



**NFG**  
Norwegian  
Forestry Group

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**2023 Progress/Technical Report**  
January-December 2023



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# List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full name</b>
<b>AARI</b>	Amhara Agriculture Research Institute
<b>ADSWE</b>	Amhara Design and Supervision Work Enterprise
<b>ANR</b>	Assisted Natural Regeneration
<b>AWA</b>	Amhara Women Association
<b>BoA</b>	Bureau of Agriculture
<b>BoF</b>	Bureau of Finance
<b>BoL</b>	Bureau of Land
<b>ACSO</b>	Agency for Civil Society Organizations
<b>CAV</b>	Climate Adapted Villages
<b>CBOs</b>	Community-Based Organizations
<b>CSEE</b>	Climate Smart Economic Empowerment
<b>DAs</b>	Development Agents
<b>DF</b>	Development Fund
<b>EFA</b>	Environment and Forest Authority
<b>EFD</b>	Environment and Forest Development
<b>FBCA</b>	Faith Based Climate Action
<b>FLR</b>	Forest Landscape Restoration
<b>FLRP</b>	Forest Landscape Restoration Program
<b>FTC</b>	Farmer Training Centre
<b>GV</b>	Green Village
<b>LUP</b>	Land Use Plan
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Norway)
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NCA</b>	Norwegian Church Aid
<b>NICFI</b>	Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative
<b>Norad</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
<b>OoA</b>	Office of Agriculture
<b>ORDA</b>	Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara
<b>PEMP</b>	Participatory Exclusion Management Plan
<b>PFM</b>	Participatory Forest Management
<b>RFW</b>	Result Framework
<b>RIP</b>	REDD+ Investment Program
<b>RNE</b>	Royal Norwegian Embassy
<b>SC</b>	Steering Committee
<b>SLMP</b>	Sustainable Land Management Program
<b>WATVET</b>	Woreta Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training
<b>WP</b>	Work Packages

# 1. Executive Summary

The FLR Program's work plan for 2023 was aiming at integrating activities across all the work packages (WP), prioritizing field-based interventions and achieving as much as possible targets in order to cover the underperformances encountered in 2022.

Thus, from the beginning of the year, the Program's Management Unit (PMU), jointly with the co-implementing partners assigned to realize different activities, have put all means and efforts to make tangible progress and accomplish most of the targets planned in the Program's Result Framework (RFW). The activities have progressed well during the 1<sup>st</sup> half year (January-June 2023), but unfortunately, the process was hampered by the instability in Amhara region due to the emergency situation stated in July 2023.

The present report describes the main activities achieved and the challenges faced during 2023. The focus is made on two main aspects of the working process, i.e.:

- i. **Organizational, management and administrative issues.** This section describes the program's activities related to the process of organizing and improving the management/working procedures as well as planning and monitoring actions aiming at achieving technical targets and objectives for 2023. Among the subjects developed in this section one may mention the program's annual meeting with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa (RNE); the agreements signed with the local and international partners (Offices of Agriculture, Bureau of Land, Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute, CIFOR/ICRAAF) and the organization of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the Steering Committee (SC).
- ii. **Technical activities.** This section illustrates the activities by work package in correlation with RFW indicators, highlights the achievements and underlines the challenges faced in 2023. The results show that the activities related to the identification, planning and establishment of forest buffer zones and green corridors (WP-1) as well as the production/planting of tree seedlings (WP-4) are well performed. Conversely, the remaining WPs, and particularly the field-based interventions, are highly hampered by the instability in Amhara region.

Thus, the program's work plan for 2024 will take into consideration all the 2023 underperformances by including additional targets across all work packages and boosting all the related field-based activities. This will of course depend on the improvement of the situation in the region.

## 2. Activities During 2023

### 2.1 Management, Administrative and Organizational Issues

This section describes the program's activities related to the process of organizing and improving the management/working procedures as well as planning and monitoring actions aiming at achieving technical targets and objectives for 2023.

#### 2.1.1 Annual Meeting with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa (RNE).

The meeting was held at the Embassy on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 to discuss different subjects related to follow up issues from last Annual Meeting (2022), the 2022 progress and financial reports, the 2023 work plan and budget as well as the revised exit strategy. The main conclusions from the meeting are:

- **Outstanding issues on FLR Program-Phase 1**

Approval of the audit report for 2021 and 2022. This was concretized after the meeting involving NFG, RNE, the embassy's controller and auditors; and also after NFG has submitted the revised audit report and the management letter to RNE.

- **Financial Management (NFG's manual)**

It's stated that the Financial Management manual developed for FLR Program-Phase 2 is fine with the embassy as far as it is in line with the agreement.

- **NFG meeting with NCA and NORAD**

This meeting was organized in response to RNE request. NFG got valuable insight into NCA's financial management, especially towards Ethiopian authorities and auditors. The meeting with NORAD solved some challenges regarding reporting, financial management and clarified expectation to have more detailed budgets.

- **Requirement to keep within the budget's flexibility of 10% per budget line**

Due to the fact that FLR Program budget has many budget lines with low amounts, NFG solicited RNE for approval that all costs deviating with 10% can be illustrated at work package level (not per budget line).

- **Progress Report for 2022**

The progress report was approved. However, RNE raised some remarks related to the improvement of the structure through more focusing on risks and risk assessment issues as political and security situation in Amhara region are impeding the effective implementation of the planned activities. In addition, RNE advised NFG to report more on progress towards outcomes (not only outputs).

- **Financial Report for 2022**

The report is approved. However, RNE raised a concern related to the utilization of the budget (Project management costs versus project activities). In fact, the budget spent on management is high compared to the implemented activities. NFG justified this issue by the intensity and the volume of administrative assignments and formalities related to the launching of the program and also to the preparatory tasks necessary for effective implementation of the activities at field level. Thus, it's agreed that in the upcoming period, the priority should be given to the implementation and the cost efficiency of the program activities. RNE gave also directives to NFG to keep better dialogue with regard to budget over/under spending.

- **Revised Exit strategy**

The exit strategy is based on the structure developed in the FLR Program document. The revision concerned only few elements in the descriptive part of the document. The main perceptible improvements are the integration of a list of exit activities and the linkage of these activities to outputs in the RFW. The subjects on how sustainability can be ensured when designing activities and how project outcomes and outputs can also be guaranteed are also improved. The elaboration of an overview of exit activities is also considered as a constructive element in the revised document.

The improvement of the program's exit strategy is a continuous process (Throughout the program period). Thus, RNE representatives advised NFG to keep improving the substance of the document notably through developing risks-related matters as well as specific plans and timelines for handover.

### **2.1.2 Agreements with Offices of Agriculture (OoA)**

To secure the production of planting materials for the tree-based restoration at green village level for 2024 planting season, the program keeps involving the tree nurseries owned by OoA in 5 Woredas, i.e.: Libokemkem, Farta, Quarit, Mecha and Guangua. To this end, agreements are

signed with the respective OoA to produce 1.4 million tree seedlings and identify appropriate planting sites.

### **2.1.3 Amendment to the agreement with the Bureau of Land (BoL)**

The substance of this agreement is the clarification of the status regarding landholding/user rights and the provision of land ownership certificates for the farmers/communities concerned by the management of enclosure identified in FLR Program intervention areas. In the agreement signed in 2022, it was agreed with BoL to start working with 588 enclosures. Then, the process progressed well, and the program amended the agreement to cover the total of the established enclosures, i.e. 1033.

### **2.1.4 Agreement with CIFOR/ICRAAF**

The negotiations and the consensus with CIFOR/ICRAAF regarding the technical part of the guideline (the structure, the substance and distribution of tasks) were relatively swift. However, the process related to administrative clauses and procedures was time consuming because of the necessity for both parts to clarify and pursue the regulations of the concerned organizations regarding the signing of such agreements (RNE/NORAD, NFG, and CIFOR/ICRAAF). In this regard, NFG has pointed out the obligation of acting in line with Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and RNE Grant Management Regime, specified in grant agreement between RNE and NFG (i.e.: specific conditions, general conditions and procurement provisions). The agreement with CIFOR/ICRAAF was signed in October 2023.

### **2.1.5 Agreement with Amhara Women Association (AWA)**

The partnership with AWA is aiming at promoting the role of rural women in FLR-based activities and other relevant gender-oriented activities in the program intervention areas. Emphasis is given to awareness raising, training and capacity building activities on topics relevant for women households. The topic of “voluntary family planning” is among the priorities. The focus area of AWA is the Green Villages sites established by FLR Program in Farta, Libokemkem and Quarit Woredas.

### **2.1.6 Agreement with Amhara Regional Agricultural Research Institute (ARARI)**

The main task assigned to ARARI is the implementation of demonstration activities using different crop technologies relevant for the farmers and appropriate for the highland context. The total number of demonstration sites to be established is estimated at 63. Each demonstration site is equivalent to 1 farmer's plot. The focus area of the work is the Green Villages sites established by the program.

### **2.1.7 Negotiation with Woreta Agric. Tech. Vocat. Educ. and Training (ATVET)**

The program started negotiation with ATVET to develop training materials and organize courses for Development Agents (DAs) and farmers (men and women). Many relevant topics are selected. Before signing the agreement, it is agreed with ATVET to start developing the training materials of the selected topics and share them with NFG for approval. ATVET has already submitted some drafts that need further improvements. Therefore, NFG was obliged to postpone the signing of the agreement and the organization of the training sessions to 2024.

### **2.1.8 Organization of the FLR Program 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Committee (SC)**

The session was held in Bahir Dar on 23 November 2023. The SC members have discussed the following agenda:

- Nomination of the Chair of the committee and adoption of the SC mandate.
- Progress of the work (Summary Report for 2022-2023).
- Updated status of FLR Program activities (by November 2023) and discussions about the challenges faced because of the unrest in Amhara region.
- Action Plan for 2024: Priorities by work package, (taking into consideration the 2023 underperformances).

First, the SC members have unanimously nominated the Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) as a chair organization and its representative as the SC Chairman. They justified their choice by the fact that, BoA and its branches at local level (OoA) are the main stakeholders through which the program is implementing most of the activities.

Then, the SC members discussed the SC mandate. They underlined the specific tasks of the SC, i.e. the monitoring of the progress of the work and the advisory role aiming at guiding and supporting a sound implementation. There were no comments on the substance of the mandate, and the SC members have unanimously adopted it.





*The first Steering Committee meeting in Bahir Dar, November 2023.*

Regarding the progress of the work in 2022-2023, NFG pointed out to the SC members that the activities have started late and there're no substantial achievements in 2022. This is due to the volume of the work and the time-consuming procedures related to the preparatory, organizational and administrative issues.

As to 2023, NFG presented to the SC members the priorities of the program by work package; mentioned the results and highlighted the gaps/challenges as well as the steps undertaken by the program to overcome the delays in the working process.

The 1<sup>st</sup> SC session is concluded by the presentation of the draft of the 2024 work plan. NFG has briefly explained the priorities by work package and the provisional budget. The SC members recommended to the program to take into consideration the underperformances of 2023 and put all efforts to boost the activities in 2024 and accomplish the program's targets and objectives.

### **2.1.9 Risks and risk assessments**

A state of emergency was declared in Amhara in July 2023. The degree of the problem related to the unrest is well mentioned in the media and by RNE's travel advise for Ethiopia. The unrest is caused by conflicts and violence between loyal militant groups in Amhara and the Federal

Government, and implies danger and instability to civilians being in the conflict areas. Along with a complicated and unpredictable situation, reports are also showing increased criminal activity such as thefts and hostage taking. Besides the fights between groups, it became dangerous to travel freely to the program's intervention areas and to use personal/project vehicles.

During August the state of emergency implied a curfew making all NFGs employees to stay at home, without project activities. After 2-3 months the situation normalized gradually, especially in Bahir Dar. The curfew was lifted in October, and NFG's employees came back to office. The project agreed to the projects manager's wish to make short visits to NFG head office in Bahir Dar to do essential work for the project. However, the project's risk assessment has been to use public transport for project staff to project sites out of Bahir Dar and only do necessary tasks notably those related to tree seedlings production, such as distribution of nursery inputs and payment of salaries for nursery workers. In addition some of the program co-implementing partners such as ORDA and AWA kept doing some basic activities related to capacity building and training of the farmers notably in South Gondar areas.

The program management unit (PMU) in Bahir Dar is closely following the situation through keeping permanent contact with the local command post (Bahir Dar) and also with the focal persons from the respective offices of agriculture and acting according to the advises given. Whenever there're possibilities to travel to the program areas, the PMU takes always the initiative to use public transport to reach the program intervention areas.

## **2.2 Technical Activities by work package, correlated to RFW indicators**

This section illustrates the activities by work package in correlation with RFW indicators, and highlights the achievements and underlines the challenges faced in 2023.

The program activities progressed well during the 1<sup>st</sup> half year (January-June 2023). The identification and mapping of buffer zones and corridors (WP-1), the production and the planting of tree seedlings (WP-4) are among the key achievements. Unluckily, the working process was interrupted by the emergency situation declared in Amhara in July 2023. Consequently, most of the field-based interventions have been postponed. By opportunity, ORDA as the program's main co-implementing partner in South Gondar areas, has, to some extent, minimized the scale of underperformances through achieving some of the planned targets related to Participatory Exlosures Management Plans (WP-2).

**WP-1: Identification, planning and estab. of forest buffer zones and green corridors**

RFW Indicators Related to WP-1	2023	
	Planned	Achieved
Number of hectares newly categorized as forest buffer zones and green corridors in new LUPs, by-laws and PEMPs	50	1000

The focus area for this activity is Untsi-Degera and Ambki Kebeles (Guangua Woreda). The activity is assigned to Amhara Design and Supervision Works Enterprise (ADSWE) to accomplish the following main tasks:

- Identification of forest buffer zones and corridors in the above mentioned Woredas.
- Mapping of the identified forest buffer zones and corridors.
- Development of activity plans for the identified forest buffer zones and corridors, i.e. propose specific/appropriate interventions that can be implemented within the identified zones.
- The working process was accompanied by informative and instructive meetings to update the local OoA and communities about the aim and the substance of the activity. As a result, ADSWE jointly with the local OoA have identified and mapped about 1000 hectares of forest buffer zones and corridors. This over performance (compared to the plan) can be explained by the appropriate context (availability of forest covered areas) and the interest expressed by the local stakeholders for this activity.



*The forest landscape in Guangua Woreda with relative high forest cover*

Regarding the activities planned to protect the forest areas from negative impacts and help maintaining and recovering a certain degree of cohesion in the fragmented forest landscapes, the proposals coming from the local stakeholders turn around 3 main actions, i.e.:

- Socioeconomic support.
- Tree-based interventions (Including enrichment plantations, woodlots and agro forestry).
- Water and Soil Conservation activities (WSC).

These proposals must be further discussed and adjusted in order to be in line with the objectives and allocated resources for this work package. In 2023, the program has planned to start implementing some interventions, but the process was impeded by the unrest in Amhara region and postponed to 2024.

**WP-2: Participatory Exclosure Management in priorly established Exclosure areas**

RFW Indicators related to WP-2	2023	
	Planned	Achieved
Number of people participating in Participatory Exclosure Management Planning (PEMP)	10 000	<b>8 850</b>
Number of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) legally organized	150	<b>36</b>
No. hectares verified as jointly managed according to exclosure management plan	30 000	<b>4 012</b>
No. of PEMP developed	59	<b>59</b>

The PEMP development process is composed from 5 complementary steps, i.e.:

- **Organize working session on PEMP**  
 Invite representatives from communities and State/Government structures at Kebele and Woreda level to participate in working sessions about PEMP. The sessions allow discussing and explaining the objectives and key principles of PEMP, key steps, roles and responsibilities.

- **Conduct socioeconomic survey and biophysical resource assessment**

A socioeconomic survey and biophysical resource assessment has been conducted together with local stakeholders. The results of the survey are analyzed and presented to the stakeholders involved in the process of PEMP development.

- **Preparation of PEMP document**

At this stage, the planning team together with the local stakeholders has to develop the main management objectives in the targeted enclosure, negotiate and agree on roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder, and finally specify priority management actions to be undertaken (What to do, when, where and by whom).

- **Establish Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)**

To promote active participation/ engagement in the planning process and also for sustainable management purposes, the local communities should be formally organized as Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).



*Meetings in the community*



*A CBO Certificate*

- **Formalization/Endorsement of the Plan**

To offer the PEMP a formal status and give the responsibility to the concerned stakeholders in terms of implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the activities, the developed PEMP document must be presented, discussed and submitted to the concerned stakeholders at community level (CBOs) and Woreda/Kebele level for endorsement.

The program, in cooperation with ORDA, has started developing PEMPs in 2023. The implementation process started well during the period from January to June 2023. Then, the process was hampered by the unrest in Amhara. The approach agreed on with the local stakeholders (OoA) is to start working with more accessible enclosures, where the human

pressure is evident. The aim is to pilot the PEMP development procedures, identify the challenges and the necessary adjustments/improvements, but also involve more communities and stakeholders in the implementation process.

As a result, the program managed to develop 59 PEMP involving more than 8000 farmers in the working process. At this stage, there was less focus on the size of areas to be covered by the planning (only 4012 Hectares covered in 2023). After getting enough field experience, the program will give the priority for the biggest exclosures (to cover more hectares).

Regarding the Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), only 36 CBOs are established.

This underperformance (compared with the planned target) can be explained by the fact that the activity was time consuming and also some CBOs are organized to be responsible for the management of several exclosures at the same time (Cluster approach).

The program has also planned to launch the process of PEMP development in Adama Cluster. PMU staff has organized awareness rising sessions with the local stakeholders in Quarit, Yelmana Densa, and Mecha Woredas to prepare the launching of PEMP activities. The sites (Exclosures) and the members of the planning team are selected. Unluckily, the process was stopped in August because of the instability in the region. The program will boost this activity when the situation in the region will improve.



*Biophysical resource assessment in South Gondar.*

**WP-3: Secure customary user rights.**

RfW Indicators related to WP-2	2023	
	Planned	Achieved
Number of hectares of enclosure areas with issued Land holding certificates	30 000	<b>30 000</b>

The work is assigned to the Bureau of Land (BoL) and the main tasks are the clarification of the status regarding landholding/user rights and the provision of land ownership certificates for the farmers/communities concerned by the management of enclosure identified in the program intervention areas.

In the agreement signed in 2022, it was agreed with BoL to start working with 588 enclosures. The process well progressed and the program decided to amend the agreement with BoL to cover the total of the identified enclosures, i.e. 1033. The preliminary assessment shows that land holding certificates have already been issued in all the Woredas, except in Ebinat where the work still uncompleted in some areas. For 2023 the total area with issued land holding certificates is estimated at 30000 hectares. This process will continue and BoL will develop and submit to NFG an all-inclusive report about the overall findings in 2024.

**WP- 4: Landscape restoration at village level**

RfW Indicators related to WP-4	2023	
	Planned	Achieved
- Number of seedlings produced and planted (million)	1	<b>1.3</b>
- Number of hectares of established woodlots	200	<b>270</b>
- Number of new Green Villages established	3	<b>2</b>
- Number of new economic activities established in Green Villages	30	<b>40</b>
- Number of demo-sites within Green Villages	30	<b>29</b>
- Number of Farmers Training Centers strengthened	3	<b>2</b>

- **Production and planting of tree seedlings**

In partnership with the Offices of Agriculture in 6 Woredas located in South Gondar and Adama Cluster, the program tree seedlings production in 2023 (transported to the planting sites) is estimated at 1.3 million (The loss during transportation and planting process is estimated at not less than 20%).

The following table illustrates the tree species and the quantity produced by tree nursery.

Woreda/nursery	Species	Quantity	Remark
<b>1. Quarit/Fengeta</b>	Acacia decurrens	120 000	Exotic
	Hagenia abyssinica	80 000	Indigenous
	Yushania alpine/Highland bamboo	75 200	Indigenous
	Pinuspatula	86 057	Exotic
<b>Total</b>		<b>361 257</b>	
<b>2. Libokemkem/Birkute</b>	Entada abyssinica	35 200	Indigenous
	Accacia abysinica	50 400	Indigenous
	Accasia senegal	9 643	Exotic
	Grevillea robusta	22 600	Exotic
	Cordiaafricana	25 000	Indigenous
<b>Total</b>		<b>142 843</b>	
<b>3. Farta/Adiko</b>	Grevillea robusta	63 768	Exotic
	Acacia decurrens	46 337	Exotic
	Cordiaafricana	93 293	Indigenous
<b>Total</b>		<b>203 337</b>	
<b>4. Ebinat</b>	Grevillea robusta	75 200	Exotic
	Acacia decurrens	75 750	Exotic
	Cordia africana	252 709	Indigenous
<b>Total</b>		<b>403 659</b>	
<b>5. S.Mecha</b>	Accasia senegal	77 043	Exotic
	Grevillea robusta	27 725	Exotic
<b>Total</b>		<b>104 768</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1 326 789</b>	

Table 1 Tree seedlings produced in 2023



Trees planted by the community



Most of the tree seedlings are planted as private woodlots and agroforestry in the established Green Villages. The total planted area is 270 ha.

The following table illustrates the number of seedlings produced by Woreda, the type of the plantations and the number of hectares (ha) planted in 2023.

Woreda	Plantation Type								Total	
	Communal		Private		Agroforestry		Institutions		No. Seedlings	Area (ha)
	No. Seedlings	Area	No. Seedlings	Area	No. Seedlings	Area	No. Seedlings	Area		
<b>Quarit</b>	33285	42.6	14850	3.5	9932	1.26	3600	0.36	<b>361 257</b>	<b>47.70</b>
<b>Libo</b>	79483	18	2500	0.56	33588	16.8	27322	4.29	<b>142 843</b>	<b>39.52</b>
<b>Farta</b>	99778	17.5	45232	5.2	45738	14.52	12589	4.2	<b>203 337</b>	<b>41.42</b>
<b>Ebinat</b>	285580	90.6	23579	2.33	87600	17.5	6900	2.76	<b>403 659</b>	<b>113.25</b>
<b>S.Mecha</b>	83322	8.45	17066	1.7	10537	0.77	-	-	<b>110 925</b>	<b>10.92</b>
<b>G.Begemder</b>	83500	12.7	-	-	19288	3.9	2000	0.8	<b>104 768</b>	<b>17.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>964 538</b>	<b>189.85</b>	<b>103 227</b>	<b>13.29</b>	<b>206 613</b>	<b>54.75</b>	<b>52 411</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>1 326 789</b>	<b>270</b>

Tabell 1 Types of plantations and number of hectares planted.

To secure the planting materials for 2024 planting season, the program has signed agreements with OoA in 5 Woredas (Ebinat, Quarit, Libokemkem, Farta and Mecha) to produce 1 million tree seedlings.

- **Green Village activity**

In 2023, two new Green Village sites are established, one in Boro Kebele (Farta Woreda) and one Shamo Kebele (Libokemkem Woreda). Here, two Farmer Training Centers (FTCs) are maintained and equipped with basic furniture (chairs, benches and tables). Also, in cooperation with ARARI, 29 demonstration sites based on smart agriculture practices are established for the benefit of the local farmers and communities, i.e.:

- Libokemkem: 11 demo sites (Teff).
- Yilmana Densa: 2 demo sites (Fababean).
- Sekela, Quarit and Farta: 9 demosites (Potato).
- Sekela: 3 demo sites (Barley).
- Mechana (Ebinat) and Shamo (Libokemkem): 4 green houses for the production of different varieties of vegetables.

In the same course of action, 40 new economic activities are established. It includes the promotion and support of beekeeping activities for the benefit of 20 households and also the provision and the plantation of about 11000 demand-driven fruit tree seedlings for the benefit of 20 farmers.



*Vegetables planted in green houses*

### WP-5: Training and capacity building

RFW Indicators related to WP-5	2023	
	Planned	Achieved
- Number of courses conducted for farmers and Development Agents	75	<b>36</b>
- Gender balance expressed as percentage of women participation	20	<b>25</b>
- Community meetings on family planning	10	<b>04</b>
- Number of pupils trained	7500	<b>4860</b>

The program has assigned different partners (AWA, ATVET and ORDA) to develop training materials and conduct relevant trainings courses for the benefit of Development Agents and farmers (Men and women).

- **Amhara Woman Association (AWA)**

The work assigned to this partner is the development of training materials and organization of courses and awareness raising sessions on gender issues, including “voluntary family planning” for the benefit of women households.



*Members of AWA discussing content of awareness raising meetings*

In 2023 the focus was on the following intervention areas:

- Shelo, Diyo and Gori villages located in Farta Woreda.
- Quala and Waibeying villages in Libokemkem Woreda.
- Chemen village in Quarit Woreda.
- To this end, AWA has developed 4 training materials related to FLR and gender-based topics, relevant for the women households, i.e.:
  - Family Planning.
  - Alternative energy and energy saving in rural areas.
  - Role of women in environmental protection.
  - Benefits of FLR for women in degraded areas.

It was also planned to conduct at least 25 short training courses for women households using the above developed training materials and also organize at least 10 awareness raising sessions on voluntary family planning. Unfortunately, because of the instability in

the region, AWA has only managed to organize 5 community meetings on family planning involving 75 participants. The remaining planned activities are postponed to 2024.

- **ORDA**

Totally 36 courses involving 360 trainees (Development Agents and farmers) are organized on topics related to beekeeping, horticulture in highland context and other FLR related subjects. As a capacity building element, ORDA has also provided 8 households/villages with Solar Home Systems (SHS) for basic energy purposes. The percentage of gender participation (women) is estimated at 25%.



*A course in beekeeping held.*

- **ATVET**

The process of negotiations with this partner has only resulted in developing drafts of training materials for different topics, such as forage production, multipurpose trees, fruit trees and vegetables adapted to the highland context, animal health, forest restoration and drip irrigation. The program brought some adjustments/improvements to the developed materials. Because of the situation in Amhara, the agreement with ATVET is not signed in 2023. The organization of training courses for the farmers and Development Agents is postponed to 2024.

Regarding the environmental education for the school children, the PMU managed to organize several sessions involving more than 4000 pupils in schools located in Libokemkem and Farta Woredas. The program planned to extend the activity to other schools in other Woredas, but this was not possible because the unrest in Amhara region.



*Environmental education for school children.*

## WP-6: Communication and sharing of information

RFW Indicators related to WP-6	2023	
	Planned	Achieved
A guideline for sustainable restoration efforts in the highlands of Amhara is developed	1	0
Number of Green Tables meetings	3	3
No. of information sharing meetings with EFD and other government institutions to promote FLR	2	1

- **Development of an FLR Guideline**

Working sessions has been organized with CIFOR/ICRAF to discuss and agree on the steps, the structure and the substance of the FLR guideline to be developed jointly. These sessions allowed distributing the tasks, the topics to be developed and the related timeframe. Accordingly, NFG will work mainly on developing the cases of FLR

practices which have been/are successfully implemented in the region. The program has already developed a structure with the necessary information and details to take into consideration while elaborating such practices, and one Green Table meeting has touched this topic (see below). This process will pass through organizing a sequence of technical working sessions, involving the representatives of all the concerned stakeholders (implementers and beneficiaries). Unfortunately; this was not concretized in 2023 because of the instability in Amhara region.

The target on developing a guideline was initially planned for the second year, with a deadline up to April 2023 (former Financial Year of the program). Due to challenges with signing an agreement with CIFOR (ref. chapter 2.1.4) and the challenges of inviting to technical working sessions, NFG are in discussion with RNE to change the target deadline to 2024.

- **Green tables**

Despite the limitations faced because of the unstable situation in Amhara, the program managed to keep a minimum of cooperation and involvement of the local partners and stakeholders through communication and knowledge sharing by organizing "Green Tables" aiming at promoting relevant FLR related topics at local level.



*A "Green Table" meeting is conducted.*

Two Green Tables are organized in Bahir Dar to discuss and share NFG FLR Program PEMP approach and the ways to improve the development procedures (Technical issues, the promotion of more management options appropriate for exclosures in the highland context, cost efficiency, etc). The first session involved the local partners and stakeholders fully engaged in the working process (BoA, OoA, ORDA, BoL), and the

second one with organizations acting in similar field of activities in Amhara region (REDD+, Kfw, GIZ).

In addition, an Excursion and knowledge exchange with Development Fund (DF) is also recorded as a "Green Table". To keep promoting the tradition of experience/information sharing among the different NICFI/RNE funded programs in Ethiopia, NFG-FLR Program has solicited DF to organize a field visit to one of the sites where DF is implementing Climate Adapted Villages (CAV). For NFG, this is a valuable opportunity to learn and improve the Green Village approach (GV) implemented by the program in the highlands of Amhara. Accordingly, a field visit was organized in November 16, 2023 to one of DF CAV sites located in Kara Adi Village (Sadani Segeta Kebele, Aleltu Woreda). The visit included briefings and show cases presentation on climate adaptation in rural development approaches (CARD).

An on-site presentation was organized by the local staff and community leaders to introduce the CAV model, its process and actions. Here, the NFG representatives have pointed out the parallel between CAV and GV approaches, notably those related to the guiding principles and objectives. The visit was also an opportunity for field observations and meeting with local community groups (women and men) who benefited of small loans for livelihood purposes. NFG representatives expressed their interest in this kind of socio-economic incentives that could be also integrated in the FLR Program GV approach. The Field visit was concluded by a debriefing meeting where the participants agreed to keep organizing such working sessions, and recommended to have the next experience sharing meeting in one of the GV sites established in the framework of NFG-FLR Program, when the situation in Amhara will be stabilized.



*DF's CAV model discussed in Aleltu.*



*Example of microfinance in a DF Cav village.*

- **Information sharing with EFD and other government institutions.**

The aim is to inform and promote the involvement of these key stakeholders on the ongoing program, the possible exit and also the prospective activities. One introductory meeting was held with EFD representatives in 2023. The EFDs carbon credit Offset Program and the possibilities to integrate FLR Program data related to the established exclosures areas as well as the development of a concept note for FLR Program third phase was among the discussions. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the methodology of monitoring the improvement of the vegetation cover in exclosure areas. NFG has informed EFD that NIBIO is assigned to develop a methodology and present it for the local partners for approval and implementation in the program intervention areas.

## 2.3 Achieved activities correlated to the Result Framework (RFW)

Results		Indicators	Base-lines	Targets 2023	Results achieved in 2023	Remarks
Outcome 1	Degraded forest landscapes are restored with local participation and involvement	Number of people participating in Participatory Exclosure Management Planning (PEMP)	0	10 000	8 850	The process was hampered by the unrest in Amhara. Time consuming activity and use of Cluster Approach (1 CBO for many exclosures)
		Number of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) legally organized	0	150	36	



Results	Indicators	Base-lines	Targets 2023	Results achieved in 2023	Remarks	
<b>Outputs</b>						
1.1	<b>Forest buffer zones and green corridors based on LUPs developed in phase 1</b>	Number of hectares newly categorized as forest buffer zones and green corridors in new LUPs, by-laws and PEMPs.	0	50	1 000	Over performance explained by appropriate context and interest of the local stakeholders
1.2	<b>At least 30% of enclosure areas established in phase I (1000 enclosure areas) are managed jointly</b>	Number of hectares verified as jointly managed according to Enclosure Management Plans	0	30 000	<b>4012</b>	At this stage the focus was more on piloting PEMP development procedures in small areas (less hectares) and involvement of the communities
		Number of Participatory Enclosure Management plans verifying enclosures jointly managed	0	59	<b>59</b>	
1.3	<b>Land holding certificates issued on at least 50% of enclosure areas established in phase I</b>	Number of hectares of enclosure areas with issued Landholding certificates	0	30 000	<b>30 000</b>	
<b>Outcome 2</b>	<b>The population of green villages experience improved socioeconomic and environmental benefits</b>	Number of Green Villages experience improved socioeconomic and environmental benefits	0	0	0	No targets for 2023
		Number of households getting socioeconomic benefits	0	0	0	No targets for 2023
		Green village concept adapted and adopted by the regional government as a component of FLR approach	0	0	0	No targets for 2023
<b>Outputs</b>						
2.1	<b>Seedlings planted by local farmers</b>	Number of seedlings (in millions)	0	1	<b>1.3</b>	
2.2	<b>Woodlots for firewood established</b>	Number of hectares of established woodlots	0	200	<b>270</b>	
2.3	<b>New Green Villages are established</b>	Number of new Green Villages established	0	3	<b>2</b>	The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara.
2.4	<b>New economic activities (NEA) are established and local value chains strengthened in Green Villages.</b>	Number of new economic activities established in Green Villages	0	30	<b>40</b>	
		New economic activities with woman in head positions	0	10	<b>15</b>	

Results		Indicators	Base-lines	Targets 2023	Results achieved in 2023	Remark
2.5	New demo-sites (DS) for climate smart agriculture, forestry and renewable-energy, developed in Green Villages	Number of demo-sites within Green Villages	0	30	29	The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara.
2.6	Farmers Training Centers are strengthened in 17 Green Villages	Number of Farmers Training Centers strengthened	8	3	2	The FTCs of the 2 new established Green Villages are maintained
Outcome 3	The capacity of stakeholders and farmers to sustain restoration efforts are strengthened	Number of stakeholders strengthened	0	15	15	
		Courses developed in FLR Program Phase I and II are included in the training program offered by the Woreda OoA.	0	3	0	The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara.
<b>Outputs</b>						
3.1	Courses conducted for farmers and development agents, with participation emphasizing on gender balance	Number of courses	0	75	36	The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara
		Gender balance expressed as percentage of woman participation	0	20	25	
3.2	Community meetings conducted on family planning, with participation emphasizing on gender balance	Number of meetings	0	10	5	The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara
		Gender balance expressed as percentage of woman participation	0	80	85	
3.3	Pupils trained in environmental education	Number of pupils trained	0	7 500	4 860	The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara
3.4	Green Table meetings on various thematic conducted to improve the coordination among organizations and authorities involved in landscape restoration in Amhara	Number of Green Table meetings	0	3	2	2 working sessions on PEMP, one organized with the local stakeholders (BoA, OoA, BoL, ORDA) and one with organizations acting in similar field of activities in Amhara

Results		Indicators	Base-lines	Targets 2023	Results achieved in 2023	Remark
3.5	<b>A web-based information HUB on forest landscape restoration in Ethiopia is prepared for transfer to Ethiopian Forest Development</b>	Relevant documents is gathered and ready for transfer from a shared cloud-based platform	0	0	0	No targets for 2023
3.6	<b>The program archive, including datasets from activities in the intervention area, is prepared for transfer to Ethiopian Forest Development.</b>	Data structured and available on a shared cloud-based platform	0	0	0	No targets for 2023
3.7	<b>Information sharing with Ethiopian Forest Development and other government institutions to promote and sustain restoration efforts in Ethiopia</b>	Number of meetings	0	2	1	One meeting with EFD to discuss cooperation in 2024 on exit relevant issues and on methodology on the changes in vegetation cover in the FLR program established exclosures.
3.8	<b>A Guideline for sustainable restoration efforts in the highlands of Amhara is developed</b>	A guideline for sustainable restoration efforts in the highlands of Amhara is developed	0	1	0	On-going development process in partnership with CIFOR/ICRAAF. The activity was hampered by the unrest in Amhara.
3.9	<b>Guidelines/Manual on FLR-model including Green villages is developed</b>	A guideline/manual is developed	0	1	0	

### 3. Conclusion

The program put all means and efforts to achieve the planned targets for 2023. All organizational, administrative and technical aspects necessary for an efficient working process have been taken into consideration from the beginning of the year. The priority was given to field-based interventions across all the work packages.

From January to June 2023 the implementation process went well and the program managed to achieve tangible results notably on the identification/establishment of forest buffer zones and green corridors (WP-1) and also the planting of tree seedlings (WP-4). Unfortunately, the emergency situation declared in Amhara region in July 2023 has acutely hampered the implementation process. Most of the WPs activities, particularly the field-based interventions, are reduced to the minimum or completely postponed.

Despite this limitation, the program management unit in Bahir Dar (PMU) together with the main co-implementing partners (ORDA, OoA) continued implementing the least possible of activities, notably in South Gondar zone (Development of management plans and certification of exclosures). Furthermore, the PMU kept organizing working sessions and experience sharing aiming at promoting relevant FLR related topics.

The program's work plan for 2024 will take into consideration all the 2023 underperformances, by including additional targets and boosting field-based activities. This will of course depend on the improvement of the situation in the Amhara region. However, it's important to mention that, whatever will be the evolution of the situation and how intense and efficient the program will act in the upcoming period, it will be difficult to achieve all the planned targets and objectives within the project's planned duration (April 2025). Thus, it would be very constructive to plan for a no extension period.