

**In this issue**

- ◆ Program Mid-term Performance Evaluation 1
- ◆ Flourishing System Strengthening Initiatives 2
- ◆ Participation in GO-NGO Forum for Knowledge Sharing and Partnership 3
- ◆ Sharing Story (1) 4
- Incredible community engagement and contribution to preserve indigenous church forests*
- ◆ Statistical Key Figures (SKFs) 5
- ◆ Sharing Story (2) 6
- Widening income base by adopting small-scale irrigation*
- ◆ Advisory Board and FE Staff Meeting 7



**Message from the Editor**

Dear Readers, we come up with the first edition of TANA Newsletter. In this edition, we have covered issues on stakeholders' review on the program performance progresses. **See more on Page.1**

This edition also covered topics on the continuous growth of FE program partnership with different GOs at different levels and CSOs. **See more on Page.3**

This edition has covered amazing stories on 'Incredible community engagement contribution to preserve indigenous church forests' **See more on Page.4 & and the second story on page 6**

Advisory board and FE staff consultative meeting is also covered in this edition. **See more on Page.3**

**In the interview section, we presented you with our first guest**

TANA also informed you on other programmatic and organizational happenings in the third quarter of the implementation year.

Overall, this quarterly newsletter brought to all readers these and more other important topics in detail.

**Enjoy reading !**

**TANA Newsletter** Issued four times a year by Floresta Ethiopia Head Office focusing on major events, key achievements, success stories and best practices.

This edition is the first edition produced by Floresta Ethiopia.

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### Program Mid-term Performance Evaluation

January 2024

The last two years will be remembered as the years that civil war engulfed our country in general and northern Ethiopia including Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) in particular. For Floresta Ethiopia (FE), the challenge was fulfilling the organization's mission while protecting the well-being of the target community & staff members.

As of July 2023, the security situation is worsening especially in Amhara region. Despite the challenges of harsh political crisis and resulting SoE (State of Emergencies), FE has been engaged in a major effort to implement planned activities. One of a key accomplishment facilitated by FE was to host / arranged PROGRAM MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



WORKSHOP on 05 January 2024, as part of the monitoring and evaluation, involving relevant stakeholders at different levels in the region. FE has convened this workshop in the venue of Naky Hotel in Bahir Dar town to review a program progresses in due course of the phase 2 program implementation for two years (01 July 2021 – 30 September 2023).

Partial View of the program evaluation participants, 05 January 2024

The workshop involved participants represented from program signatories at ANRS, Zonal and district levels, key implementing sectors including Orthodox Church representatives and SMT of FE discussed and reflected on program progresses, challenges observed in implementation as well as key learnings to be used as input for planning and management decision-making. In workshop, the participant stakeholders at different levels appreciated the ongoing efforts and results being registered by the FE.

*'The magnitude of results being registered by the program is completely different before two years ago and then after, which entails that the implementation capacity is meaningfully enhanced and its development efforts are result-driven.  
'We expect forest development endeavors of FE to be a green legacy of Andabet District'*

Mr. Azemeraw Techane

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting Directorate Director, Bureau of Finance, Amhara National Regional State,

*'The program activities of Floresta Ethiopia has contributed towards the culture of working together for community development, we have implemented many fruitful developmental activities like church fencing through mobilization of the local community in support and coordination with Floresta. We are very happy in working with Floresta'*

Priest Megabi Mistir Tesafa Dress, Orthodox Churches Administrator for Andabet District

## Flourishing System Strengthening Initiatives



- ⇒ All FE staff developed their own individual annual performance goals and key performance indicators
- ⇒ A key position for Finance & Admin Manager filled with qualified & experienced staff

- ◆ Ranges of financial templates developed & being implemented based on audit recommendations
- ◆ FE financial manual under revision



- ◆ Institutional emails created for staff
- ◆ FE website is at draft stage

## Other key implemented & on-going System Strengthening Progresses

- ⇒ Admin manual under revision
- ⇒ MEAL Guideline at draft stage
- ⇒ Improved fleet management system in place
- ⇒ Improved asset management in place

## Participation in GO-NGO Forum for Knowledge Sharing and Partnership

March 2024

The South Gondar Administrative Zone of ANRS invited Floresta Ethiopia to participate in its annual Zonal level (Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations (GO-NGO ) Forum involving Governmental Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the district.



Partial View of the GO-NGO participants while FE staff presenting our program performances, March 2024

The forum was held at the Gafat Assembly Hall in Debretabor town on march 2024 and attended by representatives of more than 81 participants from GO-NGOs at zonal and district levels, local and international NGOs working in the zone.

Higher officials from GO including the South Gondar Zone Administrator and Head of Finance & Economic Cooperation at South Gondar Zone Administrator have attended the forum. Moreover, the forum was attended by more than 5 Civil Society Organizations including ORDA, FHI, Mahibere-Hiwot, etc.

In this important forum, Floresta Ethiopia made a presentation on its performances. The forum has created opportunity to FE to interact, share their performances, share lessons learned; enhance public visibility and partnership for improved impacts.

The participants from government sectors appreciated the ongoing efforts and results being registered by the FE. Regarding the programmatic issues of FE, the participant stakeholder governmental sectors remarked that :

- Activity intervention approach of FE is based on meaningful community participation and contribution, which is highly appreciated and needed to be strengthened for ownership and sustainability. It should be strengthened.
- The strategic focus on church fencing, women empowerment, saving and loan activities, soil and water interventions are entirely relevant to the community and FE is advised to strengthen the existing fruitful efforts as key program intervention approach.
- It is advised to FE to make geographical expansion as the problem of environmental degradation and poverty are not addressed in many areas of the zone.

## Sharing Story 1

### *Incredible engagement and contribution of the community to preserve indigenous forests of partner churches*

With incredible engagement and contribution of the local community, FE successfully fenced Five (5) partner churches in Andabet woreda of South Gondar Administrative Zone.

The implemented church fencing activities would meaningfully protect church forest encroachment; promote the regeneration of endangered species, improved peaceful co-existence between the surrounding community and the fenced partner churches. The combined total land size of the fenced five partner churches combined is about 81.33 hectare.

In these fenced churches, there are more than 100 plant and 34 wildlife species including impala, fox, guinea hen animals and indigenous plant species like *dodonaea angustifolia*, *croton macrostachyus* olive, *juniperus procera*



The implemented new approaches for church fencing activities was cost-effective. On average, the local community contribution estimated at 84 %, on average, in terms of labor, local materials like stones, etc.

Previously, the church fencing activities of the program was hugely challenged due to low commitment and willingness of local bidders at Andabet for transportation of stones to the churches planned to fenced. Successfully, FE managed the problem associated with local bidders by outsourcing church fencing to the local community.

Egziabher-Ab Church, Circumstance 3120, 4.67 hectare, Gota SW, February 2024

In the newly community self-initiated approach, the program shifted towards implementation of approaches at several stages for effective implementation of church fencing activities. These stages are: (1) facilitation of community initiated planning and the recognition of a need; (2) providing training to church leaders and local leaders and integration with the community; (3) mobilize the local community to implement church fencing activities; (4) facilitation of cross-visit, church to church visit, within or outside the watershed, for better implementation of church fencing activity.

Due to the achieved results from the implementation of the new approach , With incredibly increasing contribution of the local community, the role of the program has been reducing and in turn, the role of partner churches and the community is increasing where they have been taking over the responsibilities and initiatives, which lays foundation for sustainability.

## Statistical Key Figures (SKFs) for January—March 2024

5 partner churches fenced  
with estimated 84 % local community contribution ,  
covering more than 81 hectare  
of land  
with indigenous forest



Shime Giorgis Church 29.5 hectare, Community Contribution 88.9%, Gota SW, March 2024

19 new VSLA groups successfully established  
makes accomplishment of annual VSLA establishment  
target 75 (100% of annual target)

Thus  
the total functional VSLA groups reaches 541,  
with more than 10,500 total members

More than 1 million seedlings  
are successfully made ready  
to be planted in July 2024, the  
seedlings include tree and  
fruit seedlings



Menduke Nursery, Ziragn Watershed , February 2024

## Sharing Story 2

### Widening income base by adopting small-scale irrigation

Though employment opportunity is a big challenge for youths in the local employability context, young purpose group called Gize Lehum were able to run successfully running productive group IGA on production of onions that would lead towards extra source of income and improved livelihood. The purpose group was formed at Gimb village in Gono kebele in Gota watershed in 2022. The group comprises of 20 members whose age ranges from 18 to 34 years old.

The group trained in saving & loan practices, entrepreneurship, and serviced effectively with saving & loan to enable them involve in small business activities. Before they were involved as participant in the program, group members informed they had no have knowledge, skills, and experience about saving & loan practices, entrepreneurship and their benefits to engage in different profit-making activities at community levels.



The group members emphasized the significance of training they received in managing funds effectively, investing in individual and group IGAs at community level. The economic empowerment trainings motivating purpose groups to explore new sources of income when irrigation offers them an opportunity to do so. Using the irrigation canals built by the government as an opportunity, the young purpose group bought a generator for engaging on small-scale irrigation for agricultural production on rented land for group IGA. The water pump/generator is bought at a cost of ETB 30,000.00 (555 USD), each member sharing ETB 1,500 (27.8 USD). FE supported the group with 2 kgs of onion seeds, amounting 2,000 in ETB (USD37)

Partial View of Gize-lehum Purpose Groups, Gota watershed, February 2024

The group members are expecting to earn a return of ETB 40,000 (740 USD) when it is harvested and sold in the coming April 2024. The group appreciates the blessings of their group IGA as source of extra income in addition to their efforts to engage in individual IGAs. Motivated by their promising group IGA, they happily expressed that they have a plan to expand their group IGA involvement through renting additional land to produce teff, potato and other agricultural products in the coming raining summer season.

Mr.Asmamaw Belete, one of the group member stated that ‘based on the training they received from the ECC facilitator, the group members have also established and their own community nursery to produce 605 tree buckthorn/Gesho seedlings to plant in their individual homesteads and sell the remaining for extra income of the members.

The benefits the group members are obtaining are not limited to economic benefits and employment creation opportunities. Members are able to receive social insurance fund, which mitigate the effects of unforeseen tragedies like loss of family members. The group members expressed they have also rather improved positive identity in the community and have harmonious relationships with those around them where the interventions like regular group meetings created platforms for members to share knowledge & support each other in celebrations and difficult times through social fund arrangements.

Mr.Asmamaw Belete, “He and the other members are very happy for becoming program participants and we have huge respect and admiration for FE supported economic empowerment and other programs. Apart from economic benefits, he explained that the social integration and contribution of our group members is improving from time to time at the community level. He also added that ‘we are actively participating in production of seedlings at church nurseries’.

## Advisory Board and FE Staff Meeting

On 30 March 2024, FE hosted advisory board and FE staff meeting. The objective of the meeting is to update FE Staff on additional Advisory Board roles given by PWP, the governance shift of global partner offices including FE through localization, hear & approve Floresta Ethiopia PY 2024 nine months' performance.



Partial view of the meeting participants discussing the meeting agendas

In the meeting, board members and staff of Floresta Ethiopia represented from all units of program are gathered in the venue of Avanti Blue Nile Hotel in Bahir Dar town.

The board chair Dr. Alemayehu Wassie explained the additional Advisory Board roles given by PWP in light of the governance shift of global partner offices including FE through localization,

It was explained that the Board views the organizational landscape of FE is gaining roots for take-off. The Board firmly noted that the Board members are committed towards taking the necessary steps to ensure that the mission of the FE is successfully achieved.



In this important event, the Board approved Floresta Ethiopia 2024 nine months' performance report presented by FE Country Director ( Mr.Engida Mandefro). The Board members appreciated progresses of program implementations and ongoing results .

The board chair reminded the FE staff and Board members to invest energy and passion required to get FE firmly implanted.

Partial view of the Board members and FE staff (Group Photo)