



Final Evaluation of the project

Livelihood Improvement through Sustainable Resource
Management (LISRM)

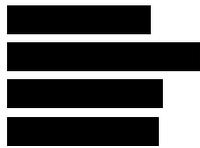
in North Gonder, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia

Final report | Volume 1 – Main report

September 2017

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Project team:



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Results-Assessment Form for Mid-Term and Final Project Evaluations/Reviews

This form has to be filled in electronically by the evaluator/reviewer. No evaluation report will be accepted without this form. The form has to be included at the beginning of the evaluation/review report

(Final Format Nov. 2016)

Title of project/programme (please, spell out): Livelihood Improvement through Sustainable Resource Management (LISRM) in North Gonder, Amahara National Regional State, Ethiopia			
Contract Period of project/programme: May 2013 – December 2016			
ADC number of project/programme: 2509-02/2013			
Name of project/programme partner: Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Finance and Economic Development			
Country and Region of project/programme : North Gonder, Amahara National Regional State, Ethiopia			
Budget of this project/programme: € 5,700,000.00			
Name of evaluation company (spell out) and names of evaluators: Österreichisches Institut für Raumplanung: Bernd Schuh, Joanne Tordy, Ursula Mollay; Kindu Mekonnen			
Date of completion of evaluation/review: June 2017			
Please tick appropriate box:			
a)	Evaluation/review managed by ADA/ADC Coordination Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b)	Evaluation managed by project partner:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please tick appropriate box:			
a) Mid-Term Evaluation	b) Final Evaluation	c) Mid-Term Review	d) Final Review
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others: please, specify:			
Project Outcome (Please, include as stated in the Logframe Matrix):			
The Logframe Matrix states a programme objective and a project purpose. No overall project outcome.			
Regarding the overall programme objective, no indicators were defined in the log frame matrix, which would enable a quantitative assessment on the impact of the programme. However, the log frame matrix offers two indicators to assess if the project's purpose has been fulfilled:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant farmers (15% women) improved their overall agricultural productivity by 15% by the end of programme period • Beneficiaries capacitated in knowledge on improved technologies. 			
According to the final report of the project, both were overachieved.			

For Final Evaluation/Review¹: Project Outcome: To what extent has the project already achieved its outcome(s) according to the Logframe Matrix? Please, tick appropriate box

Outcome(s) was/were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
x			

Please, also explain your assessment: What exactly was achieved and why? If not achieved, why not?

(Please, consider description of outcome and relevant indicators)

A total of 348,513 farmers have improved their overall agricultural productivity, 23,6% (82,388) of these beneficiaries were women. That is more than expected, since the project targeted at 100,000 beneficiaries, of which 15% (25,000) should be women. According to the report on women's participation and benefit sharing in LISRMP, 52 of the 78 respondents of a household survey were able to accumulate cash savings (see Melak, 2016: 33). The second indicator targets at 85,000 beneficiaries who should be capacitated in knowledge on improved technologies. According to the final report, this indicator was overachieved by 90% – 162,088 persons gained or enhanced their knowledge on improved technology.

These achievements were mirrored by the beneficiaries in the case study woredas. Almost unanimously the contacted beneficiaries declared their household income has increased during the lifespan of the programme. A quantification of this result by the evaluation team was not possible. The data mentioned above originates from the outcome assessment and the final report.

For Mid-Term Evaluation/Review²: Project Outcome: To what extent do you think the project will most likely achieve its outcome(s) according to the Logframe Matrix Please, tick appropriate box

NOT APPLICABLE

Outcome(s) will most likely be:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:

Please, also explain your assessment: (Please, consider description of outcome and relevant indicators)

Project Outputs: To what extent has the project already achieved its outputs³ according to the Logframe Matrix ? Please, tick appropriate boxes

As agreed upon with ADA head of evaluation [REDACTED], it is not sensible to describe each of the programme's outputs in the pre-defined way of the result assessment form. Instead we agreed on a brief synopsis (cues) on each of the programme's result areas based on the Logframe Matrix. The form has been altered accordingly.

Result area 1: Integrated Watershed management enhanced

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
x			

Please, explain your assessment:

The programme was very successful in its activities regarding integrated watershed management. The strong focus of the programme on these activities is visible. Almost all target values stated in the log frame matrix were overachieved. (e.g. 21 instead of 12 watersheds were implemented; the rehabilitation of degraded

¹ Please, only fill in in case this is a final project evaluation/review.

² Please, only fill in in case this is a mid-term evaluation/review.

³ In case there are more than three outputs, please, add them.

land was far more successful than anticipated; the programme constructed a higher number of small scale irrigation schemes and water supply structures than planned, an immense success was the coverage of protected woodland, a higher number of fuel saving stoves as foreseen was distributed. All this measured lead to an increased income level.). Solely one indicator depicted minor success: of the people engaging in participatory forest management, less than the targeted 15% were women.

Result area 2: Park and Tourism management enhanced

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

All in all the programme was successful in its activities regarding park and tourism management. Documents on community benefit sharing and a management plan for Altash Park were elaborated, a huge amount of money contributed to the resettlement of the Giche community. Furthermore Kebele park advisory committees were strengthened, 45 scouts were trained, overachieving the target substantially, and tourists are increasingly satisfied with the services provided in the national parks. Even more encouraging is the finding, that both indicators on women participation in eco-tourism are overachieved considerably.

The PCU mentions challenges with construction firms, which might be a reason for the under achievement in terms of construction of blocks for scouts, spring/well development and PV systems installed. However, the two- according to plan – missing blocks for scouts are already under construction. According to the final report, the lower number of traditional huts being constructed is the result of a decision made by the regional steering committee. Therefore it is the lower number of spring/well developments and installation of PV systems that is the reason for judging this result area with “almost achieved”.

Result area 3: Rural land administration strengthened

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

In regard to issuing primary books of holding and providing training in land administration the programme achieved its target fully. The provision of secondary books of holding is lagging behind the targets set, by 10-30%. A possible explanation for this underachievement is that the programme pioneered in the provision of this secondary book of holding and might have overestimated what can be achieved in three years.

Result area 4: Livestock development

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

In general the programme achieved its targets in regard to livestock development. A high percentage of participating farmers could increase their income by practicing at least two types of improve livestock management systems and engaging in poultry production, marketing. Farmers also benefited from small ruminant fattening, feed production and distribution as well as fish farming. The targeted number of cows/heifers artificially inseminated could not be reached (81%) due to an interruption of liquid nitrogen production and the unavailability of technicians. However, the programme overachieved its target of equipped and fully engaged households in backyard beekeeping activities. Further support for these user groups is advisable. Rather low was also the number of beneficiaries engaged in backyard feed production (50% of target was achieved). Reason given for this underachievement is that most of the livestock package participants are poor and have a shortage of land for forage development.

Result area 5: Crop development

Outputs were:

Fully achieved: x	Almost achieved:	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

The programme was able to reach a much higher number of HH in order to adopt productive crop technologies and also improved the productivity by 106% instead of the planned 40%. Although the programme reached more households and hence more women than targeted, the percentage of 25% women beneficiaries was not reached but stagnated at 19%.

The programme also overachieved its targets regarding strengthening and establishing nurseries. However, the higher number of nurseries seems to have benefitted less HH than anticipated. Only 16.200 of the targeted 22.000 HH benefited from seedlings. According to the PCU this underachievement is explained by the low number of HHs that have permanent source of irrigation water. In the planning phase, the PCU expected that number to be higher.

Result area 6: Marketing, entrepreneurship and alternative livelihood options enhanced

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

LISRMP was very successful in establishing producer groups, cooperatives and user groups. Especially the high number of women benefitting from cooperatives and user groups is encouraging. The same can be said from the participants of the revolving fund which proved to be a well designed and targeted instrument. And end is in sight when it comes to constructing the honey processing plant – the last machines are ordered to be delivered. Solely the number of HH benefitting from identified livelihood options targeted was under-achieved: 88.7%. To add on that, the available data does not allow to assess if the income increased by 50% as hoped-for. These two indicators are responsible for the “almost achieved” judgement.

Result area 7: Capacity development

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

The programme concentrated its activities in this result area on capacitating participant farmers and partner institution staff as well as on supporting watershed user associations with grant funds. In indicators relating to these target groups (including the target set for the share of women), the programme overachieved its targets considerably.

In regard to research activities and making the result available to end users and experience sharing among NGOs or governmental organizations the programme did not live up to its expectations.

Result area 8: Knowledge, Management and Communication enhanced

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

The programme achieved its goals regarding documenting and disseminating best practices, supporting

farmers training centers, documenting the programme's achievements and publishing them. It was also planned to conduct experience sharing tours for 1,400 farmers and 50 partner staff to improve the watershed management through introduction of new technologies and methods. In this regard the LSRIMP achieved 89% respectively 64% of its target values.

Result area 9: Gender and Development

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

The Logframe Matrix shows overachievement in almost all indicators, targeting gender and development issues. Amongst them the share of women beneficiaries in income generation activities and in service provision as well as women user groups and HIV/AIDS affected groups engaging in income generating activities. Gender mainstreaming activities by means of training were not fully achieved (achievement 83%) in terms of the number of participating farmers, but overachieved in terms of participating women farmers and partner staffs.

Result area 10: Planning, monitoring and evaluation systems enhanced

Outputs were:

Fully achieved:	Almost achieved: x	Partially achieved:	Not achieved:
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Please, explain your assessment:

The programme achieved its physical performance and financial utilization targets. The baseline survey was conducted as planned as were the annual plans and progress reports. Lower achievements than targeted were reported in indicators assessing efficient monitoring, internal and external evaluation. The delay of the final evaluation (present paper) is one of these indicators. The lower achievements (between 75%-95%) also concern Zonal and Woreda steering committee meetings and field visits, field monitoring by PCU staff, performance evaluation with all implementers and Woreda self-evaluation on annual basis.

Impact/Beneficiaries:

How many women, men, girls, boys and people in total have already benefited from this project directly and indirectly? Please, explain

According to the programme final report several thousands of beneficiaries benefited from the programme. The split up by special target groups is not really quantifiable as the final report does not necessarily disentangle double counting of beneficiaries. Still according to the target levels of the outputs of the programme all target groups have been reached and thus a positive impact in the programming area can be assumed.

What exactly has already changed in the lives of women, men, girls, boys and/or institutions from this project? Please, explain:

The quantification of the changes in the lives of the population and institutions is not possible due to the fact that no proper result assessment has been conducted and the evaluation itself has not been designed to collect comprehensive data in all the programming area. Thus from the analysis of the output of the programme as well as the observations in the field the following changes may be listed:

- Marginal improvement of the livelihood conditions through a improved environmental situation, broader income opportunities, inclusion of target groups (women, youth) into the economic and decision making process
- High ownership of both administration and communities – thus a very high identification with the programme objectives and willingness to carry on even without programme support

Which positive and/or negative effects/impacts in terms of gender can be possibly be attributed to the project? Please, explain:

The programme undertook serious attempts to empower women and other vulnerable groups and address the barriers for their participation. It did so with varying commitment and outcomes. In general women and other vulnerable groups were able to take part in planning and decision-making processes although there is definitely still air for improvement when it comes to the extent of their representation in the decisive body at local level. According to Melak's (2016:27) assessment of women's participation and benefit sharing in LISRMP, the data on the composition of watershed committees which she obtained from PCU indicates that 13% of all watershed committee members are women. The share of female members in the watersheds committees visited during the field trips was 20% on average. *If applicable, which institutions have benefitted from this project/programme and how?*

One of the biggest "success stories" of the LISRMP has been the establishment and accreditation of the Simien Mountain National Park under the UNESCO natural heritage. – thus the national park authorities certainly benefitted from the programme as well as the woreda authorities involved in the implementation of the programme – e.g. through capacity development.

Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues:

Gender: *To what extent was gender mainstreaming included in the project? To what extent were the recommendations – if any- from the ADA internal gender-assessment considered and implemented?*

The main target group of the programme are communities at grass root level, and emphasized on supporting women, poor-of-the-poor and other vulnerable groups. To ensure a certain share of women beneficiaries, the programme established indicators with set values.

The **gender assessment** led to two recommendations. The first one recommended the development of a gender strategy for the programme, with defined objectives for each programme component. This gender strategy should then be subject to community level discussions, facilitated by a qualified personal. The second recommendation asked for a gender analysis for the different components of the programme and as a prerequisite capacity development for the systematic collection and management of project relevant data (sex-disaggregated whenever possible).

- **Gender strategy:** There are no references to a gender strategy in the revised programme document, the final report, the outcome assessment report nor was it mentioned in stakeholder consultations during the field trips. Missing objectives for each programme component are further indications that this recommendation was not followed. The revised programme document, and consequently all reports documenting the achievements, does however includes slightly more (and sometimes adapted) indicators on women beneficiaries, plus a separate section on outcome indicators for the result area "Gender and Development". The reason behind these changes is not indicated in the documents available to the evaluators.
- **Gender analysis:** in line with the assessment on the recommendation for a gender strategy, no evidence could be found that the advice on conducting a gender analysis was taken on board. In regard to the recommended capacity development, the final report (LISRMP, 2016:56) states that the programme provided 7500 copies of data recording books and that the PCU and Woreda experts offered intensive training, field follow up and support on the utilization of these books. Over time, improvements of the data quality were observed. Considering the higher level actors, the output assessment report (LISRMP, 2015: 64) assessed that surveying and research methods trainings for PCU and zonal partners were not conducted. Looking upon the presentation of indicators, the recommendation was followed: in the outcome assessment report as well as in the final report, wherever possible indicators were presented in a sex-disaggregated manner

Environment: *To what extent was environmental mainstreaming included in the project? To what extent were the recommendations – if any- from the ADA internal environment-assessment considered and implemented?*

Environmental considerations shaped the programme's logic of intervention. The **environment assessment** recommended firstly to integrate measures strengthening climate change resilience of ecosystems as well as of local people during the implementation phase and secondly, to address the management of chemical and medical waste stemming from veterinarian activities.

- **Climate change resilience:** Measures to strengthen climate change resilience were not explicitly men-

tioned in the programme's final report nor in the outcome assessment report. Nonetheless, activities in integrated watershed management and participatory forest management can generally be judged as strengthening climate change resilience. The programme document also states to support "climate smart livestock developments", like apiculture, small ruminant production and poultry (LISRMP, 2014: 25) or drought and disease resistant crop varieties (e.g. Habru chickpea) which are expected to be more climate change resilient. In addition, short term trainings on the effects of climate change have been conducted (LISRMP, 2015: 52).

Although those measures targeted at strengthening the resilience of the eco systems and people – evidence that the implementation phase put more emphasis on that topic could not be found. It also should be noted, that the recommendation itself – strengthen climate change resilience – is rather vague and hence difficult to follow.

- Chemical and medical waste: No reference to treatment of chemical or medical waste could be found in the final report nor in the outcome assessment report. Neither was it a topic of discussion during the field trips. However, the relevance of that recommendation in view of the scope of the project is questionable.

Which positive and/or negative effects/impacts in terms of environment can be possibly be attributed to the project? Please, explain

The programme initiated a watershed management development approach. As a result, various improved crop varieties, livestock interventions (veterinary, breeds and feeds), bee keeping and NRM activities (physical and biological SWC, irrigation, high value fruit trees, eucalyptus woodlots, area closure) implemented temporally and/or spatially in watersheds

Field observations suggest some positive impacts of the interventions such as appearance of streams at mid and downstream parts of watersheds and recovery of gullies are emerging because of plantation of trees, area closure interventions and construction of SWC structures at various scales. According to the programme final report (2016), vegetative cover including perennial trees and shrubs and surface water (re-emerging springs) have increased in rehabilitated watersheds by 70% and 50%, respectively.

The natural resources management initiatives of the regional government in watersheds have received much attention by government officials, communities, government and non-governmental institutions to address land degradation issues. Drought is a concern that frequently affects livelihoods of communities in North Gonder and other neighbouring zones. The issue of water for human and livestock consumption and crop production has become critical in many areas. The physical and biological SWC interventions are playing an immense role to hold and foster infiltration of water, which recharges the hydrology and improves availability of water for agricultural and other uses.

Social Standards: *To what extent were the social standards monitored by relevant partners? Have any issues emerged? Please, explain*

As said before one of the main deficits has been the lack of result monitoring of the programme. Thus a comprehensive and transparent monitoring of the social standards did not happen. Moreover the programme did not establish a baseline condition on which any changes brought by programme activities may be assessed.

Still from the observation in the field and the outcome reports of the programme it may be deducted that all in all social standards among the beneficiaries have been improved and spill over effects on communities and non-beneficiaries can be assumed.

It has to be pointed out that the monitoring of social standards was not a specific requirement of ADA at the time of planning of LISRMP. Only environmental and gender issues were particularly addressed and appraised. The manual of social and environmental standards was released by ADA in July 2015.

Overall/Other Comments:

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1. Executive Summary

In Ethiopia, the most populated landlocked country in the world, one experiencing a rapid economic growth with real GDP averaging 10.9% over the last decade, the “Livelihood Improvement through Sustainable Resource Management” (LISRM) programme operating in North Gonder, has demonstrated a good overall performance in meeting the diverse challenges faced by the region. With an overall total project budget of just over 6.0 million euros between 2013 and 2016, the LISRM programme aims to provide livelihood opportunities and ensure food security through a series of locally-based participatory interventions. This report represents the final evaluation of the LISRM programme. The purpose of the evaluation is to systematically and objectively assess the programme logic, its implementation and results gained, as well as document lessons learnt and provide recommendations for possible future cycles of the programme.

The LISRM programme was first initiated as a response to a long series of challenges facing the region. The high rate of population growth paired with an important agricultural sector have led to fierce competition over resources and space between managed and protected areas and the local population. Intensive pressure on the land caused by overgrazing and a strong dependency on biomass fuels culminated in land degradation, deforestation and consequently to an altered ecosystem with a low productivity, in turn contributing to low household incomes and food insecurity.

LISRM was implemented in twelve woredas (districts) and two national parks between May, 2013 and December, 2016, with the aim of improving the livelihood opportunities and food security of selected rural communities through introducing more productive and sustainable resource management practices. The programme is supported by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) which provided the majority of the budget, and implemented by the Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED) of Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) that also contributed financially to the programme. The predecessor to LISRM is the “Sustainable Resource Management Programme in North Gonder” (SRMP) which was implemented in two phase between 2008 and 2013 by the same stakeholders.

According to the LISRM programme monitoring documentation, 348,513 farming households (82,544 of which were female-headed) benefited from the programme and a further 162,088 beneficiaries were capacitated, exceeding targets by more than double¹. While programme documentation provides information on regular monitoring of LISRM, a detailed and systematic evaluation process, combining several evaluation methods and on-site visits is required to provide an adequately robust picture of the real impacts of the programme.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria questions form the basis of the evaluation process. Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact/outcome, and cross-cutting issues such as poverty, gender and the environment are addressed through 23 evaluation questions answered through a mixed methodology, which allows for a triangulation of results and forms a sound basis for discussing the programme results. The information and data collection was conducted through a combination of on-site visits and desk research. The data

¹ One needs to be aware of the fact that data quality in this regard is affected by double counting

collection involved all major stakeholders including, but not limited to regional, zonal and woreda institutions, beneficiary individuals and communities, as well as the Programme Coordinating Unit. The main data collection methods included desk review of strategic documents, field visits, workshops, interviews and focus group discussions.

Two workshops were undertaken covering the entire North Gonder district. Document reviews enhanced the understanding of programme specifics, local contexts, national strategies, and previous evaluation findings. Case study regions were selected for further data collection. The selection of the case study woredas was based on several factors including: programme history, livelihood zones, budget received through the programme, the coverage of result areas of the programme, and accessibility. Considering the 5 selection criteria, the evaluation team and the client agreed on three case study woredas: Debark, Dabate, and East Belessa.

Two field visits were conducted in the case study areas to physically assess the effects of the programme interventions including, but not limited to, watershed units created, infrastructure developed, and villages where financial and other services were being provided. During the field visits a series of (semi-) structured interviews with beneficiary communities and individuals including women was conducted. In total 115 beneficiaries (40 of which were women) and 9 non-beneficiaries were consulted. In addition, on focus group discussion per case study woreda was conducted. In total 17 participants took part, 30% of which were female, including woreda steering committee members, local administration, and others.

The intervention scope of the programme includes 10 important result areas: 1) integrated watershed management; 2) park and tourism development; 3) rural land administration; 4) livestock development; 5) crop development; 6) marketing, entrepreneurship and alternative livelihoods; 7) capacity building; 8) knowledge, management and communication; 8) gender and development and planning; 10) monitoring, and evaluation. Within these areas, many new activities, capacity development initiatives, infrastructure developments, and resources were made available as a result of the programme. For example, bee keeping, grafted apple production and sale, potato and vegetable farming around homesteads, egg laying chicken programmes, weavery and bakery activities, all found to be the most important for women, vulnerable groups and youth, were supported. Interventions for vet clinics and in poultry production also played a significant role in the programme. Watershed development focusing on providing potable water for residents and livestock, and irrigation, was the cornerstone of the first pillar. The provision of short-term trainings for experts and some model farmers on soil and water conservation, livestock husbandry, bee keeping, irrigation and high value crops aimed at emphasising knowledge transfer, and were paired with general capacity building initiatives such as trainings, visits and field days. In terms of infrastructure, the programme supported the construction of vet clinics, Farmer Training Centers, fruit and vegetable marketing infrastructures and shops, land administration offices, potable water and irrigation facilities, modern and traditional cloth making facilities, bakeries, modern beehives, feed processing plants, scout houses, marketing shops for fruits and other commodities, and tree nurseries. The programme interventions targeted women, vulnerable groups and youth from poorest of the poor, poor and better off farm social categories. Each of the farm types participated in one or more of the programme interventions based on interest and priorities of the community.

In regard to the DAC criteria the evaluations **conclusions** can be summarised as stated below:

Relevance: The programme’s goal, purpose, objectives and interventions are in line with many of the national, regional and woreda level development priority issues: improved livelihood, creating employment opportunities, NRM, climate change and income diversification have regional and federal government priority focuses. A lot of effort has been made to reach the poor, women and other social groups within and outside watersheds and benefit them accordingly. Furthermore, the selection of beneficiaries was transparent and participatory.

Although the programme did well to address priority community issues, the magnitude of farmers and area coverage is a limiting factor within the programme operational action sites. There is also a need to mentor and support the communities organized into different groups such as youth to make them stand on their feet and rely on their resources.

Effectiveness: Generally stated, the programme proved to be effective. It initiated different capacity development schemes to farmers, zonal and woreda level practitioners, and executed them accordingly. It established a revolving fund favouring women that was very well received (but struggles with the return rate). The programme interventions in one way or another contributed to confront the recent drought and benefit communities within and outside the programme target areas. The programme invested and made tremendous effort to minimize human and livestock pressure on Simien Mountain National Park, create conducive environment for the valuable wildlife species, foster regeneration of indigenous plant and tree species and minimize communities’ park area encroachment activities. Furthermore, the watershed development approach of the programme has been found effective in terms of coordination and enhancing synergies as it integrates various focus areas such as livestock, crops, NRM, market, institutions and infrastructure interventions. It also helped to address several problems through multiple activities and foster communities to work together in a collective action approaches.

Monitoring and evaluation has been conducted by communities, watershed committee members, experts, focal person, woreda, zonal and regional steering committee members at various times. Proper and scientific M&E system on the impacts of the various programme interventions such as income and nutrition of households, hydrology, soils, biodiversity and environment is lacking. More trainings could be thought of for various groups on how to design functional M&E systems, implement and integrate outcomes to the different programme components.

Despite the general assessment of being an effective programme, mutual dissatisfaction is evident regarding the implementation of roles of the different stakeholders: Complaints concerning the RSC regard their limited engagement; the PCU has been criticised not to follow up RSC decisions (e.g. hiring of experts); and ADA was expected to offer more support in the programme’s implementation (e.g. field visits).

Efficiency: The programme resources are fairly and efficiently utilized to change the lives of different target groups and manage natural resources. In many cases the programme implemented more activities than anticipated (e.g. water points) and in the majority of cases fulfilled its targets. In general, beneficiaries are using the facilities supported by the programme efficiently although there still issues that require support and follow-ups.

The programme running costs were a minimum as compared to other projects, especially due to the low overhead costs. These are due to the programme set up, in which the programme activities have been considered part of the regular extension activities. Overall the programme can be assessed as efficient, considering the inputs provided and outputs achieved.

Output and Impact: Analysis points to an overall positive impact of the programme. The evaluation suggests that the programme has fulfilled its overall programme objective (improve food security and nutrition at household level) and the project’s purpose (improve household level income). The programme also had an overall positive impact on the environment: A large area of protected and well managed woodland is one of the results. The biodiversity of both national parks has improved and the pressure on the park has decreased.

What can be observed however is, that cross effects of single measures within the LISRMP have not been taken into account. Despite the fact that this has already been criticised in the previous programming period such counter effects of single measures on the environment still remain (especially outside the explicit nature protection zones in the Simiens and Alitash).

Sustainability: The analysis shows that the programme had positive effects on the resilience of household and on the ecosystem and even had an impact on the mind-set of the local community level, especially in regard to integrated watershed practice but also in appreciating collaboration and the valuing the national parks. This being said, it is important to note, that the extent of the (net) effects of the programme in that regard cannot be answered in the scope of this evaluation.

Another puzzle stone to sustainability is ownership of the local community. The participatory approach of the LISRMP was taken seriously and included the capability of the local population to play a part in setting the frame: what is the challenge, what is needed and who needs it most. The local, zonal and regional institutions also show high commitment of sustaining and up-scaling the programme activities, especially those that are part of the national rural development agenda. However, due to limited resources the continuing support for resource intensive activities, like support for user groups or revolving funds, are questionable.

The sustainability of positive changes induced by the LISRMP can be safeguarded through keeping the set-up and shared decision making structure of the programme in the sense of a mix of bottom-up and top-down approaches, taking stock of “success stories” – showcasing and making successful initiatives, projects people known. Improvements may be achieved in the fields of concentration of resources in order to match the budget/size of the programme with the possibilities and potential beneficiaries, continuous support by experts and feedback on beneficiaries’ activities and visualisation of progress through result assessment.

Cross-cutting issues: The programme has a clear emphasis on women and other vulnerable groups, although this emphasis is not reflected properly in the programme documents. Nevertheless, the programme undertook serious attempts to empower women and other vulnerable groups and address the barriers for their participation. It did so with varying commitment and outcomes. In general women and other vulnerable groups were able to take part in planning and decision-making processes although there is definitely still air for improvement when it comes to the extent of their representation in the decisive body at local

level. An elaborated gender strategy and analysis as recommended by ADA might be good starting point for further activities.

The **lessons learned and recommendations** are presented along the three crucial pillars of the programme: Natural resource Management; Livelihood improvement; Programme management and capacity building.

Natural resource management

Integrated watershed management was a breakthrough in the provision of water for human consumption and livestock, as well as for agricultural production through the introduction of new irrigation canals. However, proper design and maintenance of the physical components and the implementation of important biological interventions is lacking. In some parts of the watershed areas, the bunds and trenches constructed are not maintained, while gully rehabilitation could be strengthened with biological interventions (grasses and trees and shrubs) to stop land sliding that are currently missing. In addition, more could be done on micro basin, bench terraces, gabions, ponds, and water percolation tanks. Free grazing has been seen as a major challenge for the implementation of the biological interventions in most of the watershed sites. Some of the watershed communities respect the bylaws, whereas others freely graze in restricted watershed areas. A follow-up discussion with communities should be held to identify solutions and implement enforceable bylaws. Gullies managed by communities or by farmers who have nearby land can be one good model to circumvent these issues. In addition, the formation of water-use committees that collect minimal financial contributions per user – as demonstrated in some programme villages – is a good practice example to contribute to sustainable water supply. This approach should be scaled up to more areas.

Park and tourism development was positively impacted through the establishment of the Simien Mountain National Park and its accreditation by UNESCO. This has to be considered as the biggest achievement of the LISRM programme in the field of nature protection. On the basis of this success it may be considered that further support for this specific field of intervention will no longer be necessary, and resources can be channelled to other aspects of the programme.

The improvement of land management and more specifically the introduction of property rights on land, a main objective of the LISRM programme, has been partially successful. The programme succeeded in widely establishing primary books of holdings, which document property right for individuals. On the other hand, the setting up of secondary books of holdings did not meet programme expectations. Secondary books of holdings determine land-use, and thus a lack of these books is problematic for sustainable land management, conflict resolution, and regional planning. A strong recommendation is to continue the land management process and to establish secondary books of holdings within the programming areas.

Livelihood improvement

With respect to new production methods, the main lesson learned is that continued place based advisory services are required in order to maintain production and ensure quality. In particular, technically demanding production methods, or those introducing a new set of skills or instruments, need to be accompanied by external experts and trainers for supervising the full produc-

tion cycle. Acquiring sufficient knowhow on the local level and being capable of finding solutions is a step-wise capacity development process requiring continued intervention over a longer time-frame.

Programme interventions in livestock feed focused mainly on production. In this regard, feed troughs and feed sheds could be introduced and demonstrated to farmers to minimize wastage and improve utilization of feed resources. Post-harvest feed handling, formulation, and utilisation should be better demonstrated. To achieve this, the programme could produce a manual or guide that targets farmers who are engaged in livestock farming.

The programme attempted to introduce back yard development activities to narrow feed demand and supply production gaps. However, proper monitoring and capacity development mechanisms should also be integrated in the backyard development plans in order to increase the impact on the livelihood of smallholder farmers. Grazing lands in the watershed are abundant but are managed in a conventional way. The productivity of the grazing lands could be improved if there was an attempt to under sow grasses and legumes, portion and use grazing lands on rotational bases and produce hay on some portions. In order to optimize the feed production, handling and utilization, future programmes should introduce (further) trainings and technologies in regard to feed troughs, feed shed, feed formulation as well as on grazing land management. Exploring niches in backyards to grow forages and supplement livestock feedings systems can help improve feed availability, increase production, and reduce the strain on grazing land.

Importantly, although many of the programme woredas in North Gonder are known for small ruminants and cattle population, the attention to support and furnish vet clinics was deemed inadequate although six instead of the planned four were constructed. Livestock breed and stocking interventions should go hand in hand with animal health and feed interventions.

In terms of crop development, the programme did a good job introducing and demonstrating improved crop varieties in different woredas. However diversification in terms of tree species is limited in the watershed areas and should be initiated through indigenous and exotic compatible niche species. Newly introduced breeds, crop varieties and eucalyptus exhibited great potential in improving agricultural productivity and increasing the income at household level. Local breeds and indigenous plants can be less productive but they are often better adapted to local conditions and resilient to environmental challenges such as drought, diseases and pests. Future programme interventions should therefore take care to conserve local breeds and crops to avoid genetic erosion and promote the diversification of hillside plantation.

Apple grafted seedling production, an intervention targeted at youth, is a good start in crop development, but information on who planted seedlings or who benefitted from the intervention missing. In all, the seedling programme management and other challenges are not properly documented and attention must be paid to these aspects. Training the trainers is required in this area in order to effectively roll out the new product “apple” and to process it properly.

In supporting marketing, entrepreneurship and alternative livelihoods, the programme has implemented a number of useful interventions and brought about significant changes. Therefore, the lessons from the programme could be properly documented and shared to the end users through various avenues. Taking stock of “success stories” might encourage, in particular, the

active and entrepreneurial participants to propel the programme benefits even further. The set up of Innovation Platforms (IP) are recommended as a stakeholder forum established to facilitate interaction and learning among stakeholders focused on commodity chain or on a systems approach undertaking a participatory diagnosis of problems, joint exploration of opportunities, and investigation of solutions leading to the promotion of innovation along a targeted value chain. It must be noted, that most activities that are planned by the programme and run by the women and youth groups are still at their infant stage and lack sufficient financial reserves to continue the activities by themselves. As result, sustainability issues without the programme support are still under question.

Programme management and capacity building

Trainings and visits to enhance the capacities of experts and farmers were conducted throughout the programme. Farmers Training Centers (FTCs) were one of the programme initiatives, and are a good place to train farmers and demonstrate various crop, livestock and natural resource management technologies. However, more experience sharing visits for model farmers, experts and focal persons on some of the technologies and approaches would help make this component of the programme more effective and increase innovation and technology transfer. FTCs, for example, lack technologies on the ground to act as demonstration tools for hands-on learning.

In a potential future programme cycle the programme management would benefit from a detailed ex-ante definition of roles and tasks of the different stakeholders PCU, RSC and the donor.

The programme in general lacks baseline information for the before and after implementation of its interventions. As a result, it is difficult to assess impacts. Ways to improve this is through diversifying the indicators used, setting better targets, and introducing simple technologies that help monitor changes (hydrological equipment at watersheds). Since a lot of resources were allocated throughout this programming cycle on the construction of infrastructure, in following cycles, resources might be rather re-allocated to emphasizing soft measures, including experience sharing tours, capacity development, VET and FTC services, as well as in gathering viable monitoring data. The better knowledge on the baseline situation in combination with clear-cut strategic objectives might also lead to more appropriate target values in the logical framework matrix. Furthermore this data could support the establishment of cause-effect chains reflected in the design of the programme , which go beyond the log frame and take into account unintended effects of the programme activities which in turn could minimise goal conflicts and hence increase the programme’s positive impact.