



## FPI MONITORING REPORT – ETHIOPIA VISIT I – AUGUST 2023

NDICI CRISIS FPI/2021/427-921 – SELAM 1 EARLY RECOVERY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY IN TIGRAY, IMPLEMENTED BY CARE AND REST

Altai Consulting for EU Foreign Policy Instruments | Ethiopia | August 2023



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2023, Altai Consulting, the Third-Party Monitor (TPM) for the EU FPI, was tasked by the Nairobi Regional Team (RT) to research and communicate the progress and impact on the ground of the project NDICI CRISIS FPI/2021/427-921 – “SELAM 1 Early Recovery and Socio-Economic Stability in Tigray”, implemented by CARE and REST.

The Red-Amber-Green (RAG) table below summarizes the status of the project based on a modified version of the OECD DAC.

<b>'SELAM 1' Early Recovery And Socio-Economic Stability In Tigray (CARE/REST)</b>		
<b>Relevance</b>	The SELAM 1 project is highly relevant because it addresses high levels of food insecurity in Tigray. The focus of the project on Eastern Tigray, an area recommended by the local authorities, is relevant too, due to the significant impact of the recent conflict there. The project is also highly relevant from an early recovery perspective, considering that the vast majority of the population in Eastern Tigray rely on subsistence agriculture to live. REST is a highly capable and relevant partner in the agricultural recovery space.	
<b>Coherence</b>	The geography of the FPI's Tigray package does not lend itself to coherence between grantees. Yet, there are needs that could be met by more overlap between projects. Outside of FPI projects, CARE and REST are otherwise well coordinated with local coordination and delivery initiatives.	
<b>Efficiency</b>	SELAM 1 has reached an impressive number of beneficiaries, and delivered them tangible benefits, in a very efficient way. For a budget of €5 million, CARE Ethiopia has delivered very tangible food security benefits to around 11,200 households (roughly 60,000 individuals), and has protected the health of the livestock of around 36,000 households (roughly 180,000 beneficiaries).	
<b>Effectiveness</b>	The SELAM 1 project has made a valuable contribution to food security in Eastern Tigray. Emergency cash distribution seems to have been well targeted, and the money has been well spent to increase household level productive assets and resilience. SELAM 1 has done a good job in terms of repairing water infrastructure, and in some cases, is managing to use FPI funds to further develop water infrastructure. In the main, Outputs 1, 2 and 3 have been achieved if not exceed in some areas. The WLIE activities are yet to start, so there is no benefit yet from Output 4. The activities look less unique than originally envisaged.	
<b>Impact</b>	SELAM 1 has a localised impact. The project has improved food security in eight <i>woredas</i> in Eastern Tigray, and has helped re-start the most critical economic sector in the area. SELAM 1 has filled a one- to four-month food gap for around 8% of the most vulnerable households of Eastern Tigray. Through support to livestock and irrigation systems, farmers have managed to re-start their farms probably two to three years more quickly than they could otherwise have done.	
<b>Sustainability</b>	Some of the benefits of SELAM 1 have a good chance of being sustainable, because of the emphasis on local committees to oversee aspects of the project. However, despite making a strong contribution to re-starting the local agricultural sector, the farmers are still highly dependent on markets, which aren't working at present.	
<b>Cross-cutting issues</b>	SELAM 1 has implicitly done a good job of considering human rights in its implementation, by supporting the right to life. Gender equality has also been well handled.	

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In June 2023, Altai Consulting, the Third-Party Monitor (TPM) for the EU FPI, was tasked by the Nairobi Regional Team (RT) to research and communicate the progress and impact on the ground of the project NDICI CRISIS FPI/2021/427-921 – “SELAM 1 Early Recovery and Socio-Economic Stability in Tigray”, implemented by CARE and REST.

The project is implemented in Tigray as part of a cluster of projects alongside CST and MdM projects also monitored by Altai during this visit. These interventions focus on responding to Tigray’s post-war challenges, mostly related to livelihoods support, access to health services, and trauma healing.

The monitoring team looked to capture progress towards the project’s intended objectives at the mid-stage of its implementation. During an earlier monitoring conducted in December 2022, the Altai team found that progress had stalled due to security challenges on the ground but that the projects were gaining momentum due to the peace agreement signed in November 2022.

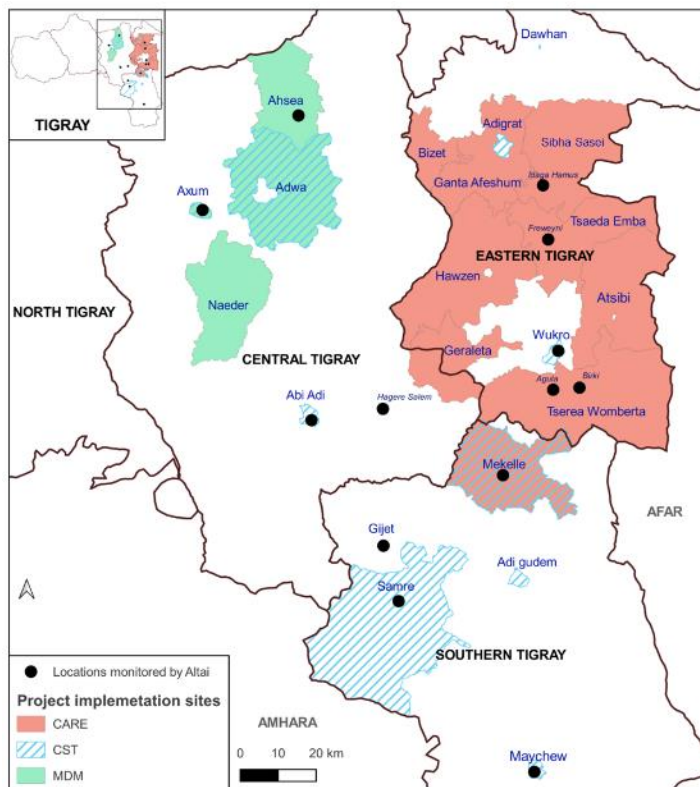


Figure 1. Project locations of the three projects monitored by Altai in Tigray

## 1.1. METHODOLOGY

This monitoring report is based partly on a review of project documentation that was made available to the assessment team, including the Description of Action (DoA) and monthly and quarterly reports provided by the implementing partners (IPs).

Secondary research was complemented by primary data collection conducted by Altai in Ethiopia’s capital, and in the Tigray region with IPs, government authorities, international organisations, and beneficiaries. Between 5 and 9 June 2023 Altai’s SMEs and Project Manager travelled to Ethiopia, where they visited Addis Ababa, Mekelle, Wukro, Abi Adi, and Hagare Selam (eastern Tigray). The Altai monitoring team trained the local field teams in Mekelle who, from 12 to 15 June 2023, travelled to Axum, Adwa, and Ahsea (Central Tigray), Adigrat, Ganta Afeshum, Tsaeda Emba (eastern Tigray), and Gijet, Samre and Maychew (southern Tigray) to conduct further KIIs and finalise the data collection. See Figure 1 above for locations of the projects in Tigray, and the Altai monitoring locations.

## 1.2. LIMITATIONS

The TPM team encountered several limitations that need to be considered when reviewing these findings.

- 1. Purposive selection of project locations:** This TPM looked at five projects that are implemented in several locations across Ethiopia. The short timeline meant that the project team had to purposely select which locations to visit and could not cover all implementation sites. Although Altai mitigated

this challenge by engaging its local field teams to increase the coverage, this means that the findings are not based on a comprehensive review of all project sites.

2. **Respondents' turnover:** At times Altai was unable to interview target respondents because they had already left to work for different organisations. In Tigray, most government workers have not been paid their salaries since the start of the war, which makes them susceptible to changing employer at short notice if a better offer arrives. At the Hagare Selam hospital for example, Altai was unable to interview the health worker who had received training from CST because he had left recently to work in Abi Adi for an NGO. Altai always attempted to find the next relevant respondent, but this turnover will have impacted the depth of the perspectives gathered.
3. **Assessing Impact:** Altai monitored the impact of two out of the five projects (CARE/REST and CST) because the other three projects (Mdm, BBC MA and LPI) only started a few months prior to the monitoring. Although the CARE/REST and CST projects officially started one year ago, an escalation of violence halted the project for six months in 2022. A ceasefire was signed in November 2022, however the challenges to implementation (logistics, payment, procurement) are still significant. The factors listed above have affected the ability of the projects to show impact yet, and the reader should keep this in mind when reviewing the findings.

## 2. EARLY RECOVERY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY OF CONFLICT AFFECTED POPULATIONS IN TIGRAY (SELAM 1)

### 2.1. BACKGROUND

#### 2.1.1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SELAM 1 early recovery project seeks to address urgent food security concerns in Tigray, not through delivery of food aid but through an early recovery approach, focusing on restocking depleted farms, building nurseries, and rehabilitating damaged watersheds, so that communities have more productive harvests in the short and medium terms. The project is implemented jointly by CARE Austria and CARE Ethiopia, which have partnered with REST, a local (but very large and long-established) NGO. CARE is responsible for overall project design and implementation, and in particular financing, centralised procurement, and logistics support, while REST is responsible for implementing activities in the communities of Eastern Tigray.<sup>1</sup>

SELAM 1 is focused on eight *woredas* judged by CARE and REST and the Bureau of Agriculture to be the most conflict affected within Eastern Tigray. See Figure 1 above. The selection of specific *tabias* (districts; like *kebeles* in other parts of Ethiopia, lower level of government structure in rural areas), communities and beneficiaries to work with in the eight *woredas* has been done through a collaborative process handled largely by REST, the Bureau of Agriculture, and local Farmers' Associations.

#### 2.1.2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The SELAM 1 early recovery project seeks to *strengthen the capacities of and support conflict affected communities, households and individuals in Tigray, in particular women and girls, to recover their livelihoods and build back better* (intended outcome, adapted from the DoA).

The project is built around four outputs. The first three are related, whereas the fourth is experimental:

SELAM 1 Output Areas (simplified)	
1	Distributing seedlings, tools and providing training to farmer households
	Promoting off-farm livelihoods for those without access to land
	Vaccinating animals
2	Rehabilitating basic water infrastructure such as water pumps
	Rehabilitating community irrigation schemes with local authorities
	Rehabilitating water provision systems in schools
3	Rehabilitating watersheds
	Establishing nurseries for tree seedlings and fodder production
4	Piloting a Women Lead in Emergencies (WLiE) project

#### 2.1.3. PROJECT PROGRESS

The project has experienced a disruptive operating environment since the DoA was agreed in October 2021. The project started in earnest in April 2022, following a cessation of hostilities in March 2022. The project enjoyed a window of relative calm until September 2022, when hostilities escalated

<sup>1</sup> REST is one of the largest NGOs in Tigray, with its roots in the food security crises of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and was regarded in its early years as the humanitarian wing of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). It operates very closely with government agencies in Tigray, such as the Bureau of Agriculture, and has a very wide reach across Tigray, with field offices in most *woredas*. REST is often described as a 'government NGO' given its very close relationship with the authorities in Tigray

severely. The ceasefire agreement, signed in Pretoria in November 2022, has held but it took several months for conditions on the ground to ease sufficiently for REST to be able to resume activities around February 2023. Happily, the first window of relative calm, and the resumption of activities post-ceasefire, both coincided with land preparations for the *meher* (rainy season), which in Tigray typically starts in late June and lasts until end of August. *Meher* underpins around 80% of Tigray’s agricultural output, and so is critical for the food security of the region. REST managed to distribute seeds just in time for farmers to get them sown, and so SELAM 1 has supported two successive harvests. See **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

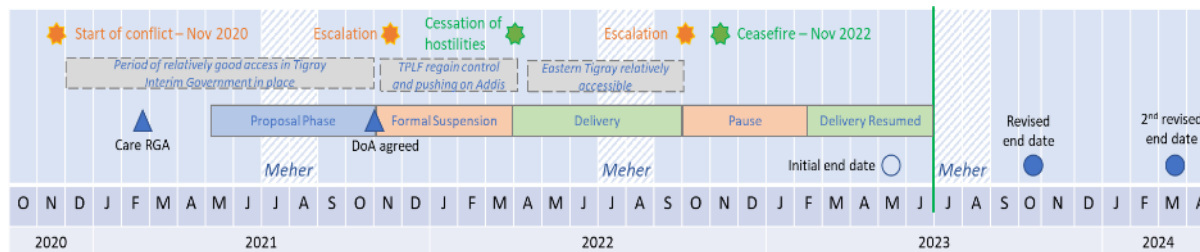


Figure 2: SELAM 1 project timeline (as of end June 2023)

Across these two delivery windows, the project has made strong progress towards all outputs, except output 4. As of mid-June 2023, the project has essentially met its targets for outputs 1-3, except for a few activities that need finalising (these should be finished by end July 2023), and in terms of seed distribution the project has exceeded its initial targets by a fair margin. This was achieved by re-allocating the budget that had been intended for poultry distribution to wheat seed distribution, when it became clear the market could not support the purchase of pullets in the scale envisaged. The project is anticipated to continue with a no-cost extension until March 2024, which is mainly to allow the WLIE component to take shape.

SELAM 1 has implemented a very wide range of activities, from seed distribution to rehabilitating irrigation schemes, and from vaccinating animals to distributing cash. At first glance these activities do not seem coherent. Yet, when viewed through a watershed lens, they make much more sense. Watersheds are a sensible unit of analysis, as farmers within a particular watershed are bound together by the fortunes of the river, its associated irrigation infrastructure, and the villages that lie within the watershed. The SELAM 1 project has taken each watershed and assessed holistically which irrigation infrastructure might need rehabilitating (an irrigation canal, a check dam, a gully, a head structure, etc.) to benefit the most farmers. SELAM 1 has then tried to identify, with the support of the community, which are the most vulnerable farmers and individuals within that watershed and offer them a range of support e.g., wheat seeds, fodder seeds, seedlings, filtration kits, cash, vaccinations, etc. SELAM 1 has then tried to work within the typically two or three villages that lie within those watersheds by strengthening Village Lending and Savings Associations (VSLAs), water user associations, etc.

SELAM 1, with its limited resources, has only been able to benefit a small proportion of farming households and as a result they have focused on trying to support the neediest households get their agricultural production re-started. Within the eight *woredas*, only eight watersheds have been chosen (there are many others). Within those watersheds, only the neediest 11,200 farmers have been supported with seeds: these numbers sound large (especially in comparison to other FPI-funded project in Tigray), yet REST estimated that perhaps just 8% of the households in Eastern Tigray have benefited from the project. For these 8%, the wheat and vegetable seeds distributed could only plant a fraction of a typical smallholding (perhaps 0.2-0.3ha could be seeded, representing perhaps a third or a half of a typical smallholding in Tigray). These numbers do not diminish the CARE/REST achievement, but

highlight the scale of the challenge to get Tigray’s agricultural economy moving again. SELAM 1’s progress, as of mid- June 2023, include:<sup>2</sup>

SELAM 1 Progress according to Output Areas		
1	Distributing seedlings, tools and providing training to farmer households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributed 280,000kg of improved wheat seeds to 11,200 farming households. Each farming household received 25kg sack of seeds</li> <li>• Distributed 470kg of vegetable seeds (tomato and onion) to 2,000 farming households</li> </ul>
	Promoting off-farm livelihoods for those without access to land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributed 5,000 sickles to mainly female-headed farming households, to help with the wheat harvest</li> <li>• Supported the establishment of 100 VSLAs</li> <li>• Distributed 8,300 ETB (around \$150) of unconditional and unrestricted cash to 2,000 of the most vulnerable women. This activity was concluding when the monitoring team visited</li> </ul>
	Vaccinating animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treated around 146,000 animals (small ruminants and cattle) in 36,000 households with a range of preventative treatments mainly for anthrax</li> </ul>
2	Rehabilitating basic water infrastructure such as water pumps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructing/rehabilitating 20 solar-powered shallow wells and storage tanks at the village level</li> </ul>
	Rehabilitating community irrigation schemes with local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabilitating 14 irrigation systems. Finalising at time of monitoring visit</li> <li>• Provided 1,000 water filtration kits for households</li> </ul>
	Rehabilitating water provision systems in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing at time of monitoring visit</li> </ul>
3	Rehabilitating watersheds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabilitating 24 watershed features</li> <li>• Trained government officers in watershed design and development work</li> </ul>
	Establishing nurseries for tree seedlings and fodder production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planted 16 nurseries with around 500,000 seedlings planted, with reported 80% survival rate</li> <li>• Distributed 11,380kg of fodder seed</li> </ul>
4	Piloting a Women Lead in Emergencies (WLiE) project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only just started at the time of monitoring</li> </ul>

There are a handful of activities still remaining to launch, including:

- Output 1: Providing 480 beehives, which can only be achieved during rainy season, and establishing the eight energy saving stove supply groups, to benefit 75 men and 75 women;
- Output 2: Concluding construction of the wells and tanks;
- Output 3: Concluding construction of micro-watershed infrastructure and seedling plantation;
- Output 4: Delivering all WLiE activities, including providing 16 women’s associations (two per *woreda*) with 120,000 ETB (around \$2,200) per association. It is not clear why the WLiE activities are so delayed relative to the other activities on the project.

Figure 3 below shows a range of SELAM 1 outputs:

<sup>2</sup> Data from a spreadsheet shared by CARE Ethiopia, with data until June 2023. Note only main achievements are listed





Figure 3: SELAM 1 outputs. Clockwise from upper left: Terracing in Beleso Watershed, water conservation structures in Dimolo watershed, head structure rehabilitation and associated irrigation canal rehabilitation in Tsirea Womberta. June 2023

## 2.2. KEY FINDINGS

### 2.2.1. RELEVANCE

**Key Finding 1:** The project is relevant because it addresses high levels of food insecurity in Tigray. The focus of the project on Eastern Tigray is significant, due to high conflict impact there

Current and reliable food security data is hard to get hold of in Tigray. An August 2022 WFP assessment estimated that 89% of the Tigray population (around 5 million people) were food insecure, and that 47% (around 2.5 million people) were severely food insecure.<sup>3</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the situation has improved since; in fact the situation may be rather worse given the poor 2022 harvest in Tigray, continued challenges getting the agricultural sector re-started, and current food aid disruption due to claims of aid diversion. The monitoring visit showed that in the villages there are obvious high levels of food insecurity, particularly in the northern most *woredas* of Eastern Tigray, and crisis coping strategies, such as relying on just one meal a day or cutting out meat completely, are commonplace. SELAM 1's intent to help farmers to re-start wheat production, so they can feed themselves and reduce their food gap and dependency on external food aid, is highly relevant. Eastern Tigray is a relevant geographical choice, too. It was both occupied by Eritrean troops for an extended period and was on the front line at some points in the conflict, which means local infrastructure was directly impacted by exchange of fire. REST and the Agriculture Bureau recommended the eight *woredas* in Eastern Tigray

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<sup>3</sup> Food security data is also quite politicised in Ethiopia. Data source: WFP Emergency Food Security Assessment, August 2022

for this reason, as they assessed that they were some of the most conflict-affected areas in accessible parts of Tigray.<sup>4</sup> FAO representatives confirmed this too.

**Key Finding 2: The project is also relevant from an early recovery perspective, considering that the vast majority of the population in Eastern Tigray rely on subsistence agriculture to live**

The large majority of the population in this part of Tigray is highly dependent on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. Most households cultivate around 0.5ha of land, and grow one crop of wheat or teff per year for food, and if there is spare land, some salad crops for food and cash. Only a small proportion of the land is irrigated and terraced (estimated by REST at just 20%), but it is this irrigated land that is by far the most productive, hence SELAM 1's focus. Some households also rear animals for meat, milk and traction, but these animals are also dependent on cultivated forage crops. The conflict in Eastern Tigray damaged the agricultural system in a number of ways: irrigation systems were damaged, oxen were eaten, seed cooperatives and agricultural extension offices and farmers training centres were looted, and markets that gave farmers access to agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, tools, etc.) stopped working, while individuals' savings were wholly depleted. The system probably has the ability to recover on its own accord, but that might take two to three years until pre-conflict yields are reached. Thus, FPI's intervention is highly relevant as it is not only trying to get food grown again quickly to improve food security, but is also contributing to restart the local agricultural systems through a broad range of interventions, such as repairing and extending irrigation systems, training local officials, etc.



“WE LOST OUR OXEN. WE COULDN'T ACCESS OUR LAND FOR 6 MONTHS. WE WATERED THE LAND WHEN WE COULD, BUT A FARMER WAS KILLED RIGHT HERE, SO IT WAS VERY RISKY”

- FARMER, EASTERN TIGRAY

**Key Finding 3: REST is a highly capable partner in the agricultural recovery space. However, working with REST, a parastatal organisation, requires strong monitoring mechanisms**

REST, with the financial and logistical support of CARE Ethiopia, achieved something quite remarkable in the last year: they managed to distribute seeds to around 11,000 farming households in some remote and highly conflict-affected areas. This lifeline kept people alive. The dedication of the REST team is impressive and should be commended. The REST team are also highly specialised in agricultural early recovery and development: they know the landscapes intimately, the farming needs and processes, etc. They also have deep relationships with *wordea* and *tabia* officials, and extension workers in the local agricultural offices, and can get things done quickly. However, there may be some down-sides to acknowledge working with REST. REST are a large parastatal organisation that handles multiple and large funding streams, and they seem to have a rather blurred mandate: in FGDs, farmers muddled REST and the Agriculture Bureau. Monitoring the quality of REST financial reporting, and ensuring that FPI funds are properly accounted for, was not within the scope of this monitoring mission, but it is certainly something CARE Ethiopia and REST should consider doing in the future, in the context of widespread rumours about aid diversion in Tigray relating to WFP. We are aware that REST has been replaced by WFP on the World Bank's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Eastern Tigray at least, and it may be worth FPI understanding reasons why.

### 2.2.2. COHERENCE

**Key Finding 4: There are no meaningful linkages between SELAM 1 and the two other FPI-funded projects in Tigray. Yet, there are needs that could be met by more overlap between projects**

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<sup>4</sup> Western Tigray is also felt to be in need of assistance—probably rather greater need than Eastern Tigray—but is wholly inaccessible at present, so was excluded from the REST selection process

A slightly greater geographical overlap and clearer linkages between the FPI-funded projects could have brought (and could still bring) benefits for beneficiaries. Of the two other projects, the CST survivor-centred Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) project, which also implements partly in Eastern Tigray, has the most potential for linkages. No referrals have been made between these two projects, which was the original aspiration of the EU team that developed the response package. This is partly due to the implementing partners, which tend to be quite inward looking within their own clusters, and which have not proactively reached out to each other, and partly because the FPI team has not brought them together. CST's SGBV survivors in the Wukro Women and Girls Safe Space (WGSS) are likely from farming households that will be in huge need of seeds, irrigation system rehabilitation, livelihoods, etc., while many of the women interviewed in the villages supported by SELAM 1 will likely have suffered from SGBV, due to the occupation of the *woredas* by Eritrean troops.

### 2.2.3. EFFICIENCY

#### **Key Finding 5: SELAM 1 has reached an impressive number of beneficiaries for the budget assignment, and delivered them tangible benefits, in an efficient way**

For a budget of €5 million, CARE Ethiopia has delivered tangible food security benefits to around 11,200 households (roughly 60,000 individuals), and has protected the health of the livestock of around 36,000 households (roughly 180,000 beneficiaries).<sup>5</sup> Other non-farming households have received cash and water filtration kits, but these beneficiary groups are much smaller in comparison to the main seed and vaccination beneficiary groups. By any measure, reaching this many households with a tangible benefit demonstrates a high degree of efficiency. CARE and REST showed strong efficiency-seeking behaviour, e.g., when they realised that the poultry activities were not going to work, the budget was quickly converted back into supplying more seeds for more farming households. The partnership between CARE and REST, which covered markets in Mekelle and Addis Ababa, was used to good effect as inputs were bought by CARE on the Addis Ababa market at lower costs than in Mekelle, and shipped to Mekelle, thus using project funds efficiently. As CARE and REST are large organisations with lots of funding streams, for a modest overheads contribution in the project budget, FPI has succeeded in leveraging corporate capabilities such as project management teams, M&E teams, technical specialists, fleets of vehicles, etc. Smaller organisations may have struggled to offer these capabilities as cheaply as CARE and REST, due to this 'burden sharing' across projects/donors.



“THE VACCINATIONS MAINTAIN THE HEALTH OF OUR ANIMALS AND PROTECT US FROM FURTHER EXPENSE AND LOSS. WITHOUT THE VACCINATIONS, WE WOULD HAVE LOST ALL THE ANIMALS, WHICH WOULD HAVE ADDED ADDITIONAL BURDEN TO OUR HELLISH CONDITION”

- FARMER, TIGRAY

### 2.2.4. EFFECTIVENESS

#### **Key Finding 6: The SELAM 1 project has made a valuable contribution to food security and recovering livelihoods in eight *woredas* of Eastern Tigray**

SELAM 1 has supplied wheat seeds to an estimated 8% of the population of Eastern Tigray, or around 60,000 individuals. This segment of the population represented some of the neediest individuals in a highly conflict-affected area, who otherwise may well have been destitute. A typical farming household, on receiving 25kg of wheat seed from SELAM 1 in the 2022 *meher*, managed to harvest typically 150 to 200kg of wheat, and the same may be expected again in the 2023 *meher*. This might sustain a typical

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<sup>5</sup> There may be double counting here between the beneficiary groups; the CARE/REST data is not clear, and the counting mechanism used by REST is likely not sophisticated enough to identify the total number of unique direct beneficiaries. This does not impact the overall efficiency assessment

“LAST YEAR I PRODUCED 1.5 QUINTAL OF WHEAT, SO THE SEED DISTRIBUTION PLAYED A GREAT ROLE TO SOLVE MY FAMILY’S FOOD PROBLEMS.

- FARMER, EASTERN TIGRAY

family for a few months. For families who received animal vaccinations, the intervention was timely, as Tigray is suffering from a raging anthrax and rabies epidemic. Following vaccinations, animals are reportedly healthier, more productive on the farms, and are getting better prices. In terms of the VSLAs, the concept seems to have taken root, but the individual contributions are tiny (around \$0.40/month per member) and it will require the village economy to improve before the VSLA can deliver meaningful benefits to members. Looking at the wider picture, however, SELAM 1 can be considered to have met (if not exceeded in some areas) its Output 1 targets.

**Key Finding 7: Emergency cash distribution has been well targeted, and the money has been well spent to increase**

#### **household level productive assets and resilience**

SELAM 1’s emergency cash component reached around 2,000 mainly female heads of households with 8,300 ETB (around \$150) of unconditional and unrestricted cash. The monitoring showed that the households had been selected by the local committees, which were comprised equally of men and women, and this approach has done a good job of including the most vulnerable. The committees take their roles seriously, and are transparent and inclusive. The monitoring indicated that those who received the cash were mainly female heads of households, sometimes widowed because of the conflict, who were in very needy situations. In many cases, the women used the cash (sometimes topping it up with other funds from savings, friends, or family), to purchase one or two sheep, thus building productive assets. Overall, while more monitoring of the 2,000 households would be welcome (see recommendation), the signs are that the cash has been well targeted and, despite the small transfer value, has been used well by beneficiaries to increase productive assets, meaning Output 1 can be considered met.

**Key Finding 8: SELAM 1 has done a good job in terms of repairing water infrastructure, and in some cases, is managing to use FPI funds to further develop water infrastructure**

SELAM 1 has done a good job in terms of rehabilitating and constructing watershed infrastructure, such as head structures, check-dams, offtakes, irrigation canals, and micro-pools. The initiatives have been very well received by the local farmers, who are totally dependent on having water for irrigation. In some cases, SELAM 1 has not only rehabilitated what was damaged, but has managed to extend the irrigation systems to benefit more farmers. SELAM 1 has also achieved its targets in terms of developing nurseries and planting out seedlings to reforest what was cut down during the war, and also to prevent soil erosion at critical points. Around 500,000 olea, eucalyptus and acacia seedlings have been cultivated and planted out in communal and individual plots, with reportedly an 80% survival rate. Construction work was observed ongoing community water source infrastructure comprising solar pumps and storage tanks, and the monitoring team saw no reason why this should not be completed by end July 2023. Overall, while there is some way to go completing the extension of the irrigation canals, and finalising community and school water infrastructure, SELAM 1 seems on track to meet if not exceed Output 2 and 3 targets.

“THE FARMERS LAUGHED AT US INITIALLY, ASKING ‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING CONSTRUCTION FOR, WHEN WE NEED FOOD’. BUT NOW THEY SEE IT’S HELPING”

- REST OFFICER, TIGRAY

**Key Finding 9: The WLiE activities are yet to start, so there is no benefit yet from Output 4. The activities look less unique than originally envisaged**

Output 4 activities, which are the pilot WLiE activities involving training 16 existing women’s associations (two in each of the eight intervention *woredas*), and distributing 120,000 ETB (around

\$2,200) per association, for them to spend how they choose, has only just started. It is not clear why WLiE activities have started a year later than all the other activities; and it is also not clear what is so unique about the WLiE methodology, nor what the 'leading' element of it is: the approach described by CARE and REST resembles a traditional grant to a women's cooperative/association. Monitoring is recommended until March 2024 to see how this activity develops and what the benefits are likely to be, especially considering the quite significant sums of money that will be granted to the associations. As discussed above, given that SELAM 1 will be working with women's associations, some of whose members will almost certainly be survivors of SGBV, there may be benefits linking with protection/SGBV specialists who can offer more specialist support.

### 2.2.5. IMPACT

**Key Finding 10: SELAM 1 has helped to re-start the agriculture sector in Eastern Tigray, probably two to three years more quickly than it could have done without support**

The SELAM 1 project has helped to re-start a very damaged agricultural sector. Depending on the size of the household, SELAM 1 has filled a one- to four-month food gap for around 8% of the most vulnerable households of Eastern Tigray, through its wheat seed distribution. While this represents a small segment of the population, in just one zone in Tigray, it is still a noteworthy impact. Some stories heard directly by the monitoring team mean it is not unreasonable to imagine that the SELAM 1 project has stopped this population segment falling into destitution, and even prevented death through hunger. At the same time, through support to livestock and irrigation systems, farmers have managed to re-start their farms probably two to three years more quickly than they could have done alone. Still, however, Tigray faces a bleak next few years and FAO officials estimated that the coming harvest would generate only around 30-40% of the pre-conflict yields, due to the damaged agriculture system. SELAM 1 has made a welcome impact, but still the needs in this area are very large.

### 2.2.6. SUSTAINABILITY

**Key Finding 11: Some of the benefits of SELAM 1 have a good chance of being sustainable, because of the emphasis on local committees to oversee aspects of the project.**

One of the most notable features of the SELAM 1 project is how it built on existing community decision-making structures. The propensity for communities and villages to take decisions in an inclusive way seems to be a unique (and positive) feature in the Tigray landscape, possibly influenced by historical political movements, and possibly by the subsistence nature of the agriculture system, where farmers have to co-operate in order to survive. SELAM 1 had little challenge gaining ownership and support of the project from the local community. Farmers contributed to rehabilitating of irrigation canals without remuneration: even though it was intended to be a Cash for Work project, there was no cash because of the conflict, yet the farmers carried on anyhow. Interviews with villagers strongly suggested that they would be willing and able to maintain the water infrastructure. Also, by selecting REST as a partner, the project has improved its chances of sustainability: REST is not packing up and going home (something seen with many other local partners on FPI-funded interventions), and REST officers said that even after funding ends, they would be able to offer continued minor support in cases where irrigation canals were badly damaged e.g., by floods. Finally, the agricultural nature of the support is fundamentally sustainable: we have seen how 25kg of wheat seeds have yielded a 150kg harvest, and how the woman who bought two sheep, and had them vaccinated, now has a small flock: in the absence of natural disaster, and assuming continued peace, the project should be able to grow its benefits over time.

**Key Finding 12: Despite making a strong contribution to re-starting the local agricultural sector, the farmers are still highly dependent on markets, which are not working at present**

While SELAM 1 has made a strong contribution to re-starting the agricultural sector in the eight watersheds, farmers say they still have a profound dependency on inputs from markets that are not working at present. Seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, tools, poultry, livestock, vaccinations, and medicines

are very hard to get hold of due to the impact of the conflict on input production, liquidity, inflation, and transportation networks. There is not much sign of this situation easing soon. Most farmers do not have transport, so are highly dependent on local markets making inputs available nearby. The Agricultural Bureau has very little to offer as its extension offices have been looted or destroyed. Farmers interviewed lamented the lack of chemicals to deal with tomato rust, for example, which has reduced yields from the SELAM 1 tomato seeds, or the lack of fertilizers that are needed to make the poor-quality land produce reasonable yields. The lack of oxen and seed means that FAO estimated that, in early June, only 30-35% of the land that typically would be prepared in time for *meher* had been prepared. So, while the cooperative instinct works to improve sustainability, the broken market system is a very strong headwind. This might be something FPI, CARE and REST could look to tackle in any future phase of the project to sustain the early recovery.

“WE HAVE PLANTED SOME MAIZE. BUT THERE’S NOT ENOUGH SEEDS IN THE MARKET, AND WE DON’T HAVE ENOUGH CASH. I’D BE HAPPY TO BUY SEEDS ON CREDIT IF I COULD, BUT THEY ARE NOT AVAILABLE. THE SEEDS THAT ARE AVAILABLE ARE DISEASED”

- FARMER, EASTERN TIGRAY

### 2.2.7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

#### **Key Finding 13: SELAM 1’s rights-based approach has encouraged participation of women and vulnerable groups in its implementation**

By improving people’s food security, the project has implicitly taken a rights-based approach, supporting the right to life. By taking steps to involve women in many aspects of the project (excluding working in remote fields, which is not culturally acceptable), the project also emphasises women’s rights, too. The project has also been highly inclusive and participatory. The monitoring team observed an array of committees working at the village level: a water users’ committee, a cash beneficiary selection committee, and a seed distribution committee. These committees are able to identify the most vulnerable in the community better than outsiders such as REST, CARE or the Agricultural Bureau could ever have done. Clear criteria were set between CARE/REST and community selection committees, for who should receive seeds and cash support. Villagers were able to discuss these criteria in detail with the monitoring team, showing a real sense of understanding (and acceptance of) these criteria. Women’s vulnerabilities, in particular those impacted by the war e.g., by loss of the main breadwinner, were considered too. The WLiE activity, when it gets moving, should take further steps to supporting women’s rights, and assuming this delivers reasonably well, SELAM 1 is on track to make a strong contribution to the women and girls aspect of the intended outcome. Finally, in contrast to other projects, where returning IDPs is increasingly an issue (and sometimes a risk) to consider, this does not seem to be an issue for SELAM 1. There seem to be only low numbers of IDPs returning to Eastern Tigray, and because all land is owned by the government, and farmers are in effect tenants, there is a (remarkable) absence of land disputes.

### 2.2.8. VISIBILITY

#### **Key Finding 14: While there is no EU branding at the village level, the EU is visible where it matters.**

No evidence was seen of any SELAM 1 activity having EU visibility. Many aspects of the project, such as an irrigation canal, or a livestock vaccination campaign, are hard to brand. Other activities, such as installing village water storage tanks, might offer an easier opportunity for EU visibility: this could be something to monitor in future. However, the EU is visible where it matters. Key project documents in Mekelle, such as those shared during cluster meetings, show the EU logo clearly. The Agriculture Bureau, the FAO and other donors all know that the project is funded by the EU.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3.1. SUMMARY FINDINGS

**The SELAM 1 project is highly relevant because it addresses high levels of food insecurity in Tigray.** The focus of the project on Eastern Tigray, an area recommended by the local authorities, is relevant too, due to the significant impact of the recent conflict there. The project is also highly relevant from an early recovery perspective, considering that the vast majority of the population in Eastern Tigray rely on subsistence agriculture to live. REST is a highly capable and relevant partner in the agricultural recovery space, although suffers from a potential lack of accountability due to its parastatal nature.

**The geography of the FPI's Tigray package does not lend itself to coherence between grantees. Yet, there are needs that could be met by more overlap between projects.** Outside of FPI projects, CARE and REST are otherwise well coordinated with local coordination and delivery initiatives. The focus of the project on watersheds ties the many project activities together into a coherent whole.

**SELAM 1 has reached an impressive number of beneficiaries, and delivered them tangible benefits, in a very efficient way.** For a budget of €5 million, CARE Ethiopia has delivered very tangible food security benefits to around 11,200 households (roughly 60,000 individuals), and has protected the health of the livestock of around 36,000 households (roughly 180,000 beneficiaries).

**The SELAM 1 project has made a valuable contribution to food security in Eastern Tigray.** Emergency cash distribution seems to have been well targeted, and the money has been well spent to increase household level productive assets and resilience. SELAM 1 has done a good job in terms of repairing water infrastructure, and in some cases, is managing to use FPI funds to further develop water infrastructure. In the main, Outputs 1, 2 and 3 have been achieved if not exceed in some areas. The WLiE activities are yet to start, so there is no benefit yet from Output 4.

**SELAM 1 has a localised impact. The project has improved food security in eight woredas in Eastern Tigray, and has helped re-start the most critical economic sector in the area.** SELAM 1 has filled a one- to four-month food gap for around 8% of the most vulnerable households of Eastern Tigray. Through support to livestock and irrigation systems, farmers have managed to re-start their farms probably two to three years more quickly than they could otherwise have done.

**Some of the benefits of SELAM 1 have a good chance of being sustainable, because of the emphasis on local committees to oversee aspects of the project.** However, despite making a strong contribution to re-starting the local agricultural sector, the farmers are still highly dependent on markets, which aren't working at present. SELAM 1 has implicitly done a good job of considering human rights in its implementation, by supporting the right to life. Gender equality has also been well handled. While there is no EU branding at the village level, the EU is visible where it matters.

### 3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### For the EU:

1. *If the EU is going to continue funding REST (directly or indirectly),* consider the opportunity to conduct a deeper monitoring of REST's financial monitoring mechanisms;
2. *If the EU is going to continue supporting early recovery and SGBV work in Tigray,* encourage CARE/REST and CST and its local partners to come together to discuss opportunities for creating synergies and linkages between the projects. Specifically, consider how the WGSS in Wukro be used to support beneficiaries of SELAM 1, some of whom will be SGBV survivors;
3. Consider how the EU could continue to support the recovery of the agricultural system in Tigray, e.g., supporting a market strengthening intervention, or supporting the Agricultural Bureau to rebuild and re-equip extension offices and farmers training centres. This will likely go beyond the mandate of FPI crisis response, but other EU funding mechanisms may be more appropriate.

**For CARE/REST:**

4. Improve outcome-level monitoring and reporting. Consider developing case studies/stories of change, showing in narrative style how SELAM 1's activities have changed lives;
5. Consider how to proactively engage with protection/GBV clusters, and coordinate and learn from other NGOs such as CST, with regards to WLiE activities that most probably will involve working with survivors of SGBV.

**For Altai's future TPM:**

6. Discuss with FPI whether there might be value in supporting CARE/REST to develop a few case stories of how people's lives have changed through SELAM 1 project could be beneficial. This might lead to some good communications material for FPI;
7. Conclude monitoring of SELAM 1 activities with the exception of VLSA and WLiE activities, with the aim of monitoring the VSLA groups and the eight women's associations in late 2023.



# ANNEX I – LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Category	Individual	Institution	Role	Location	Date
Donor	Fergus McBean Buraq Nuseibeh	FCDO	Humanitarian Team	Addis Ababa	05/06/2023
Implementer	Claire Lauren Mandefro Gebretsadik Kalayou	CARE International and CARE Ethiopia	Project Management Team	Addis Ababa and Mekelle	06/06/2023
	Weredekal	REST	SELAM1 Project Manager	Mekelle	06/06/2023
	Karen Williams Teamrat Belai Kowkab	CST	ICSP Project Coordinator Deputy Country Director – Head of Programmes CST Local Coordinator	Remote and Mekelle	
	Various	CST 5 Implementing Partners (Mums for Mums, ADCS Adigrat, ADCS Mekelle, WAT, OSSHD)	Project Officers, Case Workers, Social Workers, Facilitators, Volunteers	Mekelle, Abi Adi, Hagare Selam, Wukro, Adigrat, Gijet, Samre, Maychew	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Waqas Haytham Tasfa Beyene Fiseha Rahwa Hagos and Gezea	Medicins du Monde, EIP	Programme Manager (Mdm) Executive Director (EIP) Programme Manager (EIP) Project Program Manager (EIP, Axum) MHPSS Project Coordinator (Mdm, Axum) Peace Expert (EIP)	Addis Ababa, Axum	06/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Dr Nishu Chaudhary Tsilat Yewondwossen Judy McCallum Tamiru Lega	BBC Media Action LPI (EIP, IAG)	Country Director Senior Project Manager Project Management Team	Addis Ababa	06/06/2023
	Ms Alemat	Women's Affairs Bureau	Deputy Director	Mekelle	08/06/2023
	Muiv	Women's Affairs Bureau	Head of Women's Affairs Bureau - Abi Adi	Abi Adi	08/06/2023
National and Local Stakeholders	Dr Amanuel	Regional Health Bureau	Director	Mekelle	07/06/2023
	Clémence Caraux-Pelletan	Ethiopia HINGO Forum	Director	Addis Ababa	05/06/2023
	Dr. Kalewongel Minale	Ethiopian Civil Society Organisation Council (ECSOC)	Program and Development Advisor	Addis Ababa	05/06/2023
Beneficiaries	Various	Farmers who have benefited from seeds, inputs, or livestock	N.A.	Idaga Hamus, Freweyni, Agula, Birki (all Eastern Tigray Zone)	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Various	School principals who have benefited from WASH facilities	N.A.	Idaga Hamus, Freweyni, Agula, Birki (all Eastern Tigray Zone)	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Various	Representatives of communities that have benefited from tree planting and irrigation schemes	N.A.	Idaga Hamus, Freweyni, Agula, Birki (all Eastern Tigray Zone)	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Various	Managers of hospitals/health centres	N.A.	Ahsea, Hagare Selam	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Various	Health workers	N.A.	Ahsea, Abi Adi	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Various	SGBV survivors services beneficiaries	N.A.	Abi Adi, Wukro, Maychew	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
	Various	MHPSS group or individual services beneficiaries	N.A.	Abi Adi, Wukro, Maychew	07/06/2023-15/06/2023
UN Agencies	Dr Nigisti Mekonnen	FAO Tigray	Food Security Cluster Lead	Addis Ababa	08/06/2023
	Auwal Abubakar	UNOCHA	Head of Tigray sub-office	Mekelle	09/06/2023
	Cacha Maisori	UNFPA Ethiopia	SGBV Cluster Lead (UNFPA Addis)	Addis Ababa	06/06/2023
	Jean Luc	SGBV Cluster Lead (UNFPA Mekelle)	GBV Coordinator (acting)	Mekelle	09/06/2023
	Terhas Clark	IOM Ethiopia	Inclusion Adviser	Remote	12/06/2023 <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Please note that the list of KIIs also includes interviews conducted for other projects monitored during the same visit, thus not all are relevant for the CARE/REST project.