



Progress Report

Progress Report No.:

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| Contract Number: 2509-00/2021/GenPro/1-T&Q/2022 |
| Title of the Intervention: Resilient Livelihoods and sustainable Ecosystems in the Simien Mountains National Park (SMNP) |
| Project Period: <u>36 months (01.11.2022 - 31.10.2025)</u> |

Reporting period:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Reporting period: 01.11.2022- 31.12.2023 | Report submitted on (date): |
| Due date: 29.02.2024 | 29.02.2024 |
| | |
| | |

The answer to all questions must cover the reporting period as specified above. The report must be completed and signed by the contact person of the grant recipient/contractor. The information provided in this technical report must correspond to the financial information provided in the financial report. Please expand the paragraphs as necessary.

ADA will reject any incomplete reports.

Claire Laurent

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|--|
| CSC | Community Score Card |
| EWCA | Ethiopia Wildlife Conservation Authority |
| FAM | Feedback and Accountability Mechanism |
| FTC | Farmers' Training Center |
| GCVCA | Gender-sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis |
| HH | Household |
| IGA | Income Generating Activities |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| PWDs | People with Disabilities |
| SAA | Social Analysis and Action |
| SERGOP | Semen Gonder Resilience Project |
| SMNP | Simen Mountains National Park |
| SoE | State of Emergency |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| VSLA | Village Saving and Loan Association |

Summary of the progress of the intervention (not more than 1 page)

Despite the delays in conducting the project assessments which had been scheduled for the inception phase of the project, monitoring data collected by the project team through direct observation, monitoring visits, training reports, and discussions with beneficiaries and government representatives reveal that the project is generally on track to achieving the intended outputs and outcomes.

The community and stakeholders' involvement in restoration, rehabilitation, and conservation measures in the SMNP and surrounding kebeles is increasing through the project in North Gondar in 15 identified kebeles in Aderkay, Debark, Janamora and Beyeda woredas. The project established steering and technical committees at different levels (regional, zonal and woreda) and engaged kebele level representatives to coordinate and lead the project activities while increasing their capacity. The established committees at each level are involved in coordination and integration of the project activities with the government plan. This first year of the project zonal, woreda, and kebele-level review meetings and joint field supervision visits were conducted.

To comprehend the existing situation in the project intervention areas, various internal and external assessments were conducted. The assessment results were validated by the key government partners. The project revised its activities, workplan and budget based on the findings from the assessment. Since some of the baseline study results were not validated, the project team re-assessed the data in question and arrived at results different from those in the study. Clearing the baseline data and obtaining the approval of the corrected baseline data from the government stakeholders delayed the completion of the report and adaptation of the logframe until beginning of 2024.

This reporting period, the project supported various community groups to enhance their watershed management and livelihoods. Each identified watershed has a committee of representatives from the community, who were trained on watershed planning, management, and development. They oversee the implementation of the watershed plan, which includes different soil and water conservation measures. During the reporting period, different conservation measures were implemented in the watersheds, covering about 20.6 hectares of land. The project also provided different agricultural inputs including to 50 households headed by PWDs and 236 headed by youths. The project also planted 429,937 seedlings to contribute to restoring the ecosystem of the park. Furthermore, the project promoted the development of 22 private nurseries and supported three public nurseries in three different woredas with materials and technical assistance.

Moreover, 150 VSLAs were established with 3,618 members. The members include 2,037 women, 67 PWDs and 987 youths. By December 2023, the VSLAs have saved 659,463 ETB and given 274,980 ETB as loans to 464 members. To contribute to the transformation of social norms, 27 Social Analysis and Action groups were formed.

In the course of the project implementation, no risks related to ADA's environmental or social standards have been observed, recorded, or communicated to or by CARE/ ORDA Ethiopia.

Background/ context (update)

As depicted in the project document, in the first year of project implementation, the RELIVES project was meant to start with the implementation in three woredas (Debark, Janamora and Beyeda) and to expand to two other woredas (Aderkay and Telemt) if the security situation improved. However, in consultation with the project team, the zonal steering committee decided that the project would be most impactful if it focused on 15 kebeles in four woredas (Debark, Janamora, Beyeda and Aderkay). This decision was taken considering present and potential future conflicts in the area, especially the territorial claims in Tselemit woreda and the unpredictability of peace, in the area as well as limitations of the project in terms of supply of vehicles and due to the increasing inflation (increase from 20% to 33% between 2020 and 2023 according to the World Bank).

A six-month state of emergency (SoE) was declared on 4 August 2023 by the Ethiopian government in response to severe conflict and instabilities in Amhara region amid ongoing clashes between the military and local militia groups. On February 2, 2024, Ethiopia's parliament extended the state of emergency by four

months to respond to insurgencies in the region of Amhara that resulted in hundreds of deaths and many accusations of widespread human rights abuses. The SoE had a modest impact on the mobility of staff between Bahir Dar and Addis Abeba, while it did not impact field staff too much, since the armed conflicts in North Gondar are, in relative terms, not as severe as in other areas of the region. The project could thus implement several activities in the project intervention areas. However, the transportation of political leaders (woreda, zonal, regional, and federal) to the project kebeles and to the town was partly challenging due to the threats they received, and due to the leaders' focus on the current political unrest which took priority over project activities. The government officials' mobility restrictions prohibited joint monitoring visits by the regional and federal ministries, together with the project team. The team also faced communication issues, as internet was not available (or only a few hours per day) between August and December 2023. At the moment internet is accessible in the offices, but not when colleagues are travelling in the field.

In the project intervention woredas, specifically in Janamora, Debark, and Beyeda, the communities have been significantly impacted by drought, as the expected seasonal rain (from May to October 2023) failed in many kebeles. The drought negatively impacted the livelihoods of the local community, has reduced the availability of pasture and water for livestock, and diminished vegetation cover which may lead to increased soil erosion. These environmental changes could have long-term consequences for the resilience of local ecosystems and the sustainability of livelihoods in the region. Given this situation, it was important for the project to consider the immediate and long-term impacts of the drought on the project intervention areas. Engaging with local stakeholders, including community members, governmental agencies, and humanitarian organizations, the project will be supporting communal and governmental efforts in taking appropriate measures to support the affected communities while aligning with the project's conservation and sustainable development goal. Increasing the amount of forage seeds provided is among the measures the project took as recommended in the GCVCA.

As a result of the drought, the community, particularly in the woredas of Beyeda and Janamora, have been experiencing severe food insecurity, contributing to their need for external assistance. The zonal administration issued an official call for humanitarian response, including to ORDA Ethiopia and CARE Ethiopia. ORDA Ethiopia and CARE Ethiopia are striving to meet the population's humanitarian needs with additional funds from other donors. Following this call, ORDA Ethiopia responded through funds from another donor with the distribution of 360 metric ton (MT) of flour (258 MT for Janamora and 102 MT for Beyeda) distributed to 24,057 beneficiaries at a rate of 15 kg/ person/ month. Meanwhile, CARE Ethiopia conducted an assessment to respond as well. Other donor funds are foreseen to support RELIVES-targeted beneficiaries whose livelihood was affected by the indirect consequences of the drought.

Building strong relationships with local government stakeholders, understanding their priorities, and aligning the project with local development agendas are essential for successful project implementation. The project established woreda and zonal level steering committees, and technical working committees and assigned zonal and woreda focal persons for the project from the respective zonal agriculture department and woreda agriculture offices. The steering committee meets bi-annually to review the progress and performance of the project, and to take decisions on any changes or adjustments that may be needed. The established technical committee is responsible to ensure and support the implementation of project activities to the best of their quality.

The project is establishing coordination mechanisms and created synergies with other NGOs working in the same intervention. RELIVES and the other ADA-funded project in North Gondar, SEGORP II, have discussed how to collaborate to achieve lasting positive changes for the communities they are working with, while adhering to the principle of do no harm. To date, potential areas of collaboration were identified by the four organizations responsible including ORDA Ethiopia, CARE Ethiopia, HELVETAS and Concern worldwide. The final collaboration agreement will be signed in March 2024 by the senior officials of the respective organizations. Once the collaboration agreement is finalized, the two projects, RELIVES and SEGORP II, will benefit from sharing their learnings and best practices, exchanging data and insights, thereby enhancing their performance and impact.

Unfortunately, the price of materials increased significantly due to the high inflation rate during the reporting period. While the rate was at 20.3% in 2020, it increased to 26.8% and 33.9% in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

This price inflation has a potential negative impact on the implementation of the planned project activities, although the project team took prevention and mitigation measures, such as the early purchase of materials, including construction materials for watershed offices, the reduction in quantity of some inputs, such as solar lanterns, and the project team focused on meticulous follow-up of the budget utilization.

Stakeholder analysis (update)

The project aims to benefit 150,700¹ people directly, at least 70% of the project participants will be women, youth, and vulnerable persons. Overall, the project benefited 46,279 people in this reporting period, including 23,857 women, 289 persons with disabilities and 7,328 youth, and 22,422 men.

So far, the project has trained 1,762 people (1,392 from the communities and 370 from the government representing different institutions, including SMNP) on topics such as integrated watershed development, village saving and loan associations, social analysis and action, community score cards, and animal husbandry. Among the community trainees, 342 were women and 85 were youths.

Table 1. Summary of beneficiaries by gender, including vulnerable groups.

| Results | 2023 Achievement | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Gender | | Vulnerable groups | |
| | Male | Female | Youth | PWD |
| Outcome 1 | 14,666 | 15,264 | 3,145 | 247 |
| Output 1.1 | 11,914 | 12,401 | 2,744 | 223 |
| Output 1.2 | 2,752 | 2,863 | 401 | 24 |
| Outcome 2 | 7,650 | 8,563 | 4,146 | 42 |
| Output 2.1 | 7,650 | 8,541 | 4,138 | 42 |
| Output 2.2 | - | 22 | 8 | |
| Outcome 3 | 106 | 30 | 37 | |
| Output 3.1 | 28 | 8 | 9 | |
| Output 3.2 | 78 | 22 | 28 | |
| Total | 22,422 | 23,857 | 7,328 | 289 |

As per the request from the zone PSC, the implementing partner, ORDA Ethiopia, moved the project coordination office to Debarq, the zonal capital, from Mekane Berhan, the capital of Janamora woreda.

Moreover, after a rigorous assessment and analysis period, the North Gondar Project Steering Committee (PSC) decided that the intervention woredas for the RELIVES project should be limited to four woredas (Debarq, Janamora, Beyeda and Aderkay). In doing so, the PSC took into account the political situation, including the potential for cross-border conflicts in some of the contested woredas between Amhara and Tigray regions, questions of accessibility and logistics. The project's initially planned number of intervention woredas thus changed from five to four.

The project team also made changes to the project activities based on the findings of the assessments conducted during the inception phase, including revising some targets based on the needs, adding and removing activities. However, these changes will not lead to an amendment of the number of beneficiaries to be reached.

Monitoring results

To ensure inclusive participation and results-based management/monitoring, the project team took the following approaches:

- a) Stakeholder Engagement: The project team engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including local communities, government authorities, and partner organizations, to get their input and ensure their participation in the project activities. Project steering committees at the zonal and woreda level are coordinating

¹ Includes double counting, as some beneficiaries will be the same persons participating in activities in the different output areas.

the project implementation in their respective levels, i.e. the zonal government is coordinating the zonal level activities and the woreda steering committee is coordinating the woreda level implementations including kebele targeting, community/beneficiary targeting etc.

- b) Participatory Approaches: Inclusive and participatory approaches were used to involve beneficiaries and local communities in decision-making processes, ensuring that their perspectives were considered in the project's management and monitoring. For instance, the community was involved in the watershed sites' plantation and management decisions, and selection of improved crop seeds. In addition, during the training for the SAA groups, members were trained on how PWDs and women have their own needs and on the importance of their voices being heard in discussions and in project implementation.

The following assessments, namely the baseline study, gender analysis, community needs assessment, partners' capacity assessment, watershed sites assessment, market assessment, GVCA – Gender sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis, and the assessment of the overall dynamics of the SMNP were conducted and validated in the presence of the regional, zonal, and woreda partners.

The project team put in place various monitoring mechanisms to measure the progress and ensure the quality of the intervention during the reporting period. These measures included:

1. The project developed a Feedback&Accountability Mechanism (FAM) plan and shared the accompanying data collection templates with the project team. The project team identified the following FAM channels for the RELIVES project: i) suggestion boxes, ii) phone numbers, iii) review and reflection meetings and iv) face to face communication. In this regard, four suggestion boxes were prepared and mounted, one near the project offices and three next to the woreda agriculture offices in Janamora, Beyeda and Debark. After having introduced the FAM channels, the project team received feedback from the community and government partners which not only included appreciation from project stakeholders and beneficiaries in investing into the conservation and restoration of the world heritage site of the SMNP, but also the communities' request for humanitarian support, a general target increase and more agricultural input support.
2. Regular Meetings: The project team at the field office conducted eight regular internal meetings with technical staff, interns, and support staff. The regular meetings are used to review the project's progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments.
3. Field Visits: In the reporting year, the project team conducted 6 field visits and more than 30 technical monitoring visits. The staffs' field visits to the intervention areas are vital to directly observe the implementation of activities, engage with local stakeholders, to technically support the implementation of activities and to assess the impact on the ground.

Risk Management

As foreseen in the project document, RELIVES assessed the potential risks that could be encountered during the project implementation. The project also defined appropriate measures to mitigate their impacts. The various risks the project has faced and the mitigation measures that were implemented to address them during this reporting period are indicated below.

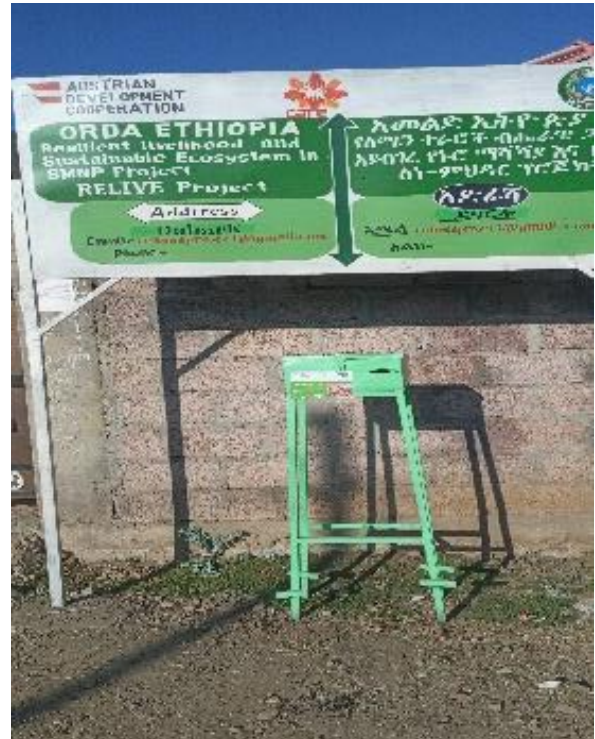


Figure 1. FAM Suggestion box near the RELIVES project office in Debark.

Risk 1: Lack of economic stability resulting in recurring currency devaluation and associated cost escalation of imported construction materials, price fluctuation/inflation and supply chain disruptions.

The project has attempted to mitigate inflation-related risks by implementing the following measures:

1. Early and bulk purchase of materials: the project purchased the needed materials early on and in bulk, especially for watershed construction, hand tools for watershed management, and the solar lanterns.
2. After assessing the needs of the community and taking into account the inflation rate, the project team revised the budget in December 2023.

Risk 2: Political instability such as political disputes associated with the recurrent conflicts of the National and Amhara region governments with the political parties in the Tigray region e.g. boundary disputes result in physical danger and program implementation uncertainty.

The project monitored the political situation between the federal government/ Amhara regional state and the Tigray region. While regularly assessing the security situation and the possibility of conflict aggravations, the project started to work in Aderkay woreda which was not targeted in the first year of project implementation. The project did not face significant obstacles, neither in the three woredas first targeted nor in Aderkay woreda which was included later on. However, the security situation in one of the projects' proposed woredas, Tselemit, is not yet reliable. As a result, the project and the zonal steering committee decided to work in four woredas only (Beyeda, Debark, Janamora and Aderkay), while increasing the number of intervention kebeles.

Risk 3: Escalation of ethnic conflicts and political insecurity as a result of ongoing public discontent in the country, and the current social unrest in the country threatens project activities. This may cause the interruption of project activities due to evacuation of staff from the project sites.

A new conflict ensued between the federal government and armed groups in Amhara region in July 2023. However, the project team adhered to the mitigation strategy outlined in the project document and managed to execute a number of project activities. By maintaining regular communication with the security department within ORDA Ethiopia and CARE Ethiopia head offices and by ensuring the neutrality of the project in its interventions, the project team implemented the activities with the highest priority for the security of the person, program and property.

Risk 4: SMNP-adjacent woredas experience a disaster, such as a prolonged drought, flash floods, or erratic and/or uneven rainfall distribution.

Lowland kebeles in the woredas adjacent to the SMNP (Debark, Janamora and Beyeda) were affected by the drought. These circumstances led to pressure on the adjacent RELIVES kebeles, as the community migrates with its livestock to access livestock feed, water and to access labour. These pressures also include the competition for animal feed and water, the market price increase of grains and subsequent low market price for livestock. The project has planned to increase improved forage development activities to reduce the pressure of livestock on the park from the park-adjacent kebeles. ORDA Ethiopia also distributed food assistance through funds from another donor since December 2023. CARE Ethiopia is also seeking additional resources for its humanitarian response.

Risk 5: Increasing conflict in the area impacts tourists visiting the area, shrinking the livelihood of the local community which in turn creates massive pressure on their livelihood.

In partnership with the governmental partners and the SMNP office, the project will work on supporting the livelihoods of cooperatives involved in ecotourism by engaging them in alternative income generating activities identified in the market assessment (Activity 2.1.2.5.)

Table 2. Risk Register

| Risk Register (risk assessment at the time of reporting) | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Description of the risk ² (concrete event, its cause and possible negative impact) | Likelihood ³ | Possible impact ⁴ | Risk management measures planned (to reduce either likelihood or possible impact or both) |
| Lack of economic stability resulting in recurrent currency devaluation and associated cost escalation on imported construction materials, price fluctuation/ inflation and supply chain disruptions. | 4 | 2 | Meticulous budget planning, forecasting, procurement lead-time and bulk purchase. Ability to adapt interventions and budget lines in concert with donor approval. |
| Political instability such as political disputes associated with the recurrent conflicts of the National and Amhara region governments with the political parties in the Tigray region e.g. boundary disputes result in physical danger and program implementation uncertainty. | 1 | 1 | Closely monitor the political situation to ensure that necessary actions are taken in advance to mitigate any interference or harm, for instance adapting or stopping planned activities, if required. Should the conflict spill over in the project's kebeles, a change of kebeles in the same woredas will be envisaged after consultations with the regional signatory bureaus and project steering committees (PSC) at all levels, and with the donor. |
| Escalation of ethnic conflict and political insecurity as a result of ongoing public discontent in the country and the current social unrest in the country threatens project activities. This may end up in the interruption of project activities due to evacuation of staff from the project site. | 2 | 1 | CARE/ORDA maintain strict security procedures and assess the political situation regularly. The policy is to continue activities wherever possible, whilst prioritizing the protection of staff and program participants. Risks associated with visibility, interaction with government authorities etc. will be reassessed regularly. |
| SMNP adjacent woredas experience a disaster such as a prolonged drought, flash floods, or erratic and/or uneven rainfall distribution. | 3 | 2 | Communities' capacity and ability to respond to shocks and stresses will be built over time with the project. Moreover, CARE and ORDA have an early warning system complimentary to the government's and can detect slow onset disasters. ORDA and CARE Ethiopia are well-positioned to support the government's response to a major emergency should it arise within the next two years. |
| Dependency of the local community/ expectation of aid in new intervention kebeles. | 2 | 1 | Knowledge within the region of how CARE/ORDA work reduces this risk. CARE/ORDA will liaise with government and community structures to discuss the dangers of dependency and ensure that the relationships in this project are based on government and |

² For the purpose of risk management in the context of projects and programmes, ADA defines risk as the danger of an event occurring that has a negative impact on the achievement of the goals of the respective project/ programme, or those of the implementing organisation or ADA. For reference, the ADA Risk Catalogue with standard risks that can arise in the context of projects and programmes is available online and can be consulted (on a voluntary basis) for the identification and description of risks. (<https://www.entwicklung.at/mediathek/downloads>)

³ Enter a value: (1) very unlikely, (2) unlikely, (3) likely, (4) very likely.

⁴ Enter a value: (1) insignificant, (2) significant, (3) major.

An ADA staff guidance on assessing likelihood and impact is available online (<https://www.entwicklung.at/en/media-centre/downloads>) and can be used on a voluntary basis for this reporting exercise.

| Risk Register (risk assessment at the time of reporting) | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Description of the risk ² (concrete event, its cause and possible negative impact) | Likelihood ³ | Possible impact ⁴ | Risk management measures planned (to reduce either likelihood or possible impact or both) |
| | | | community ownership and a joint shared agenda, not an external one. |
| Weak coordination, resources leveraging and support from government at all levels, particularly at woreda levels, due to attention focused on political agendas. | 2 | 1 | Proper scheduling/ planning including modified action plans in consultation with political leaders at all levels for project steering committee (PSC) review meeting/joint field visits; closely work with government office technical teams, mobilizing the communities to increase resources leveraging (nonfinancial resources available in the area). |
| High turnover of political leaders/ head of offices and government technical experts which impede the smooth transition and implementation of the project. | 2 | 1 | Preparedness for staff turnover, supporting a smooth transfer of documents and hand-over of activities, organizing orientations and refresher training. In addition, assigned focal persons from zone and woreda level will be highly engaged in coordinating the project activities. As focal persons are technical persons, they would stay stable in their assigned position and responsibility |
| Impacts, restrictions, and protocol measures related to COVID-19 pandemic might delay the implementation of some activities like trainings, workshops, mass mobilization and sensitization works, service provisions, etc. | 1 | 1 | The project will follow the restriction and protocol measures of government and CARE/ORDA, which are intended to protect the health and wellbeing of employees and beneficiaries, the wider community, and partners; and ensure that the project continues to implement the activities as planned and provides high quality and timely services to beneficiaries. |
| Backlash to shifting social norms and changing power dynamics, exclusion of women and vulnerable groups due to existing challenges and barriers, possible tensions between men and women due to the promotion of gender equality. | 1 | 2 | To mitigate this risk, all staff and implementers will be trained on Gender Equity and Diversity (SAA training) to help them understand the root causes of possible backlash and enable them to lead discussions that can help prevent any instances of violence or exclusion. Our complaints and feedback mechanism will also enable us to monitor potential conflicts closely. All staff are also aware of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) protocols and will be trained during the project. |
| Expansion of agricultural land and massive encroachment due to increasing population pressure and wildfire resulted in endangered wildlife management. | 2 | 3 | CARE/ORDA will work closely with SMNP/EWCA Administration to monitor the park and will undertake close follow-up on the changes over time. CARE will use imagery to analyze land cover changes over time. Staff capacity on GPS and GIS will be developed for the relevant government office to have digital data on the buffer and farmland areas. |
| Increasing conflict in the area impacts tourists visiting the area, shrinking the livelihood of the local community which in turn creates massive pressure on their livelihood. | 3 | 2 | CARE/ORDA will work with the EWCA and local authorities to initiate dialogue with local villagers to better protect the park. Moreover, CARE/ORDA will promote alternative livelihoods for the community and tourism cooperatives in case tourism does not pick up again. |
| Potential conflicts due to different interests in the use of scarce resources. | 1 | 1 | CARE/ORDA will conduct community needs assessments and collect feedback and will take joint decisions on adaptation measures with the community |

| Risk Register (risk assessment at the time of reporting) | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Description of the risk ² (concrete event, its cause and possible negative impact) | Likelihood ³ | Possible impact ⁴ | Risk management measures planned (to reduce either likelihood or possible impact or both) |
| | | | and government partners on how resources will be used for this project. |
| Potential safety and health risks in the framework of construction work. | 1 | 2 | These risks will be mitigated by conducting proper site selection and environmental impact assessments. |
| People living in intervention areas are in need of humanitarian response due to the loss of assets during the northern conflict. | 1 | 2 | CARE Ethiopia and ORDA Ethiopia are both working on getting separate funding to meet the communities humanitarian needs, but the project also aims to help war-affected community members to recover from the trauma and rebuild their lives through different income-generating activities. |
| Crop disease | 2 | 2 | The government will be supported to provide extension services on the improved agricultural practices including crop and animal disease management. The project will also create coordination with Debarq university for technical backups and research support in the area. |
| The distance and terrain of the project sites made it difficult to conduct regular supervision and monitoring of the project activities and outcomes. It also increases the vehicle running cost and affects the budget allocation. | 4 | 2 | Minimizing the frequency of travel, working in close collaboration with the government, undertaking effective supervision and monitoring with limited travel. Scheduled review meetings will be conducted quarterly with the woreda steering and technique committees to buy-in their engagement in the integration of the project activities with the government plan. |
| The conflict between the national/regional government with the armed forces in Amhara region which can affect the project implementation. | 3 | 2 | CARE/ORDA will maintain strict security procedures and regularly assess the political situation. The policy is to continue activities wherever possible, whilst prioritizing the protection of staff and program participants. Risks associated with visibility, interaction with government authorities etc. will be reassessed. The staff and organizations behave neutrally in this case. |

Lessons learned and perspectives

The project learned the following lessons in this reporting period and revised the project plan accordingly.

- Multiple assessments conducted by CARE Ethiopia and ORDA Ethiopia at the beginning of the project identified the priorities and allowed to revise the project plan and incorporate the recommendations. Besides, it has strengthened the capacity of the community, stakeholders and implementing organizations in identifying needs, barriers and how to take adapting measures.
- Engaging stakeholders in the studies and validation of study results is of paramount importance to verify the findings. Stakeholders' questioning of some baseline findings helped the project to re-validate some indicators.
- One of the project objectives was to supply lime to the target groups to help them reduce the soil acidity. However, this proved to be impractical due to the increasing transportation costs. The lime was also heavy and bulky, making it difficult for the beneficiaries to carry it from the distribution points to their farms. These challenges were unforeseen during planning. Therefore, the project plan was revised to focus more strongly on natural fertilizers, mainly compost, as it can be managed by the beneficiaries, has sustainable results, and is less costly. ToTs, community training, experience sharing, demonstration and material support for the production and utilization of natural fertilizers have been included in the second-year activities.

The changes or adjustments necessary with regard to the design of the intervention were described in the inception report and budget reallocation request submitted in the second half of 2023 to ADA.

Finances

The project faced some challenges due to the rising prices of some commodities in the local market. For instance, the original plan was to distribute 2,000 solar lanterns to promote the use of clean energy sources, but the project had to reduce the number to 1,270 due to the recently increased unit cost of the lanterns. The project also encountered difficulties in providing the planned quantity of garlic seeds to the farmers because of the high market price that was four times higher than the initial estimate. Furthermore, the project's operational cost was increased as the Ethiopian government terminated fuel subsidies, leading to higher fuel prices.

ORDA recently revised the travel cost rate for the government partners which will result in increased costs for review meetings, joint field supervisions and trainings. To meet this increase in costs, project review meetings and joint monitoring visits will be organized in consecutive days, integrating national, regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele level meetings as much as possible for higher cost effectiveness. The collaboration with other organizations like HELVETAS and Concerns will also contribute to resource sharing for similar field supervision and review meetings.

The project team did its best to keep the impact of the challenges mentioned above to its lowest, and submitted a budget reallocation request in December 2023 for all the increases it could not absorb otherwise.

Annexes of the progress report

Annex 1: Filled in matrix with the detailed description of the achievement of outcome and output indicators measured against the baseline and target values and reflecting the quantitative and qualitative dimension of the achievement. *See below.*

Annex 2: Detailed planning (action plan) and budget for the following reporting period (project year): *will be submitted once the budget reallocation request has been approved.*

Annex 3: If applicable, progress report on the environmental, gender and social risk management and sustainability plan. *Nothing to report.*

Annex 4: Any additional annexes to the progress report. *The logframe will also be submitted once the budget reallocation request has been approved.*

Annex 1: Matrix with the detailed description of the achievement of outcome and output indicators measured against the baseline and target values and reflecting the quantitative and qualitative dimension of the achievement. Please note that the provided data should be disaggregated in terms of gender and social determinants (such as age, minority status, disability status etc.), where relevant and feasible.⁵

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems are well protected through community and stakeholder involvement in restoration, rehabilitation, and conservation measures in the SMNP and surrounding kebeles.

The mid-term performance assessment will provide quantitative and qualitative information at the outcome and some qualitative indicators at output levels. However, monitoring data collected by the project team through direct observation, monitoring visits, training reports, and discussions with beneficiaries and government representatives revealed that the project is on track to achieving most of the intended outputs and outcomes.

The monitoring data and supporting documents of the project reveal that community and stakeholders' involvement in restoration, rehabilitation, and conservation measures in the SMNP and in the surrounding kebeles is increasing with the project's support. The government's involvement in the same has been positive as the project supported them to develop watershed development plans, provided training for kebele level experts, scouts and rangers, private nursery owners.

To date, 11 watersheds were selected, 4 watershed offices constructed, and 153 watershed committee members trained. Moreover, different biophysical soil and water conservation activities were implemented, and agricultural inputs (like potato tuber, malt barley) provided to community members based on the beneficiary targeting criteria set by the zonal government steering committee. These criteria included i) community or households living next to the selected watersheds, ii) households with members of VSLAs, iii) households committed to managing agricultural lands, iv) households of a very low economic status (extremely poor), v) female-headed households, vi) households with persons with disability, vii) households whose resources were highly affected by the northern war, viii) and households with resource-poor youths.

Indicator 1.1: % increase of hectares of restored land in targeted woredas (contributes to SDG indicator 15.3.1).

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|--|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | 14,050 ha, 31% (Aderkay 56%, Beyeda 6%, Debark 39% and Janamora 12%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | (18,320 ha) 41 % | | 2,122 ha (36 %) | 2,122 ha (41 %) |
| Achievement | - | | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | | - | - |

⁵ In case, disaggregation of data in terms of gender and social determinants is not feasible please provide a justification.

Indicator 1.2: % decrease of human and livestock movements inside reserved parkland (contributes to SDG indicator 15.2.1).

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|--|-------------|--|--|
| | 84% human crossing the park (Aderkay 25%, Beyeda 81%, Debark 87%, and Janamora 100%) * 45% animal movement (Aderkay 100%, Beyeda 74%, Debark 27%, and Janamora 60%) * 66% animal grazing (Aderkay 0%, Beyeda 79%, Debark 66% and Janamora 80%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | | - - - | 70% of human crossing 35% of animal movement 40% of animal grazing | 60% of human crossing 25% of animal movement 30% of animal grazing |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 1.3: % increase of people of all genders that have applied at least 3 practices to protect their livelihoods from negative impacts of climate related shocks and stresses (CARE indicator).

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | 67% (Aderkay 61%, Beyeda 58%, Debark 85%, and Janamora 57%) (Women 63%, Men 70%), (Female head of HH 60%; men in male-headed HH 73%; Person with disability 71%; women in male-headed HH 63%; and young women and men aged 15-35 years 64%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 90% | - | 75% | 90% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Output 1.1: Increased engagement and involvement of communities in restoration, rehabilitation and conservation of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem.

Activity Cluster 1.1.1: Support communities to identify, establish and manage watersheds, including developing a watershed development plan.

With the overall objective of analysing the watershed's current condition the watershed assessment was conducted in May 2023 for 10 watersheds selected in the specified period (the assessment for the 11th watershed

in Aderkay will take place in the second year of the project). This information is necessary to better understand and manage the watersheds, and for the development of watershed development plans and actions. The specific objectives of the assessment included i) identifying and delineating the selected watersheds, ii) assessing current land use and cover, and iii) assessing the status of land degradation. The study recommended the reduction of overgrazing, to minimize the utilization of firewood, to set up institutional arrangements to legalize watershed committees into cooperatives, to pursue intensive natural resource management and agroforestry activities. As a result, the project revised its plan to strengthen agroforestry practices as most of the watershed area is dedicated to farmland (51.04%) followed by grazing land (25.01%).

One of the achievements under this activity cluster is the selection of 11 watersheds in four project woredas (4 in Debark, 3 in Beyeda, 3 in Janamora and 1 in Aderkay) which covers a total area of 5,713 hectares of land. Except for Aderkay, which was targeted only after December 2023, each watershed was assessed⁶ thoroughly, including a mapping of all watersheds developed for land use and land cover, and the identification of communities and individuals who depend on it for their livelihoods. The watersheds were selected based on the following criteria: (i) road accessibility; (ii) communities' interest for the project to intervene (iii) suitability of constructing watershed structures; and (iv) potential of the farmland to enhance agricultural production. After the identification of the watersheds, the project facilitated and strengthened the formation of 11 watershed committees since March 2023, with 130 members (Activity 1.1.1.1). The watershed committee members were selected among project participants from different social groups including men, women, and youth. 43 and 60 of the committee positions are occupied by women and youth, respectively.

In addition, the project supported the construction of 4 watershed offices in two watersheds in each woreda of Debark (Arginjona and Abergina kebeles) and Beyeda (Selewa and Medebay kebeles). The project supported the construction of the watershed offices with industrial materials like nails, iron sheets, cement, and by paying skilled labor costs while the community contributed by providing local materials and with their labor when appropriate (Activity 1.1.1.2.). The constructed offices will be utilized by the watershed committee and the community members from the watershed to conduct meetings, store hand tools (soil and water conservation activity hand tools) and for proper documentation of the watershed plan and the watershed beneficiary's information.

A training designed to enhance the capacity and competence of the watershed committee members and woreda and kebele level agricultural development agents was provided by zonal and woreda experts (Activity 1.1.1.8). A total of 153 participants (31 women and 42 youths) attended the training in May and June 2023, in their respective woreda towns. The training covered sustainable land management, soil and water conservation, watershed development and planning, financial management, forestry, agroforestry, and integrated community watershed development.

Each watershed committee developed a watershed management plan (Activity 1.1.1.4), which includes an action plan for soil and water conservation measures, the identification of the required inputs and tools, and the capacity building activities demanded. The watershed committees supported by the kebele development agents developed their watershed action plan after they were trained. The watershed development plan primarily includes activities on drafted soil and water conservation types, a work schedule, and the governing by-laws. The plans were developed as per the recommendations of the study mapping of watersheds conducted by the project and will be revised when necessary. The kebele and woreda government experts who participated in the initial plan development will support the plan's revision.

The project team further conducted the mapping and analysis of the SMNP's dynamic developments over the past 20 years (Activity 1.1.1.5). To understand the land use and cover changes and to identify the woreda which has the highest impact on the park in natural resource degradation, the RELIVES project conducted an

⁶ Watershed assessment was conducted for each targeted watershed and in the assessment land use land cover was studied and recommendations set for the development of adaptation plan. Assessment results reported in the inception 2 report.

analysis of the SMNP land use/cover changes over the past 20 years. Land use/ cover was extracted from Google Earth Satellite imagery of 2001, 2011 and 2023 using QGIS 3.26.327 .

The analysis revealed that the SMNP covers 40 kebeles in five woredas with a total area of about 48,237 ha and a perimeter of 346,561 km (5 kebeles from Aderkay, 14 from Beyeda, 9 from Debark, 9 from Janamora and 3 from Tselemit woredas). The largest portion of the park is situated in Aderkay (34.4%) and the smallest in Tselemit (7%). The assessment results show that there was a change of land use/cover in the park. However, changes from one predominant type of land use to another took place in different years. For example, forest lands at one time were converted to crops and vice versa, while cultivated lands were left as fallow lands on which vegetation regenerated and turned into bush land. The Google Earth images also depicted the conversion of cultivated lands into forest areas, a common practice around Debark town for the sale of eucalyptus woodlots. However, the general trend of land use change was the encroaching expansion of cropland areas, settlements, and towns at the expense of forest and bush lands. Aderkay was identified as the hotspot for the negative impact on the SMNP's land use dynamics.



Figure 2. Assessments validation Bahirdar.

The study recommended to engage the community, and vulnerable individuals in particular (such as women, girls, youth, landless individuals and PWD) in the park's management, to improve government stakeholders' engagement in the implementation of integrated watershed development. Communities and government have to be involved in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) such that interaction between human and nature allows for sustainability of agriculture, tourism, and forestry activities around and in the parks.

Activity Cluster 1.1.2: *Support communities in implementing sustainable land management interventions and adapting to climate change.*

The project supported the community and the government to implement bio-physical measures in the respective selected watersheds (Act 1.1.2.1). The trained watershed committee members and development agents guided the community technically and the project facilitated the mobilization of community members to contribute with their labor, provided logistical support to transport the seedlings, and created awareness sessions in collaboration with the respective woreda partners. Hence, in the reporting period, 12.393 km of soil-faced stone bund, 6.04 km of soil bund, and 0.116 km of bench terraces were constructed. The total area covered is 20.6 hectare which has the potential to make a significant contribution to the restoration of degraded land. Additionally, the project supported and mobilized the community for the preparation of 429,937 pits and planting of 429,937 seedlings, covering an area of 29.259 hectares. Out of the total seedlings, 388,933 are exotic and 41,000 are indigenous. The project supported the plantation of seedlings appropriate to the land use for different plantation areas. 185,428 seedlings for communal sites, 15,204 seedlings for institutional sites and 229,305 seedlings for agroforestry sites were planted through the support of the project. The seedlings' plantation benefitted 4,331 (1,490 women) private and communal land holders who own or manage the land.

Moreover, the project purchased 380 shovels, 380 pickaxes and 60 water levels and distributed them to the watershed committees (Activity 1.1.2.2) to implement those bio-physical measures. Although initially planned in the first year of the project, the activities 1.1.2.3 - 1.1.2.5 will be implemented in the second project year.

⁷ QGIS 3.26.3.1), (Quantum Geographic Information System) a free, open-source software that allows users to create, edit, visualize, analyze, and publish geospatial information integrated with the Google Earth ma

The delay in finalizing the community needs assessment and competing priorities among government partners have led to these activities' postponement.

During the project's lifespan, the project team planned to construct 16 water schemes in the target kebeles that will be used for domestic use and wildlife (activity 1.1.2.6) consumption. During the reporting period, 11 potential water sites were selected from nine project intervention kebeles (4 in Debark and Janamora woredas each and 3 in Beyeda woreda). The sites' selection was carried out by engineers and geologists from the ORDA head office, and representatives from respective woreda water and energy office, and SMNP office- in consultation with the community. Initially, the project intended to construct high discharge water points to benefit more people. However, in the intervention woredas and kebeles, it was difficult to find such high discharge water points as the areas are drought-prone. Project stakeholders and community members therefore decided to select water points that are non-functional but can be rehabilitated. The rehabilitation will take place during the dry period (January) to ensure the reliable yield of waterpoints. The remaining five waterpoints will be selected from Aderkay woreda and the selection will be conducted in March/ April 2024.

Table 3. Water point sites selected.

| No | Name of Scheme | Scheme type | woredas | Kebele | Estimated bneficiary (HH) |
|----|----------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Aba Kale Spring | Spring | Debark | Adisge | 50 |
| 2 | Endod Wonz Spring | Spring | Debark | Adisge | 100 |
| 3 | Setoch metaya Spring | Spring | Debark | Abergina | 140 |
| 4 | Regreg Spring | Spring | Debark | Arginjona | 100 |
| 5 | Gichaw Spring | Spring | Janamora | Sakba | 40 |
| 6 | Endalew Spring | Spring | Janamora | Denkolako | 100 |
| 7 | Agafarinko Spring | Spring | Janamora | Dibil | 100 |
| 8 | Sigamareja Spring | Spring | Janamora | Lorie | 100 |
| 9 | Woldearegay Spring | Spring | Beyeda | Medebay | 30 |
| 10 | Gicha Meda Spring | Spring | Beyeda | Medebay | 150 |
| 11 | Giziya Spring | Spring | Beyeda | Selewa | 50 |

Activity Cluster 1.1.3. Support communities in improvement of sustainable livestock production and productivity.

To enhance the livelihood of the project participants, different kinds of agricultural inputs (seeds) were distributed to the selected participants. The inputs consist of 3,839 kilograms of garlic seeds, 5,000 kilograms of malt barley seeds, 29,500 kilograms of potato tuber, 20,000 kilograms of lime for soil acidity treatment, 100 kilograms of forage seeds for livestock development, and 1,200 two-months-old chickens (Activity 1.1.3.2, 1.1.3.3, 1.1.3.7). The provision of the inputs benefited 1,188 (649 women-headed) households or 6,050 people (3,118 women), of whom 50 (33 women-headed) households have at least one person with disability in their home and 236 (158 women) include youths head of household (15-29 years).

Table 4. Agricultural input distribution.

| Woreda | Input | Unit meas-ure | Qty | Ultra poor | | | PWD | | | Youth | | | Total | | |
|-----------|---------|---------------|-------|------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-------|----|----|-------|-----|-----|
| | | | | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T |
| Debark | po-tato | Kg | 11900 | 67 | 86 | 153 | 7 | 10 | 17 | 19 | 28 | 47 | 93 | 124 | 217 |
| Beyeda | po-tato | Kg | 8800 | 59 | 52 | 111 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 12 | 24 | 76 | 66 | 142 |
| Jana-mora | po-tato | Kg | 8800 | 31 | 103 | 134 | 1 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 25 | 32 | 39 | 137 | 176 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Total | | | 29500 | 157 | 241 | 398 | 13 | 21 | 34 | 38 | 65 | 103 | 208 | 327 | 535 |
| Debark | garlic | Kg | 1244 | 32 | 88 | 120 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 21 | 28 | 39 | 112 | 151 |
| Jana-mora | garlic | Kg | 1692 | 32 | 47 | 79 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 42 | 51 | 41 | 95 | 136 |
| Beyeda | garlic | Kg | 950 | 25 | 41 | 66 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 23 | 27 | 30 | 65 | 95 |
| Total | | | 3886 | 89 | 176 | 265 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 20 | 86 | 106 | 110 | 272 | 382 |
| Debark | barely | kg | 2000 | 24 | 8 | 32 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 34 | 13 | 47 |
| Jana-mora | barely | kg | 1500 | 49 | 9 | 58 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 54 | 12 | 66 |
| Beyeda | barely | kg | 1500 | 17 | 10 | 27 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 39 | 15 | 54 |
| Total | | kg | 5000 | 90 | 27 | 117 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 19 | 127 | 40 | 167 |
| Debark | Lime | kg | 20000 | 42 | 2 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 50 | 2 | 52 |
| Debark | For-age | kg | 100 | 12 | 8 | 20 | | | | | | | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| | | | | 390 | 454 | 844 | 17 | 33 | 50 | 78 | 158 | 236 | 507 | 649 | 1188 |

Before the distribution of such agricultural inputs, the woreda technical committee and the project field staff developed beneficiary selection criteria that had to be approved by the woreda PSC, CARE Ethiopia and ORDA Ethiopia senior experts to ensure their alignment with the project objectives and expected outcomes. The criteria included i) community or households living in the watersheds' nearby areas, ii) households with members of VSLAs, iii) households committed to managing agricultural lands, iv) households of low economic status (extremely poor), v) female-headed households, vi) households with persons with disability, vii) households whose resources were highly affected by the northern war, viii) and households with resource-poor youth.

Because the project does not want to encourage free handouts, as this could lead to aid dependency among the community, the recipients of the inputs agreed to return the amount of seeds they received from the project to their respective watershed associations after their first harvest. The watershed committees will provide the inputs to members of their association against a small payment so they can also reinvest the money to strengthen their association institutionally.

Except for the garlic seeds which were affected by disease, all improved seeds provided good results as per the project team's observations (data is being collected for the real harvest and income obtained). The disease that impacted the harvest of the garlic seed was unexpected, especially to this extent. Which is why the project team decided to not purchase garlic seeds anymore (as indicated in the budget reallocation request submitted in December 2023). The

same decision was taken for the lime, though for another reason- as we indicated under the learnings, the transportation of lime was too costly and complicated and the use of organic fertilizers would be more cost effective. To harness the potential of the intervention woredas for appropriate and sustainable livelihoods, the project planned to provide apple seedlings to the project participants. Regarding the apple seedlings, experiences during the first year of the project showed that the region primarily brings seedlings from other regions. The adaptability and purity of the seedlings produced under low or unknown regulatory mechanisms and the high cost of transportation constitute the downside of seedlings obtained from regions further away. That is why the zonal and woreda steering committees preferred that the project supported central apple seedling production and suggested the project does not invest into the purchase of apple seedlings anymore (reflected in the budget reallocation as well). During this reporting period, the project started to support one central nursery for highland fruit by building a fence (which was critical as the existing seedlings and rootstock materials were regularly damaged by livestock and wild animals) and taking the first steps to provide access to water.

Together with government agricultural extension staff, the project provided technical support to input users before the distribution. The technical support included training on land preparation, soil improvement, and the different agronomic practices for the targeted participants for each input. The participants were selected based

on the suitability of their sites for each crop⁸ (Activity 1.1.3.4). The cluster-based plantation is crucial for the government and other extension personnel to provide agricultural extension services and share experiences among the best performing fields.

The project purchased 670 solar lanterns that will be distributed in the second year of the project (Activity 1.1.3.6). Furthermore, the project provided 1,200 two-month-old Saso T44 chickens with 7,500 kilograms of feed to 100 women beneficiaries from the three woredas who have no or only low farmland holdings (Janamora – 336 chickens for 28 women; Beyeda – 360 chickens for 30 women; and Debark – 504 chickens for 42 women) in December 2023. The project and the government extension staff supported the beneficiaries to build separate poultry shades with feeders and water dispensers made out of local materials (Activity 1.1.3.7). To instruct the women on improved poultry practices, a training was provided to 42 women farmers and 15 (6 women) community workers (agricultural development agents and VSLA facilitators). The topics covered poultry production and management, chicken feeder and drink disburser material preparation, chicken feeding system and health care, and poultry product marketing. The training participants learned about the best practices for poultry production and productivity. The respective woreda and kebele level experts provided repeated orientation trainings during targeting, shed construction and chicken distribution. The project observed that all women were managing the chickens well. The remaining women will be trained in the coming months.

Indicator 1.1.1: # training participants in targeted kebeles who put into practice what they have learnt.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 143 | 0 | 143 | 558 |
| Achievement | - | 0 | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | 0 | | | |

Indicator 1.1.2: # community adaptation plans developed and implemented in targeted Kebeles.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 11 | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| Achievement | - | | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Output 1.2: Increased engagement and involvement of local government and stakeholders in restoration, rehabilitation and conservation of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem.

Activity Cluster 1.2.1: *Support local government to identify, establish and manage watersheds, including the development of watershed development plans.*

A total of 21 experts from the four woredas (Debark, Janamora Beyeda and Aderkay), 3 zonal experts and 3 female interns received a-five days ToT on integrated watershed development from November 27 to December 1, 2023 by ORDA senior expert (Activity 1.2.1.2). The training aimed to improve the knowledge and skills of zone and woreda government experts on the concept of community-based watershed development, watershed development planning, and watershed management principles and steps. The training also covered the challenges and opportunities of watersheds respective to law enforcement, community participation, government and watershed committee members’ roles and responsibilities, and environmental protection.

⁸ cluster-based approach is the government extension approach to plant the same crops in adjacent plots based on the identified potential

The training highlighted the benefits of watershed development for enhancing the livelihoods of farmers, conserving natural resources, increasing crop and livestock productivity, creating job opportunities, and mitigating climate change. The training also provided guidance on choosing and applying suitable technologies for watershed development, based on the local context. The training participants learned about the main gaps in integrated watershed development, such as the poor coordination between the government and the community, low community capacity and awareness, weak livelihood interventions, and a low sense of ownership and lack of inclusiveness of the climate change adaptation measures. The training ended with an agreement among the participants to develop a watershed training manual and an action plan for conducting the next training for community and kebele experts.

Immediately after the training, the ToTs cascaded their newly acquired knowledge to 55 (26 women) kebele agriculture experts during the period December 5 to 15, 2023, in their respective woreda towns. The training participants included all development agents in the project intervention kebeles (Activity 1.2.1.3). The trained kebele level experts include 15 from Beyeda (3 women), 15 from Debark (10 women), 14 from Janamora (9 women) and 11 from Aderkay (4 women). The training aimed to enhance the capacity of kebele government staff on integrated watershed development at the community levels and to prepare watershed development plans.

The training covered various topics, such as community contribution to watershed management, woreda and kebele stakeholders' responsibilities, the challenge of watershed bylaws enforcement, and the general status of the watersheds. The field monitoring results showed that the trained kebele level experts are properly supporting the planning and implementation of the watershed development activities, including the coordination and high-quality construction of the soil and water conservation activities, ensuring the presence and revision of watershed committee by-laws, filling vacant committee positions, etc.

Cluster Activity 1.2.2: Support government (incl. EWCA/SMNP) to implement sustainable land management interventions and livestock production and productivity.

The project supported government partners, including EWCA, to implement sustainable land management activities and livestock production and productivity. In this regard, 53 (2 women) scouts and rangers of the SMNP office were trained on technical park management techniques and practices between 4-8 November 2023 (Activity 1.2.2.1). The main objective of the training was to equip the scouts and rangers with the techniques and practices necessary to manage the park, share experiences among them (especially relevant for new staff due to the high turnover indicated in the partners' capacity assessment), and capacitate them to contribute positively to the restoration, conservation, and rehabilitation of the park. The training covered various topics related to Ethiopian wildlife conservation, community engagement, wildlife management and scout leadership.

The project also supported the government and the community logistically to transport seedlings from the nursery to the plantation sites, and by raising the community's awareness on the plantation rationales (Activity 1.2.2.2- linked to Activity 1.1.2.1).

To increase the availability of tree seedlings which will contribute to the conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of the natural resources, the project supported three public tree nurseries in three different woredas (Janamora, Beyeda, and Debark) with materials, and with technical training of 47 (6 women) nursery workers (Activity 1.2.2.3). The training incorporated practical sessions which aim to enhance their skills in producing productive tree seedlings.

Furthermore, 41 (15 women) Training of Trainers (ToT) participants attended a four-days training on sustainable livestock husbandry and the management of improved animal breeds (Activity 1.2.2.4). The training was facilitated by ORDA Ethiopia's head office livestock production senior expert from October 27- 30, 2023, in Gondar town for ORDA's RELIVES staff (officers and interns), representatives from the north Gondar zone office, and of the Debark, Janamora, and Beyeda woreda offices, forage development experts, and kebele agriculture office heads and livestock production experts. The training aimed to enhance the skills of the participants on animal husbandry practices, breed improvement, forage development, and management strategies for intensive animal production. The training covered topics such as animal feed resources availability, feed-related constraints of livestock production, strategies for improving livestock feeding, the importance of

improved forage, and the basic principles of forage development. The training also focused on extension delivery in forage development, which is a key means for improving livestock productivity by providing new knowledge, skills, and ideas to farmers. The training participants presented the challenges and opportunities of livestock production and productivity in the project areas. They also proposed solutions to address the constraints and improve the identified outcomes. The training concluded with an action plan that outlined the next steps as well as the roles and responsibilities of the government staff at the woreda and kebele level.

Indicator 1.2.1: # of local government and stakeholders stating they have the capacity to support communities in restoring/rehabilitating/conserving natural resources/biodiversity/ecosystems in target kebeles.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 248 | 0 | 145 | 248 |
| Achievement | - | 0 | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 1.2.2: # of local guides and scouts stating that they are better capacitated to fulfill their role in the SMNP.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 50 | 0 | 50 | - |
| Achievement | - | 0 | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Outcome 2: Livelihood options for women, youth and vulnerable groups are diversified and improved while at the same time, gender equality, climate-resilience and sustainable natural resource management are enhanced.

The project has set the first steps for income diversification, gender equality and improved climate resiliency in its first year of implementation. During this reporting period, the project trained government partners on VSLA methodology to enhance their roles in establishing and supporting VSLAs, while 150 VSLAs with 3,618 (2,037 women) members were established and supported. VSLA review meetings were conducted on a quarterly basis (3 times thus far) at the kebele level in the presence of all VSLAs' management committee members, VSLA facilitators, kebele level government partners, project staffs and interns.

Furthermore, the project team provided a Social Analysis and Action (SAA) methodology training to government and project staff, SAA manuals were developed with 16 discussion topics, and an SAA orientation training to 67 powerholders (24 women) was provided. The powerholders are made up of kebele chairmen, kebele managers, influential men and women, representatives from the kebele women and children affairs, and practitioners of harmful traditions (for instance Female Genital Cutting) who were oriented for one day on the SAA approaches and on their roles and responsibilities to support the SAA's functioning.

To date, 27 SAA groups from two kebeles in each woreda of Beyeda, Janamora, and Debark were organized with 810 community members representing different social groups including men, women, youth and people with disabilities. Out of the total number of community members, 426 are women and 78 (48 women) are people with disabilities. The SAAs started their discussions on the identified topics and started the process of developing their action plans.

Finally, three energy saving stove production and marketing groups with 30 female members were organized in three watersheds (Miligibesa of Debark, Denkolako of Janamora and Selewa of Beyeda). The respective kebele administrations provided marketing and production sites for the organized groups. These groups will be trained in the second year of the project. The remaining groups will be organized in the second year, including Aderkay woreda.

Indicator 2.1: % increase in net income of people in targeted kebeles (contributes to SDG indicator 10.1.1).

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|--|---------|--------------|---------------|
| | 25,022 ETB (Aderkay 21,917, Bedeya 23,079, Debark 32,485, and Janamora 20,229), (Women 21,596; Men 27,728), (Women head of HH 15,643; men in male-headed HH 45,188; persons with disability 13,000; women in male-headed HH 28,029; young women aged 15-35 years 18,277; and young men aged 15- 35 years 23,772) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 25 % increase | - | 8 % increase | 25 % increase |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 2.2: # and % of people who report gender equitable attitudes towards social norms in targeted kebeles (GEM Scale- CARE indicator).

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | (107) 29% (Aderkay 32%, Beyeda 28%, Debark 24%, and Janamora 32%), (Women 26%, Men 36%), (women-headed HH 33%; men in male-headed HH 31%; persons with disability 24%; women in male-headed HH 27%; young women aged 15-35 years 23%; and young men aged 15-35 years 51%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 50% | - | 38% | 50% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 2.3: # and % of entrepreneurs contributing to the green or circular economy in targeted kebeles (EU GAP thematic indicators under specific thematic objective 4) Disaggregated by gender, location, age, vulnerability.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|--|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | (21) 35% (Aderkay 60%, Beyeda 38%, Debark 69%, and Janamora 14%) (Women 44%, Men 23%), (Women head of | | | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|-----|
| | HH 50%; men in male-headed HH 20%; persons with disability 40%; women in male-headed HH 50%; young women aged 15-35 years 33%; and young men aged 15-35 years 25%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 60% | | | 60% |
| Achievement | | | | |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | | | | |

Output 2.1: Increased income generating activity opportunities, knowledge and skills for women, youth and vulnerable persons.

Activity Cluster 2.1.1: *Increase capacity of women, youth and vulnerable persons and households that are willing to move out of parklands to engage in income generating activities, while supporting communities in changing social norms that are hindering gender-equitable practices.*

The project established 150 VSLAs in three of the four target woredas during the reporting period (Activity 2.1.1.1). The remaining 50 VSLAs will be formed in Aderkay woreda, in the second year of the project. The 150 VSLAs consist of 3,618 members (2,037 of them are women), 67 of whom (38 women) are persons with disabilities and 987 (659 women) are youths aged 15-29 years. The project provided support by providing kits to the VSLAs facilitators. The kits include a cash box with padlock keys, a savings book, recording book and four colored plates.

Table 5. *The number of established VSLAs and VSLA members in project intervention areas.*

| Woredas | Intervention Kebeles | # of VSLAs | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Debark | 4 | 58 | 637 | 751 | 1,388 |
| Janamora | 3 | 46 | 481 | 552 | 1,033 |
| Beyeda | 3 | 46 | 463 | 734 | 1,197 |
| Grand Total | 10 | 150 | 1,581 | 2,037 | 3,618 |

VSLAs aim to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of project participants, especially of persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and youth. They are empowered by deciding upon and exercising group rules and regulations, by exercising leadership, enhancing their relationships, developing communication skills, accessing loans for investment, and addressing emergency cases using the cash and social capital of their VSLAs.

The in-depth gender analysis findings depicted that women have limited access to public spaces and cannot influence decisions at the community level. To address this disparity, the project is promoting women and PDWs to play leadership roles and responsibilities while enhancing their leadership/management skills in their VSLAs. Among the 755 VSLA management committee members, 96.2% of the positions are occupied by women. Initially, the VSLAs' management committees/leadership positions were dominated by men (56%) but as women increased their knowledge of the methodology and became exposed to leadership experiences, women were encouraged and became more interested to assume leadership positions.

The in-depth gender analysis also revealed that the existing cultural norms and patterns of control and management of productive assets favour men, in contrast to women. The project is promoting women and other vulnerable groups to have access and control of productive resources, such as cash for investment from their

VSLAs. VSLA monitoring data revealed that 52% of the loans disbursed to the VSLA members to date was accessed by female members, which they used to pursue IGAs or emergency purposes. In the reporting period, through monthly savings for the last 9 months, the VSLAs saved 659,463 ETB in total (\$ US 11,776) with an average amount 182 ETB per individual member. Most of the VSLA members invested in various IGAs such as petty trade for cereals and pulse crop trade, poultry production, local beer trade, and shoat production and fattening. To date, the members took out 274,980 ETB (\$ US 4,910), 52% of the loans were taken by women.³

Table 6. The saving and loan performance of VSLAs in project intervention woredas.

| Woreda | # of VSLA members | | | Total saving including social fee (ETB) | # of individuals who received loan | | | Total loan disbursed (ETB) |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|---|------------------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|
| | M | F | T | | M | F | T | |
| De-bark | 637 | 751 | 1,388 | 272,320 | 94 | 94 | 188 | 107,460 |
| Janamora | 481 | 552 | 1,033 | 226,726 | 85 | 69 | 154 | 101,670 |
| Beyeda | 463 | 734 | 1,197 | 160,417 | 57 | 65 | 122 | 65,850 |
| Total | 1,581 | 2,037 | 3,618 | 659,463 | 236 | 228 | 464 | 274,980 |

To enhance the technical skills of VSLA committee members on VSLA methodology and financial literacy, together with government stakeholders, the project trained 750 (722 women) VSLA management committee members from Debark, Janamora, and Beyeda woredas in the second and third quarter of the year (Activity 2.1.1.2).

Furthermore, based on the social norms identified during the community needs assessment, gender analysis and the partners capacity assessment, and based on the learnings from previous projects, SAA manuals with 16 topics were developed and shared with each SAA group through their facilitators (Activity 2.1.1.4).

The baseline and in-depth gender analysis identified disparities among men and women in decision making of high value productive assets, community level decision making and leadership. The studies also recommended the engagement of local institutions and leaders, collaboration of local institutions, community leaders, and influential individuals to promote gender equality and inclusivity. In line with those findings, the RELIVES project and respective woreda women, children and social affairs offices organized a one-day orientation training on social analysis and action (SAA) for power holders in three woredas (Debark, Janamora, and Beyeda) where the project operates (Activity 2.1.1.5). The 67 (24 women) trainees included kebele leaders, influential community members, representatives from kebele women and children affairs office, and practitioners of harmful traditional practices. The purpose of this training was to help the participants understand the goal and concept of social analysis and action groups, the distinctive features of social analysis and action, and the roles and responsibilities of the woreda and kebele advisory groups.

Table 7. SAA group membership overview

| Woreda | Kebele | SAA group | Numbers of SAA members | | | Disability | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | M | F | T | M | F | T |
| Debark | Miligebsa | 5 | 70 | 80 | 150 | 7 | 8 | 15 |
| | Adisge | 4 | 61 | 59 | 120 | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| Sub total | 2 | 9 | 131 | 139 | 270 | 10 | 15 | 25 |
| Janamora | Denkolako | 5 | 69 | 81 | 150 | 6 | 8 | 14 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Sakiba | 4 | 57 | 63 | 120 | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| Sub total | 2 | 9 | 126 | 144 | 120 | 10 | 16 | 26 |
| Beyeda | selowa | 5 | 71 | 79 | 150 | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| | Medebay | 4 | 56 | 64 | 120 | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| Sub total | 2 | 9 | 127 | 143 | 270 | 10 | 17 | 27 |
| Total | | 27 | 384 | 426 | 810 | 30 | 48 | 78 |

To ensure ownership and participation of the relevant government sectors for the implementation, follow-up and scale-up of the SAA approach, the project trained government partner staffs on SAA approach and facilitation methodologies. A training was provided to 17 government staff members (from the woreda and zone) and project staff members, including interns in October 2023.

Table 8. List of participants

| Sector | Men | Women | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| North Gondar zonal WCSA department | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Debark woreda WCSA, agriculture, cooperative promotion office | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Janamora woreda WCSA, agriculture, cooperative promotion office | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Beyeda woreda WCSA, agriculture, cooperative promotion office | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Interns | | 3 | 3 |
| Project staff | 1 | | 1 |
| Total | 11 | 10 | 21 |

The trained government staff from each respective woreda and the project staff cascaded the SAA approach and facilitation methodology to the SAA facilitators selected from each group. Hence, 54 SAA facilitators (one man and one woman for each SAA group) have been trained on the SAA approaches during the period October to December 2023 in the three woredas of Debark, Janamora and Beyeda. (Activity 2.1.1.6). The SAA group establishment and SAA facilitators training will be conducted in Aderkay woreda in year two.

Since SAAs were organized and the facilitators' training was conducted only very recently, SAA review meetings with SAA facilitators and power holders (Activity 2.1.1.10) will take place in the second year of the project.

The project planned to conduct quarterly VSLA management committee review meetings. Accordingly, the project conducted VSLA review meetings in Debark woreda (Miligebsa, Arginjona Adisge and Abergina Kebeles) and Janamora woreda (Denkolako, Sakba and Dibil kebeles) for one day each with 520 (495 women) VSLA management committee members and facilitators. During those meetings the project's VSLA activities are presented by each kebele VSLA facilitator, including not only details on their savings, loans, income generation activity engagement, but also on strengths, weaknesses, and plans of the groups (Activity 2.1.1.9). After the review of the performance, action plans were developed to resolve the identified challenges. The action plans will be case specific, like increasing the attendance rate, complying with by-laws, loan disbursement, record keeping, and other group health maintenance concerns and related actions. VSLAs also fostered social cohesion and mutual assistance between their members, in addition to providing them with saving and loan services.

Each VSLA set a collection system of voluntary cash contributions that go into their social fund and can be used to help each other in times of need, such as childbirth, illness, death, or when agricultural inputs are urgently needed, among others. During this reporting period, the social fund accumulated ETB 92,730 and a

total of 177 members (117 women) received various forms of assistance, amounting to ETB 21,580 in cash. In addition, VSLA group members have been supporting each other by helping each other with their agricultural activities, especially people with disabilities. During the reporting period, the VSLA members have mobilized 2,109 'Person Days' of labor to support each other.



Figure 4. VSLA members support each other for agricultural practices.

Indicator 2.1.1: # and % of female VSLA members in targeted kebeles who are able to save at least twice per year.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | (33) 52% (Aderkay 33%, Debark 54%, Janamora 50%) (Woman head of HH 75%; Women in male-headed HH 45%; and young women aged 15-35 years 56%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 80% | - | 65% | 80% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | | - | - |

Indicator 2.1.2: # and % of women, youth and vulnerable persons in targeted kebeles who diversified their income generating activities.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|
| | (15) 15% (Aderkay 20%, Beyeda 23%, Debark 8% and Janamora 14%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 50% | | 30% | 50% |
| Achievement | - | | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | | - | - |

Indicator 2.1.3: # of SAA action plans developed and implemented by the community in targeted kebeles.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|------------------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 130 | - | 72 | 130 ⁹ |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Activity 2.1.1.14 could not be implemented due to competing priorities and will be taken up in the second year of the project.

Finally, the project also supported 15 female graduated interns (3 since April 2023 and 9 since July 2023). The interns with a natural science, social science, and livestock background are engaged in the project’s internship program. To improve their technical and communication skills, the project engages them in different capacity building events, review meetings and woreda level technical trainings. The interns reside at the woreda level and support 3-4 kebeles in their respective discipline (Activity 2.1.1.15).

Activity Cluster 2.1.2: Support government efforts to accelerate marginalized groups’ engagement in income generating activities and to challenge social norms that are hindering gender-equitable practices.

Targeting criteria have been developed jointly with the woreda steering committee and the technical committee members for the identification of VSLA members who will be supported with an income generating activity (IGA). The criteria include: extremely poor households, female-headed households, households with a person with a disability, households highly affected by the northern war and conflict, and households with resource poor youths. Other criteria that can be combined with the latter criteria include people who live in geographic areas around the park that are difficult to access, people living in and around the park boundaries, communities or people living near the watershed areas, the impact on their livelihood through park restrictions (such as loss of grazing areas), their proximity to wildlife corridors, households with VSLA members, and households committed to properly managing agricultural lands. Households or individuals who meet a combination of the criteria and who receive the approval from the woreda project steering committee are eligible. Depending on the nature/type of services or support, a project participant or a household might receive one or multiple services and support. To increase the project’s impact, almost all selected/eligible project participants or households will have the chance to access more than one service or form of support (Activity 2.1.2.1).

Based on the selection criteria set, the project and the respective woreda and kebele government identified the lists of HHs who will benefit from the project (Activity 2.1.2.2).

However, changes can be expected based on the participants’ interest and other socioeconomic dynamics such as temporal movement.

To enhance their capacity and engage government partners in the establishment and support of VSLAs, the project provided a five-day ToT on VSLA methodology (Activity 2.1.2.3) for 18 (4 women) relevant government staff and VSLA facilitators, which constitutes 75% of the planned target. The training was delivered in the second quarter of the year by ORDA Ethiopia’s Senior Expert on VSLA and aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants on the tools and techniques to support the formation and management of VSLAs. The topics covered in the training included formation, governance, by-law development, savings and loan procedures, record keeping, social fund management, and calculation of share-outs.

The project team, in cooperation with the relevant government sectors, the woreda administrations and the labor and skill offices, are meant to identify viable alternative livelihoods for the relocating HHs (Activity 2.1.2.4). The project team engaged in the same conversation with the cooperative promotion offices of the respective woredas for tourism service providers (Activity 2.1.2.5). The government could not provide accurate information on the relocating households (numbers, their interests and permanent residence) to make an informed

⁹ The targets have been revised and will be reflected in the next version of the logframe.

decision on the type of support for viable alternative livelihoods. Since the existing data at government offices is inaccurate, it was difficult to define the needed support, as this activity needs to be conducted carefully to avoid negative consequences on the park relocation procedures. The tourism service providers are also affected due to the current flow of restrictions of local and international tourists. The project will identify follow up on those issues in the second year of the project to find viable alternatives for the beneficiaries.

The RELIVES project conducted a market assessment study (Activity 2.1.2.6) to get an overview and detailed information on the market situation and trends in the project intervention area as well as to understand the behavior, needs, and preferences of the target population for sustainable economic enhancement. The study was conducted in Debark, Beyeda and Janamora woredas of North Gondar Zone, Amhara Region, to identify income generating activities (IGA) that are particularly suitable to youth and women, to investigate income generating activities that have the potential to contribute to environmental protection, to identify potential opportunities, threats and expected obstacles to develop effective IGAs and to assess cooperative's effectiveness, organizational and management structure. The assessment team consulted with different government institutions and partners from May 29 - June 10, 2023. Six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), nine Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), 29 market observations were conducted in 3 woredas. The project team collected both primary and secondary data and analyzed the market performance of the three woredas through a ranking exercise. In Debark woreda, the market analysis identified honey, sheep, and wheat; in Beyeda woreda, poultry, honey and shoat, while in Janamora woreda, barley, sheep and bean market systems were chosen.

This study also revealed that smallholder farmers in the wheat, bean and consumption barley market systems mainly produced their products to cover their own household's food consumption needs, while malt barley, shoat, poultry and apiculture market systems were found to have greater potential to generate income for households. Livestock production was mainly used as a means of insurance in times of crop failure. Agricultural productivity remains very low in the region, which was mainly attributed to traditional husbandry practices and the poor supply of inputs and support services. Moreover, natural disasters like floods and other climatic conditions, such as frost and snow, resulted in the depletion of essential nutrients from cultivable land and in frequently recurring plant and animal diseases which negatively impact agricultural productivity in the project areas. The study recommendations informed changes in the project design, as indicated in the inception report.

The training of woreda government staff on the identification of norms and barriers to gender equality (Activity 2.1.2.7) will be conducted in year two.

Output 2.2: Enhanced capacities of communities, local government, and stakeholders in the sustainable management of climate-resilience and natural resources.

Activity Cluster 2.2.1: *Strengthen knowledge and capacities of community and government to address impacts of climate change on sustainable management of natural resources.*

The project established 3 new fuel-saving stove producer groups in Beyeda, Debark and Janamora in December 2023 (Activity 2.2.1.1). The groups are established in Miligebsa, Denkolako and Selewa project intervention kebeles. Each group consists of 10 female members. They are prepared to receive a training (Activity 2.2.1.2) in year two of the project, and they secured production and marketing sites from the kebele administrations.

To sustain the restoration, conservation, and rehabilitation of the ecosystems, the project and government stakeholders supported the establishment of 22 nurseries (all youth, 8 of them are owned by women who are the head of their HHs) in the three woredas of Debark, Janamora and Beyeda (Activity 2.2.1.3). The owners of these private nurseries were selected by the woreda agriculture office based on the previously defined project targeting criteria. They are in possession of their own or leased land with water access, and are experienced in seedling production.

The selected youth were provided a technical training on seedling production, nursery management and seedling marketing. In addition, the project supported them with the provision of nursery materials/ hand tools needed for the production of quality and healthy seedlings. These private nurseries were established to increase the tree seedlings' availability for natural resource conservation and restoration while improving youth's livelihood with this income source. The nursery owners will produce the appropriate seedlings demanded by the community and they will be engaged in the seedling value chain. This support has a double benefit,

increasing access to seedlings for the community and improving the annual income of the youth engaged in seedling production and marketing.

Indicator 2.2.1: # individuals in the targeted kebeles pursuing an income generating activity that contributes to climate resilience and the protection of natural resources, Disaggregated by location, sectors, gender, age and vulnerability.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | | | 500 | 500 |
| Achievement | - | 22 | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | | - | - |

Outcome 3: Capacities of EWCA/SMNP in inclusive participatory approaches are enhanced and coordination mechanisms at relevant regional, zonal, woreda and kebele level are improved.

The mid-term and final capacity assessment findings will reveal if the coordination capacities of the regional, zonal, woreda and kebele level partners will increase over time. However, the first-year activities seem promising in the sense that coordination mechanisms are enhanced at different levels.

The project capacity assessment results revealed that government partners are capable to coordinate development projects and integrate their efforts with the government plan. However, persisting logistical constraints were reported by government partners to organize coordination forums and conduct monitoring visits. Within the given budget, the project is focused on supporting the review meetings and integrate the joint monitoring visits for budget efficiency.

Indicator 3.1: % increase of people stating that collaboration in implementing the park management plan is more inclusive. Disaggregated by gender, age, location, vulnerability, sectors.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | 30% (Aderkay 32%, Beyeda 15%, Debark 15%, Janamora 31%) (Women 37%, Male 22%) (Woman head of HH 33%; men in male-headed HH 24%; person with disability 29%; women in male-headed HH 18%; young women aged 15-35 years 53%; young men 15-35 years 56%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 60% | - | 45 % | 60% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 3. 2: % increase of people of all genders in targeted kebeles satisfied with their engagement with service providers (CARE Indicator). Disaggregated by gender, age, location, vulnerability, sectors.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|-----|-----|
| | 55% (Aderkay 59%, Beyeda 66%, Debark 52%, and Janamora 48%), (Women 48%, Men 63%); (Women head of HH 28%; men in male-headed HH 24%; people with disability 44%; women in male-headed HH 11%; young women aged 15-35 years 29%; and young men aged 15-35 years 51%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 80 % | - | 65% | 80% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Output 3.1: Enhanced capacities of EWCA/SMNP administration in utilizing inclusive participatory approaches.

Activity Cluster 3.1.1. Training and mentoring EWCA/SMNP staff in utilizing inclusive participatory approaches.

CARE, ORDA Ethiopia, and government partners conducted a partner capacity assessment (PCA) from May 17-23, 2023, in the RELIVES project intervention area (3.1.1.1). The purpose of the assessment was to understand the existing capacities of key partners at the zone and woreda levels, to identify technical, managerial, coordination, collaboration and institutional gaps and to generate a technical capacity development plan tailored to the partners' needs for the successful implementation of the RELIVES project. The assessment was conducted at the zone level (North Gondar Zone) and the woreda level (Debark, Janamora and Beyeda). Based on the identified capacities and the gaps, recommendations were provided, and the project used the study results for adaptation planning. For instance, a training on monitoring and evaluation techniques will be provided. In addition, the project will support the GO-NGO forums as an experience sharing and accountability platform.

The project supported the SMNP administration in utilizing inclusive participatory approaches in the reporting period. The project conducted a four-day training for the period 12-15 October, 2023, for 39 SMNP office, government stakeholders and project staff (including 9 women) on the methodology of Community Score Cards (CSC), an accountability tool to improve service provision (Activity 3.1.1.2, 3.1.1.3). Post-training feedback was obtained from the trainees to assess their understanding of the methodology and its practical applicability.

Table 10. Participants of the CSC training

| | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------|------|--------|-------|
| SMNP | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Debark | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Janamora | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Beyeda | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Project staff | 3 | | 3 |
| Total | 30 | 9 | 39 |

Activities 3.1.1.4 and 3.1.1.7 could not be implemented in the first year and will be conducted in the second year of the project.

Indicator 3.1.1: % of increase of people in the targeted kebeles satisfied with their last engagement with EWCA/SMNP. Disaggregated by location, gender, age and vulnerability.

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
| | 25% (Aderkay 25%, Beyeda 37%, Debark 30% and Janamora 16%), (Women 18%, Men 34%); (Women head of HH 28%; women in male-headed HH 11%; person with disability 44%; young men aged 15-35 years 51%; young women aged 15-35 29%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 60% | - | 45% | 60% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 3.1.2: # of CSC sessions conducted. Disaggregated by location and sectors.

| | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 30 | - | 15 | 30 |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Output 3.2: Strengthened EWCA/SMNP coordination mechanisms at regional, zonal, woreda and kebele level.

Activity Cluster 3.2.1: Support and strengthen the coordination of EWCA/SMNP and relevant government entities activities at regional, zone, woreda and kebeles levels.

The project in the reporting period strived to strengthen the coordination among the regional, zonal, woreda and kebele level partners. Hence regional, zonal and woreda level steering committees and the zonal and woreda level technical committees were established with their defined roles and responsibilities. Likewise, the kebele level partners' coordination has been set up and is functioning well.

The project team conducted kebele representatives' quarterly review meetings in the targeted woredas. 72 (18 women) kebele representatives and kebele and woreda government staff participated to date. In the review meetings, the quarter's performance of project activities was presented by each kebele representative and by the project office representatives. The strengths, weaknesses, and ways forward were discussed during those meetings (Activity 3.2.1.1).

Table 11. List of participants kebele level meeting

| No | Participants | Number of participants each woredas | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----|--------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|----------|---|---|--------|---|---|-------|
| | | Debark | | | Janamora | | | Beyeda | | | |
| | | M | F | T | M | F | T | M | F | T | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Kebele community leader | 12 | 7 | 19 | 14 | 4 | 18 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 54 |
| 2 | Kebele and woreda government staff | 7 | - | 7 | 5 | - | 5 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 18 |
| Total | | 19 | 7 | 26 | 19 | 4 | 23 | 15 | 8 | 23 | 72 |

Likewise, bi-annual review meetings of the project were held with the zone and woreda steering committee members. The meeting took place at the zone level and involved 13 participants from each woreda and 21 zone steering committee representatives, amounting to a total of 66 (11 women) attendees on September 19, 2023. In the discussion, the project's achievements in the given period, the integration and coordination needs and implementation mechanisms with the government partners were discussed, as well as the sustainability of watersheds to be supported (Activity 3.2.1.2 and Activity 3.2.1.6).

Table 12. List of participants zone level meeting

| No | Participants | Number of participants | | Total |
|----|---|------------------------|--------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | North Gondar zone project steering committees | 16 | 5 | 21 |
| 2 | Debank woreda project steering committees | 13 | 2 | 15 |
| 3 | Janamora woreda project steering committees | 13 | 2 | 15 |
| 4 | Beyeda woreda steering committees | 13 | 2 | 15 |
| | | 55 | 11 | 66 |

Quarterly review and reflection meetings were not conducted in the reporting period and will be conducted in the remaining project time. The current security situation is not conducive to move and/or gather government officials, which is why woreda, regional and federal review meetings and joint monitoring visits were not conducted as planned during the year (Activities 3.2.1.7., 3.2.1.8, 3.2.1.9).

The project team and focal persons assigned by the government from each woreda and zone agriculture offices maintained regular contact and guidance for each activity at the local and district levels. The project staff conducted integrated monitoring visits using checklists and monitoring tools for watersheds, VSLAs, input users, nursery site owners, etc.

Indicator 3.2.1: % increase of local government sector officials reporting meaningful participation in EWCA/SMNP coordination and collaboration activities

| | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|-----|-----|
| | 22% (Agriculture Office 20%, Cooperative Office 33%, Tourism Office 13% and Women, Children and Social Affairs Office 22%) | | | |
| Target (planned) | 60% | - | 40% | 60% |
| Achievement | - | - | - | - |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | - | - | - | - |

Indicator 3.2.2: # plans and/or decisions developed and/or implemented that support the sustainable development of the SMNP. Disaggregated by location and sectors.

| | Baseline | 12/2023 | 12/2024 | 12/2025 |
|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 0 | | | |
| Target (planned) | 10 | - | 10 | 10 |
| Achievement | | | | |
| Comparison (e.g. in %) | | | | |

The SAA project staff and documentation training (budget line 6.1) will take place in March 2024.

Visibility Actions:

The project conducted different visibility actions in the reporting period. The sign boards with the donor's and the implementing organizations' logo are displayed in Debark and Janamora woredas. In addition, the project team prepared 600 t-shirts with logos and climate change messages, and distributed them to partners involved in the public mobilization events organized for plantation on communal sites.