

**PARTICIPATORY FOREST  
MANAGEMENT ETHIOPIA:  
Bonga and Chilimo**

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**By**

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# 1 NARRATIVE REPORT

## A BASIC INFORMATION

- Project Name:** Participatory Forest Management Ethiopia: Bonga and Chilimo
- Project number:** CSCF: 47
- Agency Name:** FARM-Africa
- Name of Local partners:** Bureau of Agriculture/Oromia Region and Bureau of Agriculture/Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region, local Community
- Reporting period:** April 2000 to March 2005
- Date of Report:** April 2005
- Project Goal:** To improve the livelihoods of forest user groups especially the poor and women
- Project purpose:** To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of land use through participatory Forest Management.
- Project Duration:** Five years (April 2000-March 2005).

## B EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conventional forest management focuses only on increased quality and quantity of timber. This system destroyed traditional forest management systems and alienated communities, which led to illegal and unsustainable forest resource utilization. In response, FARM-Africa's Chilimo and Bonga projects started working to address livelihood needs and forest resources' sustainable use.

The underlying principle of the projects is balanced forest resource conservation and utilization by empowering the communities to overtake the forest management responsibility. In the PFM process developed government and community are the main partners in preparation and implementation of the programme with each having specific roles. The legal documents signed by the community and government clearly shows the roles, rights and responsibilities of both parties in accord with federal and regional laws. The PFM approach tries to address issues of gender and marginalized groups by considering both husband and wives as Forest User Group (FUG) members and as in case of polygamy wives are considered independent members. It is observed that Illiteracy and culture limits the leadership of women in both projects.

As a result of the project intervention, several project level impacts could be observed such like; environmental awareness is created; Household income is improved, alternative livelihoods are made available, forest products value has

increased through limited access and improved forest conditions, and social equity where increased women participation and improvement of Menja's status in the community are witnessed.

The sustainability of the impacts or PFM system depends on internal partnership that draws the management group members together and the external support to the system including legal support. Though most DoA staff members are ready to assist the forest management group, there is still financial and technical insufficiency that could jeopardize the PFM system if completely left at this point. Regarding the replicability of the PFM system, the sites are serving as field schools where experiences can be obtained for similar work. Although formation of national PFM working group shows the government's interest to disseminate PFM to various sites, considerable policy amendments and political commitment are essential to handover state owned natural forest resources to community as well as to win dedications of communities. In addition to significant political will and support, enough financial capital and technical supports are required to scale-up PFM. Several lessons are learned from the project such like the importance of the involvement of stakeholders at all levels, importance of awareness raising and capacity building programmes, showing that Agriculture and forestry can be complementary, which seems not the case in Ethiopia, and others.

In conclusion, the project is successful particularly the involvement of women and the Menja, who were ostracized once, is an immense achievement. Though all the communities involved have showed confidence in carrying out PFM, the team has reservation in the ability of the community and government offices carrying the management in the absence of the external support.

## **C FULL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

One of the main goals of conventional forest management is the production of high quality and high quantity timber. Such an approach has undermined the long-established traditional forest management skills and knowledge of villagers. Modern practice has often ended in alienating the surrounding forest-dependent communities. As is either under State or private control, illegal acts were encouraged of deferment the resource base. Forest resource depletion through unlawful acts remained a common feature of developing countries like Ethiopia with high population growth rate, low agricultural productivity, shortage of croplands, and little off-farm activities to support the household survival needs. In such situation it is not at all surprising if communities grew hostile towards forestry projects, as was widely observed in Ethiopia. Alienated as they are from the resources, villagers reverted into what is termed by

governments an illegal and unsustainable resource utilization and faced penalties. Hence, communities largely tended to look at the forest as enemy property, and worked to minimize the damage from such alien policies and laws by external forces. Forests under such conditions were fast depleted as observed in Ethiopia.

Resource management under conflict is an impossible task, and guarding is a futile engagement. Forest resource use under conflict situation is obvious to damage the bio-physical resource base itself and harm community interests? One study indicates that since 1991 in Ethiopia the forest area under State control declined by nearly fifty percent. It may also be said that forest users are facing a decline in the amount and quality of products they used to for their livelihood system.

In response to such a situation Chilimo and Bonga forests, FARM-Africa designed a project where both the livelihood needs of communities and the necessity of protecting and using the resource in a sustainable manner were addressed. Improving productivity and efficient use of the forest resource, securing use rights for communities and developing of a sense of ownership, appreciating livelihood needs of various interest groups, and building the institutional capacity and awareness of stakeholders are the major purpose of the project set by FARM Africa in order to realize PFM in the two project sites.

## **1.2 Description and Pre-Project State of the Chilimo and Bonga forests**

The Chilimo forest is surrounded by seven Peasant Administrations (PAs) with 3563 households and a total population of 17,792 (CSA 1996). Agriculture is the main occupation for most communities in the area. Land shortage, decline in (land) productivity and growing poverty have put additional stress on the forest.

The Royal family members and high dignitaries of the Imperial government were engaged in reckless exploitation of the forest from early times particularly from the 1940s. Following the 1975 land nationalization, the Chilimo forest came under State control. However, patches of forests and less than 80 hectares located close to communities were left to the Peasant Associations as community woodlots. During and some years after the land reform until the 1980 Forestry Proclamation, the Chilimo forest remained under open access situation.

The 1980s forest area demarcation in Chilimo and other forests in the country resulted in PA (community) forests, grazing and in some cases agricultural lands included into State-owned forests. This act produced resentment among communities who grew hostile towards forests and forestry projects. Although the guarding system was stronger then, illegal use and encroachment continued. During the change of government in 1991 and after, (i.e. when the

controlling hands of the State relaxed) communities took “revenge” on the forest to compensate their decade-long isolation. Forests of Chilimo again turned into open access resources, and reduced over 22,000 ha area recorded during the Military government was to about 5800 ha. By although a forestry proclamation was issued in 1994 community encroachment for agricultural and grazing lands, illegal pit-sawing and charcoal making continued unabated for a long time.

Bonga forest is located in Kafa administrative zone. The population of Kafa is estimated at over 700,000, while the population of Kebeles extending into Bonga forests is about 71, 282 (CSA 1996). The project area of ten Kebeles has a population of over 44,000 (ZOPED 1997). Most of the populations are engaged in small scale agriculture, some benefiting from income of wild coffee and other non-timber forest products. Kafa zone still constitutes some remnants of the extensive broad-leaved forests of South-Western Ethiopia.

During the Imperial regime, the Bonga forest remained under State control. The State, nevertheless, was unable to implement a management system that would have permitted resource sustainability. The Military Regime introduced some form of centralized management resulting in the alienation of some communities like *Manjas*, one of the minorities in the zone, who are exclusively dependent on the forest resource for their livelihood. Between the time the government changed in 1991 and the start of PFM by FARM-Africa 2001, the Bonga forest fell under unsustainable exploitation both by the *Manjas* and the town unemployed. It was at this point in time that intervention by FARM-Africa was initiated in both Chilimo and Bonga using PFM as a management and cons tool.

### **1.3 Review Methods**

The team planned to interview as many stakeholders as possible during its field work in Chilimo and Bonga. The plan envisaged the advantage of collecting information from diverse and wider groups. Accordingly, the Team talked to FUG/FCs leadership, ordinary members, and women groups, all independently. The Team also interviewed those community members who were denied the right to join Forest User Groups (FUG)/Forest Cooperatives (FCs) in both places. In both places Zonal and district administrative agricultural officials, field experts, development agents and FARM Africa staff members were approached for information and opinions.

Prior to the field visits, the Team determined the type of information needed, sources and collection techniques to be applied. Appropriate evaluation checklists were prepared relevant to each group to be interviewed. The result was that through group discussions and formal and informal individual interviews extensive qualitative data have been collected that helped obtain in-depth understanding of the attitudes, opinions and perceptions of the various

stakeholders. The Team also conducted forest walks in selected sites to look at the forest condition, community nursery and farmers plots where new technologies such as beekeeping were introduced. Time constraint, however, did not allow the Team to develop and gather quantifiable field data in order to verify some of the measurable indicators given in the Log frame matrix of the two project documents.

The Team after thorough review of relevant documents and field information made an evaluation of progress more recommendations relevant to both areas. The Team remain accountable to all opinions expressed and the conclusions made in this document, however.

## **2 APPROACHES AND PROCEDURES FOLLOWED TO FORM FUGS AND FOREST FCS**

### ***2.1 The Underlying Principles & Project Objectives***

The fundamental assumption to introduce and institutionalise PFM in Chilimo and Bonga rested on the potential of the approach to accommodate apparently conflicting principles, i.e. forest resource conservation, and utilization by introducing congruency between the forest capacity and community's needs of forest products. PFM was preferred over State management because of the latter's failure to protect and develop the forest resource. Furthermore, PFM not only empowers communities, but also brings them more closely to the resource with the sense of confidence and certainty.

Improving deprived people's livelihoods, we understand, has been the central principle of FARM-Africa's Chilimo and Bonga projects, not just the conservation of the forest resources. In this context, the Chilimo and Bonga forests were to be seen as an available physical capital to be used to enhance household income on a sustainable basis. This principle situates people at the centre of development. At the same time the forest resource base should be maintained and developed in order to contribute to the livelihood improvement of target groups.

The principle and practice of PFM allows communities to become partners sharing not only benefits but also responsibilities. The approach is beneficial to communities as it is to the State; for the latter, not only costs incurred for protection is reduced as a result of communities sharing of responsibilities, but also the strategy served both a political end, social justice and ecological function, i.e. resource conservation. PFM is becoming an important instrument with an increasing number of countries adopting the approach. Taking the past and present forest condition in Ethiopia, the PFM option may be considered as a panacea to the majority of fast dwindling resources.

As already indicated, State forest management's main goals, as Ethiopia's experience showed, were to protect the resources from community members through guarding system, imposing fines and imprisonment. The more the guarding the more grievances brewed to burst at the first opportunity of the relaxation of the guarding system. It is difficult to contemplate the possibility of sustainable resources management under such a conflicted situation.

It must be from such principle that FARM Africa and SOS Sahel initiated PFM in Chilimo and Bonga forests with the following objectives:

- To contribute to the long-term conservation of forest ecosystems, through the development and establishment of new systems of forest management i.e. PFM.
- To build the capacity of government staff and rural communities to manage natural resources in a sustainable and equitable way.
- To sustain and/or increase opportunities from improved natural resources management and diversified livelihoods.
- To catalyze the adoption of PFM within forest policy and practice

The Project Documents rightly recognized the logical relationship between giving communities the rights they deserved (forest use rights) and forest resource conservation. (The Bonga project includes a relevant issue of reproductive health where one of the most important issues of rural development was addressed).

## **2.2 Procedures Followed to Form FUGs & Forest FCs.**

The government and community were recognized as the main actors and the principal partners in the project preparation and implementation process. The role of the government as regulator, advisor and supporter of community led initiatives was emphasized. The local communities would take over the responsibility of managing the resources in accordance to the contractual agreements signed with the government. FARM Africa on the other hand was entrusted with the role of facilitator and acted as technical supporter introducing new ideas and technologies, systems and knowledge through training, capacity building for both local communities and the DoA.

Before communities were organized into FUGs and became functional two conditions, (external and internal) seemed to have been met:

1. The external condition that helped the start of PFM in both places was the adoption of the process by the Federal as well as Regional governments enabling policies and accommodative legal framework by which community's use rights over forest resources were recognized;

2. We termed the second condition internal as it was initiated by FARM Africa as part of the process in the start of PFM in the two project sites. This was the long and the relatively expensive, but the essential processes of “converting” sceptical community members, officials at various levels and field staffs. The “conversion” that was organized through series of awareness creation tours abroad and at locally seemed to have produced a conceptual shift among stakeholders vital to the introduction of PFM in Chilimo and Bonga. Initially zonal and district officials including foresters were not also convinced of the possibility of communities taking over the protection of the forests where even the State guarding system had failed.

Technical training and institutional capacity building were provided for various community members and technical staff. Probably the most difficult task at the start (as noted by Farm- Africa field staffs and DoA officials) in both project sites was to convince the sceptical farmers to re-assume control over resources they had lost for a long time.

According to Farm-Africa’s on-field briefing the route-map pursued to establish and implement PFM in Chilimo and Bonga had three stages: **the first**, the investigation period, was the time taken to identify stakeholders, explore the forest potential, FUGs and jointly assess the forest resource; **the second** covers negotiation period i.e. the time spent to, prepare forest management agreement documents, forest management plan and boundary setting; **the final** stage constitutes of the implementation period where FUGs entered the practical stage of executing their newly assumed rights and responsibilities, and where experts began their monitoring duties together with communities. Members who joined FUGs did so through their own accord or choice. This has helped the group to act collectively and abide by the rules they themselves drew up. It is the impression of the evaluating Team that the cautious approaches adopted by FARM-Africa to realize PFM in the two areas were imperative and prudent. However, there are a number of non-FUG members, especially in Chilimo, who are strongly denouncing exclusion from FUGs. The project, therefore, needs to give this issue due attention.

In order to comprehensively address sustainable forest conservation, it was important to address livelihood support. The project has made provisions to sustain PFM activities through community awareness creation, experience sharing, and creation of community fund initiatives, empowerment with defined forest rights and responsibilities and legally binding documents. As observed the plans for the gradual full transfer of the project were in place and were included in the management plan.

### **2.3 *Enabling Policies and Community By-laws***

In Ethiopia participatory forest management is a new approach. It needs the State’s legal, technical and administrative support for its implementation and

success. Policies and laws of the Federal Democratic Republic, the Oromiya and SNNPR governments, although still require improvements, are favourably composed to initiate PFM in the country. The Federal constitution, the 1994 forestry legislation no 94, 1994, the Environmental Protection Policy of 1997, the Cooperative establishment proclamation, and the Oromia Regional forestry proclamation no. 72/2003 are the legal documents in support of such approach. Each document in one way or another emphasis the needs to uphold the livelihood interests of communities and ensure their involvement in the management of local resources. Moreover, devolution of power to districts (*Woredas*) to prepare and implement management plan of local resources has created a significant enabling environment to introduce PFM.

The documents signed between the government and communities were clear with duties and responsibilities of both parties. They are results of long and arduous negotiations and amendments where each article was re-examined for legal accord with Federal and Regional laws.

Among others, such documents contain: objectives, activities, membership conditions, rights and responsibilities of members and roles of various legal bodies of the Cooperative, rules and regulations for saving and credit schemes, forest protection and development issues, conflict management procedures, etc. The Chilimo Forest Cooperative leadership appears confident and relaxed, compared to that of Bonga, as to its competence to understand the legal documents it has signed and started implementing. Although the Team found the documents comprehensive, readable and devoid of legal jargons, the relatively bulky document might need level of clerical capacity to interpret, explain and grasp their legal implications.

According to one of the articles in the agreements the forest property remained under the State, while the Cooperative was provided with use rights. The document forbids land use change by the cooperative while the government party can, upon paying the necessary compensation, take over the forest if it so requires employing the resource/land for other purposes. This option left to the government with, probably unwarranted authority that might expose the Cooperative to the bureaucratic intrusion.

#### **2.4 Issues of Gender and the Disadvantaged**

Unlike Chilimo, the Bonga forest groups constitute both husbands and wives as independent members of FUG/FCs with equal opportunity. In a place where polygamy is widely practiced it was necessary to accommodate the women as self-supporting and independent individual members in the group. Women were also represented in the leadership in both Chilimo and Bonga, although limited because of cultural and literacy level, as explained by the staff. Illiteracy is a serious impediment particularly among the *Manjas* of Bonga affecting the quality of leadership. The *Manjas* were the “untouchables” in the Kaffa zone

and one of the disadvantaged and ostracized communities in the area. They are probably the most oppressed and culturally demoralized minority in the country. Sometimes it is difficult to imagine the extent of their social isolation. The PFM project in their area might be considered as a liberate, not only from poverty, but also from social segregation. The project appeared to have addressed this question adequately.

### **3 RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PFM**

#### **3.1 *Fund Raising and Utilization***

The first phase of the Chilimo project for 3 years financed by SIDA (Swedish International Development Authority). The fund was provided as one of SIDA's activities to support new initiatives. The agreement of the project was signed between the Oromiya Bureau of Agriculture, the Oromiya Bureau of Disaster Prevention and Preparedness and FARM-Africa. The phase I project resulted in understanding of the various issues involved in PFM establishment and enhanced relationship and trust between the community, Government line departments and FARM-Africa. The reason for second phase funding by DFID was to build on the experiences gained in the first phase of PFM practices. The fund that was made available for various activities (awareness creation seminars, workshops and tours, trainings on issues related to livelihood diversifications, introduction of new technologies, etc.) seemed to have helped to achieve the project objectives.

The amount of money to be secured for the next phase activities may be by far less than the previous one due to acquired experiences to continue to assist the project, but essential.

In Bonga, the second Phase started on April 2001 and ended on March 2004. FARM Africa has sourced the funds from various organizations including, EC, DSW/GEO and DFID. The shift in emphasis in phase II that recognized livelihood improvement and reproductive health as incentives to the sustainable forest conservation was reason enough for donors to continue to support the programme. The fund raising process is the most challenging and tricky point in sustaining the programme.

Much of the future activities may depend on how much fund can be secured. Representatives of the district DoA are with the opinion that it would be impossible to assist the FUG/Coops with the current level of funding from the government. There is still a need for outside support to monitor and run existing initiatives with the current quality standard and future scaling up. In addition to this the community fund has not equally been strengthened and consolidated in all FCs and FUGs and it requires further support in the form of initial grant. Future requirement for funding may need to be scaled down, since

much of the basic experiences and skills have been developed with relatively higher costs during the pilot and implementation of the preceding project phases.

### **3.2 Personnel Involved**

The three years experiences in the second phase have shown that the forest resources of Chilimo could be better managed through the involvement of community participation with the other stakeholders. The Chilimo PFM project consists of a team leader, one community development officer, assistant community development officer, and field assistant including three drivers. The project is assisted by staff of Dendi *Woreda* Rural and Agricultural Development and Protection Department. The staff included a natural resource team leader, soil and water conservation expert, forest protection technician, agro-ecologist, and socio-economist. The FARM-Africa project staff played a vital role in the formation of PFM with utmost devotion in collaboration with the staff of line Departments and Organizations.

The question often raised by community, field and project staff, about the fate of the Chilimo forest after the phase out of the project, entirely depends on how the concerned bodies including FARM-Africa are working together to further build the institutional capacity of FUG/FCs in the area.

Participation of government people in the running of PFM project is more pronounced in Bonga than in Chilimo. A management team consists of a project leader (who is also Zonal DoA Head) with 100% of his time, two foresters and one agroforestry expert were assigned from the government side. FARM-Africa's technical team include the financial manager and other supporting staff. The management team runs the project and also prepares regular reports to the relevant government offices, FARM and donor agencies.

The evaluation team has noted, from the discussions with community members, however, that the current level of support they are getting from the DOA and other GO offices, is not satisfactory. According to the officials of the Gimbo *Woreda*, the DAs usually lack the initiative to be involved, and assume that it is the duty of the FARM-Africa's staff or those working in the project. The DoA does not seem interested in monitoring the book keeping of the FCs and FUGs for lack finance. We believe that the DOA needs to aggressively try to own it and get involved more than its current level of engagement.

### **3.2 Community Development Fund and Credit Service**

The seed money provided by Farm-Africa to assist to diversify community's livelihood has helped individual members to borrow. Some reported that their income has increased due to the off-farm and on-farm activities such as livestock (small ruminant) trading, poultry, horticultural crop production and

beekeeping. In Chilimo, Seven FUGs were provided with seed money to start saving and credit services: Galessa FUG secured the highest amount Birr 31,000 and Tiyo FUG the lowest Birr 13,600. The amount of money disbursed to individual members in the different FUGs varied from Birr 140-500. In Galessa FUG, the seed money allocated for individuals was from Birr 200-500. Most of the beneficiaries have complained that the money disbursed on saving and credit basis was not enough for the intended purpose. There were some members who were able to borrow two to three times after returning the first one on time. They believed that if they could borrow a larger amount, they could have made more profit and improved their income on sustainable basis. It is the impression of the evaluation Team that the community fund has greatly helped individual households not only to improve their income but also adopt new and proven technologies introduced by FARM-Africa, the concerned government offices.

In Bonga, as in Chilimo, FARM-Africa has provided some FUG's with initial grant money and some new technologies for livelihood improvement through the provision of credits. The mechanism employed for increasing the community fund are through funds generated from NTFP, cost recovery scheme and initial grant money. Funds were provided to purchase poultry, horticultural crop production, beekeeping, and other things. Woman members of the community have been the most beneficiaries of this saving and credit scheme. FARM claims that all the six FUG's and FCs in Bonga area have been beneficiaries of the scheme. However some communities say otherwise.

In some of the FCs/FUG's the saving and credit scheme seemed to work well and in others not. Some FCs/FUG's claim that the scheme lacks equity, as for example in Matapa some members are denied access to the scheme. In Agama, members are still critical of the lack of support from saving and credit schemes (probably resulting from poor communication). On the other hand, there are members who have borrowed repeatedly each time repaying their previous debt. Most of the beneficiaries say that the loan they received has helped them implement the livelihood schemes and improved their income, but the amount is too small for bigger projects.

In addition to the alleged lack of equity, the hoarding of money generated from NTFP to boost community fund has deprived substantial portion of members from directly benefiting by selling NTFP from the forest. The loss of benefits from the forest needs to be complemented with some kind of support to assist the livelihood of members in the soonest possible time. Otherwise, its sustainability will be under threat and loss of confidence is already cropping up among some members of FUGs.

The team is of the opinion that the introduction of the community development fund in both places is probably one the most important strategies adopted by the project and it has great potential for sustaining the activities, since the

success of the project depends on, the increased capacity of the community in terms of technical skill to increase their income.

## **4 ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHILIMO AND BONGA PFM INITIATIVES**

### **4.1 Forest conservation and development**

**Improved productivity and efficient use of forests:** The significance of the Chilimo and Bonga PFM projects lie not only in the establishment and institutionalization of strong user groups of forest dwellers but also in ensuring sustainable survival of healthy and productive forests. It is only when the severely threatened and degraded forests are rehabilitated and well stocked that the forest dependent communities can extract, on a long-term basis, a meaningful amount of wood and NTFP. As the current forest tree population is dominated by inferior quality and low value timber stands both natural regeneration and artificial rehabilitation works are indispensable to convert them into viable economic and ecological resources. The awareness creation phase of the projects seemed to have made a great success in convincing communities on the need and urgency of conservation of the forest in both places. The level of community's commitment and engagement in forest protection activity is exemplary at the time of observation.

Gradual rehabilitation of the Chilimo and Bonga forests, mainly through concerted community enrichment planting efforts is quite evident. Although some natural regeneration of economically valuable species was apparent during the forest walk in Chilimo, this largely proved inadequate and was exposed to trampling and browsing damage. The wildlife population is increasing fast, resulting in many instances in increased crop damages and attack on domestic animals.

**Securing use rights and developing sense of ownership:** The contractual agreements signed between the FUGs/FCs and the government in both places are well prepared and widely reflect communities rights, although in some articles it is skewed (repossession of forests by the government when found necessary) in favour of the government. More importantly, communities were involved in the processes of the preparation of these legal documents. Most interviewed community members feel that as long as they protect and develop the forests, as indicated in the agreement they retain and exercise full use rights indefinitely. Intensification of alternative livelihood strategies and access to the forests in extracting fuel wood, construction materials, exercising controlled forest grazing, and bee keeping encouraged communities in developing a sense of ownership. The increased level of awareness in participatory resource management and growing working relations and partnership with relevant government bureaus has considerably promoted community's confidence.

In Agama FUG, for example, the communities with the help of DoA and FARM have been able to block the construction of a road, which would have destroyed a large tract of forest land.

The collection and use of NTFPs from Bonga forest area has a national significance and great potential. Farmers in the area used to collect honey from their traditional beehives that were scattered in the natural forest. Members of poor households used to collect fuel wood, charcoal, timber and other wood products both for household consumption and for sale. Collection of coffee and spices like Timiz and Corrorima for cash generation was a very common phenomenon before the project. The review team realized that following forest demarcation and handing over to the community, individual access to all forests for commercial wood, coffee, spice etc. was seriously curtailed. Farmers willingly gave up their traditional rights of boundless access to the forests in anticipation of livelihood diversification strategies and sustainable forest conservation packages of the project. Nevertheless, as indicated above, two-thirds of the FUGs/FCs did not receive credit facilities that would have contributed to their livelihood.

In Bonga the rights of collecting economically useful NTFPs were transferred from individual farmers to FUGs or FCs. Individual farmers who were denied access to the forests were seriously hurt and may gradually develop antipathy towards the project if this would cause impoverishment as was serious complaint in Matapa FUG. The ill feeling may intensify if the promised alternative livelihood strategies are lagging behind and the available are not compensating enough.

#### **42    *Appropriate Agricultural and NTFP Technologies***

**Agricultural technologies:** The Chilimo project has succeeded in disseminating some agricultural technologies to selected members of the FUGs/FCs. These technologies were mainly aimed at diversifying food sources and serves as means of cash. Vegetable production technologies were disseminated to a total of 62 community members using traditional irrigation system. The major income generating technologies were the provision and promotion of poultry and sheep production interventions which were disseminated to 86 and 274 community members respectively. Many of the beneficiaries claimed to have reaped financial profits from both ventures.

In Bonga the introduction of agricultural technologies seemed to have served both a social and an economic purpose. The *Manjas* were the most ostracised group and were known to the surrounding communities only as fuel wood gatherers and hunters. The *Manjas* themselves told the evaluation Team that they were restricted to non-farming occupation because no one was interested to buy agricultural products they produced. In view of such realities, the project

can claim a major achievement in turning the *Manjas* to permanent land cultivators. Today they are adopting improved crop varieties and new crop species. Many households hail the introduction and success achieved in vegetables and fruit trees cultivation. Enset and maize represent the major home compound crops. Potato and taro are also grown by many households. The review team has observed a considerable amount of improved potato tuber in the warehouse of Watcha Forest Cooperative, a quintal of which will be sold at 300 Birr. Such vegetable crops as carrots, beetroots, cabbage, are also grown in small plots around houses. Avocado and banana seedlings are introduced and distributed to certain number of FUG/FC members.

Majority of the farmers who adopted poultry production technology in Bonga have complained that all the chicks did not survive. This might be attributed to the prevalence of a lethal disease in the area that should have been assessed before embarking on the technology. The high death rate might also be attributed to lack of proper feeding and sanitation procedures. It still needs setting up of small on-farm trials to carefully evaluate and rectify the problem before disseminating the technology on a large-scale.

**Credit Service:** Credit schemes enabled community members to adopt improved agricultural technologies and diversify their sources of income. In Chilimo a woman who was a member of FC, for instance, borrowed 200 Birr to purchase potato seed which she planted and harvested high yield. She used greater part of the yield for house consumption and sold the remainder to repay the debt. She then bought a sheep with the profit in anticipation of advancing her financial sources. With the current credit arrangement schemes and fairly equitable distribution patterns the community members many households in Chilimo are anticipating drawing a substantial livelihood benefit and greatly fostering their living standards.

In Bonga the credit schemes that enabled farmers to buy sheep and oxen have not yet been implemented in two of the three sampled FUGs/FCs. Farmers are much disappointed by lack of credit service as promised and even consider this as a great failure of the project. On one hand, farmers relinquished individual use of the forests for cash generation; on the other hand they failed to receive short-term livelihood improvement intervention technologies. If this continues into the foreseeable future, it seriously challenges the trust and confidence of the communities and thus erodes sustainability of the PFM approach in the area.

**Community Training and Awareness Creation:** In Chilimo training of community members on various livelihood-support skills has been one of the successful undertakings of the Chilimo project. A total of 3473 community members received training in various areas aimed at capacity building. Women trainees constituted just over a quarter of the total participants. Almost the same number (3589) of community members participated in various

experience sharing tours in various relevant project areas. Among these Konso, Wolkite, Chench, Adaba Dodola IFMP, Northern Shoa, Ambo, and Dandi are notable ones. The review team has witnessed a significant improvement in awareness of the participants concerning the effects of deforestation and resultant soil and water degradation. Communities have also gained skills and capacities in participatory planning and management which helped them to assume more responsibilities and access to nearby forests and to adopt new technologies. Above all, communities are now well prepared to initiate and implement PFM approaches.

Some community members were trained in bee keeping, improved poultry and seed collection and handling (which helped the trainees and their families to collect and sell seeds of various trees species). Some trainees were involved in training of farmers of other areas, an achievement that represents a success, according to the Zonal Bureau of Rural Development and Agriculture.

With regard to farmer-led diagnostic studies, short training courses were offered to DoA staff and community members. Most of the newly introduced technologies are adopted using the Farmers participatory research approach. A limited number of FUG members have also been trained in Participatory Forest resources Assessment to enable them play a part in participatory forest assessment. This was also found to be an encouraging output to equip farmers with the necessary tool to assess the size of their wood products, in terms of basal area, and regularly monitor the changes.

In Bonga selected members of all FUGs/FCs received training on various topics to increase their awareness and to help them effectively adopt livelihood strategies. Major training areas include beekeeping, nursery management, potato production, poultry husbandry, vegetable production, and enset cultivation. A total of 229 men and 112 women participated in various training programs and experience sharing tours. They visited area of interest around Adaba-Doddola, Melkasa, Gesha, etc. The participants had an opportunity to see severe deforestation and subsequent land degradation problems, PFM approaches, as well as improved agricultural technologies practiced by farmers. Six farmers were also taken to Addis Ababa Bio-Farm to gain hands-on practical experience in beekeeping. Farmers' days proved successful in disseminating successful agricultural technologies from model farmers to others. The role of trained farmers and DAs was significant in disseminating attractive technologies on field days.

Many of the interviewed FUG/FC members claim that the new capacities they gained and the new lessons they learned help them to successfully overtake the PFM projects and run even in the absence of FARM. The Team appreciated the level of such confidence and readiness to face the challenge of PFM. In contrast to the position of sceptics such outcome must be encouraging to the project staff.

The review team, however, is strongly convinced that more training for more people on various relevant topics could have been organized for both areas. Potentially useful and appropriate training topics could be the introduction of new and/or improvement of existing multi-storey production systems, effective weed control mechanisms/land cultivation methods, improved dairy and beef cattle production systems, on-farm fish ponds, etc. It is important to base any training program on identified problems, felt needs, and potentials of the land use and management systems.

**Farmer-led participatory research approaches:** Not much has been done in introducing of farmer-led participatory research approaches that would have greatly enhanced farmers' capabilities and confidence in problem identification and curtailing of farm constraints. With regard to farmer-led diagnostic studies, short training courses were offered to DoA staff and community members. Most of the introduced technologies are adopted using FPR approach. Participatory farmers diagnostics studies were followed by farmer's field days for larger dissemination. This was found to be an encouraging output to enable farmers to assess the size of various products from their forestlands, for instance, in terms of yield, disease resistance, market availability and storage issues.

#### **4.3 Capacity Building of Partner Organizations:**

The review team learned from the discussions held with district agricultural officials and experts in both places that FARM has actively and regularly developed the capacity of their staffs. Both office staff and DAs have received training on various topics including PRA methods, conflict management, etc. Personnel from legal courts and others office were also involved in training programs.

A total of 103 individuals representing various government offices including school teachers and DAs were trained in various topics, majority of which have direct bearing on the sustainable forest management and improvement of rural livelihoods. Representation of women accounted for just over a quarter of the total trainees. In view of the stringent traditional status of the women, this representation at this early stage of the project is quite encouraging.

A total of 118 individuals participated in the experience exchange tour. A remarkable start is also the scholarship provided for upgrading six DOA staff from Diploma to B.Sc. level. The trainees will have a great role to play in assisting the district and zonal DOA in disseminating community-based forest management approaches and enhancing rural livelihood improvement. Although this appears to be an encouraging achievement to contain such reasonable gender representation at this early stage by overcoming all sorts of

traditional and cultural barriers, the DOA will need to work harder to balance the scale.

Because of the various short-term training and experience sharing tours line department staffs are now in a much better position to take up new professional roles of initiating, facilitating, supporting, and implementing PFM. Field experts claim that the new lesson and skills they gained through the project process is fundamental and more applicable than college-level degree education. There is particularly a strong collaboration in forest demarcation, PFM plan preparation, and execution of participatory forest management tasks.

However, it is strongly argued that capacity building of partner organizations is not quite sufficient to enable them to take over the responsibility of disseminating the PFM approach to other PAs and districts. Inadequacies of the training programs were felt both in terms of the quantity and quality of the government staffs. In some cases lack of capacity in relevant government offices was believed to threaten even the survival of the instituted FUG/FCs.

#### **4.4 *Networking, Compilation and Dissemination of Results***

In Chilimo the project management has organized a total of 21 capacity building training sessions out of which 13 were focused on farm communities. The total forest resources (3773 ha) of Chilimo area were assessed, demarcated, and mapped on a participatory basis of which 74.3 % is handed over to communities. A number of training workshop proceedings, thematic papers, reports, guidelines for PFM implementations, guides and tools on community-based monitoring and evaluation systems, participatory forest resource assessment, conflict management in natural resources, bee-keeping, vegetable promotion, improved poultry management, and gender issues in natural resources were documented and disseminated to a wide range of community-based organizations, governmental and non-governmental offices. A wide range of signed agreements between the DOA and FUGs/FCs and community bylaws were documented and disseminated to all concerned offices. These documents are prepared in Oromifa, Amharic, and English languages. The library of Chilimo PFM project is stocked with a good number of various publications, although not systematically catalogued and displayed on easy-to-find racks.

In Bonga the project management has organized a total of 10 capacity building training sessions and 2 visits to innovative farmers' fields. Agreements signed between the local government and documents and FUG/FCs, and the bylaws are prepared in Amharic and are available on request. Otherwise, no display of printed materials, reports, guidelines for PFM implementation, tools, etc. were found both at the project main office and in FUG/Coop offices. Similarly, such publications were not traced in any of the district Agricultural and Natural Resources offices. The review team found it beneficial if available information

is organised using advanced multimedia documentation sources such as Internet websites, video, TV documentaries, slides.

## **5 PROJECT IMPACT**

### **5.1 Awareness Creation**

The experience sharing tours and the training have made FUG/FCs members aware of the socioeconomic and environmental consequences of deforestation in both project sites. The long collective exercise to implement PFM in both places has reduced individualistic outlook of community members and has encouraged cooperative spirit. Not only peasant communities' awareness and confidence were enhanced by the PFM process, but the sceptical attitude of local officials and field experts were much reduced as a result.

Tangible benefits from the forest resource or livelihood improvement schemes (which are still in short supply) to FUG/Coop members' would naturally raise the level of environmental awareness to the highest level. Security/of tenure over the forest resource by communities is another tool to develop positive perception and commitment towards sustainable utilization of the forest resources in the area. Still another factor that assist responsiveness is the provision of training on technical and social matters. The level of awareness created among the *Manja* community in Bonga and the confidence they built is a sufficient example of the impact the project had brought on members of communities.

The most important incentive for the FUG/FCs is to regain and secure long-term use right over the forest resources around them. Hand in hand with strengthening of a sense of ownership, the participating communities' consciousness of the value of the forest has been raised.

### **5.2 Community Livelihood Improvement**

Local peoples' access to forest products to secure their livelihood and their need for income generating activities is producing some results. PFM program has contributed to stabilization of the resources basis itself: year round pasturage; fodder for bees; production of wild honey; unrestricted access of FUG/FCs members to collect fuel wood from forests for domestic use, and supply of construction wood upon request. The other contribution include the livelihood support from potato, banana, enset, poultry and vegetable farming. The PFM have also stimulated the development of new income sources and marketing structure: in Bonga for example export of forest coffee, potato seeds production, coffee and fruit tree seedling sales are contributing much to household income. Household livelihood improvement of particularly the *Menja*

ethnic group of Bonga, among others, is an example to be mentioned here in this context.

### **5.3 Forest Resources**

To begin with, the Chilimo and Bonga forest resources have gained in value because access to them is no longer free. Prevention of uncontrolled forest utilization such as firewood and charcoal making has resulted in improved regeneration, since survival rate young plants increased. The growth and protection of the existing standing trees has improved the forest productivity. Natural regeneration of indigenous trees (small shrubs and saplings can be observed) has improved at numerous open areas. Enrichment planting is underway at some selected pockets. Participatory nursery management for establishment of new woodlot is underway. Wildlife that had disappeared during uncontrolled resource use has reappeared. In spite of low regeneration of economically important tree species, there is a visible improvement of recovery of forest within relatively short period of time. Enrichment planting is limited to some selected pockets; its expansion is certain to improve the value of the forest.

The DoA and the community reported that after the formation of the FUGs, the forest situation has greatly improved. There has been apparent change for good in the handling and protection of the forest. NFTP use has increased and charcoal making and sell is not as prevalent as before. The DoA believes that although there were some problems in the process, the overall out come of the project is promising in maintaining the forest and there are plans to extend the PFM to other parts of the two administrative zones. The team has observed that community members were also very optimistic on the FUG/FCs mission as regards to the improvement of their livelihood and the protection of the forest.

### **5.4 Social Equity**

As result of the start of PFM in Chilimo and Bonga the women have started to participating in the decision making processes concerning forests and other means of livelihood, although their presence in the committees is still low. They have become full masters of their home gardens and also participate in nursery activities. In Bonga one can observe a great success in the transformation of the social lives of the *Manjas*. They were the “untouchables” in the Kaffa zone and one of the disadvantaged and ostracized communities in the area. The significance of the Bonga PFM project lies not only in establishment and institutionalisation of sustainable forest conservation and utilization as well as in the diversification and improvement of livelihoods of the user groups, but also in the efforts being made to ease *Manja*’s segregation. FARM Africa’s achievement in this line can be termed as impressive. Empowering such groups and women is both an economic and social successes.

## **6 SUSTAINABILITY OF PFM**

### **6.1 *Institutional Resilience***

Sustaining PFM in Chilimo and Bonga or elsewhere, for that matter, is dependent upon various factors, internal as well as external.

First: the in-house (internal) cohesion that draw together FUG and/or Coop members is extremely important to ensure continuity and improvement. The degree of the participatory level of decision making, fairness of the decisions themselves, and accountability of leaders, maturity and ease of conflict resolution mechanisms are some of the internal factors that would determine stability and progress.

Second: Not less significant, and even in many cases determinant to sustainability of PFM in the Ethiopian context, are external factors, i.e. consistency and adequacy of the Federal and Regional rural and forestry policies and laws, political commitment to the principle of PFM, the extent of administrative, financial and technical support to communities engaged in PFM. Particularly significant is the continued support of DoA and Coop Offices to the new FUG/ FCs. Although it could be argued that once FUGs assume the legal status of Cooperatives they would face little difficulty to sustain themselves, one should not forget that in their formative days they are vulnerable to bureaucratic meddling.

Although the district government officials are ready to assist FUGs/FCs, still worrying is the financial and technical capacity of the DoA to follow up the implementation of the working rules of PFM with the amount of budget it is receiving now for this and similar activities.

Factors governing sustainability of FUG/FCs in Bonga, though not much different from that of Chilimo, seems to require more attention and serious follow-up. The level of community awareness, individual capacity to handle comparatively complex legal and administrative undertakings of FUG/FCs, and the ability to understand, draw and implement management plans are some of the critical factors that would determine sustainability. These are, it appears in limited supply among the visited Forest FCs of particularly of Bonga.

In Bonga government agricultural office employees were directly involved in the leadership, in the processes of FUG formation and implementation of the management plan. Nevertheless, ones FA pulls out, the working group, according to the experts and Gimbo district Natural resources and Cooperative desk officials, will not be as efficient as it is now to monitor progress of FUGs and Forest FCs. The district agricultural office has a limited budget for such activities with little prospect of its improvement.

### **6.2 *Forest Resources***

In Chilimo the evaluation team made an observation of the forest condition at Galessa and Goben FUG/FCs. The team could verify that there was no freshly

cut tree, there were naturally regenerated Olea, Juniperus, Podocarpus species seedlings and other vegetation. There was no evidence of grazing, pathways (only very few tracks), and browsing. The community was happy and felt that the rain condition after FUG formation has increased due to reduced tree felling by illegal cutters and other intruders. Soil erosion has been reduced following the training on soil and water conservation practices for FUG/Coop members.

One of the factors that may greatly contribute for continuous recovery of the forest resource, more than any thing else, is the commitment of each stakeholder is showing to respect the FUG/FCs rules and contribute to their successful implementation. The evaluation team has observed such determination from among stakeholders and district government officials.

In Bonga, the forest has been declining both area and quality. The indiscriminate clearance of forest land for cultivation, charcoal making, fire-wood has taken its toll as confirmed by all stakeholders. The recognition of the community's claim and rights on the forest has created greater security and served as incentive to form FUG/FCs and protect the forest after which the forest situation has greatly improved. NFTP use has increased and charcoal making and sell is not as prevalent as before. The wildlife number has greatly increased. The DoA believes that although there were some problems in the process, the overall out come of the project is promising in maintaining the forest.

The team has observed that in Bonga community members also are very optimistic on the FUG/FCs mission as regards to the improvement of their livelihood and the protection of the forest. Field observations in some parts of the forest verify that there are naturally regenerated seedlings and enrichment plantings have also been undertaken in some of the forest corridors. The most important achievement has however been the near absence of indiscriminate destruction of the forest. This is a strong ground for the sustained use and conservation of the forest resources of Bonga.

Generally, the evaluation Team has observed optimism in the project mission by community members. Such hope can serve as a solid ground for the sustained use and conservation of the forest resources of Chilimo and Bonga.

### **6.3 *Diversification and Livelihood Improvement***

One of the major objectives of PFM approach was to sustain and/or increase income opportunities and diversify livelihood strategies of communities through improved management of natural resources. This involves among others, empowerment and capacity building of the communities as well as participatory decision-making on the level of access to common resources and benefit sharing mechanisms. The PFM programs are designed to place the community

on a much better bargaining position with government offices on revenue sharing and tax levy arrangements. Subsequently, PFM facilitates channeling of more of the benefits from sustainable forest management activities towards community capacity building and livelihood improvement.

In connection to this, the Chilimo PFM program introduced various livelihood alternatives in an effort to diversifying cash income and food sources. Notable achievements in this regard include the introduction and dissemination of vegetable production, installation of irrigation schemes, and pedal pump water generation systems. A total of 62, 90, and 13 households were involved and benefited from vegetable production, traditional irrigation schemes, and pedal water pumps, respectively.

Many poor and underprivileged households drew some benefit from improved poultry and sheep rearing ventures which were facilitated through setting up of community development fund (CDF) and credit schemes. Many of the interviewed household heads confirmed the benefits obtained from small-scale development projects initiated and supported through CDF. Many of the interviewed male and female household heads in Chilimo confirmed that they have adopted and made a good benefit out of the credit schemes that was provided to 526 male and 61 female households from 5 FUGs and Chilimo Forest Cooperative. Some male-headed households benefited from training on improved production, handling, processing, and marketing of honey and the introduction of cheaper modern beehives.

The Bonga PFM program also introduced various livelihood alternatives in an effort to diversifying cash income and food sources through the introduction and dissemination of various agricultural technologies. A total of 251, 243, and 322 households were involved and benefited from the newly introduced on-farm coffee, avocado, and banana production respectively.

Some poor and underprivileged households in Bonga drew sizable benefit from improved sheep rearing ventures. Unfortunately though, no one benefited from improved poultry technology due to high death rates of the young chickens. Altogether, 210 households participated in improved poultry production although most of them complained early decimation of all the young chickens. Some male-headed and quite few female-headed household benefited from training on improved production modern beehives.

In general, there is no doubt that the project introduced a variety of livelihood strategies from which the communities could draw considerable livelihood benefits. Counting on the skills and knowledge they acquired through the project, interviewed community members confirmed that all the successes achieved in most of the newly introduced agricultural technologies could sustainably be pursued in the future by themselves. However, it is the opinion of the evaluation Team that more skill training of community members on

diverse income sources and looking for markets for products may assist to sustain and further improve the livelihood strategies introduced in the area.

## **7 REPLICABILITY**

### ***7.1 Dissemination of PFM Experience to Other Areas***

Chilimo and Bonga PFM projects are serving as field schools where practical experiences can be gathered to ease the financial and manpower requirements for their possible replication to other forest areas with similar problems. Currently, there is an increasing recognition by relevant government offices and community-based organizations of the need to bestow natural resource use-rights upon local communities to ensure sustainable management and development of forest resources. This is an important policy shift by the government that gives new hope to the conservation efforts of environmental NGOs and others. At it stands today PFM proves a viable means of safeguarding forest resources that are fast contracting in the face of rising exploitation and conflicting interests.

Field evidence confirms that community participation in the definition, design, implementation, and evaluation of development projects resulted in successful achievements. There is a interest not only among district government offices but also among the zonal government offices to extend the Chilimo and Bonga PFM experiences to the forests in the two administrative zones. More importantly, we learnt that in Chilimo the zonal DoA is receiving requests and applications from trained farmers of other districts for extension of the PFM approach to their areas.

In view of its significant impact on the sustainable management of the forest, gradual diversification and improvement of the community's livelihoods and its remarkable positive impact on the attitudes of the FUG members and neighbouring communities, the Chilimo and Bonga PFM approach has unrivalled prospect of being replicated to other forest communities.

The experiences from the two projects indicate that PFM has a considerable potential to succeed in areas where rural people largely (Bonga) or partly (Chilimo) draw their livelihoods from forests. The establishment of National Technical PFM Working Group at regional, zonal and district levels by the Ethiopian government and its active involvement in initiating and coordinating PFM project actions mirrors the keenness of the Ethiopian government to disseminate PFM to other areas throughout the country.

## **7.2 Policy and Financial Support**

Handing over, even partially, the natural forest resources that are owned by the State to local communities require considerable policy amendments and political commitment. Fully committed government legislative and political support is indispensable, and represents the single most important factor in setting up and institutionalizing PFM here and in other places. As already indicated since the 1994 forestry legislations a number of other Federal and Regional laws and policy directives were put in place, each supporting in their own ways community participation in any forestry undertakings. This is essential to win communities' dedication to such programs as PFM.

The Chilimo and Bonga PFM projects cost over 4 and 3 million Birr respectively during their project life. It is thus quite obvious that the replicability of Chilimo and Bonga PFM is dependent on the availability of funds, to principally build Community fund to support livelihood diversification. Procurement and dissemination of improved agricultural and non-farm technologies are possible only with adequate financial allocations. Forest demarcation, mapping, rehabilitation works call for expert involvement and production of planting materials which in turn needs financial capital.

## **8 LESSONS LEARNED**

As noted above Chilimo and Bonga serves as field schools from which environmental and forestry GOs at different level, NGOs and communities can learn a number of helpful lessons to enhance rural development efforts in the country. The two sites provide policy and practical lesson: These include:

- Involving all stakeholders at different levels is not optional but mandatory. The active involvement of the respective offices has no doubt helped the relatively hopeful start and implementation of the project- a lesson from which other projects can learn.
- The processes needed to implement PFM in the two areas seemed arduous, but essential. Prudent are the investigation, negotiation and implementation stages that passed through consultative and participatory process. The long discussions, which sometimes took as long as two years helped foster built trust among all stakeholders, an essential factor for PFM implementation.
- The awareness creation initiated among communities' and government staff has helped create an understanding on the importance of the PFM approach to the conservation of the forest resources. The field tours seemed to have immediate impact on positively reconsidering and reshaping the attitude of participants.

- The institutional and technical capacity building provided by the two projects through training on participatory forest resource assessment, community based monitoring & evaluation, conflict resolution methods, gender, and other technical skills were essential for any such project to ensure efficiency and continuity.
- Introducing alternative livelihood schemes for the resource poor forest dependent communities was essential. The livelihood improvement schemes have shown that Agriculture and Forestry can be complementary and can coexist in harmony. The livelihood schemes such as Agro-forestry, Beekeeping, Poultry production, NTFP, horticultural production have received greater appeal among the forest community. Natural resource conservation and development will not stand alone with out creating a mechanism to curb the ever- increasing population that may negatively impact the efforts made to conserve resources.
- The project's focus to involve women and disadvantaged groups of the forest community is another important lesson to be drawn. The project took the initiative to accommodate women as self supporting and independent individual members of the FUGs, however, even though women participation appear to be encouraging, in view of the strict traditional discrimination, this figure is still quite low by any standard. Hence, further focus need to be given for the gender aspect of the program. The project has also organized the Menjas, who are one of the most disadvantaged and oppressed communities of the country, in FUGs, which was one of the most remarkable initiatives taken by the project. This has helped the community members to gain self-respect and self-reliance against all odds. Thus the project has shown that the PFM can be used as a social tool to ease discrimination.
- The introduction of community development fund is also an important strategy from which one can draw a lesson. The development fund has adopted a cost recovery scheme and other mechanisms to add to the revolving fund. The development fund scheme has great potential for sustaining future activities.

## **9 CHALLENGES**

The evaluation Team has understood the numerous and diverse challenges the organizers faced at each stage of PFM introduction to Chilimo and Bonga. In some instances, according to field staff the process were frustrating. Some of the difficulties may be categorised in the following ways:

1. The experience of Ethiopia with PFM is limited to a few areas. At the start of the projects few legal frameworks were in place to initiate PFM in

confidence. It is only recently that Regional State policies and laws are emerged (in a limited way) to accommodate the principle of community participation in natural resource management.

2. The bureaucratic resistance that included foresters' reservations about the possibility of community's handling of forests were some of the retarding factors (challenges) to starting PFM in Chilimo and Bonga as reported by the different stakeholders.
3. The scepticisms of peasants about new ideas and technologies initiated by outsiders have been a general problem of developing countries. The experience in Ethiopia could not have been different. According to information of the project staff, among others, the Menjas distrust, for PFM seemed to have been serious. Added to the social experience the Menjas had was the high level of illiteracy among the population, which still remained an unresolved challenge.
4. The immediate conservation and rehabilitation of the forest resources was another challenge for keeping the momentum of the establishment of participatory forest management process. The limited technology packages produced by the research centres and those adopted in the two project areas were not adequate enough to increase agricultural productivity to convince communities to halt their tradition of using the forest on non-sustainable basis.
5. Finally, sustainability of the two projects after FARM terminates its presence in the area is another incoming challenge in the face of budgetary constraints of the agricultural office and fluid political situation in the district.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

The evaluation Team is convinced that the success of the Chilimo and Bonga FUGs/FCs most probably will have a wider regional or countrywide implication. Goal attainment in these two areas might spark a new and wider beginning in other forests with similar record. There is, however, a fear that failure will be played into the hands of sceptics and all positive aspects of PFM so far observed will be lost. As PFM is a new tool in the country, cautious approach with limited ambition might be essential. Having the above in mind the Team has come to the following conclusion:

1. The introduction of community development fund in the form of credit and saving service has played a significant role in improving, although in a limited way, the community livelihood through diversification of sources of income. This has again influenced the development of the saving culture of the local people and FUG/FCs members. The credit scheme has also a direct influence in reducing un-sustainable forest resource utilization of the previous years. It has to be mentioned, however, that the amount of the available revolving money is too small to satisfy the demand of community's for more credit.

2. The awareness creation venture adopted by the organizers to bring stakeholders to a common understanding about the planning and the implementation of PFM has produced a desired result.
3. The project have attained a remarkable result in assisting communities win legally backed use rights. This has resulted in building a sense of ownership among community members, an essential conversion from sceptical attitude of the previous years.
4. One of the most significant achievements of the Project is the place women and disadvantaged social groups received in the whole set-up of PFM. Particularly important is “liberation” of the Menja community. Through the PFM program the Menjas developed self-reliance, confidence, improved decision-making skill both in forest management and agricultural activities.
5. Fug/FCs of Chilimo and Bonga has developed confidence to fully run their PFM affairs any time FARM Africa withdraws. The Team, however, is not convinced if that would be realistic looking into current institutional capacity of FUGs/FCs and the financial capacity of DoA to substitute the role of Farm Africa. In Bonga the involvement in setting goals, conducting resource assessment, design and implementing as well as monitoring and evaluation, was limited to executive committee and few ordinary members of the FUG/Coop particularly at Wacha. Field experts from DoA interviewed by the Team have expressed similar reservation. The Team felt that the community still require the legal, technical, and administrative support of external forces, particularly of government bodies.
6. The effort made by the project showed that the PFM approach improved the community’s’ livelihood by directly involving some of them in adapting new technologies. Introduction of different technologies have become more important in generating more income to improve livelihood. Among some community’s, the income from sale of potato, honey and banana has increased. However, limited availability of some technologies (e.g vegetables, poultry etc) is hindering further improvement of the livelihood as expected.
7. Conflicts between FUGs/FCs and non-FUGs/FCs who are a bit far from the resources resulting from incompatible interests over forests may contribute to destabilization at this early formation stage.
8. The socio-economic factor probably limiting sustainability PFM in Chilimo and Bonga include inadequate fund, limited service support (mainly due to shortage of fund from GO), low out put of Timiz spices per labour input, loss of income by some poor community members in FUG/Coop, lack of market, extended time for sharing of communal collected NTFPs and wood sales and market facilities mainly for honey and high workload of the FUG member in forest management activities. Some Non-FUG has already started intimidating the FUG/Coop (e.g at Matapa).

9. The reduced exploitation has improved the forest regeneration status and biodiversity. The enrichment planting practices underway has been seen as great potential to improve the productivity of the forest.
10. In the case of the Bonga PFM, the productivity of introduced technology was not evaluated in participatory way. The success of technology introduction can be achieved, if it is accompanied with required information particularly in terms of productivity, sustainability and adaptability.

Generally, in the Ethiopian context PFM can become an important forest management tool provided that other factors are in place. PFM answered not only social issues (the case of the Menjas), but also served as solution to forest depletion. If PFM failed it would be less for its principles. As a relatively “new-found” tool in Ethiopia cautious approach with limited ambition seems essential. Participatory forest management cannot, nevertheless, be considered as an ultimate remedy to solving all problems created by conventional forest management. PFM shall not also be considered as a total replacement to the long established practice of forest management. In other words, PFM is not an alternative to State or private ownership, but an antidote to open access resources. Ethiopia has reached a situation where the most viable alternative to forest protection is to make neighbouring villagers the guardians of the forest resource through PFM.

## **11 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The evaluation Team would like FARM Africa to seriously consider the following recommendations to assist sustainability as well the possible replicability of Chilimo and Bonga PFM. The recommendations, among others, concentrate on the need to further work on agricultural technologies, livelihood diversification, institutional capacity building, and conflict resolution, training in skills and management, dissemination of achievements

1. Introduction of new fruit and other food crop species and assessment of existing forest foods should be given priority. Judicious introduction of new forest food species such as mushrooms and spices can provide additional livelihood without compromising the productive potential of the forest. Identification and introduction of appropriate bamboo species both into vacant and sloping areas in the forest can be viewed as a valuable alternative means of improving forest and farm productivities. Improving farmland productivity through integration of multipurpose tree and shrub species would be advantageous. Introducing of various vegetable seeds improves on-farm productivity, dietary balance and cash income of households.
2. Beside the introduction of agricultural and other relevant technologies, the concerned bodies, including FARM-Africa, should look to the marketing possibilities of community’s produces. NTFP has been an important source of livelihood support in the lives of the Bonga

- community, for example. Its potential, although high, remained undermined for lack of appropriate technical and managerial skills, above all better access for markets.
3. However, the review team felt that achievements as regards farmer-led participatory technology development, identification and dissemination of appropriate agroforestry technologies, fodder-banking experimentations, market studies are weak so far. However, some attempts such as efficient energy uses and conservation, as well as introduction of improved cereal and pulse crop varieties were applied. Concerted efforts need to be exerted in these directions in the future to reduce pressure and dependencies on forest resources.
  4. It is important to set-off and disseminate farmer-led participatory research approaches (as indicated in the project document). This will enhance farmers' capabilities and confidence in problem identification and curtailing of on-farm constraints.
  5. There is an urgent need to increase the amount of seed money that serves as revolving fund in FUG/FCs and also the amount of money that can be borrowed to make the livelihood diversification effort to have more effect. There is a strong need to intensify the credit and saving scheme in order to increase the amount of fund available to a larger group of people. Securing more funds is one way of introducing new technologies for poverty reduction and improved food security in the area. The 30 % "tax" payable to the Regional government from sell of plantation (in the case of Chilimo) should be put back into the revolving fund. The fund raising initiative has to be continued by FARM-AFRICA and government officials of the Dendi *Woreda* in order to consolidate and maintain what has been achieved so far.
  6. The immediate transformation of FUGs to cooperatives is probably one of the most important actions to be pushed forward in both places. FARM Africa, including line Departments should pull on all available strings to speed up the transition. It may be argued that speedy transition of FUGs to cooperatives without perfecting the institutional requirements of the groups might be damaging or an immature measure. But, it has to be considered that in the face of fluid socio-political and policy situations it would always be wise and prudent to take the first available opportunity.
  7. FARM Africa has to extend its experiences gained in Chilimo to other areas and build same on different socio-cultural grounds before coming into a definite conclusion about the visibility of PFM in Ethiopia. Furthermore, extending PFM to more areas and showing of success might help to persuade policy maker to take the tool (PFM) more seriously.
  8. Existing conflicts between FUG/Coop and non-FUG/FCs over resources may negatively influence the sustainability of the achievements. The restriction of membership especially those living adjacent to the forest area should be revisited. The need for forest products of the excluded

community members can not and should not be just sidelined. Alternative wood sources, ex. establishment of separate woodlots for the excluded may be possible and helpful. Timely conflict resolution mechanisms among FUG/FCs and execution of justices need to be improved and strengthened.

9. Sustainability of the Chilimo and Bonga PFM is partly dependent on the institutional strength of the groups to defend their newly-won rights in case of any challenge from outside. External assistance (DoA, FARM Africa, and others although still necessary), would not replace community's organizational capability and legal strength.
10. The participation of women in the leadership was seen to be minimal. Though it is not an easy task to involve women in the leadership due to traditional socio-cultural conditions, strategies (affirmative action) should be designed and developed to involve women in various leadership positions, for instance, in the administration of the revolving funds after the necessary training.
11. Training has been found to be a key tool in capacity building of FUG/FCs particularly in decision-making (management skill) and documentation to sustain the achievement so far made. To further improve this capacity In-service training for concerned government staff and training for community in bookkeeping, marketing, other technical aspect related to various agricultural practices has to be strengthened.
12. In this line higher education institutions in the country can play an important role by introducing PFM education in their curriculum with practical attachments from the country's own experiences and conduct development oriented research.
13. Due to long gestation period, environmental and production function of forest, establishment of forest cooperative requires especial considerations. Every effort at all levels has to be made to lobby policy makers at Federal and regional level to promulgate relevant laws. It is particularly important to work for the legal recognition of FUGs.
14. The high illiteracy level among Bonga FCs and FUG seems to negatively affect the quality leadership needed in FCs & FUGs. It is imperative to increase the number literate members at various leadership level through some kind of literacy program.
15. Utmost care should be taken not to create a discouraging environment for some FUG members (e.g. poor people at Matapa) to compensate the lost income from the forest due to suspension of individual exploitation. Sells income from the forest (Chilimo) should be able to be distributed as planned. In places where introduced new technologies failed to bring the expected changes (e.g agro -forestry, poultry in Bonga) alternatives should be out in place as soon as time allows.

## **2 Terms of Reference**

### **Final Evaluation of DFID and DSW support for Bonga and Chilimo Project sites of FARM-Africa's March 2005**

#### **Background**

The Government of Ethiopia introduced enabling policy and legislation for community participation in forest management by The National Conservation Strategy and a forestry proclamation in 1994 and with a follow up Policy document in 1998. However, the modalities of this approach were new in Ethiopia and Phase I Bonga Participatory Forest Management project was conceived as an experiment to develop the methodologies and conditions for the success of participatory forest management (PFM).

The three years duration of the project was short for the introduction of a new approach to forest management, especially where PFM is new for the country and for the local experts working in the area. It was concluded that the experience gained in Phase I needed to be consolidated and project work continued, until such time that the relevant government departments(s) are able to implement the new approach on its own.

With this background a Phase II proposals were developed for both sites with improved and more focused goals and objectives drawn from the experiences of the first phase. the proposal for Bonga also incorporated a new and additional component, Reproductive Health, to address Population issues.

The German Foundation for World Population (DSW) and German Environmental Magazine (GEO which aim to combat environmental degradation and population problems through collaborative action, are the funding part of the forestry activity and the reproductive health activities of the Bonga project.

#### **Project Implementation**

The project rationale recognize that people will only conserve forest if they have rights (entitlements) to the resource, if they gain more benefit by retaining the forest than by removing it, and if that benefit is linked directly to the existence of the forest. Therefore the project will develop systems of established use right and sustainable forest utilisation, whereby the forest itself generates products for use and sale to directly support the livelihoods of the local households involved in managing the forest. The right to current and future forest use provides incentives for the community to take responsibility for

the forest by ensuring that their members adhere to their agreed management plan, and by protecting the forest from abuse by outsiders.

Experience elsewhere indicates that the most acceptable joint (participatory) forest management models are generally those which are based on existing (traditional) forest use practices, and access rights, and traditional community based institutions. Practical reality often dictates that such traditional systems need to be strengthened and modified to improve productivity, sustainability and equity. This approach was commenced during the first phase of the project and has gained support from Government and communities.

Therefore based on these principles, the phase II project is further developing and refining the approach. The aim is to establish a participatory forest management system. which improves livelihoods of forest users and meets forest conservation needs. The Government will replicate the system on other forest sites and results from this project will also be feed into policy and legislation processes, so as to institutionalize participatory forest management.

New Adolescent RH activities in the Bonga area began recently using Anti-AIDS clubs established at Bonga Juniro & High Schools. Short visits of the area shows the need to do something in the area concerning reproductive health, and link the issue of rapidly growing population to environmental degradation. Therefore, the second phase of this project introduces reproductive health activities, and tries to bring the understanding of the linkage of population and environmental degradation.

### **Phase II Objective**

The project has the following four major objectives:

1. To contribute to the long-term conservation of forest ecosystems, through the development and establishment of new systems of forest management.
2. To build the capacity of government staff and rural communities to manage natural resources in a sustainable and equitable way.
3. To sustain and/or increase opportunities from improved natural resources management and diversified livelihoods.
4. To catalyse the adoption of PFM within forest policy and practice
5. To complement the PFM approach with reproductive health measures (only Bonga)

The project was intended in particular to support both local government forest department and community capacity to develop/introduce Participatory Forest Management and integrate this with reproductive health measures.

### **Goal**

The overall goal of the project is to improve the livelihoods of forest user groups especially the poor and women

### **Purpose**

The Bonga project has the purpose to improve the livelihood of the community living in and around Bonga forest in Gimbo *woreda* through proper Land use and Reproductive Health Measures.

Similarly the DFID (Bonga and Chilimo) proposal read, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of land use through participatory Forest Management

### **Activity**

See each project document

### **Review methodology**

A team comprising 2-3 independent consultants (with experience in policy, socio-economic aspects, participatory resources management and participatory rural development and, Reproductive Health, RH youth-club and wide knowledge on IEC) will undertake the final evaluation

The evaluation exercise will take place tentatively in April and May 2005. The team will be thoroughly briefed concerning evaluation aims and objectives as well as form and process. The process will include a review of all project actions from the commencement of phase II up until this date. The evaluation should focus on those involved in the project, communities, government partners and project staff. Work should be oriented around the phase II project document, with adequate reference to the project logical framework, giving particular attention to an analysis to Measurable Indicators and their Means of Verification. Project document reports and other documentation, observations at project sites, meetings, discussions and participatory evaluation exercise, with community members and project staff, and a workshop involving representatives of all the major stakeholder groups, will be the major features of evaluation. A preliminary presentation of findings will be made by the team either in Addis Ababa or at one of the project sites at the end of the evaluation and a final report will be completed then after two weeks.

The purpose of the evaluation in particular is to assess impact. learn lessons and assess whether or not donor's investment was used efficiently and effectively. It is also a means in which the sustainability of the investment made can be judged.

Therefore, in carrying out the evaluation the team will assess the following:

- Progress since the start of the project focusing on activities, approaches and skills to meet the project objectives;
- Review the appropriateness of the intervention strategies to achieve the intended project purpose
- The project's relationship with the Community, DoA, and other government stakeholders;
- An analysis of stakeholder involvement (level), impact and perceptions;
- Analyse (if relevant) major problems facing the project as to successfully achieve and ensure sustainability

**The Evaluation report should give particular attention to answer the following issues:**

- **Relevance:** Details of the project's significance with respect to specific to needs
- **Equity:** Discussion of social differentiation (eg by gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group, disability, etc) and the extent to which the project had a positive impact on the more disadvantaged groups. How HIV/AIDS has been addressed can be reviewed in this section.
- **Efficiency:** How far funding, personnel, regulatory, administrative, time, other resources and procedures contributed to or hindered the achievement of results.
- **Effectiveness:** Assessment of how far the intended outputs and results were achieved in relation to targets set in the original logical framework.
- **Impact:** Details of the broader economic, social, and political consequences of the project and how it has contributed to the overall objectives of the CSCF (poverty reduction, empowerment, partnership).
- **Sustainability:** Potential for the continuation of the impact achieved and of the delivery mechanisms following the withdrawal of external support.
- **Replicability:** How replicable is the process that introduced the changes/had impact. Refer especially to innovative aspects, which are replicable.
- **Lessons Learned:** Key lessons learned throughout the period of the project, which can be utilized to guide future strategies, projects, or agencies working in development. It is useful to divide these into project, sector and broader developmental lessons.
- **Recommendations:** Recommendations for improvements based on observations during the evaluation process.
- **Information, Dissemination and Networking:** Detail the mechanisms used for dissemination outside project stakeholders.

The report should be presented in two parts each specifically dealing with Chilino and Bonga and the RH component of Bonga will be a separate report.

The report should be presented within two weeks after the fieldwork is completed.