



EU-Recovery Mid Term Evaluation Workshop Summary

January, 2017



EU Recovery Mid Term Review workshop - Summary

Mekelle, January 27th 2017

Project Title: Support to Early Recovery and Socio-Economic Stability of the Drought Affected Population in Ethiopia

Brief background

The project aims to enhance the social and economic stability in the drought affected areas through supporting the recovery of livelihoods of the affected population and building their resiliency in the target 18 Woredas/Districts of the Oromia, Amhara and Tigray national regional states..

The project contract with the donor EU was signed in March 2016 while the project implementation was started retroactively in January 2016, with budget of Euro 18 million for 18 months duration up to July 2017. The project is being implemented jointly by CARE UK/Ethiopia (leading NGO) and SCI, ORDA and REST in 18 Woredas/Districts of the Oromia, Amhara and Tigray national regional states.

Following joint monitoring field mission conducted to the two of the five intervention zones (Wag Himara and Eastern Tigray zones) the MTR workshop was organized at Mekele on the 27th January 2017, and participants were from the four implementing NGOs, the respective regional/zonal government partner's bureaus and a representative from the EU Delegation.

Highlights of the MTR workshop:

Agenda item A) Welcome and opening of the Project Mid-term Review workshop.

Meron Kidane (CARE) and Berhanu Taye (EU) opened the workshop and agenda. Key highlights of note were:

- As of end November 2016, overall project progress is good with most planned activities having been delivered on time – with some notable exceptions, discussed below.
- The objective of the workshop will be to review progress, challenges and lessons learned and plan for the remaining project period. The joint Action Plan will be reviewed to enable remaining activities to be completed by project end.

Agenda item B) overview of the project overall physical and financial progress

The programmatic and financial achievements of the project were presented by Meron Kidane and Beyene HabteMariam of CARE respectively. [See Annexes 2&3]. Following the two presentations, some of the key areas discussed were:

CFW rate should align with the regional PSNP rate as the minimum. But there should be room for consideration of the context (purchasing power for basic commodities, wage rates of other NGOs, etc. for unskilled and skilled labour rates, etc.). In reality, the wage rate of the project is lower than PSNP, especially for those HHs that are not part of PSNP.

- Since only one HH member participates in the project where as in PSNP up to five individuals of the HH can participate and benefit from the wage. In case of SCI, the wage rate was raised to ETB 64 from the PSNP rate of ETB 38 for their particular location on the above premises.
- Project impact at outcome level will be measured based on its indicators. However, impact is dependent on many factors. DRM-ATF made a *Meher* assessment across the regions - the draft Oromia report has shown positive results from the *Kiremt* rainfall with 100% and 125% improved harvest conditions compared to the previous year in East and West Haraghe zones where the project is operating. There will be an end line survey which will show the project's contribution towards the outcomes.
- Review meetings and field visits were made with zonal and woreda level government stakeholders. Soon after the workshop, field visits will be facilitated to the regional government levels in East and West Haraghe zones.
- SCI show low overall financial expenditure rate, 42% as at end December 2016 which will need to be caught up. This was mainly due to significant delays or non-implementation of some of the key livestock (poultry & sheep/goats) asset transfers and irrigation schemes.

Agenda C) Presentation on achievements, challenges and lessons learnt by implementing partners

Detailed achievements, challenges and lessons were presented by Mandefro G/Tsadik (CARE), Getachew Kalayu (REST), Lakech Mitiku (SCI) and Alebachew Yimer (ORDA) [See Annex 4]. Key discussion points following each presentation are highlighted below:

Discussion points on CARE performance

- Community Score Card implementation was delayed, however there is still scope to accommodate beneficiaries' comments into project implementation, as well as contributing to effective M&E. There will be an interface meeting with service users and beneficiaries in this first quarter to evaluate the services and capacity building training. The project will use the comments of communities to improve the quality of the services delivered by the project.
- The project has over achieved its initial plan in the provision of various trainings. This has no financial implication as the trainings are facilitated at village level by engaging woreda level governmental sector office experts with minimum cost.
- Different post-harvest assessment studies have shown that significant percentage of production is lost each year (despite overall increase in national production levels). Production capacity building activities to reduce post-harvest loss need to be considered.
- Prices of improved wheat, maize and sorghum seeds escalated and there was shortage of supply during the 2016 *Meher* season because there was high demand for seeds from government and NGOs. The project applied a variety of risk mitigation measures already identified in the project proposal. It procured the improved seeds with increased costs, it procured only improved varieties that were available, and in other cases applied the GoE emergency seed guideline. The guideline developed in collaboration with FAO under the DRM/ATF, allowed the project to procure local varieties from cooperatives and individual farmers with inspection from Bureau of Agriculture.
- The emergency accelerated start-up of project has allowed the project to deliver the required inputs, especially seed, before the agreement was signed with the regional government. The special approvals has enabled the project to catch the *Belg* season with distribution of early maturing seeds.

The types of seeds planned to be revolved is maize seed where the provided seed is composite. It is appropriate to use for planting in the following season. And farmers have

- received orientations to this end, on plant selection and saving of seeds.. The types of seeds distributed to the community were as per specification of the emergency seed guideline that the government developed in collaboration with FAO under the DRM/ATF. VSLAs and cooperatives are considered as a means to revolve seeds. However, seed storage, ensuring seeds quality, (and defining leading/responsible organisations) needs to be clear.
- The project has followed different modalities in the provision of livestock assets (small ruminants, poultry and beehives). The level of revolving transfers (transfer rounds), and the responsible entity for ensuring transfers, as well as the amount of assets to be revolved needs to be clarified.
- The provision of three sheep and goat and transferring the lambs to the next beneficiary may not bring significant change to the lives of the beneficiaries. Since the main objective of the project is to restock assets that were lost due to drought, the amount of livestock provided to the beneficiaries may not be sufficient.
- The productivity figures for last year is known to have declined due to drought. Its use in the report is purely to show comparison with the production obtained in this year due to the project. The final project contribution towards crop productivity is being assessed.

Discussion points on REST performance

- The project is recovery; however, it has to link its interventions with long term efforts. Exit strategies need to be clearly established. Sustainability issues such as the organisation of user committees to properly manage the use and maintenance of water supply and irrigation schemes to promote ownership need to be considered. SWC activities around the irrigation schemes also need to be ensured.
- The relationship and difference of RuSACCO with VSLA/VESA has to be clearly demarcated so that the standard for VSLA/VESA is not compromised. VESA groups have to start saving and lending activities.
- The project has accomplished the early warning and disaster risk reduction training target by aligning the plan with REST's other emergency project. The Emergency project has budget to train the same persons, so that the activity can be accomplished through complimentary linkage of the plans - avoiding duplication of effort.
- Performance presentation and reporting needs to be result-based to better demonstrate project impact. The current status of fruit and vegetable activities require follow-up.

Discussion with Save the Children performance

- The self-help groups/co-ops which SCI plans to support with seed stock are existing multipurpose cooperatives; there will not be any new cooperatives established. SCI needs to define the type of support that will be provided to these groups or coops.
- The ponds that are rehabilitated or constructed are used for livestock only. SCI need to ensure that irrigation is implemented properly with consideration of the required software aspects or there are is longer sustainable use for the ponds.
- SCI has delayed the planned provision of sheep and goats. SCI should have been more responsive for the target drought affected HHs, and also the timeliness of the intervention. At this current pace will the project meet the deliverables? Households have made themselves ready for the provision through constructing sheep and goat as well as poultry sheds/houses, etc. using local material. SCI has also started the implementation of sheep and goats.

The cash for work for the second phase will begin in March as during January and February, there is community mobilisation by government for public works. SCI need to be strategic in using this opportunity to integrate its activities with the government plan for budget saving.

- Since the remaining project period is short, SCI has to critically review how to accomplish the rehabilitation of the planned six irrigation schemes. Also, CFW participants have to be those who do not have access to other income opportunities.
- Hives provided in the intervention areas are transitional, whereas the project has provision for modern bee hives. SCI has adopted transitional hives in its areas due to cheaper cost and ease of construction using local material by communities.
- ORDA and SCI have similar interventions in similar zones, whereas under the agreement they entered with the regional government is different, especially in the provision of bee hives (1 beehive/HH vs 5 beehives/HH) and poultry (5 pullets/HH vs 25 pullets/HH). ORDA used the launch workshop to reach consensus on modalities for the project. Whereas SCI's approach is based on the modality recommended by the government livestock agency. This provides increased assets to a reduced number of beneficiaries (i.e. one male along with 5 female sheep/goats).
- As the coming months are dry season especially in SCI areas where there is no *Belg* rain, the provision of 25 pullets/HH in such drought prone area is risky, and the households may have hardly anything to feed their chickens. Even if SCI will give three month pullets to increase their survival rate, it is highly recommended to distribute the pullets in phased rounds.

Discussion on ORDA performance

- The crop residue used for livestock feed is not considered while calculating the crop productivity. This should be considered in future calculations.
- The project has used EMO only for compost preparation and not for livestock production that can be shared as lessons to other partners. However, the accessibility of molasses for farmers is challenging as it is industrial product in which its accessibility is very limited and challenge for its technology transfer. For compost preparation however, sugar can be used to replace molasses.
- The seed provided is higher than ORDA's plan (i.e. 6400 Quintal planned whereas 7069 Quintal provided) whereas the beneficiary reached is lower than the plan (i.e. 25,245 Households achieved against 25,888 HHs). The main reason is the amount of seed provided differs based on households land holdings ranging from 0.25 to 0.5 hectare. As there are some farmers who are provided for 0.5 ha it reduces the number of beneficiaries reached.
- ORDA's VSLA plan is more ambitious (1500) than is feasible to be implemented in the remaining project period. Therefore it is proposed to reduce the number of groups in the planned budget realignment.

Agenda item D) Way forward by the EU Delegation representative

Highlights from Mr. Berhanu Taye's (EUD) presentation are as follows:

- Seed is the priority area in recovery contexts. So for the next seed provision assess the need for seed as there is an appeal by the DRM commission. It is also recommended to use the budget savings for seed provision and retarget those beneficiaries who have lost their crop for the second round.
- The project should link with long term interventions such as the promotion of community managed seed preservation schemes to enable households to have seeds for urgently needed for replanting purposes.

- beneficiaries and whether households have made proper management of their feed, housing, sanitation, etc.
- Restocking requires timeliness. Seasonally appropriate provision is required otherwise it can create a burden for the households which also risks the project impact. Note that the Amhara region livestock provision package puts the minimum provision of poultry to be 20p per HH, so the project should ideally match this.
- Restocking activities has have different modalities including the insurance among partners. Some is in kind and some in cash. However, in REST's case, the loans from cooperatives need to be cancelled in the case of deaths of the ruminant provided to a HH.
- The VSLA budget reallocation for shoat restocking is inappropriate, and it may be appropriate to use the budget for other pressing needs by the respective beneficiary community.
- The main purpose of rehabilitation/construction of small scale irrigations schemes is for the beneficiaries to properly use and manage them. Thus, software aspects need to be considered to support appropriate irrigation cropping practices and sustainable management of the schemes to ensure they are used for increasing production and income by beneficiary farmers.
- Some water schemes were not originally identified during the project design stage. Partners need to take greater care in identifying and planning for water schemes in future projects.
- Beyond the accomplishments of project activities, consolidation and follow up of the activities need to be considered to ensure sustainable use of resources beyond the project lifetime.
- There is a possibility for granting of up to 6 month no cost extension period of the initial 18 months duration with strong justification provided.

Discussion on way forward

- Revised action plan is expected to be developed in consultation with regional and zonal partners and final discussion between consortium members.
- In the case of revolving livestock assets, beyond the 2nd beneficiary transfer is less likely so clear exit strategy should be critically reviewed.
- Documentation of project results is required both through collection of success and failure stories and institutionalisation of lessons learned.
- There should be balance between training and actual activities.
- CFW activities are not about employment. We need to work with communities to support to promote community ownership of the resulting soil and water conservation, etc structures.
- There will be an exit workshop at end of the project implementation period where local woreda and kebele partners participated and beneficiaries will be invited to feedback on project achievements/challenges.
- We must look for opportunities to align resources with government, especially for water schemes, to ensure sustainability.
- Partners are keen to sign a NCE to allow the consolidation of project activities and thorough measuring/analysis of project impact. This must take into account the seasonality of proposed extended activities and will be fully justifiable.

Next steps

- A timeframe was set for the preparation and finalisation of the budget realignment and no cost extension request.
- A first internal technical joint meeting will be held to define the activities undertaken in the next 6 months period (and NCE). Consultation with government partners is also required. Both steps are expected to be finalized by the end of February 2017.

- Formal submission of the budget revision and NCE request to the EU will be by the first week of March.
- The revised action plan will be discussed and agree in joint meeting with implementing partners. The final revised action plan has to be submitted by mid-March 2017 to the European delegation.

Agenda item E) Closing remarks

Meron Kidane closed the workshop by reviewing the MTR process and outcomes, and thanking partners for the strong commitment of project partners which has allowed significant progress to be made whilst overcoming some significant challenges. Appreciation was expressed for the active participation of all stakeholders, including the support of government bodies to the continued success of the project.

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Beneficiary testimony.

A beneficiary of the project, *Marshet Kahsay*, was invited to speak on her experience on the project:

"I am from Debaset kebele my first benefit from this project was the shoat fattening program, it helped me buy 6 sheep. I bought my sheep for 750 and sold them by 1,750 and 1350 birr. With this profit, I bought chickens and sheep again. I now own chickens and 8 sheep altogether. Before this project started its implementation in my area, I used to live with my parents with my children. And that by itself was very challenging and after the drought, I and my family faced even more challenges. The support I got from this project made me confident as I started providing for myself. I am a beneficiary of wheat (sinde) seed also, and as an existing member of RuSACCO I also use fertilizer to my products. In our VSLA we are able to save up to 50 birr per month and we are able to support ourselves in the loan from the association. I would like to extend my appreciation to REST for supporting women in its interventions".



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About CARE: Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. CARE started working in Ethiopia in 1984 in response to severe drought and famine that devastated the population and claimed the lives of nearly one million people. Since then, the organization's activities have expanded to address the root causes of poverty and vulnerability. To learn more, visit www.care-international.org.