

**Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Review of REDD+ Participatory Forest Management in South-West Ethiopia (REPAFAMA-SW Ethiopia, Phase III) Project**

# **About the Development Fund**

For more than 40 years the Development Fund (DF) has collaborated with local communities and civil society organizations in developing countries to improve the production of food and income generation of highly vulnerable and marginalized rural communities. DF’s vision is a sustainable and just world with freedom from hunger, poverty, and marginalization. Hundreds of thousands of small-scale farming households have received DF-support to develop resilient livelihoods and eliminate hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in their communities.

DF has stood steadfast in the forefront among development organizations promoting the empowerment of marginalized rural communities, pro-poor policies and appropriate solutions, particularly through approaches such as crop diversification, model-farmer, adaptive climate villages, affordable climate-smart agriculture techniques, community seed-banks, small scale irrigation and mechanizations, local natural resource management, microcredits and capacity building of civil society and grassroots organization. DF mobilizes the assets of small-scale farmers to ensure local contribution, involvement, and ownership, which is key to a sustainable, resilient, and equitable development.

# **Background and Context**

* 1. **Project description**

The REDD+ Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in South-West Ethiopia (REPAFMA-SW Ethiopia, Phase III) project has been implemented since 2021 as part of Norway’s International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI) for the period 2021 - 2025. The project is implemented across 14 Woredas housing a contiguous forest block of high conservation significance covering parts of Oromia, Gambella and Southwest Ethiopia Peoples Regional States. Specifically, project implementation areas include Kefa, Sheka, and Bench Sheko Zones of the South West Ethiopia Peoples Regional State, Iluababor zone of Oromia Regional State, and Agnwa zone of Gambela People Regional State.[[1]](#footnote-2) The areas of project intervention fall within one of the 36 globally biodiversity hotspots and constitute Ethiopia’s largest remnant forest block and home for important plant genetic materials such as the wild varieties of Arabica coffee. Moreover, the project areas of intervention Serve as a water tower for the region and inhabited by communities which are hugely dependent on the forest resources for their livelihoods.

The main purpose of the project is to further develop existing PFM interventions and test innovative practical solutions concerning management, production, processing and marketing methods, as well as addressing the institutional set-ups and incentives needed for sustainable forest management in Southwest Ethiopia. A major focus of the project is to identify, appraise and pilot sustainable forest-friendly livelihood options for Forest Dependent Communities (FDC), involving socioeconomic analysis, monitoring forest condition in near-real time, trade-offs between sectors, land uses, and management approaches and strengthening relevant capacity of PFM institutions.

* 1. **Objective of the project**

The project integrates a wide range of activities to address related socio-economic, institutional, and environmental issues. These are linked and designed to contribute to the defined NICFI Impact and Outcome. The overall objective (the intended impact) of the project is to contribute towards reduced and reversed forest loss in Southwest Ethiopia. This will be achieved through three outcomes contributing to NICFI Outcome (intermediate Outcome).

**NICFI Outcome (intermediate outcome):** The rights and livelihoods of forest dependent communities are improved, also referred as NICFI Outcome (intermediate outcome)

**Outcome One:** PFM institutions manage forest resources sustainably.

* Improved capability of Forest Management Groups (FMGs) to revise and implement Forest Management Plans and internal rules in Bench-Sheko, Kefa, Sheka, Iluabor, and Agnwa zones
* Forest monitoring systems developed and maintained for PFM institutions in Bench-Sheko, Kafa, Sheka, Iluababor and Agnwa zones

**Outcome two:** Public institutions have the capacity to provide effective support to PFM institutions in sustainable forest management and diversified livelihoods.

* Formal stakeholder collaboration platforms established in project intervention woredas of Bench-Sheko, Kefa, Sheka, Iluabor, and Agnwa zones
* Best practice in implementation of PFM promoted among public institutions
* Improved capability of public institutions at Woreda level to collect and analyse geo-data

**Outcome three:** Forest dependent communities have a diversified income base from forest friendly activities.

* Livelihood options are diversified through forest friendly practices
* Improved market options for forest friendly products
	1. **Project Implementation Modality**

The REPAFMA-SW Ethiopia, Phase III project is implemented by DF in collaboration with Ethio Wetlands and Natural resources Association (EWNRA) and the Alliance of Biodiversity and Centre for International Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). EWNRA has been partnering with the DF since 2013 on earlier phases of the same project, and the Alliance of Biodiversity and CIAT since 2021. EWNRA’s role is to provide technical back-up to relevant public and community-based forest management institutions towards efforts in consolidating PFM activities across project intervention Woredas resulting in 569,111 hectares of forest landscape under PFM arrangements. The role of Biodiversity and CIAT mainly entails building capacity of relevant experts from local government and project staff on satellite based near real time forest monitoring and conducting surveys, assessments and analysis in key programme thematic areas to inform the design of strategies and plans to be implemented by EWNRA.

# **Objectives of the Mid-Term Review**

The objective of Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to assess and document the performance of the Project and the extent to which the outputs and outcomes have been achieved, determining coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness. The MTR is forward-looking and will assess whether and to what extent results (i) are sustainable, and (ii) may contribute to achieving the intended impact.

In addition, the MTR will assess success factors and constraints, capture lessons learnt and document new knowledge and important topics for further enquiry, action, lobbying and/or influence. It will also review and assess the findings and recommendations of the Project Progress Reports.

The MTR will ensure accountability towards Norad as a donor as well as the target beneficiaries of the project. The findings of the review will be used by DF and its IPs to make necessary adjustments to the project for the remaining grant period. On this basis, the review shall also provide clear (actionable) recommendations for improvement and identify important areas for learning.

# **Review Questions**

The MTR shall answer the following questions:

***Effectiveness*:**

1. To what extent is the project successful in achieving desired results? Please provide a separate assessment according to each project-level outcome found in the results framework.
2. In terms of internal, project adjustments, if any, what concrete recommendations do you propose to the organisation for the remainder of the project cycle?

***Coherence*:**

1. To what extent does the project work with or in coordination with other initiatives funded by NICFI? What are the learning points?[[2]](#footnote-3) Particularly the review is expected to explore the integration and complementarity of the project with the NICFI supported REDD+ Investment Program and suggest recommendation for improvement.
2. To what degree does the project seek to create alliances and foster synergies with civil society organisations and other partners, national or international, to ensure harmonisation of interventions in the given contexts?
3. To what extent has the communication/ collaboration between the partners and DF been adequate?

***Efficiency***

1. Is the project being implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? Are the project objectives being achieved on time?
2. ***Sustainability*** Are the approaches being applied by the project contributing to the sustainability of the project achievements?
3. To what extent does the forest friendly livelihoods options strategy promoted by the project contributes for sustainability of community forest management scheme?
4. Is the project applying a sensible exit strategy for transfer of responsibility and activities to other stakeholders (local government, community institutions)?

***Specific questions I -* *Contribution to NICFI Outcome***

1. (Start the numbering with 1, 2, 3 etc) How does the project affect deforestation across project intervention Woredas?
2. How does the project lead to the protection of the forest and land rights of local communities? Relevant activities may include:
(1) participation in relevant processes,
(2) reports to relevant international legal mechanisms and instruments and
(3) the exercise of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).
Please provide concrete examples.
3. To what degree does the project contribute to integrating sustainable forest use by local communities into legal frameworks, area plans, and development strategies? Please provide concrete examples.
4. How does the project contribute to the protection of environmental and local communities by working for the adoption (and enforcement of) relevant laws and legal instruments? Please provide concrete examples.
5. How does the project strengthen local community capacities for sustainable management of forest of livelihood activities? Please provide concrete examples where applicable.
6. To what extent does the project contribute to poverty reduction, directly or indirectly? How is this measured and monitored?

***Specific questions II – Contribution to NICFI Areas Strategic Interest***

1. How does the project spur or employ innovative working methods, context analyses, partnership models, or similar innovations?
2. What are the impacts of the project, positive or negative, on women and gender equality and minority/marginalized communities? What are the lessons learned?

# **Scope of the Review**

* ***Temporal scope***: The project builds on the two earlier phases of NICFI funded projects, i.e, 2013-2015 and 2016-2020, both were implemented by DF in partership with EWNRA. The current project runs from 2021 to 2025 and the review will be conducted for the period of April 2021 – June 2023.
* ***Geographic scope:*** The geographic areas covered in REPAFMA-SW Ethiopia, Phase III project covers 3 regions, 5 Zones, 14 Woredas and 129 Kebeles or villages and 394 FMGs. Accordingly, the review will make sampling from Woredas in each region, sampling of FMGs from each sampled Woreda, and sampling of households from each sampled FMG. Therefore, to make it more representative the consultant shall take sufficient samples of households for each sampled FMG considering 95% Level of confidence with a 5% margin of error.
* ***Activity scope:*** The review will be conducted for the whole project across the project intervention Woredas as indicated above under geographic scope.

# **Main users and stakeholders**

The main users of the MTR are DF, EWNRA, the Alliance of Biodiversity and CIAT and Community Based Forest Management Organizations such as Forest Management Associations, Forest Management Cooperatives as well as the grassroots Forest Management Groups, and Forest Products Marketing Cooperatives which receive day-to-day technical and in-kind assistance from the project. Other stakeholders having an interest in the project or its review include relevant institutions of the Government of Ethiopia operating at varies levels of administration. At federal level, the Forest Development is the single most important institution having a stake in the project given its leadership to forestry in general, and REDD+ and PFM in particular. At regional level, project contractual agreements have been signed with the respective bureaus of Finance and Economic Cooperation of Oromia, Gambella and Southwest Ethiopia Peoples Regional States implying they have interest in the programme or its review. Moreover, relevant regional bureaus, zonal and woreda land use offices including forestry and environment, agriculture, and cooperatives have been key project partners focusing on certain or entire thematic areas of the programme and hence have an interest in the review. The review will also be used by NICFI (donor of the project) and other civil society organisations implementing similar projects in Ethiopia or other countries.

# **Methodology**

The consultant will develop appropriate methodologies and data collection tools to answer the above review questions. The review team shall use a mix of quantitative and qualitative data for the assessment of results including desk reviews of relevant documentation. Qualitative data can be collected through focus group discussions, Key Informant Interviews and observation among other techniques. In addition, the review shall employ participatory methods that give voice to the local communities. It shall consult community-based institutions, namely Forest Management Groups, Forest Management Cooperatives, Forest Management Associations and Forest Product Marketing Cooperatives, project staff (from DF, EWNRA and the Alliance of Biodiversity and CIAT), relevant government office staff, local, regional and federal authorities, regional and national and regional REDD+ coordination units, and other relevant stakeholders. The areas and partners to be included in the study is to be decided by DF through consultations with the partners and the consultant.

**Sampling**

Based on the information provided in table below, the consultant will select one Woreda from each of Keffa, Bench Sheko and Sheka zones of SWEPR and two Woredas from Illubabor zone in Oromia region and Gambella Woreda from Anywa zone of Gambella region. Then, proportionally the FMGs will be sampled from each sampled Woreda; likewise, the households will be proportionally sampled from the sampled FMGs.

**Intervention areas**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **# of project intervention Zones** | **# of project intervention *Woredas*** | **# of Kebeles** | **Number of FMGs** |
| SWEPR | 3 | 9 | 81 | 232 |
| Oromia | 1 | 5 | 46 | 111 |
| Gambella | 1 | 1 | 2 | 11 |
| Total | 5 | 15 | 129 | 354 |

# **Deliverables**

**Inception Report:** The Inception Report will not exceed 15 pages in length and will comprise detailed methodology, including data collection tools, indicative survey questions, and interview protocol; initial findings based on a desk study (document/literature review), a work plan and a comprehensive list of stakeholders and key informants (KIs); list of relevant documents and references; and any other issue of importance.

**Draft report:** The Draft MTR Report shall be delivered in English and shall not exceed 30 pages, including an executive summary and excluding annexes, with the following sections (illustrative, not exhaustive):

* Executive summary presenting main findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
* Introduction and background, including review purpose, objectives, and scope
* Description of methodology
* Limitations
* Review Results
* Findings, conclusions, and recommendations
* Lessons learned
* Annexes (to include updated logframe with results, review ToR, Inception Report, maps, list of KII/stakeholders, documents/literature reviewed, raw collected data and research tools (if applicable).
	+ The consultant must comply with global and DF Data protection policy, including GDPR. Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personal data if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the review) based on a case based assessment by the evaluator. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on a written consent.

MTR 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. Review questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and in the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. They must be clear, relevant, targeted and actionable so that the review can be used to achieve its intended learning and accountability objectives.

The structure will be agreed at the inception stage. The report will be presented both in hard copy and an electronic version and be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing. The Executive Summary will include the main findings and conclusions, lessons learned, an assessment of what has worked well, and recommended improvements.

**Presentation:** The consultant will present initial findings to DF, IPs and key stakeholders for validation.

**Final report:** The MTR Report in English shall incorporate Client comments and shall not exceed 30 pages including the executive summary and excluding annexes. It shall be submitted in digital form.

# **Timeline and resourcing**

The duration of the MTR is estimated to a maximum of eight weeks. The review should commence, no later than July 1, 2023. The budget available for the MTR is estimated at 300,000 NOK. Activities, dates (to be agreed) and deadlines (to be proposed by the consultant and agreed) for the consultancy work are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Delivery Dates** |
| Start-up – Preparatory/Contract signing |  |
| Start-up meeting (kick-off) |  |
| **Phase 1 – Inception / desk study** |  |
| * Submission of Draft Inception Report
 |  |
| * Client review and comment
 |  |
| * Submission of Final Inception Report
 |  |
| **Phase 2 – Data collection** |  |
| * Fieldwork (data collection)
 |  |
| * Debrief
 |  |
| **Phase 3 – Analysis and Reporting** |  |
| * Submission of Draft MTR Report
 |  |
| * Presentation of draft reports and presentation of initial findings and recommendation
 |  |
| * Client review and comment
 |  |
| * Submission of Final MTR Report
 |  |

#  **Roles and Responsibilities**

The consultant will prepare a comprehensive participatory methodology for undertaking the review. S/he will collaborate with partners to appraise existing data collection tools and design as needed and collect data. S/he is expected to travel to project implementation areas, adequately familiarize him/her with the project logical framework and any relevant information relating to policy and legal frameworks in the agriculture, forestry, environment, and related sectors. The consultant will be responsible for data analysis and report writing which will be accompanied by presenting study results to DF, and partner organization for validation. Whereas field visits and contact sessions with communities will be facilitated by partners.

The main responsibility for ensuring that all responsibilities are carried out lies with the consultant.

**The consultant will undertake the following activities:**

* Conduct review of data sources such as reports, relevant policies, strategies and project documents.
* Develop appropriate study methodology, design, and tools.
* Select the most appropriate sample project areas for the visit.
* Submit an inception report and finalize review plan.
* Conduct field work.
* Synthesize findings.
* Produce draft report.
* Organize validation workshops in which local partners, DF and other relevant stakeholders participate.
* Produce final report, including incorporating comments from DF and its implementing partner.
* Present findings to DF and IPs as required by DF.

**Other responsibilities of the consultant:**

* Adhere to all terms/conditions stipulated in the contract.
* Pay income tax or other taxes as required.
* Obtain relevant insurance as needed.
* Adhere to DF’s code of conduct while undertaking the assignment.
* Adhere to the agreed timeframes regarding all activities outlined in the timeline.
* The consultant shall cover all costs associated with transportation during the assignment.
* Consultant’s own laptops and phones to be used during the assignment.
* Pay for own accommodation and per diem etc.

**DF will be responsible for the following:**

* Provide consultant with all required documents.
* Link consultants to partner organizations and other relevant stakeholders and set up meetings as required.
* Support in the process and provide technical input on methodology both from Oslo and Ethiopia office.
* Plan (in collaboration with partner and the consultant) the field visits.
* Take part in field assessments and follow up the progress of the review as per plan ensuring quality.

**Implementing partner(s) will be responsible for the following:**

* Accompany the consultant during the field visits.
* Arrange interviews, focus groups discussions, meetings, project site visits as requested.
* Logistic arrangement in the field in discussion with DF.

#  **Desired competencies and skills of the consultant**

The review team shall preferably be international consultant(s). The term Consultant in this ToR refers to the review team. The Consultant will liaise closely with DF, implementing partner staff, staff of relevant government and non-government institutions in the areas where the review will take place.

The members of the consulting team should hold the following competencies and skills:

* Advanced university degree in the field of forestry, natural resources management, agriculture, development studies, economics, or related fields; working particularly on climate change, REDD+, and rural development.
* Extensive experience in designing and conducting independent reviews on rural development, natural resources management or forestry focusing more specifically in community-based forest management, and climate change or REDD+ programs/projects.
* Good understanding of gender, inclusion of minorities and community-based organizations.
* Good communication, analytical, drafting and document presentation skills.
* Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines.
* Practical experience on gender issues and gender integration analysis.
* Good understanding of forest-based livelihood options and management.
* Excellent writing and presentation skills.

#  **Reference documents (secondary data for desk study/literature review)**

DF and the implementing partners will provide the Consultant with all available project documentation upon signing of the contract. The Consultant is encouraged to identify any other sources for appropriate additional information that may be required to supplement what is provided by the project. Project documents available include:

* Project proposal document
* Log frame (original and updated)
* Implementation plan / annual work plans
* Baseline report
* Project progress reports
* Project annual reports
* Monitoring reports
* List of project locations and participating communities
* List of key stakeholders

#  **Tender submission and contact details**

Tenders/offers to conduct the Evaluation will be accepted from consultants as well as firms, and must be submitted in two separate documents, one containing technical proposal and the other financial proposal clearly marked “Consultancy Service for Mid-term Review of the REDD+ PFM project” and sent by email to Lidia Bekele, Administration Assistant at DF Ethiopia df@utviklingsfondet.no. Please note that the bid must contain CVs of the proposed evaluation team. Financial proposal shall disclose all pricing information related to the consultancy service as described in this Terms of Reference in USD for international consultants. Fee (non-recurring and recurring costs), travel cost and other out of pocket expenses should be given separately as a lump sum. Conditional cost is not acceptable.

For further details or questions regarding this ToR for the Evaluation, kindly contact Sisay Kassahun, Country Program Coordinator: sisay@developmentfund.no

# **Annexes**

Annex 1: Letter of tender form

**Re. Letter of tender: “Mid-term Evaluation for the REDD+ PFM Project**

**QZA-0746 ETH 21\_0005**

We hereby confirm that:

We have fulfilled our obligations concerning payment of taxes and social contributions to the country of legal registration for our organisation/firm.

[ ]  Our organisation/firm has not been convicted of participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering. Furthermore, it has not been convicted of any criminal offence related to its business conduct and has not in the pursuit of its business activities committed any serious breach of professional or ethical standards in the industry concerned.

[ ]  We have experience from performing similar assignments.

[ ]  The tender is in a compliance with the minimum requirements specified in section 8 of the tender/ToR.

[ ]  No potential conflicts of interest are foreseen, nor are we aware of any factors that potentially could create a conflict of interest in connection with carrying out the assignment.

[ ]  The individual consultants who have been proposed for this assignment, and who will be travelling to high-risk areas, possess sufficient knowledge and training prior to travel to high-risk areas.

We have *[please select]*:

[ ]  **No deviations** to the tender document/ToR

We confirm that the tender is binding for ----------calculated from expiry of the closing date for submission of tenders.

Contact person for the tender: *[name and position / email / telephone]*

Signed by authorized representative:

Stamp

(If a firm)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Name and position)

1. The project is implemented in 14 Woredas and 129 Kebeles through strengthening 354 FMGs. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. **Instructions to the reviewer**: A full mapping of NICFI initiatives is not necessary in answering this question. Rather, to do so, the reviewer may engage in dialogue with the DF and IPs as well as collaborating partners. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)