# 1. Project Data

| Summary project data | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GEF project ID** | | 3367 | |
| **GEF Agency project ID** | | GEF-FSP-03-ET | |
| **GEF Replenishment Phase** | | GEF-4 | |
| **Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)** | | IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development | |
| **Project name** | | Community-Based Integrated Natural Resources Management Project (CBINReMP) | |
| **Country/Countries** | | Ethiopia | |
| **Region** | | Amhara National Regional State | |
| **Focal area** | | Land Degradation | |
| **Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives** | | Strategic Investment Program for Sustainable Land Management Programme (SLMP) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)(SIP) | |
| **Executing agencies involved** | | Bureau of Agricultural and Rural Development (BoARD) | |
| **NGOs/CBOs involvement** | | Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA) | |
| **Private sector involvement** | | The CBINReMP project is a community based management of natural resources in a watershed unit. As a result, the project link with the private sector is not strong. A strong link has been established with community based organizations. | |
| **CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)** | | 25 March 2009 | |
| **Effectiveness date / project start** | | 17 March 2010 | |
| **Expected date of project completion (at start)** | | 30 September 2017 | |
| **Actual date of project completion** | | 30 September 2018 | |
| **Project Financing** | | | |
| | | **At Endorsement (US $M)[1]** | **At Completion (US $M)[2]** |
| **Project Preparation Grant** | GEF funding | 0.35 | 0.35 |
| | Co-financing | 0.1 | |
| **GEF Project Grant** | | 4.4 | 4.4 |
| **Co-financing** | IA own | 13.2 | 11.8 |
| | Government | 2.8 | 1.1 |
| | AECID (Spanish Agency for International Development) | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| | Beneficiaries (in-kind) | 5.2 | 34.2 |
| | NGOs/CSOs | | |
| **Total GEF funding** | | 4.75 | 4.75 |
| **Total Co-financing** | | 21.3 | 48.7 |
| **Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)** | | 26 | 53.45 |
| **Terminal evaluation/review information** | | | |
| **TE completion date** | | March 2019 | |
| **Author of TE** | | Not available | |

[1] IFAD MTR

[2] GEF TER

| | |
|---|---|
| **TER completion date** | 5 January 2019 |
| **TER prepared by** | Mourad Shalaby |
| **TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)** | Molly Sohn Watts |

2. Summary of Project Ratings

| Criteria | Final PIR | IA Terminal Evaluation (TE) | IA Evaluation Office Review | GEF IEO Review |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Project Outcomes** | S | MS | - | MS |
| **Sustainability of Outcomes** | | HS | - | L |
| **M&E Design** | | MU | - | U |
| **M&E Implementation** | | MU | - | U |
| **Quality of Implementation** | | MS | - | S |
| **Quality of Execution** | | MS | - | MS |
| **Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report** | | - | - | S |

# 3. Project Objectives

## 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The stated global environmental objectives of the project are that sustainable land management and improved ecosystem integrity in targeted watersheds lead to increased household incomes, food security and enhanced rural livelihoods. The project aimed to build climate change resilience and lead to global environmental benefits as a result of reduced land degradation.

The objective of the project is to increase household incomes through sustainable land management practices in the Lake Tana Watershed (LTW). Simultaneously, improvements to ecosystem function will be beneficial for biodiversity conservation and will protect against negative climate change impacts. The project's immediate objective will lead to global environmental benefits as a result of reduced land degradation.

## 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The stated development objective of the project is to combat land degradation in the Lake Tana watershed through the introduction of natural resource conservation measures and the promotion and up-scaling of sustainable land management practices. Capacity built at expert and farmer's level through improved skills, knowledge exchange and exposure visits empowers addressing land degradation more sustainably. The overall project goal is improve livelihoods and contribute to poverty reduction for about 450,000 rural households in 21 districts of Lake Tana Watershed, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia.

The project aimed to do this through the following three components:

- Component 1: Community-based integrated watershed management
- Component 2: Institutional, Legal and Policy Analysis and Reform
- Component 3: Efficient and effective project coordination and management

## 3.3 Were there any changes in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

CBINReMP underwent considerable design changes that were aimed at improving the performance of its components. The project went from having 3 components to 4 and component 1 went from having 5 sub-components to 7. The TE finds that "there have been many and frequent changes to the project structure which have not always been sufficiently explained" (TE,

p10). The TE adds that the Project Implementation Manual (PIM) initially removed output 1.5 "Land Certification" and replaced it with "Facilitating Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change". Output 1.5 was then changed in the 2011 supervision mission to "Participatory integrated wetland ecosystem management" that included climate change, and land certification was moved to sub-component 1 together with "Participatory watershed management" (TE, p10). The fourth component, "Facilitating Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change", was financed by a "reallocation of the Spanish grant" referring to the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID)'s contribution to the project. The justification of this reallocation, "as stated in the 2012 supervision mission report", was to address a lack of resources (TE, p10).

An additional, fourth component was added to the project during the course of implementation:
- Component 4: Sustainable adaptation to Climate Change

This component aimed to promote sustainable land management and poverty reduction through "climate smart livelihood diversification and integrated watershed development" (TE, p4) within the Lake Tana Watershed.

# 4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

| 4.1 **Relevance** | Rating: Satisfactory |
|---|---|

The TE rates the relevance of this project as highly satisfactory, and this TER which uses a different scale rates relevance as satisfactory. The project was aligned with a long list of national policies and strategies, which are exhaustively detailed in table 1 (TE, p5). The TE notes that "Most importantly the project was aligned with the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) 2006 – 2010" (TE, p1). PASDEP is linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and constitutes Ethiopia's medium term plan for achieving the MDGs. At project completion, the project remains relevant to the follow-up policy: the Growth and Transformation Plan II (2016 - 2020) (GTP II). The project continues to assist the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) in its "long-term goal of sustainable agricultural growth within the Climate Resilient Green Economy Framework through pastoral development; natural resources conservation and utilization; watershed management; rural land administration; irrigation development; improved sustainable biodiversity conservation; and improved food security and disaster prevention" (TE, p1) .

The project was consistent with IFAD objectives as stated in its Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP 2000). At the time of design the project was aligned with the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-10 and is currently still aligned to that of 2016-2025. At design the project was also aligned with MDG 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and MDG 7 to ensure environmental sustainability (TE, p1).

The project was aligned with the GEF Strategic Programme Strategic Priority (SP) 1 in "Supporting Sustainable Agriculture and Rangeland Management". Specifically, the project was aligned with two of the three elements under GEF 4 SP1, namely: i) "Dryland Management in Areas of Intense Competition for Land Resources"; and ii) "Management of Semi-Arid to Sub-Humid Mixed Land Uses in Areas Prone to Severe Soil Erosion and Loss of Soil Fertility". The project also contributes to Strategic Objective 2 of the GEF Land Degradation Focal Area "to upscale sustainable land management investments that generate

mutual benefits for the global environment and local livelihoods." At the same time, the project contributes to Strategic Objective 1 - "an enabling environment will place SLM in the mainstream of development policy and practice at regional, national, and local levels" (TE, p9).

| 4.2 **Effectiveness** | Rating: Moderately Satisfactory |
|---|---|

The TE rates overall project effectiveness as moderately satisfactory and this TER also rates the project's effectiveness as moderately satisfactory. The project's GEB were significant and effectively delivered, but poorly monitored and measured. The results and impact management system (RIMS) was not used until the mid-term review (MTR) for components 1-3 and a Management Information System (MIS) was not implemented at all. The project's M&E system, which is analyzed in section 6, was only established in 2016, 7 years after inception. Component 4, which was added later as explained previously, "was consistently under reported in the supervision missions and under monitored with no results framework or cumulative M&E outputs to monitor progress" (TE, p1).

Consequently, the TE assessed the effectiveness of the grant "on the basis of the achievements of the combined IFAD and GEF financing which in terms of project results and GEBs (Global Environmental Benefits) are considered to be broadly successful with some reservations in sediment monitoring"(TE, p1). Specifically, the project did meet several of its stated objectives, as the project "was broadly successful both when compared with IFADs results framework but also with those of GEF's Global Environment Benefit indicators. It largely met the targets of farmland treated with SLM (Sustainable Land Management) measures, the creation of participatory watershed management plans, and it overachieved the improved rangeland by more than 1745%. The project also achieved 75% of the target for land under afforestation through participatory planting schemes, and the carbon sequestered was significantly less than the target but the project still achieved an estimated 158% increase in tCO2e over the baseline scenario" (TE, p19). Conversely, the project did fail to implement some of its planned activities, namely "the establishment of the gauge stations to measure changes in sedimentation flows, as well as the development of carbon sequestration monitoring procedures" (TE, p19). The TE explains that the primary contribution and added value of the GEF grant is the impact it had on focusing the IFAD investment on environmental focal areas, as IFAD does not typically dedicate large sections of its projects to ENRM and Climate Change (TE, p11). 75% of GEF funding was allocated to component 1 (Community-based integrated watershed management).

The project aimed to strengthen the capacities of public institutions and community-based organizations. It engaged in a process of reviewing policies and legal frameworks for natural resources management and environmental conservation, resulting in the updating of the 'Regional Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for Combating Desertification' and the legislation for the Amhara Forest Action Project, and the development of policies and strategies for wetland and grazing land management that were both being undertaken by the Bureau of Agriculture. By project completion three of the six targeted policies had been completed, these are the 'Regional Conservation Strategy and Action Plan'; the 'Communal Grazing Land Management Legislation'; and the 'Wetland Management Legal Framework'.

One of the objectives of the project was to address one of the identified barriers to SLM, namely tenure insecurity of land users. To this end the project facilitated the documentation of properties and holding rights, particularly for women, in a land administration database. The project "resulted in the refining of existing land registration data for 324,942 holdings; the registration of a further 282,305 holdings; the computerized registration of 413,991 holdings; the completion of first level certification for 287,704 holdings; (and) the issuance of 9,577 second level certification". The TER mission reports that initial findings of this output have resulted in "reportedly decreased land disputes; the improvement of land tenure security in project sites; improved ability of farmers with maps to secure loans; the reduction of communal encroachment due to the existence of maps; and an increased female participation as committee members" (TE, p25).

Another objective of the project was to increase household incomes and food security through SLM and improved ecosystem integrity, but this was not tracked within the IFAD RIMS. The TE adds that it is also not possible to determine the changes in food security by means of the impact assessment. However, the TE states that there is sufficient circumstantial evidence "in

terms of improved access to land, sufficient improvements in agricultural productivity, the introduction of SWC (Sustainable Water Conservation) land management practices and general environmental benefits - to determine that food security will have almost certainly improved" (TE, p25). The TE states that the last supervision mission, held in 2018, concluded "from field visits, community interactions and the information available in reports" that project activities were leading to moderate increases in agricultural productivity in the target area, but these were poorly measured, quantified and documented (TE, p25).

The TE adds that the impact assessment demonstrated that crop yields in most of the watersheds under project intervention areas showed substantial improvements with crop production reportedly having doubled. Yield levels improved for teff, potato, wheat, maize due to soil and water conservation, use of improved seeds and fertilizer (TE, p25), due to the "project intervention on the soil and water conservation, land certification and management, livelihood diversification and awareness creation as the project achieved remarkable change on the biophysical change of the sample woredas" (TE, p25).

The TE reports that the project largely met its targets for farmland treated with SLM measures "with 143,989.51ha treated with SWC measures; 35,949.54km stone bunds constructed; 77,146.56km soil bunds constructed; and 665 participatory integrated watershed management plans have been designed and implemented". Furthermore, qualitative surveys and observations by the impact assessment team "confirmed beneficiary views that the project has significantly contributed to reducing erosion in degraded hillsides which increase opportunities for sustainable farming", specifically "that severe gullies have been stabilized; that plantations have been planted in the closed and physical SWC treated erosion hot spot areas including gullies, hereby reducing the risk from flooding and erosion. Hillsides terraces and trenches have been treated and have also noticeably trapped sediment and moisture; and consequently, visibly undernourished, stunted and shriveled vegetation has begun to return" (TE, p26).

The TE adds that one of the success stories of the project has been the community participatory closure of 32,123ha of grazing land. GIS analyses and impact assessment visual observations have determined that these have resulted in tangible improvements in environmental rehabilitation, such as "marked improvements of flora diversity vis-à-vis the control open grazing sites" and "improved vegetative cover"(TE, 27).

The TER confidently asserts that with reference to the GEB indicators the project resulted in significant improvements in ENRM through SLM treated farmland.

| 4.3 **Efficiency** | Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory |
|---|---|

Project efficiency is rated as moderately unsatisfactory by the TE, and this TER also rates the project's efficiency as moderately unsatisfactory given the many delays that hindered the project's progress and, most importantly, the inefficiency of the project's M&E system.

The TE states that "as of project closure on the 31st of March (no specified year), the GEF grant disbursed 90.26 percent which is a remarkable achievement" (TE, p54). However, and most importantly, the TE adds that "Due to financial reporting that was below standard, the project is not able to disaggregate spending by component, it is therefore not possible to analyze spending patterns for planned vs actual disbursements and assess how effective implementation has been in this respect" (TE, p1).

In terms of cost efficiency and resources use, as explained above, it is not possible to disaggregate the GEF grant by component or by category as this information is not available at project closure. The TE adds that it "does not have access to the projected annual budgets disaggregated for the GEF grant in order to compare how the actual disbursements met their annual targets" (TE, p1).

The TE explains that 73% of GEF funding was dedicated to "planting and construction materials and training", but project management suffered persistent delays mainly attributed to a) high staff turnover at the top level of project management; b) understaffing of the Regional Project Coordination and Management Unit (RPCMU) (TE, p2). Delays in procurements were "a consistent challenge" throughout the project, with poor record management and poor process flows, and "the procurement

plan was not consistently implemented". The M&E system, as explained earlier, remained unsatisfactory for component 4 at project closure. A baseline was eventually completed in the third year of the project, meaning "the state of conditions that existed in the project areas prior to CBINReMP interventions could not be established" (TE, p1). The TE adds that the project was implemented within the agreed timeframe "albeit with a 16-month extension and on budget".

| 4.4 **Sustainability** | Rating: Likely |
|---|---|

The TE evaluates project sustainability as likely, and this TER also rates the project's sustainability as likely.

Social sustainability is rated highly as the project "demonstrated excellent service delivery and a community ownership that through a buy-in of the equivalent of USD 34 million is 654 percent more than the USD 5.2 million planned at appraisal, and a very positive indication for the continuity of project activities". The TE adds that project activities are mostly no-regret as they are low-tech and nature-based solutions that will help ensure their future sustainability. The project has given the beneficiaries the soft skills required to continue managing their livelihoods, resulting in their producing their own management plans for pasture management as well as wetland management plans. The TE concludes that project activities have brought "substantial environmental and livelihood benefits with on average low technical requirements and are sustainable provided that they continue to be managed by the community" (TE, p2). The TE adds that project is aligned to the national strategies and policies and the needs of the rural poor which will help ensure its socio-political sustainability (TE, p 57).

In terms of institutional / governance sustainability, the TE explains that most of the project activities are implemented by "the beneficiary communities themselves, and well-anchored in the decentralized administration, hereby providing for institutional sustainability as activities are easily absorbed under the Government structure upon the completion of the project" (TE, p2). Government has closely monitored the project and has shown interest to institutionalize promoted practices.

In environmental terms, the project achieved "remarkable environmental achievements" which "have demonstrably improved resilience against the negative impacts of climate change by increasing land cover and reducing the risk of flooding, landslides and food insecurity hereby improving the prospect of environmental sustainability" (TE, p2).

The TE offers recommendations to improve project sustainability, for instance "through a means of storing project documentation and knowledge products so that future projects can access and learn valuable lessons", before adding that "Other areas could include more training and technical follow-up in the management of tree nurseries or woodlots; and ensuring that computer systems and databases are regularly updated for sustainable the land certification" (TE, p2).

# 5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The TE notes that financial reporting throughout the project was below standard. The project could not disaggregate disbursements by components for each financier, but did demonstrate the significant and essential contribution of the co-financiers, particularly the project beneficiaries at the project completion level. According to the TE, there were 3 co-financing entities funding the project, in addition to IFAD: the project beneficiaries, the Ethiopian Government, and the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID). Despite the problems in financial management, the project has demonstrated "excellent service delivery and a community ownership that through a buy-in of the equivalent of USD 34 million is 654% more than the USD 5.2 million planned at appraisal" (TE, p2). Beneficiaries have thus shown their financial commitment to the

project, and even “at times when the resources were unavailable during project implementation” (TE, p57). More over the project established good relationships with private vendors and other entrepreneurs when acquiring certain items and/or technologies, the TE adds.

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project’s outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project was due for completion on 31 March 2017 and received one no-cost extension due to unrest in the region with the project completion moving from 31 March 2017 to 30 September 2018. Project closure moved from 30 September 2017 to 31 March 2019 (TE, p3). Slow initial progress in the early years of the project was due to “delays in implementing the project categories relating to planting and construction materials and that of training” (TE, p2). Project management suffered persistent delays mainly attributed to a) high staff turnover at the top level of project management; b) understaffing of the RPCMU (TE, p9). There were also delays in procurements, poor record management and poor process flows (TE, p2).

The delays were caused “by a general lack of capacity”, “structural weaknesses” and poor government performance. These delays hindered the project’s M&E system. A baseline was completed only in PY 3, two years late meaning the state of conditions that existed in the project areas prior to CBINReMP interventions could not be measured. The delays do not seem to have negatively affected project outcomes, insofar as the most available project indicators and data suggest. Rather, the delays undermined the M&E system and general data collection of the project.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

As explained previously, the project demonstrated excellent community ownership that through a buy-in of the equivalent of USD 34 million is 654 percent more than the USD 5.2 million planned at appraisal. The TE states that there has been a high degree of commitment and ownership at the beneficiary level. The beneficiaries “have taken ownership of the project activities in terms of designing and implementing the watershed management plans”. The project’s certification and registration output has resulted in “social change in the form of broad social acceptance” in land administration; decreased land disputes; the improvement of land tenure security in project sites and improved ability of to secure loans; the reduction of communal encroachment due to the existence of maps; and an increased female participation as committee members (TE, p2).

A prime reason for the strong community ownership of the project is that the activities are largely aimed at improving “the natural resource base upon which their livelihood sustainability depends ” and most of the technology being used is low-tech and nature-based (TE, p57). The TE adds that beneficiaries have taken full control of the implementation process and formed management committees, management plans, bylaws and voluntary enforcement mechanisms to ensure the sustainable conservation of their livelihoods. As stated previously, the project is also very aligned “to the national strategies and policies and the needs of the rural poor which will help ensure its socio-political sustainability” (TE, p57).

# 6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

| 6.1 **M&E Design at entry** | Rating: Satisfactory |
|---|---|

M&E was rated by the TE as satisfactory for components 1-3, unsatisfactory for component 4, and moderately unsatisfactory as a whole. However, this TER rates M&E design as satisfactory. The project team provided a detailed Project Results Framework, a plan to create a baseline with both environmental and social indicators, a monitoring arrangement involving GEF, IFAD and local partners, and a detailed M&E budget.

The CEO endorsement document states that the Project Results Framework, which is detailed and thorough, would form the basis for the project's monitoring and evaluation system. An inception workshop would further refine and finalize the monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan,

The GEF project would rely on the information in its baseline study and on additional information collected by the project development unit. During the inception phase of the project, baseline information would be sought in each village, the CEO endorsement document explains. Additional information "on rural credit, employment, and existing agricultural practices, as well as biodiversity status" would be necessary to measure the results of the project. Measurements would be undertaken by project staff or external consultants, which would include "specific studies or periodic sampling, such as soil erosion, sediment yields, and changes in biodiversity indices, populations of important species, crop yield, organic matter flow, carbon status, areas conserved/protected by SLM and change in livelihoods" (CEO endorsement document, p4).

Day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress would be the responsibility of the project coordinator with oversight by BoARD and the PSC (Project Steering Committee), while periodic monitoring of implementation progress would be undertaken by the BoARD through quarterly meetings and field observation with the project staff. IFAD-CO, IFAD-GEF, PSC and the focal point would conduct yearly visits to field sites to assess project progress first hand. The Project Coordination Unit would be responsible for the preparation and submission to BoARD, IFAD and IFAD-GEF of the following mandatory reports: Inception Report (IR), Annual Project Report (APR), Project Implementation Review(PIR), and the Project Terminal Report (CEO endorsement document, p4).

The project would be subjected to at least two independent external evaluations. According to the CEO endorsement document, the M&E plan is results-based, and is intended to provide "timely, credible, and useful information on progress being made on SLM. The results-based M&E is: "first and foremost a management tool to help improve performance at all levels" and not an exercise done to satisfy compliance requirements, as is sated in the Strategic Investment Program for SLM in SSA (SIP) (CEO endorsement document, p4).

The project's M&E system would consist of 8 activities totalling a budget of over to USD 1 million, co-financed for 4/5 of its cost. (CEO endorsement document, p5).

| 6.2 **M&E Implementation** | Rating: Unsatisfactory |
|---|---|

M&E was rated by the TE as satisfactory for components 1-3, unsatisfactory for component 4, and moderately unsatisfactory as a whole. However, this TER rates M&E implementation as unsatisfactory.

M&E and reporting is noted by the TE as being one the greatest challenges of this project "which struggled for the best part of half the project to get a functioning M&E system up and running", despite the fact that component 3 of the project, "Efficient and effective project coordination and management ", included 'Project Management and Project Monitoring and Evaluation'. Challenges were largely due to government understaffing and high staff turnover. As explained previously, RIMS was not used until the MTR for components 1-3 and MIS was not implemented at all. The TE explains that if properly applied the MIS would

have included all the logframe indicators, implementation output and financial data (TE, p22). Supervision missions ultimately reported a satisfactory M&E system by 2016, 7 years after project inception, but the TE finds this was largely only applicable to components 1-3. Component 4, which received a USD 1.8 million during phase II in 2015, was consistently under-reported in the supervision missions with no results framework or cumulative M&E outputs to monitor progress (TE, p1). This same component lacked "a result framework, logframe, and a centralized M&E system" (TE, p10). The TE adds that the project appears to have relied on "the year-on-year annual non-cumulative reporting of output activity lines in the progress reports" (TE, p10). The TE notes that a dedicated M&E officer was not hired until 2013 and an appropriate M&E system was not operational until after the MTR when the first RIMS reports were being submitted in the supervision missions, and in subsequent years, the logframes (TE, p22).

After initial problems in M&E were identified and solutions implemented "for an eventually satisfactory M&E for components 1-3", M&E for component 4 remained unsatisfactory. A baseline was eventually completed in project year 3, two years late meaning "the state of conditions that existed in the project areas prior to CBINReMP interventions could not be established" (TE, p2).

The TE adds that all the indicators for project results have been broadly successful, but measuring impact is complicated by the issues surrounding the baseline and the data being collected by the M&E system. Specifically, the TE had difficulty assessing project impacts due "to a baseline that effectively does not capture the state of conditions that existed in the project areas prior to CBINReMP interventions" (TE, p2), as mentioned above. The lack of M&E oversight meant that "a certain degree of reporting consistency was missing as well as cumulative output reporting". The TE recommends that greater supervision mission oversight for component 4 would have made a considerable difference in improving M&E and outcomes (TE, p22).

Despite these difficulties, IFAD supervision missions were found "to have provided appropriate recommendations and consistent follow-up missions that ultimately brought improvements in M&E reporting and outputs that largely met and sometimes overachieved their targets". (TE, p30)

Nonetheless, the M&E system's critical weaknesses, including the below standard financial reporting, the 6-year delay for the system to be considered functional, but for only 3/4 of the components, and the understaffing of this crucial component of the project, justify the 'unsatisfactory' rating for both M&E design and implementation in this TER.

# 7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

| 7.1 **Quality of Project Implementation** | Rating: Satisfactory |
|---|---|

IFAD supervision and implementation support is rated as moderately satisfactory by the TE, and this TER rates IFAD's performance as satisfactory.

The TE states that IFAD operated within a challenging context "where governmental performance was an inhibiting factor to the achievement of desired outcomes of the project". Despite these difficulties, IFAD supervision missions provided appropriate recommendations and consistent follow-up missions that brought improvements in M&E reporting and outputs that largely met and sometimes overachieved their targets, as mentioned in previous sections. IFAD provided adequate support through

project design and regular annual supervision missions and implementation. It provided problem-solving prompt responses to identified bottlenecks. The TE rates IFAD to have "operated satisfactorily in terms of loan administration, and its reviews of procurement and AWPBs, and regularly highlighted problems that negatively impacted project implementation and recommended appropriate solutions" (TE, p23).

However, the TE also finds that "greater supervision clarity could have been provided particularly with respect to providing a clearer overview of the design changes that took place at the beginning of the project". The problematic M&E system of the project is also addressed by the TE in this section, recommending that "greater support and overview could have been focused on the implementation of component 4 with respect to M&E and project implementation support as this at times has been found not to be reflective of the number of activities being implemented", before adding that "number of outputs […] have not been followed up on to completion" (TE, p23).

As such, given the many challenges of the project and of the project context, namely government performance and the delays and issues affecting the different implementing partners (see below), IFAD still managed to greatly improve several aspects of the project, notably the M&E system, thus justifying a satisfactory rating in this TER.

| 7.2 **Quality of Project Execution** | Rating: Moderately Satisfactory |
|---|---|

Partner performance is rated as moderately satisfactory by the TE, and this TER also rates project execution as moderately satisfactory. The main executing agencies were the Bureau of Agricultural and Rural Development (BoARD); the Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use Authority (EPLAUA); the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED); the Ethiopian Institute of Biodiversity (EBI) and Community-Based Organizations. The performance of the project implementing partners differed greatly, according to the TE. A major problem partner was the EBI, in charge of the construction of the four remaining community gene banks, which have consistently been delayed despite funds being available, and still incomplete at project closure. The RPCMU (Regional Project Coordination and Management Unit) suffered from being understaffed and having a high staff turnover, leading to the long-running M&E problems mentioned previously. However, the MTR reports that the RPCMU "did a good job from the onset, in creating awareness and convincing the beneficiary communities about the advantages/benefits associated with embracing and implementing Project activities". This facilitated a buy-in into the project's goal and development objectives by the beneficiary communities. The TE concludes that the communities have since played the leading role in activity implementation (TE, p34). As such, the differing performances of the executing partners justify the moderately satisfactory rating of this TER.

# 8. Assessment of Project Impacts

***Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.***

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The TE confidently asserts that with reference to global environmental benefits (GOB) indicators the project resulted in significant improvements in environment and natural resource management (ENRM) through sustainable land management (SLM) treated farmland, with 143,989ha of land treated (TE, p27).

One of the success stories of the project, the TE notes, is the community participatory closure of 32,123ha of grazing land. The TE adds that GIS analyses and impact assessment visual observations have determined that these have resulted in tangible improvements in environmental rehabilitation of degraded land, "clear improvements vis-à-vis unprotected areas" and "marked improvements of flora diversity vis-à-vis the control open grazing sites" (TE, p27).

The TE notes that there are information gaps regarding environmental change. Land degradation was the only GEF strategic focal area identified at design stage, but its indicators "were not articulated beyond the Global Environment Benefits (GEB)". Furthermore, the project's planned carbon monitoring procedures were not developed due to "a lack of technical capacity as the project was not able to recruit the appropriate technical experts". The project finally hired an impact assessment team of consultants which partnered with the Colorado State University and their stock exchanges and GHG emissions measure, monitor and model software programme to recreate a 2010 baseline and calculate that the project activities, by 2017, had sequestered 44,773 tCO2e. The main gasses sequestered were CO2, N2O and CH2 as a result of rehabilitated agricultural soil; savanna burning; forest and other woody land use change and forestry; and CO2 emission and removals from the soil (TE, p28, 29).

The TE summarizes the project's GEBs as the following: reducing sedimentation in rivers and streams and Lake Tana – waters of international significance; improved water and land ecosystems through sustainable land management; and carbon sequestration (TE, p28).

## 8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

IFAD documentation explains that" due to the nature of the project" there is limited data to measure impact of the project on household income and assets. One of the objectives of the project, to increase household incomes and food security through sustainable land management and improved ecosystem integrity, was not tracked within the IFAD RIMS. It is also not possible to determine the changes in food security by means of the impact assessment. Furthermore, the impact assessment did not conduct "surveys on tree numbers as household assets comparable with a baseline". The TE also explains that the last supervision mission (2018) concluded from field visits, community interactions and the information available in reports that project activities were leading to moderate increases in agricultural productivity in the target area, but these increases "were poorly measured, quantified and documented".

The TE therefore cross-analysed the impact assessment and baseline to determine project impacts. The impact assessment team recreated a 2011 baseline through time series GIS data analysis to estimate changes in land use patterns. Its findings are the following: degraded land has decreased, plantations have increased significantly, and so have grasslands. The impact assessment also demonstrates that "crop yields in most of the watersheds under project intervention areas showed substantial improvements with crop production reportedly having doubled". Therefore, the TE determines that although no definitive conclusions can be drawn in regard to household assets because of the missing data, the improvement in communal resource base "should be considered as a net improvement in the basket of household assets".

The TE explains that the objective of the project wasn't as much to improve access to land as it was to address one of the identified barriers to SLM, namely tenure insecurity of land users, which is heavily documented to lead land degradation. To this end the project "facilitated the documentation of properties and holding rights particularly for women in a land administration database that is the foundation for sustainability and security of registered data". The TE missions reports that "initial findings of this output have resulted in reportedly decreased land disputes; the improvement of land tenure security in project sites; improved ability of farmers with maps (second level certification) to secure loans; the reduction of communal encroachment due to the existence of maps; and an increased female participation as committee members".

The TE concludes that there is "sufficient circumstantial evidence in terms of improved access to land, sufficient improvements in agricultural productivity, the introduction of SWC land management practices and general environmental benefits - to determine that food security will have almost certainly improved". The project "largely met the targets for farmland treated with sustainable Land Management (SLM) measures".

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) Capacities

The project aimed to strengthen the capacities of public institutions and community-based organizations, mainly through component 2 (Institutional, Legal and Policy Analysis and Reform) and output 2.1 (Improved Institutional Capacity for SLM activities). Therefore, it engaged in a process of reviewing policies and legal frameworks for natural resources management and environmental conservation, resulting in the updating of the 'Regional Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for Combating Desertification'. The process of reviewing policies and legal frameworks for natural resources management and environmental conservation has been reported in the MTR as having progressed slowly. The project also contributed to the updating of the legislation for the Amhara Forest Action Project in northern Ethiopia and the development of policies and strategies for wetland and grazing land management, undertaken by the Bureau of Agriculture, albeit with considerable delays. By project completion three of the six targeted policies had been completed, namely the 'Regional Conservation Strategy and Action Plan' mentioned above; the 'Communal Grazing Land Management Legislation'; and the 'Wetland Management Legal Framework' (TE, p16).

The TE states that the improvements made to access to land through land certification as well as improved institutional capacity to implement SLM helped ensure reductions in poverty, although these reductions cannot be "quantitatively verified due to M&E problems", as mentioned in previous sections, and enhanced livelihoods. The regional policies and legislative developments of the project's component 2 have directly contributed to the improvement of the integrity of ecosystems and functions and the reduction of sedimentation through improved land management and enhanced livelihoods. The TE states that the project's enhanced climate adaptation adaptive capacity ensured it directly contributed to achieving most of the desired project impacts (TE, p34).

b) Governance

The project's "excellent service delivery and large-scale community and institutional buy-in and support" is explained by the fact that "Most of the project works are implemented by the beneficiary communities themselves, and well-anchored in the decentralized administration, making it easy to be absorbed under the Government structure upon the completion of the project" (TE, p57). As such, the project certainly improved environmental governance in decentralized and regional administrations in the project affected areas, most notably by updating and improving existing legislation, policies and strategies for SLM and increasing land tenure security, hereby providing for institutional sustainability.

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

The TE does not indicate any unintended impacts. As explained in previous sections, the project was modified during its implementation, resulting in the addition of a fourth component, "Facilitating Sustainable Adaptation to Climate Change",

which promoted sustainable land management and poverty reduction through "climate smart livelihood diversification and integrated watershed development" (TE, p4) within the Lake Tana Watershed and had impacts which had not been planned during project design.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

As explained earlier, three out of six targeted land management policies have been updated and mainstreamed into regional administration policy, namely the 'Regional Conservation Strategy and Action Plan' mentioned above; the 'Communal Grazing Land Management Legislation'; and the 'Wetland Management Legal Framework', although a finalization process still needs to take place (TE, p16).

In terms of replication, the challenge posed by the project's interventions, such as gabion check-dams and bench terracing, is that when the need for industrial equipment is required their acquisition, replication and maintenance will be out of reach of the beneficiaries and will require external support by the government or other development projects and implementing partners. Successful replication of the positive results of this project relies on one fundamental element over all others, the TE notes, namely "the commitment of beneficiaries to improve their own livelihoods and their drive to learn, design and apply". As such, in addition to the technical requirements for replication, the TE highlights the importance of country ownership and buy-in as key elements of project replication. The TE adds that sustainability indicators are positive, as most of the project works have been implemented by the beneficiary communities themselves, and have been "well-anchored in the decentralized administration", thereby providing for institutional sustainability "as activities are easily absorbed under the Government structure upon the completion of the project". The TE highlights the project activities "worth replicating", namely the ones with "low-tech no regret measures", such as "land exclosures, environmental management plans (pasture, watershed and wetland) and land certification", while "on- and off-farm SLM measures" have also been successful but require more technical input and materials. The simple nature-based measures, such as "the stabilizing of bunds and gullies", are highly replicable even by beneficiaries, but those involving industrial heavy-duty material such as gabion and stone check-dams will only be replicable with considerable technical and economic support (TE, p25).

As in the 'recommendations' section, the TE suggests partnering with universities and other educational and research institutions to facilitate "future replication, upscaling, knowledge sharing and sustainability". This would help develop curriculums based on the positive project results for broader use at beneficiary level as well as in the higher educational system (TE, p36).

In terms of scaling-up, the TE notes that "the demonstrated new practices by the project have been diffused in large scale throughout its intervention areas". Area closure to avoid free grazing, Participatory Forest management (PFM), fruit seedling plantation, and rope and washer pump, are just some of the numerous technologies and practices initiated by the project and widely adopted by the community. In particular, the project's PFM activity "had a comprehensive social, environmental and economic cost-benefit analysis, which significantly increases its potential for scaling-up". The TE adds that partnering with research institutions, with the aim to produce peer-reviewed research, will help mitigate institutional shortcomings with respect to M&E and allow for project evaluators to "better gage the impact, likelihood and viability of upscaling of innovative and pilot projects, particularly in climate adaptive livelihoods and the introduction of climate resilient food varieties" (TE, p36).

# 9. Lessons and recommendations

## 9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The TE states that "if the weakest link is in M&E it will undermine the process of assessing impact and conveying results". Knowledge generation for this project has been a challenge since the beginning, as explained in previous pages. The project exemplifies the importance of conducting timely baselines, designing a functioning M&E system and defining the impact assessment's source of information used as baselines in order for reliable impact conclusions to be drawn (TE, p34).

Interestingly, the TE notes that the project has contributed to the knowledge about "the extent of reversal of environmental degradation that is possible in poor rural communities". The project's quantitative research has shown dramatic environmental regeneration capacities, provided that communities are empowered through "capacity building, collective decision making and enforcement". The project has shown that given the opportunity and with sufficient demonstrations, community buy-in can be significantly more than anticipated, boosting long-term sustainability (TR, p34).

The TE concludes that project results are mixed. Strong government support at all levels, national, regional, and local levels helped ensure the project's remarkable environmental impacts with "the rehabilitation of degraded lands; the implementation of on- and off-farm SLM; and the ability of communities to organise and develop management plans for sustainable resource management". There were also positive social changes in terms of land tenure which resulted from land certification. The TE adds that these remarkable results are all the more remarkable considering the below standard performance in project management, as evidenced in previous sections. The TE recommends that future projects benefit from addressing the institutional gaps that have emerged in terms of financial management and reporting, project management and accounting, to avoid delays related to staffing and human resources. Financial management was also below standard, as documented in previous sections, and accountability issues resulted in consistent delays in submitting Annual Work and Budget Plans (AWBPs) and delays in procurement. The TE recommends addressing these shortcomings in order to avoid project delays and missing data (TE, p35).

## 9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE's recommendations are very much academic and focused on research, education and knowledge management.

The project has exposed "necessary improvements that need to be made in project management and implementation but also monitoring, evaluation and reporting". The TE advises to consider promoting training courses in project management, M&E, financial management, procurement and accounting.

The TE also recommends capitalising on the positive environmental impact results by partnering more with research institutions with the aim to produce peer-reviewed research, so as to "mitigate institutional shortcomings with respect to M&E and reporting" and allow for "project evaluators to better gage the impact, likelihood and viability of upscaling of innovative and pilot projects, particularly in climate adaptive livelihoods and the introduction of climate resilient food varieties".

In terms of future replication, upscaling, knowledge sharing, mainstreaming and sustainability, the TE recommends partnering with universities and other educational and research institutions, to help "develop curriculums based on the positive results that have been achieved for broader use at beneficiary level as well as in the higher educational system".

## 10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

| Criteria | GEF IEO comments | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? | The report had to contend with limited project data under certain key components in the first few years of the project. It does however provide ample quantitative data for the remaining years, with satisfactory explanations of achievements, relevance and effectiveness. | **S** |
| To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated? | Because of project shortcomings in terms of data collection, the evidence collected by the project is undermined. This is acknowledged in the TE, and reflected in the evaluation ratings. | **S** |
| To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy? | The report highlighted key sustainability aspects of the project and from several perspectives. | **S** |
| To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? | The TE's lessons learned are comprehensive. The project's initial shortcomings are considerable, but the suggestion to partner with research institutions is repeated several times in the recommendation section, which is very short. | **MS** |
| Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? | The project could not disaggregate disbursements by component for each financier. The co-financing figures are presented but the project's below standard financial reporting make this rating difficult to assess. | **MS** |
| Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems: | M&E was one of the greatest challenges of this project. The report focuses on this issue throughout the report and offers certain recommendations and lessons learned. | **S** |
| **Overall TE Rating** | | **S** |

## 11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).