



## Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(due 31 October 2014)

<b>Project Ref No</b>	20-019
<b>Project Title</b>	Wof Washa Forest: Sustainable Management for Resilient Livelihoods
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Ethiopia
<b>Lead Organisation</b>	TREE AID
<b>Collaborator(s)</b>	SUNARMA, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
<b>Project Leader</b>	Tony Hill / Cheru Tessema
<b>Report date and number (eg HYR3)</b>	October 2014, HYR2
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://www.treeaid.org.uk/our-work/where-we-work/ethiopia/">http://www.treeaid.org.uk/our-work/where-we-work/ethiopia/</a> <a href="http://www.sunarma.org/Wof-Washa-Forest-Project/Projects/">http://www.sunarma.org/Wof-Washa-Forest-Project/Projects/</a>

### 1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

The near term impact of the project is already being observed by TREE AID's implementing partner, SUNARMA, which reports that: The Forest User Groups (FUGs) are strengthened and the formation of 15 cooperatives is underway, notably including a women's cooperative around fuel efficient stove production which received its legal licence. The community members report feeling responsibility and ownership of the development activities in the project.

In general, women are more organised now in cooperatives and are engaged in outside activities. They are generating additional income, are economically empowered, their leadership and managerial skills have improved and they have started to speak in public. Overall the management of Wof Washa forest has improved and the communities are becoming guardians of the forest, together with the local government.

#### OUTPUT 1: Institutional Development

##### PROGRESS:

- By the end of this reporting period a total of 15 cooperatives are organised. Of these, 11 of them are Natural Resource Development and Eco-Tourism Cooperatives, of which 1 successfully obtained its legal licence. 3 Savings and credit cooperatives were established and of these 1 has obtained its legal licence. 1 women's cooperative centred around fuel saving stove production is now organised and has obtained its legal license.
- 1712 people were organised into these 15 cooperatives. Of these, 1368 are men and 344 are women (80% and 20% respectively). All members paid registration and a share fee.
- Savings and credit cooperative members are more empowered and participants have increased their saving habits through continuous training and legally registered mechanisms.
- All the FUG members volunteer at the cooperative and they have plans to get all the FUG members to become Natural Resource Development and Eco-Tourism Cooperative members in the future.
- The cooperative members promised at the General Assembly Meeting that they would protect the natural forest from cattle-grazing and illegal human activity.
- The project staff is taking a leading role to implement the project by trying to involve government staff in project activities. This has been met with cooperation from the government (state level) Amhara Forest Enterprise offices, where a focal person has been assigned to closely implement the project with SUNARMA.
- The Amhara Forest Enterprise in the town of Debre Birhan has a Branch Office and the staffing level is being strengthened.

## OUTPUT 2: Natural Forest Management

### PROGRESS:

Overall, Wof Washa forest management has improved and the communities are becoming the guardians of the forest together with local government. By the completion of the first half of Year 2, the project is more organised and prepared and as such is in a better position to manage the forest officially. The expert team from Royal Botanic Gardens Kew completed and reported on the baseline forest survey conducted in June 2014. The report has made suggestions for further investigation about forest regeneration problems and discussion with forestry experts in country has begun.

The forest user groups are now more organised and strengthened resulting in their now being empowered and engaged in the protection of the natural forest.

- The management of the forest is being carried out by the participation of both government guards and the community.
- The Amhara Forest Enterprise group will now officially take over the management of the natural forest and is willing to transfer it to the community so it can be managed jointly.
- The target beneficiaries are actively involved in the project activities.

## OUTPUT 3: Enterprise Development

### PROGRESS:

- 61 enterprises were formed in the 14 target kebeles (30 in Ankober woreda, 12 in Baso Na Worana woreda & 19 in Tarmaber woreda). Of these enterprises, 43 now have an Enterprise Development plan (EDP) with the support of kebele facilitators.
- Two previously established enterprises started their businesses, which are: Aysofe honey producers in Baso Na Worana (Keyit kebele) and Marshet honey producer enterprises in Ankober woreda (Emmhret kebele).
- Some enterprise members purchased bees and beehives with their own budget to start their businesses.
- Apiculture trainees promised to make 2 transitional beehives on their own initiative after the trainings.
- Each enterprise promised to start credit and savings amongst the members to solve the problem of needing enterprise capital.
- All the enterprise members became aware of the concept of entrepreneurship after the Market Analysis and Development approach (MA&D) awareness creation trainings facilitated across 3 woredas.
- 

## OUTPUT 4: Watershed Management and Livelihoods improvement

### PROGRESS:

- The project established 23 Farmer Field Schools with more than 357 members in the 3 project woredas (8 in Ankober, 11 in Baso Na Worana & 4 in Tarmaber woredas).
- Farmers were trained to integrate vegetation into their soil and water conservation activities (SWC) and strengthened their practices.
- Trained farmers engaged in compost preparation.

### **2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

Some activities cannot be completed until the previous activities have been implemented. This has an impact on the implementation of the subsequent activity, hence some activities have not been completed in the anticipated timeframe. However, as the groups mature with their own enterprise plans in place and the Forest User Groups become used to working together, the project staff may see increased momentum in the project's pace of accomplishments.

Programme overlap among the stakeholders has contributed to delays in the project implementation, such as participation from government staff with other commitments. This has been beyond the control of the project, due to other priorities and timelines of other stakeholders. Nonetheless, with an office in Debre Birhan and with staff appointed to the joint forest enterprise within the project, albeit there are limited examples in the country overall. To

counteract this, experience-sharing visits have been conducted and more are planned to expose beneficiaries to similar experiences to increase their institutional capacity and knowledge.

**2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  No  Estimated underspend: £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully as it is unlikely that any requests to carry forward funds will be approved this year.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project and would like to talk to someone about the options available this year, please indicate below when you think you might be in a position to do this and what the reasons might be:

It is unfortunate that two senior field level staff members in SUNARMA (the project coordinator and a field expert) have by now resigned at a similar time. It might be difficult to fully run the implementation of planned activities with new staff as they may need some time to catch up. However, SUNARMA's Chief Executive Director, Mr. Tekle A. Jirane, is closely monitoring the project and stepping in. Additionally, TREE AID's Country Manager in Ethiopia, Mr. Cheru Tessema, was recruited to a newly created post earlier this year to more effectively run TREE AID's projects in country and foster cross-learning within Ethiopia, and jointly with TREE AID West Africa. With two senior staff members overseeing this project, the signature project for both SUNARMA and TREE AID, we do not foresee problems that cannot be overcome.

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

The Darwin Initiative funding has supported a new, closely integrated environment and development initiative in this project, which is already fostering model learning at a national level in our highly competent partner SUNARMA, and across of other TREE AID projects in Ethiopia. Lessons learnt thus far from the project include:

Through training of trainers, introducing and focusing on institutional development, and fostering cooperatives, the project is revealing distinct advantages for communities to actively and receptively manage their assets.

The forest management cooperatives are in the processes of legalisation and by being organised within woredas, Amhara Forest Enterprise (state level government) is willing to give user rights of the forest management cooperatives.

The target communities' attitude towards natural resource management is improved. More enterprises are emerging based on NTFPs in the project area and their business plans show they need investment capital which is not considered in the project plan. However, this is fostering commitment and problem-solving within the groups.

There is a gap in skills especially in honey production and other NTFPs, which the project is

addressing through its programme of training and mobilising government technical experts to come to the area.

The processes to finalise registration of FUGs is going according to plan and the stakeholders are supportive.

The project stakeholders, Cooperative Office and Amhara Forest Enterprise, need to be involved in the project more actively and in an organised manner so that there is a smooth process in handing over of the Wof Washa natural forest from government to the organised communities. The project staff spent much time in the beginning facilitation the scheduling and accommodating government staff turnover.

**If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at [Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk) . The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 20-035 Darwin Half Year Report**