **UNDP POPP and UNDP Evaluation Policy**. While these UNDP requirements are not outlined in this project document, the UNDP Country Office will work with the relevant project stakeholders to ensure UNDP M&A requirements are met in a timely fashion and to high quality standards. Additional mandatory GEF-specific M&A requirements (as outlined below) will be undertaken in accordance with the **GEF M&E policy".**

173.   As with all such projects the key project reporting requirements and responsibilities are:

- An annual report based on the Annual Workplan – Project manager
- Annual financial report – finance officer and UNDP CO
- The UNDP/GEF Project Implementation Report (annual) – Project manager, CO and RTA.
- Two periodic independent review reports (midterm and terminal) – independent consultants
- Periodic reports to project steering committee (when it meets) – project manager, chair of committee, UNDP E&E representative.

In addition to the above there are range of internal project reporting mechanisms.

174.   The main finding of the MTR in terms of the project internal reporting system is that it appears comprehensive and robust. It is based on the Quarterly workplans developed by the Woreda Steering Committee which in turn is based on an annual Woreda workplan. These individual Worada annual plans are in combination the basis for the overall project AWP. At the end of each Quarter the individual Woreda Steering committees meet to review the progress of the previous quarter and agree plan for the following quarter. Thus, quarterly reports are generated by each woreda and compiled/sent to PMU and EFCCC by the Project field coordinators. Based 4th Quarter reviews the annual reports for each woreda are prepared. Thus, control and responsibility for reporting is a joint and collaborative process between project and target Woreda's, and EFCCC.

175.   Experiences, both positive and negative, are gathered / reported on in this way and form, when necessary, a basis for applying adaptive management (examples of which have been discussed in previous sections of the report). Major issues or adaptions of the project implementation approach (such as those needed in Regions/woreda with different capacities/ socio-cultural conditions, etc) have been discussed and agreed in project steering committee meetings. Due to the very high level of direct involvement

in project implementation, both Woreda administrations and the EFCCC are likely to be internalizing and applying in the future key experience and lessons learned (both positive and negative).

176.   In terms of the key annual reporting requirement i.e. the PIR, limitations and constraints are discussed in the previous section. The PIRs are shared and cleared by the EFCCC before submission- however, the experience and impression of the MTR team suggests that for the national partner the project and its own internal reporting system is the main basis for monitoring and review, while the PIR is considered of less importance.

3.2.9   Communication

177.   Through the project's engagement with local stakeholders, there is a good understanding of the aims and objectives of the project on the ground- however, there has been no targeted communication campaigns as yet. Communications. However, to date the level of communication to national/regional stakeholders has been limited – this is perhaps justified in the initial stages of the project while results are still being generated but should now become a priority as part of the investment leverage and replication process.

3.3   Sustainability

178.   Overall, the MTR would consider the project as very sustainable in that it a). is implemented through the existing central government and Woreda system and builds on rather than separately contributes to its activities, b). it is building during implementation the capacity and know-how of local stakeholders and testing effective mechanisms for achieving results that these stakeholders can then continue post project, c). the initiatives and activities that make up the ILM approach are technically feasible, and are directly relevant to stakeholders having been selected in consultation with them, d). environmental aspects of the ILM also bring immediate livelihood benefits as well as longer-term environmental benefits, and therefore are more likely to be maintained and supported.

179.   However, some sustainability issues do exist and these are discussed in the following sections, as appropriate, with the hope that these issues can be resolved before the issue grows and is identified as a significant risk at the end of the project.

3.3.1   Financial Risks to Sustainability

180.   The main financial sustainability issue is that which faces most similar projects – i.e. what will happen when the project ceases and the technical support and investments in materials, etc. also cease? Will it be viable for central and local governments, and local communities to continue and to replicate results? This was one of the major points of interest for the MTR team and was rigorously followed up during the field visits.

181.   On the positive side, the project implementation approach actually depends largely on the input of the stakeholder's resources (Woreda staff technical inputs and time, ditto Kabele development workers, community labour and time, etc). Thus, actual project inputs at site level are spread quite thinly. However, on the other hand even these limited additional resources are critical, and it is doubtful if Woreda

administrations could continue the expansion and spread of the ILM approach without some level off additional central government / donor investment. This highlights the importance for the project of effectively communicating its experience and results and leveraging additional investments for both the target Woreda's and others, to continue.

182.   Thus, the overall financial sustainability, if the project effectively promotes the ILM approach, is considered moderately likely.

3.3.2   Socio-economic Risks to Sustainability

183.   The ILM approach, as being applied by the project, appears to have very limited socio-economic risks to sustainability. Contrary to many LD or SLM initiatives the short term economic and livelihood costs (from loss of grazing in rehabilitated lands, etc.) are mainly compensated and as a result are more likely to be maintained until full ecosystem service benefits then also materialize.

184.   In most of the project sites there is a high level of social cohesion and an awareness of the need to undertake land use changes and as a result strong social commitment. The exception is perhaps in the mainly pastoral areas where there are greater challenges.

185.   Socio-economic risks are further reduced by three factors: a). the project is promoting a diversity of livelihoods and thus the risks related to failure of any specific livelihood is less, b). the options selected were done so based on consultation with Woreda experts and the communities themselves, c). the gender mainstreaming aspect of the project increases the role of women and thereby reduces the risks of socio-economic problems to the households as a whole.

186.   Thus, overall the MTR team consider socio-economic sustainability of the ILM approach piloted by the project as likely.

3.3.3   Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

187.   This project is fully integrated into the existing Woreda and Kabele institutional and governance structure. In addition, the "in-process" training involved in implementation, plus the multiple governance and coordination structures (Woreda Steering Committee, technical committee, Gender teams, Watershed Management committees, etc) mean that the work initiated by the project is extremely sustainable in this regard. Furthermore, it should be easily transferable to other Kabele within target Woreda's and also to other targeted Woreda's and regions not currently targeted.

188.   The possible exception is those Woreda that lack the same level of capacity as the majority (for example those in mainly pastoral areas). However, the capacity gaps in those areas are a challenge for all development efforts and perhaps beyond the scope of the project to be able to change or mitigate easily.

189.   At a national level it is more difficult to judge the level of awareness and commitment outside of the EFCCC (i.e. other members of the national steering committee). However, based on the minutes of project Steering committee meetings the other national stakeholders are also well engaged and supportive of the project approach and results. Thus, the overall institutional and Governance sustainability is rated likely.

3.3.4 Environmental Risks to Sustainability

190.   The main point of the ILM approach is to integrate ecosystem management and land use in order to build more resilient production and livelihoods, and thence food security. Thus, intrinsically it is aiming towards environmental sustainability.

191.   Nonetheless there are potential risks involved in the introduction of diversified land use. One example is the introduction of small-scale irrigation agriculture in Gursum Woreda in Somali region. This has been extremely successful and is already being replicated by other farmers. It depends principally on extraction of water from the water table directly on the irrigated territory. This does bring with it the potential risk that large-scale replication will lead to over extraction and lowering of the water table, etc. with negative impact on farming livelihoods and environment. Probably this risk is small given the likely rates of replication and fact the watertable is a superficial one (near river) and is annually recharged – however, such "unexpected" repercussions are a potential risk and any activities promoted by the project with such risks need to be carefully monitored.

192.   However, the majority of the project initiatives are environmentally beneficial or neutral in impact and so overall the environmental sustainability is considered very likely.

4   Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1   Conclusions

193.   The overriding conclusion is that, with a few caveats, the project is on track to achieve the main objective and outcomes, and in some cases exceeding MTR targets and achieved or exceeded EoP targets. Furthermore, the progress that has been achieved in a manner that maximizes cost-effectiveness, capacity transfer, replicability, and sustainability.

194.   The methods and model applied to achieve integrated landscape management (ILM) within project sites seems, based on current progress, to provide an extremely effective basis for widescale scaling up and the achievement of substantial national level benefits for food security and preservation of crucial ecosystem services and global environmental benefits.

195.   A strength of the project design was a strong emphasis on ensuring the mainstreaming of gender issues in the context of food security and diversification of livelihoods. Project implementation has effectively followed through on mainstreaming relevant gender issues and activities during implementation to date.

196.   The fact that the project is mainly on track is a testament to the people involved in the project implementation – most particularly the PMU and local stakeholders (Woreda Administrations). This is particularly the case given the lack of clarity that existed in the original project document and the rather weak Results Framework (in terms of indicators, baseline and targets).

197.   A great deal of the project's success comes from the effective application of the National Implementation modality (NIM) which has resulted in a very high level of ownership of the project activities by the national (EFCCC), and local stakeholders (target Worada Administrations).

198.   Additionally, the MTR team would like highlight the extremely effective manner in which the PMU has engaged with local stakeholders and ensured from the start a high level of ownership, consultation and participation at all levels (Woreda, Kabele, Community Watershed Committees, women and youth groups, and individual households).

199.   The MTR team noted that, in the face of many challenges including rising population pressure, land scarcity and climate variability, rural land users in Ethiopia have been responding over the last decades by attempting to diversify land use (i.e. pastoralists are settling and growing crops, while previously mainly arable smallholder farmers in the highlands are relying more on livestock and less on crops, etc).

200.   However, such a transformation of livelihood approaches is extremely challenging and comes with many environmental, and subsequently, food security risks. This project aims to support this diversification and demonstrate a model for doing so in an environmentally sustainable manner through an integrated landscape management (ILM) approach. It is therefore an extremely relevant and timely intervention with potentially significant national, and regional, impact.

201.   Despite the general good progress of the project and its high relevance, there have been some clear shortfalls in terms of reaching RF targets. These shortfalls are, in the opinion of the MTR team, mainly a product of unreasonable indicators and/or targets. However, it is also clear that the implementation faces challenges in the mainly pastoral project sites and needs to make efforts to address this.

202.   There is less than half the project's life remaining and much still to complete. However, based on implementation to date there is no clear risk or reason why this should be possible. On the contrary, based on implementation by MTR the expectation is that the project will exceed most targets and expected results. However, it will need to place increasing focus and effort on effective communication and advocacy of results if it is to leverage additional resources and ensure a wide scale application of the ILM approach in Ethiopia.

4.2   Recommendations

203.   A number of suggestions and recommendations have been made throughout the MTR report. In this section, the most critical recommendations are summarised and highlighted but the project team should consider all the additional suggestions made in the sections above.

Table 10. The summary of MTR recommendations for the project

Rec.#	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
Project Design and Inception		
1	**Ensure Clarity of Project design and RF (standardized formatting):** As described in relevant report sections the MTR suggest project strategy and design, particularly indicators, lacked clarity, consistency and in some cases logic. It is therefore strongly suggested that greater efforts are made before project submission or signature to ensure the project strategy / design is understandable to an average reader and that RF meets standardized format and the required quality of indicators.	UNDP CO, RTA
2	**A rigorous and in-depth Inception Report for every project:** The inception phase of any project is critical for ensuring the successful future implementation, and usually involves a). an assessment of whether any factors have changed since project development, b). finalization of baseline / target data in RF if such is needed (as in the case of this project) and the updating / refinement of the original Multi-year workplan (plus initial AWP). The key findings and recommendations can then be presented at the Inception workshop. It is unfortunate that this opportunity to deal at the start with weaknesses in the RF was not taken during the inception phase of this project and it is strongly recommended that in any future UNDP/GEF project in Ethiopia this is done carefully and systematically, even if this results in some delay in operational start up.	UNDP CO
Monitoring Issues		
2	**Carry out a revision/clarification of Project Results Framework Indicators, Baseline and Targets:** This includes a). revision of existing indicators/baseline/ targets (clearer language, quantitative baselines, consistent parameters, remove duplication, etc.), b). inclusion of clear and quantifiable GEB and FS impact indicators for each outcome. It is recommended this revision is completed by no later than end of 1st Quarter 2020.	PMU, UNDP CO, RTA
3	**Strengthen Project monitoring and assessment of GEB and FS impacts in the field and levels of replication:** It is recommended that internal project site monitoring that incorporates impact data (including controls), and measures of replication is developed by no later than end of 1st Quarter 2020. Some suggested activities and methodologies for achieving this is provided in the annex. This monitoring and assessment could be further enhanced through support to relevant targeted Action Research activities by national/regional academic institutions.	PMU, national / regional academic partner institutions
Implementation Issues		
4	**Midterm Planning to consolidate initiated activities and Move forward with so far uninitiated ones**: Multiyear Planning at this stage (mid-term) to ensure that all remaining aspects of project implementation are rolled out in the most feasibly way possible in the remaining period of the project duration will be critical to avoiding potential problems. Thus, the preparation of an updated internal multi-year workplan until the project EoP is recommended in 1st Quarter of 2020.	PMU
5	**Trouble shooting Implementation barriers in challenging Project sites (Agropastoral)** and **Learning from initial experience / beneficiaries feedback:**	PMU

	It is recommended that at this mid-point in implementation, and in consultation with the EFCC Commission, the project needs to assess the progress and barriers faced in the agropastoral project sites and identify either ways to try and overcome those, or pragmatic adjustment of expectation / targets in these specific sites. In addition, it is recommended that Project Coordinators in each Woreda undertake a quick review with local partners and beneficiaries of the experience gained during the initial 2 years of the project and the practical lessons learned in terms improving efficiency of the further roll-out of activities during the remaining 2 years of the project. It is recommended this is done during 1st Quarter of 2020 - Any decisions in this regard can then be incorporated into the updated multiyear workplan (see above).	
6	**Enhancing Impact of the School Clubs:** As described in report text, the MTR team has some concerns on both the sustainability and impact of the school clubs, particularly in terms of what real incentive exists for the members. It is recommended that to enhance both the awareness/knowledge impact and the motivation of members, the project should introduce the addition of "Field trips" – a). to areas within the Woreda that show LD issues in practice and project initiatives to address them, b). to other project sites to experience other agroecological zones and situations. Planning for this needs to be incorporated into 2020 annual work planning and budget.	PMU
7	**Additional Support to Practical Research on Temperate tree species adaption and cultivation in the Highlands:** It is recommended that the project focus more resources to this objective, including seeking practical expertise and knowhow in this regard, particularly within East Africa (notably Kenya).	PMU, FAO, National/regional Academic partner Institutions, East Africa partners
Ensuring Sustainability and Replication, Leveraging Political and Financial Commitment		
8	**Planning in advance the Strategy and Actions Needed to effectively Communicate Project Achievements and advocating ILM approach (as applied by the project) – I.e. A Communication and Replication Plan**: It is strongly recommended that a strategy and plan for achieving this in the final 18/12 months of the project is developed (by end of 2020) and relevant activities added to the project work planning in 2021.	
9	**Recruitment of Project Communications and Advocacy Officer**: The above additional activities bring with them additional workload and the need for skill set/experience not currently available in the project. For this reason, it is recommended the project recruit a national Communications and Advocacy Officer to take direct responsibility for the overall implementation of activities and to provide support and guidance to Woreda Field Coordinators on this aspect. Ideally this officer should be recruited before preparation of the "Communication and Replication Plan" and his/her initial task would be to help in its preparation i.e. recruitment recommended mid-2020.	PMU
10	**UNDP Ethiopia to apply and Advocate the ILM Model (as applied by the Project) in other Environmental and Rural Development contexts**: As highlighted in the report, the ILM approach/model as applied by the project is applicable to a wide range of natural resource use management contexts irrespective if their primary focus is environmental (as in case of GEF projects) or sustainable rural development, etc. Thus, it is recommended that the ILM approach/model is adopted into the UNDP Ethiopia "tool-box" and applied wherever relevant in other projects and programs in the future.	UNDP CO.

4.2.1 Recommendations on Project Monitoring

204.   **Carry out a revision/clarification of Project Results Framework Indicators, Baseline and Targets:** As discussed at length in the report the RF indicators and related baseline and targets suffer a number of weaknesses. These impact on the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation. It is therefore recommended that, to the extent possible, changes are made to the RF to clarify and strengthen it, but without changing the basic intent. Changes should include a). revision of existing indicators/baseline/ targets (clearer language, quantitative baselines, consistent parameters, remove duplication, etc.), b). inclusion of a limited number od additional clear and quantifiable GEB and FS impact indicators for each outcome.

205.   The MTR team understand that there may be limitations placed by UND/GEF on the extent this can be done at this stage. However, if the basic intent of indicators etc. is not change and resulting RF is clearer and more useful, it should hopefully be supported and allowed.

206.   An example revised RF table is provided in the Annex of the report in order to provide some suggestions on changes that could be made. Final decision on this is of course outside the remit of the MTR team. It is recommended this revision is completed by no later than end of 1st Quarter 2020.

207.   **Strengthen Project monitoring and assessment of GEB and FS impacts in the field and levels of replication:** as discussed in the report**,** the lack of impact indicators in the original RF has probably contributed to the fact that existing project monitoring does not sufficiently follow through on activities to assess in a meaningful way the GEB and FS impacts – for example, number of biogas and improved stoves is monitored, **but** how that translates into fuelwood or dung not consumed, number of trees saved, Co_2 not released, health impact, time/effort of HH saved, etc. is not currently quantified systematically. This aspect of the internal project monitoring needs to be introduced.

208.   Likewise, there is probably a need to more systematically designate "control" areas and HH's – i.e. places and HH's **not** part of project activities that can provide a basis for comparison.

209.   Finally, the project needs to also start assessing and recording levels of replication of methods/technologies introduced within other communities / HH's. It is recommended that internal project site monitoring that incorporates impact data (including controls), and measures of replication is developed by no later than end of 1st Quarter 2020. Some suggested activities and methodologies for achieving this is provided in the annex.

4.2.2 Recommendations on Project Implementation Issues

210.   **Midterm Planning to consolidate initiated activities and Move forward with so far uninitiated ones**: The project has been extremely effective at getting "up and running" and has demonstrated that what is trying to do works. The challenge now is to consolidate early success by:

> a). Revising the RF monitoring Framework (Indicators, Baseline, Targets), and strengthening the internal project monitoring to better measure impact

b). replicating already tried and tested approaches and initiatives to additional watersheds, HHs and Kabele in order to meet the total area and HH targets set.

c). following through and functionally establish the web-based GIS monitoring system in a meaningful way

d). initiating in a timely manner the Outputs and activities so far <u>not</u> started such as: PES, insurance, Vital Signs monitoring landscapes system, etc.

211. Multiyear Planning at this stage (mid-term) to ensure that these 4 aspects of project implementation are rolled out in the most feasibly way possible in the remaining period of the project duration will be critical to avoiding potential problems. Thus, the preparation of an updated internal multi-year workplan until the project EoP is recommended in 1st Quarter of 2020.

212. **Trouble shooting Implementation barriers in challenging Project sites (Agropastoral**) and **Learning from initial experience / beneficiaries feedback:** It is recommended that at this mid-point in implementation, and in consultation with the EFCC Commission, the project needs to assess the progress and barriers faced in the agropastoral project sites and identify either ways to try and overcome those, or pragmatic adjustment of expectation / targets in these specific sites.

213. In addition, it is recommended that Project Coordinators in each Woreda undertake a quick review with local partners and beneficiaries of the experience gained during the initial 2 years of the project and the practical lessons learned in terms improving efficiency of the further roll-out of activities during the remaining 2 years of the project. It is recommended this is done during 1st Quarter of 2020 - Any decisions in this regard can then be incorporated into the updated multiyear workplan (see above).

214. **Enhancing Impact of the School Clubs:** As described in report text, the MTR team has some concerns on both the sustainability and impact of the school clubs, particularly in terms of what real incentive exists for the members.

215. It is recommended that to enhance both the awareness/knowledge impact and the motivation of members, the project should introduce the addition of "Field trips" – a). to areas within the Woreda that show LD issues in practice and the project initiatives to address them, b). to other project sites to experience other agroecological zones and situations. Planning for this needs to be incorporated into 2020 annual work planning and budget.

216. **Additional Support to Practical Research on Temperate tree species adaption and cultivation in the Highlands:** As discussed in text of the report, regional experience suggests there are significant opportunities to benefit from the introduction of temperate tree species to the Ethiopian highlands, both for timber / fuel and fruit production.

217. It is recommended that the project focus more resources to this objective, including seeking practical expertise and knowhow in this regard, particularly within East Africa (notably Kenya – see relevant links in footnote[17].

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[17] Plum production in Kenya http://www.farmlinkkenya.com/plum-production/, Growing Temperate fruit trees in Kenya http://old.worldagroforestry.org/downloads/Publications/PDFS/b15496.pdf, FAO Fruit Nursery in Tigray and Amhara http://www.fao.org/uploads/media/FocusMagazine8.pdf

4.2.3 Ensuring Sustainability and Replication, Leveraging Political and Financial Commitment

218. Planning in advance the Strategy and Actions Needed to effectively Communicate Project Achievements and advocating ILM approach (as applied by the project) – I.e. A Communication and Replication Plan: There are no specific Outcomes/outputs or activities in the project document for ensuring systematic activities in the terminal half of the project to review lessons learned and to advocate the project ILM Model to the government or other donors as an effective approach for future sustainable rural development.

219. This is a key need if the project is to meet its targets in terms of leveraged finances from donors, and if the projects experience is to significantly influence future government policy and programs in the future.
220.

221. It is therefore strongly recommended that a strategy and plan for achieving this in the final 18/12 months of the project is developed (by end of 2020) and relevant activities added to the project work planning in 2021.

222. **Recruitment of Project Communications and Advocacy Officer**:The above additional activities bring with them additional workload and the need for skill set/experience not currently available in the project. For this reason, it is recommended the project recruit a national Communications and Advocacy Officer to take direct responsibility for the overall implementation of activities and to provide support and guidance to Woreda Field Coordinators on this aspect.

223. Ideally this officer should be recruited before preparation of the "Communication and Replication Plan" and his/her initial task would be to help in its preparation i.e. recruitment recommended mid-2020.

224. **UNDP Ethiopia to apply and Advocate the ILM Model (as applied by the Project) in other Environmental and Rural Development contexts**: As highlighted in the report, the ILM approach/model as applied by the project is applicable to a wide range of natural resource use management contexts irrespective if their primary focus is environmental (as in case of GEF projects) or sustainable rural development, etc.

225. Thus, it is recommended that the ILM approach/model is adopted into the UNDP Ethiopia "tool-box" and applied wherever relevant in other projects and programs in the future.

4.3 Key Lessons Learned for Future Projects

Table 11 - Key Lessons Learned	
Lesson learned	*Resp.*
A rigorous and in-depth Inception Report for every project: The inception phase of any project is critical for ensuring the successful future implementation, and	UNDP CO

usually involves a). an assessment of whether any factors have changed since project development, b). finalization of baseline / target data in RF if such is needed (as in the case of this project) and the updating / refinement of the original Multi-year workplan (plus initial AWP). The key findings and recommendations can then be presented at the Inception workshop.

It is unfortunate that this opportunity to deal at the start with weaknesses in the RF was not taken during the inception phase of this project and it is strongly recommended that in any future UNDP/GEF project in Ethiopia this is done carefully and systematically, even if this results in some delay in operational start up. | |
| **Increased effort and attention to the preparation of a clear and impact orientated project Strategic Framework during project preparation:** As highlighted in the report, the project SF has numerous limitations particularly in regard to Indicators, but also clarity of format and logic of output/activity distribution. Every effort should be made in future project development process to ensure such limitations as are detailed in the report are avoided. | UNDP CO, RTA |

4.3.1 Lessons Learned on design and project start up (inception) for future projects

226. **Ensure Clarity of Project design and RF (standardized formatting**): As discussed in the report initial sections, the MTR team would suggest that this project strategy and design, though basically adequate, lacked clarity, consistency and in some cases clear logic. As a result, the essentially fairly simple concept (strategy) was not easily evident to the average reader. Furthermore, the project Results Framework contained many issues both regarding way the components were organized and arranged (i.e. the non-standard use of Components and Outcomes together) which then complicated application of other standard UNDP tools (AWP, PIR, etc.), and the quality of indicators. These problems should not have been allowed to persist through to signature stage and thus it is strongly recommended that in future project development processes a rigorous review is applied to these aspects.

227. **Ensuring a rigorous Inception Phase and Report:** The inception phase of any project is critical for ensuring the successful future implementation, and usually involves a). an assessment of whether any factors have changed since project development, b). finalization of baseline / target data in RF if such is needed (as in the case of this project) and the updating / refinement of the original Multi-year workplan (plus initial AWP). The key findings and recommendations can then be presented at the Inception workshop.

228. It is unfortunate that this opportunity to deal at the start with weaknesses in the RF was not taken during the inception phase of this project as it is both simpler and more effective to do so then rather than at MTR stage, and would have made the monitoring process of the project easier. It is strongly recommended that in any future UNDP/GEF project in Ethiopia this is done carefully and systematically, even if this results in some delay in operational start up. A small delay initially is worth avoiding such problems later.

Signed:

M.Anstey   Date: 03.03.2020