



**External review of selected issues in the
REST/DF Integrated Agricultural Development
Programme in Tigray, Ethiopia**

by

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**Final report submitted to
the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Ethiopia,
and the Development Fund (DF), Norway**

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Acronyms

ADCS	Adigrat Diocesan Catholic Secretariat
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation
AMAREW	Amhara Micro-enterprise development, Agricultural Research and Extension, and Watershed management project
BfW	Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)
BTF	Bunyion Tree Foundation
BoANR	Bureau of Agricultural and Natural Resources
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BoWA	Bureau of Women's Affairs
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CHW	Community Health Worker
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
DA	Development Agent
DECSI	Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution
DF	Development Fund
DPPB	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau
EGS	Employment Generation Scheme
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERAD	Environmental Rehabilitation and Agricultural Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFW	Food-for-Work
FHH	Female-headed household
FTC	Farmer Training Centre
GCT	Gender Core Team
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoH	Glimmer of Hope
GTZ	German Development Cooperation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IADP	Integrated Agricultural Development Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JEOP	Joint Emergency Operational Plan
KuW	Kinder unserer Welt (Children of our World)
LLPPA	Local-Level Participatory Planning Approach
MERET	Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transition to more Sustainable Livelihoods
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OD	Organisational Development
PLWHA	Person Living With HIV/AIDS

PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
RPU	Research and Policy Unit
RRP	Relief and Rehabilitation Programme
RWSD	Rural Water Supply Development
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme
SWC	Soil and Water Conservation
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TDA	Tigray Development Association
ToRs	Terms of Reference
TYA	Tigray Youth Association
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAT	Women's Association of Tigray
WFP	World Food Programme
WRDD	Waters Resources Development Department
WSC	Watershed Committee

External review of selected issues in the REST/DF Integrated Agricultural Development Programme in Tigray, Ethiopia

0. Executive summary

In January–February 2006, a three-person external review team worked together with staff of the Integrated Agricultural Development Project (IADP) in exploring some key issues identified by REST (Relief Society of Tigray) and the DF (Development Fund) of Norway as strategically important for planning future collaboration: REST-government relations, local organisational development, “exit” strategies, local ownership, gender mainstreaming, youth work, strategic priorities to continue the watershed approach, and shifts in emphasis in project components. Additional issues identified during the initial workshop with REST were: collaboration between REST and other development actors, and the work of the REST research unit. The findings are based on discussions with partners and stakeholders in Mekelle and in the field. Six watersheds were visited: two each in Ahferom and Werielekhe Woredas, a non-IADP REST watershed in Adwa Woreda and a non-REST watershed in Abraha Atsbeha Tabia near Wukro.

Main findings and conclusions

The **major shifts in emphases in REST’s work** up to 2002, when the current IADP phase began, have been: from scattered and fairly isolated to focused and integrated environmental rehabilitation and development activities; from primarily protecting natural resources to combining protection with production; and from primarily focusing on communal activities to integrating community-oriented and household-oriented activities. During the current project phase, the main shifts have been: stronger targeting of youth and women, especially in female-headed households (FHHs); greater emphasis on local institutional development; a shift from large-scale to small- and micro-scale irrigation; increased attention to micro-enterprise development and marketing; and – although not an expressed strategy – recognition of local innovation by men and women farmers.

Watershed approach. This has been applied effectively by REST since 2003. The local communities are involved in all aspects of planning and implementation. Locally elected Watershed Committees (WSCs) work in consultation with community leaders, other sectoral committees, the local administration and relevant line bureau staff. The main activities implemented in the IADP watersheds are: enclosure of hillsides and gullies to promote natural regeneration of vegetation; reforestation and other soil and water conservation (SWC) activities; water development including wells, excavated tanks and ponds on individual and communal land; livestock development including dairying, small ruminants, bees and forage; and agricultural extension related mainly to root crops, horticulture and seed banks. Most activities are not focused on the poor but rather on interested farmers, but some activities, e.g. making use of reclaimed land on hillsides and gullies, are focused on the poor and landless.

There is general consensus on the superiority of the watershed approach compared to earlier planning approaches. Some indications of the strengths of the approach are: a good understanding of the approach by the communities, which could give good reasons for their choices of rehabilitation and development activities; the existence of effective local institutions to manage the watersheds; the involvement of women and youth in productive activities within the watersheds; the provision of choice from a range of options of extension packages and techniques, according to local interests and available resources; the introduction of mutually reinforcing and relatively low-cost technologies; the spread of watershed planning procedures outside the REST-supported watersheds; and the changes in attitudes, values and outlook of watershed inhabitants, who now see more reason for hope.

The concept of protection for production, which is central to the integrated watershed approach, has been key in generating genuine local interest in natural resource management (NRM).

Indications that this has been successful and is widely welcomed are: local appreciation of the greater availability of water for production and the training and access to inputs to be able to use the water more productively; the greater readiness in the communities to make own contributions to soil and water conservation activities now that production gains are evident; the greater local appreciation of area enclosure now that the natural resources have regenerated and can be used for production, e.g. beekeeping and fodder collection, and the local recognition of larger-scale benefits beyond the actual watersheds in which the work is focused.

The watershed approach has led to a stronger feeling of local ownership than did previous approaches to development, mainly because of the wider local participation in decision-making and the possibility to realise one's own preferences. The voluntary formation of producer groups around activities such as beekeeping and dairying indicates some sense of collective ownership.

Some weaknesses in the watershed approach as applied in the IADP areas are: gaps in understanding of the watershed approach by some government agents through which REST's interventions are implemented; insufficient follow-up to training and other interventions; lack of clarity regarding impact of the watershed development interventions on different socio-economic strata; insufficient understanding of socio-political dynamics in the watersheds; and few direct links between WSCs to manage the larger watershed to which their sub-watersheds belong.

Some challenges of the watershed approach in the Tigray context are: inherent natural limitations in a dry and harsh environment; the tension between donor expectations for quick results and slow processes of local participation; harmonisation of hydrological and administrative boundaries; and ambiguity of the interface of the REST/DF-supported work with the government extension services. Potential incompatibilities in this respect include: piloting versus wide coverage; participatory versus top-down approaches; environmental protection and limited natural resource capabilities versus a push to increase livestock assets; voluntary contribution to development versus Food for Work (FFW); working with innovative versus model farmers; and working with better-off versus poorer farmers.

Gender issues. The policy environment now promotes gender equity. Several supportive institutions play an important role in empowering women. These include donors, the Women's Association of Tigray (WAT), the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BoWA) and, in some cases, the church. Some strengths of REST's gender-related work are: economic empowerment of women through their involvement in income-generating activities; diffusion of good practices from the pilot project targeting FHHs in Kolla Tembien Woreda; recognition of male and female innovators; good collaboration with WAT and BoWA at tabia and woreda level; attention to strengthening the leadership capacities of women, especially through their involvement in the WSC; and REST's lobbying for gender-sensitive norms in FFW activities. Some weaknesses are: the slow rate of gender mainstreaming within REST as an organisation; weak institutional linkages at regional level; inadequate sensibility for women's particular needs and situation with respect to some activities and technologies; and unequal empowerment of men and women, especially of women in male-headed households.

Youth-related issues. A fairly recent focus in REST/DF-supported work is on landless youths, helping them acquire rights to use communal hillsides and reclaimed gullies for timber production, fruit growing, beekeeping etc. Most of REST's activities with youths are still focused on land rather than off-farm activities that could support agriculture and NRM. Some strengths of REST's youth-related work are: strengthening the position of youth and their contribution to their own and the community's development by facilitating access to land and provided training, tools and materials; instilling hope for the future among the youth; promoting productive activities by groups of youths; and enrolling youths in community decision-making, particularly in the WSCs. Some weaknesses are: gender imbalance; running the danger of marginalising the non-formally educated; possibly adding to pressure on the land resources by not giving enough attention to activities that do not require land; weak links with local schools; weak links with the Tigray Youth Association (TYA) at regional level; and giving too little room for innovativeness by youths.

HIV/AIDS is a cross-cutting issue affecting people in all gender and age groups. The Tigray government and REST work in close partnership to address this issue, primarily in rural areas. Some strengths of REST's HIV/AIDS-related work are: increasing awareness about mode of transmission and ways of preventing HIV/AIDS; better local understanding of the links between human and environmental health; increased capacity of community-based health workers to raise local awareness and to work with affected persons and families; attempting to mainstream HIV/AIDS throughout all REST and government-implemented activities; giving support to local institutions and initiatives such as anti-AIDS clubs; and giving some attention to mitigating impact though appropriate income-generating and/or improved nutrition activities in which affected persons can be engaged. Some weaknesses and challenges are: the slow rate of behavioural change, despite the increased local knowledge about HIV/AIDS; and the still insufficient attention to mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS on affected households, compared to the emphasis on awareness-raising.

Local organisational development (OD). REST does not yet have an explicit strategy for local OD, and its reporting on relevant processes is very sparse. Its strategy seems to be to help people build functional groups around concrete activities, primarily to increase the probability that local management continues after phasing out of external support but also to strengthen civil society at the local level. Numerous user and producer groups have been established to manage communal resources such as wells and seed banks and to gain better access to inputs and markets. The WSCs have been selected by community members and represent the social groupings of elders, farmers, youth and women. They are well integrated into the wider planning process carried out by the local administration.

Some strengths in REST's facilitation of local OD are: creation of complementary committees, i.e. WSCs and sectoral committees with responsibilities for different tasks but linked to each other; broadening the responsibility for decision-making within the community; using an inherent rights-based approach through helping people organise themselves to manage their own affairs and empowering them to exert pressure on government agencies; supporting new initiatives of producer groups; building local capacities primarily through training in productive activities and local organisation; and stimulating local learning processes through ongoing OD training, facilitating experience sharing, linking external and internal knowledge, and using watersheds as sources of learning.

Some weaknesses are: little attention to process and methods of local OD; poor awareness of how new positions of power within local organisations are being used; incomplete information at local level for planning, particularly about available budget; poor access to external information and ideas; weak linkage with informal learning processes; poor integration of local knowledge into planning processes; an increasing gap between literate and illiterate; and some potential for conflict in mandates and approaches of different local committees, particularly new ones established for new programmes such as the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP).

Phasing out. The WSCs understand that the intensive support from REST will not continue indefinitely, but there is less awareness at woreda and regional level that REST might phase out of certain operational areas. The strategies and plans compiled by REST with regard to phasing out are not well formulated. The main ways in which REST is preparing rural communities and government services for phasing out have been: establishing long-term assets to lay a good basis for phasing out; promoting low-cost technologies; building the economic power of individuals, households and groups; training and other forms of capacity building; and phasing out gradually on a component-by-component basis, which builds confidence to take on overall responsibility for local development.

The **Research and Policy Unit (RPU)** within REST is engaged primarily in quantitative socio-economic surveys to support monitoring and evaluation in the IADP. The GIS unit has collated much geographic, ecological and socio-economic information in fairly detailed maps. Besides

the weaknesses and challenges listed in REST's internal evaluation report, we add: weak links between data collection and the development activities in the IADP; inadequate analysis of data and use of research outputs as a source of learning; little research and documentation on process-related and institutional issues; complete separation of the work of the RPU and on-farm experimentation; little use of GIS outputs; no systematic collaboration with government GIS facilities; and high follow-on costs of the GIS unit. There is no mention of the RPU or of any research activities in REST's 2006–2010 Strategic Plan.

Relations with other development actors. REST has close relations with government agencies and works through the existing government structures at woreda and tabia level. There is structural correspondence between REST and the line bureaux. REST is often delegated to carry out government interventions, such as the PSNP. The line offices at woreda level regard REST as an essential institution to allow them to deliver government services. REST adds value to and speeds up government-supported development related to NRM by bringing in new approaches and technologies and providing relevant training. To the extent that funds come from overseas partners via REST to support local development, government funds are allocated elsewhere. Donor support to REST thus complements and – to some extent – replaces government services in the REST operational areas. A rights-based approach would not focus on making sure that services are delivered but rather on strengthening the capacities of disadvantaged groups to assert their rights to a fair share of the existing government resources.

Few other international or local NGOs operate in Tigray, and REST has few links with them. The existence of such a large organisation as REST, with its strong capacity for development intervention and corresponding resources and its powerful position within Tigray, may have hindered the development of other NGOs in Tigray. At national level, REST participates in NGO and multi-stakeholder networks; it is engaged to some extent also in policy advocacy at international level. The government policy has recently become more open to civil-society organisations, which should create a more favourable environment for new NGOs to form.

With regard to the private sector, REST is improving farmers' access to market and is linking farmers with local input suppliers. The rise of private enterprise in the agricultural and NRM sector in Tigray may be inhibited by the fact that the production of some inputs such as seeds and seedlings is largely in the hands of government, often with financial support of REST.

The REST Board consists of six members, one of whom is a woman. Some major stakeholders, such as farmers and youth, are not represented. REST describes itself as being accountable primarily to the communities it serves. Further study would be needed to identify how it answers to these communities about the decisions and actions it takes.

The way ahead. Various government policies create an enabling environment for watershed development. These include policies to decentralise decision-making powers to the grassroots, to empower women in public decision-making, and to work with educated youth as entry points to transform rural society.

In line with regional development strategy, the major lines in REST's strategy are to strengthen household livelihoods, improve health and education, empower women, improve water security, and promote sustainable NRM. A key strategy will be economic diversification through a combination of on-farm, off-farm and non-farm activities. REST intends to further strengthen community-based institutions, "empowering communities and individuals to pursue their right to a decent standard of living, with a specific emphasis on the poorest and most vulnerable".

In the DF strategy for Ethiopia, the main emphasis is on the drylands and on civil-society development for the benefit mainly of the poorest and most vulnerable rural people: women, youth and landless. DF activities have expanded to target pastoralists. DF seeks to strike a balance between service delivery and policy advocacy for social change. It wants to reinforce the decentralisation process by creating synergies at woreda level between state structures,

NGOs and traditional institutions. The project work at the grassroots will be combined with advocacy work at national and international level related to the multi-lateral conventions on conserving biodiversity and combating desertification. Issues cutting across all activities include the rights-based approach to development; gender equality; HIV/AIDS; participation, transparency, accountability and good governance; and linking relief to development.

REST's current portfolio focuses on environmental rehabilitation and agricultural development, rural water supply development, and relief and rehabilitation. REST reports an increasing trend of support from bilateral and international organisations. In 2006, it expects DF to contribute about 13% of REST's total funds, which is a much smaller percentage of total (cash and food) contributions to REST. It tries to separate the operational areas covered by different donors, but in some tabias it is conducting activities financed by more than one donor either directly or through government bureaux, e.g. IADP and PSNP.

Recommendations

The **watershed approach** in general (i.e. not only in the IADP areas) could be strengthened by:

- Giving DAs more training about the approach so that they see it as more than merely NRM
- Giving increased attention to multiple forms of learning by WSCs and DAs within and beyond the REST operational areas
- Studying the impact of the watershed approach on livestock-keeping by land-poor and landless households, FHHs and families affected by debilitating illnesses such as HIV/AIDS
- Working in watersheds that cross tabia boundaries
- Stimulating liaison between sub-watersheds in the larger watershed
- Increasing attention to rural-urban linkages, particularly to input and output markets, off-farm and non-farm income-generating activities and information flows in both directions.

In the **gender-related work**, we recommend to:

- Implement REST's gender action plan
- Internalise gender mainstreaming throughout REST management
- Strengthen collaboration with WAT and BoWA at regional level
- Seek greater gender equity at local level, particularly in the WSCs
- Identify and adapt technologies appropriate for women
- Promote economic empowerment of women through cooperatives in fields in which women have special interest
- Build women's confidence to assert themselves in mixed-gender groups.

In the **youth-related work**, we recommend to:

- Give increased attention to capacity building and enterprise development
- Promote off-farm activities to release pressure on the land
- Improve the gender balance in work with youth groups
- Stimulate local reflection on age dynamics and resource use in the watershed
- Link watershed activities and local schooling
- Recognise the role of elders in assessing and planning local development
- Collaborate with the TYA at regional level.

In the **HIV/AIDS-related work**, we recommend to:

- Look critically at how the awareness-raising strategy can be made more effective in changing behaviour
- Target affected households with support to ways of mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS
- Strengthen community-based social support systems.

In the **local organisational development** work, we recommend to:

- Work out a REST/DF strategy for local OD
- Give greater attention to self-assessment and learning by local committees

- Facilitate farmers' and DAs' access to external information
- Strengthen the local Farmer Training Centres (FTCs) and their governance by farmers
- Explicitly link project work with the rights-based approach
- Appoint a REST staff member for local OD.

In **phasing out and phasing in** of IADP support, we recommend to:

- Formulate clearly the strategy for phasing out of current watersheds and phasing into others
- Develop a strategy for lower-input engagement in new watersheds, building on the capacities and experiences in the “old” watersheds
- Stimulate discussion at woreda and regional level about REST's phasing out strategy
- Give greater emphasis to capacity building, particularly in OD
- Facilitate sharing on sustainability mechanisms developed by local institutions
- Phase out flexibly according to the speed by which communities learn to manage their watersheds
- Monitor progress after phasing out, as a basis for deciding about changes in REST strategy.

In the **research and policy dialogue** activities, we recommend to:

- Encourage more process-oriented and analytical research
- Link the RPU with on-farm research
- Conduct research on strategic activities to guide interventions
- Disseminate research outputs
- Use research outputs in policy dialogue
- Reconsider the role of the GIS unit.

With respect to **relations with other development actors**, we recommend to:

- Promote private-sector input supply and service delivery
- Encourage formation of local NGOs within Tigray
- Improve stakeholder representation in the REST Board.

As **strategic priorities in REST/DF collaboration** in watershed development, we recommend:

- Focusing on building household assets and incomes, and reducing attention to community SWC activities
- Using DF funds to complement the PSNP, helping chronically resource-poor households “graduate” out of the PSNP programme
- Focusing REST/DF-supported work on agriculture and NRM while linking the communities with relevant actors in other sectors to achieve an integrated approach to rural development
- Focusing on appropriate, small-scale technologies
- Building the capacities of the FTCs in the IADP areas so that these centres can provide a base for continued learning, farmer-led experimentation and accessing relevant information
- Promoting input acquisition and marketing through group approaches
- Giving more attention to building local organisational capacities in management and leadership
- Plan to phase out of the current watersheds within 2–4 years, depending on local organisational capacities
- Selecting future watersheds for REST/DF collaboration with a view to scaling up through community-to-community and farmer-to-farmer learning
- Capitalising on experience through mutual learning, documentation and other forms of knowledge management to share lessons from REST/DF collaboration
- Starting to work in at least one watershed crossing administrative boundaries, so as to learn how to harmonise planning where hydrological units do not fall within administrative units
- Building on REST experience relevant for new geographic areas of DF support
- Linking local-level development work with higher-level work on human rights.

1. Introduction

The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and the Development Fund (DF) in Norway have worked together for more than twenty years in rehabilitation and development in Tigray region. In the period 2002–06, they have been implementing the Integrated Agricultural Development Programme (IADP) and the Research Project in four *woredas* (districts or counties) in Central Tigray. The main aim of the IADP is to increase household food security by improving the natural resource base, increasing agricultural production, providing water and health services, and building community awareness and local institutional capacities to manage the resources and facilities in a sustainable way. The IADP works in four drought-prone *woredas* in the Central Zone of Tigray National Regional State¹: Ahferom, Werielekhe, Tanqua Abergelle and Kolla Tembien; and is meant to be supported by the work of the Research Project.

1.1 Objectives and scope of the review

A three-person review team, made up of a male Ethiopian social geographer, a female Brazilian agronomist and a female Canadian-Dutch agricultural sociologist looked into some key issues that had been identified by REST and the DF as being of strategic importance for planning future collaboration. This collaboration is to be based on REST's new strategy, the DF's new strategy for its work in Ethiopia, and national and regional priorities related to the fields of expertise of REST and the DF. These are outlined briefly in Section 9.1.

REST and the DF had identified the following areas as foci for the external review, in the order outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToRs) to be found in Annex 1:

- **Relations between REST and the government:** REST's working relations with the government at different levels, the relationship of REST with the existing political structure and decision-making processes, and the roles of REST and government in service provision;
- **Local organisational development:** the process and extent of empowerment and autonomy; the division of roles and responsibilities of the recently established sectoral committees, particularly within watersheds; and their relation to other local institutions, such as the *Tabia*² Development Committees and *baitos* (councils); with particular attention to how a rights-based approach has been taken and could be strengthened;
- **“Exit” strategies:** the approach and strategies taken by REST in enabling local groups to assume increasing responsibility for project activities so that they can continue the activities on their own, with reduced or no project support;
- **Local ownership:** the extent to which project components are demand-driven, i.e. are genuinely demanded by the intended target groups and are regarded as their own;
- **Gender mainstreaming:** the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and strategies taken in gender mainstreaming, and ways in which this could be improved, with particular attention to REST's collaboration with other institutions pursuing the same aim, i.e. the Women's Association of Tigray (WAT) and the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BoWA);
- **Youth work:** the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and strategies taken in the work with youth, both male and female, and ways in which this could be improved, with particular attention to REST's collaboration with the Tigray Youth Association (TYA) and other actors concerned with youth development;
- **Strategic priorities to continue the watershed approach:** ways in which REST and DF can continue to collaborate in the watershed approach, making strategic use of limited funds;

¹ Hereafter referred to as Tigray or Tigray Region, of which Mekelle is the capital.

² The *tabia* is the lowest level of official government structure, composed of a cluster of small villages.

- **Shifts in emphasis in project components:** the current status and dynamics of project components that have been supported by the DF for several years and more recently introduced approaches, components and technologies, looking at “phasing in”, “phasing over” and “phasing out” from the perspectives of the different actors, and indicating strategic directions for further support by REST and the DF.

In the process of preparing its strategy, REST made an internal review of some of these and still more issues that is deemed important for planning its future work. The draft report on this internal review and the report on the review of REST’s GIS (Geographic Information System) unit were made available to us and complemented our external review. We built on the results of the internal reviews and looked more closely at some aspects covered in them, particularly the collaboration between REST and other development actors, and the work of the REST Research and Policy Unit.

According to the ToRs, the review was meant to cover the period 2003–05. In the field visits, it proved that most of the intensive work by the IADP on promoting watershed management had indeed started in 2003, although the project phase started already in 2002.

This report is structured in a different order than in the ToRs. After describing the methods of the review, an overview is given of shifts in approaches and components within the IADP. This is followed by a discussion of experiences in applying the watershed approach in the IADP, paying particular attention to issues of social differentiation (gender and age, with HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue), local ownership, local organisational development (OD) and phasing out of REST/DF support. Then the relations of REST with government and other development actors are examined, and the contribution of REST research – including the GIS work – is discussed. In the final section, strategic priorities for continuing REST/DF collaboration are suggested, in view of the place of DF-supported work within the wider portfolio of REST, the new strategies of REST and the DF, and national and regional government policies.

In this report, we do not give the historical background of REST/DF collaboration nor do we describe the environmental and socio-economic conditions in which this collaboration is taking place. This is sufficiently described in other REST and DF reports and in the recent review of the DF portfolio in Ethiopia (Waters-Bayer *et al* 2005).

1.2 Process, methods and limitations of the review

We approached this review with the intention of supporting REST’s internal review process, assisting REST and the DF to gain deeper insights into the issues they had identified, and exploring together with REST staff how best to proceed in their future collaboration with the DF and with their local partners. We repeatedly stressed in our discussions in Mekelle and in the field that the review was not an evaluation or impact assessment but focused rather on understanding development processes and socio-institutional relations. The discussions with REST staff in the field and in the workshops in Mekelle and the methods we used in drawing out different perspectives on the issues at hand hopefully stimulated mutual learning. In its response to the first draft of this report, REST indeed stated that the presence of implementing bodies in the focus-group discussions provided an opportunity for the experts to learn from the reflections put forward on the various issues.

Process and methods. Before commencing the field work, we reviewed several project-related documents (see Annex 4). On the basis of these documents and the ToRs, we prepared checklists of key items to be covered with different categories of interviewees and discussion groups. To be able to look at the DF-supported activities within the wider context of REST activities funded from other sources, we reviewed relevant documents of other rural development projects implemented by REST.

After arrival in Mekelle, we met with the REST Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Division Head to clarify points about the review process and to discuss selection of the field sites to be visited. As two members of the review team had visited REST/DF work in Kolla Tembien Woreda during the DF portfolio review in September 2005, we agreed with REST management staff to visit two other woredas in Central Tigray, one in a highland and one in a lowland area, both considered drought-prone. The duration of collaboration with REST in the watershed approach and the type of activities done in each woreda were roughly the same.

The REST management staff proposed that field visits be made to the following woredas and watersheds (see Map 1 in Annex 6):

Ahferom Woreda: Ageazine-Mariam (Maigundi) watershed in Endamariam Tabia
Maisuru watershed in Maisuru Tabia

Werielekhe Woreda: Rubagered watershed in Sumret Tabia
Maiserenigus watershed in Selam Tabia.

They assured us that these areas complied with the criteria we had proposed, i.e. that the woredas or watersheds differ according to:

- degree of “maturity” with respect to assuming responsibility for project activities, i.e. one area that is quite advanced and one that is less advanced in, e.g., managing enclosures, establishing producer groups, etc;
- number and type of activities in the area, i.e. one area in which several integrated project components are being carried out and one with a smaller number of project components;
- vicinity to major roads and markets, i.e. one area more favourably located and one area more remote.

The watersheds in Ahferom Woreda are relatively close to a market in the woreda capital Enticho on the main road between Adigrat and Adwa/Axum; those in Werielekhe Woreda are more distant from a major market.

In addition, REST identified a non-DF-supported area to visit (Tsegereda watershed near Adwa) so that we could see how the watershed approach is applied there. This work is supported by a consortium consisting of Trócaire (Overseas Development Agency of the Catholic Church of Ireland)/CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) and Christian Aid with European Union (EU) funding. We also visited a watershed where REST is not working: Abraha Atsbeha, where the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BoANR) is implementing the watershed approach using Food for Work (FFW) from the World Food Programme (WFP) in the framework of the MERET (Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transition to more sustainable livelihoods) programme. This watershed was proposed by the Head of the BoANR.

Before our arrival in the selected woredas of the REST operational areas, REST headquarters staff informed the REST field offices and woreda administrations about the purpose, structure and timing of the field visits.

We began the review with a half-day workshop with REST management to discuss the results of the internal review and to explore REST perspectives on some of the main issues. This was done using cards and flipcharts for visualisation and to encourage inputs from all present.

In each of the selected woredas, we started with a half-day joint meeting of government and REST staff to explain the purpose of the review and to explore the key issues from their perspectives. We then proceeded to the watersheds, spending one day in each, visiting sites of individual and community work by voluntary labour and FFW, conducting interviews with resource persons and focus groups (e.g. youth, women, producer groups, community health workers, HIV/AIDS clubs, local school teachers) and engaging in group discussions with members of various local institutions (e.g. Watershed Committees, community-level sector committees, Woreda Development Committees). We used visualisation techniques such as

Venn diagrams and trend diagrams to facilitate wide participation in discussions, particularly with respect to institutional analysis. We also discussed with individuals and *ad hoc* groups of men and/or women, youth and elders encountered while walking in the watersheds.

During the work in the watersheds, we were accompanied by REST staff: the M&E Division Head in both woredas, the Head of Environmental Rehabilitation and Agricultural Development (ERAD) in Ahferom Woreda and the Planning Officer handling DF-funded work in Werielekhe Woreda, plus 2–3 staff members from the respective REST field offices. Together with the local development agents (DAs), they arranged the meetings with the different groups and individuals. They also translated for the two non-Ethiopian members of the review team and made their own inputs into the discussions.

At the end of day in the field, the three members of the external review team exchanged major findings, identified gaps and prepared the fieldwork of the following days accordingly. Each of us focused on different issues during the fieldwork and report writing. However, all sections in the debriefing and this report reflect the views and recommendations of the team as a whole.³

Before leaving each woreda, we held a 2–3 hour debriefing session with government and REST staff. At the end of our stay in Tigray, we debriefed staff at REST headquarters in Mekelle and the DF Project Coordinator from Norway about our main findings and recommendations.

In Mekelle – before, between and after the field visits – we made joint or separate visits or conducted telephone interviews with key resource persons from relevant institutions: REST Board members; the Bureaux of Rural Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Finance and Economic Development, Women’s Affairs, Education, and Food Security and Disaster Prevention and Preparedness; the President’s Special Advisor for Civil Society; the Tigray Agricultural Marketing Promotion Agency; the regional headquarters of WAT and TYA; and others listed in Annex 3. The interviews were conducted according to the guidelines that we had formulated jointly and that we adjusted during the course of the review.

Limitations. We tried to triangulate information coming from different sources, but this proved to be possible only to a very limited extent, because of a shortage of time and because some of the resource persons we wanted to meet could not be found or reached.

When REST staff translated for the benefit of the non-Ethiopian team members during group discussions and interviews with individuals in the field, they often had to probe repeatedly in Tigrinya to obtain statements that they felt were relevant to the issue at hand. However, what they regarded as “irrelevant” might have given the review team members unexpected insights. Moreover, concepts in one language cannot always be expressed clearly in another. Many nuances, especially related to socio-political and institutional development process issues, were doubtless lost to the non-Ethiopian team members. We simply had to accept our own limitations and remain grateful to the REST staff for their long hours of tireless translation.

Our mission was to explore and try to understand processes and relations between individuals, groups and institutions. Unfortunately, the brevity of our visits to the different operational areas gave us very limited opportunity to observe the processes directly. We therefore had to depend largely on participants’ descriptions of how they experienced these processes. Their openness may have been affected by the large number of listeners from the community administration, government line offices and REST staff who were usually present during the discussions and interviews. For example, some farmers may be shy when local leaders are present, and some women may be shy when men are present. On the other hand, the discussions involving multiple and heterogeneous stakeholders did give all participants a chance to hear views which they otherwise may not have heard.

³ The two review team members who had previously visited other field sites where REST is operating included relevant information in the present review.

2. Dynamics within the IADP: shifts in approaches and components

According to the project document for the third phase of the IADP (2002–06), the long-term objective is to improve household food security on a sustainable basis through enhancing rehabilitation of the natural resource base, promoting agricultural production and productivity in the project area, promoting non-agricultural activities and improving social infrastructure. Expected results/outputs during this phase are:

- Natural resource development
 - Physical conservation measures
 - Biological conservation (reforestation, enclosures)
- Agricultural development
 - Agronomy development (irrigation, seed banks, root crops, fruits, vegetables, spices)
 - Livestock development (feed, bees, poultry, dairy)
- Rural socio-economic services
 - Community-based work on HIV/AIDS
 - On- and off-farm income generation
 - Drinking water supply
- Institutional capacity building

The shifts in emphases in project approaches and components in the period leading up to and during the current project phase have been in response partly to changing government policy and partly to learning from experience. We first present our understanding as to how the watershed approach was developed by REST. We then look at the major shifts in emphases and project components during the current phase.

2.1 Development of the watershed approach

Definitions. A watershed (also known as drainage basin or catchment) is defined as any surface area from which runoff resulting from rainfall is collected and drained through a common confluence point. It is made up of the natural resources in a basin, especially water, soil and vegetation. It includes people, their land-use systems, coping strategies, and social, economic and cultural aspects related to utilisation of the resources (after Lakew *et al* 2005).

In a watershed approach to development, the geographical unit of the watershed is used as a unit for local-level planning in such a way that natural resource management (NRM) is integrated with the building of communal and individual assets and productive activities. A synergy is sought between protective and productive activities so as to increase the well-being of the local inhabitants on a sustainable basis. The watershed approach being applied by REST starts at the level of relatively small and clearly delineated upstream sub-watersheds, presumably with the intention to build local institutional capacity to manage interlinked areas in a larger watershed.

General background. Planning for development of large watersheds (30,000–40,000 ha) began in Ethiopia already in the 1980s, but initial efforts were not satisfactory because of a lack of community participation and a limited sense of responsibility for the assets created. In 1988–91 the Federal Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), with FAO technical assistance, therefore started to explore community-based approaches to planning of smaller sub-watersheds in pilot areas (Lakew *et al* 2005). MoA and WFP technical staff developed guidelines for the Local-Level Participatory Planning Approach (LLPPA) designed to integrate NRM interventions, productivity intensification measures and small-scale community infrastructure such as ponds and feeder roads. LLPPA is at the core of the WFP-assisted MERET project to combat land degradation and food insecurity in several regions, including Tigray.

In the past decade, several NGOs and bilateral donors (e.g. GTZ, SOS-Sahel, AMAREW) have supported application of similar approaches in close collaboration with government partners.

REST hosted various workshops on LLPPA, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Technology Development (PTD) and catchment planning. Staff members of REST and the Tigray Government were introduced to the watershed approach through visits to India and China, financed primarily by Irish Aid. Under the recently introduced Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) supported by a multi-donor consortium, community-based participatory watershed development is being scaled up throughout Ethiopia, in an attempt to apply a standardised approach (Lakew *et al* 2005).

REST adoption of the watershed approach. Up to 2002, REST's implementation approach in the IADP and in other projects supported by other donors was in a scattered manner, in efforts to reach all villages in the project areas. Although these efforts did make some contribution to rehabilitating the natural resources, they had limited impact on improving food security (REST 2006). REST then shifted its strategy to focusing the soil and water conservation (SWC) work in selected, critical watersheds and giving households access to credit to adopt their choice of extension packages, based on their priorities, interests and labour availability.

Although, already before adopting the watershed approach in 2003, REST had organised training in LLPPA to be able to identify types of SWC activities to be carried out in water catchments, this was not explicitly proposed as a planning approach in the original project document for the current phase of the IADP. It is striking that, in the DF impact report for 2004, it is stated that "REST recognised that local-level land-use planning is a powerful tool for helping communities identify their needs and include marginalised social groups, and decided to integrate this tool into all project areas starting in 2004" (REST 2004a).

The shift to the integrated watershed approach in REST's operational areas – not only those supported by the DF – reflects a learning process based on assessment of past experience, both in Tigray and in other parts of Ethiopia and other countries. The driving force for adopting the approach was to find a more efficient way of using scarce resources for productive activities at the same time as ensuring sustainable management and use of the resources. The SWC activities are therefore combined with efforts to strengthen the economic and social well-being of the watershed inhabitants at household and community level and to build local institutions to govern the resources.

Critically degraded watersheds and areas within watersheds, e.g. gullies, are selected as foci of attention. According to REST management staff, further criteria for selection are: drought-prone, high population pressure, large percentage of farmland endangered, and potential for development. Deliberate selection has been made of watersheds that lie within one *tabia* or even *kushet* (hamlet), so as to avoid additional complications in building local institutions for watershed management to interact with existing administrative structures.

Major principles and strategies. Judging from their reports and our own observations, REST tries to apply the following basic principles and strategies in its watershed approach:

- Assuring genuine participation of the community in decision-making in each step of the process (problem identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)
- Promoting sustainable resource management and food security by combining protection with production
- Integrating activities and sectors for synergetic effects
- Harmonising different forms of land use (cropping, grazing and woodland)
- Seeking complementarity between private and communal forms of land use
- Combining voluntary labour contributions and work for incentives (FFW)
- Rehabilitating critically degraded areas and protecting communal areas with potential for high productivity
- Working through government institutions
- Facilitating partnership between government and local institutions
- Targeting poor and marginalised people.

As pointed out by REST management, the principles applied at sub-watershed level can also be applied at larger scales, encompassing all of Tigray or even the entire Nile Basin. Thus, the work supported by REST in the small watersheds can provide lessons for scaling up.

2.2 Major shifts in emphases and components over the current project phase

For the last ten years, the IADP has been working in the same woredas, which includes a total of 90 tabias. Of these, the 37 tabias that are called “DF project tabias” number eight in Ahferom Woreda, 17 in Kolla Tembien Woreda, five in Tanqua-Abergelle Woreda and seven in Maikenetal sub-woreda of Werielekhe Woreda. The activities are now focused on 16 watersheds (four in Ahferom, five in Kolla Tembien, four in Tanqua-Abergelle and three in Werielekhe) that lie in parts of a total of 20 tabias, as far as could be seen from the maps to which we referred during our field trips⁴. The project work has been intensified within the 16 watersheds, focused on critical areas prioritised by the community, but it also integrates activities in different sectors beyond land management. The work has thus become more concentrated, yet – at the same time – has expanded in scope.

Comparing REST rehabilitation and development activities up to and after 2002 (the beginning of the current phase of IADP), the major shifts in emphases have been:

- **From scattered to focused and integrated activities** – a shift from scattered, thinly spread and relatively isolated activities to greater concentration in terms of geographic areas, seeking synergy between different components in order to show visible impact;
- **From protection to combination with production activities** – a shift from primarily protection of natural resources to combining protection with production and use;
- **From community to combination with household activities** – a shift from primary focus on communal activities to seeking complementarity between community-oriented and household-oriented activities, building assets at both community and household level.

Within the current project phase, the main shifts in emphases and components in the watershed approach, as a result of learning from experience in the IADP and other areas where REST works with the support of other partners, have been the following:

- **Stronger targeting of women.** Support for improving livelihoods is being more deliberately targeted towards female-headed households (FHHs), e.g. entrepreneurial training, improved access to rural credit (see Section 4.1);
- **Stronger targeting of youth.** Increased attention is being given to generating livelihood options especially for landless youth (see Section 4.2);
- **Greater emphasis on local institutional development.** REST has long been asking rural communities to form committees to manage physical structures constructed by REST, e.g. Water and Sanitation Committees to manage sources of potable water; it likewise asked each targeted community to form a committee to manage the watershed. However, during the current project phase, the realisation grew that the committees need considerable support to be able to continue management of the assets and development processes. Therefore, REST – working with partners such as WAT and the Cooperatives Bureau – is giving increasing attention to building the management capacities of community-based institutions, particularly those for watershed management (see Chapter 5).
- **Shift from large-scale irrigation schemes to small- and micro-scale irrigation.** Water-harvesting and storage technologies appropriate for smallholders, such as open hand-dug

⁴ Printed GIS maps were given to us at the outset of our review. However, the soft copies of GIS maps that were given to us at the end of our visit show a different number of watersheds in different locations in the same tabias. We are not sure which maps actually show the watersheds where the IADP is currently being implemented.

wells, backyard ponds, excavated⁵ water tanks and series of ponds, combined with low-cost technologies for lifting water (e.g. treadle pumps), allow individual households and small groups to practise micro-irrigation mainly to grow economic trees and vegetables. The use of ponds has considerably improved seedling survival rate in and around homesteads. This shift was reportedly in response to both farmer and government initiative to prioritise water resource development throughout Tigray. The various small-scale water-harvesting and micro-irrigation structures at household and community level, including drip irrigation facilities, being applied today were not in the original five-year proposal submitted to the DF.

- **Increased attention to micro-enterprise development and marketing.** Since 2003–04, REST began to regard marketing of farm produce as an integral part of agricultural development. This also reflects new government policy. REST now gives more attention to commercialisation of farming: orienting smallholders to produce for the market and promoting value-adding and service activities at several points along the market chain. Development of micro-enterprises is meant to facilitate the provision of adequate and appropriate inputs for production (high-value and local seeds, food-processing technologies, beehives, honey extractors etc). This is complemented by the formation of producer groups and cooperatives; training them in product quality, market standards, business management and marketing; and linking them with local micro-finance institutions, particularly the Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution (DECSI).
- **Recognition of local innovation.** Although it is not an expressed strategy within the IADP, observant REST field workers have been recognising informal experimentation and innovation by creative male and female farmers. In the written reports, only achievement of (primarily physical) targets is recorded but, in the field, exciting unreported activities are underway. Some REST experts and DAs have seen how farmers, on their own initiative and often stimulated by introduced technologies, have developed their own lower-cost and possibly more productive adaptations, particularly in beekeeping. These experts and DAs have organised exchange visits so that the local ideas for improvement can be shared and further stimulated. The only record we could find of such activities is a brief mention, in the 2004 annual report to the DF, of a workshop for 24 farmer innovators. However, the process, content and outcome of the workshop are not described in this or subsequent reports.

3. The watershed approach as applied in the IADP areas

3.1 Current implementation of the watershed approach

Planning. According to REST reports and interviewed farmers, the communities are involved in assessing local needs, selecting sites for SWC activities, selecting beneficiaries for FFW and assistance in household economic development, and overall preparation of operational plans. All activities carried out under the watershed approach are reportedly planned in consultation with community leaders, other sectoral committees, the local administration and the development committees (established by the government at woreda and kushet level in line with the regional policy of decentralisation) and relevant line bureau experts and agents, e.g. in agriculture, water, health and education. First, the government DA in NRM supports the Watershed Committee (WSC) in designing the watershed plan. The community members then discuss it. After their approval, this local operational plan is sent first to the tabia baito and then to the woreda baito, where it is amended in accordance with other development work planned by the government. It then comes back to the tabia baito and to the WSC for implementation.

⁵ These are sometimes called “underground water tanks”, a term that gives the impression that they are covered (under the ground), like underground tanks below buildings. To some degree, the tanks in the IADP operational areas are collecting surface water and, to some degree, below-surface (underground) water, i.e. they serve as infiltration galleries. They are dug into the ground but are open. To avoid confusion, we prefer to call them “excavated tanks”.

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent essential decisions about what is ultimately done are made at regional, woreda, tabia or watershed level. There are planning committees at each level. In principle, all problems and the activities to address them are identified through the WSC. The committees and baitos at woreda and tabia level are meant to approve the local-level plans within the framework of available resources (the level of which is not known to the WSCs). However, the external resources are being allocated by the regional government. Plans for additional activities, e.g. the building of the Farmer Training Centres (FTCs), are also coming from above; community members are expected to contribute materials and labour, regardless whether or not they have prioritised this in their own planning.

According to the DAs and the rural communities, the latter take the main decisions about types and sites of development activities, while the former provide advice, with support from REST experts. However, there do seem to be several ready-made solutions coming from outside in the form of packages about which the community members have to be convinced, e.g. stall-keeping or tethering of livestock. Moreover, the quotas for the rehabilitation and extension activities (e.g. length of SWC structures built, number of trees planted, number of ponds excavated) that have to be completed within a given time are also coming from above. To a large extent, therefore, the lower-level committees – especially at tabia and watershed level – have little choice but to implement the final plans coming from the higher levels.

The Tabia Development Committee, which is usually represented in the WSC, synchronises the different development activities within the tabia and minimises duplication of efforts. The Woreda Watershed Committee, which is more or less identical with the Woreda Development Committee, provides technical support and allocates budgets appropriately. Information about the efforts and outcomes of REST-supported work in building local organisational capacities can be found in Chapter 5.

Implementation. Under the technical guidance of REST and BoANR experts, community members carry out the work on the sites selected for conservation, enclosure and planting/sowing of trees and grasses. They also carry out physical conservation work through the Tigray-wide institution of free labour contribution (20 days/household/year).

The main types of activities that are being implemented in the IADP watersheds are:

- Enclosure mainly of communally-used hillsides and gullies. Areas are enclosed to promote natural regeneration of vegetation, and selected sites are sown with local and imported grass seed and tree seedlings. The communities develop their own bylaws on access rights and distribution of benefits, e.g. cut fodder. In each tabia, the Development Committee identifies rehabilitated gully and hillside areas to be allocated to landless households, and the choice is discussed and approved (or changed) during a community meeting. REST pays guards' wages in FFW for three years until the enclosed areas start to generate useful resources.
- Reforestation activities include seedling production in woreda nurseries, and pitting and planting led by the DAs and trained technical leaders from the kushets and tabias, advised by woreda experts. Trees are planted on both communal and private land. Hundreds of thousands of trees are planted each year⁶. Further activities include establishment of model agroforestry sites, mainly with fodder and fuelwood species; and backyard agroforestry with fodder and fruit trees – in some cases combined with digging of small ponds to water the seedlings as well as vegetable plots.
- Water development activities include developing potable water (drilling boreholes, training Water Committees, giving health and sanitation education) and constructing excavated tanks, hand-dug wells and series of ponds. Most excavated tanks and wells are built on individuals' land, whereas the series of ponds are meant to be managed and used by groups of farmers. Communities contribute their own labour and hand-tools to help construct the

⁶ Survival rates are not given in the annual reports. However, the mention of remarkable survival rates of trees watered from household ponds (85%) suggests that far fewer trees survive in communal areas.

wells, tanks and ponds. Community participation is reportedly higher in the case of individually managed than group-managed water sources (REST 2004b).

- **Livestock development** activities encompass promotion of dairy production, small ruminant production, improved beekeeping (including queen rearing) and forage development. Begeit dairy cows are bought in Humera, Western Tigray, by a Dairy Purchase Committee made up of beneficiary farmers and experts from the BoANR and REST. The cows are provided on a long-term credit basis (up to five years). The sheep and goats are provided exclusively to FHHs on credit. In 2003, reportedly in response to a high demand for forage and probably also in response to government policy to give more attention to livestock feeding, three government centres for forage seed multiplication were established in IADP areas.
- **Agricultural extension** activities include training and provision of inputs on credit for producing root crops for food and fodder, for irrigated fruit and vegetable production, and for seed-bank management.

Targeting. According to the DAs working in the IADP areas, most of their interventions – whether in collaboration with REST or as part of their regular extension work – are not focused on the poor but rather on interested farmers who usually have access to somewhat more than average resources and who make demands for extension services. However, certain activities under the IADP are focused on the poor and landless, such as making use of reclaimed land on hillsides and gullies. For the extension packages, poorer farmers can obtain cropping inputs, animals, equipment etc on loan, whereas the less poor pay cash. FHHs are being increasingly targeted as beneficiaries, particularly with respect to small-ruminant production.

3.2 Major strengths and achievements

Strengths. During our field visits and in discussions in Mekelle, we met with general consensus on the superiority of the watershed approach compared to earlier planning approaches. Some indications of the strengths of this approach were:

- **Good understanding of the watershed approach within the communities.** In all four IADP watersheds visited in Ahferom and Werielekhe Woredas, the communities could clearly describe the shift in REST-supported work from scattered environmental rehabilitation work to an integrated watershed approach. The local expression for watershed – *mefasese* – has itself the connotation that concentrated efforts are made on specific sites. The watershed approach fits well with local traditions (previously diluted by the state-imposed environmental rehabilitation work) to focus efforts on critical areas in common resources or even in their own fields, rather than spreading their efforts thinly over large areas. The communities we visited understood the approach well and could give good reasons for the choice and siting of rehabilitation and development activities within their respective watersheds.
- **Effective local institutions** have been created to manage the watersheds. The WSCs play an important facilitating and technical advisory role related to local development. They are enhancing, not duplicating, other local organisations at kushet and tabia level and are well integrated with these organisations. A successful shift in responsibility for local-level planning has been made from DAs and production cadres to the WSCs, which are now the ones conveying the community-based plans to the tabia baito. The WSCs appear to be skilled in mapping, analysing watershed resources, identifying priority problems and solutions, and mediating between the local community and government administrative bodies.
- **Engaging women and youth.** In the watershed approach, more attention is being given to engaging women and youth in productive activities than was the case in the past. There is greater differentiation in targeting community members (“unpacking the community” instead of regarding it as homogenous). Particularly the introduction of productive activities that do not require much or any land, e.g. gardening (high-value crops) and beekeeping, has favoured landless, land-poor and oxen-poor households.

- **Providing choices.** Different members of the community can choose from a range of options of extension packages and techniques, according to their interests and available resources. This leads to diversification and at least stabilisation or even increase in household incomes and gradual increase in the people's confidence and self-reliance.
- **Mutually reinforcing and relatively low-cost technologies.** Reclamation of degraded areas through enclosure, harvesting and storing water with small-scale structures, and combining conservation practices and organic inputs on arable land have reinforced each other, leading to better vegetation cover, higher rates of water infiltration and higher productivity from the land. Local people can now tap the higher water tables with hand-dug wells, collect water in small ponds and practise micro-irrigation. The relatively low-cost technologies such as multi-purpose trees, cut-and-carry feeding, composting and gardening (fruits, vegetables, spices) have been complemented by access to credit, inputs (livestock, seedlings, seed) and training.
- **Spread of watershed planning procedures.** According to REST staff and WSC members, there has been some spread of watershed planning procedures outside the REST-supported watersheds. Other rural communities and DAs have recognised the advantages of this approach to development. Although it is not an explicit part of the IADP strategy, the REST field staff and DAs have been using the watersheds as demonstration sites for farmers and to advocate the approach to decision-makers at woreda and regional level.
- **Changes in attitudes, values and outlook of watershed inhabitants** are becoming evident. They say that they see more reason for hope. They see that investing hard work – both on a communal and an individual basis – in harvesting and storing water brings important dividends, and this realisation is encouraging them to make greater efforts to improve the land and their lives. We repeatedly heard criticism from community members about dependency on food aid. Many expressed their determination to be self-reliant through their own hard work. There is even some readiness to contribute to improving the welfare of less fortunate communities that have not yet received support from REST and the DF. These expressions of commitment to self-reliance may reflect recent government campaigns in this direction but, in any case, appeared to be expressed with conviction. Thus, the watershed approach is providing a springboard for further self-driven development.

Quotes from farmers in REST/DF-supported watersheds:

"The watershed is hope, strength and promise for us."

"Making the pond was like discovering that we are sitting on gold."

"The big lesson we learn from REST is how one can improve one's life by working hard."

Indicators of successful protection for production. The concept of protection for production, which is central to the integrated watershed approach, has been key in generating genuine local interest in managing the natural resources. It marks an important advancement beyond the previous emphasis primarily on protecting natural resources from erosion and grazing. There are many indications that the protection for production has been successful and is widely welcomed:

- **Water for production.** SWC activities have led to higher water tables and continuous availability of water, so that water can be drawn from hand-dug wells for irrigation also during the dry seasons. Some homesteads have been entirely transformed because of water availability and access to treadle pumps, which can be operated easily even by children. Farmers in the watersheds we visited mentioned particularly this benefit of the SWC work (in addition to the benefit of obtaining FFW) and also appreciated the training and access to inputs through REST so that they can use the water more productively.
- **Increased local contributions.** At woreda, tabia and watershed level, the development committees report an increase in community contributions (primarily in the form of labour and

local materials) because the people increasingly recognise the production gains that have been achieved through communal SWC activities. If this is indeed the case, it will be interesting to monitor the extent of increase in local contributions to communal development activities now that the PSNP is providing payments for work done only by chronically food-insecure households.

- **Greater appreciation of area enclosure.** The area enclosures initially met – and to some extent still meet – with resistance from community members, especially from those who depend highly on livestock but also from extremely poor people who try to survive by gathering wild resources. However, there is a growing local appreciation of area enclosure, now that the resources have regenerated and can be used for production, e.g. beekeeping and harvesting grasses and branches lopped from trees to use as fodder. There is now reportedly more readiness of communities to assume responsibility for guarding and managing the resources, and several enclosed areas have been handed over completely to the communities. In these cases, REST no longer pays FFW to the guards.
- **Recognition of larger-scale benefits.** Where the watersheds supported by REST/DF cover only part of a tabia, the tabia baito members pointed out that development of the watershed contributes to the development of the entire tabia, i.e. there is recognition of the larger-scale benefits of the spatially focused work.

Local ownership. There are several reasons why the watershed approach has led to a stronger feeling of local ownership than did previous approaches to development:

- **Wider local participation in decision-making.** The formation and relatively good functioning of the WSCs with members from different social groups in the community has provided a wider scope for local participation than was previously the case. This institutional innovation is strengthening efforts to decentralise decision-making and governance and is empowering people at the grassroots. The process of planning by local people, managed by a committee elected from and by them, appears to have created a feeling of local ownership.
- **Realising own preferences.** The wide choice of options in terms of technical components being offered for adoption by the households allows people to choose what they prefer to do. Previously, they were more or less obliged to adopt particular technologies and to take a loan for new technologies, even if they were not entirely convinced about the advantages. There is still some tendency for farmers to adopt introduced technologies in order to maintain access to FFW, but this is likely to be less than in the past, now that the FFW distributed through the PSNP is more targeted to the poor.
- **Voluntary formation of producer groups** around activities such as beekeeping and dairying indicates some sense of collective ownership. This is likely to become stronger over time, to the extent that the group members recognise advantages in seeking economic advancement together on the basis of better land and water management.

3.3 Major weaknesses and challenges

Weaknesses. As is obvious from the above and from the monitoring reports, the watershed approach as applied in the IADP areas has been improving the environment and livelihoods of many people in the communities involved. However, some weaknesses could be discerned and indicate room for improvement. These are:

- **Gaps in understanding of the watershed approach:** Some government agents through which REST's interventions are implemented refer to the watershed approach as being limited to SWC activities rather than integrated with production and other development activities. This narrow interpretation raises questions as to the quality of the approach that is being scaled up throughout Ethiopia under the PSNP. The great emphasis on SWC technologies in the guideline for community-based participatory watershed development (Lakew *et al* 2005) tends to outweigh the good descriptive text on working with communities and may reinforce the narrow interpretation of watershed management.

- **Insufficient follow-up to training and other interventions** by monitoring whether people apply what they have learned, facilitating self-assessment by communities and households and, if necessary, designing supplementary training or other interventions to address observed weaknesses, e.g. in care of waterpoints, building of pit latrines etc. REST and government experts have a responsibility to check whether the interventions are being maintained or changed and why this is happening. Additional training may not always be the answer; use of more appropriate technologies or more appropriate approaches to involving particular groups within the community may be necessary.⁷
- **Lack of clarity regarding impact on different socio-economic strata.** The reporting on benefits of the watershed development activities, including the different extension packages, does not distinguish between the impacts on different socio-economic strata within the communities. The stories of the success of selected individuals are encouraging, as they show the potential for improvement, but do not reflect the overall situation and do not explain why some households succeed and others do not. A closer examination of these reasons would allow better targeting and possibly adjustment of the watershed development activities and extension packages to bring greater benefits to the more disadvantaged households.
- **Insufficient understanding of socio-political dynamics in the watersheds.** REST experts need to be more aware of the extent to which their support to local leaders and economic development of certain households are reinforcing or aggravating inequalities in power and in wealth. More discussion about this can be found in Chapter 5 on local OD.
- **Few direct links between WSCs to manage the larger watershed.** No mention was made by the WSCs about their liaising systematically with other communities/WSCs to manage the broader watershed to which their sub-watersheds belong. It was mentioned, however, that DAs try to coordinate activities in neighbouring watersheds.

Challenges. In the context of Tigray, the watershed approach faces several challenges, including the following, which should be more deliberately addressed:

- **Climatic limitations.** As most of the agricultural development activities depend on the local climatic conditions, the wide variation in precipitation between years and the unreliability in the timing of rainfall in Central Tigray strongly affects the year-to-year success of agriculture, including livestock-keeping. Although this is being addressed to some extent by promoting small-scale irrigation, the natural limitations need to be taken into account when introducing new technologies.
- **Local participation versus donor expectations.** The watersheds being supported by REST/DF were selected because of their critical degree of degradation, yet some potential for development. Compared with most other parts of Ethiopia, they are nevertheless low in natural resource potential and highly prone to drought. A tendency by REST to rush to meet the high donor expectations for quick results from these inherently low-potential areas may lead to introduction of technologies before the community in the watershed has had enough time to consider how the interventions suit the area, fit into ongoing initiatives and can be best managed.
- **Harmonisation of hydrological and administrative boundaries.** The lack of fit between hydrological and administrative boundaries under the watershed approach can create some conflicts in leadership, mobilisation of labour and use of the resources if the same watershed is shared by different tabias or woredas. REST deliberately chose to work in watersheds that do not cross tabia boundaries. We came across a case in which the watershed was within

⁷ A positive example of such monitoring, which deserves to be intensified, is that which led to the realisation that female-headed households (FHHs make up about 30% of all households in Tigray) were not benefiting commensurately from FFW. In response to this finding, the REST/Oxfam-Canada pilot project in Kolla Tembien focused on FHHs and showed that it is indeed possible – with an appropriate approach to development – for 96% of 200 poor FHHs to “graduate” in only three years from being food-deficit for seven months a year to being completely self-sufficient in food (Mulugeta 2005).

one tabia but the kushet boundaries did not coincide with the watershed boundaries, with the result that the WSC (of which all members came from only one kushet) planned and managed activities in only part (albeit the largest part) of the watershed. In another area, representatives from two kushets in the watershed were involved in the WSC. The management of watersheds that cross administrative boundaries offers a new challenge that needs to be addressed and supported by experts in OD and politico-administrative issues.

- **Potential incompatibility in approaches:** The major challenge in the watershed approach as practised by REST is the ambiguity of the interface of the REST/DF-supported interventions with the regular government extension services. REST and the government services are working within the same watersheds. The major differences in their approaches that could lead to incompatibilities are:
 - **Piloting versus wide coverage:** REST applies the watershed approach in limited pilot areas, while the government extension service is obliged to cover the entire region and uses a quota system to stimulate DAs to intervene as widely and quickly as possible. When the government tries to scale up approaches and technologies that REST has found to be successful in pilot areas, the push to expand quickly may not allow application of the essential principles of the watershed approach.
 - **Participatory versus top-down approaches:** REST pursues participatory approaches, working through grassroots committees that are to be supported by the DAs, while these same DAs are preoccupied with top-down approaches that involve convincing farmers to practise the standard packages being extended by the government. DAs feel themselves to be under considerable pressure from above to meet their quotas with respect to, e.g. number of ponds constructed. Now that the DAs are strongly recommending to the point of imposing a zero-grazing regime, many farmers have lost trust and confidence in them.
 - **Limited natural resource capabilities versus increased livestock assets.** A potential contradiction within the integrated watershed approach is promoting enclosure of grazing land while distributing small ruminants to land-poor women. REST reports indicate an increase in livestock holdings, the household approach in agricultural extension has set norms that each household should keep a certain number of animals according to household size, and the regional policy for zero grazing calls for enclosure of still more land. Several questions arise: With unreliable rainfall, to what extent can households rely on livestock if there is less access to grazing? Can the limited natural resources sustain a growing number of animals? Do the improvements in NRM actually make more fodder available for livestock? Does the change in livestock-keeping practices (zero grazing) promoted by the government lead to higher demands on women's and children's labour?
 - **Voluntary labour versus Food-for-Work:** The development support given by REST is meant to increase self-reliance of rural communities and to stimulate them to invest their labour and other resources for the benefit of their communities and households. The idea is that the voluntary labour of rural households (20 days/household/ year) be devoted to work in critical areas identified by the community in the watershed. However, there may be a tendency for community members to provide voluntary labour inputs in the annual (February) work campaign not primarily because they believe the work to be essential for local development but rather because they see this "participation" as prerequisite for access to FFW. It will be important to monitor whether implementation of the PSNP alleviates or exacerbates this tendency.
 - **Innovative versus model farmers:** To some extent, REST is supporting local initiatives by farmer innovators, while the DAs are expected to focus on model farmers who should implement the extension packages as instructed. To the extent that local innovators are identified, there is a danger that these will be used by DAs to push new technologies coming through the government extension system, rather than seeking to explore and improve the locally-appropriate ideas of the innovators.
 - **Better-off versus poorer farmers.** Targeting in government extension work appears to be biased towards better-off farmers who can adopt the extension packages and can serve as models for other farmers. Also in some activities supported by REST in the

IADP areas, e.g. household-level water harvesting in series of ponds and excavated tanks, better-off farmers appear to be benefiting more than are poorer farmers. Moreover, at least some of the support for water-harvesting by better-off households is given on a grant basis rather than on credit.

These potential incompatibilities deserve open discussion within the communities and within the government services and REST. The discussions should be conducted in ways that encourage farmers to voice their concerns without having to fear punishment in the form of denied access to support through government programmes.⁸

3.4 Recommendations to strengthen the watershed approach

In this section, we make some recommendations about improving the watershed approach being applied by REST, regardless of whether this is supported by the DF or by other donors. In Section 9.2, we focus on strategic priorities for REST/DF collaboration in continuing the watershed approach. In general terms, the watershed approach could be strengthened by:

- **Giving DAs more training about the watershed approach** so that they regard it as more than merely NRM. It is clear that, in the watershed approach, NRM forms the basis for all other activities, but if the support to productive activities (capacity building, facilitating access to land and water resources, facilitating access to inputs etc) is not well integrated with the NRM activities, the watershed inhabitants will have little or no motivation to continue them.
- **Giving increased attention to multiple forms of learning** by watershed committees and DAs within and beyond the REST operational areas. This would include formal training and extension, primarily working through the Farmer Training Centres, pursuing a deliberate strategy of making these functional under the governance of the local people. It would also include intensification of sharing between communities by gaining a good understanding of informal information-exchange mechanisms and processes, e.g. at ceremonies and markets, and deliberately using these occasions and sites for local learning about watershed planning processes and related development activities.
- **Studying the impact of the watershed approach on livestock-keeping**, particularly the impact of area enclosures and fodder development work on the livelihoods of land-poor and landless households, FHHs and families affected by debilitating illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. This should include investigation of the extent to which resources from enclosed areas are being equitably shared among all members of the community and, if not, what can be done to promote more equitable distribution.
- **Working in watersheds that cross tabia boundaries.** Having gained experience in promoting local planning and management of watershed development within a kushet or tabia, REST should now apply the approach where hydrological boundaries do not fit into administrative boundaries. It can then learn how watershed management institutions can operate effectively in collaboration with more than one tabia baito. This may mean working in collaboration with other donor agencies whose operational areas are in neighbouring tabias. Valuable lessons for scaling up the watershed approach could thus be gained, as many watersheds in Tigray will encompass more than one tabia or even woreda.
- **Stimulating liaison between sub-watersheds in the larger watershed.** Small-scale and large-scale watershed planning processes should link upstream and downstream resource users. The watershed is ideally an entry point and unit for local-level planning that can link to higher-level planning. REST should give greater attention to helping WSCs liaise with other communities in order to manage the bigger watershed to which their sub-watersheds belong.
- **Increasing attention to rural-urban linkages.** In the face of the dynamics of population growth, expansion of settlements and urbanisation, and changes in level of formal education, more attention should be given to the rural-urban linkages beyond the watershed, particularly

⁸ In some localities, it was reported that kushet or tabia leaders oblige farmers to implement certain extension packages such as ponds and, if the farmers resist, they lose access to food or cash for work.

with respect to input and output markets, off-farm and non-farm income-generating activities and information flows in both directions. A good starting point would be to identify local initiatives in this connection – especially by youth – and to explore together with the concerned actors how to strengthen them.

4. Issues of social differentiation according to gender and age

4.1 Gender issues

Enabling policy environment. The situation and position of women with regard to decision-making and empowerment are changing rapidly in Tigray. In late 2002, when REST elaborated its gender policy (REST 2002), participation of women in government and community affairs was still in its infancy. Over three years later, an enabling policy environment is supporting active participation of women in decision-making. Policy demands that 50% of baito members at tabia and woreda level are women. In the recent elections, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) decided that 30% of the candidates for parliament would be women. The regional policy supporting gender equality has arguably given women more confidence to speak out for their rights. When asked if there were barriers to full participation, women in the watersheds we visited said that the only problem was participating in meetings when they were in late pregnancy or had small babies.

Supportive institutions. Different actors in development have been playing an important role in empowering women. These include donors, who have been pushing for pro-active work with women and on gender issues. The new manual for integrated watershed development under the PSNP (Lakew *et al* 2005) stresses the importance of women's empowerment. In the tabias we visited, other actors, e.g. the church, are helping to raise awareness on gender issues. Priests are raising issues ranging from early marriage to HIV/AIDS prevention.

The Women's Association of Tigray (WAT) is seeking to strengthen women's leadership and management capacities. The structure of WAT goes from regional to grassroots level. At tabia and woreda level, WAT focuses on awareness-raising about gender policy, male and female rights to land in case of divorce, and laws against early marriage, among others.

Within the government structure, the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BoWA) focuses on gender mainstreaming in governmental institutions, addressing what it refers to as a "big gender blindness". The work of WAT and BoWA is intrinsically related, and there is good cooperation between the two institutions at all levels. BoWA is working on building the capacity of women in leadership positions at woreda level and in focal points in government offices. It is also tackling HIV/AIDS prevention. It is in the process of developing a strategic plan for the next few years. The newly-appointed gender expert in REST headquarters is in contact with BoWA. There is potentially much to gain from such contacts in terms of mutual support and capacity building.

REST's work at local level is supported and implemented by the DAs employed by the government. We were told that the DAs facilitate both women's and men's participation in REST-supported activities.

Women's involvement in local institutions. In the watersheds visited, women were members of the WSCs, but they differed considerably in their outspokenness. For example, in Maisuru and Endamariam, where women's representation in the WSC was foreseen from the beginning, women took active part in our meetings with the WSC and were relatively outspoken. In Adwa, on the other hand, women were not initially part of the WSC. After over two years of operation as a WSC, the members realised the importance of women's participation. This meant that the women had been in the WSC only for the past 1.5 years, and they were still quite shy in voicing their opinions to the review team. Our field work in Werielekhe showed that women in that woreda are not yet able and/or willing to voice their views in public. It was thus obvious that women's level of empowerment differs greatly from one watershed to another.

At local level, women are also important actors in groups, clubs and other committees, such as anti-AIDS clubs and the Tigray Youth Association. At the local school (in Endamariam), WAT is supporting girls clubs. Women were also seen taking up positions as production cadres (farmers who support others on implementing activities, e.g. making energy-efficient stoves) in addition to traditional roles, e.g. as Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA).

4.1.1 Strengths and achievements of REST's gender-related work

- **Economic empowerment.** The main strength of REST's work was repeatedly formulated along the lines of "strong efforts to increase the participation of women" and "involving women in income-generating activities". There was consensus among all interviewees that women have benefited substantially from REST's activities in rural areas. Certain REST projects, especially those related to training for small-enterprise development, have been especially important for women. Benefiting from these projects may lead to a certain economic independency from men. Increasing economic power of women leads to increased socio-political power within society and family. It was striking to us how many of the women we met in the field were accessing credit and becoming less dependent on male-owned resources.
- **Diffusion of good practices.** From 2002 to 2005, REST carried out an interesting pilot project targeting FHHs in two tabias in Kolla Tembien Woreda. The women were engaged in FFW activities that improved the environment and productive assets in and near their homes. They were trained in business skills and encouraged to study and respond to market opportunities in their localities. They were supported in taking decisions and risks, freely choosing from a range of on-farm and off-farm investment possibilities. Their access to credit was facilitated. As a result of this pilot project, the FHHs earned an annual income ranging from Birr 600 to Birr 2000 from their supported investments. Local institutions were also formed to manage the revolving fund and the project itself. The women involved handle their own credit distribution and repayment. This pilot was supported by Oxfam-Canada and has been well analysed (Mulugeta 2005); REST is now planning to scale this up in the DF-supported areas, using the same enterprise-oriented approach.
- **Women value benefits of hard work.** The additional activities in which women are engaging to generate their own income, such as livestock rearing and gardening, clearly increase their workload. Nevertheless, when asked about this, they stated that the added burden was "worth it". They stressed that access to such activities is vital to their (and their families') well-being and there was no other option than simply to work harder.
- **Recognition of male and female innovators.** In some of the watersheds visited, we had the opportunity to see some male and female innovators: farmers that use their own creativity in experimenting and improving traditional and modern technologies alike. The fact that REST staff is able to recognise both female and male farmer innovators reveals that they regard not only men but also women as active farmers.
- **Good local-level collaboration with WAT and BoWA.** By making information and materials available for campaigns in woredas and tabias, REST supports WAT in its efforts to raise awareness about gender issues – support that is highly appreciated by both WAT and BoWA. In Maisuru Woreda, for example, women mentioned the important support REST provided in a campaign against early marriage. At community level, REST interventions are supporting WAT's work, especially those targeting FHHs. For policy advocacy at woreda level, BoWA and WAT regard REST as an important partner. REST facilitates lobbying at woreda level by paying transport and per diems for women to attend meetings.
- **Empowerment in leadership.** At community level, REST has played an instrumental role in ensuring women's participation in the WSC (at least three of the 12 members). It works together with WAT at woreda and tabia level in giving leadership training to men and women.
- **Lobbying for gender-sensitive norms.** REST has been outspoken in questioning the treatment of women involved in FFW activities, specifically the expectation that women

achieve the same working norms (e.g. metres of terraces constructed) as men, although communities had decided that, in the voluntary labour activities, women need to complete only half of the norm of men.

4.1.2 Weaknesses and challenges of REST's gender-related work

- **Slow gender mainstreaming within REST.** At the opening workshop with REST staff in Mekelle, it became clear that REST's main weakness with regard to gender is the slow gender mainstreaming within the organisation. The clearest sign of this is the complete lack of women at management level, and the existence of very few women experts at operational level. While some staff explained this by a shortage of women capable of taking up the challenge, others mentioned the lack of "special conditions to attract women to the positions". BoWA referred to the role that REST could play as an "exemplary institution", supporting women to build their capacities and to advance to management level.
- **Weak institutional linkages at regional level.** Although operational linkages with WAT are good at woreda and tabia level⁹, they are less so at regional level. According to the 2004 annual report (REST 2005c), BoWA, WAT and REST gender committee members held a joint workshop to create networking opportunities and to share experiences among line bureaux with regard to gender mainstreaming and sensitisation. However, the initiative was neither continued nor followed up (Waters-Bayer *et al* 2005).
- **Inadequate sensibility for women's particular needs and situation** is evident with respect to some activities and technologies. Activities such as carrying heavy stones and building terraces may be too heavy for women (especially for those who are pregnant or nursing), while some of the introduced technologies and facilities do not take into account the specific needs of women (e.g. waterpoints without a platform for loading water containers onto the woman's back).
- **Unequal degrees of empowerment.** Despite some promising initial developments, the economic power of women has not yet been strengthened as much as that of men, especially among women in male-headed households. There are inequalities also in terms of socio-political empowerment: 50% participation of women does not necessarily mean that women have 50% of decision-making power. Some women stated that male chauvinism is still very evident in the decision-making fora at all levels, as well as in some youth groups.

4.1.3 Recommendations for REST's gender-related work

- **Implement REST's gender action plan.** REST's gender policy and action plan (REST 2002) recognises the weak position of women within the organisation's staff. Over three years have passed since this action plan was drawn up, and the number of women at management level has only further decreased (from one in December 2002 to zero in January 2006). The action plan contains several constructive suggestions, but these apparently have not been fully put into practice. For example, in order to "narrow down the imbalance between men and women in higher level positions of the organisation" and to strengthen efforts to attract women to operational and management positions in REST, the action plan suggests numerous measures including: upgrading the educational level of female staff members, arranging exposure visits to raise their capacity, explicitly encouraging female applicants when advertising positions, recruiting a female rather than a male candidate with comparable qualifications and competence, providing full salary for women on maternity leave, and providing 90 days maternity leave and seven days paternity leave. In addition to these suggestions, one could add: provision of accommodation, support for child care, and salary bonus or increment.

⁹ Even here, however, formal institutional linkages are still weak. In the 2004 annual report (REST 2005c), it is stated that, starting in 2004, REST would establish Gender Core Teams (GCTs) at woreda and tabia level. The GCT would consist of representatives from REST woreda staff, TYA, WAT and the Tigray Farmers Association. We did not come across such teams in the field, and they were not mentioned in the woredas and tabias where we facilitated exercises to map local institutions.

- **Internalise gender mainstreaming throughout REST management.** REST tends to see strong leadership as the missing asset in the Gender Unit. Nevertheless, if the REST management does not internalise “gender mainstreaming”, a strong woman in the Gender Unit will not alone make the crucial difference.
- **Strengthen collaboration at regional level.** The 2002 action plan also suggests building stronger alliances with government and civil-society partners to mainstream gender. Particularly collaboration with WAT and BoWA at regional level needs to be strengthened. Both can potentially contribute to REST’s work in capacity building.
- **Seek greater gender equity at local level.** In the watersheds, REST could encourage communities to take more equal advantage of both male and female potential in all age groups. In view of the fact that women are also young, farmers and elders (i.e. they belong to all age groups within the community), REST could encourage the WSCs to think about changing the way women are represented within them. Presently, a WSC of 12 members usually includes three women plus three youths, three farmers and three elders, all nine of which are male. One might look at women’s participation from a more integrated perspective, which could lead to a WSC with four elders, four middle-aged farmers and four youth, with two men and two women in each group, leading to a total of six women. A similar suggestion is made in the government guideline for watershed development (Lakew *et al* 2005): that a “Community Watershed Team” be composed of ten members, at least five of which should be “influential and outspoken women”, four of them representing FHHs.
- **Identify and adapt technologies appropriate for women**, i.e. technologies which respond to their specific needs and interests. In one of the watersheds visited, for example, women mentioned the need to install mechanisms to help them lift water from the reservoirs.
- **Promote collective economic empowerment of women.** We very much agree with the suggestions made in the 2006–10 Strategic Plan (REST 2005d) and the recent internal evaluation (REST 2006) to strengthen attention to collective economic empowerment of women. This could be achieved through development and support of, e.g., women’s cooperatives in fields in which they have special interest, enterprise development on an individual and group basis, and business training – building on the experiences made in the above-mentioned pilot project in Kolla Tembien. This should include women not only in FHHs but also in male-headed households.¹⁰
- **Build women’s confidence in mixed-gender groups.** REST should give more attention to dynamics in building women’s confidence. There appears to be a deliberate choice to work with women’s groups separately from men’s groups (also among the youth). Starting with separate groups is a sensible strategy to make sure that the women and girls develop strong self-confidence. Yet they must also be prepared to assert themselves in mixed groups, e.g. cooperatives and management committees. REST should more deliberately build capacities of women to participate in such mixed groups in a more equal way.

4.2 Youth-related issues

In their strategic plans, REST and the DF are giving more attention to developing the potential of youth in rural areas. According to TYA’s five-year strategic plan, “youth” refers to people between 15 and 35 years of age. The Ethiopian youth policy defines youth as those between 15 and 30, but the bylaws of TYA, which are older, still maintain the wider age range. The DF’s definition includes only people between 15 and 24 years of age. The TYA definition is applied throughout Tigray, both at regional and local level. Government institutions and political parties regard youth not only as a source of labour and newly acquired skills for development but also as a potential source of political support, and therefore favour participation of youth in community institutions and interventions.

¹⁰ In REST’s newly drafted strategy, the emphasis continues to be on FHHs. There is no mention of attention to women in male-headed households.

TYA estimates that almost 26% of Tigray's population can be classified as "youth". In 2005, it made a survey of 368 youth in 23 tabias in Tigray. Of the 176 respondents living in rural tabias, 48% were landless and 40% were "homeless or living with their parents". "Landless" refer to lack of access to rather than ownership of land. Youths with access to land include those who inherit land and those who gain access through renting, sharecropping agreements etc.

Thus far, REST's work with youth has been within its operational areas, but with few links to the regional TYA, even though the two organisations are pursuing similar aims. TYA's income comes mostly from membership fees, but some external donors are directly or indirectly (through other organisations) supporting its activities. The organisation is presently trying to build its institutional capacity. Activities implemented or coordinated by TYA include advocacy aimed at influencing government policy on problems involving the youth and their families, income-generating activities (supporting revolving funds, beekeeping, irrigation, construction, livestock) and awareness-raising to prevent HIV/AIDS and early marriage. TYA is also providing *ad hoc* support to innovative ideas of youth groups, such as a waste-collection initiative in Mekelle. At regional level, TYA focuses mainly on urban youth, although some of the above-mentioned activities are also targeted to their rural peers.

The BoWA has also been working with the youth, through training youngsters about gender issues. It has been focusing on girls clubs at schools, training the girls to be more assertive and making them aware of government policy related to women's participation in decision-making, laws against early marriage, etc.

Like WAT, TYA has a structure of representation that goes down to the grassroots level. TYA was formally established at regional level in 1983, but it was only in very recent years that the youth – encouraged by REST in the woredas visited – really joined forces to carry out activities. In the four IADP watersheds visited, the youth groups were involved in several productive activities, mostly since 1–2 years, including honey production, bee queen rearing, indoor feeding of livestock, and growing vegetables and spices. Some of these activities, e.g. beekeeping, were completely financed through (credit taken via) REST. In the case of vegetable growing, the youth were supported by both the line bureaux and REST.

A fairly recent focus in REST/DF-supported work is on landless youth. In collaboration with the woreda administration and the local communities, REST has helped landless youth acquire rights to use communal hillsides and reclaimed gullies for timber production, fruit growing, beekeeping and other forms of livestock-keeping (using a cut-and-carry feeding system). Most of the heavy rehabilitation work on the land is done by the whole community, as part of the FFW or voluntary work. The WSC then discusses the allocation of the rehabilitated land, together with the previous land owners and the rest of the community. The final decision on land allocation is sanctioned by the tabia baito. Land is then granted to a group of youth, who further subdivide the area and cultivate individual plots. Before being involved in the TYA and in the cultivation of these areas, the youth would often migrate to seek work in towns, perform paid tasks within the community and work in sharecropping. Most of REST's activities with youth are still focused on land rather than off-farm activities that could support agriculture and NRM, as was already noted during the previous evaluation (Robinson *et al* 2001).

The level of education of the youth is rising. Enrolment in primary school is said to be close to 100%, even in rural areas. In view of this changing scenario, we deliberately discussed the role of the educated youth in the rural communities. Some of the older members of the communities recognise the potential contribution of educated youth to incorporate new ideas into existing local experience. They are keen to build on the insights of the new generation by involving youth in decision-making. In some of the watersheds visited (i.e. Endamariam and Adwa), educated young people were purposely chosen to join the WSC, as their writing, reading and calculation skills could help in documentation and analysis of the activities.

4.2.1 Strengths and achievements of REST's youth-related work

- **Strengthening youth's contribution to development.** According to the communities visited, REST has greatly contributed to strengthening the position of youth and their contribution to their own and the community's development. Through activities targeted at youth, it facilitated alternative means of access to land and provided training, tools and materials. Furthermore, through FFW, REST provided the human (community) power needed to recuperate the land allocated to the youth.
- **Instilling hope for the future.** The interviewed TYA members maintain that they would still need some years (time span varying from group to group) to build their assets and capacities further towards self-reliance before REST phases out support to their area. But when asked what they would do if REST would leave immediately, the youth groups stated that they would continue "the struggle" and their present activities. They already feel much stronger than before, and REST has showed them "hope for the future". This indicates a high level of ownership and potential for long-term sustainability.
- **Promoting group activities.** REST has tried to stimulate group work in areas allocated to the youth. In Maisuru, for example, two groups of young men are now cultivating strips of land in a rehabilitated gully. A group of female youth is in the process of organising itself. Although the land is cultivated in an individual basis, the group members still rely on each other for having access to credit. For example, in Endamariam, a male youth group is seeking joint credit for queen rearing and beehive marketing.
- **Enrolment in community decision-making.** REST has played a strategic role in ensuring that youth, in the same way as women, have seats in the WSC. The youth representatives interviewed claim that they can easily bring forth their interests and problems in this decision-making body. Indeed, the young males were amongst the most vocal individuals in the community meetings held in all the watersheds we visited.

4.2.2 Weaknesses and challenges of REST's youth-related work

- **Gender imbalance.** In both woredas visited, our discussions with youth groups were only with young men (mainly because the young women chose to join the discussions with groups of women). Although groups of both young men and young women have been formed under the TYA, we heard of only one group of female youth that was organising itself to implement activities (see above). In our debriefing session in Ahferom Woreda, participants confirmed that young women are still "behind" in terms of taking part in enterprise development activities within the TYA.
- **Danger of marginalising the non-formally educated.** Increasing attention to youth may be marginalising the experience and knowledge of the elders and other non-formally educated farmers. Although we see the positive side of the communities' openness to the contribution of the youth, this should not be at the expense of the contribution of community members without formal education. In one non-IADP watershed (Adwa), elders did not have seats in the WSC because they were not considered intellectually and physically fit to join the group.
- **Increasing pressure on the land.** In its work in the watersheds, REST puts great emphasis on activities related to land and natural resources, also in the work with youth. REST is not giving enough attention to off-farm activities in which youth – especially the formally educated – could be engaged in the rural areas, thus releasing pressure on the land.
- **Weak linkages with local schools.** There is a weak link between the institutions of formal education (local schools) and the watershed approach. We came across only isolated attempts to bring the reality in the watershed (local environment, farming, rural development) into theoretical and practical formal education in the schools. Environment Clubs seem to be the only link between the work done outside the school and that done inside it.
- **Weak links with TYA at regional level.** Links between TYA and REST at regional level are reportedly non-existent. There is therefore poor linkage between activities and initiatives

taken by the youth (through TYA) at regional level, especially in urban areas, and the ones supported by REST and local TYA groups in the rural tabias and woredas.

- **Insufficient room for innovativeness.** TYA has been giving urban youth considerable room for innovativeness. We do not feel that similar openness for the creativity of youth has been fully incorporated into REST's work in rural areas.

4.2.3 Recommendations for REST's youth-related work

- **Capacity building and enterprise development.** When asked where REST should focus in the future, the youth pointed to a broad range of activities, from providing tools and other materials such as seeds and seedlings, gabion etc to capacity building to address their need to build up options for the future. Capacity building refers to both technical training (e.g. construction) and more process-oriented training (e.g. diversification in income-generating activities, investment, cooperatives and entrepreneurship). The top priority was capacity building for enterprise development, because the youth saw this as a requirement for tapping on-farm and off-farm opportunities to set up small businesses.
- **Release pressure on the land.** Support by REST and other agencies to keep people on the land could aggravate pressure on scarce resources. REST could tackle this problem by stimulating youth to engage in off-farm activities such as marketing and other enterprises¹¹. Some examples are: operating privatised nurseries, beehive construction and assembly, producing gabion, providing local transport services (e.g. with donkeys or with animal-drawn carts), input supply, tool-bank management, equipment maintenance, providing plough contracting services, etc. These developments should not make the youth dependent on REST, but instead show them the way to set up their own businesses. In any case, as settlements grow and urbanisation increases, many rural youth are being attracted to urban areas. Some are already becoming involved in urban gardening and the informal market (selling honey or milk, operating teashops). REST should identify relevant local initiatives at the rural-urban interface and support them.
- **Improve gender balance.** REST and government staff should give more attention to encouraging the involvement of young women in activities being carried out with youth groups and individual youths, and should seek to ensure that young men and young women in the rural communities benefit equally from capacity building.
- **Stimulate thinking on age dynamics and resource use.** REST should stimulate thinking about the future of today's youth (after they turn 35) and the youth of tomorrow (today's children). When asked about the future of those who turn 36, some youth said they would have access to their parents' lands by then. Others thought that 36-year-olds could continue in the youth group if they so desire. All agreed that they would not lose access to the land they have been granted (hillsides, gullies etc). Further, they said that accumulated assets, gathered through beekeeping and other activities, would allow them to continue making a living. Regarding the future of children who will turn 15 in a few years, the youth argued that education will make them better able to take advantage of local possibilities and resources and intensify use of the land. Others said that educated youth will migrate to cities where they can find better-suited jobs. A third group said that the children would have greater chances to gain access to land, because by the time they get older their parents will be too old to farm. This group saw the problem of the landless as confined to their own generation; it will solve itself in the future. Building on these perspectives, REST could stimulate reflection within the communities with a view to avoiding future conflicts and creating an enabling environment for future generations to gain their livelihoods.
- **Link watershed activities and local schooling.** By supporting environmental education initiatives (in the productive sense of the word "environmental"), REST could bring the watershed work closer to the school. Learning sites could be set up around the schools, managed and worked by teachers and children (but not as punishment for misbehaving

¹¹ This is included in REST's new strategy and is discussed further in Section 9.1.2.

ones!). On school grounds, REST and government staff could support experimentation and learning related to new technologies. Environmental education can also bring the school closer to the watershed work, contextualising the school lessons and relating them to the local realities. School staff, supported by REST and DAs, could organise visits to work accomplished in the watershed and to innovative farmers who are experimenting with new ideas. That would build the children's confidence and open their eyes for internal and external resources of which they could better make use in the future. In the (non-IADP) Adwa area, for example, the watershed serves as an education centre to teach children about the environment (Berhane Woldetensaie & Yohannes GebreMichael 2005b).

- **Recognise the role of elders.** The gap between literate and illiterate people within the community seems to be widening. The value of literacy cannot be denied, but illiterate people – especially very experienced elders – can also make very valuable contributions in local assessment and planning. While strengthening the role of youth in watershed development, REST should be careful not to undermine the elders' role and importance.
- **Collaborate with TYA at regional level.** TYA is keen on starting up all sorts of activities in rural and urban areas, and has already done so to a certain extent. Communication and coordination with TYA would strengthen the work of both REST and TYA, avoiding duplication, stimulating mutual learning and supporting each other.

4.3 HIV/AIDS

Our ToRs do not mention HIV/AIDS as a separate issue, but we believe that not addressing this would be overlooking its importance as a cross-cutting issue affecting people in all gender and age groups.

There has been increasing attention to HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation in Tigray over the last decade. The government and REST are working in close partnership primarily in rural areas. REST supports many awareness-raising activities in community organisations (including the development and distribution of a series of local videos), distribution of condoms, training of community health workers (CHWs) etc. It also offers support to Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) in the form of cash, school materials and payment of living expenses, and to orphans of parents who are assumed to have died as a result of HIV/AIDS.

4.3.1 Strengths and achievements of REST's HIV/AIDS-related work

- **Increased awareness.** The awareness-raising activities have led to increased knowledge about mode of transmission and prevention methods. In a survey in 2004, REST found that 90% of the respondents knew about HIV/AIDS, how it is transmitted and how it can be prevented (REST 2005c). Several couples have gone for testing prior to marriage, and we were told that some couples did not marry when a partner was diagnosed positive. A REST Health Expert informed us that, in Werielekhe, about 600 people went for testing in 2005, in comparison with zero in 2004. Of those 600, some 30 were diagnosed positive¹². Although the number of people going for testing is still fairly small, it does represent a step forward.
- **Local understanding of links between human and environmental health.** The awareness-raising also appears to have led to an understanding of the relationship between HIV/AIDS and watershed development, in the sense that "we need healthy people to create a productive watershed" (farmer in Endamariam Tabia). The fact that some rural people think in this way reflects how they understand concepts of integrated development.
- **Capacity building.** REST's support to capacity building of CHWs and TBAs has proved very important in raising community awareness and improving treatment for PLWHAs.
- **Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS.** Through sensitisation of REST and line bureau staff, REST has aimed at mainstreaming HIV/AIDS throughout all REST and government-implemented

¹² REST Health Expert Kelali Tsegay, pers. comm.

activities. REST reportedly makes good use of the opportunity to raise the subject during every meeting or training with the rural communities.

- **Supporting local institutions and initiatives.** REST has played a strategic role in supporting existing anti-AIDS clubs in schools and in the communities.
- **Some attention to mitigating impact.** There has been some attention (especially by CHWs) to mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS through appropriate income-generating and/or improved nutrition activities in which affected persons can be engaged. In this connection, training about HIV/AIDS has been given to DECSI staff. Issues tackled include the way the disease affects the credit and savings activities of individuals and households. Training given to REST staff and community peer educators has also dealt with problems faced by PLWHAs in relation to food security (REST 2004b and 2005b).

4.3.2 Weaknesses and challenges of REST's HIV/AIDS-related work

- **Little behavioural change.** Despite the considerable efforts to raise awareness at woreda, tabia and community level and the reported increase in knowledge about HIV/AIDS, our field interviews revealed that awareness has not led to a substantial change in behaviour. The use of condoms, for instance, is not yet widespread. When visiting Maisuru watershed, we were told by members of the TYA that they did not even fully believe in the existence of HIV/AIDS. Elsewhere, we heard that stigmatisation of PLWHAs is extremely high.
- **Attention to mitigating impact still insufficient.** In its "Strategy for HIV/AIDS-related interventions", REST reflects on the development impacts and implications of HIV/AIDS, saying that "its impact on food security ... is of great concern". In practice, although REST and line bureaux have paid great attention to awareness-raising, they have given too little attention to ways of mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS on affected households, or how to support PLWHAs to alleviate the effects on food security. A series of trainings did pay attention to difficulties faced by PLWHAs in attaining food security and healthcare, but there is still a much greater emphasis on awareness-raising and prevention than on mitigation.

4.3.3 Recommendations for REST's HIV/AIDS-related work

- **Critically look at the present awareness-raising strategy.** The fact that "there is still a long way to go" in terms of behavioural change regarding HIV/AIDS leads us to reflect on how REST has tackled awareness-raising. It relies on several tools for this purpose, such as developing and distributing videos depicting real-life stories acted by local people. Possibly these films have not yet been given enough time to make a difference at ground level (they are fairly recent products from 2004 and 2005). The awareness-raising tools and how they are used should be revisited, together with the communities, to analyse why they have not led to change in behaviour. REST could also take advantage of relevant experiences and materials developed by other organisations by networking with them. Other forms of awareness-raising may be more effective or could complement those presently being used.
- **Targeting affected households.** More attention needs to be given to households that have been weakened, whether through HIV/AIDS or other illnesses or disabilities. Economic activities in which they can engage should be promoted. This suggestion is in agreement with the strategies indicated in the internal evaluation by REST (2006), such as livelihood diversification, improved nutrition for people living with HIV/AIDS, and legal assistance and training to prevent asset stripping. However, these strategies are not reflected in the activities planned according to this document, nor are they mentioned in the 2006–2010 Strategic Plan. The targeting of affected households needs to be integrated with the PSNP support that is being made available in the IADP operational areas.
- **Strengthen community-based social support systems.** Together with community and woreda staff, REST should explore ways in which PLWHAs and orphans can continue to receive support from the community, from government and from internal resources. There is currently much reliance on external funding through limited-term projects.

5. Local organisational development and learning

5.1 Approach to local organisational development

In our review of REST's strategy and planning documents up to 2005, we could not find an explicit strategy for local OD and how a rights-based approach is incorporated into this. Even in REST's new strategy document (REST 2005d), concepts of local OD are vague. Plans regarding institutional development refer only to development of REST as an institution. REST's reporting on local OD within the DF-supported IADP is very sparse. The following remarks are therefore based almost exclusively on observations and interviews in the field.

Establishing user and producer groups. Already before starting the watershed approach, REST had been asking communities to form committees to manage communal assets, e.g. wells, or group-based production activities. REST's strategy appears to be to help local people build functional groups around concrete activities, so as to increase the probability that local management continues after phasing out of REST's support.

Numerous sectoral committees have been established, such as to manage sources of potable water, irrigation facilities (e.g. from a river diversion or group ponds), seed banks and nurseries¹³. Each committee is responsible for facilitating agreement by the users on how the resource or facility is to be used and maintained and for ensuring that the agreements are upheld. REST, together with relevant government agents, trains the committees in leadership and management. This includes setting levies and collecting contributions for guarding and for future maintenance or replacement of equipment. According to reports and our own interviews and observations, the user groups are fairly balanced in gender terms and are composed of people who are recognised in the community as capable and responsible. The local committee members could clearly explain the differences between their tasks and those of the WSC, e.g. that the Water and Sanitation Committee is responsible for managing and maintaining a specific waterpoint and teaching users about environmental sanitation, whereas the WSC is responsible for planning and coordinating all development activities within the larger watershed.

In the last two years, attention has been given especially to establishing rural producer groups, such as in beekeeping, dairying and horticulture. Women are also actively involved in the producer groups which, according to the women themselves and the Woreda Development Committees, have been functioning well. Loan repayment rates by women are very high. The committees for managing the revolving credit schemes at tabia and woreda level are likewise of mixed gender. The main purpose of the producer groups is to help farmers gain access to credit for production inputs as well as to gain better access to markets and reduce marketing costs. Particularly the landless youth also see an advantage of operating as a group to negotiate access to land-use rights. The producer groups are trained in product quality and market standards, business management and marketing, and handling credit.

Multi-stakeholder watershed management committees. In each watershed visited, the communities stated that the DAs and REST asked them to form a committee to plan and manage activities to rehabilitate and develop the watersheds. The communities organised themselves as instructed. The WSCs are elected by the community which meets in a general assembly. Candidates are selected according to criteria such as: hard working, experienced in coordinating community activities, willing to assist the community, capable of representing others in the community, experienced in SWC, heads of well-performing households who adopt different packages delivered and solve their own problems of food shortage (WSC member in Tsegereda: "If they cannot succeed as households, they cannot be good leaders"). The committees in the REST/DF-supported watersheds appear to be identical: consisting of three (male) elders, three (male) farmers, three (male) youth and three women. Committee members explained that these represent the major groupings in the community.

¹³ However, most seeds bank and nurseries are still being financed and run by the government and REST.

After their election, the WSC members received a series of trainings, starting with what they described as a fairly theoretical introduction to the concept of watershed management and explanation of the roles of the WSC. Subsequent training sessions included self-assessment of the work done by the community and the committee. The committee usually meets once a month to plan and monitor, assisted by the DA for NRM. In some cases, members of sectoral committees, e.g. for water and sanitation or for seed-bank management, are also members of the WSC and can facilitate communication between the respective bodies. Some WSCs consider the DA for NRM also to be a member of the committee. The WSCs appear to serve as contact groups for the DAs, providing a link with the community and the local leaders in planning, implementation and M&E of development activities in the watershed.

Although clearly externally initiated, the formation of the WSCs and REST's support in building their capacities are clearly appreciated by the communities as a good way of strengthening community action. The WSCs feel that they have important tasks that will continue in the future – e.g. linking with government, coordinating local development – and they seem to be on the way towards becoming longer-lasting institutions. They are well integrated into the planning process carried out by the kushet and tabia baitos. The existence of the WSCs and the other sectoral committees is likely to make the communities better able to handle future challenges and, thus, make them more resilient in the face of risks and uncertainties.

Blueprint versus process approach. The approach taken in local OD in the DF-supported areas does not seem to be as deliberately thought through as in the Tsegereda watershed near Adwa, where REST's work is supported by Trócaire/CAFOD and Christian Aid. Here, the WSC described how it designed its own composition, reviewed its performance after two years and then decided to improve the committee by including women – also more formally educated young women. This reflects more of a process-oriented learning approach to local OD, rather than asking for a particular type of organisational structure.

Each approach has its pros and cons: in the DF-supported IADP, REST asks that women be included in the WSC from the outset, whether community members are convinced or not. They then have a chance to experience the advantages of having women in the WSC. In the Tsegereda case, the WSC eventually realised the importance of including women – but this meant that the women had been involved for a shorter time and were less experienced in playing their role within the committee. REST staff and DAs working in the IADP areas do not seem to have consciously assessed the pros and cons of different approaches to local OD. It has been somewhat of a “tradition” to propose strongly certain structures to local organisations formed by government programmes in Ethiopia (cf. Lakew *et al* 2005), so it will require some re-thinking to accommodate a more process-oriented approach.

5.2 Major strengths in facilitating local OD and learning

Establishment of complementary committees. Local OD is enhanced through REST's support to establishment of WSCs and sectoral committees with responsibilities for different tasks but linked to each other. The committees assume some responsibility from the outset and their capacities are developed so that they can assume increased responsibility. Formation of these complementary committees at the grassroots helps to nurture a feeling of local ownership and enhances coordination.

Broadening decision-making in the community. The formation of WSCs and sectoral committees drawing from different social groups in the community allows a broader spread of leadership and decision-making rather than concentrating power in only a few hands. There is some overlap of leadership positions, but the inclusion of members of other committee and the tabia or worda baitos in the WSCs allows better communication between the different decision-making bodies.

Using an inherent rights-based approach. REST has long been involved in helping to fulfil the economic and social rights of the people with whom they work. The right to food is at the core of these activities. By helping people organise themselves to manage their own affairs, REST is increasing the means and capacities of rural communities to make demands on the government. The groups are formed around specific functions that are important to the local people (e.g. water-supply management, marketing farm products); these are good entry points for local organisation. Building the capacities of these local development-oriented groups and institutions, reinforcing people's (especially women's) confidence and making them more economically independent is empowering them to exert pressure on local government agencies and, thus, to assert their rights.

Supporting new initiatives of producer groups. ERAD staff members noted that producers who had formed a group for one purpose, e.g. to sell milk jointly, have come up with new ideas, such as jointly obtaining industrial feedstuffs for their cows. REST is supporting these new initiatives which are, in themselves, evidence of the advantages of a group-based approach.

Building local capacities. Good attention has been given to building local capacities primarily through training in productive activities and local organisation. As a result, "the need to know" has become stronger in the rural communities, stimulating demand for still more training. Both men and women in the communities we visited expressed a need for more knowledge to be able to intensify use of the land and to add value to production. Some farmers pointed out that, over time, new needs for capacity building will develop of which they have not yet dreamt. As their livelihoods improve and as their awareness of new opportunities increases, their demands for capacity building are likely to increase. It is possible that they will now seek training without expecting payment of incentives. ERAD has been good in analysing the changing capacity-building needs of the producer groups, particularly in terms of managerial skills, handling funds and accessing services of other parties, e.g. market information and legal advice. Thus, as the groups become stronger and explore new possibilities, ERAD is rising to the challenge of responding to their increasing needs for capacity building and new linkages.

Stimulating local learning processes. REST experts and DAs have been stimulating local learning processes in the following ways:

- **Ongoing OD training.** Training for local organisations is not a one-off activity. There has been good incorporation of reflection and learning into follow-on training of the WSCs.
- **Facilitating the sharing of practical experience.** REST staff and DAs have organised exchange visits by WSCs, sectoral committees and individual beneficiaries. Members of local committees have been able to share their knowledge and practical experience. Also individual beneficiaries who have visited other areas, e.g. gardening activities in southern Ethiopia, have been encouraged to share their learning with other community members.
- **Creating interfaces between external and internal knowledge.** At least some REST experts and DAs are thinking beyond "the package". They are encouraging farmer-to-farmer exchange about both introduced technologies and locally-developed adaptations of them. For example, they have arranged visits by farmers to local innovators who have developed improved water-lifting devices and beekeeping systems, and have thus stimulated further adoption and adaptation of appropriate technologies.
- **Using watersheds as sources of learning.** Although this is not an explicit strategy in the watershed approach as implemented in the IADP, some REST experts and DAs are using the watersheds as demonstration sites from which neighbouring communities can learn, and have been actively encouraging this wider learning process. Some DAs have stimulated formation of new WSCs, which learn from existing ones.

5.3 Major weaknesses and challenges in facilitating local OD and learning

- **Little attention to process and methods of local OD.** Although REST's strategy and planning documents contain numerous references to empowerment through local OD,

corresponding processes and methods are not reflected in the activity reports. A strategy for local OD is not spelled out. For example, it is not clear how long individuals should be members of the WSCs and other sectoral committees. Moreover, the WSCs do not seem to have given thought to how they will cover operating expenses (e.g. office space, if they feel this is required; stationary and other operating materials; travel costs etc) if they want to continue – as they say they do – after support from REST comes to an end.

- **Insufficient awareness of how new powers are being used.** Positions of power within local organisations – particularly the WSCs, development committees and baitos – give the position-holders access to information that allows them access to other resources, such as arable land that is not being used by anyone. There is a tendency for the position-holders to use this knowledge for their own advantage rather than for that of the community. This weakness is closely linked to the above-mentioned lack of clarity about length of terms of service in local decision-making bodies. It is likewise linked to the lack of deliberate attention to possible linkages with and mutual impact of traditional institutions and modern institutions that have been set up to manage development activities.
- **Incomplete information for planning.** The tabia baitos and WSCs are not aware of the budget resources available to them. They merely make sure that the final plans that come back to them from the woreda are implemented and mobilise local inputs of resources, especially of human labour. Local planning should be based on awareness of available internal and external resources. In the course of decentralisation, it will be necessary for the tabia baitos and the WSCs to become able to plan according to budgets. As experiences in other countries have shown (e.g. Guèye 2005), it is possible for community-based organisations to handle basic budgeting for local development.
- **Poor access to external information and ideas.** WSCs, sectoral committees, individual farmers and DAs face considerable problems in accessing information from elsewhere. It is difficult for them to find out how other farmers in similar environments are dealing with similar problems or what new opportunities are opening up. The FTCs are supposed to help address this problem, but the ones we saw are still not functional.
- **Weak linkage with informal learning processes.** Information exchange and informal learning take place during farming activities, social gatherings, market visits and from parents and elders. Insufficient attention is given to integrating these processes with the more formal learning organised by REST. At the moment, the WSCs and other committees and individuals depend on REST experts and DAs to arrange exchanges between farmers, local committees and communities. There seems to be little awareness among REST staff and DAs as to how these learning activities could link with local forms of exchange and how relevant information could be more deliberately “fed” into the informal learning processes.
- **Poor integration of local knowledge into planning processes.** Although it is commendable that REST staff and DAs are recognising local innovations and encouraging farmer-to-farmer sharing about them, there are few deliberate efforts to integrate local knowledge and solutions into formal processes of development planning. The solutions are coming from outside as packages offered by the extension service. It is not an explicit part of REST’s past or expressed future strategy to identify locally developed solutions and incorporate them into planning either for testing or for diffusing the innovations.
- **Increasing gap between literate and illiterate.** As mentioned in Section 4.2, there is a danger that the REST staff and DAs with their formal education give too much attention to the formally educated (often younger) rural people, and not enough attention to recognising and strengthening the capacities of more mature but illiterate rural people to be leaders in development. Through involving older farmers and women in local committees, REST could assist in functional literacy for adults, encouraging them to learn to read and write sufficiently well to fulfil their tasks in the committees.
- **Potential for conflict in mandates and approaches of different local committees.** Almost every time a new project or programme is introduced, a new local committee is set up. For example, the Community Food Security Task Force is meant to identify beneficiaries

of the PSNP, and the work done under the PSNP is very similar to that done under the IADP. It will be a major challenge to ensure that the way such new local committees are set up and their mandates are defined does not undermine the OD approach taken with the WSCs.

5.4 Recommendations re local organisational development and learning

- **Work out a strategy for local OD.** Elaboration of a strategy for local OD should include clarification as to mandates, responsibilities, means of direct linkage and coordination with other community-level institutions – both the traditional ones and the many committees that have been set up by line bureaux (credit, early warning, food security, road maintenance, water supply, health, education, production cadres, model farmers etc). A strategy for local OD should include building the committee's capacity to plan according to budget, accommodating different sources of income from the community, REST, government, PSNP etc. The local committees also need to work out how they can show their accountability to the community, e.g. through reporting expenditures (transparency). Committee members and their constituencies should be supported in working out how the committees can operate self-reliantly, if necessary, in collaboration with other local development actors (e.g. use of office space in the FTC). In line with this strategy, REST staff should report on the process and methods of strengthening local organisations, including monitoring of indicators for organisational sustainability and analysis of strengths and weaknesses of REST's approach to OD (see also Chapter 7).
- **Give greater attention to self-assessment and learning by local committees.** More attention needs to be paid to facilitating self-assessments by the WSCs, encouraging them to review their composition and functioning after 2–3 years (see Box 1), reflecting on duration of membership and leadership and on procedures for changing committee members and handing over to new members. The WSCs should be encouraged to define terms of office and to elect new members into at least some of the positions in the committee, so as to include new people with new ideas and other skills and to spread the sense of responsibility within the community. The guidelines for the WSCs under the PSNP even suggest that the community elect a new planning team each year to allow people to become responsible for the programme, to check unnecessary leadership ambitions and to gain new ideas for improving implementation (Lakew *et al* 2005). This may be too frequent, and a complete replacement of the WSC each year would hinder continuity in the management work.

Box 1: Stimulate reflection on WSC composition

The composition of the local management group proposed in the WFP/PSNP guideline for integrated watershed development could be suggested to existing WSCs to stimulate thinking about the merits and demerits of their own composition. In the WFP/PSNP approach, the community is asked to elect at least ten representatives and active members of the main social groups to form a "Community Watershed Team": the community leader (representing the community at tabia level), four male-headed and four female-headed households representing different social groups including vulnerable groups and those living in different strata in the watershed (lower to higher), one youth representative, one religious representative and other members wanted by the community, such as innovative farmers, respected persons and women's groups (Lakew *et al* 2005).

In deliberations about gender composition of the WSC, it may be wise to combine aspects of a more process-oriented learning approach and the current more blueprint-oriented approach to OD. The strategy could combine 1) an initial requirement to include a certain number of women with 2) periodic facilitated self-assessment by the community of the composition and functioning of the WSC. This self-assessment would be designed to examine the contributions of the representatives of different social groupings, leading to – if necessary – decisions by the community to revise the composition of the WSC.

- **Facilitate farmers' and DAs' access to external information.** REST should encourage the local organisations to consider how they can strengthen informal learning processes by incorporating their own ways of gaining information about development experiences and technologies. Responsibility to initiate and organise farmer-to-farmer exchange, also

between watersheds, should gradually be transferred to the local organisations. Farmers and DAs need to find out how to link with external sources of information and learning, including other NGOs and research and training institutes. Information networking could also be improved by increasing farmers' and DA's access to brochures, posters, radio broadcasts and films about new technologies developed by formal research and farmer innovators.

- **Strengthen the FTCs and their governance by farmers.** Closely related to the above recommendation, REST should integrate experimentation, demonstration and other learning activities at the FTCs into the watershed approach. In close collaboration with the BoANR, it should strengthen the capacities of the FTCs to serve as resource centres to meet local demand for useful information. Now that farmers have become more aware of the need for further learning, it will be timely to give attention to local governance of the FTCs to ensure that they serve the interests of the local farmers and respond to their demands. REST should therefore encourage participation of the WSC and other community-based organisations (CBOs) in steering the activities carried out at the FTCs.
- **Explicitly link project work with the rights-based approach.** REST should make its inherent rights-based approach explicit in the way it presents its work (particularly that related to local OD, economic empowerment and girls' and women's development) in its reports and public-awareness materials. In the process of analysing its work for this purpose, it is likely to recognise aspects to which it should give more attention – ways in which it could adjust its approach so that especially the poorer and more marginalised people can make their voices better heard. At the same time, REST and the DF should jointly consider how best to address human-rights issues in the public sphere in the specific context of Ethiopia. REST should engage in rights-related advocacy that clearly stems from its project work.
- **Appoint REST staff member for local OD.** To be able to give the required attention to local OD, REST should appoint a staff member with relevant capacities, as well as enhance the knowledge and skills of existing staff to analyse and deal with community-level socio-political dynamics and OD.

6. Phasing out

6.1 REST's phasing-out strategies in IADP areas

Rather than referring to exiting from communities or handing over projects to communities at a particular point in time, it would be better to refer to an evolution of partnerships between REST and the communities with which it works. In the initial phases, the interaction is fairly intensive, with training, planning, construction and other development activities, for which the community members provide local materials and voluntary labour, in addition to the work recompensed by REST through food payments. The watershed inhabitants with whom we met said that they were aware from the outset that watershed management is in their own interests. The tabia baito and WSC members understand that the intensive support from REST will not continue indefinitely: they referred to a time horizon of five years. However, they argued for a gradual decrease in support. They request further contacts in the form of follow-on training and linking with sources of new ideas and inputs that become relevant as the quality of the natural and human resources in the area improves.

In contrast to people in the watersheds, there seems to be less awareness at woreda and regional level that REST might consider phasing out of certain operational areas. Moreover, in the woreda staff's forecasts of sources of support for development activities in the next five years, no consciousness is evident of new local resources that may become available as households and groups generate more income as a result of development.

The strategies and plans compiled by REST with regard to phasing out are relatively weak (short and vague), creating the impression that the organisation has given little serious thought to this. On the ground, it has indeed been giving more attention to phasing out in the last couple of

years (e.g. handing over project components, making it clear to communities that support is time-limited), but its strategy in this respect is not well formulated. However, it does explicitly state in its strategic plans for 2006–10 that it does not envisage withdrawal from its current target woredas within the near future.

The main ways in which REST has prepared rural communities and government services for phasing out have consisted of the following and can all be regarded as strong points:

- **Establishing long-term assets to lay a good basis for phasing out.** At the level of communities, groups and households, assets such as wells and seed banks are being established that can serve for several years or decades. These provide a good basis for phasing out external support. The communities, groups and households need only continue management and maintenance that they can do with their own resources. For larger-scale repairs, such as replacement of a pump shaft, they depend on the relevant line bureaux of the government and it can be assumed that, to the degree that the local people value the local assets, they will exert pressure on the government bureaux to deliver.
- **Promoting low-cost water-harvesting and -lifting technologies.** A particular type of asset that deserves special mention are the inexpensive, small-scale systems of harvesting, storing and lifting water that individual households and small groups of households can manage and replicate without external support, e.g. open hand-dug wells, ponds and excavated tanks that hold water for supplementary micro-irrigation of crops. Watershed rehabilitation measures such as terracing have led to higher water infiltration rates and a higher groundwater table. It then becomes worthwhile for households to dig wells on their own, mainly for irrigating vegetables and fruit trees, and to buy treadle pumps for cash or short-term credit. The resulting increase in productivity and income implies that maintenance and further development of the watershed can be continued with reduced external support.
- **Building economic power of individuals, households and groups.** A key strategy that REST is using to prepare rural people for phasing out of external support is economic empowerment. REST helps them form user groups/cooperatives and market associations to be able to access inputs and new technologies and to market their products more efficiently. This is increasing the self-reliance of the households and groups and is preparing them to continue improving their livelihoods without external support. One way of building economic power that deserves special mention is the allocation of land-use rights to landless people – particularly youth – where they can produce timber, grow trees for fruit and fodder, and practise beekeeping and other forms of livestock-keeping. This provides them with a long-term source of income.
- **Training and other forms of capacity building,** including experience sharing by community members about the watershed approach, have prepared communities for self-management. Particularly the establishment and training of functional committees to manage local development efforts are major steps towards successful phasing out. An indication that this has been effective is the fact that WSCs are thinking in terms of self-reliance and sustainability: e.g. when community members in Rubagered watershed asked for a second well with pump, the WSC asked for their own contribution: 10% of the total costs in cash or convertible assets (livestock).
- **Phasing out gradually on a component-by-component basis,** e.g. transferring seed banks to multi-purpose service cooperatives and handing over mature enclosure areas and completed waterpoints to communities to manage without further financial or material support from REST. This is already practised in connection with some of the components implemented with REST support, such as the deep wells, which are now managed by local committees. Some components, such as treadle pumps for micro-irrigation, need little follow up, as farmers see the benefit immediately and can continue on their own without any further support. Other components, such as formation and strengthening of producer groups, need longer backstopping. Individuals and groups that have assumed responsibilities for some components within the watershed approach have greater confidence to assume overall responsibility for local development.

6.2 Recommendations related to phasing out and phasing in

- **Clear formulation of strategy.** REST should formulate more clearly its strategy for phasing out of current watersheds and phasing into others. This would help it to be more strategic in its development activities. REST could use watersheds as demonstration sites from which others can learn. This would have implications for selecting watersheds, locating them more widely throughout its present and future operational woredas. Information exchange and learning by communities in neighbouring watersheds about the watershed approach and component technologies could then be deliberately planned. The OD and other support that REST would need to give in the new watersheds would then be reduced. In the watersheds in which it is currently working, REST experts should plan to become less frequent advisors, facilitating linkage with other sources of information or services, until the local institutions can manage also these linkages on their own.
- **Develop a strategy for lower-input engagement in new watersheds,** building on the capacities and experiences in the “old” watersheds. REST should identify areas in which communities have started to apply a watershed approach on their own initiative, include them in capacity-building activities, provide them with OD support, and link them with sources of information and other resources to further stimulate local initiatives. The most effective demonstration sites for watershed management will be areas where communities are doing this without intensive external support.
- **Stimulate discussion at woreda and regional level about REST’s phasing out** of tabias and woredas in which targets have been achieved and phasing into new tabias and woredas that are in greater need of REST support.
- **Greater emphasis on capacity building, particularly in OD,** to establish a better basis for sustainability, including building community capacities to continue to demand and access information and training opportunities from governmental and non-governmental providers.
- **Facilitate sharing on sustainability mechanisms developed by local institutions.** An important role of REST and the government services when phasing out of intensive work in some watersheds and phasing into intensive work in other watersheds is providing opportunities for the WSCs and sectoral committees to share experiences with each other about ways in which different local groups are making their work sustainable. This would include, for example, different ways of securing payments for protection and maintenance of waterpoints or enclosed areas. Some communities pay guards, some allocate an area in the enclosure where the guard can collect fodder for his animals, some set up systems of “social fencing” which do not require guards at all but rather surveillance by all community members. Community-to-community exchange about these mechanisms would also help REST to learn and to strengthen its phasing-out strategy.
- **Phase out flexibly according to diversity in capacities between communities.** Development planners and donors need to recognise that communities differ in the speed in which they learn to manage and further develop their watersheds. This may be due to many factors, such as previous experience of the inhabitants, presence of local leaders who can energise the community, agro-ecological conditions and proximity to market. The WSCs we visited stressed the need to evaluate the watershed development work and the functioning of the committees at the end of the five years, in order to judge what further support may still be needed. All stakeholders, including donors, should be flexible in planning when to phase out of intensive work in different watersheds.
- **Monitor progress after phasing out of intensive support.** To be able to assess the effectiveness of its phasing-out strategy, REST should monitor the community-based organisations and services after external support becomes less intensive. This would include facilitation of self-assessments by the committees of their strengths and weaknesses, particularly in terms of management. The monitoring should serve as a basis for deciding about changes in REST’s strategy.

7. Contributions of REST's Research and Policy Unit

7.1 Strengths and achievements of the Research and Policy Unit work

The Research and Policy Unit (RPU) within REST serves primarily for M&E purposes. It carries out socio-economic baseline studies and surveys, nutritional and other assessment studies. The results support the overall planning and reporting processes within REST, in particular, proposal writing and compilation of reports to donors.

Since 2002, the RPU hosts a GIS unit, which has collected and organised an enormous amount of geographic, ecological and socio-economic information in fairly detailed maps.

The RPU also coordinates research activities in collaboration with universities (e.g. Triangular Institutional Cooperation Project) and external consultants. Since 2005 it has started to work with a watershed study team composed of ten REST staff members at headquarters who try to understand the physical and social conditions in the watersheds and changes in these over time.

A Research Unit should be capable of documenting processes so that REST can capitalise on them and share lessons with others. There are a small number of good examples of such work, namely the brochure "Promising practices: empowering landless youth by distributing hillside land" (actually authored by the DF) and the paper presented at the recent Novib Knowledge Management Workshop (Mulugeta 2005).

Upon our request REST prepared a list of RPU publications over the last two years (Annex 5).

7.2 Weaknesses and challenges in the Research and Policy Unit work

REST's internal evaluation report (REST 2006) brings a number of reasons for the "ups and downs" of the RPU over the last years, with which we agree in principle¹⁴:

- Lack of adequate and highly qualified staff;
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining staff;
- Inadequate resources;
- Low or lack of awareness about the importance of research both as a tool for resource mobilisation and as a means to increase the confidence of donors, as it supplements the task of impact evaluation for every intervention;
- Inadequate senior management back-up and support for the research function;
- Inadequate dissemination and use of research results.

To the above, we add the following weaknesses and challenges:

- **Weak links between research and project work.** There is no clear linkage between the RPU's work in collecting data in the field and the development activities of the IADP. The surveys and studies are done mainly by RPU field and headquarters staff who do not work on a day-to-day basis closely with the communities and project partners. DAs and woreda experts were not systematically involved in data collection or analysis. When asked about the RPU's contribution to their work in the field, REST and government staff at woreda level said they knew very little of the outputs and outcomes of the research.
- **Inadequate analysis of data.** Socio-economic research is seen as a source of quantitative data for M&E, with little attention to analysis and discussion of its results. The few examples of more qualitative, analytical research done by the RPU were not heeded. For example, a social and agro-ecological baseline study in Central Tigray carried out in collaboration with Noragric (REST & Noragric 1995) brings interesting suggestions to REST's IADP, some of

¹⁴ Another weakness mentioned in the report is the "donor driven nature of the Unit's activities". It is not clear to us what exactly this means.

them similar to those being raised in this review. In other words, they were apparently not followed up since 1995. Insufficient efforts are made to use research outputs as a source of reflection and learning with a view to improving activities on the ground.

- **Little research on processes.** With the exception of the few examples mentioned in the previous section, very little research and documentation has been done on process-related and institutional issues, e.g. critically looking at the way local institutions are built, the impact of training on the way the WSC works, etc.
- **Complete separation of RPU and on-farm experimentation.** In the field, we saw several examples of experimentation and technology adaptation carried out by farmers, supported by REST field staff (see Section 2.2). The RPU has not supported these initiatives, nor has it initiated or linked up with on-farm research to adapt technologies, e.g. in livestock feeding, to local conditions.
- **Little use of GIS outputs.** The internal review of the GIS unit points out that “one reason for the lack of response in some departments [within REST] could simply be a lack of understanding of the potential benefits of developing and maintaining a GIS database ... GIS is still a somewhat enigmatic concept” (Vagen 2006). We endorse this statement, having observed that there is little awareness among REST staff of ways in which the GIS maps could be used. Some staff members at headquarters use GIS outputs in watershed resource mapping and water development planning, and reportedly incorporate the maps into their reports and proposals. In a field office, we encountered only one staff member who used GIS maps, which were available only in soft copy. We understand that the plotter was temporarily out of order. This cannot explain the total absence of printed maps, if one considers that the GIS unit was set up three years ago and that field staff could also have requested smaller prints of the maps, if these were thought to be useful.
- **No systematic collaboration with government GIS facilities.** Although the internal review of REST’s GIS unit states that “the contact with regional government seems to be good, and there is quite a bit of demand from regional government for GIS competence and data from REST” (Vagen 2006), we saw little indication of such linkages. The Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED) is building up its own GIS unit and database, with support from the Italian development cooperation. Although we did hear that BoFED and REST’s GIS unit are in contact with each other, there appears to be no systematic collaboration.
- **High follow-on costs.** As confirmed by the internal review of REST’s GIS unit, high follow-on costs are involved in maintaining up-to-date GIS facilities. It is a wise decision of REST to try to minimise these costs by updating only when the existing software no longer serves the functions for which REST is using GIS.

It is striking that there is no mention of either the RPU or of any research activities in REST’s 2006–2010 Strategic Plan.

7.3 Recommendations regarding research and policy dialogue

Encourage more process-oriented and analytical research. There are several, non-mutually exclusive ways of bringing about a more process-oriented character to the research work within REST. The three alternatives presented below were also mentioned by REST in its DF Internal Review (REST 2006), although not fully elaborated.

- Hiring a new suitably qualified staff member for the Research Unit (to be upgraded to Department). The Unit/Department would benefit from a coordinator with relevant expertise in process-oriented documentation and participatory action research;
- Strengthening the capacities of the existing staff (within and outside the RPU) to do process-oriented research, through exchange and learning with/from other NGOs and research organisations, both in Ethiopia and abroad;

- **Contracting out:** REST's DF Internal Evaluation calls for a "push and pull" approach, in which some of the more specific research would be done by consultants and outsiders, preferably in close collaboration with the Research Unit/Department and REST field staff.

Although REST's preference seems to be to upgrade the RPU by hiring a new qualified "manager", the organisation should carefully consider whether hiring a new staff member will alone manage to boost the RPU. It is first necessary that all the other Departments in REST perceive the need for and value-added of such research efforts.

Whatever alternative is chosen, it will be important that field staff of REST and the line bureaux become involved in the research from the very start. They are not only sources of manpower for data collection; they are rich sources of information and insights into the communities' social and political realities.

Link the RPU with on-farm research. The RPU could coordinate initiatives on farmer experimentation and action research, which already happen on an *ad hoc* basis. This would allow the organisation to learn from these initiatives, and provide important support to field staff.

Conduct research to guide interventions. Detailed follow-up studies should be made of at least very strategic activities, such as those related to livestock-keeping (e.g. issues of equitable division of benefits from enclosures, distribution of goats versus enclosure of grazing areas, impact on poorer families with no options to take goats to more distant grazing). Also issues related to biodiversity need to be investigated: local people are using wild plants for various purposes, especially for pest control and to treat human and animal ailments, and this appears to be expanding now that some plant species are appearing in area enclosures. These benefits of biodiversity need to be documented and acknowledged and ways explored to allow sustainable use of the plants. A further issue that could guide intervention by REST and the government would be the relationship between NRM in the watershed approach and the technical packages for households to increase food security

Disseminate research outputs. Dissemination of research outputs should be part and parcel of the RPU's work. These outputs should be fed back to woreda, tabia and community level, as well as being disseminated widely at least within Tigray. For the sake of local-level stakeholders, materials could be translated or produced in Tigrinya.

Use research outputs in policy dialogue. Outputs of the research work, which potentially consist of compiled lessons and field-derived messages, could be used as powerful tools for policy and advocacy at both national and international level, e.g. fora related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Reconsider the role of the GIS unit. With regard to the GIS part of the RPU, the only mention of it in the recent internal review is a recommendation to maintain/develop in-house research capacity in GIS mapping, particularly for planning and monitoring purposes (REST 2006). Our recommendations go in a different direction, as follows:

- REST should increase its efforts in raising staff awareness about how GIS could be used. It should support learning on how to use GIS as a tool for planning, stimulating demand within the organisation and the government offices at woreda and tabia level.
- REST should strengthen links with governmental GIS services, especially in BoFED, and make sure there is no duplication of work.
- REST should closely monitor supply and demand from within the organisation and from woreda and possibly lower levels of planning. If no appreciable positive change is observed within the next two years, the GIS equipment should be handed over to BoFED and arrangements made that it do both the regional mapping currently being done by the government and the more detailed watershed mapping being done by REST. Even if

demand within REST for GIS outputs increases, BoFED could take over most of the responsibility of supplying data, maps etc.

- Finally, to the extent that it is faced with reduction in funding, REST should carefully consider if the funds should be invested in maintaining an expensive GIS system or in giving more attention to local OD and enterprise development. In short, a choice may have to be made between the GIS work and the work at local watershed level¹⁵. REST argues that GIS is a tool to capacitate local OD, but we could not find signs that it is serving this purpose through work with local organisations making use of GIS.

8. Relations between REST and other development actors

8.1 Relations with government agencies

Working through government agencies and development committees. At woreda and tabia level, REST works through the existing government structures. This is not only cost effective but also offers an opportunity to institutionalise the development approach. The development committees at different levels (woreda, tabia and kushet) consider the watershed approach as a component of their routine activities. According to interviewees in the watersheds, decisions about division of labour between REST and the government are made at woreda level, depending on available resources. However, as mentioned above, the challenge at the level of the DAs through which REST works is to encourage a participatory, process-oriented approach, while the DAs are simultaneously implementing a top-down approach of meeting quotas for interventions promoted by the government. Nevertheless, the communities in the watersheds were usually able to distinguish between REST-supported and government interventions; they describe the former as more varied and integrated, allowing more choice and supported by strong capacity-building, whereas the latter are offered as fixed packages.

Correspondence between government line bureaux and REST structure. Almost all line bureaux at regional level relevant for rural development are mirrored at departmental level within REST headquarters: NRM, crop production, livestock production, water development, health, education, gender, planning, research and GIS. This structure in REST has been established to facilitate collaboration, coordination and capacity building within government structures. The same departments are represented in the Woreda Development Committees set up by the government as part of the decentralisation process.

Stronger links at local than regional level. With regard to planning and implementing development activities, the links between REST and the relevant line bureaux are strong at woreda and tabia level but less so at regional level. This may hinder the harmonising of regional priorities with local (watershed, tabia and woreda) priorities, but does help to create a counterweight to the conventionally heavy influence of centralised regional planning.

Delivering services. The line offices at woreda level regard REST as an essential institution to allow them to deliver government services and to make interventions in rural development. In addition, the training given by REST in different disciplines at different levels within Tigray has intensified and speeded up the development process. However, there is a danger that, in trying to help meet the needs for various kinds of government services and interventions, REST spreads itself too thinly and may lose its former focus and position as centre of excellence in NRM and water development.

We were informed by government staff that, to the extent that funds come from the DF and other overseas partners via REST to support local development, government funds are allocated

¹⁵ REST is not the only NGO or government organisation that has established a GIS system with external resources and will face a challenge of maintaining the facility after the project ends (see e.g. Stadley 1997, Vu Duy Man & Garland 1998). Not only the costs for up-to-date hardware and software but also the ongoing costs of applying GIS, e.g. data entry and analysis, must also be taken into account.

elsewhere.¹⁶ Donor support to REST is thus complementing and – to some extent – replacing government services in the REST operational areas. On the one hand, this could be interpreted as helping the government provide the basic necessities to which the Ethiopian people are entitled, such as clean water. On the other hand, a rights-based approach would not focus on making sure that services are delivered to hitherto disadvantaged groups but would rather focus on strengthening the capacities of these groups to assert their rights to a fair share of the existing resources, i.e. to demand that government resources are shared more equally. IADP staff at headquarters informed us that they plan to give much more emphasis to strengthening local OD, particularly through user and producer groups, so that the community members are more informed about their rights and better able to assert them.

Adding value to government-supported development. With respect to NRM and water development, REST has deep-rooted knowledge, skills and experience that it shares with government agencies. It brings in new approaches and technologies that are usually taken up by the government extension services. For example, many of the water-harvesting technologies (excavated water tanks, series of ponds, drip irrigation etc) that are helping smallholder farming households to make more productive use of their resources were introduced and diffused by REST and are now being promoted by government bureaux.

Delegation of REST to carry out government interventions. In principle, the PSNP which has been launched throughout Ethiopia is facilitated through the Office for Food Security and Disaster Prevention and Preparedness. However, some NGOs that have been successful in emergency and development aid have been chosen to implement the PSNP in some woredas or tabias. Accordingly, REST has been delegated to implement the PSNP in six woredas of Tigray where it has a long history of development intervention. The Director of REST is also a member of the advisory board for the PSNP. For REST, implementing the PSNP in its operational areas offers both an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity to the extent that the PSNP resources can be strategically incorporated into the watershed development work to support labour-intensive activities. The PSNP-supported work can also be used to spread principles of the watershed approach in other areas within the tabia and woreda. However, there is a danger that the PSNP will perpetuate a state of dependency, as opposed to self-reliance which is being nurtured through the watershed approach.

8.2 Relations with other NGOs¹⁷

Few links with other NGOs in Tigray. While in Tigray, we had difficulties obtaining information on other NGOs in the region. The new regional government office on civil society did not have such a listing. According to a map produced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), eight NGOs are working in agriculture and NRM in Tigray Region: Action Aid, Adigrat Diocesan Catholic Secretariat (ADCS), Catholic Relief Service (CRS), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Oxfam-Canada and World Vision. UNOCHA does not mention REST at all and, although TDA is mentioned in the list of NGOs on the map, its activities are not marked on the map. Also some NGOs that are working through REST, such as Glimmer of Hope (GoH), Trócaire/CAFOD, Pact-Ethiopia, Novib (Oxfam-Netherlands), Brot für die Welt (BfW), Kinder unserer Welt (KuW), Pathfinder and Bunyon Tree Foundation (BTF) are not included in the UNOCHA map (see Map 2 in Annex 6). Likewise, overseas NGOs that are working through other local NGOs, such as Caritas Germany, Caritas Belgium and the Belgian Survival Fund working through ADCS, are not mentioned. Small local NGOs that operate primarily or exclusively with members' contributions are also not mentioned.

¹⁶ They therefore assume that, if the DF funding to the woredas would be reduced or cease, government funding would be increased (see Section 9.1.4).

¹⁷ We did not have time to investigate in depth the role of the church and REST's relations with the church, but we noted that priests are members of various local committees, including the WSCs, and seem to play an important and largely positive role in influencing local attitudes and decisions, innovating in farming, supporting activities related to women's and youth's development, and even providing informal credit.

Our interviewees in Mekelle and in the field could name few other NGOs involved in agriculture and rural development in Tigray; they did not know of the activities of many of the above-mentioned NGOs. They did, however, mention development activities of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

REST and the mass organisations WAT, TYA, Tigray Farmers Association and Tigray Development Association (TDA) grew out of the Tigray People's Liberation Front's armed struggle from 1975 to 1991. These are now registered as local NGOs. Their history, their large geographic coverage and – in the case of REST – their relatively large capacity in terms of development interventions and corresponding resources sometimes blurs the distinction between them and the government. Possibly because of their powerful position, the existence of these NGOs may have hindered the development of other NGOs in Tigray. The relationship of REST with the smaller NGOs appears to be very weak and sometimes competitive.

Links with other NGOs at national and international level. REST participates in national NGO umbrella organisations such as CRDA (Christian Relief and Development Association) and other inter-agency working groups. It collaborates in experience exchange and mutual learning with other NGOs, especially indigenous ones, in other regions of Ethiopia. As a member of the Dryland Coordination Group, REST links its work at field level with policy advocacy related to the UNCCD at national and international level, e.g. through presentations in the open-dialogue sessions at the Conference of Parties meetings. It has been involved in organising awareness-raising workshops about the UNCCD for policymakers and members of parliament in Tigray and Ethiopia. Although it is mentioned in its strategic plan that REST aims to enhance capacity of both local government and other relevant development actors (which would presumably include NGOs), there is no mention in the plan of activities for collaboration at regional or more local level with any other stakeholders than the government.

Recent policy change encourages new NGOs. The Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Regional Government of Tigray have recently become more open to encouraging civil-society organisations to be established. The Regional Government has set up an office for a special advisor to the president dealing with civil society development. This change in policy creates a more favourable environment for the formation of new NGOs, many of which are likely to be very localised, growing out of CBOs, possibly even some of those being supported by REST in the IADP areas. The formation of other local NGOs working at regional or woreda level would offer communities a wider range of options for partnership in development. Besides, REST cannot cover all parts of Tigray. New local NGOs could help to address the development gaps.

8.3 Links with and influence on the private sector

Links to market. Through the watershed approach, some progress has been made in intensifying agricultural production. Access to market is needed in order to ensure sustainability. REST is improving farmers' access to market. For example, methods of queen rearing were demonstrated and the producers were linked to a market where many of them were able to generate significant income and continue on their own. Similarly, the organisation of women into groups of dairy producers and gradually into a union in Ahferom Woreda are steps forward in improving access to market.

Links to input suppliers. In the case of some inputs, REST has created links between farmers and local suppliers. For example, treadle pumps were originally introduced from India and were produced by a government technology centre, but the centre could not meet farmers' demand for the new technology. REST now purchases treadle pumps produced by the private sector and provides them on credit to farmers. There is reportedly no shortage of treadle pumps at affordable prices, and the credit can be paid back after only one vegetable-growing season.

A factor that might be inhibiting the rise of private enterprise in the agricultural and NRM sectors in Tigray is the fact that input production, such as the production of seeds and seedlings in

nurseries, is largely in the hands of government with financial support of REST, i.e. REST is buying such inputs from itself or the government rather than from an emerging private sector.

8.4 Governance and accountability

According to a list made available to us by REST management, the Board consists of five men – Head of the Rural Development Bureau as Chair, Director of REST as Secretary, President of Mekelle University, Dean of Sheba Info-Tech (private) College and one man with no position noted – and one woman, also with no position noted but formerly Chair of WAT. Thus, the current percentage of female members is 17%.

The fact that the Board is chaired by the Head of Rural Development, which encompasses various line bureaux, offers an opportunity not only to orient REST's interventions to the regional rural development policy but also to give feedback about government policy from REST's operational sites at the grassroots. In theory, two-way information flows and improved accessibility offer a basis for learning and sound decision-making.

Reports on Board meetings could not be obtained. We were not able to see a memorandum of association or guidelines for the Board. However, the information that we could obtain about the Board composition and activities suggests to us that some major groupings, such as farmers (as primary stakeholders), youth and other NGOs, are not included. We gained the impression that Board members have relatively little information about what is happening on the ground in the REST project areas. Some Board members have made field visits, but these have been few.

In its profile (REST n.d.), REST is described as being accountable to its General Assembly, which meets every two years and is composed of representatives of the rural communities, line ministries, regional administration, mass associations, REST founders, REST staff, intellectuals and other development actors in the region. According to its strategy for 2006–10, REST is accountable primarily to the communities it serves. Further study would be needed to identify the mechanisms through which REST answers to the rural communities about the decisions and actions it takes.

8.5 Recommendations re relations between REST and other actors

- **Promote private-sector input supply and service delivery.** In the process of encouraging local enterprise development as part of the watershed development approach, REST should be promoting private-sector input supply and service delivery. For example, rather than supporting government nurseries, REST should be encouraging farmers to set up their own nurseries and to sell tree seedlings on contract to REST, BoANR and others. Also the selling of root-crop cuttings and other planting materials should be seen as a private-sector income-generating opportunity. This was recommended already in the 2001 evaluation (Robinson *et al* 2001), and REST proposed to implement this recommendation in selected areas, but we found no evidence of a change in approach to promoting input supply.
- **Encourage formation of local NGOs within Tigray.** REST could play a role in helping local groups establish themselves as registered NGOs which could not only generate funds from their own constituencies but also access external funds to meet local needs. This would contribute to democratisation within the region and would widen the potential coverage of NGO-supported development. REST could give more space to emerging local NGOs/CBOs and link them directly to sources of funding for activities that the local organisations may be able to handle more efficiently and effectively.
- **Improve stakeholder representation in the REST Board.** The governance structure of REST should include representatives of the most relevant stakeholders so that their issues and concerns can be raised directly and their influence can be exerted in defining the priorities and strategies of the organisation. Moreover, this would reflect what REST and the DF are promoting at the grassroots, where the WSCs and other sector committees include

representatives of the major social groupings within the community. Stakeholder representation in the REST Board should include more women and should be widened to include at least youth and farmers and possibly also other civil-society organisations. This would lead to greater transparency about decision-making and use of funds by REST.

9. The way ahead

9.1 The policy and strategy framework

9.1.1 National and regional policy framework

Various policies at federal and regional level expound the principles behind the watershed approach and thus create an enabling policy environment. These include policies to decentralise decision-making powers to the grassroots, to empower women in public decision-making, and to work with educated youth as entry points to transform rural society. The current national and regional policies favour local-level priority setting.

NRM and agricultural development. Ethiopia's rural development policy aims at improving land productivity through natural resource conservation and rehabilitation, with particular attention to water resources. Participation of the local communities is encouraged so as to ensure that they benefit and are motivated to continue managing the rehabilitated resources.

Under Ethiopia's core policy for economic development – Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation (ADLI) – attention was initially focused on increasing agricultural production. The government is now giving greater attention to issues of value-adding and marketing chains, e.g. through the recently established Tigray Agricultural Marketing Promotion Agency. This is reflected also in the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP), which seeks to strengthen marketing systems primarily through cooperative development, irrigation, livestock development and labour-intensive public works primarily related to land and water resources.

The Ethiopian Food Security Strategy of 1996, revised in 2002, targets mainly moisture-deficit (dryland) and pastoral areas. It focuses on environmental rehabilitation to reverse land degradation and to create sources of income for poor households. New elements in the revised strategy are water-harvesting and the introduction of high-value crops, livestock and trees. Support used to be given almost exclusively in the form of FFW. The revised strategy still focuses on environmental protection and rehabilitation, but puts more emphasis on improving production and productivity while providing primarily cash income for food-insecure households engaged in the public works.

The Regional Development Strategy in Tigray complies with ADLI, SDPRP and the Food Security Strategy. Its main objectives are:

- Ensuring food security, particularly in the most drought-prone areas
- Poverty alleviation focused on rural and agricultural development
- Expansion of basic social and economic services
- Strengthening community participation in development programmes
- Enhancing decentralisation
- Creating a conducive environment for private investors.

The Food Security Strategy is being implemented since 2005 through the PSNP. Cash or (in the case of REST-implemented PSNP) food is provided to chronically food-insecure households in order to prevent the loss of household assets (selling them to buy food) at the same time as building communal assets. About 80% of the activities under the PSNP are supposed to involve NRM. The federal government, supported by the WFP, has adopted the Integrated Participatory Watershed Management approach for planning and implementing the Food Security Strategy.

Thus, in Tigray as in the other regions in Ethiopia, the watershed approach is being scaled up. The manual that has been prepared to guide expansion of the approach (Lakew *et al* 2005) draws upon previous experience in watershed management in various parts of the country, including Tigray. In this manual, considerable attention is given to small-scale water-harvesting and low-external-input agriculture, including composting and other organic farming techniques. It reflects the growing attention within the government extension system to farmers' indigenous knowledge and informal research and to PTD by farmers and DAs to assess the performance of new measures.

Gender. In recent years, policies to empower women have been put in place, including the stipulation that at least 50% of baito members at all levels be women. With the support of bilateral and international organisations, increased attention is being given to equality of males and females in education, health etc. Campaigns to promote girls' schooling and to prevent early marriage are encouraging parents to give their daughters the same opportunities that they give their sons. Gender mainstreaming is being pursued within government institutions. At various administrative levels from the grassroots to the region, women are being encouraged to involve themselves in development efforts and become members of management bodies.

Youth. Early in this decade, the Tigray Government began to give more attention to the problems of landless youth. It developed a policy to grant young people the rights to use degraded land for rehabilitation and sustainable production of wood, honey, forage etc. In its activities to help landless youth gain rights to use communal hillsides and rehabilitated gullies for productive purposes, REST is a forerunner in implementing this policy.

9.1.2 REST's new strategy

In line with the regional development strategy, the major lines in REST's new strategy consist of:

- Strengthening household livelihoods within REST operational areas
- Improving the health and educational status of people in Tigray
- Promoting the empowerment of women in Tigray
- Improving water security within Tigray
- Promoting sustainable natural resource management.

The approaches that REST has chosen to take in the next five years encompass: integrated watershed development; household livelihood development; strengthening rural-urban linkages; market-led commercialisation of smallholder farming; enhancing the production and marketing chain; building community institutions and ownership; empowering marginalised groups; gender equity and mainstreaming, capacity building at local level and in supporting government agencies; support to children and disabled; collaboration with other stakeholders including those in the private sector; developing market infrastructure; and increasing the availability of services and inputs in rural areas.

A key strategy will be economic diversification through a combination of on-farm, off-farm and non-farm activities. According to the 2006–10 Strategic Plan (REST 2005d) and the recent internal evaluation of its DF-funded work (REST 2006), REST will strive to diversify the rural economy by:

Within the primary agricultural production sector

- Increasing diversity of production, crop and livestock
- Increasing the scale and productivity of existing output

Within a wider agro-business sector

- Supply of farm inputs, including manufacturing and trading of inputs
- Marketing and trading of agricultural products
- Increasing the marketable value of agricultural production through processing/ packaging of products

Beyond the agricultural sector

- Expansion within the service sector
- Trading in non-agricultural goods
- Manufacturing household and other goods.

The programmes that REST has planned for the period 2006–10 include:

- Integrated Watershed Management programmes in 10 woredas (4 of which will presumably be supported by the DF)
- PSNP in 6 woredas (including 2 DF-supported woredas)
- Emergency and recovery assistance in 16 woredas
- Health interventions in 21 woredas
- Water supply development activities in 14 woredas
- Irrigation construction in 11 woredas
- Education in 7 woredas
- Child support in urban areas.

Although much of its development work will be concentrated in critical watersheds, REST will continue to intervene in water development and health promotion more widely throughout Tigray.

In its new strategy, one of REST's strategic objectives is to improve household livelihoods through expansion and strengthening of community-based institutions. Part of its mission is "empowering communities and individuals to pursue their right to a decent standard of living, with a specific emphasis on the poorest and most vulnerable". It intends to increase the access of poor and marginalised people to livelihoods assets and opportunities and to increase their capacity to take full advantage of them. This will be done by identifying the marginalised people, analysing factors constraining their access to development opportunities, and empowering them through capacity building and institutional development. A new Child Support Unit will work with street children in Mekelle and zonal towns to help the children claim their rights to development. REST also plans to explore ways of promoting greater self-reliance of the disabled in making their own living.

9.1.3 The DF's strategy for Ethiopia

The DF is diversifying its partnerships and projects in Ethiopia to include other NGOs in different social, ethnic, political and geographic contexts. The main emphasis will be on the drylands and civil-society development, with the goal of improving food security for rural arable-farming and pastoral households. The main beneficiaries are to be the poorest and most vulnerable people in rural communities – namely, the women, youth and landless. DF activities are being expanded to target pastoralists and agropastoralists.

In its new strategy for Ethiopia (DF 2004a), the DF seeks to strike a balance between service delivery and policy advocacy for social change. It wants to reinforce the decentralisation process by creating synergies between state structures at the woreda level, NGOs and traditional governance institutions.

In all projects, conservation of biodiversity in agriculture, including pastoralism, will be a key objective. The project work at the grassroots will be combined with advocacy work at federal and international level with respect to the UNCCD and the CBD. The DF and the Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa intend to develop a strategic partnership to support implementation of the UNCCD in Ethiopia.

Issues cutting across all activities include the rights-based approach to development; gender equality; HIV/AIDS prevention, care and coping; participation, transparency, accountability and good governance; assessing and minimising adverse environmental impacts; and linking relief to development. The DF is in the process of developing a strategy to address the issues of young people in rural and urban areas.

9.1.4 The REST portfolio and the place of DF-funded work within it

Currently, the three main programmes of REST are:

- Environmental Rehabilitation and Agricultural Development (ERAD) aimed at improving food production while promoting conservation and rational use of natural resources. It comprises activities like SWC, irrigation and development of appropriate technologies in cropping and livestock-keeping.
- Rural Water Supply Development (RWSD) aimed at increasing the access of rural people to safe and adequate water supply by constructing hand-dug wells and boreholes, developing springs and providing training on water management and sanitation.
- Relief and Rehabilitation Programme (RRP) aimed at providing food and non-food aid in times of disaster to prevent hunger and migration, and providing rehabilitation packages (mainly farming inputs) to re-establish disaster-affected households' basis for production. It is also engaged in health and education programmes in cooperation with related line bureaux to improve social services in rural areas.

The former Rural Credit and Saving Programme has become the independent micro-finance institution DECSI, in which REST is the major shareholder. DECSI gives rural and urban families opportunities to diversify their sources of income and accumulate wealth.

REST reports an increasing trend of support from bilateral and international organisations, e.g. USAID, EU and WFP, and a corresponding increase in income. For the financial year 2006, REST has made funding requests to 18 donors, the largest of which is USAID (56% of total funds in cash, plus almost 50,000 metric tons of grain¹⁸). The proportion expected from the DF is about 13% of cash funds and a much smaller percentage of total (cash and food) contributions requested for 2006. Most of the activities funded by USAID, NCA, EU, GoH, Trócaire, Novib and BfW are for much the same activities as are funded by the DF: SWC, reforestation, crop and livestock development, irrigation and potable water supply. Some of these donors also support activities related to health and education, whereas other REST partners, such as CRDA, Packard, Pact, KuW, Pathfinder International and BTF support exclusively activities in the health and education sectors.

On the whole, REST tries to separate the operational areas covered by different donors, e.g. by selecting different tabias within a woreda for different projects. However, in some woredas and tabias, it is conducting activities financed by more than one donor either directly or through government bureaux. For example, the FFW made available through the Employment Generation Scheme (EGS) was distributed in tabias where DF funds were also used. REST has tried as much as possible to use these different sources of funds in a complementary way, incorporating planning for FFW from non-DF sources into the watershed planning process. The EGS funds have now been more or less replaced by the PSNP. At the woreda, tabia and WSC level, the interviewees see little difference as a result of the shift, because the funds are basically being used for the same types of work (terracing, roads, tree planting etc), even though they do seem to be aware that the PSNP funds could be used for more than this.

When considering how a reduced amount of DF funds could be used strategically in continuing the watershed approach, one cannot regard the IADP in isolation. The entire complex of external support to REST activities has to be considered. REST is obviously seeking support from many donors and hopes to be able to gain funds from elsewhere to compensate for any reduction in DF funds. We can make suggestions for strategic use of DF funds in the REST/DF collaboration, but this does not mean that the strategic priorities we suggest for continuing a watershed approach within the current DF-supported IADP areas will coincide with the priorities of REST as a whole. Some donors support integrated approaches, while some focus on sectoral issues and

¹⁸ According to REST's response to the draft version of this report, the food resources it receives account for about 70% of the total budget of the organisation.

some on specific target groups such as FHHs. They have a wide range of interests and priorities, all of which will affect REST's overall strategy.

To the extent that DF funding is reduced, local officials and communities expect that the government will allocate more funds to the tabias concerned. This follows from their awareness that less government funds were allocated to their tabias because DF funds were forthcoming. On the one hand, the support coming through the DF has helped the government expand its development activities and services, as it could then give more attention (including government funds) to other parts of Tigray. On the other hand, DF support has been replacing government funding and providing to rural communities the services that the people have a right to expect from the government. Only to a limited extent can the support through the DF be regarded as additional resources that allow exploration of new approaches, technologies etc. Both REST and the DF should be aware of this when considering how non-governmental funds can be used strategically to contribute to development in Tigray and in Ethiopia as a whole. It will be necessary to look beyond the areas demarcated as IADP watersheds and to see how the DF funds can add value to the overall work of REST in integrated watershed development.

9.2 Strategic priorities in REST/DF collaboration in watershed development

In view of the considerable positive outcomes being achieved through the watershed approach, it is clear that REST and the DF should continue to collaborate in applying this approach. In this collaboration, strategic priorities should encompass the following:

- **Focus on building household assets and incomes.** In the watersheds currently supported by DF funds, REST and the DF should focus on building assets and generating incomes by households and groups, and reduce attention to community SWC activities. The latter can be supported through other programmes (e.g. PSNP) and through community contributions of labour or cash for activities that the local people increasingly recognise as necessary and useful to maintain and improve their common basis for livelihood. The more that local people do the environmental conservation and rehabilitation work without incentives, the more it will be their own. It should be taken into consideration that the communities have benefited considerably from the watershed development work, according to their own verbal reports and the written reports of REST. As a result of the improvements, at least some households are generating sufficient income to be able to contribute to maintaining the communal assets.
- **Use DF funds to complement the PSNP.** Some of the DF funds should be used to support the PSNP by helping chronically resource-poor households "graduate" out of the PSNP programme. This would mean that the DF support for building household assets and developing income-generating activities would go to the same households that are receiving PSNP support. These are poor households with some capacity to work and to generate an income, and do not include the very elderly and severely disabled people who are likely to remain dependent on some form of social welfare support, whether through the PSNP or a government- or community-based service.
- **Focus REST/DF-supported work on agriculture and NRM,** including water development, while linking the communities with relevant governmental and NGO actors in other sectors (e.g. education, health) in order to achieve an integrated approach to rural development. Through collaboration with other development actors, such as TDA, WAT, TYA, local NGOs and line bureaux that receive funds from other sources, their efforts could complement the support being given by the DF, leading to positive synergies and greater impact.
- **Focus on appropriate technologies,** such as small-scale water-harvesting and water-lifting techniques, that can be easily constructed (or purchased) and managed by individual households and small groups within the community, coordinated through the WSC, rather than supporting large-scale technologies such as dams and river-diversion structures. Greater attention should be given to systematic local testing and adaptation of technologies together with farmers, e.g. jointly comparing the advantages and disadvantages of different water-harvesting techniques.

- **Build the capacities of the FTCs** in the IADP areas so that these centres can function on a sustainable basis, providing a base for technical training, farmer-to-farmer learning, coordination of farmer-led experimentation and accessing information relevant for farmers.
- **Provide inputs for agriculture and enterprise development on credit** instead of providing some free of charge: it is important for a business-oriented approach that the local people know the costs of improvements such as excavated tanks; this also promotes greater self-reliance. (To some extent, it is understandable that REST wants to encourage individuals with initiative by providing them with materials free of charge, but this is not expressed REST policy and would need to be well justified.)
- **Promote input acquisition and marketing through group approaches**, working with relevant governmental bodies, the private sector and local groups in one or more neighbouring watersheds to explore ways to improve market access and local benefits. This may include the local production of (or at least the local organisation of acquiring) inputs such as fruit-tree seedlings and gabion wire.
- **Give more attention to building capacities of local organisations** in management and leadership. This should include systematic follow-up training for existing committees in the IADP areas. The additional training need not be provided by REST staff; rather, REST should link the committees to sources of relevant training, e.g. Cooperatives Bureau, WAT.
- **Develop a phasing-out strategy** in a more deliberate way and plan to phase out of the current watersheds within 2–4 years, depending on the local organisational capacities that have been developed. The phasing-out strategy should outline how the contributions of the partners in development, including the local community, are expected to change over time. The roles of REST and the DF in providing financial and material support and technical training should decrease, while other roles – such as in advisory support in local OD, entrepreneurship, marketing etc; linking with sources of inputs, training and other services; and networking (linking producer groups, sector committees, WSCs and other community organisations for the purposes of information exchange and learning) – should continue for several years.
- **Select future watersheds for REST/DF collaboration with a view to scaling up** through community-to-community and farmer-to-farmer learning. Lateral learning from watersheds supported by REST/DF is already taking place in an *ad hoc* fashion. Selecting watersheds for wide demonstration and learning effects will require more attention to the spatial distribution of the watersheds.
- **Capitalise on experience.** Give more emphasis to capitalising on experience through mutual learning events, documentation, publication and other forms of knowledge management so that lessons from the REST/DF collaboration can be shared more widely. This should include capitalising on local innovators for diffusing and inspiring the wider testing of site-appropriate ideas. It would also include documenting REST's watershed approach and comparing it with approaches applied by other agencies. It is to be welcomed that the Ethiopian Government has decided to apply the watershed approach throughout the country. However, there are different interpretations as to what this approach entails. It will be important that REST document thoroughly the approach it had taken, to make it more clear to others and to contribute to wider learning.
- **Start working in at least one watershed crossing administrative boundaries**, in order to learn how planning can be harmonised where hydrological units do not fall within administrative units. At the same time, explore less intensive (“lower-input”) ways of promoting watershed development by seeking collaboration with other development actors and focusing on the “software” rather than the “hardware” of watershed management.
- **Build on REST experience relevant for new geographic areas of DF support.** Many of the activities in the IADP areas would be relevant also beyond Tigray. As the DF starts giving more attention to improving pastoral livelihoods, REST has much to contribute from its experiences in land management in dry areas, water development, local institutional

development etc. Visitors from other areas, e.g. Afar and Somali Regions, have heard of, visited and learned from REST/DF work in Tigray. The DF could capitalise on REST's capacities by providing some seed money to create stronger linkages, so that REST can contribute to developing the pastoral lowlands, without working directly in that area.

- **Linking local-level development work with higher-level work on human rights.** Much of REST's work in strengthening local institutions, reinforcing local people's confidence and making them more economically independent is empowering them to claim their rights. However, REST could play a stronger role in linking its development work at the grassroots to rights issues at higher levels. It could provide concrete examples and thus give substance to the more abstract advocacy work in which some NGOs are engaged at national and international level.

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for external assessment of selected issues in the REST/DF Integrated Agricultural Development Program (IADP) in Tigray, Ethiopia

Final, per 11 November 2005

The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and the Development Foundation (DF) have cooperated for more than 20 years in rehabilitation and development work in Tigray Region. In the period 2003–2006, they are implementing the Integrated Agricultural Development Program (IADP) and the Research Project. The IADP has focused on environmental rehabilitation; development of water, agriculture, marketing and small-scale business and fighting HIV/AIDS, with gender equality as a cross-cutting issue. The project operates in four drought-prone woredas of Tigray Region: Anferom, Werielekhe, Tanqua Abergelle and Kolla Tembien. The research work is meant to support these project activities and the overall work of REST.

Review process

A two-person review team, made up of one Ethiopian and one non-Ethiopian with considerable experience in planning, advising, monitoring and evaluating projects in Tigray and other parts of Ethiopia, will assess some key issues that have been identified by REST and the DF as being of strategic importance for planning future collaboration. This collaboration will be based on REST's new strategy, the DF's new strategy for its work in Ethiopia, and national and regional priorities related to the fields of expertise of REST and the DF.

In the process of revising its strategy, REST will be carrying out a facilitated internal assessment of still more issues that are important for planning its future work. The outcomes of this internal assessment, including the assessment of the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) work, will complement the external assessment. The review team will refer to and build on the results of the internal review process and, if necessary, deepen aspects of it that are crucial for the external review. Particular attention will be given to the contribution of the REST research to the IADP, to REST as a whole and to Tigray Region.

Main areas for external assessment

After reading the draft Terms of Reference (ToRs), the review team understands that the following areas have been identified for external assessment:

1. **Relations between REST and the government:** REST's working relations with the government at different levels, the relationship of REST with the existing political structure and decision-making processes, and the roles of REST and the government in service provision;
2. **Local organisational development:** process and extent of empowerment, autonomy, as well as the division of roles and responsibilities of the recently established sectoral committees, particularly within watersheds, and their relation to other local institutions, such as the Tabia Development Committees and Baitos, with particular attention to how a rights-based approach has been taken and could be strengthened;
3. **"Exit" strategies:** the approach and strategies taken by REST in enabling local groups to assume increasing responsibility for project activities to the extent that they can continue the activities on their own, with reduced or no project support;
4. **Local ownership:** the extent to which project components are demand-driven, i.e. are genuinely demanded by the intended target groups of the IADP and are regarded as their own;
5. **Gender mainstreaming:** the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and strategies taken in gender mainstreaming, and ways in which this could be improved, with particular attention to the working relationship of REST with other institutions pursuing the same aim, i.e. the Women's Association of Tigray and the Bureau of Women's Affairs;
6. **Youth work:** the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and strategies taken in working with youth, both male and female, and ways in which these could be improved, with particular attention to the working relationship with the Youth Association of Tigray and other actors in the field of youth development;
7. **Strategic priorities to continue the watershed approach:** ways in which REST and DF can continue to collaborate in the watershed approach, using limited funds strategically. Did the change from Woreda planning approach to the watershed approach strengthen local ownership and local participatory development processes?

8. **Shifts in emphasis in project components:** the current status and dynamics of project components that have been supported by the DF for several years and more recently introduced approaches, components and technologies, looking at “phasing in”, “phasing over” and “phasing out” from the perspectives of the different actors, and indicating strategic directions for further support by REST and the DF.

Scope of the review

The review will cover the period 2003–2005 (three years). The team will look at the DF-supported activities within the wider context of REST activities funded from other sources. It will review relevant documents of REST, the DF, the federal and regional government and line ministries, and other donors of relevant projects implemented by REST. In consultation with REST, the team will select two tabias in each of two IADP woredas where it can visit projects relevant to the ToRs. The team will consult with the woreda administration and REST field staff when starting the assessment process in each of the two woredas, and will hold a debriefing session with woreda administration and REST field staff and other interested parties before leaving the woreda. At the outset and at close of the period in Tigray, the team will prepare for and debrief about the fieldwork, respectively, with staff at REST Headquarters in Mekelle.

The watershed approach is also being implemented in other parts of the region, in addition to the four woredas covered by the IADP. The review team will, together with REST staff, select one area to visit in order to see how REST is implementing this approach with support from another donor. Together with BoANR staff, it will select one area to visit in which the Tigray Government is implementing this approach without any external funding.

Methodology of the review

The team members will acquire and review as many project-related documents as possible before commencing the fieldwork. On the basis of these documents and the ToRs, it will prepare checklists of key items to be covered in each of the eight above-mentioned areas and will identify possibilities for acquiring the information required. If there exist external evaluations undertaken by other donors of REST within the same areas of development as the DF supported program these evaluations should be reviewed and main conclusions summarized from these report.

Immediately after arrival in Mekelle, the team will meet with relevant REST staff for final clarification about the process of the review and for selection of the woredas and tabias to be covered by the review. This will give the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff member in REST Headquarters an opportunity on the following day to notify the woreda administrations and field staff about the timing of the field visits.

The initial criteria proposed by the review team for selection of woredas are:

- duration of collaboration with REST, selecting those woredas in which REST has been working for several years on long-term project components
- duration of implementation of the watershed approach, selecting one woreda where the approach is well established (Woreda A) and another in which it has started more recently (Woreda B)
- number and type of activities in the woredas, selecting one in which several integrated project components are being carried out (Woreda A) and one with a smaller number of project components (Woreda B)
- extent to which the team members are already familiar with the woreda, with preference given to visiting woredas that are less well-known.

The initial criteria proposed by the team for selection of the two tabias in each woreda are:

- degree of “maturity” with respect to assuming responsibility for project activities, i.e. one tabia that is quite advanced and one that is less advanced in, e.g., establishment of cooperatives, management of enclosures, seedbanks, etc;
- number and type of activities in the tabias, selecting one in which several integrated project components are being carried out and one with a smaller number of project components
- vicinity to major roads and markets, selecting one that is more favourably located and one that is more remote.

Before visiting the field, the team will hold a half-day workshop with REST staff – primarily the Management Team – and use visualisation methods to draw out the main concerns related to the issues at hand. Subsequent discussion during the workshop will focus on these concerns.

In Mekelle, separate visits will be made by each of the two team members to key resource persons or small groups from relevant institutions: Board members, Bureaux/Offices of Agriculture and Natural Resource Development, Water, Health, Capacity Building, Planning, Food Security/ Productive Safety Net, Women's Affairs, HAPCO, and regional headquarters of the Women's Association of Tigray, the Youth Association of Tigray and the Farmers' Association of Tigray.

At the beginning of each period in a woreda, the reasons for and proposed process of the review will be presented to woreda administration and REST field staff. Two tabias per woreda will be visited. Focus-group meetings will be held with youth, women, marketing cooperatives, sector committees, Woreda Development committees and other relevant groups. Visualisation techniques will be used to facilitate wide participation in discussions by all members of the group, particularly with respect to local organisational analysis.

Discussions will also be sought within individual households and *ad hoc* groups of men and/or women, youth (in and out of school) and elders encountered in the tabias, as well as with resource persons in local schools, clinics etc. Staff from sectoral offices, with particularly emphasis on agriculture and natural resource development, will be interviewed according to semi-structured interview guidelines.

The implementation of the review in the tabias will be flexible in the sense that discussions will be held with individuals and groups as opportune and also deliberately following up on findings so as to triangulate information received from different sources.

In Addis Ababa, if deemed necessary, further discussions will be held with other individuals, e.g. in donor agencies supporting similar activities to those now being supported by the DF, especially with a view to possible complementarity in continuation of the watershed approach. It may also be necessary to visit Board members in Addis Ababa or elsewhere if they cannot be met in Mekelle.

Reporting

The review team will prepare a report that describes the process of the review and presents the findings, recommendations and lessons learnt. The draft of the report will be submitted to REST and the DF two weeks after the debriefing at REST Headquarters in Mekelle. REST and the DF will give the team comments on the reports within ten days. The final report will be submitted to REST and the DF one week after this.

Logistics

The review team will be responsible for arranging international and domestic air travel. REST will provide transportation in Mekelle and in the field. One M&E expert will work with the team in the field to facilitate the review process.

Annex 2: Itinerary of review mission in Ethiopia

Day / Date 2006	Place	Activities
Fri 27 Jan		Travel to Addis Ababa (international consultants)
Sat 28 Jan	Addis Ababa	Document review Preparation of checklists and of introductory workshop
Sun 29 Jan	Mekelle	Flight to Mekelle Meeting with REST Head of Planning and M&E
Mon 30 Jan	Mekelle	REST introductory workshop with Management Team and RPU Selection of woredas and tabias Interviews with resource persons
Tue 31 Jan	Ahferom Woreda	Travel to Enticho Woreda-level meetings and interviews
Wed 1 Feb	Endamariam Tabia	Field visits/discussions in Maigundi watershed
Thu 2 Feb	Maisuru Tabia	Field visits/discussions in Maisuru watershed
Fri 3 Feb	Adwa Woreda	Field visits/discussions in Tsegereda watershed Meeting with REST field staff Preparation for woreda-level debriefing
Sat 4 Feb	Ahferom Woreda Adigrat	Woreda-level debriefing in Enticho Visit to ADCS in Adigrat Travel to Mekelle
Sun 5 Feb	Mekelle	Consolidation of notes Document review Preparation for next field visit
Mon 6 Feb	Mekelle	Interviews with resource persons
Tue 7 Feb	Werielekhe Woreda	Travel to Edaga Arbi Woreda-level meetings and interviews
Wed 8 Feb	Sumret Tabia	Field visit/discussions in Rubagered watershed
Thu 9 Feb	Selam Tabia	Field visit/discussions in Maiserenigus watershed Preparation for debriefing
Fri 10 Feb	Edaga Arbi Hagereselam	Woreda-level debriefing Visit to Office of Agriculture Travel to Mekelle
Sat 11 Feb	Mekelle	Consolidation of notes Document review
Sun 12 Feb	Mekelle	Interviews with resource persons Preparation for debriefing
Mon 13 Feb	Wukro	Fields visit/discussions in Abraha Atsbeha watershed
Tue 14 Feb	Mekelle	Debriefing Flight to Addis Ababa
Wed 15 Feb	Addis Ababa	Report writing
Thu 16 Feb	Addis Ababa	Report writing
Fri 17 Feb	Addis Ababa	Report writing
Sat 18 Feb	Addis Ababa	Report writing
Sun 19 Feb		Travel from Addis Ababa

Annex 3: Persons and groups consulted

Participants in introductory workshop at REST headquarters, 30.01.06

Name	Position
Kahsay Girmay	Irrigation Construction Head (WRDD)
Kunoum Assefa	Information Technology/GIS Head
Desta Gebreher	Research Officer
Berhane Hadera	Project Coordinator
Atsbeha Berhe	Health Department Head
Yemane Solomon	Planning and Coordination Head
Mekonnen Abrha	Deputy Director
Tilahun Amha	Supply & Maintenance Department Head
Eyasu Kiros	Public Relations Officer
Mulugeta Berhanu	Environment and Agriculture Department Head
Getachew Kalayu	Programming, M&E Division Head
Webedekal Atsbeha	Programming, M&E Division Senior Expert
Getachew Haile	Water Supply Department Head
Kalayu Gitet	Human Resources Department Head
GebreMichael Ghiday	Finance Department Head
Feven Tadesse	Gender Expert

Participants in introductory workshop in Ahferom Woreda, 31.01.06

Name	Position
Bereket Hagos	REST Livestock Expert / Woreda Watershed Committee
Kelali Tsegay	REST Health Expert
Desta Gilselassie	SWC Team Leader / Woreda Watershed Committee
Yohannes Assefa	Irrigation Expert
Yisak WoldeGiorgis	Cooperative Expert (Livestock Expert)
Samson Eyasu	District Health Office Head / Woreda Watershed Committee
Zeru Kiflewahid	Health Officer (HIV/AIDS expert)
Kibrom GebreKidan	Woreda Watershed Committee
GebreEgziabher Areghegne	Agricultural & Rural Development Office Head
Mohammed Abdulkadir	REST Ahferom Coordinator
Almaz Mirae	Representative of BoWA (from WAT)
Getachew TekleHaimanot	Animal Science Expert
Lemlem Kahsay	WAT
Seyfu Alzgi	TYA
Mengesha GebreMichael	REST Crop Expert / Woreda Watershed Committee
Mulugeta Berhanu	REST, ERAD Head

Participants in meeting with REST field staff in Ahferom Woreda, 03.02.06

Name	Position
Bereket Hagos	Livestock Expert
Gilmedhin Afraine	SWC Expert
Kelali Tsegay	Health Expert
Mengesha GebreMichael	Crop Expert
Mohammed Abdulkadir	REST Ahferom Coordinator

Participants in debriefing in Ahferom Woreda, 04.02.06

Name	Position
Desta Gebreselassie	SWC Team Leader / Woreda Watershed Committee
GebreEgziabher Areghegne	Agricultural and Rural Development Office Head
Kelali Tsegay	REST Health Expert
Mohammed Abdulkadir	REST Ahferom Coordinator
Almaz Mirae	WAT

Getachew TekleHaimanot	Animal Science Expert
Yisak WoldeGiorgis	Cooperative Expert (Livestock Expert)
Yohannes Assefa	Irrigation Expert
Kebede Kidanu	REST Education Coordinator
Zeru Kiflewahid	Health Officer (HIV/AIDS expert)
Seyfu Alzgi	TYA
Mengesha GebreMichael	REST Crop Expert / Woreda Watershed Committee
Bereket Hagos	REST Livestock Expert / Woreda Watershed Committee
Mulugeta Berhanu	REST, ERAD Head

Participants in introductory workshop (07.02.06) and debriefing (10.02.06) in Edaga Arbi, Werielekhe Woreda

Name	Organisation	Position
Gebrehiwot Gebremedhin	Office of Health	HIV/AIDS expert
Aberham GebreMichael	Office of Agriculture	Team Leader
Tesfaye Berhane	TYA	Chair
Meseret GebreWolde	WAT	Vice Chair
Teklehimanot WoldeGebrel	REST	SWC Expert
Kelali Tsegay	REST	Health Expert
Berhanu GebreMedhin	REST	Woreda Coordinator
Tesfay Mekonnen	Office of Agriculture	Natural Resources Expert
Asefa GebreEgziabhir	Office of Water Resources	Woreda Head
Teweldemedhin	REST	Livestock Expert
Haileselassie Kiros	Office of Agriculture	Forestry Expert
Tsehai Woldekidan	WAT	Chair

Participants in debriefing at REST headquarters, Mekelle, 14.02.06

Name	Position
Teklewieni Asefa	Executive Director
Mekonnen Abrha	Deputy Director
Yemane Solomon	Planning & Coordination Department Head
Mulugeta Berhanu	ERAD Department Head
Getachew Haile	Water Department Head
GebreMichael Ghiday	Finance Department Head
Tilahun Amha	Supply & Maintenance Department Head
Kalayu Gitet	Human Resources Department Head
Atsbeha Berhe	Health Department Head
Getachew Kalayu	Programming M&E Division Head
Mebrahtu Fekadu	Project Preparation Division Head
Kunoum Assefa	Information Technology/GIS Head
Feben Tadesse	Gender Unit
Muluberhan	Project Preparation Expert
Haileselasie Gebremedhin	Programme Expert
Solomon Gezae	Programme Expert
Werede Atsbeha	Programme Expert
Hagos Girmai	Health Expert
Gebremedhin Tadesse	Programme Expert
Dawit WoldeLibanos	Programme Expert
GebreTsadik K/mariam	Study and Design Division Head
Jorn Stave	DF Project Coordinator
Dagnaw Menan	ERAD Department Vice-Head

Other individuals:

Abay Woldu	Head, Agriculture and Rural Development; REST Board Chair
Abadi Teklohiwonot	MSc student, formerly Head of Training, Tigray BoANR
Abba WoldeSelasie Tesfay	Adigrat parish priest
Abba Tesfasselassie Medhin	Bishop of Adigrat Diocese
Amanuel Hadera	ADCS
Assefa Tewodros	Head, Food Security
Berhane Haile	Head, BoANR
Beyene Birru	Project Officer, UNICEF
Eyasu Tesfay	General Manager, TYA
Gebreselassie Zelelu	Farmer innovator, Rubagered watershed
Giday GebreMedhin	Tigray Agricultural Marketing Promotion Agency
Gide Aregay	Woman farmer innovator, Maisuru watershed
Girma Negussie	Programme and Training Coordinator, TYA
Goytoom Alemayo	Livestock Team Leader, Hagereselam Office of Agriculture
Hadush Gebru	Head, Education Programme and Supervision, Bureau of Education
Hailemariam Gebreselassie	NRM expert, Office of Agriculture, Wukro
Hailu Araya	Institute for Sustainable Development
Hailu Kiros	Rural Development coordinator, Hagereselam Office of Agriculture
Josef Naudts	Caritas International Belgium, Adigrat
Mehari GebreMedhin	Head, Agriculture and Rural Development Office, Wukro
Mehred	REST Coordinator, Adwa
Mitiku Haile	President, Mekelle University; REST Board member
Roman Gebreselassie	BoWA
Roman Moges	Caritas International Belgium, Adigrat
Yirgalem Mehare	REST agronomist, Adwa
Zemichael Gebremedhin	President's Special Advisor for Civil Society

Other groups at watershed level:

Endamariam Tabia: anti-AIDS club, beekeeping group, DAs, elders, elementary school staff, farmers, Home Agent, Maigundi WSC, TBAs, women's group, youth group

Maisuru Tabia: DAs, elders, farmers, Maisuru WSC, tabia baito, women's group, youth group

Tsegereda watershed: DAs, farmers, Tsegereda WSC

Sumret Tabia: beekeepers, CHWs, DAs, elders, farmers, Home Agent, Rubagered WSC, TBAs, Water and Sanitation Committee

Selam Tabia: elders, farmers, irrigation group, tabia baito, women's group, youth group

Discussions with other individuals and groups working with REST, made by two of the three review team members during the DF review in September 2005 (Waters-Bayer *et al* 2005), are also referred to.

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Annex 5: RPU publications from FY2003–2005

S/N	Survey title	Survey duration	Donor	Remark
1	Pre-harvest nutritional anthropometric conducted in H/Wajerat, Ahferom and Mereb Leke Woredas	13 Aug–27 Sep 2003	Save the Children –USA	The survey was done with representatives from Save the Children–USA, Tigray DBBP, Tigray Health Bureau, REST Health Department and RPU. The data encoding, analysis and writing up of the report was done by RPU.
2	ACCESS centres evaluation survey, Seharti-Semre Woreda	Dec 2003	BTF	RPU Report produced
3	Nutritional anthropometric survey conducted in Tanqua-Abergele Woreda	1–8 Jan 2004	DPPB/UNICEF	The field survey was done by Tigray DPPB and RPU. Report produced by RPU.
4	Post-harvest nutritional anthropometric conducted in H/Wajerat, Raya Azebo, Ahferom and Mereb Leke Woredas	28 Mar–5 May 2004	JEOP/USAID	RPU Report produced
5	Socio-economic baseline survey conducted in 5 watersheds located in Werie Leke, T/Abergele, Kola Tembien, Ahferom and Degua Tembien Woredas namely Begiela, Seyemtiruba, E/Mariam, Migundi and Maihawti respectively	10 Jun–21 Aug 2004	DF-Norway for the first 4 watersheds and USAID for the 5 th watershed	RPU Draft report produced
6	Pre-project implementation baseline survey conducted in 38 water points located in H/Wajerat, S/Samre, T/Abergele, Hawzien and Adwa Woreda	6–14 Aug 2004	Millennium Water Project (MWP)	RPU Report produced
7	Pre-harvest nutritional anthropometric conducted in H/Wajerat, Raya Azebo, Ahferom and Mereb Leke Woredas	4 Oct–22 Nov 2004	JEOP/USAID	RPU Report produced
8	Nutrition and food security survey conducted in Tsegereda, Debre-Genet, Tsekebiya and Enda Michael watersheds located in Adwa Woreda	23 Nov–4 Dec 2004	Trócaire	RPU Report produced
9	Gender and household socio-economic condition in Hawzien Woreda	12–19 Dec 2004	Oxfam-Canada	The field survey was done by WAT and RPU. RPU produced report.
10	Pre-project implementation baseline survey conducted in 38 water points located in S/Same and Alage Woredas	14–26 Jan 2005	Intermon	RPU Report produced
11	Socio-economic baseline survey conducted in 3 watersheds located in Kola Tembien Woreda namely Tezamira, Mawi and Begesheka watersheds	16 Sep 2005 and wind-up by 2 Oct 2005	Novib	RPU Draft report produced
12	Nutrition and food security survey conducted in 8 watersheds in Hintallo-Wajirat and Adwa Woredas	Nov 2005	Trócaire	RPU Report produced

Besides the aforementioned research studies RPU has collaborated with:

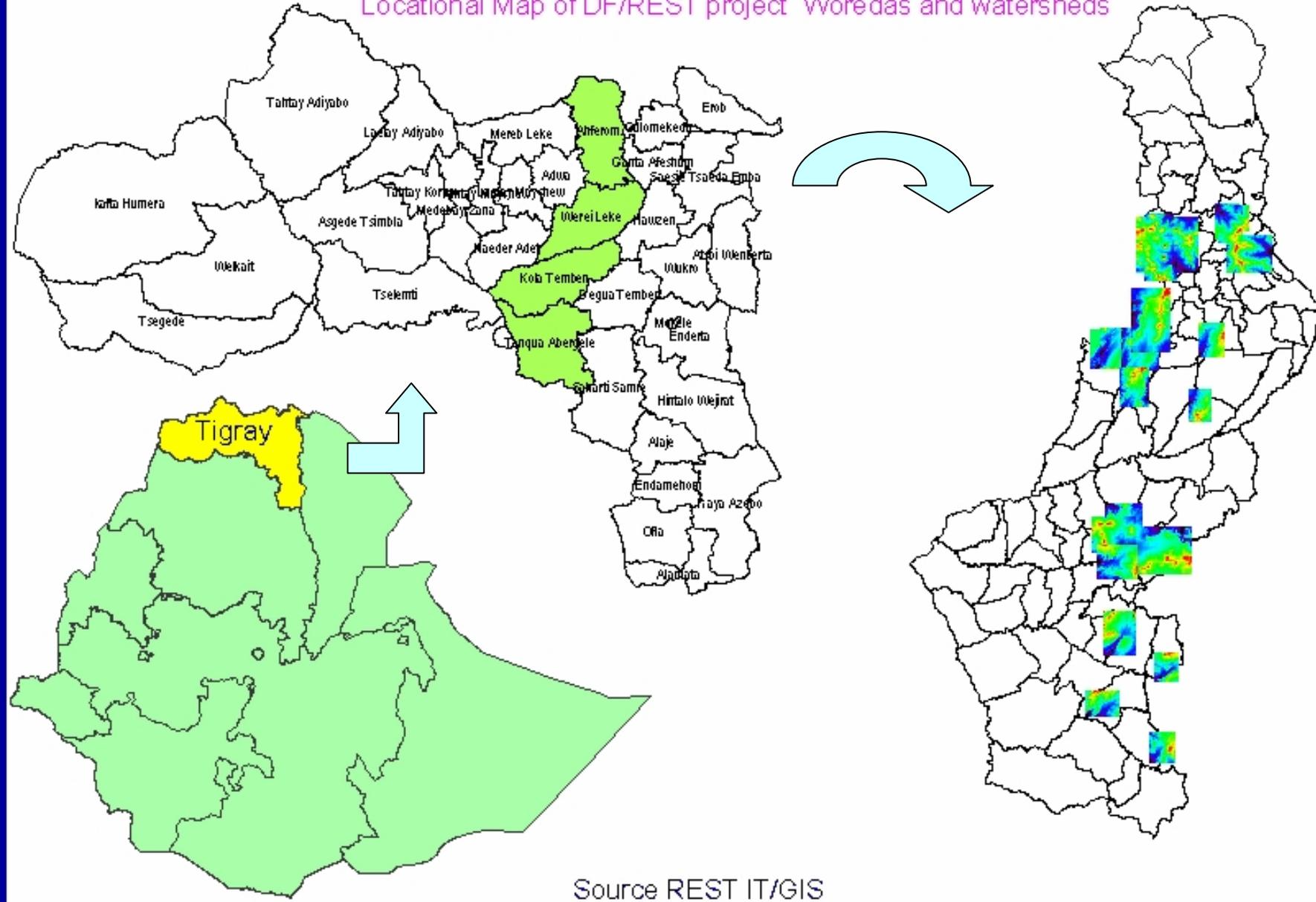
- Mekelle University (MU) in designing and undertaking the operational Research survey conducted in Debre-Kidan and Bega-Sheka watersheds located in Hawzien and Kola Tembien Woredas respectively
- WFP in the nutritional anthropometric survey conducted in internally displaced peoples (IDPs) located in Gulo-Mekeda, Ahferom, Sheraro and Humera Woredas in July 2004
- Moreover the Research Unit data collectors had trained and participated in collecting data in the Joint Cooperating Sponsors Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Baseline Survey conducted in drought-prone areas located in six woredas namely. Raya Azebo, Degua Tembien, Wukro, Ahferom, Mereb Leke and Werie Leke. The unit also collaborated in designing and collecting data on Adult Reproductive Health Survey conducted in Mekelle, Enderta and Raya Azebo Woredas.

Annex 6: Maps

Map 1: Locational map of DF/REST project woredas and watersheds
(REST IT/GIS 2006)

Map 2: NGOs by sector and zone in Tigray Region (UNOCHA 2005)

Locational Map of DF/REST project Woredas and watersheds



Source REST IT/GIS

NGO Activities by Sector and Zone in Tigray Region

