

Evaluation Summary

1. Outline of the Project

Country: Ethiopia

Project Title: Participatory Forest Management Project in Belete-Gera Regional Forest Priority Area

Issue/Sector: Natural Environment Conservation - Forest Resources Management/Conservation

Cooperation Scheme: Technical Cooperation Project

Division in Charge: Forestry and Nature Conservation Team II, Global Environment Department

Total Cost (at the time of evaluation): 362 million yen

Period of Cooperation

(R/D): 1 October 2003 - 31 September 2006

(Extended period):

(F/U):

(E/N): (Grant aid)

Partner Country's Implementing Organization(s): Oromia Agriculture and Rural Development Bureau (OARDB)

Supporting Organization(s) in Japan:

Related Cooperation: None in particular

1-1 Background to the Project

Ethiopia once had a vast forest totalling some 42 million hectares, covering about 35 percent of the country's total area. Inappropriate land use, excessive deforestation and population growth, however, have resulted in the decline of both forest area and quality. According to a UN report, the total forest area stood at only 4.5 million hectares in 2000, with the area of land subject to forest conservation accounting for only about two percent of the total area of Ethiopia.

To mitigate such deforestation, the Ethiopian government devised forest conservation measures, including the designation of National Forest Priority Areas (NFPAs, now Regional Forest Priority Areas or RFPAs). However, these measures have not been fully implemented to date.

These circumstances prompted the Ethiopian government to ask Japan for technical assistance. In response, JICA conducted a development study between 1996 and 1998 for the purpose of formulating a master plan for forest conservation in the southwestern part of Ethiopia, which boasts the most valuable forest ecosystems in the country. In this study, formally known as

the Forest Resources Management Study in the Southwestern Part of Ethiopia, JICA conducted forest and community surveys on the Belete-Gera Regional Forest Priority Area (RFPA), with an area of 150,000 hectares, in Oromia Region. It also prepared topographic and vegetation maps. Based on the results and findings of these surveys, JICA made recommendations relevant to formulating a forest management plan.

Between March and April 2002, the JICA's fact finding team for cooperation in natural environmental conservation in Ethiopia confirmed that natural forests were diminishing every year in the Belete-Gera RFPA as human settlements and farmland increased. The team concluded that prompt action should be taken to conserve local forest ecosystems and utilize forest resources there. In response to these findings of the study, the Ethiopian government made in June 2002 a formal request to Japan for a technical cooperation project aimed at developing and implementing participatory village plans for forest management in two districts (Seka Chekorsa District and Gera District) in the Belete-Gera RFPA.

1-2 Project Overview

This Project aims to develop a model for participatory forest management (PFM) system in order to mitigate deforestation in the Belete-Gera RFPA while building up the capacity of officials at Belete and Seka Chekorsa districts, Jimma Zone, Oromia Region.

(1) Overall Goal

Forest management is sustainably carried out by the local people in and around the Belete-Gera Regional Forest Priority Area (RFPA).

(2) Project Purpose

Participatory forest management is sustainably put in place in target villages (Ganda) in Belete-Gera RFPA.

(3) Outputs

Output 1: Target villages (Ganda) are selected based on a participatory manner such as workshops and inquiries.

Output 2: Capacity of technical experts and development agents over forest management, participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation is strengthened.

Output 3: Boundaries regarding forest management and land use in the target villages (Ganda) are agreed upon by all of the major stakeholders.

Output 4: Capacity of the local people in the target villages (Ganda) for natural resource management is strengthened.

Output 5: Appropriate systems of participatory forest management in the Belete-Gera RFPA are clarified.

Output 6: Information and lessons learned on participatory forest management are shared among the stakeholders.

(4) Inputs (until the time of evaluation)

Japanese side:

Long-term Experts: 4 experts Equipment: 53 million yen in total

Short-term Experts: 5 experts Local cost: 34 million yen in total

Trainees received: 7 persons in Japan, and 8 in a third country Others (training costs, etc.): 22 million yen in total

Ethiopian side:

Counterparts: 38 persons

Land Local cost: Remunerations for C/Ps

2. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team

(Role/responsibility: Name Position)

Team Leader Yukihide KATSUTA Group Director, Group I, Global Environment Department, JICA

Participatory Forest Management Shingo SHIBATA Planning Division, Private Forest Department, Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Evaluation Planning Toshihide YOSHIKURA Forestry and Nature Conservation Team II, Global Environment Department, JICA

Evaluation Analysis Shinichi MORI President, International Management Group (IMG) Inc.

Period of Evaluation

Members for evaluation analysis: 4-24 June 2006

Other members: 11-24 June 2006

Type of Evaluation: Terminal Evaluation

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Achievement Level

The Evaluation Team concludes that the Project has almost achieved its purpose. In the target areas, local people have organized forest administration associations (WaBuBs). The target sub-villages have signed a Provisional Forest Management Agreement (P-FMA) with the Oromia Regional Government and now proactively conduct monitoring for forest management.

Indicator 1: More than 70% of the target communities supported by the project sustainably carry out forest management activities.

This indicator has been met. Supported by the Project, the target sub-villages, each in the two target villages (Ganda), now sustainably performs forest management activities as prescribed in the P-FMA.

Indicator 2: More than 70 percent of the local people supported by the Project stop the deforestation (estimated through annual participatory monitoring) after participating in the Project.

This indicator has been achieved. The forests in the two sub-villages are used and conserved in a traditional method. The P-FMAs serve as an official guarantee by the Oromia Regional Government that the local people have the right to use the forests. Three rounds of monitoring have shown that local people in the project areas do not do anything that might destroy the forests.

Indicator 3: Contracts for forest management are signed between the target villages and the Oromia Regional Government by September 2006.

The Evaluation Team thus concludes that this indicator has been largely achieved. A P-FMA was signed between the target sub-villages and the Oromia Regional Government in August 2005. The P-FMA contract will undergo review, and by mid-August 2006, procedures for replacing it with a formal FMA or at least extending it will be completed.

Output 1. The target villages were selected in light of such criteria as the type of forest, and local people's usage of forest resources. A social unit, rather than an administrative unit, was considered appropriate as the implementing unit. Given the limited implementation capacity of the Project, sub-villages (specifically Afalo and Chaffee) were selected as the implementing unit. Meanwhile, an action plan for PFM and livelihood support activities was developed based on the results of a participatory baseline survey.

Output 2. The technical and administrative capacity of the counterparts has been increased through a training program, workshops and OJT, although the training program was ready-made.

Output 3. Through workshops and a GPS survey, provisional boundaries were settled among the people in the target sub-villages.

Output 4. The steering committee, which represents the WaBuB members, met regularly in the target sub-villages. The general meeting, attended by a majority of the members, was held several times. A P-FMA that defined the rights and responsibilities of WaBuB and the Agriculture and Rural Development Office (including a map showing the provisional boundaries) was signed by Afalo and Chaffee sub-villages in August 2005.

Output 5. Following a joint monitoring by WaBuBs, the P-FMA will be reviewed to decide whether it should be replaced with a FMA or extended, by August 2006, when the provisional contract expires.

Output 6. Information on the project activities are shared with other donors, NGOs, and the federal government, contributing to awareness building for the stakeholders.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

Participatory protection of natural forests is consistent with the laws and policies of the Oromia Regional Government. Likewise, participatory management of natural resources is a major focus of JICA's aid policy toward Ethiopia. In an interview survey on local people, all the respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the Project, saying that the Provisional Forest Management Agreement (P-FMA) guaranteed their right to reside in and use the forests.

(2) Effectiveness

The Project is considered highly effective. Through the implementation of the P-FMAs, forest management systems have been almost completed. The prospect of these P-FMAs being replaced by a formal FMA or extended means that Output 5 will largely be achieved. Outputs 1-4 have contributed to the attainment of the Project Purpose, while Output 6 has paved the way toward the accomplishment of the Overall Goal. The Evaluation Team concludes that the Overall Goal has been almost achieved.

(3) Efficiency

The efficiency of the Project is considered moderate due to three major factors. First, the Japanese short-term experts were sent to Ethiopia without their Terms of Reference (TOR) having been fully discussed between them and the Ethiopian counterparts. Second, part of the equipment, including motorbikes and GPS, was not put to effective use. Third, because all the counterparts engaged in the Project while performing their original duties at their government offices, they could not allocate sufficient time for the Project, which slowed down some of the project activities.

(4) Impact

Training in participatory forest management (PFM) has raised the awareness of the counterparts. The interview survey on local people suggests that the provision of grain mills, road rehabilitation, and the spread of improved hives will likely increase local income. The conclusion and execution of P-FMAs have assured the members of forest administration associations (WaBuBs) that their right to reside in and use the forests is officially recognized. They also raise public awareness about the need for forest conservation. The Project has thus had a major social impact. Many residents of adjacent villages have shown keen interest in P-FMAs. It is likely that PFM will spread to other parts of the Belete-Gera RFPA (toward the attainment of the Overall Goal).

(5) Sustainability

The sustainability of the Project is considered low. The Zone and District governments still do not have the institutional capacity to extend the FMA system to other areas. Nor the Ethiopian side has enough funds to do so. The local costs the Ethiopian side bears are almost limited to the labor costs of the counterparts. At the technical level, the counterparts

need to improve their skills in supporting local people and conducting continued monitoring. Nevertheless, the Project has raised the awareness of the counterparts and local people, building a platform for improving its sustainability.

3-3 Contributing Factors

(1) Concerning the project plan

Training and workshops on participatory management of natural resources for the counterparts and local people, as well as inspections of similar projects by them, were highly instrumental in raising the awareness of the project counterparts. These activities resulted in P-FMA.

(2) Concerning the implementation process

The process of forming an organization for managing the provided grain mills has developed the organizational capacity of the local people, enabling the smooth operation of forest administration associations (WaBuBs). The livelihood support activities allowed local people to see the project implementers listen to them, stimulating their interest and eventually resulting in the development of WaBuBs.

3-4 Inhibiting Factors

(1) Concerning the project plan

No major obstacles have been observed as far as the project plan is concerned.

(2) Concerning the implementation process

At the beginning of the Project, the Ethiopian counterparts were poorly motivated, and the Japanese experts were too busy to perform all their duties. As a result, the counterparts showed only limited commitment to the management of the Project, especially to the decision-making process. As the Project progressed, however, they became more and more motivated and gradually increased their commitment to project management.

3-5 Conclusion

The evaluation results against the five criteria can be summarized as follows:

- (i) The relevance is high because the Project is consistent with the Ethiopian government's policy, local needs and Japan's aid policy.
- (ii) The effectiveness is sufficient because the PFM system is practically complete.
- (iii) The efficiency is moderate because the provided equipment is not necessarily put to good use.
- (iv) The impact is extremely high because the Project has brought the assurance that the local people have the right to reside in and use the forests.

(v) The sustainability is low in institutional, financial and technical aspects, although the heightened awareness of the local people and counterparts is expected to provide opportunity for improvement.

In sum, the Project is high in its relevance, effectiveness and impact, but there is room for improvement in its efficiency and sustainability. Because of the heightened local awareness and other opportunities for improvement, as well as the unchanged relevance (to the government policy and local needs), the Overall Goal will likely be attained if the insufficient efficiency and sustainability are addressed and the Project continues as Phase II.

3-6 Recommendations (specific solutions, suggestions and advice for the Project)

- The uncompleted project activities should be completed by the end of the project period. They include (i) identifying and sorting out experiences and lessons learned in the process up to the conclusion of P-FMAs; (ii) encouraging the extension or upgrading to FMA of the P-FMAs that expire by August 2006; and (iii) organizing open seminars for government officials, and representatives from NGOs, and other donors.
- The Equipment for the Project should be handed over to the Ethiopian side and arrangements should be made to record and maintain it properly.
- The Project should proceed to the second phase (for a period of four years). Phase II should develop PFM guidelines that would draw on the experiences from the P-FMA process, guidelines on the WaBuB approach, and extend PFM to other villages in the Belete-Gera RFPA. Phase II should be implemented on condition that the Ethiopian side bears the local cost to enhance the project sustainability.

3-7 Lessons Learned (especially those that provide information that is useful for identifying/formulating, implementing, and administering similar projects)

- It is necessary to create an enabling mechanism and environment in which the counterparts can be effectively involved in the decision-making and management of the project.
- It is necessary to offer opportunities for the stakeholders to inspect similar projects early in the project process so that their awareness will be raised.
- Because the PFM plan aims to increase the local capacity to manage natural resources through livelihood support activities, these activities should, in principle, be implemented on the same levels (villages, sub-villages, etc.) as in PFM, depending on the local conditions.

3-8 Follow-up Status

The launch of Phase II is dependent on whether the Ethiopian side will bear a certain portion of the local cost by the end of the project period (the end of September 2006). The focus of Phase II should be placed on developing PFM guidelines based on the experiences in the

P-FMA process and disseminating them to other areas in the Belete-Gera RFFPA, and on building up the capacity of the counterparts and local people to manage forest resources.