

Mid-term Review Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme 2007-2011

NORAD COLLECTED REVIEWS 27/2009

Leif Tore Trædal, Adviser, Norad, Dr. Yohannes Gebre-Michael, Consultant, University of Addis Abeba

Norad collected reviews

The report is presented in a series, compiled by Norad to disseminate and share analyses of development cooperation. The views and interpretations are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Norad

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO- 0030 OSLO

Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway

Phone: +47 22 24 20 30 Fax: +47 22 24 20 31

ISBN 978-82-7548-475-6

Mid-term review

of

ETH-06/039

Development Fund of Norway

Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Program

PREFACE

This report covers the Mid-Term Review of the Program:

Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme 2007-2011

The Program was reviewed in September/October 2009. The Review Team undertook the main field work in Ethiopia during 26 September – 02 October 2009.

Such a mid-term review is part of the normal project cycle in Norwegian-supported projects. The Program was reviewed based on a desk study of written documents, interviews with the Norwegian partner and a field visit to one of the Program areas, namely the Afar Region. Discussions were held with relevant Ethiopian partners and institutions.

The report contains a brief introduction to the program features and a systematic review of the most significant aspects of the Program, together with the Team's own assessment of the program performance and status. The standard elements of the review are: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability.

Based on significant, relevant and detailed comments given by the Program's various partners the report was prepared in October 2009 and submitted to the Embassy and the Norwegian Development Fund (DF) for comments on 04 November 2009. Comments on the draft report were received and as far as possible incorporated in the final report.

The Review was undertaken by a joint team from Norad and a local Ethiopian consultant:

- ◇ Leif Tore Trædal, Norad;
- ◇ Dr. Yohannes Gebre-Michael, Addis Ababa University.

Representatives of DF joined the Team during the visit to Afar. All visited partners were well prepared, and provided the Team with all relevant information. The program manager of DF guided the team on pastoral perspective and was instrumental in the whole process of the evaluation and served as a resource person for the Review. The Team wants to thank DF and all the involved Program partners and other visited institutions for their open and kind contributions during the review, as well as the hospitality.

10 December 2009

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Council
ACDP	Adadley Community Development Project
AD	Appropriation Document
ADLI	Agricultural Led industrialization
ADWG	Agriculture Donor Working Group
AIPDP	Afar Integrated Pastoral Development Program
AISDA	Action for Integrated Sustainable Development
APDA	Afar Pastoralist Development Association
ARDA	Afar Rural Development Association
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DCG	Drylands Coordination Group
DF	Development Fund of Norway
DDC	Drylands Development Centre
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations
FARM Africa	Food and Agricultural Research Management Africa
FSS	Food Security Strategy
IDPAC	Integrated Development for Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Communities
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LIUFC	Lee Asita Irrigation Users Farmers cooperative
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MU	Mekelle University
DF	Development Fund of Norway
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OA	Objective Areas
OWDA	Ogaden Welfare and Development Association
PASDEP	Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty
PFE	Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia
PP	Program Proposal
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
PWO	Pastoralist Welfare Organization
SCN-E	Save the Children Norway –Ethiopia
SEA	Safe Environment Association
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPDP	Shinile Pastoral Development Project
SRCDP	Semu-Robi Community Development Project
SSD	Support for Sustainable Development
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendance
THP	Traditional Harmful Practices
UNCCD	United Nations' Convection to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION. BACKGROUND AND REVIEW APPROACH	9
1.1 BACKGROUND	9
1.2. THE REVIEW TEAM’S MANDATE AND APPROACH	9
1.3 CONTEXT OF AFAR AN SOMALI REGIONAL STATES	10
1.3.1. <i>Afar regional state</i>	10
1.3.2 <i>Somali Region</i>	10
2. PROGRAM DESIGN	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
2.2 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES.....	12
2.2.1 <i>Program Goal</i>	12
2.2.2 <i>Program Objective(s)</i>	13
2.3 PROGRAM OUTPUTS, ACTIVITIES AND INPUTS	14
2.3.1 <i>Program Outputs</i>	14
2.3.2 <i>Program Activities</i>	15
2.3.3 <i>Program Inputs and Budget</i>	18
2.4 PROGRAM INDICATORS	19
2.5 PROGRAM BUDGETING.....	20
2.6 PROGRAM ASSUMPTIONS/ EXTERNAL FRAME CONDITIONS	20
2.7 PROGRAM PARTNERS AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	22
3. PROGRAM STATUS ASSESSMENT	24
3.1 OVERALL PROGRAM PROGRESS AND STATUS	24
3.1.1 <i>Introduction</i>	24
3.1.2 <i>The Use of results in Policy-Making</i>	26
3.2 FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE PROGRAM	27
3.3 REVIEW OF STANDARD EVALUATION ELEMENTS	27
3.3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	27
3.3.2 <i>Effectiveness</i>	27
3.3.3 <i>Efficiency</i>	28
3.3.4 <i>Impact</i>	28
3.3.5 <i>Relevance</i>	29
3.3.6 <i>Sustainability</i>	31
3.4 PARTICULAR ASPECTS	33
3.4.1 <i>Reporting</i>	33
3.4.2 <i>Transfer of Knowledge. Capacity Building</i>	34
3.4.3 <i>Interaction with Other Sector Programmes and Projects</i>	34
3.4.4 <i>Gender Aspects</i>	34
3.4.5 <i>Anti-corruption</i>	35
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
4.1 MAIN FINDINGS. CONCLUSIONS	36
4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM CONTINUATION	37
ANNEX 1:	39
ANNEX 2:	42
ANNEX 3:	44

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia has since 2007 been funding an Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Program implemented by Norwegian Development Fund (DF) in collaboration with various partners in the Afar and Somali regions. This report provides a mid-term review and a status report of what has been achieved so far, and some recommendations to be considered for the improvement of the Program performance for the rest of the program period.

A fieldwork in Ethiopia was conducted in September/October 2009 by a team consisting of an Ethiopian consultant from the Addis Ababa University employed by DF and one Norad technical adviser. The study was conducted based on review of program documents and reports, and consultations with partners in the field.

In the Program, DF is currently collaborating with 13 partners, 10 in the Afar Regional State and 2 in Somali Region, with the main goal of:

“Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Afar and Somali regions of Ethiopia”.

In summary the Team found that much has been achieved so far, and that the Program activities by and large are on track and according to schedules and work plans. In conclusion, considering the challenging context, working environment and short period of time, both DF and DF partners have made remarkable progress and achievements in a short period of time. However, a few issues regarding the program design, performance and strategic fit of the Program were identified.

Program design

The Program Proposal (PP) gives a good overview of the program and its approach. In the inception phase of the Program, several changes in the implementation premises were however made. Due to the diplomatic crisis between Norway and Ethiopia, the Embassy had to dismiss many of its plans and responsibilities. These changes included the termination of the Embassy's role as *chef de file* for the UNCCD implementation. This is reflected both in the Appropriation Document (AD) and the Agreement of the Program, but not in the PP. Currently there are therefore inconsistencies between the key Program steering documents that are potential sources of confusion and misunderstanding. Preferably the PP should also have been updated to reflect the changes made in this phase.

The Team has also identified some gaps in the Program's results framework. It is the Team's view that the main framework including the Program goal, objectives and outputs should be revisited in order to make them more operational and more logically linked to each other. Strategic indicators linked to a Program baseline should also have been established for the Program on an aggregate level.

Program status assessment

Program progress is by and large on schedule. Considering DF relatively newly established office and the time the UNCCD Program has been in place, much has been achieved in terms of outputs achieved and number of new partners identified. DF is also perceived to be doing a good job in following up the partners in the field, and giving partners high degree of flexibility in project planning and reporting.

Effectiveness. As there are two years left of the Program, it is difficult to make a proper assessment of the Program effectiveness. Still, a concern for the Team has been a perceived weak programmatic approach, caused by thematic and geographic proliferation of the Program activities. It is the Team's view that this is the most serious risk for the overall performance of the Program.

Efficiency. Most activities and outputs are delivered (or assumed to be delivered) according to plans.

Impact. Some issues were identified, mostly related to a perceived weak strategic and programmatic

focus. It should however be noted that also for the impacts it is too early to make any solid conclusions, and that long-term perspective would be needed in order to achieve sustainable development in such a challenging environment.

Relevance was found to be very good, as Program is very much in line with national, Norwegian and African strategies for rural development, e.g. Ethiopia's PRSP (PASDEP), ADLI, the Norwegian Action Plan for Environment in Development Cooperation, and the most central African policy framework, such as the CAADP. The Program could however profit from being more directly linked up with the most central national and regional processes on drylands development and Sustainable Land Management. The Embassy has a key role to play here in order to mobilize other donors and bring pastoralism higher up on the development agenda in the country.

Sustainability. Some sustainability challenges were identified, mostly due to most partners' lack of fund raising capacities and lack of clear DF exiting strategy. Some technical issues related to chosen technologies in some of the projects are also potential bottlenecks for the long-term well-functioning of the activities. However, it should also here be stressed that DF is working in an extremely difficult environment, and long-term perspective on development work in this context is therefore necessary.

Financial progress reporting was found to be of acceptable quality in general, but lack of a conform reporting system for Program partners makes it difficult to measure efficiency of spending compared to planned program results.

Risk assessment. Even though the Team was not specifically requested to make an assessment of the status of potential risk factors, such assumptions are normally part of any program design, and should therefore have been part of the Team's mandate. Several critical factors were found not to have been sufficiently considered in the Program, including standard risks such as the conflict dimension and HIV/AIDS. Also high turnover of government staff, marginalization of pastoralists and recurrent emergency interventions in the program regions, pose risks to the overall performance of the Program.

Competence and performance. Technically the competence of DF and partners' staff and quality of work seems good, but perceived to be vulnerable due to a general high turnover of staff in Ethiopia. DF has however focussed on recruiting few but good staff, aiming at making it attractive for staff to stay in DF with long term perspectives. Similarly the annual and semi-annual reporting has been timely and regular, however the Team recommend that the reporting should aim at becoming more outcome oriented on actual development achievements of the program. Otherwise the understanding of the Program in general seems satisfactory at all levels.

Capacity building and training. Training of staff both at DF level and with partners seems to have been successful, but it is the Team's perception that training of partner institutions mostly has been on the level of individuals and has not targeted institutional development as such. Training of individuals alone is not enough to ensure institutional development. The trained staff may eventually leave the organization and thus leave it vulnerable to loss of institutional memory. Other factors such as an established ongoing internal training program, mainstreamed decision-making processes, management approaches, well-defined compliance strategies and tools, etc. must compliment individual training in order to achieve successful institutional development.

Environment. Crucial environmental and social issues related to infrastructure development have not sufficiently been addressed in many of the program activities. In order to follow-up this, DF could develop and implement environmental guidelines on how interventions should be undertaken in different contexts in order to avoid the most critical negative consequences of infrastructure development.

Gender. Women and women issues have an explicit focus in the central Program steering documents, and women are also included in at least some of the key program activities, particularly the trading and cooperative components. It would however be recommended that more gender specific baseline studies are carried out and that gender baseline indicators are established for the program on an aggregate level. More women in project staff (and also in DF main office) could also stimulate more efficient interaction

with women at project level.

Anti-Corruption. No particular focus is on anti-corruption in key program steering documents. Corruption in general is perceived to be less in Ethiopia than in other comparable countries, and the Team does not have any indications that corruption has occurred within the Program. DF seems to have generally good routines for following-up partners and their accounts. Procurement has also been carried out according to national standards, which reportedly are very strict even compared to Norwegian conditions. Still, considering the complexity and high number of partners, it would be recommended that DF increases the focus on transparency and anti-corruption even more in the Program.

Safeguarding pastoral values. For some of the observed activities, the Team questions whether all DF partners have sufficiently internalized the concept of pastoralism. This seems to have had some potentially negative impacts on pastoralist mobility, as many project activities most likely will imply some form of sedentarisation of beneficiaries, e.g. in relation to irrigation schemes, agriculture, and possibly also water points. The Team in general agrees with DF strategy of livelihood diversification and bottom-up approach, but believes that interventions such as promoting agriculture and area enclosures should not only be based on community request, but also on sound and in-depth studies and knowledge about the local pastoral system(s).

Lack of clear focus. The number of partners, activities and *woredas* currently covered in the Program is high and a lack of clear focus both in terms of geography and thematic areas is a perceived risk for the overall performance of the Program. It would be recommended that DF aims at stimulating a higher degree of cooperation, and creating synergies between partners and activities. Leaders for thematic and geographic areas – e.g. APDA for Cooperatives, SSD for irrigation – could also be identified. This could in the long run also relieve DF's following-up of Program partners in the field and also improve the sustainability of the Program.

Cooperation with policy-makers. At the policy level, the impact of DF's work has been limited both because the program is still young and because DF has a commitment that the partners themselves should articulate and advocate their vision for pastoral development. It should also be recognized that civil society in Ethiopia is relatively weak in terms of policy influence. DF's role in policy making nationally in Ethiopia was even more undermined after the termination of Embassy's role as *chef de file* for the UNCCD implementation.

Conclusions and recommendations

Need to develop a comprehensive plan for monitoring and evaluation, including streamlining of results framework, strategic indicators and baseline. As the result framework stands now the program will face problems on reporting on actual outcomes at the end of the program period. A 'results management' exercise where all partners are invited to participate, and where a comprehensive results framework and monitoring and evaluation plan are developed could be useful, not only for the monitoring and evaluation itself, but also for developing the partners' ownership to - and understanding of - the Program.

Higher strategic focus, both thematically and geographically. In the long run DF should aim at higher strategic focus of the Program. Cooperation and synergies between partners and activities could stimulate higher performance and a more programmatic approach. DF could also consider to define leaders for thematic areas e.g., APDA for Cooperatives and pastoral education, SSD for irrigation and FARM-Africa for integrated development. Thematic resource persons/experts could also be identified to be present at regular programme meetings, and give some critics and advise on selected issues.

Linking up with research and scientific institutions. The links to research could be stronger in the Program, and it would be recommended that DF looks into meaningful ways of strengthening the cooperation and link the research capacities of the Mekelle University to the other partners and activities in the Program. The new Semera University in Afar could in the long run also be a potential link to research and scientific knowledge about dryland farming and pastoral issues. The Team does however

consider the capacities of the Semera University to currently be too low to have an added-value in the Program. Substantial capacity building and institution building of the university is needed before such collaboration would be feasible. The Program could also benefit from a closer link and collaboration with the Drylands Coordination Group (DCG). Both DF and DCG could benefit from a strengthened collaboration.

Capacity building should go beyond individual training. Establishing ongoing internal training programs, mainstreamed decision-making processes, management approaches, well-defined compliance strategies and tools, etc. could compliment individual training in order to achieve successful and sustainable institutional development of partner institutions.

DF's capacities. DF has in a very short time established an operational office in Ethiopia, with a highly qualified and skilled staff. The staff size and composition is however by the Team perceived to be vulnerable to potential staff turnover. If approach on collaborating with small and weak partners continues and is increased further, there will be a need to strengthen capacities and the number of DF staff. Alternatively these responsibilities could be outsourced to key partner institutions, when (and if) these are considered to have an acceptable level of capacities for such responsibilities.

Long-term perspective crucial. To have positive impacts and achieve sustainable development in pastoral areas, there is a need for a long-term perspective of at least 10-15 years. Given that pastoral development will continue to be a prioritized field for the Embassy and provided that the program shows acceptable progress towards the objectives and goal, it would make sense for the Embassy to extend the collaboration to a second phase.

An out-phasing strategy needed. Even though sustainability of program is not very likely in the short run, an elaborated exit strategy should be developed. Strengthening of partners' fund raising capacities is seen as a key in this work in order for the partners to get more diversified sources of funds.

Need for combined efforts in order to scale up. And last but not least, in order to scale up activities to really achieve sustainable development results among pastoralists in the two Regions, there is a need for combined efforts between government, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors. DF as an NGO is not in a position do this alone. The Team would therefore recommend that in order to do this, more resources and combined, coordinated efforts are needed. The Embassy could play a key role here in linking DF's activities up with key national and regional efforts for rural development, including CAADP and TerrAfrica. Norway is also in a position to influence decision-making in international organizations in order ensure political support for pastoral policies that are 'bankable'. If this is the way the Embassy wants to follow, Norad should assist the Embassy in this work.

1. INTRODUCTION. BACKGROUND AND REVIEW APPROACH

1.1 Background

An agreement for strategic cooperation between the Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa (hereafter named “the Embassy”), and the Norwegian Development Fund (DF) was signed in November 2007, designed to support the Embassy in its role as *chef de file* for the implementation of the United Nations’ Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Ethiopia. The DF UNCCD program builds upon DF’s long presence and work in Ethiopia since 1982, initially in the Tigray Region, where DF currently has collaboration with the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and Women’s Association of Tigray (WAT). In 1998 DF also decided to expand its portfolio to the Afar region. Building on these experiences, DF was chosen as a strategic partner for the Embassy in the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD program. In addition, it was also envisaged that the Embassy would support the national UNCCD focal point, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and a UNDP sustainable land management (SLM) program in Afar.

Since the inception of the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Program in 2007, the national and regional context for implementation has changed significantly. Most notably, the Embassy has, due to the 2007 diplomatic crisis between Ethiopia and Norway, terminated its role as *chef de file* and has discontinued the partnership with the EPA, and the long awaited UNDP Afar program has not yet materialized.

1.2. The Review Team’s Mandate and Approach

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Review Team (hereafter referred to as “the Team”) is enclosed in *Annex 1*. The overall purpose of the review was to assess the progress towards the goal and to forward recommendations for the remaining phase of the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Program. This includes assessing past performance and proposing concrete steps for further follow up. The Team should assess the overall implementation status of the Program with reference to the standard evaluation elements in *Programme and Project Cycle Management* including effectiveness, efficiency, impact, relevance and sustainability. In addition, considering the point of departure of the whole program as a key component in the Embassy’s UNCCD efforts as *chef de file*, some analysis of the whole program in terms of its strategic fit and the potential for increased synergies with other partners and programs, are made.

Issues of particular interest listed in the ToR were:

- The institutional and professional capacity of DF-Ethiopia to manage and develop the program with a view to enhancing institutional learning;
- To assess the achievements and performance of the program in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, and to assess DF-Ethiopia’s strengths and weaknesses in these respects; and,
- To assess DF-Ethiopia’s planning processes and instruments, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems, and funding mechanisms. Specific recommendations were expected in respect of the DF-donor information flows, and the targets, indicators and (quantitative) monitoring necessary to judge performance.

The ToR do not request the Team to identify and make an assessment of potential risk factors for the Program. The Team perceives this as a lack in the ToR, as Reviews normally provides an opportunity to update risks assessments from preparatory and implementation phase. Section 2.6 therefore also makes an assessment of the status of potential risks and external factors affecting the effective implementation of the Program.

As the focus of the mid-term review is on the Program as such, the main focus of this report is not on single activities and projects under the program umbrella, unless these have illustrative functions for the overall analysis.

The Team studied relevant reports and information prior to the field work in Ethiopia and had meetings

with the Program partners in Addis Ababa and in Afar (see *Annex 2*). Moreover, the team considered it important to also visit some of the program sites in order to get an impression of the program, DF's partners and the status of program implementation. Six project sites in Afar Region were of logistical reasons chosen for the review. In all places the Team was received with openness and hospitality, and all pertinent and impertinent questions from the Team were answered to the best ability of the project staff and the targeted community (*Annex 2*). A selection of illustration photos from the field visits are also enclosed in *Annex 4*.

Following the field trips, the Team had a de-briefing meeting in Addis Ababa with DF and the Embassy, where the main observations of the Team were presented and discussed for possible adjustments.

1.3 Context of Afar and Somali Regional states

Generally, more than sixty percent of Ethiopia is assumed to be arid and semi-arid land inhabited by pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. The major national livestock populations, particularly of goats and camels, are found in these areas. The pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Ethiopia are estimated to be found in 136 districts. The estimated population is close to 12 million people, composed of various clans and sub-clans.

Traditionally these societies are known for their traditional ruling systems, which serve to resolve conflicts that might occur between clans, sub-clans or individuals. The different livestock species also have different ranges of threshold mobility, which has much rationality for the sustainable use of resources in these areas.

Unfortunately, today many of the pastoralists are exposed to the problems of ecological and human crisis such as drought, famine and environmental degradation, conflicts and dependency on food aid. The historical cumulative effects of marginalization by different regimes and policies have accelerated the vulnerability of pastoralists.

1.3.1. Afar regional state

Afar Regional State in northeast Ethiopia covers an area of 96,707 km² and borders with four other regional states, namely the Tigray Region in the northwest, Amhara Region in the southwest, Oromia Region in the south and Somali Region in the southeast. It also borders with two national states, namely Djibouti in the east and with Eritrea in the northeast. The altitude of the region ranges from 120m below to 1,500 m. above sea level. In agro-climatic terms, about 85% of the area is classified as arid and the remaining as semi-arid. It has a bimodal rainfall pattern, with a main wet season from July to September (*Karma*) and a short wet season from March to April (*Sugum*). Annual average rainfall ranges between 200 and 500 mm. The major rivers in the region are Awash, Mille, Kesseme and Burkeno, while the parks include Awash, Yangudi Rasa and a sanctuary at Mille-Sardo.

According to the 2007 census, the Afar region has a population of approximately 1.4 million people with an average family size of 5.7 people per household. Livelihoods in the region are mainly based on livestock keeping, mainly combinations of cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and camels. In some places livestock is combined with agriculture, including the cultivation of mainly sorghum and maize grown in opportunistic farming. Some people are also engaged in petty trade, salt mining and – a more recent phenomenon – charcoal making.

Currently the region is divided into 32 woredas and five zones. The DF Ethiopia partner organisations are functional in 16 woredas covering more than 50% of the region.

1.3.2 Somali Region

Somali region covers an area of 279,252 km². The region borders Afar and Djibouti in the North, Somalia in the East, Kenya and Somalia in the south and Oromia region in the west. Somali has an arid to semi-

arid climate, with a bimodal rainfall in April–June (*Gu*) and October–December (*Deyr*). Usually, the rainfall is very unreliable in terms of time and space.

According to the 2007 Census of Ethiopia Somali Region has a total population of approximately 4.4 million, with an average of 6.6 persons per household. The livelihood is mainly based on livestock, complemented with trade, opportunistic farming, and traditional irrigation. Camels, sheep and goats are the dominant livestock in the region. In Somali there has been a widespread adoption of *birkas* (in-ground water tanks) and the growth of settlements around them. Cattle-keeping is also becoming more important in the region.

Land degradation mainly due to cutting of trees for fuel wood and charcoal production, has been a serious problem particularly during extended droughts. With the reduction of vegetation cover, overgrazing on limited resources becomes inevitable causing intensified water and wind erosion. Generally, the Somali region is chronically characterized by drought, famine, resource conflicts, emergency intervention (food, water and fodder). This problem has been compounded by refugees leading to even more deforestation, overgrazing, land degradation and the depletion of communal and private water sources. Many of the areas in Somali region are also inaccessible, due to lack of proper infrastructure. Lack of basic social services, such as water, health and education is also a major development problem in the region.

The Somali Region consists of nine administrative zones and 44 *woredas* (administrative districts). Currently the two partner of DF-Ethiopia, Ogaden Welfare and Development Association (OWDA) and Pastoral Welfare Organisation (PWO) are working in the *woreda* of Adadley and Shinile respectively.

2. PROGRAM DESIGN

2.1 Introduction

The Program Proposal (PP) dated 21 June 2007, describes the layout and content of the Program in detail. To the Team's opinion, the document gives a good overview of and insight into the various components of the Program and the program partners (at the start time of program). The PP (version 5) forms the basis for the *Agreement* between the Embassy and DF. The three steering documents take precedence in the following order:

- The Agreement
- The Appropriation Document
- The PP (version 5) (being referred to in the two other legal documents, in the Agreement referred to as the "Project Document")

The PP is not designed according to the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) modality, as DF was clearly *not* asked to prepare the document according to this.

Even though the Review Team in its ToR was not asked to review the Program based on LFA design of project, the Team still considers results based management as a useful tool in structuring the review and assessment of the various program elements. In one way or another, LFA or not, the Team believes that the Program as a whole could profit from an increased focus on results management in the program design. In the following sections, the main elements of the program design are reviewed.

2.2 Program Objectives

2.2.1 Program Goal

In the final version of the PP the goal is formulated as:

"Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Afar NRS and other dryland regions of Ethiopia".

In the Appropriation document the program goal is said to be:

"Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Afar and Somali regions of Ethiopia"

This modification probably reflects the Norwegian Embassy's preference towards expanding the portfolio to also include the Somali region.

In the general, the goal of *any* project is defined to be the long-term objective to which "the project will *significantly* contribute¹". The achievement of the goal will however also depend on other factors and projects beyond this one project. Formulation of the goal should be *clearly defined* and used as a *main point of reference* by all involved parties during project implementation. This means that a narrow, specific goal normally should be chosen, also increasing the probability of "success" when evaluating the project achievement against the goal. The goal must represent a sufficient *justification* for the project, it must *not be too ambitious*, it should mention the *target groups*, and should be expressed in *verifiable terms*.

¹ Reference to "The Logical Framework Approach (LFA). Handbook for objective-oriented planning, Fourth edition." Norad, Oslo.

In this case, the goal in the main steering documents (the Agreement and AD) does not comply with these requirements. It is not clearly defined and far too general, too ambitious and high-flying to be used as a “guiding star” for the Program, which in fact is being implemented at a very much practical implementation level (see section 2.3.2 below). The implementation of a convention is also not a proper objective in itself, but rather a means to reach an overall objective of e.g. ‘reduce poverty’.

The fact that the main goal (UNCCD implementation) of the programme rarely is used and referred to in yearly and semi-yearly meeting reports, annual reports, etc., might also reflect that the goal is not formulated in a very operational way. It clearly takes a lot of experience (trial and errors) to be able to formulate properly program objectives, and this element was also not addressed in the 2007 Norad desk appraisal of the program document. The goal should also be seen in the political context of 2007, where the Embassy just had accepted the role as *chef de file* for UNCCD implementation in Ethiopia, and had been chosen DF as strategic partner for the practical implementation of the program in the field.

The Team would still recommend that DF and its partners revisit the results framework of the Program, including the main goal of the program, in order to make it more operational.

2.2.2 Program Objective(s)

The purpose should be *the state* (or situation) that is expected to prevail as a *consequence* of the project. The achievement of the purpose is outside the project and cannot be guaranteed by the project management, and should be directly linked to the various project outputs. The purpose should normally specify the target groups, should be formulated as a desired state (not as an activity), should be precise and verifiable, and should be realistic. The four Program objectives (purpose) are derived from the UNCCD text and the National Framework for Investments in Sustainable Land Management.² In the PP the “objectives” (*purpose*) of the Program, are formulated as:

- a) Promote sustainable land management and improve pastoral livelihoods in the targeted *Woredas*³
- b) Develop strategies for poverty eradication and food security, including the establishment of alternative livelihood projects and the development of pastoral markets
- c) Promote sustainable management of water resources, including improvement of water quality of the Awash River
- d) Support the decentralisation process, including the devolution of responsibility for management and decision-making to local authorities and the active participation of traditional institutions
- e) Enhance the active participation of local communities, including women, with the support of NGOs and CBOs
- f) Promote the UNCCD agenda and *chef de file* experience in relevant forums at the national and international level

In both the contract and the AD, the “objectives” have been reformulated and reduced to the following four objectives:

- i. Promote sustainable land management and improve pastoral livelihoods in the targeted woredas
- ii. Develop strategies for poverty eradication and food security, including the establishment of alternative livelihood projects and the development of pastoral markets *with a particular focus on women*
- iii. Support the decentralisation process, including the devolution of responsibility for management and decision-making to local authorities and the active participation of traditional institutions

² DF 2009: ETH-06/039 Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Program Progress and Status, September 2009.

³ Woreda is an administrative division of Ethiopia (managed by a local government), equivalent to a district. Woredas are composed of a number of Kebele, which are the smallest unit of local government in Ethiopia.

- iv. Enhance the active participation of local communities, including women, with the support of NGOs and CBOs

The elimination of f) can be explained by the fact that the Embassy, just before the signing of the contract with DF, had to reduce its number of staff due to the crisis in diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, and therefore had to step down from the responsibility as *chef de file*. The Embassy's focus on gender and women is probably the reason why "with a particular focus on women" was added to b). c) also refers to the planned role EPA was planned to have in relation to promote sustainable water resources. EPA was also eliminated as a partner in the program in relation to the 2007 diplomatic crisis.

The Team notes that also here there are inconsistencies between the PP that are potential sources of misunderstandings related to the overall goal and objectives of the program. The inconsistencies can be explained by several rounds of negotiations and revisions of the program proposal, and the latest version is considered to be the approved "project summary" attached to the Contract. Nevertheless, it is the Team's opinion that these discrepancies should have been streamlined before the entering into agreement between the Embassy and DF.

Some of the factors listed are also placed on a wrong level in a goal hierarchy context, i.e. to "develop strategies", "support decentralization processes", and "enhance the active participation" must all be characterized as activities (or in some places even inputs, e.g. 'strategies' and 'plans' must be in place before irrigation schemes are constructed, etc.).

Some of the objectives are also so-called "double-objectives". For instance "Promote sustainable land management and improve pastoral livelihoods in the targeted woredas" is in fact two objectives ("promote sustainable land management" and "improve sustainable pastoral livelihoods"), which reduces the measurability and certainty of what the objective actually is.

It would thus be recommended that the level of precision of the Program objectives is increased in order to make them more operational and measurable.

2.3 Program Outputs, Activities and Inputs

2.3.1 Program Outputs

The PP lists the following expected 16 outputs from the Program:

- a) Soil and water conservation structures are built
- b) Micro-irrigation schemes are constructed
- c) Rainwater harvesting structures are constructed
- d) Traditional grazing areas are respected
- e) Bush encroachment is prevented
- f) Community-based animal health services are provided
- g) Market sites for livestock trading are established
- h) Income opportunities are diversified
- i) Water quality in Awash River is monitored
- j) Access to clean drinking water for humans and livestock is improved
- k) Institutional strengthening of EPA is achieved
- l) Local environmental management plans are developed and applied
- m) Capacity of line bureaus at *woreda* and *kebele* level is improved
- n) Training and education of selected *woreda* staff and traditional leaders is provided
- o) Women's livelihoods are improved
- p) Traditional institutions and CBOs are strengthened

In both the agreement and the AD, j) and k) have been removed from the list of “outputs”, probably reflecting the elimination of purposes c) and f) above. The team does however not see how the addition of *with a particular focus on women* at purpose level 2) has had any implications for the planned outputs of the programme. It is the Team’s perception that this was done in order to achieve higher degree of coherence in the Program’s results framework.

According to principles of results management the outputs should all be seen as means for achieving the purpose of the project, and they should be precisely and verifiably defined. The Team finds that *most of the outputs adequately fulfil these requirements*. Outputs d) and e) could however be classified as *purpose*, being on a higher level in the results-chain (purpose level).

In conclusion, the Team sees a general need for streamlining of the program’s results’ framework, as this could improve the planning and monitoring of the program activities on an aggregate level. A list of relevant indicators related to the program objectives should also be developed. DF has just recently requested all its collaborating partners to come up with 5 indicators each for results reporting. It is the Team’s recommendation that these indicators are streamlined in order to fit into the overall results framework of the Program.

2.3.2 Program Activities

In order to achieve its main objectives and in turn its overall goal (“implementation of the UNCCD in Afar and Somali”), the DF has made agreements with both international and local NGOs and CBOs that are responsible for the practical implementation of activities on the ground. The different program partners develop their own project proposals, with separate goals and objectives. The intention is that these in turn will add-up, and lead to the achievement of the overall program goal and objectives.

The projects and partners presented in table 2 below, currently form the basis of the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Program. In total DF has under the UNCCD program initiated 14 agreements with 13 partners in Afar and Somali regions (11 and 2 partners respectively). The program activities currently cover 13 woredas in Afar (see table 2) and 2 woredas in Somali.

Table 1: DF partners and projects

Partner	Project name	Objectives	Budget 2009 (1000 NOK)
Afar			
<i>Mekelle University(MU)</i>	Afar Integrated Pastoral Development Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen and sustain water development efforts • To ensure food security by efficiently utilizing water resources (mainly floods) • To improve animal health services by developing the capacity of the communities to manage their own problems • To create awareness about the prevention of the pandemics of HIV/AIDS in the project through strengthening the existing efforts and establishment of anti HIV/AIDS clubs 	2,000
<i>Farm Africa</i>	Semu-Robi Community Development Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for joint planning, management and review of woreda development plans developed and implemented • Community-based pastoral development institutions strengthened and functional • Capacity of woreda government offices strengthened to lead participatory 	1,000

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning process in the woreda Operational Community Development Fund established at woreda level to finance community-based and community-supported projects Improved understanding and demonstrated support to participatory and inclusive development planning process 	
<i>Farm Africa</i>	Afar Prosopis management project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosopis control and management Development of cooperatives Policy advocacy 	1,300
<i>Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE)</i>	Documenting Pastoralist Land Tenure and Use in Selected Regions of Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documenting pastoralist land tenure and use in selected regions of Ethiopia. 	474
<i>Support for Sustainable Development (SSD)</i>	Dewe Irrigation-based Integrated Development Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lay smooth ground and benchmark for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project To ensure food self-sufficiency of 200-250 households in one kebele in Dewe woreda zone five in Afar National Regional State through irrigation-based food and fodder production To set up a culturally acceptable participatory mechanism to oversee the management and utilisation of natural resources To improve the technical and managerial capacities of community institutions and local government in order to promote gender sensitive community development 	1000
<i>Safe Environment Association(SEA)</i>	Pest and Pesticide Management in Afar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create awareness on pests and pesticides management issues among the relevant regional and woreda stakeholders and pastoral and agro-pastoral communities of the region To conduct training workshops on pesticides life cycle management To undertake action oriented researches on pests and pesticide management To facilitate and support regional pest and pesticide regulations and guidelines in collaboration with the regional stakeholders To promote alternative pests and pesticide control options 	300
<i>Afar Pastoralist Development association (APDA)</i>	Developing viable household economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a viable market in Afar region Assure appropriate social services <p>Improve animal herd by selling in the market</p>	436
<i>Afar Pastoralist Development association (APDA)</i>	Environmental protection under traditional leadership	Develop Afar region environmental protection through the traditional knowledge system averting the current level of environmental destruction	230
<i>Action for Integrated Sustainable Development</i>	Dalifag community development project (DCDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve NRM for better grazing and water source To improve local economy through animal health services 	1,000

<i>Association (AISDA)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To empower pastoral community through awareness creation and advocacy on HIV/AIDS and harmful traditional practices (HTP) 	
<i>Integrated Development for Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Communities (IDPAC)</i>	Community action process in addaar woreda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve annual household income and living standards Empowerment of women and marginalized groups Awareness on HIV/AIDS and HTP Capacity building of different stakeholders Generate and disseminate new ideas against poverty 	450
<i>Lee-Asita Irrigation Users Farmers Cooperative (LIUFC)</i>	Cotton plantation project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To clear prosopis for agricultural production Generate income through cotton plantation To pay boarding facilities for orphans and students from the poor family To enhance quality of services delivery by the school centre To secure food for orphans and students of the poor family 	200
<i>DADAL-Afar Rural Development Association (DADAL-ARDA)</i>	Women Gadeyta mat production and marketing project in Gewane woreda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the employment opportunity of women through cooperatives Upgrade the production and marketing capacity of the mat production <p>Strengthen the management capacity of the cooperatives</p>	250
<i>Save the Children Norway-Ethiopia (SCNE)</i>	Afar Basic Education project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of ABE centres and mobile schools Capacity building of teachers and curriculum development Creation of environmental awareness 	2,100
Somali			
<i>Pastoralist Welfare Organization</i>	Shinile Pastoral Development Project (SPDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacities of local authorities and pastoral communities in implementing and managing grass root development endeavours Minimize the negative impacts of <i>Prosopis juliflora</i> by clearing and maximizing the benefit from it Improve the socio-economic services for pastoralists through the provision of community development fund 	600
<i>Ogaden Welfare and Development Association (OWDA)</i>	Adadley community development project (ACDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce vulnerability through micro-financing and revolving fund provision to women groups To improve social and economic infrastructures through micro-projects investment 	1,000
Total			12,340

Characterisation of the DF partner organisations and activities:

Local and international. Most of the DF partners are local NGOs and CBOs. FARM Africa and Save the Children Norway (SCN) are the only international ones in the portfolio. Generally it would be expected that the larger international NGOs have wider and more complex activities and higher implementation capacities than the smaller local ones. This is partly also the case with the DF partners; however, implementation capacity building is an identified need for almost all DF partners, regardless of size and type of organization. The DF partnership with organizations with different characteristics has been a good opportunity for an “intermarriage” of experiences. Generally the partners are working in collaboration with sectoral bureaus at regional level and through the government line office structures at woreda and district level. The regional government of Afar underlined that DF support for the local NGOs is of more added value than support to the international ones that have access to funds from different donors and have higher fund-raising capacities.

Geographical coverage. The partner organizations are widely distributed in Afar, and also in Somali the two partner organizations have activities far away from each other. In some woredas several partner organizations are active, e.g. in Addaar three organizations have activities (APDA, IDPAC and SCN-E) and also in Gewane there are three partners present (FARM Africa, LIUFC and DADAL). Still, with the exception of APDA and SCN-E working on education in Addaar, there is little evidence of different partners joining their efforts to achieve synergetic effects within the geographic areas where they are present (this issue will be discussed more in detail in Chapter 3.3. “Review of standard evaluation elements”).

Table 2: Woredas in Afar with DF partners’ presence

Woreda	No. partners	Partners
Abaala	1	MU (AIPDP)
Addaar	3	APDA, IDPAC, SCN-E
Ambera	1	FARM Africa
Assaita	2	APDA, SCN-E
Dalifage	1	AISDA
Dewe	1	SSD
Dubti	1	APDA
EliDaar	1	APDA
Gewane	3	FARM Africa, LIUFC, DADAL
Kori	1	APDA
Mille	1	APDA
Semu Robi	1	FARM Africa
Uwwa	2	APDA, SCN-E

Thematic focus areas. Within the framework of the UNCCD Program the different thematic areas can be broadly classified under food production, natural resource management and empowerment of local institutions. Accordingly the different thematic areas covered by the partners include water development, health (human and livestock), education, small scale irrigation, marketing, cooperatives and natural resource management. In all projects drought cycle management, gender and capacity building are cross-cutting elements. More than half of the partner organizations are engaged in the promotion of small-scale irrigation and establishments of cooperatives, which is also in line with the regional strategic plan of the two regions (Afar and Somali).

2.3.3 Program Inputs and Budget

Other than the financial inputs, the PP does not describe in detail the inputs to the Program. These can however be assumed to be:

- Funding the Norwegian Embassy: NOK 59,516,640;
- DF personnel: 7 staff (however not only for UNCCD Program)
- Partners' personnel (number not available).
- Misc. equipment and material (cars, training and workshop material and consumables, computer software and hardware, equipment and material for construction work, etc.).

The budget frame for the Program is in general considered to be appropriate. Based on the budget breakdown presented in the Agreement it is possible to get an overview of the full administrative and Program management costs *at program level*. Detailed information on the use of resources between the various components can also be found in the Project plans. However, from the different budget reports it is not easy to deduce how much has been used for *the respective four priority areas (objectives) of the program*. Results-based budgeting could be one way forward in order to be able consider cost-effectiveness large and rather complex programs of this kind.

2.4 Program Indicators

An indicator defines the performance standard to be reached in order to achieve the objective/output. Ideally, *separate indicators* should be formulated for the outputs, the purpose and the goal. Indicators are measures on how well the project has succeeded, and are only useful when the means of verification can be established. Indicators should mainly be: specific (number, time, quality, location, target group); verifiable at reasonable cost; and relevant.

The PP, nor the AD and Agreement for the Program include any “indicators” of goal/objectives achievement. A list of indicators directly linked to the Program outputs are however presented in the AD:

- Number of soil and water conservation structures built
- Number of irrigation schemes constructed
- Number of rainwater harvesting structures constructed
- Size of grazing areas
- Coverage of invasive shrubs and trees
- Number of community animal health workers trained
- Number of livestock market sites
- Number of small-scale businesses supported
- Number of water points developed
- Number of local environmental management plans developed and applied
- Service level of line bureaus at woreda and kebele level
- Number of trainings given to selected woreda staff and traditional leaders
- School enrolment rate in targeted woredas
- Number of women beneficiaries
- Number of traditional institutions, NGOs and CBOs supported

It is the Team's perception that not all of these match the precision level of all the outputs, e.g. number of women beneficiaries does not necessarily imply “improved livelihoods for women”.

The different program partners have also recently been asked to come up with 5 outcome indicators each directly linked to the program objectives/purposes. It is the Team's perception, however, that as these stand now, *there is a need to organize and streamline these into a coherent results framework for the Program on an aggregate level*.

The team also notes that the partners' regular monitoring and evaluation mainly deals with technical and quantitative figures, such as length of SWC constructed, number of water points, areas covered with conservation and number of training beneficiaries. It is not only biased towards quantitative information but also focuses on separate activities, and little attention is given to the holistic approach. Moreover, reporting on the processes of empowerment in decision making, social, institutional and behavioural

changes also remain unanswered.

Principles that could be considered in identification of indicators:

- Address the integration of the major pillars such as food security, sustainable resource management and empowerment of the grassroots in decision making;
- Assuring the synergetic effect of the different activities within the pastoralist system;
- Mainstreaming the cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment and capacity building;
- Flexibility to accommodate community indicators with participatory monitoring and evaluation as a continuous processes;
- Using baseline survey as a benchmark indicators to gauge the trend of changes due to the intervention;
- The need to develop a trade-off between traditional and modern practices, quantitative and qualitative analysis;
- Stimulating ownership of the community as a foundation to the phase out strategy;
- Consideration of the intervention site as a demonstration centre site for the diffusion of best practices. (E.g. the Afar community have a strong traditional information sharing practices known as '*Dagu*' that could be used for this diffusion locally.)

2.5 Program Budgeting

The overall budget for the Program is attached to the Agreement between the Embassy and DF, dated 22 November 2007. The total funding is given as NOK 63,297,600 including NOK 3,780,960 as bridging fund, of which NOK 46,508,000 is allocated for UNCCD projects in Afar and Somali. Of this amount NOK 26,000,000 were allocated for portfolio development, giving DF space for entering into agreements with new partners and increase cooperation with already existing ones.

Geographically, only 16% (NOK 1.60 million) of the budget went to activities in Somali, while partners in Afar received a total of NOK 8.64 million. As DF does not have any plans to expand activities in Somali (and in Afar), it is not likely that this imbalance will change, at least not within this phase of the Program.

The overall impression of the budget information in the three steering project documents (the AD, the Contract, and the PP), is that it provides a sufficient basis for a proper economic follow-up of the Project. The amounts presented in the PD are however not consistent with the Agreement and the AD, being NOK 58,940,640 and NOK 59,516,640 respectively. In the PP funds for technical backstopping are NOK 112,000 higher than in the AD/Agreement. Still the total amount in AD/Agreement is higher than in the PP budget, identified to be a calculation error of the 8% administrative costs in the PP budget. Again here there are inconsistencies between the PP and the AD/Agreement, inconsistencies that probably are due to several adjustments in the program design that were done in the later stages of the planning phase.

The true administrative costs of the Program can also not be deducted from the Program budget presented in the Agreement, as the different partners also deduct an 8% administration fee. An analysis of the total DF budget shows that 78.9% of the budget is allocated for partners in the field. The Review Team has no reasons to say that the DF part of the budget is too high.

The Program budgets are further detailed by each partner in their agreements with DF. Going into the details of each of the 13 program partners' budgets is however beyond the scope of this assignment. All partners' accounts are however annually audited by an accountant licensed by the auditor general, which is a prerequisite to the release of funds.

2.6 Program Assumptions/ External Frame Conditions

Project assumptions describe situations, conditions, or decisions which are necessary for project success,

but which are largely or completely beyond the control of the project management. Such *risk factors* may seriously delay or prevent the achievement of the project outputs and objectives, and this is why it is important at an early stage in the project planning to identify them and take them into consideration in the further project work. Even though the Team was not specifically requested to make an assessment of the status of potential risk factors, such assumptions are normally part of any program design with bilateral and multilateral donors and financial institutions (notably the World Bank), and it is the Team's view that this therefore should have been part of the Team's mandate.

In the following section, some reflections on potential external risk factors for the Program are made. It should however be noted that this list is not exhaustive, but only reflecting observations made by the Team during the review. It is highly recommended that DF also carries out a complementary update of the Program's risk assessment.

Conflict dimension. In the 2007 Norad appraisal⁴ of the Program, the conflict dimension was mentioned as one potential risk factor of the Program. Experiences from e.g. SSD have shown that conflicts between highland farmers and lowland Afar pastoralists, is a real risk factor for project implementation. In the irrigation schemes visited by the Team, the conflicting dimensions of the schemes had seemingly not sufficiently been included in the project planning. No doubt small irrigation schemes contribute to the diversity and assure food security, but prior to such intervention it is wise to understand the function of the river in the system and the current land use practises both upstream and downstream. Usually rivers are used as a dry season grounds for pasture and water, moreover different ethnic groups have different level of access to river. The basic question is how the irrigation schemes affect the community and the ecology beyond the boundary of the locality or woreda, as pastoralist mobility goes beyond the political boundary (territorial fluidity) and reciprocity.

HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has in general not been considered as a cross-cutting issue in the Program. This is particularly relevant for interventions involving construction entrepreneurs coming into the project areas, e.g. for the construction of irrigation schemes, water harvesting points, etc. The HIV/AIDS dimension could also to a higher degree have been integrated in the cooperative activities and in the work with local committees, e.g. related to information-sharing and awareness raising.

Recurrent emergency interventions. The recurrent emergency interventions (including the Productive Safety net Program (PSNP)) with food, fodder, water and livestock, are often in conflict with regular development aid. This is also the case in many of the DF Program areas. For instance free distributions of both food and medicines in times of crisis undermine the cooperatives' activities of marketing of pastoral products and petty trading. Even though it is outside the mandate and capacities of DF as an NGO, it should by DF be considered as a risk factor for the Program performance.

High turnover of government staff. Both at Regional and woreda levels, high turnover of staff was reported to be a major problem for effective interaction with government level administration. This could be a risk for the successful achievement of Program objective number iii). DF's partners give continuous training to government staff where staff turnover is high, in order to cope up with the situation.

Marginalization of pastoralists in Afar and Somali. The Afar people have for decades been subject to marginalization processes, due to increased pressure from other ethnic groups and government led land investment schemes. Huge state farms many places, particularly along the Awash River, currently interfere and are in conflict with traditional land use practices of the Afar pastoralists. Moreover, many of the woredas administrations in Afar have demarcated huge areas of land for private investments (see Table 3). This trend might be seriously affecting the livelihoods of the Afar in a negative way and consequently also the successful achievement of the Program goals and objectives. As an NGO it is difficult for DF to mitigate this risk factor in an efficient way, apart from continuing work with capacity building of civil society and local NGOs. Furthermore, the risk of further marginalization of pastoralists in Ethiopia will in the end have to be addressed on a higher political level in order to lift the pastoral economy higher up in the national development agenda.

⁴ Noragric 2007: Appraisal of Programme Proposal on the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programm 2007 – 2011.

Table 3 Land allocated for private investors in Afar Region

Woreda	Total area (Ha)	% of the total woreda
Afambo	35,896	19
Amebara	23,168	6
Awash Fentale	14,484	13
Assita	33,694	24
Dealfage	55,003	55
Dewe	13,958	13
Dubti	131,014	14
Gewane	14,124	6
Mille	88,337	18
Total	409,678	

Source: MOARD, 2009

In conclusion, DF should 1) carefully go through the Team's identified risk factors but also carry out its own update of the Program's risk assessments; 2) analyze the identified risk factors (including the likelihood of occurrence and potential consequences; 3) suggest measures to avoid the risks or mitigation measures; 4) reveal whether the design of the Program is robust enough to achieve its planned results in the presence of the uncertainty and risk.

2.7 Program Partners and Program Management

In addition to the 13 already listed local and international NGOs/CBOs, the initial idea was that DF would also link up with other relevant programs funded by Norway, particularly the UNDP-Drylands Development Centre (DDC). The main objective of the UNDP-DDC program was initially to support the work of the *chef de file*, involving, *inter alia*, (1) capacity-strengthening of the UNDP country office in Ethiopia to be a lead partner with the *chef de file*, (2) scaling-up of best practices in Afar National Regional State based on continued support to Mille Integrated Drylands Management Project, and (3) a trainee program for young Afar who will work in the regional and woreda offices after graduation.

Despite the diplomatic crisis, the UNDP program was not terminated, but has for various reasons not yet materialized. Nevertheless, there are hopes that the program activities will start up in early 2010 in 5 woredas in Afar. The UNDP proposal has also been reformulated and is more focussed than it initially was. Focus now will be on pastoral issues, including improved livelihood and capacity building, in close cooperation with the woreda level government. DF has since 2007 also played an advisory role and maintained close contacts with UNDP (and FAO) to ensure alignment with ongoing interventions in Afar region.

It is DF which has had the main responsibility of evaluating and selecting Program partners and projects. An Advisory Council (AC) was however initially going to be established in order to ensure national ownership and technical backstopping to the Program. The AC should consist of 8 members, selected from different institutions and sectors involved in the UNCCD agenda. The mandate of the AC was initially meant to include a peer-review mechanism for proposal and provision of technical backstopping to the Program. The peer review guidelines included the following eligibility criteria:

- Only legally registered NGOs and government agencies in Ethiopia may apply
- The applicant must have a minimum of 1 year documented existence as a legal entity in Ethiopia
- The applicant must have the appropriate qualifications and requisite financial and operational resources to complete the project

The scope of the projects was defined by the program objectives and outputs from PP version 5 (and not

from the AD and Agreement). The Team notes that no strategic guidelines on geographical and thematic composition of the Program portfolio were given.

The AC never materialized due to the termination of the Embassy role as *chef de file*, and is therefore currently not operational. The selection of partners has been documented in the institutional assessments conducted by DF. It is the Team's perception that the composition of Program portfolio has by and large been established "along the way". It is clear that the availability of potential partners has been limited, which probably also has contributed to the geographically and thematically scattered composition of partners and activities in the portfolio.

3. PROGRAM STATUS ASSESSMENT

3.1 Overall Program Progress and Status

3.1.1 Introduction.

The Team has made its assessments based on the written material made available, on interviews with the Ethiopian and DF program managers and staff, and on interviews with the different local and international partners. Since a detailed baseline is lacking for the Program, it is difficult to assess the achievements of the Program at an aggregate level. (Most partners have however elaborated baselines on project level.) Furthermore, the counterfactual situation is therefore also difficult to assess. Still, based on available information in relevant reports (annual and semi-annual) and observations made by the Team in the field, a brief assessment of the status of the four Objective Areas is made in the following.

a) “Promote sustainable land management and improve pastoral livelihoods in the targeted woredas”

It is the Team’s view that this objective covers the entire expected Program outputs presented in 2.3.1, and could potentially (with some modifications) have functioned as the overall goal of the Program.

Thus far the Program has mainly reported on an output level, e.g. number of constructed irrigation schemes and rainwater harvesting structures, number of cooperatives formed and committees established, number of gully structures rehabilitated, number of reports produced and circulated, training conducted, paravet organizations established, training carried out, etc., and for many of the activities it would be too early to say anything about actual impacts of the interventions. Nevertheless, some of the Program partners have made some efforts to report on results on a “higher level”. For instance Farm Africa SRCDP presented the following case study in their semi-annual report for 2009:

“Dille Tore is a single woman with 4 daughters all of them are under 15 years of age. Dille Tore is a herder and lived on livestock products and selling of livestock. Due to the recurrent drought in the area, the pasture availability has been deteriorating at an alarming rate. This resulted in low livestock multiplication and productivity which meant that she earned less money and could not feed her family.

In November 2007, she took out a loan from the project which enabled her to increase her total income to 3,015 ETB⁵. She travels on foot to purchase sugar, coffee and tobacco [...] and subsequently sold the items in her district for a small profit. Moreover, she would also buy sheep and goats [...] and sell them at [...] markets for small profit. Before receiving the loan to conduct the petty trading activities, she received training on business management and book keeping. She has also accumulated her assets by 6 goats. She understood her responsibilities towards paying back the loan. She was regularly supported by the Community Development Officers. She uses the money for medicines, food and clothing for herself and her children. Dille has indicated that the quality and quantity of food has improved significantly”

The case indicates that the beneficiary has achieved improved livelihood security as consequence of the project intervention. This does however not allow us to draw any conclusions on whether this is the case with all or a majority of the beneficiaries. Such examples do also not say anything about attribution, i.e. what would the income be without the intervention? It does also not address the potential negative impacts of the intervention, e.g. do the interventions have any negative unforeseen consequences for equality and power structures in the communities?

⁵ Ethiopian Birr.

b)“Develop strategies for poverty eradication and food security, including the establishment of alternative livelihood projects and the development of pastoral markets with a particular focus on women”

It is the Team’s view that there is overlap between this objective and objective a). b) could in fact be perceived as a key component for improving “pastoral livelihoods in targeted woredas”, and thus being on a lower level in the results-chain (ref. also Section 2.2.2).

It is clear that on output level results have been delivered in the form of irrigation schemes developed, water harvesting structures established, studies have been carried out on traditional grazing rights, cooperatives for livestock marketing and petty trade have been established many places. Whether the activities actually have led to improved livelihoods among beneficiaries is however too early to say.

During the review mission the Team made observations indicating that the diversification activities in some places actually are not going quite as foreseen. For instance in Semu-Robi, where Farm-Africa has, as a response to communities’ own request, established pump-irrigation schemes of about 30 ha, where about 80 household heads agro-pastoralists have started to grow crops (sorghum) in order to diversify own livelihoods. As a response to the current drought most of them have however moved away with their herds, leaving their fields unattended. As a consequence the 2009 yields have completely failed. It is the Team’s perception that agriculture as a risk minimizing strategy for pastoralists (e.g. when there is drought) should be further looked into by DF and its partners in the different areas. One way to do this could be by linking applied research to the program activities in order to increase knowledge about this particular thematic area.

In APDA’s cooperative marketing of livestock in Logia, the cooperatives as a response to decreased number of livestock have switched to consumer goods in order to maintain their business. This illustrates the vulnerability of enterprise and markets in Afar region. In the 2009 semi-annual report, DF states that this also show “...the adaptive capacity and opportunistic livelihood strategies of Afar pastoralists”. This is one way of interpreting this behaviour; another interpretation might be that the Afar in general have not been used to livestock trading, and that livestock trading is a viable activity only in times of abundance. If the latter is true, unless the pastoralist are able to accumulate some form of capital in times of abundance that can decrease their vulnerability when there is a crisis, as a coping mechanism agriculture might be inappropriate for the Afar. The Team would recommend that also for this component, further analyses are made of the effectiveness of such interventions to promote livelihood security of the pastoralists in the Program areas. Establishing stronger links to relevant research societies could be one way to go in order to strengthen the knowledge component of the interventions.

According to the information collected during the Review, livestock trading is not an activity for women. Within the Afar culture only men are allowed to trade livestock. Focusing on petty trading and other commercial products could therefore possibly be a more appropriate strategy when targeting women and their livelihood security. Women economic groups have also in Semu-Robi and Adadley woredas been established with the intention to prepare business plans and trade. In Gewane woreda, DADAL has been supported to establish women cooperatives to produce and market traditional mats (used as shelter in peri-urban areas).

On animal health services much has been achieved, both in terms of establishing paravet associations and training of paravets. In Semu-Robi fairly large animal vaccination schemes have been carried out. Investigations on actual results, i.e. what this has done to improve animal health in the woreda, have however not yet been carried out. The planned training and vaccination campaign by OWDA in Somali region was cancelled due to the severe drought in the region. The budget for this was reallocated to emergency water trucking.

c)“Support the decentralisation process, including the devolution of responsibility for management and decision-making to local authorities and the active participation of traditional institutions”

This objective is mainly covered by outputs k) and l), but must also be characterized as an activity, and thus being on a lower level in the results chain (i.e. being an activity). Training of both woreda staff and traditional clan leaders has been carried out in three woredas, namely Aba’ala (AIPDP), Semu-Robi (FARM-Africa) and Adadley (OWDA). In Semu-Robi, training has been carried out, including on decentralization. Both clan leaders and woreda administrators also participated on the program study trip that was carried out to REST in Tigray. Creating relationships of trust and confidence between woreda level and traditional leaders is considered as key for achieving synergies between the two levels. As a result of the activities that have been carried out, it has been observed that community members increasingly are taking leadership roles in project activities. High turnover of woreda administrative staff is however a risk for the achievement of this objective.

d)“Enhance the active participation of local communities, including women, with the support of NGOs and CBOs”

By partnering with local NGOs and CBOs, DF has capacitated civil society with funds, training and a network of partners. Establishing local development committees has been another strategy to strengthen local communities and stimulate their active participation in project activities. In all partner projects different committees, including pastoral development committees, women are represented and participate in decision making. Women have not participated in joint meetings with men before the project intervention. Whether women’s voices actually have had influence on decision-making in these meetings is however a bit uncertain, as Afar women traditionally do not have the right to speak in communal meetings. Still, women representatives in Semu-Robi claimed that “after FARM-Africa came women have become more brave and outspoken”, indicating that FARM Africa’s capacity building in organizational skills have strengthened women’s ‘voices’ in the local communities.

Various cooperatives have also been established by the partner organizations. Many of the cooperatives are engaged in activities of livestock marketing, fattening dairy, shopping, vegetable production and mat production. Many of the community members have benefited from being organized under cooperatives, e.g. some of the cooperatives working with APDA have already started to share the dividend. With access to credit it may also have contributed to the culture of saving and developing innovative ideas for small businesses. Moreover, being organized also creates an enabling environment to address other social and political issues in the communities. The different cooperative activities have been also been supplemented with revolving funds. In Afar, where the government budget is limited, and where no microfinance institutions have been established and the environment is characterized by recurrent drought, revolving fund seems like an appropriate approach.

3.1.2 The Use of results in Policy-Making

DF has had an active strategy on publicising results and sharing information on the projects in the public debate in Norway, particularly in relation to the climate change adaptation debate, where DF has had a leading role nationally through its “More than rain” report⁶ elaborated in collaboration with the Global Environmental Change and Human Security (GECHS) project, where the DF program in Tigray is one of the case studies. The UNCCD program was also considered as one potential case study in the report.

On the UNCCD agenda, DF impact has been limited, both in Norway and in Ethiopia. The main reason for this is according to DF that the Program is still young, in addition to a principle that the partners themselves should articulate their vision for pastoral development. In addition, it should be recognized that civil society in Ethiopia is relatively weak in terms of policy influence. There has also been a policy vacuum in the program since the termination of the Embassy’s role as *chef de file* for UNCCD implementation. The 2008 annual report states that the Director of DF Norway participated at UNCCD

⁶ <http://utviklingsfondet.no/filestore/MoreThanRain2ndeditionWebsize2.pdf>

CRIC-7 held in Istanbul in late October 2008. In 2009 a staff member of EPA and board member of DCG have participated on UNCCD COP in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The experiences from these meetings have reportedly been fed back into the program, while practical lessons from the program have been shared and disseminated at the meetings.

3.2 Financial Status of the Program

The main source for this assessment has been the steering program documents (see *Section 2.1*) and the Annual Reports 2008-09, in which accounts for the years 2007-2009 are given. Since the accounting for 2009 was not yet ready by the time of the review, this section refers to financial status as of 31 December 2008. Other sources of written economic/financial information have been Minutes from Program Meetings, and the Contracts between DF and its partners, in addition to yearly and semi-yearly reports from the DF partners.

According to the 2008 Financial Report, most of the allocated funds have been disbursed, with some minor deviations. Assessing the work actually done, it is the Team's overall impression that the expenditures are close to the budget with only minor (and acceptable) deviations. The technical progress in the Program so far also indicates that the total budget will not be exceeded by the end of the Program. DF also seems to follow-up the partners closely and in a satisfactory way in terms of budgeting, accounting and financial management.

On project level it has been difficult to get a full overview of the financial reporting, due to high number of partners and lack of a uniform reporting system. DF is however currently developing a uniform reporting system across the board.

3.3 Review of Standard Evaluation Elements

3.3.1 Introduction

Below follows a brief assessment of the standard evaluation elements as referred to in the Program and Project Cycle management Manual used by Norad, and specifically asked for in the ToR of the Review Team, including effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and relevance.

As mentioned earlier, the program has not been designed according to the LFA concept, and the assessment will therefore not be done stringently based on this. The assessment is also made on an overall program level, and does therefore not include assessments of single Program activities and projects as such.

3.3.2 Effectiveness

The *effectiveness* largely describes the project progress as compared to the work plans and budgets, and the extent to which the targets (outputs) and objectives have been achieved so far. The prospect of achievement within the remaining project period is also relevant in this case.

As there are two years left of the Program, it is difficult to make a proper assessment of the effectiveness. Obviously, the first year(s) of such program will be spent on establishing the project camps, installing equipment, training staff, establishing routines, training of stakeholders, constructing infrastructure, etc. As DF is working in an extremely difficult environment and with many weak and small partners, the importance of having a long-term perspective on development in these areas should be underlined.

For most of the Program activities it can be concluded, that by and large annual work plans so far have been fulfilled. As to the question of whether the outputs will be reached by the end of the Program, it seems clear that most targets will be met. On a higher level it is however presently more unclear whether

the program objectives (purposes) will be reached as a consequence of the interventions. For some categories of intervention (i.e. irrigation, agricultural schemes, and livestock marketing) it seems of various (already mentioned) reasons unclear whether these actually will lead to the successful fulfilment of target objectives (i.e. improved livelihood). For other objectives such as such as active local participation and supporting decentralization processes, success seems to be within reach.

DF has pursued a bottom-up and evolutionary approach to program development, thereby adjusting to the local reality of scattered presence and weak capacity of local partners, which has led to the current portfolio composition. A concern for the Team has however been the issue of thematic and geographic proliferation of the Program activities, potentially being a risk to the overall performance and efficient use of resources. A weak programmatic approach might be critical for the successful achievement of the overall program objectives. For the rest of the program phase, efforts should be put into creating stronger formal and informal links between program components and partners in order to create more cooperation and synergies between them.

3.3.3 Efficiency

Efficiency is a measure of productivity, meaning comparing inputs against outputs. The term involves the assessment of achievements/results as compared to the input of resources.

As two years still remain of the Program, the Team must also in this case make some reservations as to the fulfilment of outputs. However, it is clear that most of the outputs are delivered (or assumed to be delivered) according to plans, like establishment of irrigation schemes, water harvesting structures, cooperatives, training carried out, etc. Some outputs are however difficult to assess at this stage, e.g. “access to clean drinking water for humans and livestock improved”, “women’s livelihoods improved”, etc. For these “outputs” DF has thus far reported number of *birkas*, cisterns, ponds, etc., constructed, without saying anything about whether access to drinking water actually has been improved as a consequence of these efforts.

Still, the overall impression of the Team is that the input in terms of man-hours and budget to the Program, so far has given “value for money”. As discussed under 3.3.2, it could however been questioned whether increased geographic and thematic focus of activities could stimulate more synergies, and in turn increase the efficient use of funds and inputs. This has however, according to DF, so far not been possible within the time frame of the program.

3.3.4 Impact

Impact is a measure of all positive and negative consequences/effects of the Project, whether planned for and expected, foreseen or not foreseen, direct or indirect. Such effects could be economic, political, social, technical or environmental, both on local and national level.

Based on the assessment of progress in Chapter 3.1 the Team notes that the Program has had demonstrated impacts at local levels, even though a detailed baseline is lacking. The counterfactual situation for the Program on an aggregate level is therefore unclear.

Resulting from the Review, the Team also wants to list the following obvious impacts (that have materialised or will most likely materialise), beyond the ones being part of the Program:

- The training of the project staff seems to have been adequate, holding a relatively high standard.
- The Program has created a few jobs for local employees in program area.
- Some of the Program activities seem to have had some negative impacts on pastoralist mobility, as many project activities most likely will imply some form of sedentarisation of beneficiaries, e.g. in relation to irrigation schemes, agriculture, and possibly also water points (see point 2.6. above).

Considering the high number of partners and wide geographical and thematic distribution of activities, the Team has some concerns on the overall impact of positive impacts of the Program. Will the activities in the long run “add-up” in order to reach the Program’s overall objectives?

As already mentioned DF is working with a range of different NGOs and CBOs, ranging from small local to international NGOs, weak to strong. The different organizations have different capacities both in terms of implementation and competences, which in turn might have implications for the actual impacts of the different activities and projects. It is the Team’s perception that the smaller organizations could profit from closer collaboration with the larger and supposedly stronger partners of the Program. Some of the partners also have competences that could also be of direct use for the other partner organizations. For example FARM Africa has developed deep rooted experiences in natural resources management (NRM) especially on *prosopis*. Similarly, APDA has experiences on cooperatives and pastoral education, SSD on small-scale irrigation, SEA on pollution and safety, and PFE on advocacy and lobbying. More work could be done to see how the comparative advantages of the different partners could be used more strategically for the benefit of the whole Program.

Finally, it should be noted that the long-term impacts are difficult to assess in this case, as the Program is still ongoing. Even though the Team has observed some challenges related to the design of a coherent Program portfolio, it should also be recognized that working on pastoral development in this challenging environment would demand long term perspective and commitment. It is therefore important that the Program has a long term perspective and at the same time has as a key strategy to stimulate higher degree of synergies and cooperation between the Program partners, and also to link up with other development agencies active in the two regions.

3.3.5 Relevance

Relevance is a measure of whether the original rationale behind the Project still is in keeping with the priorities of the national and local policy, priorities and needs, and the usefulness of the Project in this respect. The aspect covers the direction of the Project as compared to possible social and political changes that have materialised since the programme start-up.

a) National development policies

The main goal of the Program is “the implementation of the UNCCD in Afar and Somali regions of Ethiopia”. Currently the UNCCD agenda in Ethiopia has transformed into a national investment framework for SLM, and effective implementation restricted by the inadequate integration of the UNCCD NAP into the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, called Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). The UNCCD can therefore not be said to be the most important policy framework for drylands development and reduced land degradation in Ethiopia. The focus on the UNCCD can therefore not be seen as a direct response to national priorities and demands of Ethiopia, but rather as part of Norway’s follow-up of own commitments to support and finance the UNCCD implementation in dryland areas of Africa.

The DF activities are still very relevant in relation to national development priorities outlined in the PASDEP, Food Security Strategy (FSS), and the Agricultural Led industrialization (ADLI). In addition, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) has recently become a key policy framework for agricultural and drylands development in Ethiopia, however currently with little focus on pastoralism and pastoral interests, besides from what is stated in the PASDEP. This will be discussed more in detail below under c) “Regional priorities – Africa”.

b) Norwegian Policy & Priorities

Norwegian development policy is guided by the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The projects supported by the DF through the Program are relevant for contributing directly to this implementation, including MDGs 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7. Supporting developing countries in implementing the UNCCD is also an expressed priority in the Norwegian Action Plan for Environment in Development Cooperation⁷. For Africa, the plan also gives priority to the development of climate change adaptation strategies, and the DF UNCCD Program must also be considered as very relevant in this regard.

As the DF UNCCD Program also is a direct response to Norwegian priorities, the degree of congruence with official Norwegian policy and priorities must be characterized as high. At the overriding level, there is nearly complete convergence between the priorities of the DF Program and those of the Embassy. Support to civil society is also a point of policy convergence. The DF not only is an NGO, it also works primarily with NGO partners and contributes to strengthening civil society in Ethiopia.

c) Regional priorities – Africa

Since the Maputo declaration by the African Union Heads of States and Governments in 2003, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) has become the central focus of efforts by African governments under the AU/NEPAD initiative to accelerate growth and alleviate hunger among African countries. The main goal of CAADP is to help African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculturally-led development which alleviates hunger, reduces poverty and food and nutrition insecurity, and enables expansion of exports. COMESA⁸ has been mandated to coordinate and harmonize implementation in the eastern and southern region as a partner with national authorities of AU/NEPAD.

Ethiopia just recently (August 2009) endorsed the CAADP Compact. The focus of the CAADP process in Ethiopia is to strengthen and add value to the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) under the ongoing PASDEP. Even though pastoralism and drylands agriculture are not concretely mentioned in the CAADP Compact, the Team considers the DF program very relevant for pillars II and III of the CAADP Compact, namely “Improve rural infrastructure, market access and trade capacities” and “Enhance food security and improve disaster risk management”. Specific programs under the PASDEP have also been developed to support pastoral areas of Ethiopia, including for the Afar and Somali regions. The PASDEP programs for pastoralists include provision of clean water supply, livestock development, and provision of marketing through improvements of infrastructure and social services, well in line with the DF activities.

Currently the donor finance for the CAADP process comes primarily from a CAADP Multi-donor Trust Fund managed by the WB. Bilateral donors may however also in parallel decide to focus specific CAADP countries. The in-country CAADP processes will be lead by a CAADP country team, and Agriculture Donor Working Groups (ADWG) will lead and coordinate country level donor support for the process nationally. The ADWG will work closely with the CAADP country team and liaising with stakeholders from government, private sector and civil society.

The CAADP framework intends to take a comprehensive approach to agriculture, requiring cross-sectoral approach by donors. It is however not clear whether and how marginal dryland agriculture and pastoralism, and SLM in general, will be targeted through the CAADP. The role of civil society is also a bit unclear. The Team would therefore encourage the Embassy to take an active role in also providing donor support for sustainable dryland management in the CAADP framework for Ethiopia, including drylands agriculture and pastoralism. As a key development actor in Afar (and to some degree also in Somali region), DF should also link up with the national ADWG (once established?) in order to promote pastoral values and interests within the Ethiopian CAADP Compact.

⁷ <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Documents/Reports-programmes-of-action-and-plans/Action-plans-and-programmes/2006/norwegian-action-plan-for-environment-in.html?id=420455>

⁸ Common Market for Eastern- and Southern Africa.

3.3.6 Sustainability

Sustainability is a measure of whether the positive effects (or assumed measurable effects) of the Project is likely to continue after the external support is concluded, meaning: will the programme process lead to long term benefits. This is indeed for most projects, may be the most important element to be assessed, so also in this case.

Below, the brief assessment of various aspects of sustainability is presented:

Technical Sustainability. Equipment purchased by the different program partners is reportedly in daily use, and few technical problems have so far been reported. However, during the review mission it was observed that for some of the project activities there seems to be some challenges related to the appropriateness of applied technologies. For instance, installations constructed for water harvesting in Semu-Robi are likely to face serious maintenance problems due to chosen design, which might not be very adapted to the local precipitation and silting conditions. In addition, the pumps for pump irrigation need constant maintenance, and problems with fuel provision were reported by some beneficiaries. Even though the project is benefiting from water technicians from the neighbouring woreda, efficient ways of maintaining the system in a more sustainable way should be carefully looked into by DF and FARM-Africa jointly. Options of information sharing and cooperation between partners that have more experience on certain issues, such as water harvesting and irrigation, should also be explored in order to avoid such problems.

The Afar communities also have deep rooted experiences on NRM under mobility, and yet little consideration has been given in the Program to the documentation of such experiences. Issues on NRM, enclosures, diversity of livestock species are some to be mentioned in this regard. Introduction of modern animal health services is helpful, but considering local community knowledge is equally important. Some research findings indicate that the Afar community has deep rooted experiences in treating their livestock with from different tree species.⁹ The use of indigenous veterinary practice is important and need to be integrated with modern vet practices for addressing the needs of pastoralists.

Organizational capacity of DF-Ethiopia. Historically DF has not had any residence representation in Ethiopia. DF used to manage the Ethiopian portfolio through the principles of mutual trust, good communication and regular monitoring visits to partners in the field.¹⁰

After the establishment of the Country Office in 2007, DF has strengthened its manpower to include seven people working full time (including the country representative). The educational background and experience on pastoralism from the country representative and project manager has been an added value to the UNCCD program. Recently an additional program officer, with rural development background has been hired.

The job descriptions for all DF professional staff indicate multiple functions. Generally the core activities of DF include identification of partners, screening and approval of project proposals, conducting capacity building, field monitoring and evaluation, organizing of workshops, annual meetings, arranging experience sharing, supervision of field activities, compilation of progress reports and documentation and dissemination of best practices, contact with donors and government, etc. Moreover, DF is also a board member of Drylands Coordination Group Ethiopia.

In addition to the UNCCD Program, DF also has other ongoing projects and activities to follow-up in the country, including the Program in Tigray on integrated agriculture. It is the Team's perception that the follow-up of the UNCCD program and other DF partners is very demanding, also considering the limited

⁹ Scoones, I. and A. Andrew (2009): Pastoral innovation systems: Perspectives from Ethiopia and Kenya, Institute of Development studies, Brighton, UK.

¹⁰ Walters-Bayer, A. Torstensen, and GM Yohannes (2005): Review of the Norwegian Development Fund Portfolio in Ethiopia.

capacities of many of the new partners. Nevertheless, all of the partners the Team met with underlined the good quality of DF in communication and flexibility in reporting. The regional bureaus also acknowledged DF's strengths in working with the most reliable and high quality partners in the region.

Still, considering the current size and capacity of DF Ethiopia and the current size and geographical composition of the Program portfolio, it is the Team's views that the Program has now reached a critical level where there is little room for expanding the number of partners and activities. It would even be advisable that DF looks into ways of decreasing the size, and create cooperation between partners in order to create synergies and pool resources more efficiently.

Environmental Sustainability. On environment, the program contains a number of activities that potentially may have a negative impact on the environment, including small scale irrigation, river diversions, and well construction. The team assumes that these activities are considered as being of such a scale and nature that in-depth Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) is not needed. Nevertheless, these arguments have not been seen stated anywhere in the key program documents reviewed. It is therefore recommended that the documentation part of environmental assessment in relation to the DF program activities is strengthened. In line with the recent Climate Change and Environment Review of the Embassy's portfolio, DF could be encouraged to develop an environmental manual with specific guidelines on how interventions should be undertaken in different contexts.

Pastoral values and the issue of mobility. Generally the pastoralists' livelihoods are highly depending on natural resources, mainly for pasture and water. Accordingly, the different partners' project activities including livestock and crop production, development of social infrastructure, natural resource management and institution building are directly addressing the needs and priorities of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. The Team in general agrees with DF strategy of diversifying livelihoods as the most appropriate strategy for achieving increased resilience for pastoralists in the Program areas. However, considering that the interventions are carried out in the context of a pastoralist system, the interventions might have their limitations and may possibly cause undesired impacts. The point of departure for the activities should be the deep-rooted understanding of the pastoralist way of life in arid and semi-arid environments. For some of the observed activities, the Team questions whether the DF partners have sufficiently internalized the concept of pastoralism. How do the different interventions complement pastoralism or mobility with the principle of territorial fluidity and reciprocity? Usually mobility is equated with lack of water and pasture. Pastoralists also move from place to place to fulfil different cultural requirements and also protect against livestock disease, conflicts and other natural and man made hazards. The issue might be further complicated in attempt to document the best practices. For example in a study on the impacts of the of Ethiopian pastoralist day commemoration, different stakeholders (government, NGOs and community) working in pastoral areas were asked to identify the best practices in their operational areas. For the government institutions by and large the "best practices" in pastoral and agro-pastoral were related to the adoption of introduced technologies, while the pastoralist communities themselves that the "best practices" were related to the level of practicing reciprocity, tolerance and mobility¹¹. With such conceptual differences on pastoral development, sustainable development might be difficult to achieve. It would be recommendable that in order to develop the most appropriate and sustainable interventions, decision-making should be based on in –depth knowledge about the system (through applied research), and not only on community request.

Economic/Financial Sustainability. Injecting funds and competence into cooperatives and business groups at the community and household level might prove to be a very relevant strategy to increase income and decrease community and household vulnerabilities to droughts and other crisis. According to DF many of these groups show early signs of profit-making and are already in a position to continue their business without external support.

It is however unlikely that the services provided by DF partners will be superfluous in the near future.

¹¹ Yohannes Gebre-Michael 2009: Impact assessment of the Ethiopian Pastoralist Day Commemoration (1999-2008), Commissioned by Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE), July, 2009 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Fund raising capacity would therefore be essential for these organizations to continue their activities without DF support. With the exception of APDA, IDPAC, SSD and OWDA, few of DF's local partners receive financial support from other donors. Few of the NGOs/CBOs also have sufficient fund raising experience and capacities. While some of the DF partners in Afar and Somali only have DF support others have several sources of fund support. For example APDA has more than 15 different donors supporting different thematic areas, while an organisation like Safe Environment Association (SEA) only has a single donor (i.e. DF). This has also implications to the complexity of activities and fund management of the DF partners. Fund raising capacities need to be increased among partners in order to make them more independent of DF support. Phasing out of DF support would most likely lead to a collapse of many partners and their activities. The absence of pooled resources from the donors has also contributed to weaken the holistic approach among some of the DF partners that have multiple funding sources. It is the Team's view that other donors in the program areas could be more actively integrated and included in the information sharing activities of the Program, e.g. UNDP was invited for the 2009 yearly meeting where results achieved so far were presented.

Even though the Team has identified issues with the overall sustainability of the Program, again it would be relevant here to stress the need for having a long-term perspective on development activities in this difficult environment, and the need for pooling resources and link up with other relevant partners in order to scale up the efforts of drylands development in the two program regions.

3.4 Particular Aspects

3.4.1 Reporting

a) Technical Progress Reporting

The status and progress of the Program is described in the *Annual and semi-Annual Reports* to the Embassy. These have in general been regular and timely, and are orderly set up and give a short, but to the point, overview of status of work and outputs.

The work plans have also been regular and timely, giving a good overview of the different partners' planned activities and outputs. It is however the Team's perception that the work plans more specifically could categorize activities within the overall objectives framework of the program so that planned progress could be seen on a more aggregate outcome level.

b) Financial Progress Reporting

The Program has been audited by an independent auditor and found to be in compliance with international standards. The Team has therefore not evaluated the financial statements as such, but instead looked at the overall disbursements according to the budget for each Partner. The Review Team also concludes that there has been proper guidance from DF as to how the financial reporting should be undertaken. Capacities on financial management among partners have been increased. However, mainstreaming of financial reporting at partners' level could be improved.

c) Information sharing. Workshops, Seminars, and publications

DF has arranged annual and semi-annual meetings where partners are attending, progress reports are presented, new partners defending their projects, and where experiences are shared and issues of common interest are discussed. The Embassy is also attending these meetings, and at the June 2009 annual meeting UNDP also attended to learn more about what DF is doing in the field. DF has also drawn upon its experiences in other program areas, e.g. a study trip to Tigray and REST was carried out in 2008 where partners and some stakeholders were invited to learn more about what DF and its partners are doing in Tigray.

DF has published articles both in Norwegian and Ethiopian newspapers on the experiences from the UNCCD program. Moreover, DCG-Ethiopia has also published several research findings on UNCCD and pastoral issues, though not directly building on the DF experiences. DF being a DCG board member could potentially facilitate the Program partners to take more advantage of the financial and technical

support DCG could offer them. DCG-Ethiopia has also never been invited in the semi and annual meetings of the Program, which could have been an added value to both parties.

3.4.2 Transfer of Knowledge. Capacity Building

Transfer of knowledge has taken place both through training and courses by DF staff and through on-the-job training. DF partners also carry out a continuous training of pastoral development committees. The Ethiopian project staff in all areas showed a good basic knowledge of the Program and the tasks to be undertaken. Training of staff both at DF and with partners thus seems to have been successful. It is still the Team's perception that training of partners' staff mostly has been on the level of individuals and has not targeted institutional development as such. Training of individuals alone is not enough to ensure institutional development. The trained staff may eventually leave the organization and thus leave it vulnerable to loss of institutional memory. In the long run DF and DF partners should aim at establishing ongoing internal training programs, mainstreamed decision-making processes, management approaches, and well-defined compliance strategies and tools, etc. that can compliment individual training in order to achieve successful institutional development.

3.4.3 Interaction with Other Sector Programmes and Projects

DF does currently not formally collaborate with other programmes and projects in the regions, except from that DF in some occasions has tried to link partners involved in emergency support in the two regions, e.g. FAO and UNICEF. However there will probably be direct interaction with the planned upcoming UNDP program on SLM in the near future, with potential synergies and co-benefits between the two programs. In the process of elaborating its program, UNDP has also used DF as a strategic partner for information sharing and collaboration. It is truly not an easy task to get an overview development agencies presence both Afar and Somali, and more work needs to be done on the networking, and analysis of who is doing what, particularly in Afar where DF has many partners and is involved in many activities. This will help to avoid duplications and develop effective strategic planning. This could potentially also identify potential new collaborating partners to join efforts and scale up work on SLM in dryland areas of Afar and Somali.

3.4.4 Gender Aspects

Women and women issues have an explicit focus in the central Program steering documents. By and large project activities carried out by the partner organizations are based on baseline surveys, addressing community needs and priorities in general and women issues in particular. However, the Norad Gender Review of Embassy's portfolio carried out in January 2009¹² concluded that no specific gender analysis had been included in the program and no gender baseline indicators established for the program on an aggregate level.

It is however the Team's perception that at least some of the Program partners have carried out gender analysis in the baseline reports, though not with a strategic focus on developing gender sensitive indicators for project evaluation and monitoring. E.g. the FARM-Africa baseline contains sound analysis of women's positions in the society, and possible entry points for good and gender sensitive interventions, access to credit and nearness to water being the most crucial ones.

Many of the program activities carry out work related to what was reported as "expressed needs of women in the project planning". For instance the established cooperatives dealing with livestock marketing, dairy products, vegetables, mat production and multi-purpose cooperatives do have a focus on stimulating women business. The revolving fund and the saving and credit mechanism are reportedly also influencing the livelihood of women in a positive way (though no verifiable data are currently available on this). Also in the pastoralist development committees mandated to manage and implements the different project activities at grassroots level both women and men are represented. This

¹² Norad 2009: Gender Review: Mainstreaming Gender in the Development Portfolio of the Norwegian Embassy in Ethiopia. In *Norad Report 5/2009 Discussion*. Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Oslo.

empowerment in leadership has reportedly been an opportunity for women to address their needs and priorities. Similarly the intervention with traditional birth attendances and traditional harmful practices is an opportunity for the intermarriage of women's deep rooted local experiences and modern ideas.

At project management level, there is few female staff directly involved in the follow-up of the project activities, mainly due few women applicants for such positions. This may still hamper the effective interaction with women in project implementation. Similarly at the woreda level and kebele level there are no female employees to support the women related activities. DF could maybe also profit from having a gender expert at its country office, and not only at the main office in Norway, even though it is DF's policy to have staff doing multiple jobs and not recruit staff for each thematic issue.

3.4.5 Anti-corruption

Anti-corruption is not emphasized in the main steering documents of the Program. The Team has however no indications that any irregularities have taken place in this regard. DF is also following-up the partners' accounts both for control purpose and capacity building. The little procurement that has been carried out for consultancy services by some partners (e.g. SSD and FARM-Africa) has reportedly also been carried out according to national laws and regulations, which are of comparatively high standards. Considering the complexity and high number of partners, it would however be recommended that DF increases the focus even further on transparency and anti-corruption in the Program.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 *Main Findings. Conclusions*

The following listing summarises the program characteristics and main findings referred to earlier in the report:

- Regarding the **program design**:
 - The PP gives a good overview of the program and its approach. Currently there are however inconsistencies between the PP, AD and the Agreement that are potential sources of confusion and misunderstanding. Preferably these inconsistencies should have been updated to reflect the changes made in the AD and the Agreement in the late stages of the Program planning phase.
 - The Team has also identified some gaps in the Program's results framework. It is the Team's perception that the main framework including the Program goal, purposes and outputs should be revisited in order to make them more operational and more logically linked to each other. Strategic indicators linked to a Program baseline should also have been established for the Program at an aggregate level.
- **Program status assessment**:
 - Progress is by and large on schedule. Considering DF relatively newly established office and the time the UNCCD Program has been in place, much has been achieved in terms of carried out activities, outputs achieved and number of new partners identified. DF is also perceived to be a high quality partner by the partners, providing close follow-up and giving partners high degree of flexibility in project planning and reporting. In conclusion, considering the challenging context, working environment and short period of time, both DF and DF partners have made remarkable progress and achievements in a short period of time.
 - Total expenditures of funds were with some minor deviations, more or less as planned per 31.12.2008.
 - Caveats: Event though it is too early to conclude anything on impacts of the Program, a weak programmatic focus in the Program is by the Team perceived to be a risk factor for the overall positive impacts of the Program. Most of partners' lack of fund raising capacities and lack of clear exiting strategy are main risk factors for Program sustainability. However, it should be stressed that DF is working in an extremely difficult environment, and long-term perspective on development work in this context should be aimed for.
- **Competence and performance**: Technically the competence of staff and quality of work seems good, but perceived to be vulnerable due to a general high turnover of staff in Ethiopia. The annual and semi-annual reporting has also been timely and regular, however the Team recommends that the reporting should aim at becoming more outcome oriented on actual development achievements of the program. Otherwise the understanding of the Program in general seems satisfactory at all levels.
- **Financial progress reporting**: Of acceptable quality in general, but lack of a conform reporting system for Program partners makes it difficult to measure efficiency of spending compared to planned programme results.
- **Capacity building and training**: Training of staff both at DF and with partners seems also to have been successful, but it is the Team's perception that training has mostly been on the level of individuals and has not targeted institutional development as such. Training of individuals alone is not enough to ensure institutional development. The trained staff may eventually leave the organization and thus leave it vulnerable to loss of institutional memory. Other factors such as an established ongoing internal training program, mainstreamed decision-making processes, management approaches, well-defined compliance strategies and tools, etc. must compliment individual training in order to achieve successful institutional development.
- **Lack of clear focus**: The number of partners, activities and woredas currently covered in the Program is high and a lack of clear focus both in terms of geography and thematic areas is a perceived risk for the overall performance of the Program. It would be recommended that DF

aims at stimulating higher degree of cooperation, and creating synergies between partners and activities. Leaders for thematic and geographic areas – e.g. APDA for Cooperatives, SSD for irrigation – could also be identified. This could in the long run also relieve DF's following-up of Program partners in the field.

- **Environmental aspects:** Crucial environmental and social issues related to infrastructure development have not been addressed in many of the program activities. In order to follow-up this, DF could develop and implement environmental guidelines on how interventions should be undertaken in different contexts in order to avoid the most critical negative consequences of infrastructure development.
- **Gender aspects:** Women and women issues have an explicit focus in the central Program steering documents, and women are also included in at least some of the key program activities, particularly the trading and cooperative components. It would however be recommended that more gender specific baseline studies are carried out and that gender baseline indicators are established for the program on an aggregate level. More women in project staff (and also in DF main office) could also stimulate more efficient interaction with women at project level.
- **Anti-Corruption:** No particular focus is on anti-corruption in the main steering documents of the program. Corruption in general is perceived to be less in Ethiopia than in other comparable countries. DF seems to have generally good routines for following-up partners and their accounts. Procurement has also been carried out according to national standards, which reportedly are very strict even compared to Norwegian conditions. Still, considering the complexity and high number of partners, it would be recommended that DF increases the focus even more on transparency and anti-corruption in the program.
- **Cooperation with policy-makers:** At the policy level, the impact of DF's work has been limited both because the program is still young and because DF has a commitment that the partners themselves should articulate and advocate their vision for pastoral development. It should also be recognized that civil society in Ethiopia is relatively weak in terms of policy influence. DF's role in policy making nationally in Ethiopia was even more undermined after the termination of Embassy's role as *chef de file* for the UNCCD implementation in Ethiopia.
- **Safeguarding pastoral values.** For some of the observed activities, the Team questions whether all DF partners have sufficiently internalized the concept of pastoralism. This seems to have had some potentially negative impacts on pastoralist mobility, as many project activities most likely will imply some form of sedentarisation of beneficiaries, e.g. in relation to irrigation schemes, agriculture, and possibly also water points. Interventions such as promoting agriculture and area enclosures should not only be based on community request, but also on in-depth studies and knowledge about the local pastoral system(s).

4.2 Recommendations for Program Continuation

For DF:

- **Need to develop a comprehensive plan for monitoring and evaluation, including streamlining of results framework, strategic indicators and baseline.** As the result framework stands now the program will face serious challenges on reporting on actual outcomes at end of programme period. A 'results management' exercise where all partners are invited to participate, and where a comprehensive results framework and monitoring and evaluation plan are developed could be useful, not only for the monitoring and evaluation itself, but also for developing the partners' ownership to - and understanding of - the Program.
- **Update of Program's risk analysis.** DF should 1) carry out its own risk identifying exercise; 2) analyze the risk factors (including the likelihood of occurrence and potential consequences; 3) suggest measures to avoid the risks or mitigation measures; 4) reveal whether the design of the Program is robust enough to achieve its planned results in the presence of the uncertainty and risk.
- **Capacity building should go beyond individual training.** Establishing ongoing internal

- training programs, mainstreamed decision-making processes, management approaches, well-defined compliance strategies and tools, etc. could compliment individual training in order to achieve successful and sustainable institutional development.
- **Need for a more strategic focus.** In the long run DF should aim at higher strategic focus of the Program. Cooperation and synergies between partners and activities could stimulate higher performance and a more programmatic approach. DF could also consider to define leaders for thematic areas e.g., APDA for Cooperatives and pastoral education, SSD for irrigation and FARM-Africa for integrated development. Thematic resource persons/experts could also be identified to be present at regular programme meetings, and give some critics and advise on selected issues.
 - **Linking up with research and scientific institutions.** The links to research could be stronger in the Program. It would be recommended that DF looks into meaningful ways of continuing and expanding the cooperation and link the research capacities of the Mekelle University to the other partners and activities in the Program. The new Semera University in Afar could in the long run also be a potential link to research and scientific knowledge about dryland farming and pastoral issues. The Team does however consider the capacities of the Semera University currently to be too low to have an added-value to the Program. Substantial capacity building and institution building of the university is needed before such collaboration would be feasible. The Program could also benefit from a closer link and collaboration with the DCG. Both DF and DCG could benefit from a strengthened collaboration.
 - **DF's capacities.** DF has in a short time established an operational office in Ethiopia. The staff size and composition is however by the Team perceived to be vulnerable to turnover of staff. If number of small and weak partners increases, there is also a need to strengthen capacities of the DF staff. Alternatively tasks could be outsourced to key partner institutions, when (and if) these are considered to have an acceptable level of capacities to have such responsibilities.
 - **An out-phasing strategy needed.** Even though sustainability of program is not very likely in the short run, long- term sustainability and exit strategy should be elaborated. Strengthening of partners' fund raising capacities is seen as a key in this work in order for the partners to get more diversified sources of funds.

For the Embassy:

- **Agree on level of ambitions for Program.** DF and the Embassy should jointly agree on the level of Program ambition, i.e. continued strategic partnership on SLM/pastoral development or DF program only?
- **Long-term perspective crucial.** To have positive impacts and achieve sustainable development in pastoral areas, one has to have a not long-term perspective of at least 10-15 years. Given that pastoral development will continue to be a prioritized field for and provided that the program shows acceptable progress towards the objectives and main goal, it would make sense for the Embassy to extend the collaboration to a second phase.
- **Need for combined efforts in order to scale up.** And last but not least, in order to scale up activities to really achieve sustainable development results among pastoralists in the two Regions, there is a need for combined efforts between government, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors. DF as an NGO is not in a position do this alone. The Embassy could play a key role here in mobilize other donors and linking DF's activities to key national and regional efforts for rural development, including CAADP and TerrAfrica. Norway is also in position to influence decision-making in international organizations in order ensure political support for pastoral policies that are 'bankable'. If this is the way the Embassy wants to follow, Norad should assist the Embassy in this work.

ANNEX 1:

Mid-Term Review of Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme

Terms of Reference

1. Background

Development Fund (DF) is an independent non-government organization (NGO) founded in 1978. DF supports development projects through local partners in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with a focus on sustainable management of natural resources. The organisation has a focus on working at the grassroots level with national and international policy work, and with a strong emphasis on both environment and sustainable development.

DF's basic values are solidarity, diversity, justice, and participation. The mission of DF is to contribute, with emphasis on long-term measures, to promoting a fairer distribution of the world's resources, supporting sustainable development and local participation aimed at promoting democracy and human rights, reducing poverty and safeguarding the environment. This will be pursued by:

- Actively supporting and entering into partnerships with poor people and their organisations in low- and middle-income countries, and promoting sustainable development in general. DF will focus on projects in rural areas, addressing food security and environmental management, in addition to organisational development, networking and support for civil society.
- Actively informing and influencing public opinion, in Norway as well as internationally, in favour of the environment and democracy, promoting changes in the global structures that prevent a fair distribution of the world's resources.

DF has for more than two decades received financial contributions from Norwegian development assistance funds through NORAD. From January 2005, the administrative and financial responsibility for Norwegian support to DF's work in Ethiopia was shifted from NORAD to the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) in Addis Ababa as part of the newly established arrangement of strategic partnerships between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Embassies) and Norwegian development NGOs.

DF started its support to Ethiopian partners in 1982 through cross-border operations into Tigray region. Until 1998, DF concentrated its support to Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and Women's Association of Tigray (WAT), but it was decided to expand the portfolio into neighboring Afar region. The first project to be initiated there was the Afar Integrated Pastoral Development Project (AIPDP) in Aba'ala woreda through a partnership with Mekelle University. Later, DF also started working with Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA), which at that time was the only local NGO in Afar, as well as with FARM-Africa in Semu Robi woreda, with Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE) at the national level, and with Ogaden Welfare and Development Association (OWDA) in Somali region. By 2007, DF had built a strong pastoral profile in Ethiopia with a particular focus on Afar region and plans to expand in Somali region.

In parallel to the growth of the DF portfolio in Ethiopia, the Government of Norway had agreed to act as *chef de file* for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Ethiopia. The role as *chef de file* primarily involved policy lobbying in favor of the UNCCD agenda, but the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE), acting as *chef de file*, was also committed to provide direct financial support to NGOs and other partners (incl. Environmental Protection Authority, the UNCCD focal point) promoting sustainable land management in Ethiopia. To this end, RNE had approached the Drylands Coordination Group (DCG) for support in the practical implementation of the *chef de file* role. DCG had further delegated the assignment to the Development Fund (DF), a member of

DCG with an already existing strategic partnership agreement with RNE and with a newly established country office in Ethiopia. Against this backdrop, RNE entered an agreement with DF on November 22, 2007, for support to the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme. Despite earlier plans to incorporate a bilateral component (including support to Environmental Protection Authority), the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme emerged as a civil society programme following the termination of the *chef de file* assignment in October 2007.

The Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme contains a budget for continuing the partnership between DF and the existing partners (Mekelle University, APDA, FARM-Africa, PFE, and OWDA), as well as a budget for portfolio development (i.e. new partners and projects). The goal is stated as “Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Afar and Somali Regional States of Ethiopia”, under which there are four objectives (purpose) derived from the UNCCD text and the National Framework for Investments in Sustainable Land Management:

- Promote sustainable land management and improve pastoral livelihoods in the targeted woredas
- Develop strategies for poverty eradication and food security, including the establishment of alternative livelihood projects and the development of pastoral markets with particular focus on women
- Support the decentralisation process, including the devolution of responsibility for management and decision-making to local authorities and the active participation of traditional institutions
- Enhance the active participation of local communities, including women, with the support of NGOs and CBOs

2. Purpose of the review

The overall purpose of this review is to assess the progress towards the goal and to forward recommendations for the remaining phase of the Ethio-Norwegian UNCCD Programme. This includes assessing past performance and proposing concrete steps for further follow up. It is envisaged that the review findings and recommendations will provide a basis for learning by RNE and DF as well as by the partners.

The specific objectives of the review are:

- To assess the institutional and professional capacity of DF-Ethiopia to manage and develop the programme with a view to enhancing institutional learning.
- To assess the achievements and performance of the programme in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance, and to assess DF-Ethiopia’s strengths and weaknesses in these respects.
- To assess DF-Ethiopia’s planning processes and instruments, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems, and funding mechanisms. Specific recommendations are expected in respect of the DF-donor information flows, and the targets, indicators and (quantitative) monitoring necessary to judge performance.

The review shall in particular:

- Provide factual (quantitative and qualitative) information on the efficiency (the relationship of input to output) and effectiveness (the relationship of output to outcome) of the programme at the mid-term stage
- Provide information on DF-Ethiopia’s practices and strengths and weaknesses with respect to its potential for influence and dialogues with partners, including:
 - Criteria for partner selection
 - Initiation and planning systems
 - Capacity-building in partner organizations
 - Role and approach by DF and its partners related to decentralization and coordination with national, regional and local authorities
 - Anti-corruption measures
 - Gender policies
 - Models of participatory local development

- Assess the sustainability of the programme, including opportunities for phasing out or scaling down in some programme areas and the need for phasing in or scaling up in other programme areas.
- Assess the capacity and institutional sustainability of the partners, especially the effects of the institutional capacity building provided by DF.
- Assess the relevance of the programme in relation to Ethiopian federal and regional policies and strategies (including the Ethiopian Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management), as well as the bilateral priorities of Norwegian development cooperation with Ethiopia.
- Assess the composition of the portfolio with respect to geographical coverage (Afar versus Somali region), capacity and characteristics of the partners (small/weak versus big/strong, indigenous versus non-indigenous), 'ideology' of the partners (pastoralism versus farming), degree of government involvement (state versus NGO), and environment versus livelihood-orientation.
- Recommend and justify possible policy and operational changes in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

3. Scope of the assignment

The review shall cover the time period 2007-2009, but it should also draw upon the experience from the previous phase of collaboration with Mekelle University, APDA, FARM-Africa, PFE, and OWDA. Hence, the review team should refer to the findings and recommendations in the most recent external review of the DF portfolio in Ethiopia (2005) and in external and internal project reviews/evaluations. As this is a review and not an evaluation, the scope shall be limited to using existing documentation in assessing efficiency and effectiveness. However, the desk study will be complemented by a field mission to selected project sites.

4. Work process and method

A two-person review team, made up of one Ethiopian and one non-Ethiopian with considerable experience in planning, advising, monitoring and evaluating projects in Afar and Somali regions and/or other pastoral areas, will assess some key issues that have been identified as being of strategic importance for assessing past performance and planning future strategic directions (cf. section 2). This will be achieved through reviewing written documentation, such as previous reviews, evaluations, proposals and report, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews with relevant resource persons from RNE, DF, partners, donor agencies, NGOs, government bodies, academic institutions, and project beneficiaries. The length of field work will be approximately 10 days, and a debriefing session for the concerned stakeholders should be organized at the end of the field work period. The total number of working days for the review will be 21 days during the month of October 2009.

5. Reporting

The review is to conclude with a concise and well-documented report (maximum 30 pages, including an executive summary of no more than 3 pages) that describes the process of the review and presents the findings, recommendations and lessons learned. The draft of the report will be submitted to RNE and DF after the debriefing on the 21st day. The team will then get comments on the report within 10 days. The final report will be submitted one week after this.

6. Logistics

The review team will be responsible for arranging international and domestic air travel. DF will provide transportation in Afar. At least one monitoring and evaluation expert from each partner will work with the team at the respective project sites to facilitate the review process.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 14, 2009

ANNEX 2:**Contact persons and itinerary of the field trip**

Date/009	Location	Name	Organization
15	Addis	- Jørn Stave	DF
17 September	Addis	- Ababau Anage - Tibbu Checkole	EPA MOARD/extension
18 September	Addis	- Hadera G/Medhin - Mebratu Kifle	SEA PFE
23 September	Addis	- Ayele G/Mariam - Jørn Stave - Bente Nilson	DF DF Norwegian Embassy
26 September	Gewane	-Hamedu Ali (Manger) - 5 women - Alawis Ahmed - Zelalem G/Yesus - 3 women and 3 men (prosopis pod collection) - Clearance of prosopis for cultivation - 5 staff of cotton plantation	-DADAL -DADAL cooperative -FARM Africa -FARM Africa -Sedhu-fage cooperative -Bedlu Ali Kebele -LIUFC
27 September	Loggia Assaita	- Abdi Yosuf - Takele Engedawork - Sisay - Two men and one woman - Adane Boirie - Abdulkader Yosuf - Admasu Tasew	-APDA -APDA -APDA -Assita cooperative -Semera University
28 September	Logia Eleweha Dewe	- Tilahun Alem - Mohammed Ali - Ibrahim Ahmed - Getachew Kebede - Abdualkader Mohammed - 4 women - 6 people (staff)	-Food security Dept. -Early warning Unit -DPPB and FS (acting) -NGOs coordinator -IDPAC -Women cooperative -SSD
29 September	Dewe Semu-Robi	- Visit river diversion - 1 elder 2 women - 4 people (Staff)	-SSD -Community -FARM Africa
30 September	Semu-Robi Shewa-Robit	- 2 women and 4 men - 2 women and 3 men (irrigation user) - 7 pastorlistse + CAHW - Modern Birka - 4 women (cooperative member)	-PCD kebele and woreda -Falmitu Kebele -Kombare Kebele - Hare-Hamo Kebele - Semu-kedubra kebele
1 October	Addis	- Valdemar Holmgren	UNDP
2 October	Addis Addis Addis	- Plenary meeting with partners - Wondwosen Gulelat - Kiros Melese - Hadera G/Medhin - Beshir Abdulahi - Demelash Zenebe - Ayele G/Mariam	PFE SEA SEA OWDA SCN-E DF

		- Sisay Kassahun - Marthe Strørmmen	DF DF
		- Debriefing - Ayele G/Mariam - Sisay Kassahun - Marthe Strørmmen - Mekeleya Borgicho	DF DF DF Norwegian Embassy
		- Abiye Alemu - Getachew Kassaye	DCG General Auditor

ANNEX 3:**Other consulted documents:**

AISDA (2008): Project proposal on Dalifag community development project, May 2008, Addis Ababa

Bezabih Emanu (2008): Assessment of climate change in the DF supported Integrated rural development project area of Tigray region, Ethiopia, February, 008, Addis Abba

DADAL-ARDA (2009): women gadyt mat production and marketing project in Gewane and Amasuabure kebele, Gewane woreda, project proposal, January, 2009, Addis Ababa

DF (2008): Work plan, October, 2008, Addis Ababa

DF (2009): Annul progress report, May, 2009, Addis Ababa

DF (2008/9): Minutes from semi-annual meeting,

DF (2008/9): Field visit reports

Devereux, S. (2006): Vulnerable livelihoods in Somali region, Ethiopia, Research Report 57, Institute of Development studies at University of Sussex Brighton, UK

FARM Africa (2008): Afar prosopis management project proposal, June 2008

FARM Africa (2009): Semu-Robi community development project proposal, annul plan Semi-annual and annual report, Addis Ababa

FARM Africa (2009): participatory rangeland resource assessment in Amebara and Gewane woredas of Afar region, April 2009, Addis Ababa

FARM Africa (2009): Afar prosopis management projects narrative financial report, March 2009, Addis Ababa

FARM Africa (2009): Semu-Robi community development project annual plan, January 2009, Addis Ababa

IDPAC (2007): improving the livelihood of Afar pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Asayiat woreda, Afar region, concept paper, September, 2007, Addis Ababa

MOARD (2008): Sustainable land management project, project implementation manual, September 2008, Addis Ababa

MOARD (2008): Ethiopian strategic investment framework for sustainable land management project, project implementation manual, August 2008, Addis Ababa

OWDA (2007); Adadley community development project proposal, October 2007, Addis Ababa

Oxfam International (2008): Survival o the fittest: pastoralism and climate change in East Africa, briefing paper, August 2008

PFE (2009): Bi-annual progress report on documentation of pastoral land tenure and use in selected regions of Ethiopia, August, 2009, Addis Ababa

SEA (2008): pest and pesticides management Afar region, October, 008, Addis Ababa

SSD (2008): Dewe irrigation based integrated development project proposal, June2008, Addis Ababa

SSD (2009): Dewe irrigation based integrated development annul report, April 2009, PFE(2009): Bi-annual progress report on documentation of pastoral land tenure and use in selected regions of Ethiopia, August, 2009, Addis Ababa

Stevenson, Grainne 2008: Documentation of Norway's role as 'Chef de file' for the UNCCD in Ethiopia, January 2008.

WABEKBON Development Consultants 2006: Review of development polices and strategies related to pastoral areas of Ethiopia, PCDP, November, 2006

Yohannes G/Michael and Mebratu Kifle (2009): Local innovation in climate change adaptation by Ethiopian pastoralists, PROLINNOVA-Ethiopia and PFE, January, 2009, Addis Ababa

