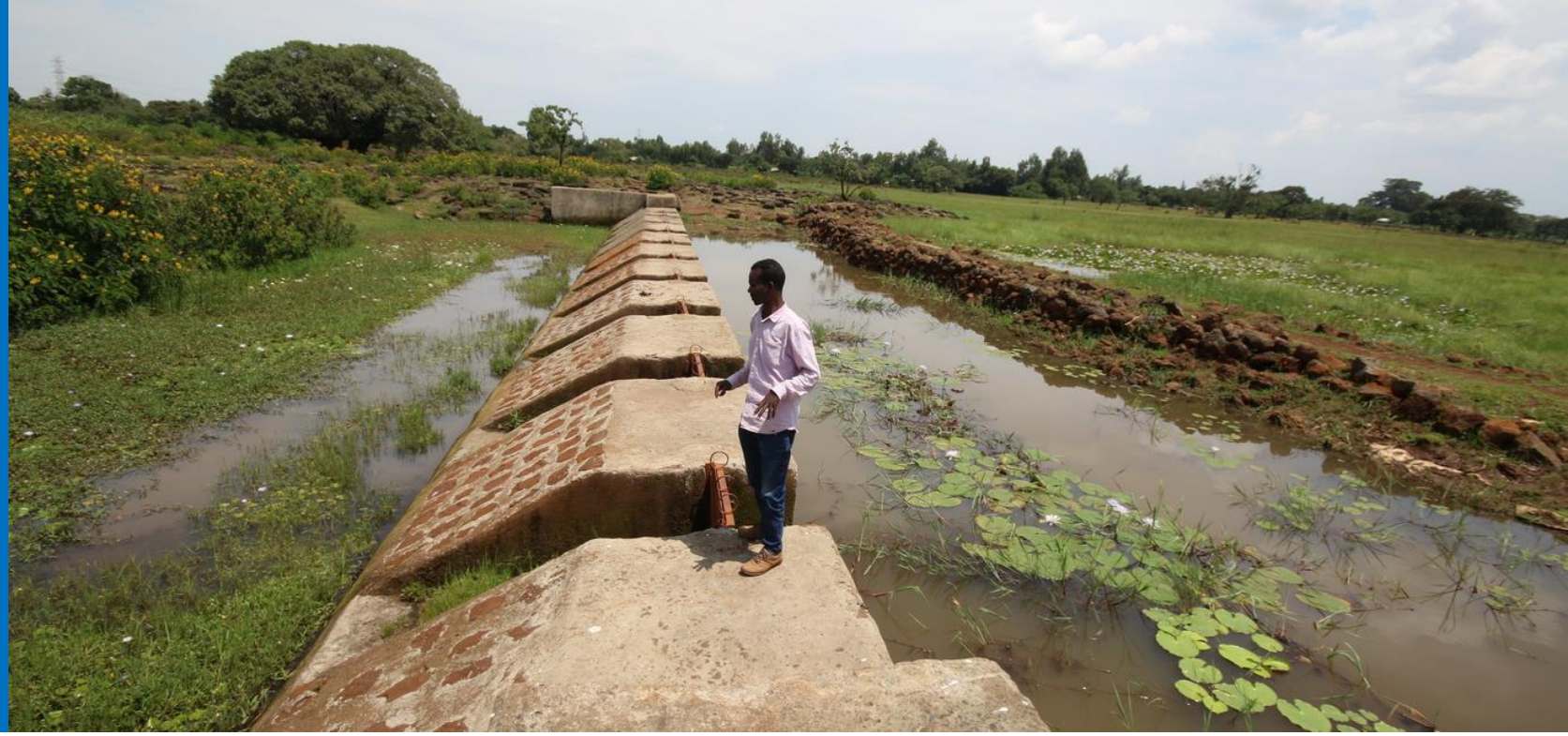


# Impact Evaluation of the Community-based Integrated Natural Resources Management Project: Ethiopia

**Presented on 19 March 2021 at the Hundred and Twelfth Session of the Evaluation Committee of IFAD**

Independent Office of Evaluation

IFAD
Investing in rural people

# Background of the project

The project that was evaluated aimed to enhance access by poor rural people to natural resources (land and water) and help them to improve agricultural production technologies through sustainable land management practices.

**Main activities:** i) off-farm soil and water conservation; ii) watershed planning and management; iii) pasture and forage management; iv) forest rehabilitation; v) land certification; vi) climate adaptation and mitigation.

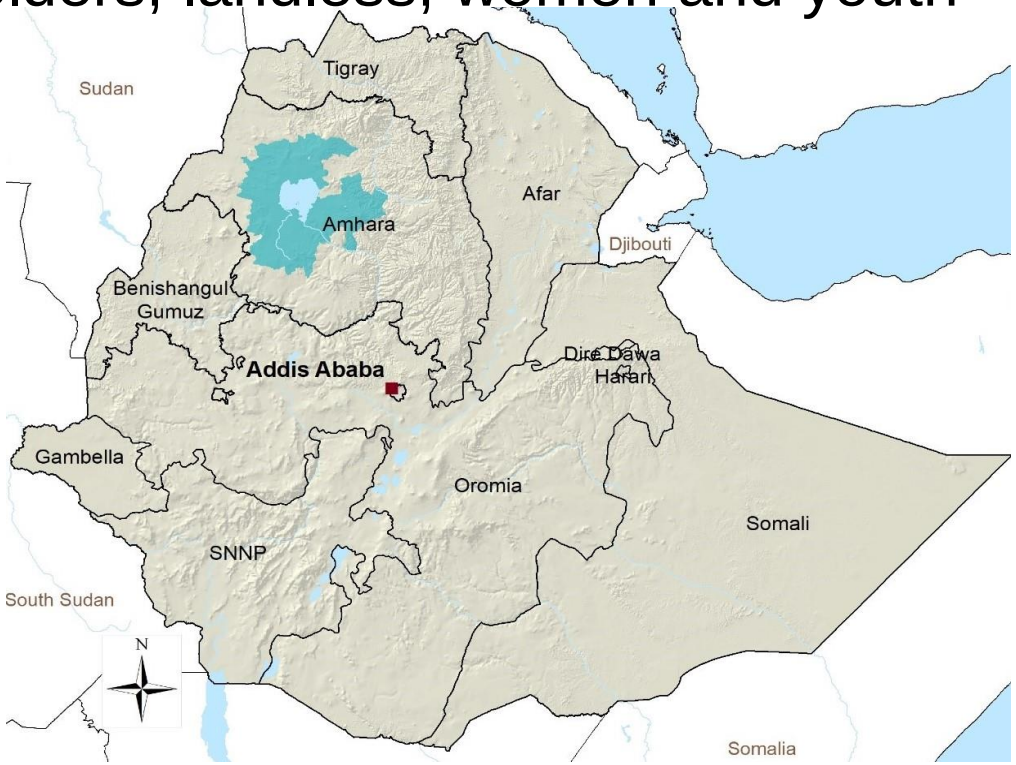
**Duration:** March 2010 to 31 March 2019

**Cost:** US$ 54.23 million (share of IFAD loan and grant: 24%); project cost formed 7 per cent of country's on-going portfolio cost

# Background of the project

Project's beneficiary selection approach

- All rural households in the Lake Tana Watershed in the Amhara National Regional State
- Beneficiaries: smallholders, landless, women and youth




Independent Office of Evaluation

IFAD
Investing in rural people

# Impact evaluation methodology

In order to assess project impact the following methodology was used:

- Theory of change constructed to identify outcomes to be measured (incomes/assets, agricultural productivity, food security, etc.)
- Stratified sampling used to identify watersheds
- Representative samples of beneficiary and non-beneficiary (comparison) group selected from identified watersheds (using propensity scores)
- Data on outcomes collected using household survey (1,655 HHs) and interviews/ focus groups (416 respondents)
- Impact calculated based on difference in outcome values between beneficiary and comparison groups (difference in difference method)
- Geo-spatial data also used to assess changes in biophysical indicators

# Highlights of impact results

- Agricultural income and dietary diversity of beneficiaries that benefitted from multiple and complementary activities increased with respect to comparison group (statistically)
- Results were driven by increased agricultural and milk productivities (statistically)
- For all other beneficiaries, results were inconclusive (statistically)
- Geospatial analysis showed increase in vegetation in project areas; however, increase was also noted in selected non-project areas (comparison areas)

# Main findings

- The project's impact on incomes and productivity was limited to smallholders in a few watersheds (with multiple and complementary activities).
- Insufficient focus on on-farm soil and water conservation and forage production led to limited productivity increase, and limited income effects.
- Employment activities for women, youth and landless were not as successful as expected; private sector involvement was limited.
- Construction of soil and water conservation structures in off-farm degraded areas led to improved natural resource management.
- Land certification to farmers improved access to land and reduced social conflict, but no evidence to show increased investment by farmers.

# Conclusions

- The project designed the right activities but an integrated approach was missing; variation in the level and quality of beneficiary participation.
- Absence of Master river basin plan led to less coherence and synergies in activities.
- Nature of the project and low investment per beneficiary resulted in limited impact on income.
- The intention to secure land certificates for women was successful, but overall support to more vulnerable groups was insufficient.
- Project successfully restored degraded natural resources using community participation, but genuine community empowerment did not occur.
- Climate change related activities were largely successful but opportunity was missed for their use in all 650 sub-watersheds.

# Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1**: Watershed-related projects should prioritize the more vulnerable groups in design and implementation of the management plan of their watersheds.

- **Recommendation 2**:The design of watershed management projects should embed M&E elements that can better facilitate impact studies

- **Recommendation 3**:When adding new cross-cutting components to a project, ensure that they are holistically integrated into the project rather than appearing as a separate project implemented in a fragmented manner.

- **Recommendation 4**:For natural resource management projects, align the length of the project's duration with the time frame of the Watershed Management Plan.

- **Recommendation 5**: Adopt a Master Plan for integrated participatory watershed management.

# Thank you