

RELIEF SOCIETY OF TIGRAY (REST)

**HINTALO WAJERAT GENDER RESPONSIVE LIVELIHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

SUPPORTED BY NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID (NCA)

2011 – 2013 FY

MID-TERM REVIEW

OCTOBER 2012

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1. Introduction

The Gender Responsive Livelihood Development Project was prepared to support poor and vulnerable people of two watersheds in Hintalo Wajerat Woreda found in South East Administrative zone of Tigray Region. The watersheds are Gereb –hinche and Belesat watersheds. The project Woreda is one of the 31 chronically food insecure and vulnerable Woredas of the Region. The Woreda has a total population of 163,923 out of which 50.5% are females. More than 92% of the project Woreda reside in Rural *Tabias* while the remaining in urban and semi-urban areas. The total population of the two *Tabias* is 16,234 out of which 8037 are females.

The proposed gender responsive livelihood development project is a three – year project from 2011 to 2013 FY. The total budget allocated was ETB 6,996,708.00 (six million, nine hundred ninety six thousand and seven hundred eight birr only) where the contribution from NCA is ETB 5,466,708.00 (five million four hundred sixty six thousand and seven hundred eight birr only) and REST and community ETB 1,530,000.00 (one million five hundred thirty thousand birr only).

One and half year has been elapsed where 2011 FY has been fully implemented and reported to NCA, and 2012 FY implementation is on implementation process. Physical activities and budget utilizations have been monitored during the implementation period using different modalities as reporting, field visits for monitoring and evaluation, etc. Experts from REST head quarter and coordination offices have been monitoring the progress of interventions of hardware (physical structures, organize cooperatives and self-help groups, etc) and software (trainings, by-law development, awareness creation on gender and HTP (harmful traditional practices), etc) aspects of the gender responsive livelihood development project. In addition, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) livelihood coordinator and Monitoring and Evaluation experts have also been visiting the watersheds and discussed with beneficiaries and REST representatives. Based on the plan a mid-term review has been conducted now from October 5-6, 2012 FY to assess the progress of the gender responsive livelihood development project. Representatives available during the mid-term review were drawn from NCA, REST, Regional Food security desk office of BoARD, Woreda women’s affairs, Woreda youth office, Woreda Agriculture office and Woreda water and mines office.

2. Background to the context

Implementation of the project activities has been monitored by REST staffs of both head quarter and coordination offices in collaboration with respective sector offices. During the monitoring period community especially of beneficiaries have been participating to create awareness on ownership of the projects being implemented. Besides, to the monitoring by REST staffs, NCA staffs have also been closely monitoring the progress of the project implementation and give support to the implementing organization both technical and financial aspects to smoothly implement and utilize resources destined to the project. In addition to the periodic monitoring, a mid-term review

was done at one and half year of the project life to evaluate whether the project goals and objectives are on the right track and see if there are activities that have difficulties in their implementation and that have no contribution to the program objectives. The mid – term review carried out from October 5-6, 2012 was done in a participatory manner where different stakeholders have participated and examined the progress of the project through office discussion and field level observation and discussion with communities on their perception, knowledge, benefit and prospects of the project in general. Discussion was also held on specific interventions being implemented in the two project watershed areas where beneficiary farmers have gave their consent on the importance of specific activities. Based on the visits and discussions, different issues and problems were raised by the beneficiaries of the two watersheds. All issues and problems raised and the need and importance of the mid-term review will be discussed in detail in the coming chapters.

3. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project is to contribute for promoting overall economic development in the target watersheds, through restoring ecological balance and improvement of socio-economic conditions of the people inhabiting the watersheds.

Specific objectives of the project:

Objective 1: Ecological balance restored by harnessing, conserving and developing natural resources i.e. land, water, vegetative cover in the target four watersheds at the end of 2013.

Objective 2: Increased households' income through promotion of livelihoods diversification and sustainable management and utilization of watershed resources and mitigated adverse effects posed by vulnerability in the target area at the end of 2013.

Objective 3: Increased access to infrastructure (water supply, access road), and information (health, HTP, gender, etc) that enhance the general well-being of the people inhabiting the target watersheds at the end of 2013.

Anticipated results that lead to achievement of objectives include:

Result 1.1: Land degradation in the target watersheds controlled and degraded land rehabilitated

Result 1.2: Improved vegetation cover and bio-diversity

Result 2.1: Increased crop production and productivity in the target watersheds

Result 2.2: Increased income of the households involved in different income generating activities

Result 2.3: Increased access to market information

Result 2.4: Enhanced social networking and community safety nets

Result 3.1: Increased access to safe water and sanitation services for the people in the target watersheds

Result 3.2: Target beneficiaries developed favorable attitudes to prevent HIV and HTP and promote gender equality

4. Activities planned and achieved under each specific objectives and results

Under the specific objectives and results different activities have been planned oriented to achieve the overall objective or goal of the gender responsive livelihood development project. During the specified period activities implemented under each specific objective have been reported as follows:

Objective #1: At the end of the three years project, ecological balance restored in the two watersheds by harnessing, conserving and developing natural sources i.e. land, water and vegetative cover.

Result 1.1: Land degradation in the target watersheds controlled and degraded lands rehabilitated

Activity 1.1.1 Capacity building (watershed development committees established and capacitated): During the starting of the implementation period (beginning of year one) familiarization workshop was held (64 participated where 43 male and 21 females). During same year, two watersheds committees one each at Gereb-hinche and Belesate established by direct participation of communities of the two watersheds. The watershed committees were composed of 14 members in the two watersheds (7 male and 7 females). Training was given to the watershed members for 5 days and the focus of the training was on natural resources management, resources mobilization, problem identification, resources sharing, community mobilization, target groups/beneficiary selection and monitoring of interventions. Each member of the watersheds committees was assigned specific duties/activities by the committee. In the specified period one watershed development technical team formed at Woreda level. The technical team was composed of eight male and 2 female drawn from different sector offices such as Woreda agriculture offices, Woreda Water resources office, Woreda health office and REST coordination office. The technical team and other participants have got training for 6 days and the focus of the training was land use system and management, resources management, watershed delineation, community mobilization, problem identification, beneficiaries targeting and monitoring of interventions.

Activity 1.1.2: Watershed user groups organized: During the past one and half years different user groups have been established such as 2 groups for bee keeping, 2 groups for shoat fattening, 1 group for cattle fattening, 2 groups for poultry production.

Activity 1.1.3: Development and management plan for the two watersheds prepared: During the first year development and management plan has already been prepared in the two watersheds. Participants

during the development plan were watershed development committees of the two watersheds and Watershed development technical committees for technical inputs.

Activity 1.1.4: Soil and water conservation measures: Different in-situ soil and water conservation structures have been carried out to enhance water and soil conservations in the two watersheds such as deep trenches, stone bunds, stone faced trenches, herring bone, loose stone check dam, half moon, percolation ponds, etc. Physical structures were supported with biological soil and water conservation activities. The different soil and water conservation activities achieved have been tabulated below:

Activity 1.1.4 Soil & Water Conservation	Unit	2011 FY		2012 FY		Total		Remark
		Plan	Ach't	Plan	Ach't	Plan	Ach't	
Gereb - Hinche Watershed								
* Deep trench	Km	0.5	0.5	13.635	13.635	14.135	14.135	
* Stone bunds	Km	2.4	2.4	29.95	29.95	32.35	32.35	
* Stone faced trenches	Km	0.7	0.7	0	0	0.7	0.7	
* Biological SWC	No	1264	1264	14632	14632	15896	15896	
* Herring bone	No	400	400	0	0	400	400	
* Loose stone check dam	M3	0	0	516	516	516	516	
Belesat Watershed								
* Deep trench	Km	1.05	1.05	0	0	1.05	1.05	
* Stone bunds	Km	3.5	3.5	0	0	3.5	3.5	
* Stone faced trenches	Km	1.115	1.115	0	0	1.115	1.115	
* Biological SWC	No	19400	19400	0	0	19400	19400	
* Herring bone	No	1055	1055	0	0	1055	1055	
* Half moon	No	495	495	0	0	495	495	
* Percolation Ponds	No	2	2	0	0	2	2	
* Area cover of in-situ water conservation structures	ha							

Activity 1.1.5: Gully treatment and development: During three years project life one gully was planned to be treated with the size of 3.375 km, but 2 gullies have been treated with a total area size of 2.5 km.

Activity 1.1.6: Water harvesting check dams constructed: Totally 2 water harvesting check dam construction was planned and based on the plan this 2012 FY one water harvesting check dam has been constructed (at least 98% completed by the time of mid-term review).



Photo: Water harvesting check dam during construction

Result 1.2: Improved vegetation cover and bio-diversity

Activity 1.2.1: Conservation of existing natural vegetation through area closure: During the project life a total of 50 ha of closure area planned to be enclosed and guarded and based on that 567 ha of closure areas have been enclosed and guarded in the two watersheds performing 600% above the plan. This

high achievement was due to the community interest to protect and enclose more and more degraded communal areas. More and more enclosure areas have been apportioned to landless youth for different income generating activities as grass bales production and beekeeping development and plantations of different economically viable trees.

Activity 1.2.2: Seedling raising and supply: Landless youths have been organized into legal tree seedling producers and sellers cooperatives. The cooperatives produce different economically important or viable tree seedlings with high demand by community. So far different forage tree seedlings such as *Sesbania sesban* and tree seedling such as *Eucalyptus* for woodlot have been raised and supplied to the surrounding people on cash basis, but for the future the cooperatives have planned to produce different fruit seedlings such as sweet orange which have high demand by the community. During the last one and half years, there was a plan to raise 246315 tree seedlings by the cooperatives and about 181597 tree and forage seedlings have been raised and supplied to the surrounding communities on cash basis, performing 74.64%. However, over the three year period the plan was 330000 tree seedlings production, but the achievement has only been 55%.

Activity 1.2.3: Planting seedlings at appropriate sites: During the specified period (one and half years) there was a plan to plant 246315 different tree seedlings purchased from different sources and the achievement was 239597 tree and forage seedlings planted on different areas such as area enclosure, agro-forestry, etc performing 77% from the one and half years plan and 75% from the three years plan. The tree and forage seedlings had been secured from the tree seedling producer cooperative and government nurseries.

Activity 1.2.4: Hillside apportioning to landless: During the three years period there was a plan to apportion hillsides to 4 landless groups with 90 members and based on the plan 3 groups with 60 members have been established in the two watersheds, performing 75% with the groups and 66.67% with the members of the groups. The landless youth have started to engage themselves in different income generating activities such as seedling production, beekeeping, grass bales harvesting, etc.

Activity 1.2.5: Farm land and range land agro-forestry: During the three years proposal there was a plan to plant 6000 different seedlings on agro-forestry areas, however, achievement has been 12800 seedlings planted on agro-forestry areas (farm bunds with trenches constructed), performing 113% above the plan.

Activity 1.2.6: Introduce and promote energy efficient stove: During the three years project life there was a plan to establish two groups where their main duty was to introduce and promote energy efficient stoves through supplying 2 moulds and different local materials needed for the production of modern stoves and supply them to 200 households. However, the supply of mould was not possible due to the reason that GIZ was patented and recognized as sole distributor of such moulds by the regional state of Tigray. As a result REST has purchased and distributed 100 firewood saving modern stoves purchased from the groups established by GIZ found at Hiwane town.

Objective #2: Increased households' income through promotion of livelihoods diversification and sustainable management and utilization of water resources and mitigated adverse effects posed by vulnerability in the target area at the end of 2013.

Result 2.1: Increased crop production and productivity in the target watersheds

Activity 2.1.1: Training farmers on agronomic practices: During the three years project life there was a plan to engage 33 women headed households in different agronomic practices and training 67 women headed households, the performance has been more than 200%.

Activity 2.1.2: Backyard/Micro – gardens: During the three years project life there was a plan to train 35 women headed households on micro-garden and supply them with different local materials important for production of different vegetables destined to improve household nutrition and enhance income generation. Based on the plan 30 women headed households in the two watersheds have been trained and supplied with different local materials (manure, soil and stone), performing 85.71%. The poor women headed households are now benefiting from vegetable production and selling at nearby market place of Hiwane and Mi-nebri.

Activity 2.1.3: Provision of improved seed/bud/seedling to the farmers: Different agricultural inputs as vegetable tubers (potato and garlic), vegetable seeds (Bombay red, swiss-chard, cabbage and tomato roma vfn) and different fruit seedlings (sweet orange and mango) have been purchased and distributed to the beneficiary farmers as indicated on the table below:

Activity 2.1.3 provision of improved seedlings to farmers	Unit	2011 FY		2012 FY		Total		Remark
		Plan	Ach't	Plan	Ach't	Plan	Ach't	
* Vegetable tuber						0	0	
* Potato	Qtl	33.33	33.33	33.33	29.85	66.66	63.18	
* Garlic	Qtl	22	22	16.67	18.52	38.67	40.52	
* Vegetable Seeds	Kg	17	17	10	11.75	27	28.75	
* Bombay red (Onion)	Kg	7	7	2.5		9.5	7	
* Swisschard	Kg	1	1	2.5		3.5	1	
* Cabbage	Kg	2	2	2.5		4.5	2	
* Tomato Roma VFN	Kg	7	7	2.5		9.5	7	
* Fruit Seedlings						0	0	
* Sweet Orange	No	303	303	251	200	554	503	
* Mango	No	200	200	251	299	451	499	

Activity 2.1.4: Provision of water lifting technologies: During the three years project life 6 water-lifting motor pumps were planned to be purchased and distributed to grouped farmers and based on the plan only 2 motor pumps purchased and distributed in the 2011 FY and 3 motor pumps are on purchase process in the current 2012 FY. It was due to price escalation that only two have been purchased from

the planned 3 water pumps in 2011. The purchase of 3 motor pumps for 2012 FY has been on purchase process and expected to be delivered by the end of the fourth quarter.

Result 2.2: Alternative income sources diversified and promoted for resource poor households,

Activity 2.2.1: Establish apiculture group and provide necessary input: There was a plan to group 50 landless youths into honey producers and marketing cooperatives using apportioned hillsides, based on the plan 38 farmers have been grouped into honey producers and marketing cooperatives, performing 76%. Necessary inputs such as bee box hives, queen excluder and other accessories have been purchased and distributed to the groups.

Activity 2.2.2: Support 30 vulnerable women households in shoat rearing/fattening: 30 women headed households were planned to benefit from shoat fattening, and based on the plan 30 women headed households had been selected, trained and supplied with shoat destined for fattening, performing 100%.

Activity 2.2.3: Support to 60 vulnerable women households in poultry production: During the two years, there was a plan to recruit 40 poor women headed households and after appropriate training on management of poultry supply them with day old chicks. In 2011 FY, 20 women head households have been trained and supplied with 200 day old chicks, performing 50% of overall plan for the two years. In 2012 FY 20 women headed households have been selected and trained but the day old chicks are on purchase process and expect to supply them in the coming fourth quarter. The purchase of day old chickens has been linked with other projects established by TRoCIARE, CAFOD and SCIAF.

Activity 2.2.4: Cattle fattening: During the three years proposal there was a plan to train and supply 23 oxen for fattening to women headed household beneficiary farmers and based on the plan 23 women headed households have been selected, trained and supplied with oxen for fattening, performing 100%.

Activity 2.2.5: Animal feed for fattening: In the three year proposal, there was a plan to select, train and supply with different livestock feed stuffs. Based on the plan in 2011 FY 10 landless youth had been selected, trained and supplied with 200 quintals of molasses, 200 blocks of UMB and 300 quintals of concentrate feed, performing 50%. In the FY 2012, 12 farmers have been organized and trained for the supply of livestock feed supply, but the purchase and supply of livestock feed is on process, to be carried out in the fourth quarter.

Activity 2.2.6: IGA mapping and market promotion for IGAs in the watersheds: IGA mapping has not been conducted during the past one and half year implementation period, however, the value chain analysis that is going to be conducted in the coming quarter will address it.

Result 2.3: Increased access to market information

Activity 2.3.1: Access to market information: Market information at Hiwane and Mai-nebri market place was weekly collected and posted at both watersheds (FTCC: Farmers training center) in a bid build farmers awareness on market trends and marketing system. Farmers have also been made aware when to collect and sell their produces at the nearby market place; that is, Hiwane and Mai-nebri peri-urbans.

Activity 2.3.2: Conduct value chain analysis: Value chain analysis play significant role in identifying the main gaps in the market system and forecast the main promising income generating activities (IGA) and recommend different upgrading systems of existing one through the participation of sector offices and community at large. Value chain analysis also plays significant role to identify the most important functions and their actors that greatly affect the market system and functions. The value chain study is planned to be conduct in the coming quarter of 2012 FY.

Result 2.4: Enhanced social networking and community safety nets

Activity 2.4.1: Organize women in self-help groups (SHG): During the three years proposal, it was planned to establish 20 SHG and based on that 6 SHG have been established in 2011 FY. 6 SHG establishment is also on process during the current 2012 FY that women headed households have been selected and the project area is preparing itself to give training in collaboration with Woreda respective sector offices such as Small and medium enterprises, cooperative offices and women affaires offices. The established SHG have already saved ETB 8000.00 in cash and are planning to give loans to their groups for different income generating activities.

Activity 2.4.2: Establish watershed development association: Two watershed development associations establishment was planned in the main three years development proposal and already two associations have been established in 2011 FY in the two watersheds (one in each watershed), performing 100%.

Activity 2.4.3: Strengthen community support to people with different abilities and OVCs: In the two watersheds about 60 orphans and vulnerable children were planned to be supported and in 2011 FY 20 OVC have been selected by the community and approved by community and Woreda social affair offices and are receiving support for school and living expenses. Out of the total OVC supported 13 are females and the balance 7 were males. Similarly, in 2012 FY 20 OVC has been nominated and their names sent to watershed leaders for approval by community and the support is expected to start soon after the Woreda Social affair office gave its consent.

Objective #3: Increased access to infrastructure (water supply, access road) and information (health, HTP, Gender, etc) that enhance the general well-being of the people inhabiting the target watersheds at the end of 2013.

Result 3.1: Increased access to safe water and sanitation services in the target watersheds

Activity 3.1.1: Construction of water supply facilities: One Spring water development was planned to be constructed in 2011 FY, however, this particular intervention was not carried due to the reason that other donor (A Glimmer of Hope) has been addressing it and REST believed that no need of resources duplication and is planning to shift the budget to other resource constrained interventions.

Result 3.2: Developed favorable attitudes to prevent HIV and HTP and promote gender equality

Activity 3.2.1: Awareness raising of the inhabitants on gender equality: The training on gender awareness was carried out in two parts: the first awareness raising was done at Woreda level given to

sector offices where 24 male and 26 females have participated (102% performed) and the second part was at watershed level. In the two watersheds there was a plan to give awareness on gender equality to 143 inhabitants, based on that 132 inhabitants have been trained on awareness creation, performing 92.3%. The content of the training were: basic concept on gender issues, benefit of maintaining gender equality, gender role in food security, gender relation analysis, tools and techniques for gender analysis and basic concepts of mainstreaming in different level of projects.

Activity 3.2.2: Awareness raising of the inhabitants on HTP: Awareness raising to the inhabitants was planned bi-annually on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP), based on the plan awareness raising was conducted annually to the inhabitants and totally 41 (24 male and 17 females) people have participated in the training. Out of these people, 20 people (14 males and 6 females) have received cash for IGA. The remaining will receive cash soon.

Activity 3.2.3: Awareness raising of the inhabitants on HIV Prevention: Bi-annual awareness raising was planned to the inhabitants on HIV prevention, based on annual training on awareness raising on HIV prevention was carried out and totally 533 people have participated in the awareness raising training.

5. Outstanding activities during the implementation period

Due to different reasons some activities have not been implemented as IGA mapping and market information, value chain development and spring water development. IGA mapping and value chain study or market information: this has not been implemented due to the reason that this had to be done before the project has gone operational as some income generating activities have already been on-going that no need to carry out the study after the project has started. Value chain development: this value chain development has been planned during the final two months of 2012. Spring development has already been shifted to other significant interventions as there could create resources duplication if implemented.

6. Project review

6.1 Necessity of the mid-term review: This mid-term review carried out based on the aim of evaluating the progress and its contribution to the beneficiaries of the two watersheds.

6.2 Participants of the review: The participants of the review were drawn from NCA country office, REST and different sector offices such as women affairs office, youth and sport office, water and mines office, agriculture and rural development office of the project area and *tabia* leaders and beneficiaries at large. In addition, a participant from regional food security and disaster prevention and preparedness desk office was available throughout the review period.

6.3 Review approach: First there was a brief discussion at REST head office in the presence of NCA, regional food security and disaster prevention and preparedness desk office and REST head office staffs. Brief discussion was held on the approach and main contents of the review. A meeting was also held at REST project coordination office where all respective sector offices representatives participated.

NCA review team raised some issue as part of the main agendas of the review as follows: 2011 – 2012 FY (one and half year) progress reports; integration and implementation approach with sector offices; outstanding issues and successful activities that need to be scaled up. Based on the agendas proposed by NCA reviewing team the coordination office representatives presented progress of the one and half year achievement in the area of natural resources management, agriculture development (crop and livestock development), health development, gender, HTP and HIV/AIDS. Some questions and issues were also raised by NCA reviewers. REST (HQ and coordination office) and sector offices have responded to the questions and issues raised by NCA reviewers. After discussion at coordination office level, the team of reviewers and sector offices representatives visited the physical structures implemented by REST the first day and the second day discussion held with beneficiary representatives from the two watersheds.

6.3.1 Gereb-hinche watershed: The visited physical soil and water conservation activities especially of big gully reclamation were on progress. The gully visited was highly dissected by long years of soil and water erosion. Stone was transported using animal and human backs, and gabion check dams were constructed using the stones to reclaim the gully. During the visit it was observed that there was a resource shortage to finalize the gully reclamation, but both REST head office and coordination office have reiterated to link the program with other government programs like that of PSNP to finalize the reclamation. During the discussion, there was also technical issues raised by the reviewing team especially from the food security and disaster prevention and preparedness desk office that the gully reclamation should, technically, be constructed not to aggravate erosion like that of side way gully reclamation needs gully plugging or reshaping to control run-off and has to be skewed to both sides to avoid weak point of flood penetration. It was also recommended that such area of gully reclamation need to be integrated with biological soil and water conservation activities such as the soils deposited are alluvial soil (deposited soil) and active (highly susceptible to erosion). At the upper part of the gully it started to stabilize and hence passive (low erosion) as some vegetation has started to emerge. The catchment treatment has been undertaken integrating with government programs and other community mobilizations and has started to stabilize which was evidenced by the fact that the earlier treated upper areas of the gully has been stabilized with less soil depositions that means there was less soils moved from the catchment treated areas during the rainy season.

6.3.2 Belesat watershed: Different structures have been visited such as hillside apportioned to landless youths, landless youths controlled tree nursery area, and enclosure area based beekeeping development by landless youths, agro-forestry development, and water harvesting check dam constructions. During the visit by the reviewing team, water harvesting check dam was at its final construction phase (gate fitting) that soon the gate will be closed for harvesting the flowing water for irrigation purpose. A water conveyer canal has not been constructed so far but physical construction will soon start after the gate has been fitted and closed, and move the working force to construct the canal. The second watershed was relatively rehabilitated and stabilized better than the first visited watershed (Gereb-hinche watershed).

6.3.3 Discussion with watersheds representatives: After the physical structure visits was over the next day program was to discuss with beneficiaries representatives drawn from the two watersheds. During the discussion in addition to the representatives from sector offices and beneficiary representatives from the two watersheds, development agents, health agents, watershed committees, *tabia* leaders were present. During the discussion different issues were raised by the reviewing team especially from NCA and FSDPP desk office. Beneficiaries have also given responses and their concerns, too.

6.4 Results of the discussion (sector offices and communities): Three discussions at Mekelle, Adigudom and Belesat Watersheds have been of significance to reviewing and get insight to the progress of activities planned. The discussion at Mekelle REST head office was a sort of brain storming and entry point to the discussions at the grass root levels where the main discussion had been carried out. As a result the discussions made at the project area was of significant importance and given due emphasis.

6.4.1 Discussion held at REST Project Coordination Office level: Based on the agenda proposed by NCA reviewing team, REST project coordination office presented the ‘one and half year’ achievement of the implementation report. The REST coordination office representative briefed on how the project started. He said that before the project started thorough discussion was held at Woreda level about the nature of the project, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and project life and the main intervention areas. The Woreda administration office also gave consent on the main activities as being in line with government policies and the food security strategies of the project Woreda. In addition, the main needy areas had also been identified in an integrated way to bring ownership of the project activities by all sector offices and to be streamlined with the overall Woreda development plan in which it worked as a baseline for the overall integration. When the project started, all respective sector offices and REST staffs have worked together from implementation, such as beneficiary selection, trainings, input supply and others including monitoring and evaluation. Beneficiaries are selected in collaboration with respective sector offices such as agriculture and rural development office for agriculture development programs, health office for health related activities, etc. Trainings and other capacity building were also given in collaborations with the respective sector offices. These have brought the ownership of the project development interventions by the respective sector offices and participated through all process of the project cycle (identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

Agreement signed among sector offices: after the ‘gender responsive livelihood development project’ approved, all sector offices and *tabia* leaders have signed an agreement for the successful implementation of the project. The sector offices and *tabia* administrations that entered in to the agreement are such as REST coordination office, agriculture office, water and mines office, women office, youth and sports office, Small and medium enterprises office, *tabia* leaders and the beneficiary representatives at large. The signee members of all sector offices have established Woreda level sector offices committee to follow, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the project. Woreda level committee is endowed with the responsibility of successful implementation of project based on the rules and regulations set by the government to support poor farmers.

Watershed Development Committee (WDC) selection and approval: Watershed Development Committees have been nominated and selected by the community and approved by themselves. The watershed development committees endowed with the responsibility of selecting beneficiaries and follow up of the interventions throughout the project life. The number of watershed development committee is 7 in number (3 women and 4 males). Each member of the watershed development committee is responsible for specific intervention and should follow the activities up to the final implementation.

Role and Responsibility of WDC: The watershed development committees have been endowed with such responsibilities as beneficiary selection, follow up of interventions, follow up of revolving funds (repayment on time), identify interventions appropriate to the watershed, prepare development map of the watershed, etc.

Selection criteria of beneficiaries: Selection criteria for each intervention beneficiaries has been setup and based on that criterion the watershed committee are responsible to nominate and select beneficiaries and bring before the community of the watershed for approval. If the community found that there are some inconsistencies in the selection of beneficiaries, they discuss on it and rectify the issue. The selection criteria setup is as follows: levels of poverty, family size, disability, interest, etc are mentioned but few. IGA beneficiary selection for HTP: the community knows the entire HTP practitioner and as a result of the awareness creation, community members are not willing to pay for the practitioner. In addition, as a result of the awareness training almost all practitioners of HTP they are also aware of the issues and have abandoned their practices to the safety and wellbeing of the community at large. Hence, those practitioners who abandoned their practices have been nominated and selected to participate in the IGA.

Activities integration at watershed level: in the gender responsive livelihood development project the planned activities have been implemented at the selected and approved two watersheds in an integrated way to bring about synergetic effect. The integration and synergy are evidenced as for instance area enclosure have been protected from reach of animals and humans, soil and water conservation structures and tree seedling plantations were also done in the protected enclosure areas. Such integration have brought in the appearance of new to the area indigenous plant species as a result landless youths have benefited from the hillside apportioning for beekeeping development and grass hay cuttings for their animals. In addition, as a result of the protection of the enclosures spring started to emerge that landless youth are exploiting by establishing 'landless youth tree seedling production centre'. The nursery center has been producing different species of seedlings and sold to different institutions and the community at large that have been planted on the protected areas and agro-forestry areas as a result the members of the nursery centre have gained good sum income as profit.

Role of women in WDC: Watershed development committee is composed of 7 members where half of the members should and have been women headed households residing in the watershed. The women headed households members of the watersheds have been instrumental in the successful project interventions especially those activities focused for poor women headed households. This was identified due to the peer influence for the good.

Issues raised as recommendation during discussion: some questions were raised by the sector offices participants and are indicated as follows:

- REST should, during planning, give due attention to landless and unemployed youth to play its role in reducing the number of unemployed.
- Highly price difference or fluctuation or escalation between planned and current one of some animals like Oxen and shoat fattening. REST should give due attention to the frequent price escalation during planning phase.
- REST also should target beneficiaries for interventions as packages rather than single one to bring about meaningful livelihood improvement at household level.

6.4.2 Discussion held at Watershed level

Participants at watershed level discussion were all sector offices who participated at Woreda level and participants from the two watersheds including representatives of beneficiaries from all interventions, watershed committees, *tabia* leadership and development agents. Before the discussion commenced, a brief introduction about the review was given by the representative of REST coordination office and additional input was delivered by NCA representatives. The points raised by NCA review team have been summarized here below:

- How the communities are leading the project?
- How the community are managing and utilizing (vegetation, land and water) in a sustainable manner?
- How community capacity building is going?
- How watershed committees are elected by the community?
- How beneficiaries are selected to participate in different IGA?
- How the beneficiaries get support from the project implementing stakeholders?
- How beneficiaries of the different interventions get grouped into cooperatives?
- How the cooperatives are strengthened and seed money as capital given to them?
- How the repayment is managed by the cooperative and advance loan to their members for expanding or starting new ventures?
- Tree seedling purchase from landless youth rather than government centre?
- Are seedlings produced by the landless youth based on community need?

The discussion at the watershed level divided, for convenience, into two parts: The first one was on watershed development, group formation and cooperative formation, while the second discussion point was on specific intervention level as fattening, beekeeping, micro - garden and poultry developments. The areas of discussion were focused on the status and constraints of the entities and future directions given to strengthening the entities. Community members (watershed development committee members, group and cooperative members and beneficiaries) comments have been discussed below:

❖ **How watershed development committees elected:**

Watershed development committees are elected directly by the community themselves and are composed of 3 females and 4 males. The watershed **development** committee follows up and oversee the implementation of interventions in their watershed in collaboration with the *Tabia* leadership.

Assefa Abera: Belesat Watershed vice chairman: He said that the watershed committee members were directly elected by the community themselves and composed of 3 females and 4 males. “We follow up the implementation of the program in collaboration with the *Tabia* leadership, check whether the community works on the project and according to the plan set”, he said. “ For technical aspects REST was responsible to give trainings and other capacity buildings for the interventions”, he added. He also said that each one of the watershed development committee member is (were) responsible for specific interventions and follows up its implementation, how the beneficiaries were doing their business. “At every 12th day of the months local time we meet and discuss on our progress and raise any constraint we faced during the month and try to solve it”, he said.

❖ **Beneficiaries selection:**

Beneficiary selections for the different interventions were done by the watershed **development** committee of each watershed. The established watershed **development** committee nominates beneficiaries and bring them to the community for approval or be replaced by others. After approval the watershed committee confirms that the selected beneficiaries have interest in the venture and list them as beneficiaries for each IGA.

❖ **Input purchase committee:**

Inputs such as shoat for production and fattening, oxen for fattening are purchased by established committees composed of REST livestock expert, Agriculture office livestock production and veterinary professionals, cashier from REST, watershed representative, *tabia* representative and beneficiary. Such process prevents some fraud by some beneficiaries and checks that the cash given to the beneficiaries are used for the intended purpose.

❖ **Agreement with beneficiaries:**

After the inputs have been purchased and during handing over to the beneficiaries both parties enter into agreement that the beneficiaries sign agreement on the specific format for each intervention. After

signing the beneficiaries have entered to legal force to use the resource for the intended purpose and repay their loan including interest rates as indicated on the agreement. During the course of action all responsible stakeholders; that is, REST, agriculture office, *tabia* leaders, watershed committees, etc follow and monitor the progress made by each beneficiaries. The cooperative elected leaders have also the responsibility to follow up and monitor the implementation and loan repayment.

❖ **Group and Cooperative formation:**

Different user groups and cooperatives have been established by grouping the specific intervention beneficiaries to be able share knowledge with each other, solve together market constraints, create savings, etc. For example last year beekeeping beneficiaries have been organized into cooperative started harvesting honey and selling them in the nearby town – Hiwane and started saving from the sale of their harvest but as the venture is too early their saving is meager. This, 2012 FY, bee keeping beneficiaries have been organized into cooperatives but they are on process to get strengthened. Similarly, landless youth tree seedling producers have been grouped into cooperatives and started seedling production. Their potential markets are institutions, communities, etc. Based on that they managed to produce about 60000 tree seedlings and REST purchased the seedlings that have been distributed for plantation in different appropriate sites. Earlier REST was purchasing seedlings from government nursery sites, however, now by organizing landless youth into tree seedling raising nursery centre, created an employment opportunity to the unemployed youth farming households. The landless youth have saved 30% of their income and have already deposited 18000.00 ETB at the nearby Dedebit Micro-finance Institution (MFI). The landless youth cooperative are now preparing for the next production season. Besides, the different income generating activities (IGA) have also been grouped into associations to be able share knowledge and start saving.

Mehari Kalayu. Member, Beekeeping Cooperative. “We have been grouped in to legal cooperative with total number of 12 landless youth. We got 8 days training on overall beekeeping management. Every time we harvest honey we save ETB 15,” each he said. Ato Mehari said that so far they had extracted three hives for two times and six hives ones. There were 3 hives ready to be harvested. Adding he also said that the average honey production from the extracted hives was 50 kg. The price for a kg of honey was also 120 ETB.

Berhan Tsegay. Member, Tree nursery beneficiary. “With the support of the project we have been organized into tree nursery producer cooperative. Total members are 10 landless youth (2 females and 8 males),” he said. Berhan said that after they have been nominated by watershed development committee and approved by the community and got necessary trainings by REST and agriculture office experts, they started to produce forage and tree seedlings. He also said that they planned to produce 118000 different tree seedlings; however, they managed to produce 60000 seedlings. “We sold the seedlings to REST 1 birr for each seedling and received 60000 ETB during the fiscal year,” he added, adding “out of 60000 ETB, we managed to save 18000 ETB which was 30% of our total income.” Berhan also said that they have planned to diversify their income generation by involving in oxen fattening, dairy development, etc.



Photo: Landless Youth beekeeping Cooperatives

❖ **Income generating Activities (IGA):**

The different income generating activities (IGA) included in the project are micro-garden, shoat and cattle (oxen) fattening, and poultry production which have been identified in collaboration with project area stakeholders and the community at large. According to the works of the beneficiaries participated in the review meeting, all the IGA identified have proved successful to be potential sources of income to the farming households. Poor women headed households have been generating weekly income by selling vegetable produces at the nearby market-Hiwane and Mai-Nebri in addition to the household nutritional improvements. Poor women head households have also been able to generate good income from the shoat and oxen fattening business. Poultry production was also successful in improving the household nutritional status and increases household income generation.



Photo: Micro garden vegetable beneficiaries at practical training

Desta Aschenaki: Poultry Beneficiary. “Before the project comes here, I used to get meager income from local hair dressing, but now I am engaged on poultry production”, she said. W/ro Desta also reiterated that the project had created employment opportunities in the area of hillside apportioning and beekeeping development for the landless youth who used to be idle and roaming in the village, poor women headed households who had no job opportunities have now engaged in poultry production, shoat and cattle fattening and micro-garden vegetable production. She said, “First I received 10 white Shover chicken, in 2011 FY, from Adigudom small scale poultry farms established by REST. After four months they started to lay eggs.” She also said that after the chicken started to lay eggs, her income from the sale of eggs was increasing. Adding she said that the 10 members as association have saved about ETB 1743.00. She also raised some issues that need to be addressed saying there were some needy women headed households that need to be addressed by the project to improve their livelihoods.

Hassen Lebelo: Fattening Beneficiary. Ato Hassen said that he was benefiting from the project through fattening of animals by improving feeding systems and the feed types he was using were grasses, local beer by-products, urea treated straw and other by-products. He said, “This year I fattened animals three times. I purchased first, second and third round oxen for ETB 2700.00, 3000.00 and 32000.00, and after fattening for three to four months I sold them ETB 3500.00, 35000.00 and 3700.00, in that order.” Continuing he said, “Before the project starts here, I had no even a chick, but now I am sending my children to school and started saving.”

Mulu Alemu. Micro-garden Beneficiary. “There was a big gully formed at Gereb-hinche that children and animals were endangered. Now the gully is being reclaimed and hope our problem and concern will be solved” she said. She also said that women headed households were benefiting from the project by participating in different income generating activities such as Micro-garden, fattening and beekeeping. W/ro Mulu said, “I grow different vegetables such as cabbage, tomatoes, onion and swiss-chard, and my weekly income from the sale of vegetables at two nearby local markets (Hiwane and Mi-nebri) was 90 ETB” continuing also said, “as a result of the project, I am now able to feed and dress my children and send them to school with full educational materials.”



Photo: Micro-garden development by poor women head households

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP): Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) have been incorporated into the project with the main aim of avoiding such practices and involve the practitioners in different income generating activities. There was awareness raising training on the HTP to the community at large and representatives from different sector offices of the project area. After the communities have been made aware of the danger of the harmful traditional practices, discussion was held with the both parties (the community and practitioners) on how to avoid the practices. All parties agreed to avoid the practice as female genital mutilation (FGM), throat cuttings, etc. To support the livelihood of practitioners, the project planned to engage them in different income generating activities. Based on that some practitioners have been nominated by the watershed committee and approved by the community and have been supported with different income generating activities (IGA) such as beekeeping, fattening, etc. At this moment, all parties have developed attitudinal change not to be involved in the harmful traditional practices (HTP).

Gebretsadik Kalayu. Harmful Traditional Practice (HTP) practitioner (before) and fattening beneficiary (now). “Before the project started I used to generate my income from such practices as female genital cutting, throat cutting, bloodletting, scarification, etc. but now I have stopped such practices and engaged in shoat production,” he said. He also said that some community members were insisting me to be involved in the practices but I was firm not to be involved again in such practices.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). The project has been supporting orphans and vulnerable children to cover their living and school expenses. The children were nominated by the watershed committee with the participation of social affairs office of the project Woreda and approved by the community. In 2011 FY 20 children have been nominated and supported with living and school expenses and for 2012 FY 20 children have been nominated and are on the process of approval by community and social affair of the project Woreda.

Mulu Alemu. “Before the project started operation here, vulnerable children were dropped out of school, but now due to the presence of the project here they are supported with living and school expenses and started life as new,” she said. Mulu said that they were supported two rounds in the fiscal year in the first year. Adding she said that they were expecting for the inclusion of other vulnerable children to be supported by the project.

Community perception of the review: The perception of community on the project itself and the project contribution to the livelihood improvement was discussed with the community and watershed development committee representatives. Present in the review were different sector offices of the project area who have direct linkage with the project. All participants have said and agreed on the importance of the project, to the livelihood improvement especially of women headed households and social protection of vulnerable children. The participants have also said that before the project started its operation in the two project watersheds, most women headed households were dependent on precarious income generation activities like that of local hair dressing, labour for better-off families, etc. Landless youths were dependent on their parents.

W/ro Mulu Alemu: Micro-garden beneficiary. “I would like to thank the project, that poor women headed households are now engaged in income generating activities (IGA), poor children are supported with living and school expenses to continue their education that reduced school drop outs,” she said. She added that landless youth have also started to see their future as green through the opportunity created by the project on different income generating activities like hillside apportioning and beekeeping development, landless youth tree nursery development, etc.

Conclusive Remark by NCA team during community discussion: The project has been benefiting communities; beneficiaries are getting good income from the different income generating activities (IGA). They are also forming associations/cooperatives to access loan and other benefit. We have seen also that beneficiaries were diversifying their income as a result of the income generation from the project activities. Those beekeeping cooperatives established this fiscal year need support and diversify their income generations. Strengthening saving associations need to be given due emphasis by all sector stakeholders. All the income generating activities (IGA) such as micro-garden, poultry, fattening and beekeeping need to be strengthened into user groups and association/cooperative. The project is not here for life but we need to sustain the already in place income generating activities; we need to scale up them. When the beneficiaries become successful and repay their loan and grow sustainably, other may follow suit.

7. Summary and Action Points

7.1. Programme Review Summary

The Gender Responsive Livelihood Improvement programme has started its implementation since one and half years ago and the progress made towards its achievement both physically and results base was very impressive. There are very good success in the overall implementation of the programme in the last one and half year implementation period of the programme and simultaneously, there are some challenges that needs attention in the remaining implementation period of the programme.

The team has confirmed that the target beneficiaries have started utilizing the benefits from the range of income generating activities. This was confirmed through the visits made in a number of households and the ever increasing demand of these interventions from the community members living in the watershed. Almost all the beneficiaries of the income generating activities are requesting to strengthen these interventions. There are also a number of women headed and landless households that are still in need of different income generating activities to improve their livelihood base.

On the other side the natural resource rehabilitation implemented in the watershed clearly reveals the it's impacts, and this can be witnessed by the visible improvement in the vegetation cover of the area, Establishment of the self-help groups to improve their culture of saving is another approach to support the households living in the watershed improves the livelihood options. These self-help groups are doing well. The review team understands the group members clearly understand why they are organized in the self-help groups from their explanation. The group members started internalizing the benefits of being organized in such kind of a group, they have started some savings and are in the process to be upgraded to the cooperative level. The sector office (Woreda cooperative office) representative has explained well the reason why the groups are not so far upgraded to the cooperative level. There are technical requirements that need to be fulfilled by the self-help groups to be upgraded to the cooperative level and some of the requirements is that every member of the group should have a minimum amount of saving which is equal to Birr 150 from own source; the number of members of the group etc. The team has observed how the REST Wareda coordination office in collaboration with the Wareda cooperative office experts is jointly working to fulfill these requirements and upgrade the groups to the cooperatives. The group was very impressed with the collaboration and the joint effort of REST, the NGO, and sector office representative, government, for the same goal. This is one means of ensuring sustainability of the project.

The farmers in the sides of the gully where the water harvesting check dam is under construction are very keen to start using the water for irrigation. They really understand how water could change their life by using for supplementary as well as dry time irrigation enabling them to harvest twice a year. This significantly increased their annual crop production compared to the harvest they earned from rainfed agriculture. They follow up the day to day development of the check dam construction and they want to see to be completed as soon as possible with a strong desire to start irrigation or start to use the water for irrigation.

The review team has visited other activities implemented by other programmes and it is really impressive the integration made between of the different programmes implemented in the same Wareda. The hatchery plant provided to support the livelihood of the women headed households by the promotion of innovative livelihoods programme funded by Trocair-Cafod and SCIAF became the source of day old chicken provision in the Hintallo-Wajirat Gender Responsive Livelihood Development Project Funded by NCA. These two programmes would have a good synergetic effect in the improvement of the livelihood of the rural poor. The approach followed by REST in diversifying the livelihood of the targeted beneficiaries should be taken as a big lesson. REST provides different livelihoods, three or two IGAs, (such as like vegetable, fattening/production, poultry, dairy etc.) to one individual beneficiary at a time to diversify its livelihood options reducing the risk of depending in one livelihood because it is a risk in case there is disaster or loss of asset. This provision of IGAs as a package has also another advantage that it supports to generate sufficient income to the target beneficiaries laying its asset base in a strong foundation and sustainably ensure food security of the household.

Institutionalization is one way of ensuring sustainability of the various types of programme components and one of the institutions formed in the watershed is the establishment of the watershed development committee with the mandate to lead and manage the overall implementation of the project in the watershed. The committee was raising useful opinions and discussion on a lot of issues with the review committee revealing the strength and depth of knowledge of the committee in the overall programme under implementation in its watershed. This is another confirmation revealing this watershed based development approach is the best approach in addressing or improving the livelihoods of the chronically food insecure households in the rural area.

7.2 Action Points

The review team has suggested the following action points to be executed during the remaining implementation period of the programme.

- During the discussion it was raised that at Gereb-hinche watershed there was an active gully on process of reclamation, but as the gully formed was so big it needs more resources (gabion, cement, labour etc) beyond the resource allocated by NCA. It is difficult to cover all the work in the gully by NCA budget. REST should discuss this issue with the Woreda Administration and Office of Agriculture and Rural Development in the way to support the reclamation of this big gully. Integrating this task especially with the government PSNP programme could be one way of supporting this intervention.
- Construction of Water harvesting check dam at Belesat watershed has been delayed and REST should discuss with relevant sector offices and the Woreda administration in the way to expedite how to speed up the implementation of the construction of the check dam and then start using the water for irrigation.
- Watershed **development** committees, user groups, associations need capacity building to strengthen resource management. REST will try to give capacity building such as trainings and

exposure visits to the watershed **development** committee members and support with different materials necessary for their work.

- The self-help groups are doing well and need to be strengthened and upgraded to cooperatives to have a legal status and more stronger and stronger and generate the maximum benefit to its members. As there are many needy people demanding to be organized in self-help groups, the project should plan to support more in 2013. REST should continue to work closely with the Woreda cooperative office to fulfill the groups all the requirements (the gaps seen in the groups like individual saving and number of members) to be quickly transformed or upgraded to cooperatives.
- The success stories of all IGA in terms of documents, case stories and photos need to be documented as knowledge and learning process for sharing.
- Natural resource management before and after the project photos have to be taken as reference for the changes and improvement as a result of the project.

7.3 Challenges and recommendations

- Price of inputs has been fluctuated between planning and actual implementation period that created problem during purchase such as oxen for fattening, etc. It was recommended that due attention should be given during planning phase to analyze current price and forecast the trends of price escalation.
- Poultry distributed to the poor women head households have faced with access to veterinary service due to the reason that medicine purchase recommend bulk purchase for dozens of chicken. The purchase of medicines at market is available for dozens of chicken that necessitated integrating it with the established small scale poultry farms at Adi-gudom.
- Resources constraints at Gereb-hinche watershed for the reclamation of big gully. The resources available from NCA for the reclamation of big gully at Gereb-hinche was meager, hence REST was planning to integrate the programme with government PSNP of the Woreda.
- With the financial utilization there were some activities that have consumed huge budget. The issue should be addressed by budget alignment for the remaining three months to shift unutilized budget to activities with negative budget utilization.
- Plan and support more self-help groups to be organized and engaged in IGAs.

8. NCA Mid-Term Review Participants

Sector Level

1. Ato Walta Mirach (REST Coordination office, Health expert),
2. Ato Gurdi Belay (H/Wajerat Women Affairs Office, Expert),
3. Ato Hagos Aberha (H/Wajerat Youth office, Expert),
4. Ato Meron Mehari (HW REST Coordination office, NR Expert),
5. Ato Kahsu Mesfin (HW REST Coordination office, Livestock Expert),
6. Ato Kalayu Afera (HW Agriculture Office, Livestock Expert),
7. Ato Kalaeb Tesfaye (HW Agriculture office, SWC Expert),
8. Ato Ataklti Abebe (REST HO Food Security and Livelihood Division Head),
9. Ato Tsehaye Kahsay (BoARD, Food Security Desk, M&E),
10. Ato Gutema Gezmu (NCA Livelihood program Coordinator),
11. Ato Beket Tarkegne (NCA, M&E),
12. Ato Kassahun G/Michael (REST HO Forester),
13. Ato Yibrah Kahsay (REST HO SWC Senior Expert).

Watershed level

S/n	Name of participants	IGA	Remark
I	Belesat Watershed		
1	Bezu Assefa	Fattening	
2	Hassen Lebello	Fattening	
3	Akeza Merutse	Poultry	
4	Mehari Kalayu	Beekeeping	
5	Ashenafi Gebrekidan	Beekeeping	
6	Desta Aschenaki	Poultry	
7	Metselale Gebrekidan	IGA/HTP	
8	Asqual Tsegaye	Orphan	
9	Gebretsadik Kalayu	IGA/HTP	
II	Gerb-hinche Watershed		

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10	Etsay Tesfay	IGA/HTP	
11	Romeha Tesfay	Orphan	
12	Samuel Hadgu	Shoat Fattening	
13	Mulu Alemu	Micro Garden	
14	Geregis Fisseha	Oxen fattening	
15	Genet Bezabih	Micro-garden	
16	Mebrat Alemu	Micro-garden	
17	Akeza Teka	Micro-garden	