

# **Sustainable Natural Resources Management for Enhanced Pastoralist Food Security Project in the Borena Zone, Ethiopia**

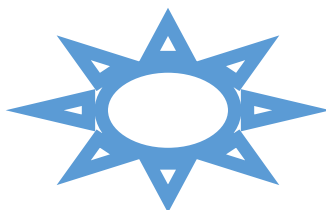
## **Project Evaluation Report**

*"A pastoralist community has no priority than rangeland and water"*

**Submitted**

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<sup>1</sup> Kebele is the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia

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## List of Acronyms

ANRO	Agriculture and Natural Resources Office
APO	Annual Plan of Operation
ASAL	Arid and Semi-arid Lands
BoFEC	Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation
CIFA	Community Initiatives Facilitations and Assistance
CMDRR	Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSPM	Conflict Sensitive Program Management
DA	Development Agent
DPPO	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRMO	Disaster Risk Management Office
ER	Emergency Response
FCDC	Frontier Counties Development Council
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Program
HAFL	Switzerland based School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences
HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HSI/E	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation/Ethiopia
IP	Implementing Partner
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IPCM	Implementing Partners Coordination Meeting
KII	Key Informant Interview
LSS	Livestock Sector Strengthening Project
MARIL	Managing Risks for Improved Livelihood Research & Development
MSD	Market System Development
MTR	Mid-Term Review
PAR	Participatory Action Researches
NCE	No Cost Extension
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OARI	Oromia Agricultural Research Institute
OBFED	Oromia Bureau of Finance & Economic Development
ODPPC	Oromia Disaster Prevention & Preparedness Commission
ODRM	Oromia Disaster Risk Commission
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
ONRS	Oromia National Regional State
OPADC	Oromia Pastoralist Areas Development Commission
PDC	The Peace and Development Centre
PDCC	Pastoral Development Coordination Committee
PDO	Pastoralist Development Office
PPS	Population Proportional to Size
PRM	Participatory Rangeland Management
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association
WHH	Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Action)
YPDARC	Yabello Pastoral and Dryland Agriculture Research Center

## Executive Summary

### Background

NRM-Borena is SDC mandate project implemented by a consortium of HELVETAS and Welthungerhilfe in cooperation with multiple sector offices in Oromia region and local civil society organizations ((CIFA and PDC). The project implemented in 16 Kebeles targeting 70,661 persons found in Dillo, Dire, Wachile, Dhas and Miyo Woredas in Borana zone of Oromia region, Ethiopia. The objective of the project was to improve the food and nutrition security and the resilience of (agro-) pastoralist communities through context-specific and sustainable NRM practices as well as enhanced income diversification strategies. The NRM project implemented from September 2016 – December 31, 2021 with funding of 6,096,567.26 CHF as of December 2020.

### Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the NRM-Borena project in achieving its objectives. The evaluation included gender, transversal good governance and conflict sensitivity dimensions in the programme delivery to generate learning and recommendations for SDC and the relevant stakeholders.

### Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation employed both quantitative and qualitative study methods, combining data collection approaches from both primary and secondary sources. The evaluation team collected quantitative data from 387 households through a household survey. Qualitative data collection includes 30 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key project stakeholders, 14 focus group discussions (FGDs) with project beneficiary communities, 5 observations, and documentation of 3 case studies. The team collected secondary data through extensive desk reviews. Quantitative data analysed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics. Thematic analysis techniques used to analyse qualitative data based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, evaluation objectives and identified key themes. The data analysis involved triangulation of quantitative data with qualitative findings as well as information from primary and secondary data sources.

### Findings

#### Relevance

The evaluation found out that the project aligned with the country's GTP (Pillar I Sustain the rapid, broad based and equitable economic growth and development witnessed during the last decade and pillar 9 build climate resilient green economy), and Green Legacy agenda<sup>22</sup> and local government development plans (Annual Zone/Woreda sector Plans). The interventions were responsive to community priority needs due to active engagement/consultation of community, government offices, development partners, gender sensitiveness, and designing its interventions to the local contexts and agility of implementation approaches. The project employed context-specific project management approach for alignment of interventions with changing priorities and needs. The project concerted effort linked to SDC overall cooperation strategy in responding to humanitarian needs, while contributing to poverty reduction and conflict transformation within the food security and governance domain of intervention of the Swiss Regional Cooperation Program for the Horn of Africa.

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<sup>22</sup> Ethiopian government initiative to promote eco-tourism and combat the effects of climate change with a campaign to plant 6 billion trees across Ethiopia in 2021.

## Effectiveness

**Impact:** The percentage of food secured households increased from 10% at baseline and 4.3% during the mid-term review to 28.7% in this final evaluation. However, the achievement was below the project target of 50% for phase 1.

**Outcome 1:** The project intervention helped the pastoral and agro-pastoral community by increasing their access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated water point and rangelands, thereby reducing the vulnerability of communities during prolonged drought seasons. The percentage of households ranking depletion and deterioration of forage base as a major constraint of access to pasture has increased from 62% at baseline to 91% at end line. Similarly, the percentage identified access to livestock drinking water in pasture areas a major constraint for access to pasture increased from 71% at baseline to 86% in this final evaluation.

**Outcome 2:** The project achieved 13.4% of its target for the number of women group members who earn additional average cash income of Birr 9,000 annually and the figure has increased from 3.7% during the MTR. However, the project managed to reach only 161 women under this indicator, which was by far below its target of increasing income for 1200 women. However, as per the desk review, the NRM-Borena project also established nineteen women groups<sup>3</sup> and 372 members<sup>4</sup> benefited from various income activities.

**Outcome 3:** The focus of this outcome was better coordination, harmonization, and enhancing knowledge management system to properly document and scale up promising practices of NRM interventions. The project attained the targets for most indicators at zonal level while the achievement was below the plan at Woreda and kebele levels. The project managed to achieve only two of the plans to document eight best PRM practices, while it realized none of its plan for adoption of PRM guidelines, strategies, and policies.

**Outcome 4:** Outcome 4 was included in 2020 implemented by PDC (Peace and Development Center) – mainly conducted two participatory action researches (PAR) on Shared NRM governance of Customary Institutions and local government as well as conduct PAR on the local government and customary institutions' and their role in relation to peace building/conflict prevention. Capacity building were some of the activities under this outcome to build local government capacity to enhance local governance effectiveness and efficiency, social accountability, participation, transparency, non-discrimination, and rule of law.

## Efficiency

The overall project achievement of physical plan of activities was satisfactory considering multifaceted challenges during the project implementation period. The project utilized the existing resources, including the government structure, and active community participation enhanced the project efficiency by minimizing cost. In terms of budget utilization, the project utilized 72% of the allocated budget as of December 31, 2020. Analysis of cost-benefit showed that the project cost per beneficiary was 86.3 CHF (calculated from the total budget utilized as of December 31, 2020) which is within the normal range compared with similar projects. The project was efficient in engagement of stakeholders throughout the project phases including in the designing, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities. In terms of efficiency by outcome, outcome 1 utilized 87%, outcome 2 utilized 81%, outcome 3 utilized 71%, and outcome 4 utilized 4%. These shows both outcome 1 and 2 budget utilization and activity performance is reasonable and outcome 4 is least performance in both budget utilization and achieving activity performance.

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<sup>3</sup> 6 women farming groups that engaging both in crop production and livestock fattening with a member of 120 women, 1 livestock fattening group with 20 women members, 2 women vegetable production group with 32 women members, 2 poultry production groups with 40 women members, 4 milk marketing group with 80 women members and 4 bee keeping group with 80 women members

<sup>4</sup> The 372 women is separate from the 161 women which was the target for outcome 2

## Sustainability

The project created sense of ownership among the government sector offices, community groups, and the community at large that will facilitate the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes. Since the project consulted the community in planning activities, the interventions based on the needs of beneficiaries and the targeted communities are appreciating the project benefits, it is highly likely the community will sustain the project results. Two key institutional factors that possibly impede the sustainability of NRM-Borena project will be the weak rural financial system and lack of plot of land for cooperatives and farming groups to expand their business sustainably. Both rangeland and water access will also be affected by the country's land policy versus customary land management of land use in the target sites.

**Conclusion:** The final evaluation participants strongly agreed the NRM-Borena project was responsive of the community priority needs and its relevance in addressing them. However, most of respondents also prioritize outcome one and two, which indicate the collective community priority need. The project is effective in terms of meeting both impact and most of outcome level indicators by utilizing the available resources in a way that maximizes synergetic effect and efficiency through sound community and stakeholder's participation throughout the project cycle, and most prominently created a sense of ownership among the community and GO.

### Recommendations:

- Consider revision of outcome 3 and 4 in the next phase programming to make it more visible, increased awareness building concerning the importance of outcomes 3, 4 and the relevance thereof to achieve outcomes 1 and 2 for further consideration and more relevant for the target community by tailoring the activities and indicators.
- SDC and implementing partners could articulate an impact level indicator in the next phase project by aligning with SDG and the new 'Ten Years Development Plan' of the Government of Ethiopia with a focus on identifying key challenges and developing a pathway for resilience building to reduce vulnerabilities and recurrent emergencies.
- Adopt the conceptual framework for the links between resilience and household food security to show the clear pathway of resilience with food and nutrition security.
- SDC could develop a next phase programming considering a cross-border programming with common objective setting, including addressing cross-border community conflicts in its governance component. Also, conduct regular remote experience sharing among countries to improve synergy and coordination.
- SDC and partners need to develop how to measure the conflict sensitivity programming and governance as a cross-cutting issues to document the outcome of the project. In addition, SDC needs to clarify the indicator to measure governance activities in the next phase programming. The next phase project should include strengthening rural micro finance institutions to enable cooperatives and farming communities finance their innovative business ideas and expand their businesses.



# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1. Context

Pastoralists represent approximately 10% percent of the Ethiopian population, and approximately 40% of the land area of Ethiopia considered under pastoral production system. In Ethiopia, pastoralists occupy the arid and semi-arid regions of the country located in lowland areas in the East, Northeast, West, and South of the country. Pastoralists live in much of the peripheral lowlands that surround the central highland plateaus dominated by rain-fed small-scale agriculture (Fecadu G, 1998). Pastoralism is an economic activity, a land-use system and a way of life for people who derive most of their income from keeping domestic livestock using feeds available in the natural environment. Pastoralism, as an economic activity, supports 12-15% of the over one hundred million population of the country. As reported by Coppock (1994 cited in Desta, 2006) and REGLAP Secretariat (2012) reported, of the total livestock in the country, it is estimated that the pastoral sector raises 40% of the cattle, 75% of the goats, 25% of the sheep, 20% of the equines, and 100% of the camels.

The pastoral system in Ethiopia is vulnerable to environmental degradation and food insecurity. Livelihood of pastoralist communities in Ethiopia is constrained by diverse natural, social and economic problems including recurrent drought, lack of basic infrastructure, conflict, and they have low resilient capacities to cope with and recover from such vulnerable situations. The large majorities' livelihoods in most seasons of the year are depending on food assistance of the government and other partners. About 15% of Borena pastoralists are food-insecure throughout the year (Ethiop. J. Health Dev. 2021; 35(1):38-49). Because pastoralist's income is so dependent on livestock, pastoralists are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which will include increased poverty, water scarcity and food insecurity.

The Borena Oromo Community, a family of the Oromo population that constitutes over a third of the Ethiopian population, occupies Southern Ethiopia lowland bordering Northern Kenya. Borana constitutes one of the 18 administrative zones in Oromia Regional State. The Zone occupies a total land area of about 63,939 km<sup>2</sup>. Yabello Town, which is located 570 km away south of Addis Ababa, is the capital of Borana Zone. The Zone encompasses 13 districts. The most recent census estimates a total population of Borena Zone to 962,489, and annual population growth rate of 2.5-3% (CSA 2017, Homan, et al, 2003).

The Borana communal rangeland system is a web of social codes, norms and practices that constitute a hierarchical social system known as the Gada system (Swallow and Bromley, 1995, Watson2003). At the helm of the Gada system is the aba Gada who are elected every eight years in an assembly that is open to all Borana men. The Aba Gada and his male councilors, the Yea, comprise the main decision-making body of the Borana common property system. Each governing body serves for eight years. The governing body formulates and enforces general laws - the Aada Seera - that govern access to and use of communal water and forage. Each newly elected governing body revises existing tenure arrangements and Rangeland management in Borena is a social and political affair that primarily involves male-dominated governing councils headed by elders.

The Borena community caught in vicious cycles of deepening poverty, conflict, resource degradation and drought. Following successive droughts, the average household herd size is on the decline. As per the recent FEWSNET report, short dry season from June to September 2020 in Borena and South Omo Zones, and desert locust (DL) invasion, declined household food and income access from livestock. During October to December 2020 IPC analysis, Borena zone was among DL affected in Oromia region damaging crop and pasturelands. In addition, impacts of COVID-19 on the economy continued to limit sufficient food availability for the poor and very poor households. The high number of IDPs, about 60,000 in the Borena zone with limited livelihoods opportunities, is

also affecting the food security situation<sup>5</sup> The same report showed 30% (146,670) of Borena population classified as IPC phase 3 and above (October-December 2020) and expected to increase from 30% to 45% (224,955 ) from January 2021 – June 2021 classified as Phase 3 and above.

## 1.2. NRM-Borena Project Overview

Sustainable Natural Resources Management for Enhanced Pastoralist Food Security in Borana Zone is based on the facts that some two decades ago, the Borena rangelands in the South of Ethiopia at the border to Kenya were still producing quality inputs for livestock production, allowing pastoral communities to derive their livelihoods. However, in recent years, pasture productivity has significantly dwindled, mainly due to advancing bush encroachment, overgrazing, soil erosion, demographic pressure, recurrent drought and the weakening of traditional rangeland management systems. Other factors also contributed to the weakening of pastoralist livelihoods, e.g. competition for the use of the land (agriculture, forest/environmental protection), increased incidences of resource-based conflicts, a high prevalence of livestock diseases, and more generally.

Sustainable Natural Resources Management for Enhanced Pastoralist Food Security in the Borana Zone, Ethiopia (NRM-Borena) is a mandate project implemented by a consortium of HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation (consortium lead) and Welthungerhilfe in cooperation with Regional Government of Oromia and with Community Initiatives Facilitations and Assistance (CIFA)) a local NGO from Borena zone. The government partners involved in the project are Oromia Pastoralist Areas Development Commission (OPADC), Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation (BoFEC), Yabello Pastoral and Dryland Agriculture Research Center (YPDARC), and Oromia Disaster Risk Commission (DRM). The Peace and Development Centre (PDC), a non-for-profit and NGO registered in Ethiopia, has also recently joined the project for implementing the governance component of the project. The NRM-project implemented in 16 Kebeles found in Dillo, Dire, Wachile, Dhas and Miyo Woredas/Districts of Borana zone, Oromia regional state from September 2016-December 2021 with a budget of 6,096,567.26 CHF as of December 2020 This evaluation covered the first phase of September 2016- December 2019.

The overall objective of the project was to improve the food and nutrition security and the resilience of (agro-) pastoralist communities in the Borana zone through context-specific and sustainable natural resources management practices as well as enhanced income diversification strategies. The NRM-Borena project had the following four outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Vulnerable pastoralists have increased access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated and/or improved rangelands

**Outcome 2:** Pastoralist women incomes increased while women diversify their livelihoods

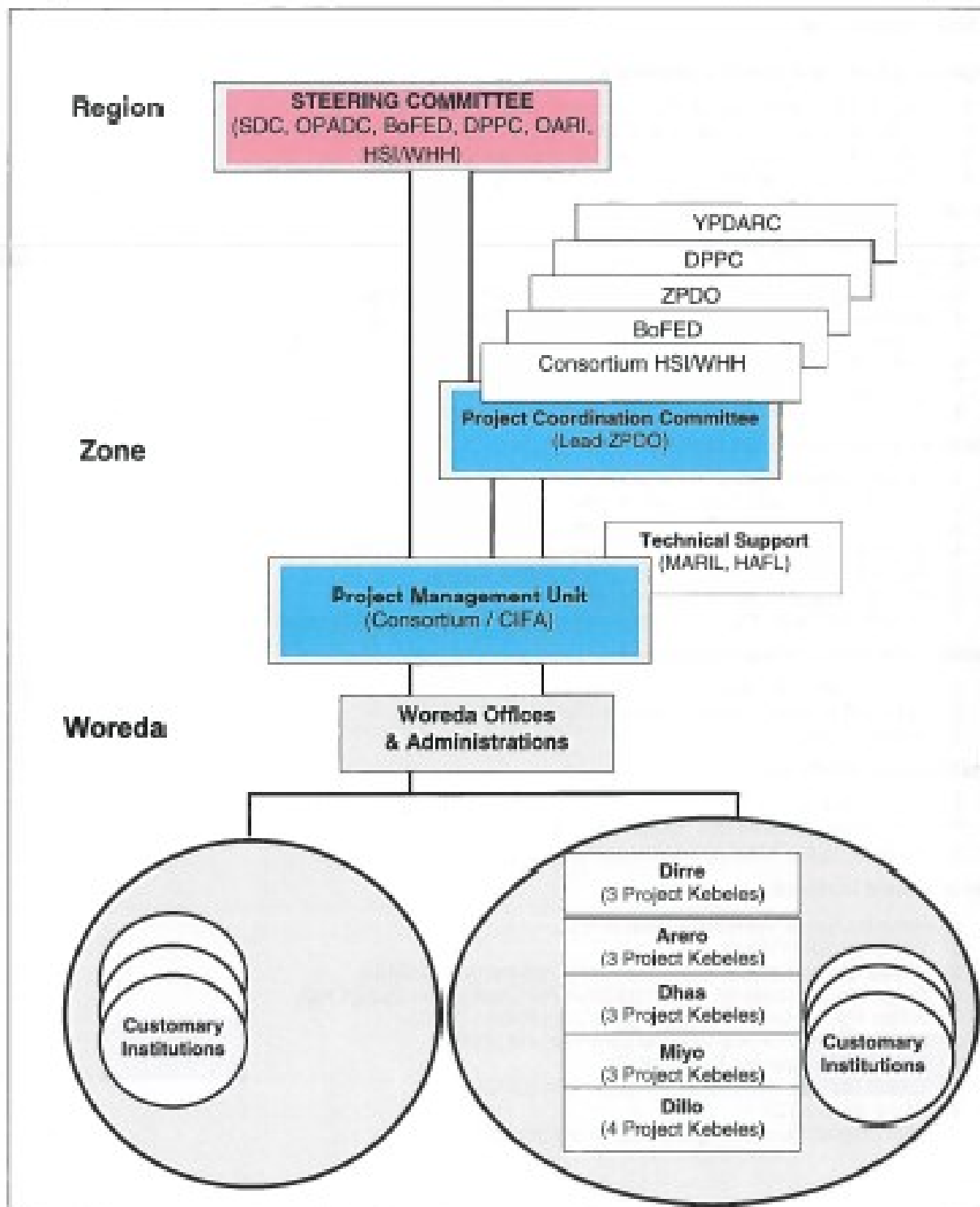
**Outcome 3:** NRM interventions are better coordinated, harmonised, and knowledge management improved to properly document and scale up promising practices

**Outcome 4:** Local Government and Customary Institutions are equipped to better prevent and resolve intra- and inter-community conflicts

The direct beneficiaries as per the project document includes; pastoralists and agro-pastoralists living in 16 project Kebeles: 70,661 persons (34,379 males; 36,282 females) in 12,120 households (7,148 men and 4,972 women headed HH). The indirect beneficiaries include; people living in the five project Woredas: 300,219 persons (145,447 male; 154,772 female). *[See annex 1 for profile of project beneficiaries]*

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<sup>5</sup> IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS October 2020 – September 2021 Issued December 2020



Source: SDC Project Proposal (NRM Project Organizational Setup)

## Evolution of the NRM-Borena Project

The first few months (from September to December 2016) dedicated mainly for preparatory phase including establishing cooperation mechanisms and signing agreements among stakeholders. Due to poor rainfall in 2016, the target sites faced severe drought and the project forced to implement an emergency response (ER) using its contingency fund. The first ER action concluded by May 2017 extended with a second four months ER intervention (1<sup>st</sup> September- 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017). From July 2017 to December 2018, a conflict erupted between Somali and Oromia regions due to border dispute. Due to a better Ganna rainfall, which lasted from March to May 2018, the project switched from ER to development mode in all the targeted NRM-Borena project sites.

In 2019, a mapping exercise conducted to strengthen integrations and complementarities for synergy building, and to maximize project impacts at project sites. The project also applied basic CSPM approaches in dealing with ongoing conflicts in Borena Zone. To ensure sustainability, long-term development vision formulated to implement both development and ER in parallel. A midterm review conducted in the same year to assess overall progress of the project.

In 2020, the project faced multiple challenges including outbreak of COVID-19, locust infestations in the target areas and security threat. Swarms of Desert Locust has invaded Borena zone from December 2019 to April 2020 damaging crops and pasturelands. The NRM-Borena project responded for the emergency through contingency fund from November 2019 to July 2020 with one NCE (no cost extension). An additional forth outcome that mainly focus on governance included in 2020. NRM-Borena project has responded for desert locust invasion and COVID-19 pandemic through relocation of certain development budget based on zonal officials' requests

Overall, on one hand, the project invested enormous amount(1,050,000.00 CHF) about 12% of the total budget allocated of funding for ER and showed adaptability to the changing contexts, but on the other hand, the changes make it difficult to measure the real impact (achievement of the overall goal) of the project. *[See the graph in Annex 2 on the evolution of the NRM-Borena project in the last five years]*. However, the contribution of emergency response (ER) was significant to protect the development gain of this project.

### 1.3. Objectives of the Final Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the NRM-Borena project in achieving its objectives. The evaluation included gender, transversal good governance and conflict sensitivity dimensions in the programme delivery to generate learning and recommendations for SDC and the relevant stakeholders.

The evaluation also aimed to inform the possibility of a next phase of the project, and identify areas for enhanced synergies with other projects in view of consolidating the Swiss food security portfolio in the Horn of Africa, which covers Somalia, lowlands of Ethiopia and northern Kenya. The focus was to see potential synergies and complementarities between the NRM-Borena with other projects funded by SDC, especially with LSS programme implemented in Northern Kenya and interventions funded by other donors in Borena zone. The following were specific objectives for this final evaluation:

- **Relevance:** To what extent the objectives of the project and project design are consistent with target community/beneficiaries' priority needs, relevant problems or requirements, local (woreda, zone and region) development plans and the country's policies and strategies
- **Effectiveness:** Evaluate the extent to which the project is delivering on the outcomes expected to achieve the overall goal and effectiveness of project towards achievement of the expected immediate and intermediate outcomes as per the logical framework.

- **Efficiency:** How do you evaluate the project effectiveness particularly to execute planned activities in time and quality and assess the project efficiency in resources use, i.e., efficiency in timeliness, quality, quantity and cost effectiveness
- **Sustainability:** How do you assess the likelihood of the project results/benefits to continue after the intervention ends?
- **Documentation and learning:** Best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for next phase.

## 2. Evaluation Methodology

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The evaluation employed a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods for triangulation of findings from primary and secondary data sources. The team collected quantitative data through a household survey among the project target beneficiaries. Qualitative study methods include key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with government sector offices, consortium member organizations, the project staffs, and community members and documentation of case studies. The team also conducted field observations at project sites and collected secondary data through desk review. This final evaluation methodology is similar to the MTR for comparison purpose (target sites/Kebeles for HH survey locations and similar questioner for HH survey) and MTR conducted in September 2019 versus the final evaluation in March-April 2020.

### 2.1. OECD Evaluation Criteria and Process

The consulting team applied OECD-DAC standard evaluation criteria as per the client requirements. The criteria focused on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project and identifying and documentation of lessons learned, best practices, gaps and recommendations for a way forward. On top of this, this evaluation considered gender development and governance issues.

### 2.2. Evaluation Design

In undertaking this assignment, the consulting team utilized a participatory methodology, which highly involve all relevant stakeholders from Regional to Kebele level. Our approach in the execution of this assignment was based on the Results Chain Conceptual Model. For this evaluation, the midterm evaluation report used to compare the changes in results of the project stipulated on the project log-frame. The evaluation covered nine Kebeles in the five Woredas of targeted Woredas in Borena Zone, which is similar to the MTR sample size for comparison purpose. In addition, the qualitative study method included key informants from consortium organizations, government sector offices at Zonal and Woreda level, and community members.

### 2.3. Study Methods

#### 2.3.1. Household Survey

##### Sample Size and Sample Distribution

The required sample size for the household survey was determined using single population proportion determination formula and used similar sample size with the midterm review (390 Households) for comparison purpose. The team allocated the calculated sample size to the five Woredas and 9 Kebeles using population proportional to size (PPS) technique based on the number of project target households of the Woredas and Kebeles. The study included both agro-pastoralist and pastoralist communities in the five project Woredas. Table 1 presents the calculated sample size and sampling distribution by Woreda, kebele and household type.

**Table 1: Sample size for the household survey by Woreda, Kebele and household type**

Livelihood system	Woreda	Name of sampled kebeles <sup>6</sup>	# of sample households [calculated sample]		
			M	F	Total
Pastoralist	Dillo	Chirate	16	16	32
		Kadim	15	15	30
	Dhas	Gayo	22	22	44
		Dhas	29	29	58
	Wachille	Hara-Jarte	30	30	60
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>224</b>
Agro-pastoralist	Dire	Madacho	19	19	38
		Hododhi-Samaro	20	20	40
	Miyo	Melbena	32	32	64
		Baha	12	12	24
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>390</b>

### Sampling Technique

Purposely selected kebeles considered as the primary sampling units and villages were the secondary sampling units. In each Kebele, the team randomly selected 1-2 villages using simple random sampling method then the team obtained list of beneficiaries in the selected villages for the evaluation from the project office. Then, the team prepared a serial list of all the project target households in the selected villages. From the list, the team randomly selected the allocated sample number of households for the kebele (using random number generator App uploaded on tablets). In each selected household, enumerators interviewed the project direct beneficiaries.

### 2.3.2. Qualitative Study Methods and Field Observations

The team conducted 14 FGDs, 30 KIIs, and 5 observations and documented 3 case studies as shown in the Table below.

**Table 2: Number of FGDs conducted for the evaluation**

Methods	Borena	Consortium/IPs	Dhas	Dillo	Dire	Miyo	Wachille	Total
FGDs			4	2	2	3	3	<b>14</b>
KIIs	7	4	2	3	5	6	3	<b>30</b>
Case studies			1	1	1			<b>3</b>
Observation			1	1	1	1	1	<b>5</b>

### 2.3.3. Document Review

The team reviewed project documents including project proposals, baseline study report, mid-term evaluation report, progress reports and collect relevant secondary data from consortium members and project sites.

## 2.4. Field Organization and Final Evaluation Team Composition

Data collection carried out by deploying personnel qualified and experienced in data collection of similar studies and well versed in the local language (Afan Oromo). The team comprised of five qualitative data collectors (KIIs and FGDs) and eight enumerators (for the household data). Three consultants trained the field team and supervised the overall data collection activities. The team conducted the data collection from April 5 to 15, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Sample kebeles included here taken from Midterm review for the comparability purpose

## 2.5. Data Management, Analysis and Report Writing

**Data Management:** The household survey data collected through Kobo App using tablets and the team synchronized the data into the server (KoBoToolBox) daily. The consultant team checked for completeness and consistency of the data daily and provided feedback to the field team. Moderators audio-recorded each FGD and KII and took notes during the interview. The team transcribed/translated recordings of FGDs and KIIs into English and appended handwritten field notes (typed in English) to the transcripts.

**Data Analysis:** Before data analysis, the consultants reviewed and cleaned the quantitative data using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to check for inaccurate (outliers or other errors), and incomplete data (missing values) and see if the data is consistent and logical. The team analyzed the quantitative data using SPSS software to generate descriptive statistics such as frequencies, proportions, mean and standard deviations. We employed thematic analysis techniques for the qualitative data based on the evaluation criteria and objectives and identified key themes. The data analysis involved triangulation of quantitative data with qualitative findings as well as information from primary sources with secondary data. Generally, the team analyzed, interpreted, and presented the data in a way that is easily understandable for readers.

**Report Write-up:** The report presents result from the quantitative data analysis in graphs and tables with explanatory text describing the findings. It presents the findings of the evaluation through triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis from primary and secondary sources. The report gives more elaborated information about the changes brought about by the project, lesson learned, conclusions and recommendations for designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of future similar projects.

### 3. Major Findings of the Final Evaluation

The findings of the final evaluation organized based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria.

#### 3.1. Household Survey Participants General Information

The team managed to conduct interviews at 387 households, yielding a response rate of 99.2%. From the total study participants, 53% were male and 47% female. The mean age of respondents was -40-year-old. The majority (72%) of the households are male headed. Regarding their livelihood system, 73.1% of the surveyed households are pastoralist 26.9% are agro-pastoralist.

**Table 3: Sex of household survey participants and heads of households**

	Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Sex of respondents	Female	135	47.7%	47	45.2%	182	47.0%
	Male	148	52.3%	57	54.8%	205	53.0%
Household head sex	Female	79	27.9%	28	26.9%	107	27.6%
	Male	204	72.1%	76	73.1%	280	72.4%

#### 3.2. Project Implementation Modality, Management and Partnership

##### Project Management

Consortium of organizations and local implementing partners (IPs) with diverse experience implemented the project. HELVETAS led the overall project implementation, provided expert support for Market System Development (MSD) for livestock and other economic opportunities. WHH work on WASH related activities. CIFA mainly work on rangeland management but also involved in WASH and some part of livelihood activities. The mandate of the project M&E reporting shifted from WHH to HELVETAS. During the 2020 annual plan of operation (APO), the project signatories signed a project amendment for a 16 months' (September 2020 to December 2021) cost/no-cost extension. The Peace and Development Center (PDC) was included as a local CSO to implement the fourth outcome of the project during this extension period. Key informants valued the project implementation modality for quality of outputs as the organizations had diverse experience and expertise. However, the approach has its limitations in terms of timely implementation of activities as explained by an informant from HELVETAS as follows:

*“WHH specializes in WASH and we use their experts in WASH related activities. CIFA mainly work on rangeland management while they also work on WASH and some part of livelihood. These organizations have technical implementation role while we do overall guidance. They also carry out their own monitoring and evaluation on the activities they do. However, consortium [approach] has pros and cons. One of the advantages is sharing expertise and collaborative effort that help achieve one's goal. However, every organization you work with has its own internal bureaucracy and that may affect your speed”.*

The project implementation modality clearly outlines coordination mechanisms at different levels, but didn't describe about the linkage to cascade the SC's decision to Woreda and kebele level. Key informants stated existence of Woreda government task force committee, which had the role of overseeing the NRM-Borena project implementation at Woreda level. There was a meaningful consultation at the Woreda level during selection of project target sites. The project also involved the target communities in project activities such as in site selection for rangeland management and water resources. However, there were gaps in involving community and customary institutions consistently during selection of target site, according to informants from Woreda sector offices.



Key informants repeatedly acknowledged the importance of community facilitators at Woreda level who mobilize the community and work with government development agents. Informants noted that the main approach of the project at community level was context specific project management which included working in a conflict sensitive way and adaptive management system which is changing in the annual plan of action according to the community priority need.

### Coordination Mechanisms

HELVETAS led the consortium and the overall responsibility for the implementation of the NRM-Borena project. The project used various coordination mechanisms for managing the activities as summarized below.

**Steering Committee (SC):** The regional level, i.e. Oromia National Regional State (ONRS), SC meets at least biannually and looks mainly into strategic matters. Chaired by Bureau of Plan & Economic Development Commission (BoPEDC), the SC had members from Oromia BoPEDC, Oromia Pastoral Area Development Commission, Oromia Disaster Prevention & Preparedness Commission, Oromia Agricultural Research Institute, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and consortium organization of the project (HELVETAS / WHH).

**Pastoral Development Coordination Committee (PDCC):** The PDCC is a forum, which brought various actors (government offices, customary institutions, NGOs and government flagship projects) that working on NRM together for exchange of learnings and harmonization of approaches. This forum also serve as a mechanism to improve coordination at Borena Zone level not only for NRM-Borena project but also for all Zonal level Go-NGO coordination.

**Implementing Partners Coordination Meeting (IPCM):** HELVETAS led monthly meeting of the implementing partners' coordination (IPCM) among HSI, WHH, CIFA, PDO, YPDARC, DRMO, ZCPO form the IPCM. The objective of IPCM is to follow NRM-Borena project progresses, integration of activities, challenges encountered and to provide the required logistic support.

**Community planning and Implementation Teams (CPIT):** At Kebele level, CPIT are in place and closely cooperate with the project partners (Government, JIP)<sup>7</sup>

The key strength of the coordination mechanism was engaging regional level stakeholders, implementing partners and customary institutions and active participation at PDCC level to share the project activities.

The weakness of the coordination mechanism includes; at the higher (SC) level, the strategic decision-making happened at the Addis Ababa and regional level without the involvement of key Woreda partners where the actual activities implemented. There was disconnects between the SC, PDCC and IPCM as there was no clear communication channel from top to down regarding decisions. The decision power was mainly at INGOs and donor as clearly noted in one of the meeting minutes:

*“Helvetas, WHH, SDC, and regional level signatory commission/bureaus are remaining the voting members of steering committee that expect to handle the strategic matters of the project . Local implementing CSOs could be invited for steering committee meeting as non-voting member as deemed necessary.”, SC meeting minute*

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<sup>7</sup> First SC Meeting minute ( October 12, 2017)

### 3.3. Relevance

This section presents the relevance of the NRM-Borena project's in terms of its importance to beneficiaries and in addressing community specific needs, the alignment of the project activities with priorities of local development plan, national policy/strategies and areas of synergy (with other projects within the food security domain of the Swiss Regional Cooperation Program for the Horn of Africa).

#### 3.3.1. Relevance of Interventions from Beneficiary Priority Needs Perspectives

Most final evaluation participants agreed that the NRM-Borena project was responsive of the community needs and its relevance. Key informants and FGD participants indicated the alignment of the interventions to the priority needs of the targeted beneficiaries. The interventions based on the priorities of the targeted communities as the project identified the activities through consultation of the community and stakeholders, according to study participants. Some key informants stressed that the NRM-Borena project consulted target community on its relevance and feasibility of the activities to the local context before implementing an activity. A key informant from the Zone Disaster Risk Management (DRM) office explained how the project design was appropriate in addressing the needs of the beneficiaries as follows:

*“Development of plan of action is also planned in consultation with the target community, government sectors and consortium members. The project works on community's need. For example, when the community was in sever problem due to drought, they [NRM-Borena] totally focus on responding to that emergence condition. That is what we mean by community's need. They also work on promoting agriculture to support the existing livelihood system. The project organized women and engage them to participate in agricultural practice”.*

The NRM-Borena project was responsive in addressing communities' needs as the interventions related to water point construction/rehabilitation, women economic empowerment, and rangeland management were most relevant. One FGD participant in Dhas Woreda explained relevance of the project in addressing the community's needs in relation to addressing climate change impacts as follows:

*“The project is very relevant for pastoral community like us. We need pasture and water than everything, because our life depends on these things [water and pasture] hence the project directly matches with our needs and we found it very useful. It [NRM-Borena project] addressed challenges of pastoral community in many ways. It helped grazing land to rehabilitate and consequently increased availability of pasture and increased access to water through water points' maintenance/rehabilitation, reduced women's burden of traveling long distance in search of water and grass for cattle, increased adult literacy and many people and able to read and write consequently”.*

The key informant above clearly articulated the relevance of the NRM project in addressing the impact of climate change by rehabilitating grazing land and rehabilitation of water sources.

Some key informants and the community valued the livelihood diversification, which the informants described as the major activity aimed at encouraging women to engage in alternative income generating activities, as a realistic intervention to improve women's income. The rehabilitation of rangelands, ponds, and traditional water wells were important interventions for women in reducing long distance travel in search of water. The improved access to water facilities enabled women to have time to look after their children and do their household chores. Rehabilitated rangelands saved livestock lives, according to key informants. FGD community participants expressed that the project was fruitful in responding for the community specific needs especially rangeland management and income diversification. The income diversification activities of the NRM project especially the rangeland management addressed the impact of climate in turn increased income of the target communities.

Key informants also said that the NRM-Borena project was flexible in designing its interventions to the local contexts. The project implemented activities considering agro-ecological nature of the Woredas and through discussion with the community. For example, agriculture activities implemented in some of the target Woredas where the areas have better rainfall. A key informant from Miyo Woreda government office reinforced the adaptability of the NRM-Borena project as follows:

*“The project is considerate of the local context. Their [NRM-Borena project] activities are different from Woreda to Woreda because each Woreda have different problems and potential. They do not just replicate what they did in one Woreda”.*

The adaptability of the NRM project with regard to the agro-ecological nature of the target Woredas that contribute to farming system resilience against climate change impacts.

### **3.3.2. Alignment with Government Policies and Strategies and Local Development Plans**

#### **Alignment with National Government Policies and Strategies**

Ensuring food security for all citizens is one of the key components of the key Ethiopian Government development agenda outlined in the Growth and Transformation Program (GTP). - Pillar I Sustain the rapid, broad based and equitable economic growth and development witnessed during the last decade and pillar 9 build climate resilient green economy. In the GTP, the development of the agriculture sector aims at improving the food security situation in the country. The GTP food security component directly aligned with NRM-Borena impact level indicator (Improve food security and resilience of (agro-) pastoralist communities).

Key informants noted the alignment of the NRM-Borena project with Government of Ethiopia (GoE) strategies, policies, and development plans, including GTP and the green legacy plans. The project interventions such as water and soil conservation work, rangeland rehabilitation, adult literacy, and women empowerment through livelihood income diversification are all parts of the national development plans which will ultimately address climate change impacts. A key informant from CIFA explained the alignment of the project to national development agenda as follows:

*“As to me it [NRM-Borena project] is in line with government plan. For example, what CIFA implement are all what government works on. For example, if you take from livestock, there are things that support livestock resource development. CIFA also work on rangeland and offer trainings. We create awareness among the community to preserve pastureland for drought months. All these activities have respective sector offices having mandate on it. For example, on making community to withstand drought, the DRM office also work on that. On water and conservation and what we plan is also what the government is promoting now a day as a green legacy”.*

As the key informant elaborated above, both GoE Green Legacy and water conservation activities are part of the climate change activities aligned with NRM project.

#### **Alignment with Local (Woreda, Zone and Region) Development Plan**

Key informants acknowledged that the NRM-Borena project alignment with development plans at the local level. They said that both the development and humanitarian assistance provided in the last five years are in line with the priorities and plans of local sector offices. Many key informants noted that active participation of all sectors from region to Kebele level showed the commitment of NRM-Borena project in synchronizing its interventions with the local development plans. A key informant from a Zone office explained how the project aligned its activities with local development plans (Zone and Woreda level annual plans which is drawn from GTP) by involving government sectors and other relevant partners as follows:

*“[The] involvement of sector offices indicates the alignment of the project with development plans. The project has ensured this by inviting all concerned government and NGOs at all levels to participate in planning of the activities. All government sector offices invited to reflect on the planned activities. Thus, the project is aligned with the development plans”.*

The NRM-Borena project contributed in strengthening local institutions and enhancing local ownership for resilience building from kebele to Woreda and Zone level, according to key informants. The project had contribution in strengthening government and customary institutions and enhancing local ownership through numerous capacity building activities and engagement of sector offices and communities throughout the project cycle.

The project employed context-specific project management approach for alignment of interventions with changing priorities and needs. The project implemented its activities in a conflict sensitive way and through adaptive management system by revising its plan according to the existing dynamic and priority, according to key informants. Several key informants also noted that the project flexibly addressed emerging needs and priorities of local authorities, especially during emergencies. A key informant from a Zone government office described the benefit of emergency response and its advantage to protect the development gains as:

*“The other strong side of the project was the contingency fund. This fund has saved lives during emergency and protected development gains of the project. It was difficult to sustain development gains during the COVID-19 pandemic, desert locust infestation and other emergency [drought and conflict, displacement], if not for the emergency fund. The project was instantly responding for emerging crisis through its crisis modifier (emergency fund)”.*

### 3.3.3. Synergy of Project Components and Activities

Rural food security in Ethiopia depends largely on rainfall, which determines the success of meher and belg crop production in the highlands, and the availability of water and pasture for livestock in the lowlands. Desk review and key informants showed the synergy of NRM-project interventions to meet the overall goal of improving food and nutrition security. The project aimed to improve food and nutrition security through NRM by linking with all project activities. For instance, the pasture and rangeland productivity increased through rehabilitation of rangeland while community members participated in cash-for-work increased their income, and some used it for asset building (buying shoats). The activity of thinning encroacher created commercial opportunities as the thinned encroacher used to make tables and chairs, which can be considered as one pilot example to diversify income. Furthermore, access to water and rangeland increase women engagement into various livelihood diversification options. Bee keeping activities in the rehabilitated woodlot sites, participatory action researcher on pond catchment at the rehabilitated pond sites and creating access to water and pasture helped women to engage into various livelihood activities. The above examples showed the synergy and complementarity of outcome one and two of the project.

Qualitative study participants prioritize some interventions over the others in terms of their relevance. Most FGD community participants highlighted outcome one (rangeland management and water resources) and outcome two (livelihood diversification) of the project are more relevant than outcome three and four because these two activities address the direct basic community priority needs. FGD participant from a woman farming group in Dire Woreda said:

*“This project [NRM-Borena] successfully responded our need. Some of the project activities successfully addressed our need for soil conservation and the planting of trees successfully reduced soil erosion and converted the bare land into green area as well as attract favorable weather condition to our kebele.*

*Women crop farming improved women's economy by increasing income and diversifying their livelihood. For example, each of our [farming group] members purchased at least two cows in last year only".*

However, though most respondents prioritized outcome one and two, it does not necessarily mean that outcome 3 and 4 (coordination, knowledge management and governance) are not important since the community and government informant's might not notice the soft activities of this project. In fact, some women FGD participants noted that the project had some limitation in properly addressing their needs related to the literacy component. They said that unavailability of permanent teacher and lack comfortable classroom, desk, chair and textbooks impede them from attending the literacy program regularly, indicating their interest in the intervention.

The contingency fund (CF) played a key role in addressing immediate community needs resulting from recurrent crisis. This shows the project adaptive nature of programming, which contributed to the overall project goals in terms of lifesaving activities to reduce acute food insecurity, protect and restore livelihoods. The project managed to link the rehabilitation (pond & rangeland rehabilitations) with long-term development resilience building as central approach.<sup>8</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to measure the extent of CF role that played in sustaining development gains from protracted emergencies due to conflict, COVID-19, displacement, and recurrent drought. Livelihood diversification in general and livestock diversification in particular are adaptation strategies to climate change adopted by pastoralists.

### 3.3.4. Relevance of NRM-Borena beyond the Ethiopian Borena Zone

Key informant and desk review stated NRM-Borena project is coherent with the other SDC-funded interventions in pastoral areas of Ethiopia in a sense the focus of both projects is to improve food security and resilience (SDC domain of Food security).

Both NRM-Borena and LSS aligned with the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the Horn of Africa (HoA) and its strategic objectives. NRM-Borena outcome one, two and three feeds into SDC Food Security & Rural Development domain and into outcome one of the Good Governance & Peace Building Sector.<sup>9</sup> Both projects focused on improving the resilience of the target communities.

The potential relevance of NRM-Borena project beyond the Ethiopian Borena zone, to the Kenyan FCDC ASAL Counties, specifically LSS experience-sharing visits as the National Program Officer from Kenya highlighted. Out of the planned multiple experience sharing, only one field visit materialized partially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, partners missed an opportunity to document the feedback from the field visit and shared among SDC partners. As the key informant noted, the approaches for both projects vary as NRM-Borena implemented the project through implementing partners while the LSS intervention was with government partners. Nevertheless, capacity-building approaches of both projects could be one area for best practices considering both partners training activity is heavily towards government staffs.

As documented in the LSS evaluation report, *"rangeland management is an inevitable investment in both Kenya and Ethiopia."* As an outcome 1 for NRM-Borena, project to increase access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated and/or improved rangelands aligned with Kenyan sustainable management of rangelands Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE) framework.<sup>10</sup> Competition for resources (pasture, water) is a critical challenge in both countries internally and reason for across borders conflicts which LSS evaluators suggested a formation and activation of cross-border pastoralists' and peace associations as a way to avoid cross resource based conflicts. In the next phase, the governance component of both countries projects could implement cross border conflict

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<sup>8</sup>2018 Annual Report

<sup>9</sup> Annual Reports

<sup>10</sup> LSS Final Evaluation Draft Report

prevention intervention. A key informant from FCDC and SDC Kenya suggested a joint project planning (objective setting) in the next phase project design and implementation.

### 3.4. Effectiveness

This section explains the effectiveness of the project in achieving the expected outcomes and outputs based on the project logical framework. The section has two sub-sections based on the level of indicators - impact and outcome level indicators.

#### 3.4.1. Effectiveness in terms of Achieving Impact Level Indicators

**Impact indicator:** *Percentage of pastoralist households in the project kebeles, which rate their food and nutrition security status as safe all year round.*

The project anticipated to increase the percentage of targeted households that rate their food and nutrition security status safe as all year round from 10% at baseline to 50% by end of the project period. The household survey findings revealed that 28.7% households reported that they are food secured (no food shortage throughout a year). The percentage of food secured households has increased from 10% at baseline and 4.3% during the mid-term review (MTR), but was below the project target of 50% for phase I. Table 4 compares the impact level indicator values of the NRM-Borena project at baseline, MTR and final evaluation.

**Table 4: Impact level achievement of the project at end line compared to baseline and MTR**

Strategy of intervention	Impact level indicator	Baseline	MTR	Final Evaluation	Target end of phase I
Improve food security and resilience of (agro-) pastoralist communities in Borena zone through improved context specific sustainable natural resources management practices	% of pastoralist households in the project kebeles which rate their food and nutrition security status as safe all year round	10% <sup>11</sup>	4.3%	28.7%	50% HH (50% women and 50% men)

At end line, 71% of the respondents rated their household current food security situation as food insecure, showing a reduction from 96% during the MTR. As presented in table 5, the food insecurity situation of pastoral and agro-pastoral community has notable difference, 74% and 64%, respectively. Among food insecure households, 42% of households during the MTR faced food shortage for five months or more compared with 28% in this survey.

**Table 5: Household food Security situation at MTR and end line**

Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	MTR	End line	MTR	End line	MTR	End line
<b>HH security situation (availability of food throughout the year)</b>						
Food secured (no food shortage throughout a year)	4%	25.8%	5%	36.5%	4.3%	28.7%
Food insecure (there is food shortage for some months)	96%	74.2%	95%	63.5%	95.7%	71.3%
<i>Sample households</i>	289	283	106	104	395	387
<b>Food shortage Months in the year</b>						
For 1-2 months	22%	15.7%	24%	28.8%	21.5%	18.8%
For 3-4 months	33%	56.2%	35%	45.5%	32.7%	53.6%
For 5-6 months	30%	22.4%	15%	25.8%	25.1%	23.2%
For over 6 months	15%	5.7%	22%	0.0%	16.5%	4.3%
<i>Sample households</i>	277	210	101	66	378	276

<sup>11</sup> This figure is from the NRM-project log frame not from baseline study

This evaluation further analyzed to understand the level of food insecurity of the target community by asking respondents if their household suffer a shock (such as the loss of a main income, crop failure, livestock loss, sickness of a breadwinner or unaffordable costs that had to be paid out) in the last 12 months. The findings showed that 77.3% of the households have suffered a shock (pastoralists 78.1%; agro-pastoralist 75.0%).

To assess the NRM-Borena project effort in improving food security attributed to the project, respondents were asked to rate their household current food security situations in the last five years. About two-third (64%) of the households at end line believe that their food security situation has improved over the past five years. During the MTR, only 49% of respondents reported that their household food security situation has improved over the past three years. On the other hand, 25% of respondents said their current food security situation has deteriorated/decreased compared with 33% in the MTR.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 6: Household current food security situation as compared to before 3 years (MTR) and 5 years (end line)**

Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	MTR	End line	MTR	End line	MTR	End line
Improved	43%	64.7%	65%	61.5%	48.6%	63.8%
Remained the same (no change)	19%	11.3%	18%	11.5%	18.5%	11.4%
Deteriorated/deceased	38%	24.0%	17%	26.9%	32.7%	24.8%
<i>Sample households</i>	289	283	106	104	395	387

Among those respondents who reported improved household food security, 73% those in this survey and 39% during the MTR attributed the improvement to better income from production (livestock and crop) due to the NRM-Borena project interventions. About a-third (32%) of respondents at final evaluation mentioned better forage access as a reason for household food security improvement. Table 7 shows reasons for household food security improvement at end line. KII and FGD also attested that the project has invested to enhance the food security situation of the targeted communities. The project, in collaboration with government sector offices and other partners, has made significant achievements in improving the food security situation and building the resilience of the pastoral and agro-pastoral community in the project-targeted sites. NRM-Borena project contributed for increase crop production as the 2020 annual report documented; *“Yabello research centre did participatory on-farm trails at all women faming sites (3 each during Ganna & Hagaya rainy season) by using different moisture conservation practices on maize and Haricot bean. A new crop variety Pearl Millet also introduced from Amhara region, Waghimira zone and planted at on-farm trail plot for further scaling. This crop is somehow new to the Ethiopia and particular to Borana zone”*

The project established a market system development (MSD) to link women economic diversification groups (milk marketing, livestock fattening and vegetable) with private entities to bring systemic change to improve livelihood diversification and improved market price. NRM-Borena contribution for improved market price includes; creation of milk marketing linkages among pastoralist women and private milk collection centers that reduced the daily travels and costs used to incur, provided capacity building on feasible business options, and supported private milk collection centre.

A key informant from GAA (German Agro Action) explains the project effort to address food and nutrition security as follows:

*“Many households [were] unable to gain sufficient milk from their cattle as the starved cows were unable to give milk to sustain the families’ food needs. The project has designed multiple activities and implemented to address the real problem of the communities and mitigate drought result food insecurity.”*

<sup>12</sup> Final evaluation HH survey methodology and locations where the sample HH taken are the same as MTR, however the season was different ( MTR in Aug/Sep 2019 and March/April 2021)

**Table 7: Reasons for improvement of food security situation at end line**

Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Better crop harvest due to good weather, rain etc.	26	14.2%	19	29.7%	45	18.2%
Better forage harvest due to good weather, rain etc.	50	27.3%	19	29.7%	69	27.9%
Better forage access	65	35.5%	14	21.9%	79	32.0%
Better income from production (livestock and crop) (increase production and improved market price for products due to NRM Borena project support)	134	73.2%	45	70.3%	179	72.5%
Own efforts to diversify income and improve agricultural production	5	2.7%	12	18.8%	17	6.9%
Government and NGOs humanitarian support (emergency food aid and PSNP)	54	29.5%	35	54.7%	89	36.0%
Support from families in the form of remittance and other increased	3	1.6%	4	6.3%	7	2.8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>183</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>247</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

In addition to the overall food security situation, respondents asked about access to sufficient and nutritious food compared to last five years. As indicated in table 8, 66% of the respondents reported there is improvement in their household diet in the last five years. The percentage of households that have access to sufficient and nutritious food has doubled from findings of the MTR where only 33% of them said there was improvement in the last three years. About seven households in every ten (69%) in this survey reported that their household consume varied diet that contain cereal, vegetable, fruit, and animal products or pulses at least once a week in food and nutrition secured months of a year at least once in a week, increasing from 53% during the MTR. In addition, 9% of households consume varied foods once a day in food and nutrition secured months of a year compared with 2% in the MTR. However, more proportion of households in this survey do not consume varied food in food and nutrition insecure months (lean season from July-September/October of a year).

**Table 8: Nutrition security of households at MTR and end line**

Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	MTR	End line	MTR	End line	MTR	End line
<b>Improvement of households in getting sufficient and nutritious food as compared to last 3 (MTR) or 5 (end line) years</b>						
Yes	27%	67.5%	51%	60.6%	33.2%	65.6%
No	73%	32.5%	49%	39.4%	66.8%	34.4%
<i>Sample households</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>283</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>395</i>	<i>387</i>
<b>Interval of households getting balanced meal in food and nutrition SECURED months of a year that contain cereal, vegetable &amp; fruit, animal products (pulses) over the last 1 year</b>						
At least once per month	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
At least ones in a week	53%	72.1%	54%	58.7%	53.4%	68.5%
At least ones over two weeks	40%	14.1%	43%	23.1%	41.3%	16.5%
During holidays <sup>13</sup> only	4%	4.2%	1%	6.7%	3.0%	4.9%
Not available most of the time	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Ones in a day	2%	8.1%	2%	10.6%	2.3%	8.8%
<i>Sample households</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>283</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>395</i>	<i>387</i>
<b>Interval of households getting balanced meal in food and nutrition INSECURED months of a year that contain cereal, vegetable &amp; fruit, animal products (pulses) over the last 1 year</b>						
At least ones in a week	2%	3.9%	1%	7.7%	1.8%	4.9%
At least ones over two weeks	46%	10.6%	39%	23.1%	44.1%	14.0%
During holidays only	52%	84.5%	60%	69.2%	53.9%	80.4%

<sup>13</sup> National holidays are times where spent their income to purchase diverse diet to celebrate



Not available most of the time	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Ones in a day	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Sample households	289	283	106	104	395	387

### 3.4.2. Effectiveness in terms of Achieving Outcome Level Indicators

<b>Outcome 1:</b>	<b><i>Vulnerable pastoralists have increased access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated and/or improved rangelands.<sup>14</sup></i></b>
<b>Indicator 1.1:</b>	<i>Percentage of project communities ranking depletion and deterioration of their forage base as a major constraint of access to pasture</i>
<b>Indicator 1.2:</b>	<i>Percentage of project communities ranking access to livestock drinking water in pasture areas as a major constraint of access to pasture</i>

The NRM-Borena project is effective in terms of meeting both indicators under outcome as confirmed by this evaluation, though the figures have slightly declined from the MTR. The percentage of households ranking depletion and deterioration of forage base as a major constraint of access to pasture has increased from 62% at baseline to 91% at end line (pastoralists 90.1%; agro-pastoralists 92.3%). At baseline, 71% of households identified access to livestock drinking water in pasture areas a major constraint for access to pasture and the figure has increased to 86% in this survey (pastoralists 85.9%; agro-pastoralists 85.6%). These findings show the project created an effective community awareness in identifying the underlying cause of deterioration of forage and water resources for accessing pasture.

**Table 9: Outcome 1 achievement of the project at end line compared to baseline and MTR**

Outcomes	Outcome level indicators	Baseline	MTR	Final Evaluation	Target end of phase I	No of Beneficiaries
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Vulnerable pastoralists have increased access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated and/or improved rangelands.	% of project communities ranking depletion and deterioration of their forage base as a major constraint of access to pasture	62%	94.4%	90.7%	25% communities (50% women, 50% men)	8, 278
	% of project communities ranking access to livestock drinking water in pasture areas as a major constraint of access to pasture	71%	89.1%	85.8%%		6,662

### Rangeland and Water Supply Schemes Rehabilitation

The project intervention helped the pastoral and agro-pastoral community by increasing their access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated water point and rangelands. Among the household survey respondents, 89.7% and 27.9% of them, respectively, reported that water and irrigation schemes constructed in their area in

<sup>14</sup> There is misunderstanding of this indicator from the inception of the project, for instance in the baseline report which shows measuring the knowledge

“Access to (livestock) drinking water in pasture area for each of the three communal pasture resources was rated as: 3) major constraint, 2) moderate, 1) minor, 0) no constraint ) and Depletion, deterioration of forage base (declining availability of quality forage) for each of the three communal pasture resources was rated as: 3) major, 2) moderate, 1) minor, 0) none”

The MTR review also considered this indicator for improving the knowledge of the community as indicted in the report;

“The survey testified that 95% of respondents ranked that depletion and deterioration of forage base as a major constraint of access to pasture. Similarly, 89% of respondents ranked that access to livestock drinking water in pasture area’s is also a major constraint of access to pasture. These tell that the project created sufficient awareness (already achieved the target) to the community to understand the root cause of their underlining problems”

the past five years. Nearly all of those who reported construction of water points (95.1%) and irrigation schemes (98.1%) said the NRM Borena project constructed the schemes. This project conducted participatory action researches (PAR) for resolving the knowledge gap. For instance, one of the PAR objective was to resolve the knowledge gap on crop production under moisture stress conditions through different moisture conservation practices. Another PAR focused on identifying in collaboration with the communities local solutions to mitigate the erosions of catchments and siltation of ponds *“Scaling up of PAR initiatives (pond catchment treatment) by community in some project operational areas”*<sup>15</sup>

The qualitative study findings also substantiated the household survey results. Key informants from government sector offices verified that the project interventions played instrumental role in improving access to pasture through rangeland and water resources rehabilitation, thereby reducing the vulnerability of communities during prolonged drought seasons. The project intervention changed the way of life of the target community, increased access of water for livestock and human that reduce community burden and mobility for search of water. The rangeland management activity enhanced access to pasture for livestock, which increased production from livestock. A key informant from Borena zone livestock production office eloquently explained the contribution of the project in this aspect as follows:

*“Activities implemented by the project has significantly reduced vulnerability of the pastoralist community. Their livestock can get grass and water without traveling far. They survived this year’s prolonged dry season by cutting grass from the rehabilitated rangeland. The project avoided a disaster”.*

A key informant from a Woreda DRM office also added:

*“What the project has done on rangeland rehabilitation and the bale preparation technology has increased vulnerable pastoralist communities’ access to pasture. This year could have been a disaster given the longer dry season throughout the zone”.*

### **Rangeland Management and Climate Vulnerability**

Nearly all (96.4%) of respondents said that the local community has designed and implemented participatory rangeland management (PRM) plans. The current natural resource and rangeland management improved compared to the last 5 years with 79.1% households reported improvement in rangeland management practices among the community, with the highest among pastoralists (82.0%) compared with 71.2% among agro-pastoral areas.

**Table 10: Current situation of rangeland management compared to the last five years**

	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Deteriorated/deceased	35	12.4%	21	20.2%	56	14.5%
I don't know	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	1	0.3%
Improved	232	82.0%	74	71.2%	306	79.1%
Remained the same (no change)	16	5.7%	8	7.7%	24	6.2%
Total	283	100.0%	104	100.0%	387	100.0%

The major reason for improvement on rangeland management was due to the NRM-Borena project accounted for 85.6%.

<sup>15</sup> Erosion-control interventions associated with pond-catchment rehabilitation on the Borana Rangeland, Ethiopia – Participatory Research Action (PAR) final report

**Table 11: Reasons for improvement compared to the last five years**

	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Better rangeland management	102	44.0%	41	55.4%	143	46.7%
Better physical and biological conservation structures constructed	31	13.4%	8	10.8%	39	12.7%
Better weather (good climate due to environmental rehabilitation and restoration)	17	7.3%	8	10.8%	25	8.2%
Government commitment on NRM and Rehabilitation works	24	10.3%	14	18.9%	38	12.4%
Borena NRM project support for NRM was better	197	84.9%	65	87.8%	262	85.6%
Total	232	100.0%	74	100.0%	306	100.0%

The beneficiaries evaluated the communities' disaster and risk management (DRM) capacity before and after the project intervention and 71.1% of the respondents agreed that communities' DRM capacity has improved. Among those who said the communities' DRM capacity has improved, 84.7% of them attributed the improvement to the NRM Borena project.

**Table 12: Communities' disaster and risk management capacity**

	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Deteriorated/deceased	30	10.6%	17	16.3%	47	12.1%
Improved	207	73.1%	68	65.4%	275	71.1%
Remained the same (no change)	46	16.3%	19	18.3%	65	16.8%
Total	283	100.0%	104	100.0%	387	100.0%

About half (53.5%) of respondents said that climate vulnerability of the community has reduced due to improved NRM and rehabilitation works. However, 26.6% of them believe that the climate vulnerability of the community worsened compared to the status before.

**Table 13: Climate vulnerability of the community**

	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Climate vulnerability reduced as NRM and rehabilitation works have been done	154	54.4%	53	51.0%	207	53.5%
Community disaster and risk management capacity improved	50	17.7%	14	13.5%	64	16.5%
I don't know	3	1.1%	4	3.8%	7	1.8%
Remained the same/no change	4	1.4%	2	1.9%	6	1.6%
Vulnerability worsened than before	72	25.4%	31	29.8%	103	26.6%
Total	283	100.0%	104	100.0%	387	100.0%

### Literacy

Although most of respondents are still illiterate, the percentage has reduced from 78% during the MTR to 71% at end line. The proportion of respondents who are able to read and write has increased from 7% in MTR to 11% in this survey, indicating the contribution of the project literacy intervention.

**Table 14: Current educational status of the household survey respondents at MTR and end line**

Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	MTR	End line	MTR	End line	MTR	End line
Grade 1-8	2%	14.8%	0%	21.1%	1.8%	16.6%
Grade 9-10	2%	1.4%	1%	1.0%	1.5%	1.3%
Read & write (informal education)	4%	9.5%	13%	14.4%	6.6%	10.9%
Illiterate	78%	73.5%	72%	63.5%	78.2%	70.8%
Grade 11-12	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
<i>Sample households</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>283</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>395</i>	<i>387</i>

**Outcome 2:** Pastoralist women incomes increased while diversifying their livelihoods

**Indicator 2.1:** *Number of women group members who earn additional average cash income of Birr 9,000 annually*

Outcome 2 of the project focused on improving the livelihood of women through income diversification by supporting women's cooperative groups. The project achieved 13.4% of its target for the number of women group members who earn additional average cash income of Birr 9,000 annually. Although, there was improvement compared to the MTR, the project achievement for this outcome was by far below its target of increasing income for 1200 women. In addition to the achievement of 161 women who earned 9,000 Birr annually, the NRM project established a total of 19 women groups with 372 members, which benefited from various livelihood diversification interventions.

**Table 15: Outcome 2 achievement of the project at end line compared to baseline and MTR**

Outcome 2	Indicator	Baseline	MTR	Final Evaluation	Target Phase 1	Additional Achievement
Pastoralist women incomes are increased while diversifying their livelihoods.	# of women group members who earn additional average cash income of Birr 9,000 annually.	0	45 women (3.7%)	161 women (13.4%)	1200 women	19 women groups with 372 members benefited from livelihood diversification

### Cooperatives

Cooperative members and various women groups such as women farming, horticulture, bee keeping, poultry production and milk marketing groups are engaged in different economic activities to diversify their income. To complement the women farming crop production, the project conducted participatory action research (PAR) on moisture conservation techniques and adaptability of dry land seed at six farm sites. The findings of the research has contributed to improve the agronomic practice of women group members and their production.

Findings from the household survey indicated that 64.6% of the respondents reported they are member of cooperatives or VSLAs (pastoralist 64.0%; agro-pastoralist 66.3%). Among the member of cooperatives or VSLAs, 87.6% of the said that the benefited from improved food security due to their participation, which the NRM-project intended to achieve as an outcome. Slightly lower than half (43.6%) of those participated in cooperatives or VSLAs were benefited from increased income, with annual saving of 1032.75 Ethiopian Birr. Other benefits respondents gained from cooperatives or VSLAs include better knowledge and skill (33.6%) and improved dietary diversity (21.6%).

Findings from KIIs and FGDs showed that women (RUSACCO members) are able to engage in diverse livelihood options and/or economic activities like fattening, livestock marketing, milk production and collection, beekeeping (honey production), and petty trading. Several key informants and FGD participants highly appreciative of the

income generating activities NRM-Borena project contribute as explained by a key informant at a Woreda cooperative office:

*“I know these women are getting better income compared to what they were earning before the project support. They have received technical support on how to run their businesses successfully. More women are becoming traders and changing their family. Women are earning additional income, feeding their children, and sending them to school, and seeking better health care. It has increased their household income and diversified their livelihood. This is just the beginning, as the financial capacity of the cooperative increase, the amount of money they [women] can borrow and the type of investment they can engage in will increase. The project support is absolutely necessary to the cooperatives”.*

### **Women Groups**

Cooperative establishment, particularly women group, helped to improve women participation and involvement in the community not only in this specific project intervention but also in many other community engagements. The project established a total of 19 women groups benefiting 372 members from various livelihood diversification interventions. These includes; 6 women farming groups engaging both in crop production and livestock fattening benefiting 120 women, 1 livestock fattening group with 20 women members, 2 women vegetable production group with 32 women members, 2 poultry production groups with 40 women members, 4 milk marketing group with 80 women members and 4 bee keeping group with 80 women members.

This evidenced by findings from the household survey in which 90.2% of respondents (pastoralist 89.8%; agro-pastoralist 91.3%), confirmed cooperatives/women focused groups established during the last five years. Among those who said cooperatives/women focused groups are established, almost (99.1%) reported that the groups are established by NRM-Borena project. Besides, 98.3% of them said that there was an improvement of trust among the community about women leaders in the cooperatives. The main reason for the community trust and perception improvement was mainly due to training and awareness creation activities by the NRM-Borena project mentioned by 73.5% of respondents, followed by Government and NGOs support (25.1%). According to the information from KII and FGD, the level of women participation in decision making at their group and the community increased. A key informant from Zone and Woreda cooperative office reported more than 60% of these cooperatives are women. These findings show the significant contribution of the project in enhancing women participation in the project target areas.

**Outcome 3:** *Natural resources management interventions are better coordinated, harmonized, and their knowledge management system enhanced to properly document and scale up promising practices*

**Indicator 3.1:** *# of representatives of GO, NGO and customary institutions who regularly attend coordination meetings per year*

**Indicator 3.2:** *# of knowledge and experience sharing events organized per year*

**Indicator 3.2:** *# of best PRM practices documented over the phase*

**Indicator 3.4:** *# of PRM guidelines, strategies, and policies adopted*

The focus of this outcome was to enhance collaboration and coordination among the local government representatives and customary institutions for the ultimate goal of better NRM interventions. As seen in the table below, the government (GO) and NGO partners attend regular meetings and meet the target at zonal level while the achievement was below the plan at Woreda and kebele levels. In terms of knowledge and experience sharing events, the achievement at zonal level was above the target but less at both Woreda and kebele level. Out of the project plan to document eight best PRM practices, it managed to achieve only two. The project achieved none of its plan for adoption of PRM guidelines, strategies, and policies.

**Table 16: Outcome 3 achievement of the project at end line compared to baseline and MTR**

Outcome 3	Indicator	Baseline	MTR	Final Evaluation	Target Phase 1
NRM interventions are better coordinated, harmonised, and their knowledge management system enhanced to properly document and scale up promising practices.	# of representatives of GO, NGO and customary institutions who regularly attend coordination meetings per year a) at Zone level b) at Woreda level c) at Kebele level	a) =0 b) = 0 C) =0	a) = 51 (42.5%) b) = 17 (3%) c) = 348 (58%) <b>Overall = 34.5%</b>	a) 321 (267.5%) b) 374 (62.3%) c) 721 (37.6%) <b>Overall =53.6%</b>	a) 120 b) 600 c) 1920
	# of knowledge and experience sharing events organized per year a) at Zone level b) at Woreda level c) at Kebele level	a) =0 b) = 0 c) =0	a) =0 b) = 0 c) =0 <b>Overall = 0%</b>	a) 2 (200%) b) 2 (40%) c) 4(25%) <b>Overall = 88%</b>	a) = 1 b) = 5 c) =16
	# of best PRM practices documented over the phase	0	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	8
	# of PRM guidelines, strategies, and policies adopted	0	0	0	2

Though most of the indicators not achieved regarding outcome 3, the activities implemented were extensive and there is clear indication to show these accomplishments. The project utilized the existing PDCC coordination committee to coordinate activities and consultation forum with other GO and NGO partners and Woreda task force committee that had the role of managing routine project implementation at Woreda level. One outstanding finding from the desk review was the involvement of Gada leaders in the GO-NGOs forums through regular meeting for fostering participation of customary institutions. A key informant from DRM office noted the importance of coordination and knowledge management as follow:

*“This committee [at Kebele level] is different from the traditional committee being formed in the previous time. Because, it is formed from traditional institution and formal structure. Six persons from customary institution and five persons from modern structures who come together and make a committee. This is because strengthening customary institution will strengthen the management of pasture and water. Water has culture, Ela has its own culture and rangeland too”.*

A key informant from the Borena Zone finance office also explained the contribution of the project in strengthening coordination among stakeholders while acknowledging the challenge in bringing immediate change as:

*“Regarding strengthening local institutions and enhancing local ownership for resilience building, the project did a great job. They have provided technical and logistic support to strengthen local institutions. Resilience, however, will take time and cannot be measured now. However, the project give emphasis to knowledge transfer to local community to let them start over in case they lost their business.”*

**Outcome 4:** *Local governments and customary institutions collaborate to exercise accountable and inclusive governance and provide effective services related to natural resource management and conflict prevention*

**Indicator 4.1:** *% increase in level of citizens satisfaction in regard to the collaboration and provision of NRM and conflict prevention services of local government and customary institutions*

The governance component (outcome four) added in the extension phase (2020) of the NRM-Borena project and implemented by PDC (Peace and Development Center). The component aimed to harmonize both local governments and customary institutions in exercising accountable and inclusive governance and providing

effective services related to natural resource management and conflict prevention.<sup>16</sup> Under this component the project conducted two participatory action researches (PAR) on Shared NRM governance of Customary Institutions and local government as well as conduct PAR on the local government and customary institutions' and their role in relation to peace building/conflict prevention.

Several informants noted that capacity building were the main activities under outcome four to build local government capacity to enhance local governance effectiveness and efficiency, social accountability, participation, transparency, non-discrimination, and rule of law. A key informant from HELEVTAS explained the importance of the component:

*"Governance and peace building play a key role to use resources efficiently. Because there is conflict of interest on the scarce resources".*

However, some key informants alluded disconnect of customary and formal governance structures negatively affecting the achievement of the intended outcome as explained by an informant from the Zone DRM office:

*"Project activities implemented together (in collaboration). There are some challenges now a day. Borena community is led by customary institutions like Dheedaa and Reera, but the government structure does not recognize this".*

A key informant from Woreda livestock development office noted the local government undermines customary institutions:

*"Local government and customary institutions do not collaborate to exercise accountable and inclusive governance and provide effective services related to natural resource management and conflict prevention. Local government undermine customary institutions but I do not know the reason".*

Some FGD participants also said that kebeles tend to control communal resources resulting in disagreement with the community as FGD participant from a woman farm group explained:

*"Rehabilitated rangeland used by kebele leaders only after the project is ended. This results in conflict in the community due to community institutions as [the] kebele undermines the kebele residents and monopolized the common resource".*

### 3.5. Efficiency

Efficiency of the project was examined in terms of resources utilized compared to achieved outcome results (cost-benefit), the project implementation timelines (time efficiency), partnership between the consortium members and the delivery of the project outcomes, and risk mitigation to achieve the project objectives.

In general, efficiency of the project has been highly satisfactory since it has been utilizing the available resources in a way that maximizes synergetic effect. Prior to the project implementation, analysis of the context made to inform programming and decision-making that helped improve efficiency. Among the adaptive strategies to improve efficiency, inclusion of climate adaptation activities (livelihood diversification); inclusion of the private sector (cooperatives) into the market linkage intervention; and engaging different institutions to address challenges pertinent to pastoral and agro-pastoral community in NRM and adaptation activities increased the efficiency of the project. Capacity building supports and beneficiaries' engagement in the planning, implementation, monitoring and decision-making process supported the project efficiency.

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<sup>16</sup> NRM-Project Annual Report 2021

### 3.5.1. Physical Activity Performance

The project performed most of the planned project interventions except for activities planned under output four. The result of the project verified most of the project activities performed with very satisfactory accomplishment. In addition, qualitative findings described project activities implemented at grass root level: cooperatives supported, technical and financial support, regular M&E conducted, rangeland and water sources developed and rehabilitated (Ella, pond and gravity water supply), woodlot development, women crop farming, support to NRM activities performed, DRR activities undertaken (DRR store construction), capacity building training to the community.

As indicated in the table below, the overall project achievement of the overall physical activities plan was very encouraging considering the COVID-19 outbreak, desert locust infestations, and conflicts during the project implementation period.

**Table 17: Physical performance (% of total) of the project (Sep 2016 – Dec 31/2020) (outcome and output level results)**

Code	Project outcomes and outputs	Target	% achieved of the total plan (2016-2020)			
			Final Evaluation Against plan	MTR	Final Evaluation Based on Performance Report	Final Evaluation Based on HH survey
<b>OC1</b>	Vulnerable Pastoralists have Increased access to Pasture and Water Resources from Rehabilitated and/or Improved Rangelands.	25%	523	37.2%	NA	90.7
OP1.1	Climate Resilient PRM Plans are Developed in 16 Kebeles	16	16	34.3%	(16)100%	
OP1.2	Communal Natural Resource-Based Asset Building (CAB)	16	2	25.0%	(10)62.5%	
OP1.3	Water & WASH (8 ellas,8 ponds,4 water points, & 1 dam)	21 3	17	60.8%	34 <sup>17</sup> (>100%) 3 (>100%)	
OP1.4	Pastoralist Women and Access to NRM (25%literacy 50% GSE&CSPM)	25% 50%	11.5%	28.6%	? <sup>18</sup>	
<b>OC2</b>	Pastoralist Women Incomes are Increase While Women Diversify their Livelihoods	1200	161	23.2%	394 (33%)	
OP2.1	Training/capacity building support to women groups	80	19	8.7%	62.5%	
OP2.2	Farming by women groups	1600	152	5.4%	332(21%)	
OP2.3	Income diversification for women groups ( # group established and Promotion of women cooperatives	10		3.8%	25 (>100%)	
<b>OC3</b>	Natural Resources Interventions are Better Coordinated, Harmonized and Knowledge Management is Improved to Properly Document and Scale up Promising Practices			32.8%		79.1%
OP3.1	Exchange between GO and NGO on NRM Go-(NGO forum (biannual), Mthly DRM-ATF meeting & )Regular participation	8 48 40	3	59.4%	13 (>100%) 16(33%) 594 (>100%)	
OP3.2	Exchange between customary and LG institutions	256		3.0%	117	
OP3.3	DRM planning and plans	24 100% 100%		36.6%	81 (>100%) <sup>19</sup>	96.4%
OP3.4	Capacity building and knowledge management	4 6 3		32.1%	3 (75%) 5(83%) 6(>100%)	98.2%

**Source:** Summarized from project physical activity report covering the period from Sept. 2016 to April 2020 HH survey results

<sup>17</sup> 14 Ellas, 17 ponds, 3 water pont and 3 big machine dug pond constructed in the last five years NRM project

<sup>18</sup> 2017 Annual report documented 11 not clear if it is % or number

<sup>19</sup> We are not convinced to put the average percentage here which doesn't tell the actual output



The household survey result and KIIs at Woreda level with DAs and experts, as well as community level FGDs showed most of the beneficiary households involved in more than one benefit-packages (project interventions). As indicated in the table below of the different activities, nearly all the surveyed households (99%) benefited by participating in kebele/village level dialogues and meetings, and followed by trainings/capacity building (98%), support in DRM (97%), and rangeland rehabilitation (93%). Vast majority of targeted communities benefited from water development activities (91%), Woodlot establishment (90%), support through cooperatives (RUSACCOs) (87%), water treatment technology (84%), cash for work (81%), and literacy class (75%). The least benefit recorded was 61% of the household benefited from farming group support.

By comparison with the MTR, the percentage of households benefited from the project activities was significantly higher than the MTR across all the list of activities. For instance, 10% of households during the MTR benefited from water treatment intervention compared with 84% in the final evaluation. Most (87%) of households benefited from support through cooperatives while the figure was 25% in MTR.

**Table 18: Percentage of surveyed households benefited from project activities at MTR and end line**

Project Activities of household benefited from the project	Mid-term			Final Evaluation		
	Pastoralist	Agro-Pastoralist	Total	Pastoralist	Agro-Pastoralist	Total
Water supply schemes rehabilitation ( <i>Ella</i> , and pond)	82%	77%	81%	92.2%	88.5%	91.2%
Water treatment technology (SAWYER)	9%	14%	10%	85.2%	79.8%	83.7%
Rangeland rehabilitation	68%	63%	67%	94.7%	88.5%	93.0%
Woodlot establishment	2%	1%	2%	89.8%	92.3%	90.4%
Trainings/capacity building (DRM, EW, agriculture, IGA, Gender ...)	19%	10%	16%	98.6%	97.1%	98.2%
Literacy course	29%	27%	28%	73.9%	76.9%	74.7%
Support through cooperatives (RUSACCOs)	22%	31%	25%	86.2%	89.4%	87.1%
Farming group (women)	6%	19%	9%	53.0%	80.8%	60.5%
Support in disaster risk management	3%	0%	2%	98.2%	95.2%	97.4%
Involving in kebele/village level dialogues and meetings	4%	0%	3%	98.6%	99.0%	98.7%
Cash for work	75%	69%	73%	83.4%	75.0%	81.1%

### 3.5.2. Cost Efficiency

The total project budget was 8,482,245.00 CHF, of which the project utilized 72% of the budget (6,096,567.26 CHF) as of December 31, 2020. The project benefited 70,661 persons during the project period. Calculating the utilized budget by the total number of beneficiaries, i.e. 6,096,567.26 CHF, the project cost per beneficiary was 86.3 CHF ( $6,096,567.26 / 70,661 = 86.3$ ). Considering only the direct project cost spent (Administrated Project funds) of 3,869,038.00 CHF, the project cost per beneficiary was 54.8 CHF which is within the normal range compared with similar projects (USAID). In terms of efficiency by outcome, outcome 1 utilized 87%, outcome 2 utilized 81%, outcome 3 utilized 71%, and outcome 4 utilized 4%. These shows both outcome 1 and 2 budget utilization and activity performance was reasonable and outcome 4 was least performance in both budget utilization and achieving activity performance.

Wise resource utilization is a key indicator of project efficiency. With this respect, key informants considered the project as cost efficient compared with the achieved results. According to them, resources utilized by the project were least compared to achieved outcome results. They noted that the project minimized cost by integrating its

activities with projects of other NGOs, using existing human resources, and through sound community participation. NRM-Projects utilized resources with other project like CARE RESET II, Gayo Pastoralist Development Initiative (GPDI), HEKS/EPER and Zone pastoralist development office while organizing participatory scenario planning for sharing of early warning information, PDCF, machine support to bale haymaking and GO-NGO forums. Such coordination and leveraging of resources ensure the cost efficiency of the project and synergy building.

They acknowledged that the project accomplished its activities with minimum staff meeting the required quality of outputs. The project coordinator also believes that the project was economical without compromising quality of the work.

*“I believe that the project was efficient resource wise. We accomplished all these activities in this vast intervention area with the three cars we have. We use community facilitators hired by CIFA; we did not recruit our own. If an expert exists in one of the consortium members or government sector, we will use that person rather than hiring from external. If you take the money we invested, we integrate activities and share the cost. For example, when we organize community forum, we talk to NGOs who have similar activity and run the session together through cost sharing<sup>20</sup>. This way we save money and time of the community. There is an agreed payment range on rangeland rehabilitation, and we always pay the minimum wage for the workers”.*

A development agent argued that the project did standard quality work with minimal cost by explaining the payment rate paid for rangeland rehabilitation:

*“The payment is not exaggerated, they paid 1500 per hectare. We supervise quality of the work to the highest standard. The pond was also rehabilitated by using cash for work and did not take long”.*

An informant from a Woreda women affairs office further explains why the project was cost-efficient:

*“The project is efficient because it is working with the community-on-community priorities. The issue here is whether you listen to stakeholders and work with them in harmony. The public is engaging with passion whenever asked to do so. For example, if you take rangeland rehabilitation, the project pays 1500 birr per hectare and the community do it with good quality because they are the end users”.*

### 3.5.3. Implementation Efficiency

A project implementation to be efficient when it accomplishes the planned activities timely with expected quality standard without any significant resource wastage. In this regard, the NRM-Borena project has accomplished most of the project activities as per the project allocated budget. As per the key informants and FGD participants, the project interventions implemented within the project period only 4% of the budget of outcome 4 has been utilized. An informant from a government office said:

*“We believe that the project was efficient because they have implemented the entire planned activities despite the observed inflation on raw materials they use for the implementation of activities. The project has wise use of resources; they coordinate activities in each Woreda with one another to maximize efficiency. The only delay we have seen in the project lifetime is the delay we encountered due to rain season during development of Harjarte pond. Otherwise, the project has executed every planned activity as per the*

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<sup>20</sup> The project coordinated and leverage resources among NRM-Borana and other project like CARE RESET II, Gayo Pastoralist Development Initiative (GPDI), HEKS/EPER and Borana zone pastoralist development office while organizing participatory scenario planning for sharing of early warning information, Pastoralist development coordination forum, machine supported bale hay making and GO-NGO forums. Such coordination and leveraging of resources ensure the cost efficiency of the project and synergy building

*plan". He added "The fact that the project used participatory approach, worked on community and government priority issues mean it [the project] has efficient resource utilization that makes it exemplary. It has successfully implemented planned activities through multi-sectoral collaboration in a way that ensures sustainability. Engagement of stakeholders and beneficiaries from start to end of each activity was the other characteristics of the project".*

Regarding resource utilization, most informants agreed that the project has limited budget resources in general. Nevertheless, the project management team adopted wise resource utilization without compromising the quality of the work or without affecting the project target. Community FGD participants and KII findings shows that this approach has been an exemplary lesson to take for scaling up and replication. A KII participant said that:

*"We have learned wise resource utilization from this project. They integrate activities and mobilize resource for the sake of efficiency. They use minimum resource and do a lot. Their approach is participatory; all concerned parties are equally invited to the table and contribute their part".*

Another informant also added:

*"The fact that the project used participatory approach, worked on community and government priority issues, enabled for efficient resource utilization that makes it exemplary. It has successfully implemented the planned activities through multi-sectoral collaboration in a way that ensures sustainability".*

#### 3.5.4. Efficiency in Participation and Partnership

The engagement of stakeholders through direct involvement in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities enhanced the project efficiency. There was joint planning, execution, and monitoring of interventions with government signatories, consortium members, Woreda and kebele level community institutions and other stakeholders. Most activities carried out with the support of government offices, and with engagement of the community. There was a strong linkage between Borena NRM project and government offices; the project interventions made a joint effort and benefited from resource leveraging. Staffs of the government sector offices highly collaborated with the project staff to prioritize and schedule activities, during trainings, organizing them in groups and facilitation of market linkages and office space for cooperatives like farming groups. According to KIIs with government officials and experts, the project staff had active engagements in all relevant technical coordination and working groups at all levels. According to the interviewees, the working relations with all stakeholders were good, as explained by a key informant from a government sector office:

*"The good side of the project was stakeholder involvement. They were closely working with our office and building our capacity at the same time. I like the way they work with our office... We share information and plan a day to meet the cooperatives and visit them. They do not work without our involvement".*

A key informant from a Woreda DRM office explained the efficiency of the project and the quality of the intervention as follows:

*"The project work quality is good and was properly supervised. For example, the constructed stores supervised by the project staff and our professionals (DRM staffs). Even if we have no technical knowledge of construction, they were willing to consider our feedback. There was no delay or extravagancy in the implementation of the activities".*

Key informants mentioned good level of coordination with government sector offices and other stakeholders at all levels including at grass-root community level as reasons behind the timely implementation of the project

activities with the required quality. The project technical support to build the capacity of government staffs and a 'check and balance' system in place among stakeholders, including the community, for monitoring progress and quality, contributed to the overall success for the implementation of the project activities, according to key informants.

### 3.6. Sustainability

This section presents findings on the likelihood of sustainability of the project results and the factors (facilitators and barriers) associated with sustainability from institutional, technical, economical, and environmental dimensions.

Participation of government stakeholders and all other implementing stakeholders in identifying priority problems of the target beneficiaries, planning and implementation of the project activities was very good from the on-set of the project. Project activity prioritization conducted with full participation of all concerned stakeholders and the project supports based on identified needs by the community and government. This has enabled the project activities based on the felt needs of the community and created good opportunity to take over the results by government sector offices.

The findings of KIIs and community FGDs indicated that the project could sustain and there is high likelihood of scale-up and replication. The fact that the project interventions are in line with the government plan and sector offices to own the activities, improved capacity of women group from the project's capacity building support, and sense of ownership among the community are facilitators for sustainability. Interventions well aligned with the existing policies and strategies means their likelihood to sustain them is high. The project interventions aimed at building the capacity of cooperatives. In this aspect, the project financed the construction of stores and rehabilitate different rangelands, supported milk collection centers with active leadership of the cooperatives, and the community contributed to the construction of the centers, fences and toilets that is the basis for ownership and sustainability. In general, sustainability of the project results seems promising considering established capacities within the sector government offices, which will maintain some of NRM project activities. However, the study identified few potential factors that could potentially impede sustainability of the project such as challenges for cooperatives and farming groups to access finance and plot of land for production and processing of agricultural products as mentioned by key informants.

#### 3.6.1. Institutional Factors

The establishment of a multi-sectoral platform at the Zonal and Woreda levels as key players in advocacy, technical support and addressing emerging issues will help to sustain the interventions. The project created sense of ownership among the government sector offices, community groups, and the community at large that will facilitate the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes. A KII participant said that:

*"The project results will sustain, because the project has built sense of ownership and capacity to sustain the results among the community. The activities are priority of the government and the government structure will always support it. Above all, the community has good understanding of importance of the activities".*

Another informant also agreed:

*"The project results will be sustained. Because the logistic support the project gave, the women group is their property and will not take away from them. So, this is an asset on which they can build their future. They have obtained knowledge and skill that can help them sustain their results. The project has built a capacity that can responsibly run the business even in their absence. The project results have reached the intended beneficiaries. These beneficiaries have once tasted the fruit and will be encouraged to sustain it.*

*The project was clear that it will not keep doing these activities and letting the people know they have to own the activities and learn to do it all alone. Because, in truth, they will leave one day, and the community has to do without their support”.*

Some of the key factor for project result sustainability is institutional factors such as market system for milk and honey, land use system in Ethiopia where most of the farming community has limited and very fragmented land, which forbid expanding and even for new business startup. According to KII and FGD participants, in some areas of the project implementation, it is almost impossible to get office space because of the above-mentioned reasons. In addition, there is high bureaucracy to facilitate even for cooperatives and farming groups to get a plot of land for production and processing of agricultural produce.

One of the key institutional factors that possibly hinder the sustainability of Borena NRM project will be the rural financial system. Most of the cooperatives and farming communities are unable to finance their innovative business areas unless linked with rural micro finance institutions. Therefore, there must be strong financial system and strong institutional arrangement to accommodate such a need. Infrastructure is also a key institutional factor that can contribute a lot. Better infrastructure can help to make life easy and improve production and productivity in many ways. According to the information from KIIs and FGDs, pastoral community has limited access to infrastructure. Besides, the FGD participants’ claim that kebeles tend to control communal resources was a concern for sustainability.

### 3.6.2. Technical Factors

The transfer of skills and knowledge in production of honey and marketing of milk through building capacity of women farmers group and other members via training, demonstration, experience sharing, and others helped farmers and their institutions acquire skill and experience, which is pivotal for the sustainability of these interventions. A key informant from HELVETAS described why the activities are likely to sustain as follows:

*“If you take the milk market, the cows and the milk were there, we just link them with the collection center and provide some logistic support for the collection center. This cycle will continue with or without the project as the suppliers and collectors have already met and benefited from their teamwork. If you take women agriculture group, the beneficiaries have bought oxen from their profit because they know we are not going to provide them tractor every year. This means they are taking things to their hands to sustain their business.”*

The NRM Borena project is a good example of adaptation project to combat climate change. However, there were limitations in adopting more climate resilient technology and innovative alternative climate resilient working system to sustain the result of the project. The assessment verified that some of the adaptation activities are not climate smart and climate resilient technology promotion and climate adaptation activities has been found limited. For example, new agricultural practices to counter the increased climate risks. Improving access to energy in underserved areas and using low-emission technologies can address the development needs of vulnerable populations while promoting a transition to green, low-emission and climate resilient development (UNDP).

### 3.6.3. Economic Factors

Economic factor is one of the key success factors in project management. Economic factors such as production, labor, capital, and land are important. The importance of the intervention to the community, the economic benefit they gained, and their knowledge how to sustain it are positive factors for sustainability, according to informants.

MSD has promoted use of the value chain (VC) framework to encourage a market system approach to economic growth with poverty reduction. However, MSD evolved to inclusive market development goes far beyond moving a product or service from inception through to end market consumers. Rather, it aims to catalyze a process that

results in a market system that is able to adapt as needed over time to deliver a sustained flow of benefits to system actors, including the poor and otherwise disadvantaged. The NRM project widely implemented value chain framework that limited the sustainability of MSD activities.

However, most respondents worried that interventions related to income diversification could not sustain if the economic return of income generation activities is negligible in the long run. This indicates the need for strengthening the business management skills of the target community to sustain the income diversification activity.

### 3.6.4. Environmental Factors

Environmental sustainability is a concept central to solving problems such as global warming, lack of water, environmental pollution, and rapid consumption of natural resources. The soil and water conservation works has changed the land as grasses and other plantations recovered dramatically. The community has benefited from the improved rangeland in getting pasture for their livestock and women are benefiting economically by practicing bee keeping. Since the community is enjoying the benefits from the improved natural resources, it is highly likely they will sustain the project interventions related to environmental protection. Development agents said that the community would continue such activities as they witnessed the importance.

The NRM Borena project was ideally a project to contribute improving NRM and help the local community to combat climate change impacts through adaptation activities. Consultants have confident in that climate mitigation activities need to incorporate to make the project more effective in managing climate change problems. However, this evaluation identified that the project had limitations on the mitigation part that is understandable considering the investment from the donor, which focused more on climate adaptation.

## 3.7. Gender, Good Governance, and Conflict Sensitivity

### 3.7.1. Gender

The NRM-Borena project contributed significantly in women participation and empowerment (decision-making, livelihood support and access to resources and investments) and transformation of gender relations at household and community level. Nearly all (97.9%) of the household survey participants said that the participation and involvement of women in both local government and customary institutions has improved in the last five years (pastoralist 98.2%; agro-pastoralist 97.1%). The main reason for the improvement of participation and involvement of women in local governance systems was due to the NRM Borena project support (98%) followed by community awareness to involve women (48%) and Government and NGO support (40%). Similarly, almost all (99.5%) of respondents that said women participation in customary institutions has increased in the last five years mentioned NRM Borena project support for the increase. Other reasons for increased participation in customary institutions include enhanced community awareness (50%) and government and NGO support (41%).

**Table 19: Reasons for women participation improvement in local government and customary institutions compared to last five years at end line**

Characteristics	Pastoralist		Agro-pastoralist		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<b>Reasons for improvement in participation and involvement of women in local government institutions</b>						
NRM Borena project support to increase women participation in the project implementation	273	98.2%	99	98.0%	372	98.2%
Government and NGOs support improved	110	39.6%	40	39.6%	150	39.6%
Training and capacity building support increased for the last five years	58	20.9%	31	30.7%	89	23.5%
Community awareness enhanced to involve women	130	46.8%	52	51.5%	182	48.0%
<b>Reasons for improvement in participation and involvement of women in customary institutions</b>						

NRM Borena project support to increase women participation in the project implementation	277	99.6%	100	99.0%	377	99.5%
Government and NGOs support improved	114	41.0%	40	39.6%	154	40.6%
Training and capacity building support increased for the last five years	48	17.3%	28	27.7%	76	20.1%
Community awareness enhanced to involve women	136	48.9%	55	54.5%	191	50.4%

The project has significant contribution in integrating a cross-thematic gender issues in the project shows the Gender-sensitiveness of targeting and activities. The project has increased access to pasture and water resources from rehabilitated rangelands and water resources as evaluation participants noted several times. Specifically, women benefited from the improved access to pasture and water resources. Because traditionally woman and girls are responsible for water collection, they used to travel long distance for hours in search for water for the livestock and household consumption. Key informants even said that the project has a nickname in the area and sometimes they call it a “*Women’s project*” because the interventions focus on addressing the needs of women. Key informants noted that the project was women centered and has given priority for women in training, adult education, and cooperatives. The interventions contributed to enhance women participation and empowerment in decision-making, improving livelihoods and access to resources and investments and transforming gender relations at household and community level. A key informant from Woreda Women’s Affair office explained the contribution of the project in empowering women as follows:

*“For example, if a husband wants to sell a cow, he can’t [sell] without consulting his wife. Because she has no power over the household resources. This was the norm before the project intervention. Now, women are working in-group and earning additional income, they are being educated through the adult literacy program, and have received different life skill and management trainings from the project”.*

### 3.7.2. Conflict Sensitivity and Good Governance

#### Conflict Sensitivity

SDC defines CSPM (Conflict Sensitive Program Management) as being aware that SDC work, presence and behavior can potentially have positive and negative effects on the environment. The project applied basic CSPM approaches in dealing with ongoing conflicts in the target sites and reinforced the gender orientation in livelihood diversification.<sup>21</sup> The NRM-Borena project essentially implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner. The project approach towards rehabilitation of rangeland and water points based on the do-no-harm principles, which contributed to reduction of conflicts among and within communities. In identifying target project sites, and selection of beneficiaries, the project actively engaged the community and government offices in a transparent way, which avoided conflicts among communities. A key informant from Miyo Woreda witnessed this as follows:

*“Identification of project sites and communities, and selection of beneficiaries were done through participation of the local government structure. Beneficiaries selected through involvement of kebele level structure and the community itself. I have not heard of any complaint on the procedure because priority was given to the poorest”.*

FGD participants strongly argue that implementing partners need to step-up in their conflict resolution activities as the local government did in resolving cross-border conflict between tribes in Ethiopia-Kenya border. Community FGD participant in Kadhim Kebele of Dillo Woreda explained the issue as follows:

*“In Kadhim kebele, we settled on border of Ethio-Kenya at south of the country. We are always affected by tribal conflict with Kenya-based ethnic group called Gabra on resource sharing. [The] Garba in Kenya and Borena in Ethiopia, except for name, we practice similar way of livelihoods that is pastoralism. Both us*

<sup>21</sup> NRM-Borena Annual Report 2019

*search of best pastureland and water sources. It is sharing of this livestock input a factor of clash between these two tribes throughout years. CIFA or another NGO is not working on this peace and security problem as government did. It is good if the project collaborates to resolve the conflict”.*

### **Good Governance**

In order to supplement the existing NRM Borena project, a fourth Governance Component introduced in 2020. The fourth component aims at linking local governments and customary institutions to improve NRM & good governance. The Peace and Development Center (PDC) conducted two key researches conflict mapping and Participatory Action Research (PAR) on the Shared NRM, Governance, and Peace-building in Borena Zone. The resource mapping identified key reasons for conflict in the targeted project sites includes; resource-based competitions (on pasture and water), identity politics, power politics, administrative units, and cattle raid as key issues in the cross-border, cross-boundary, and intragroup conflicts in Borena zone.

It is too early to determine the NRM-Borena project contribution in enhancing local governance effectiveness and efficiency, social accountability, participation, transparency, non-discrimination, and rule of law in relation to the project objectives due to the short duration of the implementation period of this component. One key finding that coincides with the finding of this evaluation is “Contrary to the customary way of getting access to natural resources, the formal institutions organize different groups as cooperatives and encourage them to engage in animal fattening and other income generating activities.”

The PAR noted the challenge of customary and local management as documented in the findings of PDC report;

*“In the last four decades pastureland management and governance in Borana are under continuous change due to expansion of farmlands, frequent drought and eroding pastoral resilience, discouraging policy environment, an increase in the human population, and widespread conflicts. Private enclosures (kaloo) are growing, the development of large kaloos, bush clearing, and haymaking are being promoted by NGOs and government projects, and ranching system has emerged, and new local government arrangements and modern water point developments have shrunk the wet season grazing system”*

The above findings showed key challenges for the NRM-Borena project to address in the next phase programming which aligned with outcome 4 of to exercise accountable and inclusive governance, provide effective services related to NRM, and conflict prevention.

### **3.8. Lessons learned**

- Adaptive and flexible management approach enabling this project implemented in collaboration with various organizations (GO and NGOs organizations) which was excellent approach for leveraging resources and enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The commitment of the project staff and IPs in working closely with government sector offices and the community enhanced local-level capacity and sense of ownership for sustainability. However, there were delays of decision-making to run the project smoothly.
- The tradeoff of the implementation approach through a consortium of three organizations and the local IPs was instrumental for sharing experience among organization for better project effectiveness and quality of outputs on one hand. However, it created challenges in ease of project management, decision making and communication on the other hand. Understand that the management of consortia requires adequate resources and specific staff competencies in supporting organizational processes (Fowler and McMahon 2010).
- The contingency fund was critical in addressing emerging needs due to crises such as recurrent droughts in the targeted project sites. The project flexibly responded to immediate community needs using its contingency fund during emergencies. The project’s adaptive programming was instrumental not only in addressing immediate community needs, but also contributed to the achievement of the overall project goal by preventing potential negative consequences in meeting its targets resulting from recurrent crisis.



- The best lesson others can learn from this project is significant engagement of community in the prioritization of the interventions. The project undertook site selection for pond development and rangeland rehabilitation with the participation of the local community and established/organized women groups based on their interest. By designing the interventions based on the communities' interest, the project enhanced the success of outputs and outcomes and laid a foundation for sustainability.
- The NRM-Borena project management approach in implementing the project interventions in a more focused way by leveraging the available government human resource and resources is a lesson to scale-up in similar intervention for maximizing efficiency. Moreover, the project focus was on impact by targeting selected beneficiaries instead of reach (increasing number of beneficiaries) by dispersing the budget, which bring about to maximize impact.
- Another important lesson was the VSLA approach as a means to create financial access to rural poor as it contributed to the social cohesion and this will serve as a platform to promote community learning and engagement. It was a very effective and easily scalable approach as it empowers women economically and socially. VSLA is beyond an economic model, it is an empowering approach for the rural poor, especially women. The project implemented activities such as VSLAs, cooperative promotion, role modeling that enhanced gender empowerment as women assumed leadership positions in the cooperatives, leading VSLAs and became key players to pastoralist to pastoralist extension of marketing and value chain of honey and milk.
- The multifaceted interventions (literacy, diversify income, access to loans) contributed to enhance women participation and empowerment in decision-making, improving livelihoods and access to resources and investments and transforming gender relations at household and community level.

### 3.9 Challenges/Limitations

The main challenges the project faced includes recurrent drought, conflicts, displacement, desert locust and COVID-19, which limit the movement of staffs and government stakeholders that influenced the operation of the project. The challenges of implementing cross cutting issues (Gender and conflict sensitivity) and good governance in this project include: protracted emergencies due to multiple factors where COVID-19 outbreak, conflict, and locust infestations exacerbate already delicate context.

The governance component of an additional outcome 4 to the NRM-Borena project added in the extension phase (2020-2021) at the later stage, which limited the assessment of the outcome of this component.

The NRM Borena project goal was to improve food and nutrition security and the resilience of communities in the target sites through context-specific and sustainable NRM practices, and enhanced pastoralist income diversification. However, the project document lacks a clear theory of change (pathway) which is critical strategic approach for successful implementation of the project. The annexed conceptual framework for the links between resilience and household food security<sup>22</sup> could benefit to clarify the overall project in the next phase interventions (Annex 3).

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<sup>22</sup> Modified based on Béné et al. (2012)

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

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### 4.1. Conclusions

The vast majority of the final evaluation participants agreed the NRM-Borena project was relevant as the interventions were responsive of the community needs and priorities. KII and FGD participants acknowledged that the project designed and implemented activities based on need identification in consultation with the target communities. Besides, the project flexibly addressed emerging needs during emergencies. Most FGD participant community members prioritized outcome one and two of the project interventions. The reason behind prioritizing these outcomes was that the interventions focus on the immediate needs of access to pasture and water resources to pastoral and agro-pastoral communities and income diversification for women. Here, the relatively less relevant outcome three and four (coordination, knowledge management and governance) does not necessarily mean not important since the community and government informants could easily remember activities related to construction/rehabilitation and establishment of cooperatives/women groups.

The NRM Borena project aligned with the development agenda of GOE (GTP & Green Legacy) and in line with local development plans (Zone and Woreda level Annual plans). Largely, the project design was appropriate to achieve the project intended objectives as the interventions especially related to water point construction, rangeland rehabilitation and management, women economic empowerment are instrumental for improving food security and resilience of (agro-) pastoralist communities.

The project achieved all targets under outcome one and most of the indicators for outcome three. The achievement for outcome two was below the target. The project significantly contributed to women participation and empowerment<sup>23</sup> and transformation of gender relations at household and community level through women focused interventions. Given the importance of governance for better management of communal resources for improved food security in pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, the short implementation period of outcome four was a constraint to bring the intended result. Besides, the indicator for outcome four was not clear to measure the change. At impact level, the project falls short of achieving its target. However, this final evaluation finding indicated that the project made striding progress compared with the results of the MTR. Overall, the effectiveness of the project was satisfactory considering the changes during the project period including the COVID-19 outbreak, conflicts, locust infestation, and recurrent droughts - factors that could potentially drag project implementation and achievement of results.

In general, the project was largely efficient in achieving its planned activities, timeliness of implementation, and engaging stakeholders. Analysis of cost-benefit of the project indicated reasonable financial investment per direct beneficiary. Active engagement and involvement of stakeholders at all levels, integration of the project interventions with the local government plans and similar projects of other NGOs, use of existing government structures and available human resources enhanced the project efficiency. The project applied various monitoring mechanisms such as joint supportive supervision with the implementing partners and key stakeholders, and experience sharing for enhanced effectiveness and efficiency.

Most of the project results had a high likelihood of sustainability due to the groundwork the project put in place for sustaining the achievements beyond the project period. The project has contributed in strengthening local capacity and enhancing ownership by involving government sector offices in the project implementation and several capacity building activities. In addition, the community consultations during activity planning and recognition of the benefits of the interventions among beneficiaries created sense of ownership among the community, which will facilitate for sustainability. The project also empowered women by organizing in women groups and providing capacity building training and supports. However, challenges related to accessing finance

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<sup>23</sup> Decision-making, livelihood support and access to resources and investments

and plot of land for cooperatives and farming groups and mismanagement of kebeles on communal resources are potential barriers for sustainability.

## 4.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are strategic and operational recommendations to consortium members, SDC and government partners to consider in the project exit strategy and next phase project:

- Instead of multi layered coordination mechanisms, Consortium partners could consider remote (virtual) meetings from SC to Woreda level, which will avoid second-hand information and facilitate swift decision-making process. This will enable effective coordination and communication across all levels. Which begs to invest in relationship-building and creative partnerships that generate impact rather than formulaic approaches.
- Consider revision of outcome 3 and 4 (see the table below for suggested review for each output) in the next phase programming to make it more visible and more relevant for the target community by tailoring the activities and indicators in consultation with the partners and targeted communities.
- SDC and implementing partners could articulate an impact level indicator in the next phase project by aligning with SDG and the new 'Ten Years Development Plan' of the Government of Ethiopia with a focus on identifying key challenges and developing a pathway for resilience building to reduce vulnerabilities and recurrent emergencies.
- Better to articulate development-humanitarian nexus<sup>24</sup> programming with evidence-based interventions in the next phase programming considering the project sites are prone to protracted emergencies.
- Adopt the conceptual framework for the links between resilience and household food security to show the clear pathway of resilience with food and nutrition security.
- SDC could develop a next phase programming considering a cross-border programming with common objective setting, including addressing cross-border community conflicts in its governance component. The governance component of both countries' projects could implement joint cross-border conflict prevention interventions.
- Conduct regular remote experience sharing among countries to improve synergy and coordination [An area for enhanced synergies within the food security domain of the Swiss Regional Cooperation Programme for the HoA].
- SDC and partners need to use existing SDC guidance to measure the conflict sensitivity programming and governance as a cross-cutting issues to document the outcome of the project. Also, SDC needs to clarify the indicator to measure governance activities in the next phase programming.
- Introduce governance at the beginning of the next phase programming to properly measure the achievement of this outcome.
- Several studies showed and evaluation participants claimed that COVID-19 impact on poverty and food availability will require continued action to improve food and nutrition security, which the next phase SDC project need to put into consideration.
- The next phase project should include strengthening rural micro finance institutions to enable cooperatives and farming communities finance their innovative business ideas and expand their businesses.

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<sup>24</sup> Nexus refers to "the transition or overlap between the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the provision of long-term development assistance" (Strand 2020: 104).

- The project exit strategy needs to include advocacy and joint planning with Woreda governments to solve challenges in accessing finance and plot of land for cooperatives and farming groups and addressing the management issue of communal resources by kebele administrations.
- The table below summarizes the consultants' suggestion at outcome and output level for revision in the next phase implementation

Code	Project outcomes and outputs	Key findings and recommendation
OC1	Vulnerable Pastoralists have Increased access to Pasture and Water Resources from Rehabilitated and/or Improved Rangelands.	
OP1	Climate Resilient PRM Plans are Developed in 16 Kebeles	Instead of plans change this output into tangible output [on the actual implementation of the plan] or remove this output
OP1.2	Communal Natural Resource-Based Asset Building (CAB)	The output is vague, it is more of plans and difficult to measure the contribution to the overall impact of the project outcome (suggest to remove in the next phase)
OP1.3	Water & WASH	Keep this activity with a focus of water point rehabilitation for both human and livestock consumption
OP1.4	Women represented in customary and local government institutions, and contribute actively.	Include these as a cross cutting gender issue and modify the output with women empowerment output/outcome level indicator. This only shows participation
OC2	Pastoralist Women Incomes are Increase While Women Diversify their Livelihoods	
OP2.1	Training/capacity building support to women groups	Merge all the outputs and coin as a livelihood diversification output with 1-2 specific measurable indicators
OP2.2	Farming by women groups	
OP2.3	Income diversification for women groups	
OP2.4	Promotion of women cooperatives	
OC3	Natural Resources Interventions are Better Coordinated, Harmonized and Knowledge Management is Improved to Properly Document and Scale up Promising Practices	
OP3.1	Exchange between GO and NGO on NRM	The coordination activities are more of number of meetings. Hence, better to focus on integration of NRM with relevant sector offices with clear measurable indicators
OP3.2	Exchange between customary and LG institutions	
OP3.3	DRM planning and plans	
OP3.4	Capacity building and knowledge management	
OC4	Local governments and customary institutions collaborate to exercise accountable and inclusive governance and provide effective services related to natural resource management and conflict prevention.	
OP4.1	Local gov and customary institutions are capacitated to plan, implement and monitor local plans in a complementary and participatory manner NRM related development.	Develop clear indicators based on the PDC research findings
OP4.2	Local government and customary institutions are equipped to better prevent and resolve intra- and inter-community conflicts	

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Profile of project beneficiaries by Woreda, Kebele, gender, and type of household head

**Table 20: Profile of project beneficiaries**

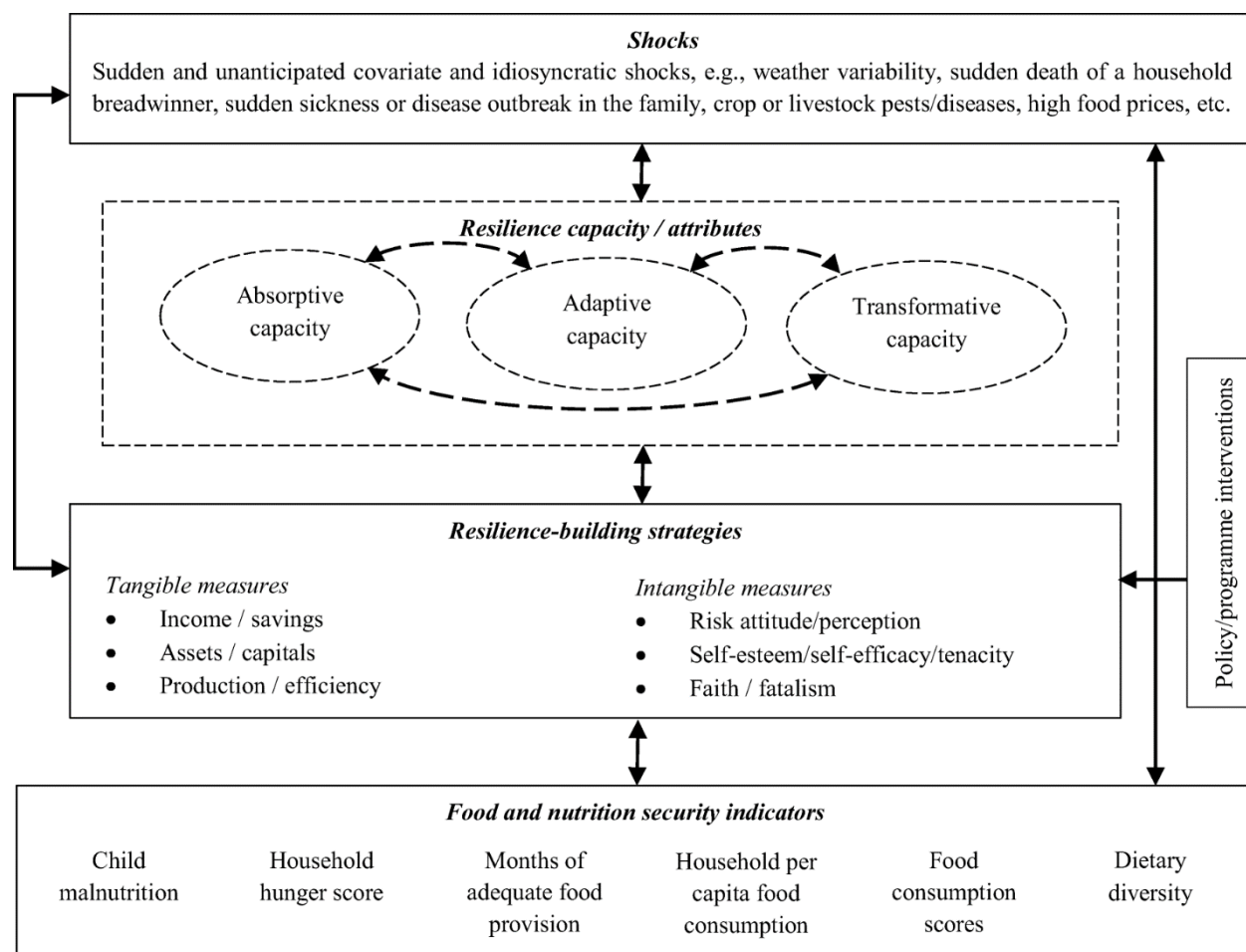
Woreda	Kebele	Households			Population		
		Men headed	Women headed	Total	Men	Women	Total
Dillo	Magole	115	200	315	1,068	1,021	2,089
	Cirate	396	182	578	1,538	1,370	2,908
	Qadhim	351	172	523	1,889	1,808	3,697
	Arbale	311	200	511	2,478	2,369	4,847
Dhas	Gorile	306	550	856	3,157	3,859	7,016
	Dhas	884	451	1335	4,470	4,781	9,251
	Gayo	578	411	989	1,987	2,013	4,000
Dire	H/Samaro	505	485	990	2,396	2,360	4,756
	M/Soda	276	266	542	1,313	1,292	2,605
	Madacho	453	433	886	2,146	2,114	4,260
Wachile	Webi	544	300	844	1,364	1,800	3,164
	Qaqallo	308	252	560	1,848	1,512	3,360
	Hara Jarte	330	146	476	2,270	2,437	4,707
Miyo	Baha	271	241	512	1,349	1,520	2,869
	Hidha Babo	523	291	814	2,415	2,837	5,252
	Melbana	997	392	1389	2,691	3,189	5,880
<b>(5)</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>7,148</b>	<b>4,972</b>	<b>12,120</b>	<b>34,379</b>	<b>36,282</b>	<b>70,661</b>

## Annex 2: Evolution of the NRM-Borena project in the last five years

**Jan 2017-March 2018 emergency relief mode and July 2017-early 2019 (conflict)**



### Annex 3: Conceptual framework for links between resilience and household food security



Source: Modified based on Béné et al. (2012)

### Annex 4: FGDs, Key informants, case studies and observation profile

Table 21: List of key informants, FGD, case studies and observation by Woreda

Woreda/Zone/ IPs	KII, FGD, case study and Observation
Wachille	KII with Water office
	KII with Women, children & youth
	KII with DRM office
	KII with NRM
	KII with Education
	FGD with male beneficiary
	FGD with Women beneficiary
	FGD with Harajarte Women group
	Case study- Income diversification
	Rangeland observation
	Harajarte Kebele Pond observation
	Observation women agriculture
Dillo	KII with Education office
	KII with Woreda Cooperative office
	KII with community elder
	KII with Agriculture and NRM

	FGD with Women beneficiary
	FGD with Qadhim kebele women group
	Qadhim Rangeland Observation
	Case study Income diversification
Miyo	KII with Women, children & youth
	KII with Agriculture and NRM
	KII with Education office
	KII with DRM/DRRO
	KII with DA
	KII with community leader
	FGD with Melban women group
	FGD with male beneficiary
	FGD with Women group
	Nursery site observation in Baha kebele
	Miyo Melbana Women farming group observation
Dhas	KII with DRM office
	KII with Agriculture and NRM
	FGD with Male beneficiary Dhas kebele
	FGD with Male beneficiary Gayo kebele
	FGD with women group
	FGD with female beneficiary
	Dhas Bee farming observation
	Rehabilitation well in Dhas Kebele
Dirre	KII with Agriculture and NRM
	KII with Livestock Development office
	KII with Women, children & youth
	KII with H/samaro kebele DA
	KII with Woreda DRRO
	Case Study on milk value chain
	Case study- fattening
	FGD with Women beneficiary
	FGD with women farming group
Borena/Yablello	Zone Women, children and Youth office
	Zone DRM
	Zone Livestock Proudction
	Zone Cooperative Office
	Zone Finanace and Econmy Office
	Oromia agricultural research institute Yabello pastoral and dryland agriculture research centre
	Zone NRM
KII Consortium members	Helvetas PM
	CIFA PC
	Helevetas CD
	GAA WASH
	GAA PD

**Table 22: Number of FGD participants**

FGD Participants	Dillo	Dhas	Wachile	Dire	Miyo
Women farming group	10	8	23	12	12
Community (kebele level beneficiaries)	8	14	10	8	8
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>



**Table 23: Number of KIIs by Woreda**

KII Conducted with specific sectors	Total	# of KIIs conducted per woreda					
		Borena	Dillo	Dhas	Wachile	Dire	Miyo
Office of Agriculture and NRM	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Livestock Production and Management	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office of Women & Children Affairs	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office of Cooperatives	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Disaster and Risk Management	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
Education Office	5		1	1	1	1	1
Water Development Offices					1		
Finance offices	1	1					
Community Elders			1	1	1	1	1
Consortium staffs (Helvetas, GAA, CIFA)	8	2	1	1	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

## Annex 5: Case Studies Documented

### Case study 1: Income

Background Information	
Woreda	Wachille
Kebele	Hara Jarte
Name and role of informants/ interviewees	Mini shop
Name of person recording case story	Tsegaye Alemu
Date of recording	04/04/2021
When did the change happen?	2010 E.C
Title of story? (Based on the stories)	Trade

### Methodology

This personal testimony presented using participant's own words. Data collected through in-depth interview with the beneficiary, Wachille Woreda, Hara Jarte kebele on April 04/2021. The participant purposively selected. Informed verbal consent obtained from the participant prior to data collection. The interview audiotaped using a digital voice recorder, later transcribed, and translated verbatim from the local language, Afan Oromo to English.

### Case presentation

My name is Darmi Duba and I am 35 years old. I have four children; 2 male 2 female. My husband died years back and all family responsibilities fallen on me since then. Since the death of my husband, I have seen many livelihood challenges. I have been engaged on petty trade at our kebele center. Due to financial scarcity, I can only sale very limited item with limited amount. The income I generated from the petty trade cannot fulfill my family's needs so that enforced to sale livestock usually.

Other NGOs organized as saving and credit cooperative by AFD years before. Since that, we have been contributing some amount of money monthly. As our cooperative has limited financial capacity, half of the member will get credit and the remaining half receive next year after those halves paid back. Therefore, whatever plan you might have, you need to wait for at least one solid year to get credit, which is also very small in amount.

Thanks to NRM-Borana project who come to us and donated Birr 50,000 for cooperative. That money is a lot for our cooperative. We able to gains credit without waiting year for money. In addition to the fund they gave, they have also offerred to us different trainings on different issues like business skills. Due to the fund, our cooperative can give credit to its member without financial scarcity. More importantly, the business skill has made me to look around and sorts ways to improve my livelihood and fully support my children.

I took credit from my cooperative four years back to expand my petty trade. I now sales many items like tap water, soft drinks, biscuits, salt, and sugar. I am able to create more money from my trade and support my children at school. My daughter is attending grade 12 while my son is grade 9. They are smoothly attending their school without any absents and school dropout. I would like to thank this project because I am not selling my livestock for different family need due to the income. I have now at least 20 shoats and 10 cattle and I do not sale them. Not only this, but also I deposit not less than Birr one thousand every two weeks at Dubluk town. I am planning to build private home at better standard in the near future.



## Case study 2: Income diversification

Background Information	
Woreda	Dirre
Kebele	Mandhacho
Name and role of informants/ interviewees	Fattening
Name of person recording case story	Tsegaye Alemu
Date of recording	07/04/2021
When did the change happen?	2011 E.C
Title of story? (Based on the stories)	Trade

### Methodology

This personal testimony presented using participant's own words. Data collected through in-depth interview with the beneficiary, Dirre Woreda, Mandhacho kebele on April 08/2021. The participant purposively selected. Informed verbal consent obtained from the participant prior to data collection. The interview audiotaped using a digital voice recorder, later transcribed, and translated verbatim from the local language, Afan Oromo to English.

### Case presentation

My name is Tume Abduba Gelgelo and I am 55 years old. I have seven children and live with my husband. Before this NRM Borena, I do not know how to earn from existing livestock through fattening. Our livelihood was full of challenges. I sale my livestock during dry seasons when livestock body condition significantly reduced. Since their body condition is very poor, I never sold them at fair prices so that getting smaller money from livestock sale is

normal livelihood. Let alone the knowledge of livestock fattening, I do not sell livestock's during rainy season so that could get better price.



CIFA, which spelt in her mouth as “*shifa*” come and started implementing different activities such as pond rehabilitation, enclosure rehabilitation, literacy and grouping women on chicken farming, and training as well. I took training on fattening and implemented what I learnt.

I have four bulls and keep them in to two locations. I started feeding the two bulls with the grass I cut from communal enclosure. Fetch water on my back and started keeping the bulls alone. They will sleep on dry area. While continued for certain months, I started observing body condition change significantly despite we were in dry season. I sold one of the bull at Birr 45,000 and the other at Birr 50,000. I witnessed that I sold one of my bull with equal age with those, which fattened at Birr 18,000. You can imagine the difference that I learnt that I could bring change on my livestock sale price if I conserve them appropriately. In the previous time, we only count their number than their quality. I change my

mind now due to NRM Borena project.

With the money from my bulls, I built house with three doors at Mendhecho kebele center. I rent two of the class at Birr 400, which is 800 in total and opened a shop in the third room. I am able to create additional permanent income from house rent and from the mini shop. Because of this knowledge, I am still want to continue fattening other bull when the rain comes and get grass. I want to build another house in the near future for getting more money.

My livelihood was very dependent on weather condition, because I can loss all of my livestock during persistent drought time. I think drought cannot damage my livelihood no more as that of previous one. With the income I get, I assisted two of my sons to build their own house as they have their own family, as well as assisting two of my children in education. They are attending their school and I fulfill everything they asked. I am now living a good life and thanks NRM Borena project otherwise CIFA!!

### Case study 3: Milk value chain

Background Information	
Woreda	Dirre
Kebele	Mega town
Name and role of informants/ interviewees	Owner, Marefia milk and milk products business center (□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□□)
Storyteller's Mobile number	0924656905/0961487929
Name of person recording case story	Yohannes Mehretie and Andargachew Eniyew
Date of recording	07/04/2021
When did the change happen?	2012 E.C
Title of story? (Based on the stories)	Milk value chain

## **Methodology**

This personal testimony presented using participant's own words. Data collected through in-depth interview with the beneficiary, Dirre Woreda, Mega town on April 07/2021. The participant purposively selected. Informed verbal consent obtained from the participant prior to data collection. The interview audiotaped using a digital voice recorder, later transcribed, and translated verbatim from the local language, Oromiffa to English.

## **Case presentation**

I used to rent this house, which is located beside the main road, because I was not business oriented. The project opened my eyes and made me view the world differently. My situation was not good before I started this business through the help of the project. For instance, I was not in a good health and could not even seek better health care because of my economic circumstances.

Suppliers do not have a fixed place to sell the milk, every household who have milk waste their time to bring it by a jerry can to the town separately. The women, they came out from their village before sun rises to prevent the curdling process, which devalue the price of the milk. A mother had to leave her young child behind and spent the day in town to sell few liters of milk. The marketing helped on open place without any shade over their head taking the alternate of burning sun and drifting rain.

On the consumers' side, they used to buy milk from market and there was a high probability that the milk is not fresh. Because it exposed to, direct sunlight for extended time and that will affect its quality. In addition, cleanliness of the containers or jerry can used by producers was also questionable.

My children saw a notice posted by the project and told me to compete and I did. I could not believe the news when I learned and selected. The project first gave me a training on customer handling, business expansion and saving. They have arranged field visit [experience sharing] to Negelle Borena and Yabello towns that helped me learn from successful businesses. Logistically the project has given me refrigerator, cream separator, and milk quality tester. The logistic support helped me buy good quality milk, diversify my products and now I sell fresh milk, yogurt, butter, and cheese. I have no fear if milk there is leftovers, because it will be yogurt and if the yogurt not sold; I will sell butter thanks to the cream separator I obtained from the project. I even sell cheese to the poor at reasonable price, and I am happy.

First, I started with three liters of milk per day, and it did not take me longer to get customers as I am located at a convenient place and my milk has good quality. Shortly my daily sell reached 60 liters per day. Sometimes, especially during rainy season, my daily sell surpasses 110 liters as milk production increases. I have no market problem; I am even buying milk from non-suppliers. The supply is far below the demand; there is shortage of milk on the market. Especially this year, the dry season was longer and has affected milk production significantly. My regular suppliers help me get more milk from their neighborhood whenever theirs fell short. We have good relationship and work in harmony. They search for milk producers and link them to me. People trust quality of my milk and use it regularly. Parents buy my milk for their children; I am making it accessible to them while doing business at the same time. Because my suppliers collect the milk using appropriate container and send it to me by motorcycle without a delay and I immediately put it in the refrigerator unless I decide to make yogurt. Therefore, the chance that quality of the milk compromised is almost negligible and my customers are aware of this supply chain. That is why they trust my milk with their children.

The business helped me improve my economic circumstance significantly. I have stable income that I maintained, expanded, and refurbished my residential house, I have renovated this house [where she sells milk] and have saving account. This was a dream a year and half ago. I never thought one could change like this by selling only milk; it is like a miracle for me. My suppliers have also greatly benefited from this supply chain; they do not waste a minute to carry milk to the market and they are getting better price. I always give my suppliers competitive price compared to the local market and will keep doing that. Because they are the base of my whole business.

As my market is booming, I want to expand my business by expanding and renovating the house, buying additional refrigerator, collect milk from all local producers, and totally replace milk trade in the market. This way we all, suppliers, customers, and I will benefit. Suppliers will save their time and make more money; end users will get good quality milk anytime while I keep my business growing. I am certain that I will accomplish what I set my mind to, thanks to the trainings I have received from the project. They have taught me how to run my business independently and sustain my results. Their technical and logistic support have helped me stand firmly. I am grateful for what the project has done for my family.

The only potential threat to growth of my business is energy problem. Severe power interruption during rainy season, when milk production is high, is prohibiting me from buying more milk as I cannot use the refrigerator. Therefore, I will be glad if the project lends me its hand once again and buy me a generator. Because all involved stakeholders will definitely benefit. Milk producer's produces more milk during rainy season but sell it at reduced price in the market. However, if this problem resolved, I will collect more milk at a price better than the local market and provide quality milk to my customers.



## **Management response to the Sustainable Natural Resources Management for Enhanced Pastoralist Food Security Project in the Borena Zone (NRM Borena), Ethiopia**

### **Management Response**

The Management Response (MR) states the position of SDC on the recommendations of the external evaluation of the NRM Borena project. The MR provides a solid basis for strategic decision-making in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, especially the implementing partners and partner institutions in the project area.

### **Appreciation of the evaluation**

The evaluation was conducted by a team of independent experts from the ITUNE Health & Development Consultancy PLC firm in accordance with OECD-DAC standard evaluation criteria. The evaluation process was managed directly by the Swiss Embassy in Addis Ababa in close collaboration with the Embassy in Nairobi, the implementing partners, *i.e.* the consortium members Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation (lead) and Welthungerhilfe, and relevant local partners and stakeholders.

The evaluation employed both quantitative and qualitative study methods, combining data collection approaches from both primary and secondary sources. The evaluation team collected quantitative data from 387 households through a household survey. Qualitative data collection includes 30 key informant interviews with key project stakeholders, 14 focus group discussions with project beneficiary communities, 5 observations, and documentation of 3 case studies. Secondary data was collected through extensive desk reviews. The team also conducted field observations at project sites and collected secondary data through desk review. Out of the planned cross-border field visits, only one experience-sharing visit could be realised due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 situation.

The main objectives of the evaluation were to assess i) relevance, ii) effectiveness, iii) efficiency, and iv) sustainability of the project, and to identify and document lessons learnt, best practices, gaps and recommendations for a way forward, and as such they have been met by the evaluators. The evaluation team submitted a well-structured evaluation report based on extensive field work. The report's analysis and resulting recommendations are considered useful for strengthening the strategic orientation and design of the potential next phase of the NRM-Borena project.

### **Main findings**

The findings of the end of phase project evaluation indicate that the project has achieved most of its objectives under Outcomes 1 *Pastoralists have increased access to pastures and water resources from rehabilitated and/or improved rangelands* and Outcome 2 *Pastoralist women have increased incomes and diversify their livelihoods*, except for an under-performance with regard to women's economic empowerment (WEE). Project performance was below expectations with regard to Outcome 3 *Natural resources management interventions are better coordinated, harmonised, and documented to scale-up promising practices* as compared to the targets set in the project document. Under Outcome 4 *Local government and customary institutions collaborate to exercise accountable and inclusive governance and provide effective services related to NRM and*

*conflict prevention*, which was only added in 2020, mainly action research was conducted in order to identify promising intervention areas. While the report contains a clear and thorough assessment of achievements against indicators and targets, a stronger appreciation, and more in-depth analysis by the evaluation team's for possible reasons for observed successes and/or under-performance would have been welcome. Observations on which activities have a potential for scaling-up or which activities should be phased-out during a possible next phase would have been appreciated.

In the first phase, the NRM-Borena project has succeeded in laying crucial groundwork with regard to networking at local and regional levels for successful and sustainable NRM practices, and for women's inclusion and economic empowerment. These achievements are key for further continuation and consolidation. In addition, the two recommendations regarding the exploration of cross-border programming (recommendation 6) and rural micro-financing (recommendation 11) are considered critical for a possible next phase, in order to consolidate and ensure sustainability of achievements.

#### *Summary of conclusions and the evaluation follow-up*

The majority of the evaluation participants agreed that the NRM-Borena project is relevant, and that the interventions, especially those under Outcome 1 (Increased access to natural resources for pastoralists) and Outcome 2 (increased incomes and diversified livelihoods for pastoralist women), are responsive to the communities' needs and priorities with in-depth consultation of the target communities. Besides, the project flexibly addressed emerging needs during emergencies, using the Contingency Fund on different occasions and in response to different events (drought, desert locusts, and COVID-19). Most community members prioritized interventions under Outcomes 1 and 2, which focus on the immediate needs of access to pasture and water resources for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, and income diversification for women.

The NRM-Borena project is well aligned with the development agenda of the Government of Ethiopia (Growth and Transformation Plan & Green Legacy), and with the local development plans at zone and *woreda* levels). Largely, the project design is appropriate to achieve the set objectives especially with regard to interventions related to water point construction, rangeland rehabilitation and management, women economic empowerment are instrumental for improving food security and resilience of agro-/pastoralist communities.

Overall, the **effectiveness** of the project was satisfactory considering the challenges encountered during the implementation period, *i.e.* the recurrent droughts, locust infestation, conflicts, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The project achieved all targets under Outcome 1 *Pastoralists have increased access to pastures and water resources from rehabilitated and/or improved rangelands*, and most under Outcome 3 *Natural resources management interventions are better coordinated, harmonised, and documented to scale-up promising practices*, while achievements for Outcome 2 *Pastoralist women have increased incomes and diversify their livelihoods* were below targets. The indicator for Outcome 2, however, only captured the ten women cooperatives and did not include 21 women economic diversification groups that were supported throughout the project period. Despite low performance with regard to WEE, women-focused interventions contributed significantly to women's participation and empowerment, and to the transformation of gender relations at household and community levels. Given the importance of governance for better management of communal resources for improved food security in pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, the short implementation period of Outcome 4 on governance



and conflict prevention (only since May 2020) was a constraint to achieving the intended results. At impact level, the project falls short of achieving its target, although the findings indicate that significant progress was made since the results of the Mid-Term Review in 2019, during which a worsening situation was observed when compared to the baseline at the beginning of the project.

In general, the project was found to be **efficient** in achieving its planned activities, with regard to timeliness of implementation, and engaging stakeholders. Analysis of cost-benefit of the project indicated reasonable financial investment per direct beneficiary. Active engagement and involvement of stakeholders at all levels, integration of project interventions with local government plans and similar projects of other NGOs including leveraging resources for similar actions, use of existing government structures and available human resources enhanced project efficiency. The project applied various monitoring mechanisms such as joint supportive supervision with implementing partners and key stakeholders, and experience sharing for enhanced effectiveness and efficiency.

Most of the project results have a high likelihood of **sustainability** due to the groundwork laid for sustaining achievements beyond the project period. NRM-Borena has contributed to strengthening local capacity in sustainable NRM practices and to enhancing ownership by involving government sector offices in project implementation and selected capacity building activities. Community consultations during activity planning, and recognition of the interventions' benefits created a sense of ownership among the communities, which are expected to encourage sustainability. Challenges related to accessing finance and land for cooperatives and farming groups, and mismanagement of *kebeles* on communal resources remain as potential barriers for sustainability which need to be further addressed mainly through outcome 4 (governance and conflict prevention) interventions.

Out of the 12 recommendations, 11 are 'fully agreed' (green), 1 is 'partially agreed' (orange) and none are not agreed ('disagree' - red) – see table below. SDC agrees to seize this opportunity to improve its results by taking specific measures in line with the recommendations.

1. To facilitate swift decision-making process, consider remote (virtual) meetings from SC to <i>woreda</i> level to avoid multi layered coordination mechanisms and second-hand information. This would improve effective coordination and communication across all levels, and enable investment in relationship-building and creative partnerships that generate impact rather than formulaic approaches.	
2. Revise Outcomes 3 and 4 in the next phase programming to make them more visible and more relevant for the target community by tailoring activities and indicators in consultation with the partners and target communities.	
3. Consider articulating an impact level indicator in the next phase by aligning with SDGs and the new 'Ten Years Development Plan' of the Government of Ethiopia with a focus on identifying key challenges and developing a pathway for resilience building to reduce vulnerabilities and recurrent emergencies.	
4. Better articulation of development-humanitarian nexus programming with evidence-based interventions in the next phase to better address challenges of project sites prone to protracted emergencies.	
5. Adopt a conceptual framework for the links between resilience and household food security to show a clear pathway of resilience with food and nutrition security.	



6. Consider a cross-border programming in the next phase with common objective setting, including addressing cross-border community conflicts through the governance component. The governance component of both countries' projects could implement joint cross-border conflict prevention interventions.	
7. Conduct regular remote experience sharing among countries to improve synergy and coordination. [An area for enhanced synergies within the food security domain of the Swiss Regional Cooperation Programme for the HoA]	
8. Use existing SDC guidance to measure conflict sensitivity programming and governance as cross-cutting issues to document the project outcome. Clarification of the indicator to measure governance activities in the next phase.	
9. Introduce governance programming at the beginning of the next phase to properly measure the achievement of this outcome.	
10. Ensure continued focus on food and nutrition security to mitigate COVID-19 impact on poverty and food availability.	
11. Include strengthening of rural micro finance institutions to enable cooperatives and farming communities to finance their innovative business ideas and expand their businesses.	
12. Include advocacy and joint planning with Woreda governments in the project exit strategy to solve challenges in accessing finance and plots of land for cooperatives and farming groups, and to address management issues of communal resources by <i>kebele</i> administrations.	
Fully agree	Partially agree
	Disagree

## Overview of recommendations, management response, and measures

Recommendation 1		
Consider remote (virtual) meetings from SC to <i>woreda</i> level to avoid multi layered coordination mechanisms and second-hand information, and to facilitate swift decision-making process. This would improve effective coordination and communication across all levels, and enable investment in relationship-building and creative partnerships that generate impact rather than formulaic approaches.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
The recommendation in the evaluation report is not entirely conclusive, simultaneously commending the project's inclusive consultation processes at local and regional level, while also pointing at a lack of clear communication with stakeholders at <i>woreda</i> levels. To date, the project has aimed at maintaining two coordination mechanisms, i) a strategic one at national level (with participation of consortium partners, regional government and SDC as donor) and ii) an operational one at zone level (with implementing partners).		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) The project management will further clarify what are strategic and what are operational issues, and how communication on these issues could be better addressed in a next phase to avoid misunderstandings in decision-making regarding the project implementation.	HELVETAS	Phase 2, project design
b) The project will seek to establish a more strategic functioning of a leaner Project Steering Committee.	HELVETAS	Phase 2, project design

Recommendation 2		
Revise Outcomes 3 and 4 in the next phase programming to make them more visible and more relevant for the target community by tailoring activities and indicators in consultation with the partners and target communities.		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
Management response		
Outcome 3 ( <i>NRM interventions are better coordinated, harmonised, and documented to scale-up promising practices</i> ) was the result of a merging of two implementation modalities (NGO and bilateral) at project design stage. The corresponding activities and monitoring indicators were less articulated and not as comprehensively integrated into the overall project design as perhaps would have been required. As a result, outputs under Outcome 3 lacked ownership while Outcome 4 ( <i>Local government and customary institutions collaborate to exercise accountable and inclusive governance and provide effective services related to NRM and conflict prevention</i> ) was added at a later stage to the original project design. The short time period, and the instability in the Zone, hampered progress and effective learning. A participatory design of phase 2, and the knowledge partners have gained during phase 1, should address this concern.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) The relation with (local) government actors will need to be better articulated to ensure targeted activities are relevant and responsive to the needs of the different project stakeholders.	HELVETAS, and SDC	Phase 2, project design
b) The outcomes of phase 2 will need to take into account the priorities of the new Swiss Regional Programme of the Horn of Africa (RPHoA) 2022-25 and the potential strategic orientation of the new Regional Livestock Corridor Programme.	HELVETAS, and SDC	Phase 2, project design

Recommendation 3			
Consider articulating an impact level indicator in the next phase by aligning with SDGs and the new 'Ten Years Development Plan' of the Government of Ethiopia with a focus on identifying key challenges and developing a pathway for resilience building to reduce vulnerabilities and recurrent emergencies.			
Management response			
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree	
A clear alignment to the relevant policy frameworks at impact level will be sought during the design of the next phase.			
a) In a next phase, impact level indicators will be defined aligned to the i) new FDRE Pastoral Development Policy prepared by the Ministry of Peace, ii) the new Swiss Regional Cooperation Programme for the Horn of Africa (RPHoA 22-25), and iii) with relevant SDG targets for food security.		HELVETAS, and SDC	Phase 2, project design

<b>Recommendation 4</b>			
Better articulation of development-humanitarian nexus programming with evidence-based interventions in the next phase to better address the project sites, which are prone to protracted emergencies.			

Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
A more visible and comprehensive programming of the development-humanitarian-peace nexus would allow a more strategic approach to recurrent and protracted emergencies, especially with regard to improved and sustainable (climate smart) NRM practises. It is foreseen to integrate a more nexus focused approach into the design of the next phase, aligned to the project contingency fund, in order to explore more strategic and anticipative responses to the most prominent recurring emergency situations.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) In order to be less reactive, project partners have already started preparing an Emergency Preparedness Planning process, which will be further operationalized in a next phase from a triple nexus perspective (conflict-development-humanitarian).	HELVETAS, and SDC	Phase 2, project design
b) Maintain the project Contingency Fund and agree on replenishment procedures and sources.	SDC	Phase 2, project design

Recommendation 5		
Adopt a conceptual framework for the links between resilience and household food security to show a clear pathway of resilience with food and nutrition security.		
Management response		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
Since its inception in 2016, the project has evolved significantly and the implementation context has encountered significant challenges <i>i.e.</i> desert locust invasion and COVID-19 pandemic. , and adapted over the duration of its first phase during which context changes and challenges were significant. A clear and integrated conceptual framework, taking into account the root causes of recurring challenges and emergencies would be beneficial to develop more strategic and anticipative approaches for a next phase, in particular also with regard to considerations of sustainable communal management of natural resources (rangeland and water) and gender transformative approaches (livelihoods and governance).		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) Articulate the conceptual framework within the objectives and approaches of the FDRE Pastoral Development Policy, and taking into account the findings of the root cause analysis commissioned by SDC.	HELVETAS and SDC	Phase 2, project design
b) Initiate and support an evidence-based learning regarding resilience with a national knowledge centre.	HELVETAS	Phase 2, project design

Recommendation 6		
Consider a cross-border programming in the next phase with common objective setting, including addressing cross-border community conflicts in its governance component. The governance component of both countries' projects could implement joint cross-border conflict prevention interventions.		
Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree

A cross-border programming will be crucial to achieve better alignment with the new Swiss RPHoA 2022-25, which foresees to further explore and expand cross-border collaboration and synergies with other Swiss-funded projects and partners, and to further consolidate the regional Food Security portfolio. Furthermore, the dynamics of transboundary common issues will need to be considered.

Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) Options for cross-border activities, regionally between Oromia and Somali, and nationally between Ethiopia and Kenya, will be explored and linkages with other SDC-supported projects in these locations will be sought (e.g. SDR-GIZ, LSS and other Swiss-funded initiatives).	HELVETAS, SDC	Phase 2, project design
b) Thematic and strategic exchanges will also be sought with programmes and regional institutions supported by the SDC Global Food Security Programme.	HELVETAS, and SDC	Phase 2, project design

### Recommendation 7

Conduct regular remote experience sharing among countries to improve synergy and coordination and explore synergies within the food security domain of the Swiss RPHoA.

#### Management response

Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
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The recent COVID-19 related restrictions and the poor connectivity situation have made experience sharing challenging. A regular and strategic exchange between implementing partners on selected topics of common relevance needs to be explored to strengthen a clear learning and advocacy agenda.

Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) In a next phase, the project will contribute to a clear learning and advocacy agenda by exploring scope and form for strategic exchanges between partners of the Swiss Regional Cooperation Programme for the HoA and other networks active in pastoral development in the HoA.	HELVETAS	Phase 2
b) Develop the learning agenda based on a gender-sensitive systems approach	HELVETAS	Phase 2

### Recommendation 8

Use existing SDC guidance to measure conflict sensitivity programming and governance as cross-cutting issues to document the outcome of the project. Clarification of the indicator to measure governance activities in the next phase.

#### Management response

Fully agree	Partially agree	Disagree
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In order to contribute more clearly to a nexus approach and improve reporting on governance as a mainstreamed theme, closer alignment to SDC's thematic reference indicators would be useful.

Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) Relevant indicators among SDC's reference indicators will be explored, that will allow monitoring and reporting on cross-cutting issues.	HELVETAS, SDC	Phase 2

b) In phase 2, an integrated Theory of Change will be formulated and from that cross-cutting governance will be defined.	HELVETAS,	Project design phase 2
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Recommendation 9		
Introduce governance programming at the beginning of the next phase to properly measure the achievement of this outcome.		
Management response		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
Due to late addition of Outcome 4 only in May 2020 and the subsequent restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, progress with regard to governance and conflict mitigation has not been as planned. Governance will be incorporated as an integral part of the project intervention in the new phase, especially with regard to closer collaboration with customary institutions in relevant project components.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) The project will reinforce the structural engagement with customary authorities and institutions, a group of actors so far only been involved in the project for specific issues. Conflict prevention, both cross-border conflict and conflict between agro-pastoral and pastoral groups will be more specifically addressed.	HELVETAS	Phase 2
b) If possible, the design of the next phase will no longer address governance as a separate distinct outcome, but address issues related to governance across all project interventions and components, specifically in resource management and with regard to livelihood strategies.	HELVETAS	Phase 2

Recommendation 10		
Ensure continued focus on food and nutrition security to mitigate COVID-19 impact on poverty and food availability.		
Management response		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it has become increasingly clear that the prevalence and the impact of COVID-19 will continue to restrict and guide project implementation for some time to come. Increasingly, the security situation is also affecting access to markets and inputs and thus impacting on the overall availability of food.		
Measures	Responsibility	Timing
a) Health emergencies will be integrated into the Emergency Preparedness similarly to the approach for desert locusts.	HELVETAS	Phase 2
b) The project will seek to include lessons from the One-Health project in the design of phase 2.	HELVETAS	Project design phase 2

<b>Recommendation 11</b>		
Include strengthening of rural micro finance institutions to enable cooperatives and farming communities to finance their innovative business ideas and expand their businesses.		
<b>Management response</b>		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
The project has adopted a Market System Development (MSD) approach for strengthening livelihood activities and the pastoral economy. In this, strengthening microfinance options, specifically those suitable for low-income households and women enterprises, to the extent possible, will be considered as a critical component.		
<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>
a) Developments and options in the area of microfinancing solutions will be monitored and explored in order to assess the added-value for the projects MSD interventions.	HELVETAS,	Phase 2
b) Partnerships with existing providers or organisations will be explored.	HELVETAS	Phase 2

<b>Recommendation 12</b>		
The project exit strategy needs to include advocacy and joint planning with <i>woreda</i> governments to solve challenges in accessing finance and plot of land for cooperatives and farming groups and addressing the management issue of communal resources by <i>kebele</i> administrations.		
<b>Management response</b>		
<b>Fully agree</b>	Partially agree	Disagree
Both the MSD approach and a geographic orientation towards rangeland management by customary institutions will require new thinking and new approaches by <i>woreda</i> partners, which constitutes one of the capacity development challenges of a next phase.		
<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>
a) Considered targeted capacity building support for relevant partners at <i>woreda</i> level to strengthen support for and openness to local economic development approaches to solve challenges in accessing finance and involvement of suitable private sector stakeholders.	HELVETAS	Phase 2
b) Include advocacy and joint planning with <i>woreda</i> governments in the project consolidation strategy of phase 2 on land allocation for cooperatives and farming groups, within a system of consolidated land management by accountable customary institutions.	HELVETAS	Phase 2