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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Evaluation of UNPD's support to the Forest Sector institutional development and catalyzing the Forest Sector, Ethiopia

Final Report

Evaluation of UNPD's support to the Forest Sector institutional development and catalyzing the Forest Sector, Ethiopia

**Final Report
December 2021**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
EFCCC	Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSDP	Forest Sector Development Program
GTPII	Growth and Transformation Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
RBM	Results Based Management
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
REDD+	The plus refers to the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Preface

The Embassy of Sweden, Addis Ababa, has contracted NIRAS to conduct an evaluation of UNPD's support to the Forest Sector institutional development and catalyzing the Forest Sector Project, supported financially by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The evaluation report has been prepared by an evaluation team with the following members:

- Åke Nilsson (team leader)
- Bethелеhem Tenkir

Matilda Svedberg has been the evaluation manager at NIRAS, and Lucien Back has served as quality assurance advisor.

NIRAS and the evaluation team would like to thank staff at the Embassy of Sweden, Addis Ababa, UNDP, EFCCC, and all Project sub-grantee organisations and beneficiaries for the time and support they have provided to the evaluation.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are those of the evaluation team.

Executive Summary

This report presents an evaluation of a forestry project in Ethiopia, financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), executed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and implemented by the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC).

The Project consists of three parts:

1. Forest sector institutional development
2. Catalysing forest sector development
3. Sheger beautification program

The evaluation has been carried out during November-December 2021, by a team of two consultants, one from Sweden and one from Ethiopia. Preliminary findings were presented to the Embassy of Sweden at a virtual debriefing session on 9 December 2021.

The conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation are presented below.

CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The Project is well aligned with the relevant strategies of the government, including the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy and the Growth and Transformation Plan II, and with many relevant government policies, including those on livelihood improvement, job creation and urban greening. It is thus well justified, and also firmly anchored within the Ethiopian Forestry Development Programme. Similarly, the alignment with the Swedish development cooperation strategy for Ethiopia is strong, both for the existing and upcoming new strategy.

Effectiveness

A number of results, most of them at output level, have been summarised, based on the reporting for both programme phases, cumulatively up to the year 2020. Several of these results have been mentioned and verified by interview respondents. However, the results framework has been characterised by stakeholders as weak and not of sufficient quality with regard particularly to indicators, and tends to be presented in narrative text in the tables. The team agrees with this. The evidence, therefore, remains weak in several aspects.

UNDP transfers funds to other implementing actors, and has imparted capacity to some extent when working with counterparts at EFCCC. It is clear, however, from the results of a

questionnaire survey issued by the evaluation and a Forcefield Analysis that capacity building is an area of utmost priority that has not been sufficiently addressed in the Project.

Efficiency

UNDP is found to be a workable alternative for transferring funds to other implementing actors, and has imparted capacity to some extent when working with counterparts at EFCCC.

There are several areas of project administration, planning and follow-up where limitations in efficiency have been evident. This includes fund transfer and procurement, where there have been substantial delays. The administrative charges are high, and highly variable among the different sub-grantee organisations. This has a negative effect on the efficiency of the Project.

The M&E system is weak in several aspects, and progress reporting has not been consistent over time.

Impact

The Project is not oriented towards monitoring impact, partly because instruments for measuring have not been developed, including a Theory of Change and a robust Results Framework. However, there is evidence of improvement of ecosystems, including water resources, in protected forest lands and enhanced livelihoods at community level.

It can also be expected that the training-of-trainers programme will have positive impacts at community level, since this is expected to lead to 1 000 trainers being trained for carrying out forestry extension work in the country.

With regard to gender equality, there has been an input on gender mainstreaming connected partly to the training-of-trainers programme, but the reporting on gender in the annual progress reports is scarce.

Sustainability

It is concluded that engaging community members more actively in the planning and implementation of the Project is important for sustainability. It is equally important that the initiatives taken for entrepreneurship and private sector involvement that would increase the motivation and engagement by the communities are continued and strengthened.

The fact that the Project has put more emphasis than earlier interventions on post-planting activities and on soil and water conservation will have a positive effect on the sustainability of plantations established by the Project. It is likely that this will have an effect also on the sustainability of results achieved by the Project through the livelihood-supporting interventions carried out, particularly if the reorganisation of the forestry sector results in the cooperatives established by the Project adopt a wider scope of activities, including an increased orientation towards agricultural products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to UNDP and EFCCC

The following recommendations are made to UNDP and EFCCC:

1. When the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic are over, a process should be initiated to develop the necessary RBM instruments. This could be started by arranging a participatory workshop, facilitated by competent RBM consultants and using the results of the Forcefield Analysis as one input, to develop a Theory of Change and a robust Results Framework for the Project.
2. The progress reporting should be strengthened with regard to reporting on gender equality and rights aspects, and the necessary indicators and targets need to be clearly developed in the results framework.
3. Continue and intensify efforts to develop skills, capacity and awareness among implementing partners as well as with community members.
4. Intensify efforts to engage, support and cooperate with communities and private-sector entrepreneurs in order to increase effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Project results.

Recommendations to Sida/Swedish Embassy

The following recommendations are made to Sida/Swedish Embassy:

1. Discuss and resolve with UNDP and EFCCC how the frequent delays in disbursements within the Project can be addressed.
2. In a possible new phase of the Project, negotiate lower surcharge fees for engaging sub-grantees in the Project.
3. In a possible new phase of the Project, assist the Project in developing a Theory of Change as a basis for a robust results framework
4. In a possible new phase of the Project, ascertain that UNDP and EFCCC develop improved instruments for effective results based management, as well as more consistent and higher quality progress reporting.

1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an evaluation of a forestry sector support project in Ethiopia: *UNDP's Support to the Forest Sector institutional development and catalysing the Forest Sector*, implemented by the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC). The Project was initiated against the backdrop of severe threats to the economic base of Ethiopia, caused by unsustainable use of available natural resources, population pressure, weak institutional capacity and the impacts of climate change. Having established a strategy for Swedish development cooperation with Ethiopia, which included efforts contributing to a better environment, reduced climate-change impact, strengthened resilience and strengthened rights and livelihoods for people living in poverty, the Swedish government, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), entered into an agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to provide support to the Project.

The Project consists of three parts:

1. Forest sector institutional development
2. Catalyzing forest sector development
3. Sheger beautification program

The Project, which is implemented by the EFCCC is financed by Sida through the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa, with UNDP as the executing agency.

The evaluation has been carried out during November-December 2021, by a team of two consultants, one from Sweden and one from Ethiopia. Preliminary findings were presented to the Embassy of Sweden at a virtual debriefing session on 9 December 2021.

2 The Evaluated Intervention

2.1 BACKGROUND

The livelihoods of people living in rural areas of Ethiopia depend to a large extent on rainfed agriculture. The expected impact that climate change will have on the availability of water is dramatic. At the same time as temperatures are expected to rise, the variability in rainfall will make agriculture unpredictable and increase the occurrence of droughts as well as flooding. Forests have an important role to play in reducing the impacts of climate-change by regulating temperature as well as water flow and availability. During the period 1990-2020, the forest cover in Ethiopia decreased by 11,4% from 19,3 to 17,1 million ha¹, equal to an annual reduction of 73,300 ha.

The project under evaluation attempts to increase the forest cover in the country and counteract the impacts of climate change in order to achieve better livelihoods and increased resilience for communities. If the forest resources are conserved and managed sustainably, it will benefit the economic development of the country. The government of Ethiopia has promoted green initiatives by setting a target of planting 20 billion trees by 2022. Whilst working on structural transformation, the country has signed and implemented international forest and sustainable land-use policies. The focus on making the use of forests sustainable, is reflected in a number of laws, policies and strategies to that effect, under various sectors including environmental protection, development of natural resources, and the diversification of the domestic and export commodities. These have included the National Forest Policy, the National Forestry Law, the National Environment Law, the Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Policy (2007), the Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Proclamation (2007), and the Environment Policy of Ethiopia (1997). Recently, Ethiopia has adopted and started implementing the Ten-Year Development Plan (2021-2030). Targets have been set in the areas of environment and climate change, most importantly increasing the national forest coverage to 30%.²

The existing strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, developed for the period 2016-2020³, has three result areas, of which one aims at supporting a better environment, limited climate impact and greater resilience to environmental impact, climate change and natural disasters, and another includes creating better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions. The new country strategy that is currently being developed for the period 2022-2026 is expected to address how Swedish development cooperation with Ethiopia can help strengthening Ethiopia's resilience to crises affecting the environment and climate, peaceful societies, and livelihoods. It is expected to contain, as one

¹ FAO, 2020: Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, Main Report.

² FDRE Planning and Development Commission, 2021

³ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2016: Results strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, 2016-2020.

focus area, efforts at improving the environment, reducing the impacts of the climate crisis, and strengthening resilience to climate change⁴. Effective management of the forest resources of the country is highly relevant in this context.

2.2 EVALUATION OBJECT

The object of the evaluation consists of three separate forestry interventions, in the following called ‘the Project’:

1. Institutional strengthening for forest sector development in Ethiopia, 2016 - 2020
2. Catalysing forest sector development in Ethiopia, 2018 - 2022
3. Sheger beautification program

The first phase of the project (2016-2020) aimed at achieving the following major results; (1) the institutional capacity of the forest sector strengthened at all levels, (2) forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced, (3) private sector investment in forest development facilitated, and (4) science and innovation for enhanced sustainable forest management promoted. The second phase of the project has aimed at (1) strengthening the capacity of the forest sector at strategic and operational levels, (2) creating multi-functional landscapes in rural and urban areas, and (3) substantially reducing the vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events.

The Sheger beautification program is part of a national initiative for investment in urban renewal, justified by the need to address severe urban challenges, including soil degradation, water pollution and flooding, and at the same time achieving economic, livelihood and income-generating benefits, while conserving and restoring urban ecosystems. It is an extension to the other two projects and has as its objective to support implementation through human and institutional capacity building and an integrated urban planning and management approach.

The Project, is implemented by EFCCC, supported financially by Sida through the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa, with UNDP as the executing agency. EFCCC implements the Project through a Program Coordination Office at federal level, as well as coordination offices at regional and district levels. There has been a recent re-structuring in that EFCCC has been moved under the Agriculture Ministry. It is not entirely clear what implications this will have on the implementation of the Project, but it has been indicated by several key respondents, that the organisation is likely to continue being an independent one.

⁴ <https://donortracker.org/policy-updates/sweden-develops-new-strategy-development-cooperation-ethiopia>

A unit has been established at the UNDP office in Addis Ababa for Project execution. A number of organisations with specific competencies have been engaged in the implementation as sub-grantees. International sub-grantees include the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Eco Innovation and the Swedish Forest Agency. National sub-grantees include Wondo Genet College of Forestry, Ethiopian Forest Research Institute, Holeta Polytechnic College and Mertule Mariam TVET College.

In addition to UNDP, UN-Habitat and the Addis Ababa City Administration and Mayors offices, a large number of stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the Sheger beautification program, including EFCCC, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Urban Development and Construction, Addis Ababa Environment and Green Area Development Commission, River Basin and Green Area Development Agency, UNIDO, FAO, UNECA and UNESCO.

Following a no-cost extension of one year, the Project is planned to be finalised by the end of 2022. The Swedish contributions to the three components are as follows:

Phase 1: 56 MSEK

Phase 2: 79 MSEK

Sheger beautification project: 20 MSEK

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Evaluate support to the forest sector institutional development, catalysing forest sector development and Sheger beautification program and formulate recommendations on how its management team can improve and adjust implementation.
- Evaluate support to the forest sector institutional development, catalysing forest sector development and Sheger beautification program and formulate recommendations as an input for further discussion about a new phase of the intervention.
- Evaluate support to the forest sector institutional development, catalysing forest sector development and Sheger beautification program as an input to the decision whether or not it shall receive continued funding.

In addition to fulfilling these three main objectives, the purpose of the evaluation is also to provide information and evidence that can be of use to the wider group of stakeholders mentioned in Section 2.2, in their implementation work.

Scope and focus

The scope and focus of the evaluation are provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR, see Appendix 1). The focus is put on the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Project, and the time period covered is from 2016 to 2021. The team's interpretation of how it has intended to assess and find answers to the evaluation questions under each criterion is shown in the evaluation matrix in Appendix 2.

In order to assess the performance of the Project, field visits were foreseen to Amhara, SNNPR, Oromia, Somali and Benshangul Gumuz regional states. During the evaluation start-up meeting, it was agreed to exclude Amhara for security reasons. Subsequently, as the security situation deteriorated in all regional states that were originally included in the field visit programme, all field visits were cancelled after consultation with the Swedish Embassy.

Overall approach

The evaluation has been carried out in accordance with OECD DAC criteria and guidelines. A utilisation focus approach has been applied, engaging all concerned institutions, and primarily the Swedish Embassy, the staff of which has been engaged in several discussions during the course of the evaluation.

Major changes to the originally intended evaluation methodology were made due to the changed security in the country, as described above. The changes were made after discussion and in agreement with the Swedish Embassy.

Ethical matters and risks

Interviewees and respondents to the questionnaire were informed that the results of the interview and information and perceptions gathered would be stored, processed and presented in full confidentiality by the team. Informed consent procedures were followed. Respondents were assured anonymity in the reporting of information, and the team has made sure that no circulation of interview notes or information contained therein, external to the evaluation team, could take place. Participants were informed that they were free to cease their participation in the interviews at any point.

Apart from the major methodological changes that had to be made due to the changed security situation, no other actions had to be taken related to risk management.

Data collection

Information for evaluative analysis has been gathered through the following methods:

1. Study of Project documentation and related external documents
2. Interviews, all of which by phone or on virtual platforms
3. Email correspondence
4. Digital questionnaire survey with Forcefield Analysis questions integrated

Document study

A large set of documents was made available by the Embassy, UNDP and EFCCC. Additional documents have been collected and studied as the evaluation has progressed. A list of documents studied is provided in Annex 3.

Since it has not been possible for the team to go to the field and observe the progress and outputs of the Project, other sources of information have been used to assess the effectiveness, including the Project reporting. It was found in connection with the mid-term review of the Norwegian REDD+ support that the Project reporting had given a largely accurate picture of the actual physical performance in terms of forest plantation coverage, when compared to a survey carried out on the same lands for ground-

checking purposes. The team has also verified in their stakeholder interviews, several of the results presented in the Project progress reporting.

Interviews

Due to the security situation, all interviews were carried out on virtual platforms or over the phone. An originally planned field trip programme to be carried out by the national team member had to be cancelled in its entirety, due to the deteriorated security situation. In addition to carrying out a number of virtual interviews with stakeholders in Addis Ababa and Sweden, the team applied a combination of phone interviews and email correspondence to seek information from stakeholders in the regions and districts. This was a complicated and time-consuming process, but it was effective in terms of the amount of valuable information received. A list of persons met and interviewed is provided in Annex 4.

Digital questionnaire survey

A digital questionnaire survey for acquiring a dataset on stakeholder perceptions on Project relevance and performance was issued and distributed to the persons interviewed. The questionnaire is available in Appendix 5. Responses were provided by 13 persons, a response rate of 59%, which is considered acceptable.

Forcefield Analysis and Theory of Change

Data collection for the Forcefield Analysis was integrated with the questionnaire survey. The respondents were asked to list, in order of importance, the five most important factors hindering and supporting change respectively, towards accomplishing the Project aim to enhance the capacity of institutions and promote sustainable and competitive tree-based production systems thereby contributing to community and ecosystem resilience. The specific factors provided by the respondents were grouped under more generic headings, which were then scored in accordance with the average importance grade given to the specific factors under each heading.

Some limited material available for a discussion on and development of a Project Theory of Change was collected by the team but the COVID-19 pandemic, in combination with the challenging security situation and the inherently slow internet connections, made it impossible to organise an appropriately participatory Theory-of -Change event, and this has therefore been dropped.

Data analysis

Inputs from the different data collection methods and from different stakeholder sources have been triangulated to the extent possible considering the limitations presented below.

Quantitative data from Project documentation and external documents received from interviewees have been analysed and triangulated to respond to the evaluation questions.

The structure of the final evaluation report follows the structure of the evaluation matrix, that is, each criterion and each evaluation question have their own section or subsection in the relevant part of the report.

Limitations

As mentioned, there have been several serious limitations to the evaluation. The limitations caused by the security situation has been described above.

In order to evaluate effectiveness, evaluators should have access to a well-described theory of change, and a series of annual reports where progress is presented against a results matrix with SMART⁵ indicators and targets. In this case there is no explicit and detailed Theory of Change⁶. The results framework is rudimentary and incomplete, focusing on activities and outputs, and for one year it was not even reported against.

Secondly, the internet connectivity has been a problem on a large number of virtual interviews, but it has been possible to manage by taking short breaks and then restarting the interviews. No larger internet-based meetings were organised, since such meetings could not have been managed effectively for this reason.

⁵ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

⁶ A Theory of Change should have at least the following components: problem statement, context, inputs, activities, results at different levels, assumptions and risks.

3 Findings

The findings arrived at during the analysis of the collected information are presented in the following text, structured under the five OECD evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, and under the specific evaluation questions provided in the ToR and elaborated in the evaluation matrix presented in Appendix 2.

3.1 RELEVANCE

1. *To what extent has the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries', partners' and government needs, policies, and priorities, and have they continued to do so if/when circumstances have changed?*

The Project intervention aligns well with major pillars of the country's development strategic documents, such as the Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II), the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy (CRGE), the Forest Sector Development Plan (FSDP), and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) from forestry.

The Project has supported communities to cope with the negative effects of climate change, and supported them to engage in livelihood improving initiatives, which have helped strengthening food security at the community level. Benefiting communities have also considered adopting clean renewable energy means instead of cutting down trees for fuel purposes. When emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, the Project adjusted its management procedures and also supported health campaigns by providing sanitary supplies to the communities. In addition, awareness has been created so that the benefiting community members may stay healthy and continue being engaged in the Project. This has been supported by providing alternative income generating means such as poultry, sheep and improved cooking stoves to the target beneficiaries at community level. This is considered a good example of how the Project has been able to respond to beneficiary needs in concrete terms.

The Project adheres well to both the existing strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, developed for the period 2016-2020⁷, and to what is expected to be included in the new strategy currently being developed for the period 2022-2026. The current strategy has three result areas, of which one aims at supporting a better environment, limited climate impact and greater resilience to environmental impact, climate change and natural disasters. Another result area includes creating better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions. The new country strategy is expected to address how Swedish development cooperation with Ethiopia can help strengthening Ethiopia's resilience to crises

⁷ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2016: Results strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, 2016-2020.

affecting the environment and climate, peaceful societies, and livelihoods. It is expected to contain, as one focus area, efforts to improving the environment, reducing the impacts of the climate crisis, and strengthening resilience to climate change⁸. Effective management of the forest resources of the country, which is a corner stone of the Project, is highly relevant in this context.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

2. To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?

The main objective of the Project is to strengthen government capacity in the forest sector at all levels and spearhead the implementation of forest components contained in the GTP II and CRGE strategy. The Project interventions have achieved a number of results. As reported by the Project and largely verified by the team through other sources, results in the following important areas have been achieved:

- Forest cooperatives established and supported
- Forest sites demarcated; certificates given to sites
- Improvement and expanding livelihood means for the community
- Effective commitment of stakeholders at all levels
- Community engagement in forestry, securing community ownership
- Ongoing capacity building
- Capacity building provided to youth
- Sheger beautification Project has trained over 800 individuals in entrepreneurship

Community members have been able to use forest products such as frankincense for sale, and then use the income to support their families. Cooperatives establishments are carried out in the participating Woredas. 178 forest cooperatives have been established and technical expertise has been assigned to follow up and provide technical support to these groups⁹.

The 2020 progress report presents the following account of the impact-level achievement for Phase 1 in the area of tree plantation:

“A well-functioning structure established at three levels capable of producing and managing forest. Over 14,728 ha degraded land covered with forest that is capable of producing over birr five billion in two years. Several livelihood-based forest related businesses created in the form of 26 legal and 178 associations generating birr 2,480,885 for 7638 households”

⁸ <https://donortracker.org/policy-updates/sweden-develops-new-strategy-development-cooperation-ethiopia>

⁹ Sintayehu Derese, Interview, Amhara regional coordinator

According to the 2020 progress report, the following results were achieved at outcome level for Phase 1:¹⁰

Outcome 1: Institutional capacity of the forestry sector strengthened at all levels

EFCCC established, with no capacity. NFSDP prepared and implementation started. Regional plans prepared for 11 regions. Forest sector structure established in nine regions and staff capacitated. Forest database established. Vehicle and equipment procured.

Outcome 2: Forest conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced

4,364.9 ha of plantation covered up to 2020. Rural land use plans prepared for all 9 implementation sites.

Outcome 3: Private sector involvement in forest development facilitated

178 cooperatives have been established with Project support, of which 26 are certified, generating an annual income of birr 2,480,885 for 7,638 households.

Outcome 4: Science and innovation for enhancing sustainable forest management promoted

Five research projects awarded to EEFRI and upgrading of equipment provided. Overall, 13 research projects completed by, in addition to EEFRI, Gondar University, Hawassa University and Oda Bultum University.

Outcome 5: Stakeholder's engagement in forest development enhanced

Four consultative meetings organized. Stakeholder mobilisation.

For Phase 2, the following cumulative results were reported for 2020:¹¹

Output 1: Enabling environment for strong forest sector delivery enhanced

Three colleges capacitated with tools and equipment. Forestry resource gap study by SLU. Manuals of six modules and lesson plans prepared for training of trainers. So far, around 300 trainers have been trained.

Output 2: Sustainable forest production promoted

79,513 ha mapped and demarcated for participatory forest management. Studies conducted on challenges and opportunities for women and youth entrepreneurs. Frankincense samples collected for testing. As a demonstration project, two small-scale wood processing machines were installed at Wood Technology Research Institute of EEFRI but has not led to any continued research or extension activity.

Output 3: Forest ecosystem services enhanced

1,155 ha of land covered with afforestation/reforestation. Capacity building support for two existing botanical gardens.

Output 4. Model environmental stewardship fostered in selected urban areas

¹⁰ Results have been summarized by the evaluation team, and results reported coincide overall with information gathered from interviews and questionnaire.

¹¹ Results have been summarized by the evaluation team, and results reported coincide overall with information gathered from interviews and questionnaire.

One national guideline prepared for integration of green facilities in city planning. guideline on urban green space planning, development and management.

While it has not been possible for the team to verify all the above results and particularly not the actual numbers, several respondents have mentioned that this type of results have actually been produced.

Some examples of specific results directly related to strengthening of livelihoods include:

- 8,920 chicken have been provided to 978 beneficiaries (140 males and 838 females).
- 142 beehives with bee colony have been provided to 25 beneficiaries (all males).
- 20 sheep have been provided to three beneficiaries (all male).
- Improved cook stoves have been provided to 37 female beneficiaries.
- Provision of hygienic facilities such as face mask, sanitizer, alcohol, soap, etc. for 2,550 beneficiaries (1,146 males and 1,404 females).
- Participatory forest resource assessment conducted for two sites.
- 178 forest cooperatives established, of which 26 are legally certified.
- Agroforestry practices implemented: 67,103 seedlings planted in 20.32 ha.

The Project has also included urban areas, since part of the Sheger beautification program has been included in the implementation. It has provided seed money for the purpose of creating jobs for those who have been relocated due to beautification works. As part of this project, which is supported through UNDP, environmental and social impact assessment has been carried out.¹²

More than 500 trees have been planted in degraded areas of the city, and firms are contracted to capacitate people affected by the project. The capacity building relates to identification of business opportunities, entrepreneurship and business management. Potential business opportunities where affected people can be engaged are also identified.¹³

Several challenges that have hampered operation have been mentioned. With regard to capacity, it has been mentioned that the training is not intensive enough for onboarding technical capacities. Some of the coordinators were hired less than a year ago, and they have not been properly briefed. This challenge is seen at kebele¹⁴ level implementers. This has negatively affected the seasonal forestry activities. Limited availability of vehicles was also a challenge, since monitoring is also held back due to this. The stakeholders who have an important decision power at times have other priorities to focus on, and as a result, works that need decisions and management are pulled back. There is high staff turnover in the Project, this tends to delay achievements. Mobilising grass-root community members for joint work is also a challenge. Budgets are not also sufficient for operations such as evaluations, doing awareness creation works to the community, vehicles fuels and maintenance. This is an observed problem throughout the project's period.

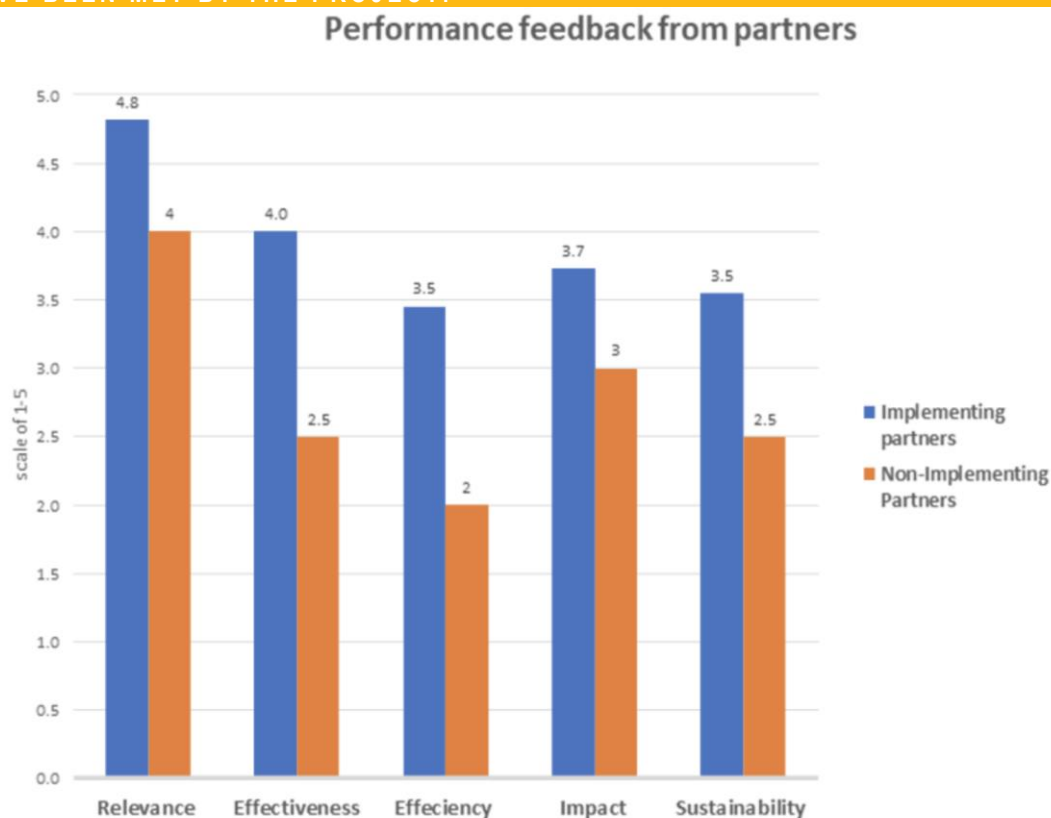
¹² In Ethiopian Business Review, November 15, 2020, there was a report on the topic of people that have up till now been dependent on the forest no longer being allowed. Several hundred of the users may get employed in the park management, but the number of those who have not got jobs is larger, and they are people living in poverty, many of them women.

¹³ Interview, Sheger Beautification mega Project office, Addis Ababa

¹⁴ Lowest administrative level

Capacity building from the UNDP side is considered having been limited by respondents other than Project implementers. Figure 1 shows how implementers and non-implementing stakeholders consider fulfilment of effectiveness and other criteria.

FIGURE 1. PERCEPTION AMONG PARTNERS HOW EVALUATION CRITERIA HAVE BEEN MET BY THE PROJECT.



3. To what extent is the agreement partner building the capacity of implementing partners, i.e. subgrantees.

One of the findings of the questionnaire survey is that 50 % of the respondents were of the opinion that the support of UNDP to building capacity among the Project partners has been very limited.

The results of the Forcefield Analysis with regard to hindering factors for achieving the aims of the Project are shown in Table 1. The limitations in skills, capacity and awareness was, by far, the most important issue brought out by the respondents.

Table 1 Questionnaire survey respondents' perception of hindering factors in order of importance

1	Low skills, capacity and awareness
2	Insufficient sources of financing
3	Weak institutional setup
4	Political instability and pandemic
5	Land tenure insecurity
6	Long-term returns from trees
7	Lack of markets
8	Limited private sector engagement
9	Insufficient input supply chains
10	Policy insufficiency

The factors that support Project effectiveness, as they have come out in the result of the Forcefield Analysis are shown in Table 2. The active participation of community members, and the support to improvement of their livelihoods is considered the most important factor to support the achievement of the aims of the Project. This has also been mentioned in many interviews as a decisive factor for achieving sustainability of results.

Table 2 Factors that support Project effectiveness

1	Community participation and livelihood improvement
2	Stakeholder engagement, collaboration and information sharing
3	Appropriate forestry management
4	Strong institutional set-up
5	Capacity building
6	Market and credit availability

7	Continued external support to the Project
8	Strong policy support
9	Monitoring and evaluation
10	Private sector engagement

Although UNDP has not been directly involved in Project implementation to any large extent, there are certain functions through which UNDP can transfer knowledge and skills. One example is through the close interaction between UNDP staff and staff working at the federal EFCCC office. It has been reported in some interviews that a certain amount of knowledge transfer takes place particularly in the areas of M&E and financial management.

National sub-grantees have benefitted from capacity building in their cooperation with the Swedish and international sub-grantee organisations rather than with UNDP.

3.3 EFFICIENCY

Although the Project organisational set-up as such with the large number of implementation actors may seem as complicated and possibly limiting efficiency, there is overall satisfaction with this set-up. That said, a majority of implementers interviewed or reached through the survey questionnaire, have stated that there are limitations to the efficiency of UNDP as executing agency. Most commonly the limitations mentioned relate to delays of services and low level of capacity transfer.

4 To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?

Administration costs are charged to the Swedish contribution at different stages of the Project fund flow. In accordance with the agreement between Sida and UNDP, the surcharge on funds transferred to UNDP is 8%, which is normal for this type of implementation management support. On top of that, there are additional administration cost charges of varying size made by sub-grantees. For instance, when the Swedish University for Agricultural Science (SLU) charges UNDP, an administrative surcharge of 55% is made and on top of that there is a Wage Cost Surcharge (LKP) of 54%, of which only about 31% is statutory. That means that there is an actual overhead charge of 78%. Another sub-grantee respondent interviewed, reported an administration charge of somewhere between 10 and 16%. At the same time, in the case of another sub-grantee it was reported that since there was no administration cost surcharge in their case, the respondent had to manage the coordination function without pay.

There were several complaints from respondents at national, regional, district and sub-grantee level about delays in transfer of funds. Such delays led to delays of implementation activities. These cases concern transfers from UNDP, either to EFCCC or to sub-grantees. Such delays can be up to six months.

It was also mentioned by some respondents that the funds, as budgeted, were not sufficient, which restricted flexibility and effectiveness in implementation.

In relation to UNDP, there is an in-built source of delay in that there is a requirement that sub-grantees have to report to 80% of funds provided for agreed reporting periods, normally three months, before they can request additional funds for the coming period. This rule is designed such that it applies to all sub-grantees together, so that if one sub-grantee is late with reporting, the others cannot receive more funds either, until the late reporting has been addressed. This reduces the implementation efficiency of the Project.

Interview respondents report that it has been common with delays in procurements carried out by UNDP. In one case it took one and a half year to procure motor bikes.

Other impediments to organisational efficiency mentioned by respondents include high staff turnover in implementing institutions, and delays caused by necessary coordination with stakeholders in sectors other than forestry at regional and district level.

5 *To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust intervention implementation?*

Several forest staff respondents at regional level have stated that lessons learned from previous forest sector development programmes have been an important factor for helping to improve performance and achieve targets. Providing an account of lessons learned in one specific section of the annual reporting in the organisation is an obligatory requirement.

6 *Have the M&E system/narrative report delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning.*

An M&E system normally contains a robust set of indicators at different result levels of an activity (outputs, outcomes and impact) along with the tools one can use to collect the data that can measure the value of the indicators, and also the processes to be applied. This is not reflected in the tables provided in the progress reports prepared in the Project.

7 *What are the comparative advantages of working through UNDP, in transferring skills, knowledge and new technologies to government and its sub-grantees?*

In the absence of the possibility of providing direct financing from Sweden to the Government of Ethiopia, UNDP provides a viable alternative for transferring funds for the forestry development interventions.

UNDP has a procurement function in the Project and is therefore directly involved in facilitating technology transfer, although judging from inputs of several respondents the efficiency of the procurement function has not been high.

See also under Question 3 under Effectiveness above.

3.4 IMPACT

8 *To what extent has the intervention generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, high-level effects?*

As mentioned, there is no rigorous attempt to report on impacts of the Project, but the team has found, mostly through the interviews, evidence of improvement of livelihoods, both through regular forestry and sale of wood produce, and through diversification into, for instance, frankincense production and sale. This has been reported by forestry staff at different levels and is also confirmed by respondents working with sub-grantee organisations at both national and international level. Similarly, improvement of the availability of water resources has been mentioned by several respondents.

There has been a massive effort at the Wondo Genet College of Forestry, with the assistance of the SLU group, to train trainers on various aspects of forestry, including participatory forest management. So far, around 300 trainers have been trained and it is intended to train a total of 1000 trainers. These trainers will in turn provide service and advice to extension agents. It is highly probable that this will have a positive impact on the quality and value of what can be produced in the forest sector in the coming years. It can also be expected that there will be secondary effects resulting from capacity being built among community members. If such effects are being complemented with initiatives of private-sector actors, the impacts can be enhanced.

With regard to gender equality and rights aspects, these are not reported on to any substantial extent in the annual progress reports. There was an input on gender done as part of the contract with SLU, implemented by a group at Umeå University. A gender gap analysis was carried out, and work was done on gender mainstreaming, primarily in relation to the modules prepared for the training-of-trainers programme. A training programme was also carried out with participants from different parts of the country.

There is evidence, reported by interviewees, of groups of community members taking up the responsibility of protecting natural forest land, which has helped in protecting endemic plant species and improved local climate and the availability of water, which, in turn, has reduced the vulnerability of the communities to climate change, and has had a positive effect on their livelihood.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

9 *To what extent will the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue?*

As the result of the Forcefield Analysis has shown, the participation of community members in Project planning and implementation and being able to show improvements in livelihoods is considered the most important input to effectiveness. It is equally important to sustainability of Project results, since livelihoods improvement is what motivates people to sustain their efforts.

There are examples on the African continent, where capacity building anchored in community ownership has produced results at both output and effects level that have been sustained after

interventions have been phased out. Such examples have typically included strong participation of communities, households in combination with some kind of private sector actors.¹⁵

The massive training-of-trainers programme mentioned in the previous Section is important in this context, because of the secondary effects that may result if this leads to an on-going process of increasing knowledge at the community level, coupled with the capacity and entrepreneurship of private actors. The mid-term review of the REDD+ interventions financed by Norway also pointed to these two aspects as being supportive to sustainability.

The current reorganisation of the EFCCC to be located under the Ministry of Agriculture could involve a shift towards a wider thematic scope of, for instance, the cooperatives, which could become more multi-purpose to include both forestry and agriculture activities. This has been mentioned as an advantage by respondents at district level in that it could provide a more viable basis for the operation of the cooperatives than just forestry. Several respondents have mentioned that cooperatives should do other things than just producing and selling wood products. This would increase the viability of the cooperatives, and improve the prospects for sustainability of both the cooperatives as such and of the forest and tree resources that have been and are being produced under the Project.

¹⁵ See, for instance, Waterkeyn, 2016. In Zimbabwe, masons that had been trained to produce improved open dug wells and toilets for individual households had kept up this vocation during many years of economic downfall, political instability and an almost complete withdrawal of funding from external donors. The study found that around 20,000 homesteads had been equipped with these facilities without any type of external support.

4 Evaluative Conclusions

4.1 RELEVANCE

The Project is well aligned with the relevant strategies of the government, including the CRGE and the Growth and Transformation Plan II, and with many relevant government policies, including those on livelihood improvement, job creation and urban greening. It is thus well justified, and also firmly anchored within the Forestry Development Programme. Similarly, the alignment with the Swedish development cooperation strategy is strong, both for the existing and upcoming new strategy.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

A number of results, most of them at output level, have been summarised in Section 3.2, based on the reporting for both programme phases, cumulatively up to the year 2020. Several of these results have been mentioned and verified by interview respondents. However, the results framework has been characterised as weak and not of sufficient quality with regard particularly to indicators, and tends to be presented in narrative text in the tables. The team agrees with this. The evidence, therefore, remains weak in several aspects.

UNDP is found to be a workable alternative for transferring funds to other implementing actors, and has imparted capacity to some extent when working with counterparts at EFCCC. It is clear, however, from the results of the questionnaire survey and Forcefield Analysis that capacity building is an area of utmost priority that has not been sufficiently addressed in the Project.

4.3 EFFICIENCY

UNDP is found to be a workable alternative for transferring funds to other implementing actors, and has imparted capacity to some extent when working with counterparts at EFCCC,

There are several areas of project administration, planning and follow-up where limitations in efficiency have been evident. This includes fund transfer and procurement, where there have been substantial delays. The administrative charges are high, and highly variable among the different sub-grantee organisations. This has a negative effect on the efficiency of the Project.

The M&E system is weak in several RBM aspects, and progress reporting has not been consistent over time.

4.4 IMPACT

The Project is not oriented towards monitoring impact, partly because instruments for measuring have not been developed, including a Theory of Change and a robust Results Framework. However, there is evidence on improvement of ecosystems, including water resources, in protected forest lands and enhanced livelihoods at community level.

It can also be expected that the training-of-trainers programme will have positive impacts at community level, since this is expected to lead to 100 trainers being trained for carrying out forestry extension work in the country.

With regard to gender equality, there has been an input on gender mainstreaming connected partly to the training-of-trainers programme, but the reporting on gender in the annual progress reports is scarce.

4.5 SUSTAINABILITY

It is concluded that engaging the community members more actively in the planning and implementation of the Project is important for sustainability. It is equally important that the initiatives taken for entrepreneurship and private sector involvement that would increase the motivation and engagement by the communities are continued and strengthened.

The fact that the Project has put more emphasis than earlier interventions on post-planting activities and on soil and water conservation will have a positive effect on the sustainability of plantations established by the Project. It is likely that this will have an effect also on the sustainability of results achieved by the Project through the livelihood-supporting interventions mentioned in Section 3.2, particularly if the reorganisation of the forestry sector results in the cooperatives established by the Project adopt a wider scope of activities, including an increased orientation towards agricultural products.

5 Recommendations

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PROJECT

The following recommendations are made to UNDP and EFCCC:

5. When the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic are over, a process should be initiated to develop the necessary RBM instruments. This could be started by arranging a participatory workshop, facilitated by competent RBM consultants and using the results of the Forcefield Analysis as one input, to develop a Theory of Change and a robust Results Framework for the Project.
6. The progress reporting should be strengthened with regard to reporting on gender equality and rights aspects, and the necessary indicators and targets need to be clearly developed in the results framework.
7. Continue and intensify efforts to develop skills, capacity and awareness among implementing partners as well as with community members.
8. Intensify efforts to engage, support and cooperate with communities and private-sector entrepreneurs in order to increase effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Project results.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EMBASSY OF SWEDEN AND SIDA

The following recommendations are made to Sida/Swedish Embassy:

5. Discuss and resolve with UNDP and EFCCC how the frequent delays in disbursements within the Project can be addressed.
6. In a possible new phase of the Project, negotiate lower surcharge fees for engaging sub-grantees in the Project.
7. In a possible new phase of the Project, assist the Project in developing a Theory of Change as a basis for a robust results framework
8. In a possible new phase of the Project, ascertain that UNDP and EFCCC develop improved instruments for effective results based management, as well as more consistent and higher quality progress reporting.

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of UNPD's support to the Forest Sector institutional development and catalyzing the Forest Sector. (Ref. 10430)

Date: August 12, 2021

1. General information

1.1 Introduction

The fast-growing economy of the country has been under great challenge due to unsustainable use of natural resources, population pressure, weak institutional capacity and climate change impacts. Cognizant to this, in March 2016, the government approved a strategy for Swedish international development cooperation with Ethiopia and instructed Sida to take responsibility for the implementation of the strategy. The strategy implementation will contribute to a better environment, reduced climate impact and strengthened resilience to shocks and disasters while creating an opportunity for the people living in poverty to exercise their rights. Furthermore, the strategy aims at promoting sustainable and democratic development to improve the living conditions of the urban and rural poor by creating conducive environment, enhance productive employment, food security and social protection. The strategy will cover the period 2016-2020¹⁶ to promote sustainable economic development and environmental management through sustainable natural resources management that avert the impact of climate change and ensure community and ecosystem resilience. UNDP has been identified as a potential organization for strategy implementation by promoting sustainable environmental governance through institutional development, technology transfer and knowledge sharing. Hence, the agreement with UNDP was signed in 2016 to support the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission to implement the programme entitled “Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia” and “Catalysing Forest sector development in Ethiopia”.

1.2 Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated

The evaluation aims at assessing UNDP's support to the forest sector development in promoting forest business, strengthening forest institutional setup, forming forest coops and technology transfer. Moreover, the assessment will cover how UNDP created an enabling conditions for active engagement of local institutions such as Forest development cooperatives and government offices in forest sector development. The assessment will also look into how

¹⁶ Annex A: Swedish Bilateral Development Cooperation Strategy for Ethiopia 2016.

UNDP enabled its partners such as SLU, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural resources, Mertollemiam College of Natural Resources, CIFOR, Ethiopian Forest Research institute and Environment, Forest and Climate Change commission. The assessment will cover sample Woredas (districts) from the following regions.

- ✓ Phase I: Amhara, SNNPR
- ✓ Phase II: Oromia, Somali and Benshangul Gumuz

For further information, the intervention proposal is attached as Annex D.

The intervention logic or theory of change of the intervention may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report, if deemed necessary.

1.3 Evaluation rationale

The outcome of this assessment will inform the Embassy to make informed decision on further engagement with UNDP during the upcoming new strategy for Ethiopia (2022-2026) period.

2. The assignment

2.1 Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose of this evaluation is to assist the Embassy in Addis Abeba to get insight on the progress of on-going intervention in Forest sector development and to make an informed decisions on how project implementation may be adjusted and/or improved in the preparation of a new phase of intervention or serve as an input for Sida to make a decision on whether the support to the Forest sector development shall receive continued funding or not.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are;

The project management team of Forest sector development at UNDP, Government i.e. Environment Forest and Climate Change, CIFOR, SLU, Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Ethiopian Forest Research Institute.

Moreover, Sida's Bilateral development Cooperation unit at the Swedish Embassy in Addis Abeba will benefit from the evaluation outcome to make decision on the continuation of support to UNDP.

Finally, other donors such as Embassy of Norway in Addis Abeba, EU-delegation in Addis Abeba and Embassy of Denmark in Addis Abeba will benefit from the evaluation.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the Embassy will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation scope

The UNDP is expected to deliver on the major results that have been indicated in the program document. The program document was divided into two phases of the projects. The first phase of the Project is "Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia

2016”¹⁷ and it aims at achieving the following major results; 1) The institutional capacity of the Forest sector strengthened at all levels, 2) Forest Conservation and development for their multiple benefits enhanced, 3) Private sector investment in forest development facilitated and 4) Science and innovation for enhanced sustainable Forest Management promoted. The second phase of the project “Catalysing Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia 2018”¹⁸ is a continuation of phase one and aiming at achieving the following major results; 1) Strengthening the capacity of Forest sector at strategic and operational level, 2) creating multifunctional landscapes in rural and urban area and 3) substantially reduce the vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events. Thus, the scope of this study is to assess whether the proposed results have been achieved as per the plan or not, the added value of working through UNDP, the contemporary capacity of the UNDP to efficiently and effectively deliver on the proposed major results at various levels, assess tools and mechanisms designed to ensure sustainability of the achieved results (Example: Capacity and sustainability of the Institutions established at grass roots level, forest sector development, private sector engagement etc.) and capacity and skills transferred to the consortium members.

The evaluation specifically assess the following points;

- Summarize so far achieved results in promoting forest business by engaging private sectors at different levels i.e outgrowers, market linkage, processing and manufacturing.
- Indicate the comparative advantage of working through UNDP, in transferring skills, knowledge and new technologies to government and its sub-grantees.
- Analyse the institutional capacity of the UNDP in building the capacity of implementing partners i.e. subgrantees.
- Analyse the capacity, skills, and knowledge of the Forest cooperatives in office management, business planning, financial management, forest management and market engagement.
- Analyse risks and challenges that is likely to compromise promotion of institutional sustainability including Forest cooperatives and the results achieved so far.
- Analyse to what extent forest related livelihood options have been identified to benefit the respective communities and discuss its contribution to forest sustainability and community resilience.

The assessment will cover the period from October 1, 2021 up to December 24, 2021 and will address Amhara, SNNPR, Oromia, Somali and Benshangul Gumuz regional states. Sample target groups for the interview will include the project offices and Forest Cooperatives at district level, The Swedish University of Agriculture (SLU), Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources, Ethiopian Forest Research Institute

¹⁷ Annex D: Project document “Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia”, 2016

¹⁸ Annex D: Project document: “Catalysing Forest sector development in Ethiopia”, 2018.

and CIFOR and selected TVETs and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission.

If needed, the scope of the evaluation may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

2.3 Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The objective/objectives of this evaluation is/are to

- Evaluate support to the Forest Sector Institutional development, Catalyzing Forest Sector development and sheger beautification program and formulate recommendations on how its management team can improve and adjust implementation.
- Evaluate support to the Forest Sector Institutional development, Catalyzing Forest Sector development and sheger beautification program and formulate recommendations as an input to for further discussion a new phase of the intervention.
- Evaluate support to the Forest Sector Institutional development, Catalyzing Forest Sector development and sheger beautification program as an input to the decision whether or not it shall receive continued funding.

The evaluation questions are:

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?

- To what extent has the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries', partners and government needs, policies, and priorities, and have they continued to do so if/when circumstances have changed?
- To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust intervention implementation?

Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

- To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?
- Have the M&E system/narrative report delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?

Efficiency: How well are resources being used?

- To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?
- To what extent the agreement partner building the capacity of implementing partners i.e. subgrantees.

Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

- To what extent has the project or programme generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, high-level effects?

Sustainability: Will the benefits last?

- To what extent will the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue?

2.4 Evaluation approach and methods

The assessment will be carried out in two stages. The first stage is primarily focused on a desk review supported by interviews with UNDP staff. Moreover, the desk review will be supplemented by assessing secondary data such as project document, annual work plans, annual narrative progress reports, financial reports and the Swedish development cooperation strategy for 2016-2020. The second stage will involve an interview (depending on current conflict situation and COVID-19 it might be virtual or done on person) with implementing partners (consortium members) supported by field visits (contingent upon current situation i.e. COVID-19 and conflict) to representative sample Woredas from Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul Gumuz and SNNPR regional states to triangulate with the already communicated result reports. On top of assessing the major achieved results, the field visit will encompass interviewing different stakeholders such as Forest Cooperatives, key beneficiaries, concerned government offices at different levels, field offices and observation of physical interventions.

2.5 Organisation of evaluation management

The bilateral development cooperation section at the Embassy in Ethiopia (Addis Abeba team) jointly with UNDP will facilitate conditions for the consultant to conduct an assessment both during desk review and travel to field.

2.6 Evaluation quality

The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

2.7 Time schedule and deliverables

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
1. Draft inception report	Head of development cooperation, controller and Program Manager	5 October 2021
2. Inception meeting through virtual platform	Head of development cooperation, controller and Program Manager	8 October 2021
3. Comments from intended users to evaluators (alternatively these may be sent to evaluators ahead of the inception meeting)		11 October 2021
4. Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance	Evaluators	5 November 2021
5. Debriefing/validation workshop (meeting)	All bilateral section or Head of development	6 December 2021

	cooperation, controller and Program Manager	
6. Comments from intended users to evaluators		13 December 2021
7. Final evaluation report		24 December 2021

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology *including how a utilization-focused and gender-responsive approach will be ensured*, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design, including an *evaluation matrix* and a *stakeholder mapping/analysis*. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented.

The final report shall be written in English, and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure and follow the layout format of Sida's template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages.

The report shall clearly and in detail describe the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection and analysis and make a clear distinction between the two. The report shall describe how the utilization-focused approach has been implemented i.e. how intended users have participated in and contributed to the evaluation process and how methodology and methods for data collection have created space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users. Furthermore, the gender-responsive approach shall be described and reflected in the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with other identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Limitations to the methodology and methods and the consequences of these limitations for findings and conclusions shall be described.

Evaluation findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and in the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions and be specific, directed to relevant intended users and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The report should be no more than 25 pages excluding annexes. If the methods section is extensive, it could be placed in an annex to the report. Annexes shall always include the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report, the stakeholder mapping/analysis and the Evaluation Matrix. Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personal data if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the evaluation) based on a case based assessment by the evaluator and the commissioning unit/embassy. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on a written consent.

The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation¹⁹.

2.8 Evaluation team qualification

The lead consultant should at least have master's degree or above in one of the following disciplines: Sociology, Natural Resource Economics/management, Forestry, Economics/business management and related discipline. The team of consultants should at least have master's degree or above in one of those areas; Economics, Social studies, Agricultural Economics/Environment and Natural Resource Economics, gender, Forestry, Business administration and marketing.

Team composition

The lead consultant at least should have twelve years of work experience in similar areas. The team of consultants should at least have five years of working experience in areas of business development & market system, livelihood, forest management, natural resources management, RBM and M&E.

Functional competencies

- Strong background on project design, monitoring and Evaluation, RBM with analytical skills, together with the ability to gather and analyze complex information from a range of sources, understand the business context, extract key points and draw conclusions to make recommendations.
- Very good knowledge of common statistical and econometric packages (such as Stata and/or SPSS).
- Experience in development project impact analysis and MLE analysis.
- Excellent report writing skills.
- Proven capability to meet deadlines and work under pressure.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

2.9 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 400,000SEK

Invoicing and payment shall be managed according to the following:

¹⁹ Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

- Inception report to include the proposed deliverables and milestones, 40% of the lump-sum amount
- Draft reports, reports of consultation / validation meetings, workshops, 40% of the lump-sum amount
- Upon submission of the final report, 20% of the lump-sum amount

The contact person at Sida/Swedish Embassy is Elmi Nure, elmi.nure@gov.se. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be provided the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Abeba, responsible program manager at bilateral section

Contact details to intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Abeba and UNDP country office.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics BOOKING INTERVIEWS, PREPARING VISITS in consultation with UNDP including any necessary security arrangements.

3. Annexes

Annex A: Swedish bilateral development cooperation strategy

Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention)	
Title of the evaluation object	Evaluation of Forest sector development
ID no. in PLANIt	10403
Dox no./Archive case no.	UM2016/35597
Activity period (if applicable)	2016-2023
Agreed budget (if applicable)	155MSEK
Main sector ²⁰	Forest sector
Name and type of implementing organisation ²¹	UNDP
Aid type ²²	Grant
Swedish strategy	Bilateral Development Cooperation for Ethiopia 2016-2021

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Swedish Embassy	Embassy of Sweden in Addis Abeba
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Elmi Nure elmi.nure@gov.se
Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post, or other)	Other i.e. assessing contemporey situation of the intervention
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	10403

Annex C: Decentralised evaluation report template

[This format is a requirement for publication under the “Sida Decentralised Evaluations” report series in Sida’s publication database and can be found on Sida’s Inside, under Guidelines & Support/Contribution Management/Evaluation/Implementing.]

Annex D: Project/Programme document

1. Forest sector institutional development
2. Catalyzing Forest sector development
3. Sheger beautification project

Annex 2 – Evaluation Matrix

QUESTIONS RAISED IN TOR	PRIMARY INDICATORS	METHODS	SOURCES OF DATA
RELEVANCE			
To what extent has the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries', partners' and government needs, policies, and priorities, and have they continued to do so if/when circumstances have changed?	• Perception of relevance among programme beneficiaries • Extent of alignment with relevant national policies and strategies • Alignment with Swedish development cooperation policy and strategy • Extent of examples where there has been flexibility to adjust implementation in order to respond to emerging needs	Desk review of documents Interviews Meetings Questionnaire survey Forcefield analysis	Progress, evaluation and review reports Staff of programme agreement and implementing partners Staff of Sida and other donors Members of Forest Cooperatives Fringe beneficiaries
EFFECTIVENESS			
To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?	Extent to which the achievement of objectives and results has been demonstrated in programme reporting, evaluations or donor monitoring Reasons for achievement/non-achievement provided	Desk review of documents Interviews Meetings	Programme progress reports Evaluation and review reports Annual meeting minutes Staff of donors, and agreement and cooperating partners
To what extent is the agreement partner building the capacity of implementing partners i.e. subgrantees.	Extent to which capacity building of implementing partner has been confirmed in programme reporting, evaluations or donor monitoring Perception among implementing partners of effectiveness of capacity building implemented by the agreement partner	Desk review of documents Interviews Meetings Questionnaire survey	Programme progress reports Evaluation and review reports Annual meeting minutes Staff of donors, and agreement and cooperating partners
EFFICIENCY			
To what extent has the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?	Extent of timely/non-timely disbursement of funds for planned activities and reasons for any delays Extent of planned implementation activities	Desk review of documents Interviews Meetings	Programme progress reports Evaluation and review reports Annual meeting minutes Staff of donors, and

	having been carried out in a timely manner Extent of delayed reporting Extent of requests for additional budget allocation to activities already foreseen Adequacies and inadequacies of the governance and organisational structure, staff size and each individual's responsibilities for the attainment of outputs, considering inputs (funds) Proportion of funds allocated to administration as compared to operational activities Size of overhead costs and/or mark-up on staff expenditures		agreement and cooperating partners
To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust intervention implementation?	Extent of reporting on lessons learned Number of examples where it is reported that changes have been made based on lessons learned.	Desk review of documents Interviews	Evaluation and review reports Annual meeting minutes Staff of donors, and agreement and cooperating partners
Have the M&E system/narrative report delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning.	Level of SMARTness of relevant components of results framework Perceptions of usefulness among implementing and donor staff	Desk review of documents Interviews	Progress reports Staff members of implementing partners Staff of donors
What are the comparative advantages of working through UNDP, in transferring skills, knowledge and new technologies to government and its sub-grantees?	Donors' perceptions of advantages of working through UNDP Level of relevant competencies among UNDP staff.	Desk review of documents Interviews Meetings	Staff of relevant other donors Organisational audit/evaluations
IMPACT			
To what extent has the intervention generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, high-level effects?	Number of examples of interventions that generated significant effects Number of intended effects generated because of the interventions Number of negative impacts generated Number of unintended significant effects/ impacts generated due to the intervention	Document review Key informant Interviews Focus group discussions Document review	Members (men and women) of forest cooperatives Community members in areas visited

SUSTAINABILITY			
To what extent will the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue?	Number if examples of benefits of the interventions continued after the phaseout of the intervention Number of the target beneficiaries continued to benefit from the intervention Number of examples of the intervention's effects continued after phase-out of the intervention	Focus group discussions Key informant	Members (men and women) of forest cooperatives Community members in

Annex 3 – Main Documents Consulted

- EFCC, the National Program Coordination Office, EFCC, Final Report on The Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development Program in Ethiopia (ETH-13/0021) from January – December 2018, 2018
- EFCCC, 2020, Project Activities Report, Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2019, UNDP 2016 – 2021: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development, Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2016, Decision on amendment of contribution UNDP's Institutional Strengthening for the Forest sector Development Program (2016-2022), Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2016, Decision on appraisal of contribution UNDP's Institutional Strengthening for the Forest sector Development Program (2016-2022), Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2017 Decision on amendment of agreement on UNDP's Institutional Strengthening for the Forest sector Development Program, Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2018 Decision on amendment of agreement on UNDP's Institutional Strengthening for the Forest sector Development Program (2016-2022), Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2021, Letter on approval of No Cost Extension, Ethiopia
- Embassy of Sweden, 2021, Travel Report for UNDP 2016-202: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development, Ethiopia
- FAO, 2020: Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, Main Report.
- FDRE Planning and Development Commission, 2021
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2011, Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy Green economy strategy
- LTS, Mid-Term Review of the Result Based Payment to the CRGE Facility – Partnership Agreement for REDD+, 2018,
- MEFC, 2018, Institutional Strengthening for forest Sector Development in Ethiopia, 2018
- MEFC, 2018, Forest Sector Development Project Document, Ethiopia
- MEFC, Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, Sweden, UNDP, 2018, Report on: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia
- MEFC and UNDP, 2016, Action plan for the Institutional Strengthening for the Forest sector Development Program, Ethiopia
- Mengisteab and Daniel audit Partnership, 2020, Independent auditor's Report on the Financial Statement of UNDP Assisted Project Institutional Strengthening for forest Sector Development in Ethiopia (FSDP), Ethiopia
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2016: Results strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, 2016-2020

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and climate Change, 2018, National Forest Sector Development Program,
- National Planning commission, 2016, Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/16-2019/20)
- NDP/EFCCC, 2019, Ground Truthing and Management Plan Preparation for Plantation Sites and Rehabilitated Degraded Lands in Nine Project Intervention Districts using GIS, Final Report
- Sida, 2018, UNDP: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest sector Development Program, Ethiopia
- Sida, 2018, Travel report Ethiopia (Addis Ababa, Wollo and Central Rift Valley), Ethiopia
- Sida, 2019, Joint UNDP-UN Habitat Proposal on Sustainable Development of Sheger Project through Integrated Watershed and Urban Planning approach, Ethiopia
- Sida, 2016, Third Party cost sharing agreement between Sida and UNDP, Ethiopia
- UNDP, 2019, Conclusion on Performance of UNDP 2016-2021: Institutional Strengthening for the Forest Sector Development, Ethiopia
- UNDP, 2020, Auditor's Report on United Nations Development Program, 2020
- UNDP, 2019, The Institutional Strengthening for Catalyzing Forest Sector Development Project in Ethiopia (ISCFSDP), Ethiopia
- UNDP, 2020, Activities Report on Forest Sector Development Program (Phase I & II), Ethiopia

Annex 4 – Persons Met/Interviewed

All interviews with the persons listed below were carried out on virtual platforms.

Organisation	Function/Position
EFCCC	Project Manager
UNDP	National Climate Change Specialist
UNDP	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
UNDP	Consultant
UNDP	Project Manager Sheger Project
Swedish Embassy	Program Manager, Environment and Climate Change
Swedish Embassy	Minister Counsellor
Norwegian Embassy	Program Officer for Natural Resources Management and Forest
SLU	University Professor
Eco Innovation Foundation	Director
CIFOR	CIFOR Representative in Ethiopia
EEFRI	Responsible for EEFRI component
Wondo Genet College of Forestry	Responsible for capacity building related to the Project
Holeta Polytechnic College	Natural Resource Department Head and Instructor
Oromia	Regional REDD+ Program Coordinator
SNNPRs	Regional REDD+ Program Coordinator
Somalia	Somali Region Manmade Forest Coordinator
Benishangul Gumuz	District ISFSDP Coordinator
Amhara Region	Regional REDD+ Program Coordinator
SNNPR	
Amhara	Cooperative Promotion, Jawi Woreda
Addis Ababa City Administration	Engineer at Mega Projects Office

Annex 5 – Survey questionnaire

Questionnaire to EFCCC/UNDP forest sector project stakeholders

This questionnaire is issued as part of an evaluation of the Swedish support to forest sector institutional development and catalyzing the forest sector in Ethiopia, executed by UNDP and implemented by EFCCC and partners. The information provided will be used to prepare statistics related to the relevance and results of the support. All responses are treated in full confidentiality and no information about individual responses will be communicated beyond the evaluation team.

Åke Nilsson and Bethelehem Tenkir
NIRAS

Part I: Position of the respondent

1.1 What (type of) organisation are you engaged in?

1. EFCCC/federal
2. EFCCC/regional or district
3. UNDP
4. Donor
5. Sub-grantee, consultant or other support function
6. Other

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Tick the box

Part 2: Performance of the project

2.1 On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very low relevance' and 5 is 'very high relevance', how do you rate the relevance of the project in relation to current policies and strategies that govern your work?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Tick the box

2.2 On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'no improvement' and 5 is 'very significant improvement', to what extent has the project improved the resilience and livelihoods of rural communities in Ethiopia?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Tick the box

2.3 On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not at all' and 5 is 'very high extent', to what extent has the project managed to promote forest business by engaging the private sector?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Tick the box

2.4 On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is ‘not at all’ and 5 is ‘very high extent’, to what extent has UNDP been effective in transferring skills, knowledge and new technologies to government and sub-grantees?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Tick the box

2.5 On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is ‘not at all’ and 5 is ‘to a very high extent’, to what extent do you think the project is sustainable, meaning that the benefits of the project would continue even after the project interventions as such have stopped?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Tick the box

2.6 On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is ‘not at all’ and 5 is ‘to a very high extent’, to what extent do you assess that forest cooperatives established and/or supported by the project have the capacity, skills, and knowledge to provide the intended benefits to their members?

1	2	3	4	5
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Tick the box

Part 3: Advantages of UNDP

3.1 In your view, what has been the comparative advantage of the Project being executed by UNDP, in transferring skills, knowledge and new technologies to government and its sub-grantees

Part 4: Forcefield analysis

4.1 In your view, what are the most important factors **supporting change** towards accomplishing the project’s aim to enhance the capacity of institutions and promote sustainable and competitive tree-based production systems thereby contributing to community and ecosystem resilience? Please list five factors, in order of importance:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

4.2 In your view, what are the most important factors **hindering change** towards accomplishing the project’s aim to enhance the capacity of institutions and promote sustainable and competitive tree-based production systems thereby contributing to community and ecosystem resilience? Please list five factors, in order of importance:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Annex 6 – Inception report

1. Assessment of the scope of the evaluation

1.1 Background

The evaluation for which this inception report is prepared, has been commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa. The evaluation is intended to provide information to the Embassy as part of its decision making on potential further engagement with UNDP as an agreement partner for providing support to forest sector development by promoting forest business, strengthening forest institutional setup, forming forest coops and supporting technology transfer, activities that have been supported financially by the Embassy since 2016.

1.2 Development context

Ethiopia is one of the more densely populated countries in Africa, with a population of 115 million²³. This has resulted in a large portion of the arable land being used as a means of livelihoods for rural people, depending to a large extent on rainfed agriculture. In addition, as a result of the growth of both population and the economy, the demand for forest produce had increased both in urban and rural areas. The expected impact that climate change will have on the availability of water is dramatic. At the same time as temperatures are expected to rise, the variability in rainfall will make agriculture unpredictable and increase the occurrence of droughts as well as flooding. Forests have an important role to play in relation to climate-change adaptation in terms of regulating temperature as well as water flow and availability. During the period 1990-2020, the forest cover in Ethiopia decreased by 11,4% from 19,3 to 17,1 million ha²⁴, equal to an annual reduction of 73,300 ha.

It is clear, that if the forest resources are conserved and managed well, it will benefit the economic development of the country. Sustainable management of forests and forest resources is paramount. The government has promoted green initiatives by setting a target of planting 20 billion trees by 2022. Whilst working on structural transformation, the country has signed and implemented international forest and sustainable land-use policies. The focus on making the use of forest sustainable, is reflected in a number of laws, policies and strategies to that effect, under various sectors including environmental protection, development of natural resources, and the diversification of the domestic and export commodities. These have included the National Forest Policy, the National Forestry Law, the National Environment Law, the

²³ www.worldbank.org, 2021

²⁴ FAO, 2020: Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020, Main Report.

Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Policy (2007), the Forest Development, Conservation and Utilization Proclamation (2007), and the Environment Policy of Ethiopia (1997). Recently, Ethiopia has adopted and started implementing its own development plan: the Ten-Year Development Plan (2021-2030). Targets have been set in the areas of environment and climate change, most importantly increasing the national forest coverage to 30%.²⁵

The existing strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, developed for the period 2016-2020²⁶, has three result areas, of which one aims at supporting a better environment, limited climate impact and greater resilience to environmental impact, climate change and natural disasters, and another includes creating better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions. The new country strategy that is currently being developed for the period 2022-2026 is expected to address how Swedish development cooperation with Ethiopia can help strengthening Ethiopia's resilience to crises affecting the environment and climate, peaceful societies, and livelihoods. It is expected to contain, as one focus area, efforts to improving the environment, reducing the impacts of the climate crisis, and strengthening resilience to climate change²⁷. Effective management of the forest resources of the country is highly relevant in this context.

1.3 Object of the evaluation

The object of the evaluation consists of three separate forestry intervention projects, in the following called 'the Programme':

4. Institutional Strengthening for Forest Sector Development in Ethiopia, 2016 - 2020
5. Catalysing Forest sector development in Ethiopia, 2018 - 2022
6. Sheger Beautification Program

The Programme has aimed at (1) strengthening the capacity of the forest sector at strategic and operational levels, (2) creating multi-functional landscapes in rural and urban areas, and (3) substantially reducing the vulnerability of poor communities to extreme events. The Sheger Beautification Program is an extension to the first two projects, and has as its objective to support the implementation of the Sheger Project through human and institutional capacity building and an integrated urban planning and management approach.

The three projects have been developed and included in the program at different times, and there seems to be no common explicit theory of change. Figure 1, which is taken from the project document for the Sheger Resilience Project, describes to some extent the interaction between riverside rehabilitation, integrated watershed management and sustainable urban planning, but important components are lacking, such as main assumptions, spheres of control and influence, and how interventions

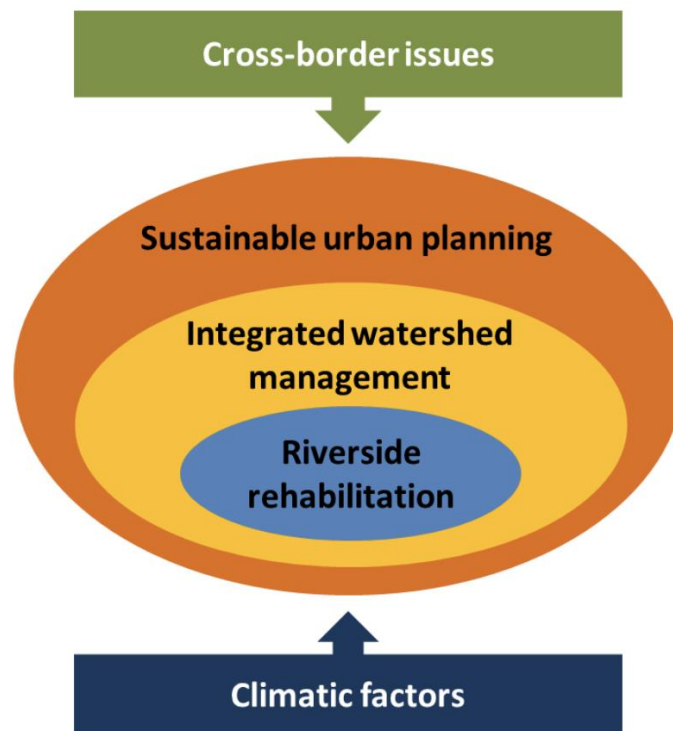
²⁵ FDRE Planning and Development Commission, 2021

²⁶ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2016: Results strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Ethiopia, 2016-2020.

²⁷ <https://donortracker.org/policy-updates/sweden-develops-new-strategy-development-cooperation-ethiopia>

can bring about desired changes. The results frameworks for the individual projects will be studied by the evaluation team, and theories of change for the projects can be discussed as part of the Forcefield Analysis part of the evaluation (see below).

Figure 1 Hierarchy of interventions in the Sheger Beautification Program



The interventions have been supported financially by Sida under an agreement between the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP, through which support is provided to the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission of Ethiopia (EFCCC). Other partners engaged in the programme include the Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources, the Mertule Mariam College of Natural Resources, the Ethiopian Forest Research Institute, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

1.4 Scope and focus

The scope and focus of the evaluation are provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR, see Appendix 1). The focus lies on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Programme and covers the period 2016 – 2021. The team's interpretation of how it intends to assess and find answers to the evaluation questions under the respective criteria is shown in the Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 2.

In order to being able to assess the performance of the Programme, field visits were foreseen to Amhara, SNNPR, Oromia, Somali and Benshangul Gumuz regional states. During the evaluation start-up meeting, it was agreed to exclude Amhara for security reasons. The team will carry out virtual interviews with stakeholders in Amhara and Oromia.

2. Pertinence and evaluability of evaluation questions

The evaluation questions provided in the Terms of Reference are modelled after the standard OECD-DAC criteria for evaluation of development interventions, and are pertinent and possible to evaluate as formulated.

The team proposes, however, two changes to how the evaluation questions have been located in the evaluation matrix. It is suggested to move the evaluation question “To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well been used to improve and adjust intervention implementation?” from the Relevance heading to the Efficiency heading.

It is likewise suggested to move the evaluation question “Have the M&E system/narrative report delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?” from the Effectiveness heading to the Efficiency heading.

It is also suggested to add one evaluation question to the matrix, namely one of the specific points mentioned on p.3 in the ToR to the Efficiency part of the evaluation matrix: “What are the comparative advantages of working through UNDP, in transferring skills, knowledge and new technologies to government and its sub-grantees”.

3. Proposed approach and methodology

3.1 Approach

The evaluation will be carried out as an impartial and independent evaluation in accordance with OECD-DAC criteria and guidelines, structured under the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation will conform to OECD/DAC’s quality standards for development evaluation²⁸, and the Sida OECD/DAC glossary of key terms in evaluation²⁹ will be used.

The approach and methodology of the evaluation will be evidence-based. Information from a variety of sources will be triangulated using a number of different data collection tools in order to draw well-founded conclusions and recommendations to assist the Embassy’s decision making and further planning by the Programme implementers.

The utilisation-focused approach that has been specified in the ToR will partly be supported by the participation of both the Programme implementers and the Embassy in the evaluation process, which will provide an opportunity to express their priorities and opinions and to review and contribute to the reports produced by the team. Stakeholder and beneficiary engagement will be further promoted through the use of participatory data collection and analysis methods, including a questionnaire survey,

²⁸ DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, OECD 2010

²⁹ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

and a Forcefield Analysis (FFA) process during the data collection phase, which will provide an opportunity for forward-looking strategic discussion. As mentioned, it will also be attempted to connect the discussion on the results of the FFA to a discussion on the programme Theories of Change, which seem to be rather rudimentary.

Aspects of gender are particularly important in interventions that relate to forests and forest land. In most cases it is the women who have to toil for long days extracting fuel wood to their families and for sale. Gender responsiveness will be addressed, amongst others by gender categorization in the questionnaire survey and the evidence matrix, and by organising separate interview sessions for women beneficiaries during the field visits.

3.2 Stakeholders

Based on information provided in the programme documents, progress reports and indications provided by the Embassy, a stakeholder analysis was performed by assessing linkages between potential stakeholders and the programme activities. The result is shown in Table 1. The e-mail addresses and phone numbers for almost all individuals are available. The most important stakeholders identified at this stage, who will be the main target groups for interviews, will include:

- Project offices and forest cooperatives at district level
- SLU
- The Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources
- The Ethiopian Forest Research Institute
- CIFOR
- Selected TVETs
- EFCCC.
- UN-Habitat and Addis Ababa City Administration for Sheger project.

Table 1. Preliminary list of agencies, organisations and individuals to interview

#	Organisation	Name
1	UNDP	
2	UNDP	
3	UNDP	
4	EFCCC	
5	EFCCC	
6	SLU	
7	Eco-innovation	
8	WGCFNR	
9	CIFOR	
10	EEFRI	

11	AAU
12	Mertulemariam TVET
13	Holeta Polytechnic
14	EBI
15	Oromia
16	Wolmera
17	Ameya
18	Goro
19	Shashego
20	Sodo
21	Yem
22	Mirab- Abaya
23	Ararso (Somali)
24	Kumruk (BG)
25	Delanta (Am.)
26	Embassy of Sweden
27	Embassy of Norway
28	
29	Embassy of Denmark
30	
31	UN-Habitat (Sheger project)
32	Addis Abeba City Administration
33	EU

3.3 Methods and tools for data collection

Collection of data and information to be used in the evaluation analyses will be through:

- Desk review of documentation
- Interviews
- Focus group meetings
- Field visits
- Forcefield Analysis
- Questionnaire survey

Desk review of documentation

A substantial amount of documentation has already been made available to the team by the Embassy. This includes, amongst others, project documents and progress reports, Sida contribution administrative documents and audit reports.

Interviews

Interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries will be through virtual platforms as well as in-person during an extensive field visit programme (see below). The interviews will be semi-structured. All persons listed in Table 1 will be interviewed. The team will also identify a number of “fringe stakeholders”, who are not involved in the programme implementation, but who would have an interest in the results of the Programme.

Focus group meetings

Focus group meetings will be organised during the field visits, normally at each field visit site one meeting with implementing staff, one with male beneficiaries and one with female beneficiaries. There will also be a virtual event with a larger group of stakeholders at the end of the FFA process.

Field visits

The national team member will carry out an extensive field visit as shown in Table 2. She will meet with and interview local implementation staff and beneficiaries, notably members of forest cooperatives, and make site visits to plantations. Amhara and Oromia have been excluded from the field visit programme for security reasons.

The field visit programme presented below covers 4 trips in an estimated total of 10 days, taking into account that some locations may be off road, or it is not possible to drive non-stop for some other reason. Limited availability of interviewees at the exact right days could also affect the itinerary, and it needs to be taken into account if other sites should be visited in addition to interviewing. The programme is preliminary and will have to be discussed with the Embassy and other stakeholders in order to arrive at an optimal and realistic plan.

Table 2 Preliminary field visit programme

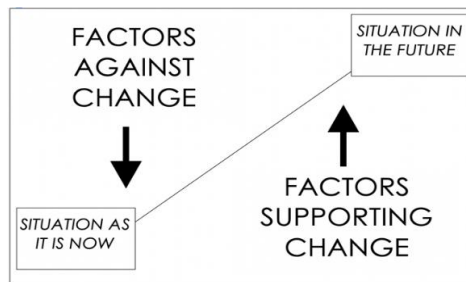
Date	Travel from	Travel to	Contact person
Trip 1 (estimated 2 days)	Addis	Welmera	
	Welmera	Addis	
Trip 2 (estimated 4 days)	Drive Addis Ababa	Arba Minch,	
	Drive from Arbaminch	Mirab Abaya	
	Arba Minch	Dorze (overnight)	
	Dorze	Sodo	
	Shashemene	Wendo Genet	
	Wendo Genet	Shashemene	
Trip 3 (estimated 2 days)	Fly Addis	Jijiga	
	Jijiga	Ararso	
	Jijiga	Addis	

Trip 4 (estimated 2 days)	Addis, Beautifying Sheger Projects		
Total: 4 trips, 10 days			

Forcefield Analysis

The Forcefield Analysis methodology was originally developed as a tool for taking business decisions and planning change. It can also be used to analyse what factors enable and what factors hinder the ability of an organisation, project, programme or strategy to achieve its intended goals and can thus provide valuable strategic guidance. A more detailed description of the methodology and how it can be used in a virtual communication environment is provided in Appendix 3.

Figure 1 Forefield analysis



Questionnaire survey

A questionnaire survey will be issued on the Survey Monkey platform. The questions will be formulated at a stage where the team has already arrived at some findings and identified areas that will be of interest. As mentioned in the technical proposal, conducting an effective survey with high response rate necessitates in most cases an introductory contact with the respondent, or his/her boss, in order to create an interest and motivation for participation. The respondents to the questionnaire can be persons already interviewed or other staff members in organisations where other individuals have been interviewed. It will thus most probably be directed to the main stakeholder institutions specified above. The Embassy has offered to write to key persons concerned, to stress the importance of staff actually responding to the survey.

3.4 Limitations

The review will depend on baseline and other data to be provided by the Programme implementers. The quality and availability of this data may be one possible limitation to the evaluative analysis.

The field visit programme is very extensive in terms of travel, with long hours every day, and this will leave relatively little time for interviews and meetings at the field sites. This may prove to be a limitation to the amount of primary data that can be collected.

3.5 Ethical matters

As mentioned, the evaluation includes primary data collection from key stakeholders and beneficiaries, in the form of key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a questionnaire survey. Interviewees, meeting participants and respondents to the questionnaire will be informed that the results of the interview and information and perceptions gathered will be stored, processed and presented in full confidentiality by the team. In order to avoid presenting information that could be harmful to stakeholders or beneficiaries, informed consent procedures will be followed. All respondents will be assured anonymity in the reporting of information, and it will be made sure that all personal identifiers are removed before any wider circulation of interview notes or information contained therein. Participants will be informed that they are free to cease their participation at any point. Sensitive or confidential information will be treated with due care and used in agreement with the Embassy.

All interviews will be carried out by the two team members. No additional enumerators will be employed. An internal note will be prepared for providing guidance to the team members on the above issues and on general conduct by the interviewer during interviews.

3.6 Risks

The risks for implementation of the evaluation and how they can be managed are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Risks and risk management

Risk	Level	Management
Independence of the evaluation team vis-à-vis stakeholders, including its policy & operation	Low	No conflicts have been identified at this stage. Any possible conflicts of interest will be addressed openly and transparently.
Lack of timely access to relevant information and data, particularly quantitative data on some of the indicators in the evaluation matrix	High	Attention is drawn to the importance of timely access to required documentation and statistics. The team will work constructively to overcome difficulties in locating and collecting needed data and reports.
Team dysfunctions, lack of performance and team member drop out due to unforeseen circumstances	Low	By applying a proactive project management approach, it will be possible to closely monitor progress and identify early warning signals. It will be possible to replace team members at short notice, drawing on NIRAS' broad and deep in-house networks and competence both locally in Ethiopia and internationally.
Delays	Medium	The general evaluation timeframe has been found to be tight but realistic, and agreed during the start-up meeting. Provided that timely access to relevant documentation, beneficiaries and stakeholders is arranged, no delays are foreseen in implementing the evaluation. In this regard the field work period is the most constrained in terms of time

		management. Open, honest and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders will be encouraged to provide a basis for identifying possible delays in time and to allow for adjustment of timelines, if need be. Realistic and firm time management will be applied, and strong internal resources enable timely mitigation of delay risks.
Emerging sensitive issues beyond the scope of the evaluation, e.g. corruption	Low	The NIRAS Evaluation Toolkit provides clear guidelines on how to deal with this, should sensitive issues arise.
External risks; Natural disasters, conflict, political climate, epidemics, etc.	Low	Thorough understanding of regional and national issues ahead of assignments is a prerequisite for undertaking any evaluation – combined with proactively engaging with NIRAS' network 'on the ground and keeping 'eyes and ears' open.
Stakeholder disagreements with evaluation findings and conclusions	Low	This is primarily addressed by applying a utilisation-focused approach to the process whereby findings are triangulated to ensure credibility and transparency, and validation with the users.

4. Work plan

4.1 Milestones and deliverables

The timetable for deliverables is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Timetable for deliverables

What	Who	When (2021)
Start-up meeting	Embassy, NIRAS	27 September
Submission of draft inception report	NIRAS	22 October
Comments on draft inception report	Embassy, stakeholders	27 October
Inception meeting	Embassy, stakeholders, NIRAS	28 October
Submission of final inception report	NIRAS	29 October
Approval of inception report	Embassy	3 November
Document review, interviews, survey, Forcefield analysis	NIRAS	4 – 22 November
De-briefing workshop	Embassy, stakeholders, NIRAS	23 November
Analysis of data, report writing	NIRAS	24 November-7 December
Submission of draft report	NIRAS	8 December
Report presentation meeting	Embassy, stakeholders, NIRAS,	10 December
Feedback on draft report	Embassy, stakeholders	15 December
Submission of final report	NIRAS	22 December

4.2 Work plan

A workplan for implementation of the evaluation is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Workplan

2021			September					October					November				December				
Inception Phase	AN	BT	w35	w36	w37	w38	w39	w40	w41	w42	w43	w44	w45	w46	w47	w48	w49	w50	w51	w52	
Start-up meeting, week of 27 September	0,25	0,25																			
Initial desk review, and methods and tools development	1,25																				
Stakeholder analysis	0,50	0,50																			
Drafting inception report	1,75	0,50																			
QA inception report																					
Submission of draft inception report, 22 October																					
Comments/no-objection sent by Stakeholders. 27 October																					
Inception meeting, 28 October	0,25	0,25																			
Revision of inception report based on comments	0,50																				
Submission of final inception report, 29 October																					
Approval of inception report, by 3 November																					
Data Collection Phase																					
Review of additional documents	1,00	0,50																			
Field work preparations		1,00																			
Key informant interviews in-country		9,00																			
Remote key informant interviews (online/telephone)	4,00																				
Questionnaire survey	2,00																				
Forcefield analysis	2,00																				
Debriefing workshop, 23 November (tentative)	0,25	0,25																			
Data Analysis and Reporting Phase																					
Analysis of collected data and information	2,00	0,50																			
Report writing	4,50	2,00																			
QA of draft report																					
Submission of draft evaluation report, 8 December																					
Report presentation and validation meeting, 10 December																					
Feedback from stakeholders on draft report, 15 December																					
Finalization of the report	0,75	0,25																			
Submission of final evaluation report, 22 December																					
Total days	21,00	15,00	Initials: AN=Ake Nilsson; BT=Bethelehem Tenkir																		

Evaluation note, 2021-11-09

Note on agreed changes to implementation of the Evaluation of UNDP forestry sector support, Ethiopia.

The implementation of the evaluation of UNDP support to the forest sector in Ethiopia, to be carried out by a NIRAS team, was discussed on November 8th, 2021, between NIRAS and representatives of the Embassy of Sweden, Addis Abeba, against the backdrop of the recent developments concerning the security conditions in the country.

It was agreed that the planned field visit programme (please refer to section 3.3; Table 2 in the inception report) be cancelled, since travel in the field would pose too high a risk to the consultant. The NIRAS team proposed during the meeting to go ahead with the evaluation within the set timeframe, but with a revised methodology relying on remote solutions for the data collection. The interviews that were planned to be carried out as part of the field visits will instead be carried out using phone or virtual platforms. The NIRAS team will also apply a broader distribution of the survey questionnaire than originally intended, with the aim to, to the extent possible, compensate for the lack of field observations. The team will apply appropriate measures to try and get a high response rate to the survey questionnaire. The Embassy (and UNDP) will support the team with formal introductions to the stakeholders and informing them about the ongoing evaluation. The team had an initial meeting with UNDP on November 8th, 2021.

The alternative methodology was accepted by the Embassy and it was agreed that the team will move ahead with the data collection phase as proposed. The date for delivery of the draft and final evaluation report as specified in the inception report (please refer to section 4; Table 4 and Figure 2 in the inception report) will be adhered to. Hence, the aim is to finalize the evaluation process by the end of the year and keep within the current contracted timeframe.



Evaluation of UNPD's support to the Forest Sector institutional development and catalyzing the Forest Sector, Ethiopia

The purpose of this evaluation of a project supporting institutional strengthening and capacity building for catalyzing forest sector development and urban beautification in Ethiopia, was to provide recommendations for improvement of project implementation, discussion on a new phase of the intervention and decision on potential continued funding. The project received funding from Sida through the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa and has been implemented by the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission of Ethiopia, with UNDP as executing agency. The evaluation was carried out through virtual interviews, document review and an electronic questionnaire survey, and focused on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project. Recommendations to the implementing partners are provided in the areas of results-based management, reporting and engagement with communities and private-sector actors. Recommendations made to Sida also relate to improved results-based management, as well as to addressing, in a potential continued support, issues concerning disbursement delays and high administration costs on the part of the implementing partners.

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