Preventing Forest Loss, Promoting Restoration, and Integrating Sustainability into Ethiopia's Coffee Value Chains and Food Systems

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Guidelines for Targeting & Management of Category-1 Project Beneficiaries

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1. Background

The "Preventing Forest Loss, Promoting Restoration, and Integrating Sustainability into Ethiopia's Coffee Value Chains and Food Systems" (FOLUR) project is an ambitious initiative led by the Ethiopian Ministry of Planning and Development, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This project aims to address critical environmental and socio-economic challenges in Ethiopia by halting deforestation, promoting ecological restoration, and integrating sustainable practices within the coffee value chains and broader food systems across key regions.

With a total budget of approximately USD 20.8 million, the project is set to run from 2023 to 2031 and is expected to significantly impact local communities by improving the livelihoods of around 440,000 people, restoring 10,500 hectares of unproductive coffee gardens and 456,074 hectares of small-scale farmland of other annual crops, and managing 61,512 hectares of vital forest areas (which includes 20,000 ha of degraded ‘buffer zone’ of Coffee Forest Biospheres, and 40,000 ha of communal forest) with potential to enhance PFM and restoration.

The success of the project hinges on the identification and engagement of appropriate beneficiaries who will directly or indirectly participate in and benefit from the project's interventions. A clear, transparent, and equitable selection process is essential to ensure that the project reaches its intended beneficiaries, particularly those most in need and most likely to contribute to and benefit from the project's objectives. This guideline has been developed to standardize the beneficiary targeting and management process across all project Kebeles, ensuring consistency, fairness, and alignment with the project's goals.

2. Types of Project Beneficiaries in the Context of FOLUR Ethiopia

The FOLUR Ethiopia project identifies several types of beneficiaries, categorized based on their participation in and benefit from coffee value chains and sustainable livelihood schemes; forest conservation & restoration; and integrated land management practices. Table 1 provides an overview of the types of beneficiaries.

Table 1: Project beneficiary categories in the context of the FOLUR project

Beneficiary categories	Description	Remarks
Category 1	Individual farm households at Kebele level	These groups of beneficiaries are the ones receiving direct technical advice and mentoring, training, and production and/or marketing inputs. They may include, but not limited to: farmers targeted to undertake old coffee stumping; farm households (including young men and women) engaged in various income generating schemes (such as gardening, tree seedling production and marketing, poultry, fattening, fruit production, petty trading, communities engaged in PFM activities; farmers supported to be involved in business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-partner (B2P) partnerships, etc.).
Category 2	Farmer groups	These categories of beneficiaries encompass: women self-help groups, cooperatives (including PFM cooperatives), integrated watershed management or integrated land use planning community groups, etc. They are the ones receiving capacity building support to increase their services to their members. Supports could be business skills enhancement training, market linkages with buyers, materials support, B2B or B2P negotiation skill development support, etc.
Category 3	Think tank institutions, public and private sector representatives	These categories of project beneficiaries encompass research and academic institutions involved to support project operations (such as through generating knowledge or delivery of training), government experts and private sector actors at all administrative levels receiving knowledge and skills enhancement trainings or providing technical training or mentoring services, taking part in experience sharing events and partnership platforms, input-output trading relationships (market linkages), etc.
Category 4	Indirectly reached groups	These categories of beneficiaries are the ones that are not directly approached through project activities or not in the record of project beneficiary lists. They may not even have awareness about the project, but benefit from it due to its multiplier or spillover effects. This would take the form of downstream communities protected from the risk of flooding as a result of integrated land use planning (ILUP) and/or an integrated watershed management activities upstream, farmers getting access to better markets due to market linkages facilitated by the project, other national and international development actors including who learn from the FOLUR Ethiopia project or whose practices are informed by lessons from it, etc.

3. Guidelines for selecting category-1 beneficiaries

3.1 Definition of beneficiary households

From a gender perspective, rural farm households in Ethiopia are often categorized as men-headed and women-headed households. Such categorization would conceal possibilities of targeting married women (wives), and unemployed youth. In order to ensure equitable targeting of beneficiaries, households in the context of the FOLUR Ethiopia project are defined in five categories as follows.

a. Men farmers (often identified as heads of the household).
b. Married women farmers (wives).
c. Women heads of households (widows, divorced women, etc.).
d. Unemployed young boys who may be members of a household or pursuing independent life (bachelors).
e. Unemployed young girls who may be members of a household or pursuing independent life (bachelorette).
f. Vulnerable, disables and marginalized groups (both male and female)

3.2 Establishment of beneficiary selection committee and roles

3.2.1 Beneficiary selection committee at Woreda level

a. The beneficiary selection committee shall be set at both Woreda level.
b. The head (coordinator) of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Office (or Agriculture, Environment Protection and cooperative office) or his/her official delegate shall be the chairperson and shall nominate relevant sector organizations to be members of the beneficiary selection committee at the Woreda level.
c. The FOLUR PFM Officer shall be the secretary and document officially nominated members-of the Woreda beneficiary selection committee.
d. Members of the Woreda beneficiary selection committee (drawn from relevant sector organizations) shall nominate the co-chair of the committee based on majority vote or other criteria agreed by committee members.

e. The role of the Woreda beneficiary selection committee is to facilitate establishment of the Kebele beneficiary selection committee and monitor beneficiary selection progresses at the kebele level.

3.2.2 Beneficiary selection committee at kebele level

a. The kebele beneficiary selection committee shall comprise the kebele administration, prominent community leaders (such as religious and group leaders), agricultural development agents (DAs), Specialized Coffee Development Agents, cooperative executives, women group representatives, and youth representatives.

b. The kebele administrator shall be the chairperson for the Kebele beneficiary selection committee.

f. Members of the kebele beneficiary selection committee shall nominate the co-chair of the committee based on majority vote or other criteria agreed by committee members.

a. Specialized Coffee Development Agents or Development Agents specialized by natural resource management (based on majority vote or other criteria agreed by committee members) shall be Secretaries of the Kebele beneficiary selection committee in their respective kebeles of assignment.

b. The kebele beneficiary selection committee shall enlist, prioritize, and select project beneficiary households based the selection criteria provided under section 3.3.

c. The kebele beneficiary selection committee shall critically consider general selection principles provided under section 3.3.1 and specific criteria under section 3.3.2.

3.3 Principles, criteria, and procedures for selecting category-1 beneficiaries

3.3.1 Generic selection principles

a. The beneficiary selection process shall be transparent, clearly communicated, and coordinated with local stakeholders and adhering to legal requirements, ethical standards, and the principles of good governance.

b. The project shall not discriminate against any individual or group based on race, color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, or disability.

c. The project shall consider beneficiaries whose inclusion may result in positive socio-economic and environmental impacts.

d. The project will strive to provide equal opportunities to all eligible beneficiaries, taking into account their specific needs, circumstances, and priorities.
e. The project shall prioritize beneficiaries who exhibit greater potentials for collaboration with other stakeholders, promoting partnerships and collective impact.
f. The beneficiaries should demonstrate the organizational, financial, and operational capacity to effectively utilize the support provided by the project.
g. Women, poor households, unemployed young boys & girls, vulnerable & marginalized groups shall be given priority.

3.3.2 Specific beneficiary selection criteria

a. Smallholder coffee farm households who own old coffee plots that require stumping and/or replacement planting and associated agronomic practices and have strong interest to get their old coffee rejuvenated.
b. Smallholder coffee farm households willing to pursue improved coffee production and marketing activities.
c. Smallholder farm households who are interested in and have the minimum resources (land and labor) to pursue viable livelihood strategies such as fruits production, vegetable gardening, beekeeping, poultry production, seedling production (tree, coffee, and fruits), etc.
d. Farmers who demonstrate willingness to adopt and implement sustainable coffee production techniques, as well as actively participate in project activities.
e. Coffee farmers who are motivated to enhance the quality and productivity of their coffee while seeking market opportunities in Kebeles and villages recognized for their specialty coffee potential.
f. Men and women farm households, Young men (boys) and young women (girls) who are motivated and organized to protect, manage, and restore communal forests through Participatory Forest Management (PFM) and restoration activities.
g. Women, young men (boys) and young women (girls) who have the desire and motivation to engage in cooperative businesses, using financial, training and other related support (such as improved coffee seedlings, hand tools, grafting materials, spice corms & cuttings, fodder crop seedlings, vermicomposting start-ups, polyethylene bags, protective gear, indigenous tree

seedlings, etc.) to produce and sell a range of farm products and engage in the production and supply of environmentally friendly alternative sources of fuel such as sawdust briquettes and on producing briquettes from coffee waste.

h. Women interested in pursuing women's Village Savings and Self-Help Groups and willing to digitize their accounting systems for enhanced financial management and transparency.
i. Women, young men (boys) and young women (girls) demonstrating a strong commitment to adopting fuel-efficient technologies and sustainable practices, indicating a proactive approach to environmental conservation and energy efficiency.

3.3.3 Procedures for beneficiary selection, disclosure, verification, and registration

a. The FOLUR project management unit (PMU), in consultation with regional Agroforestry Coordinators, shall first develop a beneficiary recording format and share the same to Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents for application.
b. The Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall first approach farm households meeting the criteria specified under 3.3.1 & 3.3.2 and enlist all interested households.
c. The Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall record key socio-economic characteristics (such as productive assets possession, household size, gender, etc.) of all interested households as per the format developed by the PMU and regional Agroforestry Coordinators.
d. The Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall present the lists and respective socio-economic characteristics of interested households to the kebele beneficiary selection committee for prioritization and selection.
e. The kebele beneficiary selection committee shall set and apply beneficiary prioritization criteria and finally select eligible project beneficiaries.
f. The kebele beneficiary selection committee has the discretion to set maximum limits to the number of beneficiaries per household if the numbers of category-1 beneficiaries exceed project capacities.

g. The kebele beneficiary selection committee shall first send the list of selected project beneficiaries (including relevant documentation on how the selection process was undertaken) to the woreda beneficiary selection committee for verification.
h. The woreda beneficiary selection committee shall review the beneficiary prioritization selection criteria employed by the kebele beneficiary selection committee and verify within 15 days whether the selection process was fair, transparent, and according to agreed procedures.
i. Once the selected beneficiaries are verified by the woreda beneficiary selection committee, the kebele beneficiary selection committee shall organize a beneficiary disclosure meeting to announce to all farm households regarding the criteria applied and farm households selected as category-1 project beneficiaries.
j. The kebele beneficiary selection committee shall announce to all farm households regarding rights to present their complaints (if any) first to the kebele grievance redress committee and then to the woreda grievance redress committee, the latter in case their complaints remain unresolved by the kebele grievance redress committee.

3.4 Project Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

a. A grievance Redress committee shall be set at both the woreda and kebele levels to receive, review, and address any complaints related to the beneficiary selection process, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability.
b. The beneficiary selection committee at the woreda level shall serve as the grievance redress committee at the woreda level.
c. The woreda grievance redress committee shall facilitate establishment of the kebele grievance redress committee including assignment of chairperson and co-chairpersons.
d. The woreda grievance redress committee shall manage to address complaints that cannot be resolved by the kebele grievance selection committee.
e. The kebele grievance committee shall include the Kebele Manager or chairperson, religious leaders, influential community members & elderly, and representatives from Agricultural Development Agents, the youth, women, and farmers within the kebele, ensuring diverse community involvement in the grievance resolution process.

f. The chairperson, co-chairperson and secretary of the Kebele grievance committee shall be nominated by members of the kebele grievance committee through majority vote or agreed criteria set by members of the kebele grievance redress committee.
g. The kebele grievance redress committee shall set the dates and agenda of its meetings to address complaints.
h. The kebele grievance redress committee shall ensure confidentiality of sensitive information and get the consent of individuals regarding disclosure or otherwise.
i. If any individual (including a farmer, a women, youth, etc.) feels that he/she is unjustly excluded or that the selection process was not conducted according to the established criteria, they are entitled to submit a formal complaint.
j. Complaints on exclusion during beneficiary selection shall be submitted in writing or orally to the designated Kebele grievance committee within 5 working days of the announcement of the final beneficiary list.
k. Upon receiving a valid complaint, the Kebele grievance committee shall investigate, which may include interviews, a review of the selection process, and consultations with the beneficiary selection committee.
l. The kebele grievance committee will issue a formal decision on the complaint within 10 working days of completing the investigation, informing the complainant in writing and providing clear reasons for the outcome.
m. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she has the right to appeal the decision to the woreda beneficiary selection committee. Appeals must be submitted within 5 working days of receiving the decision from the Kebele Grievance Committee.
n. The Woreda beneficiary selection committee shall review the case and issue a final decision within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.
o. The PFM Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall be responsible for tracking and documenting all complaints received at the kebele level and appeals at the woreda level, including actions taken, final outcomes, and submission of report.

3.5 Monitoring and follow-up

a. The Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall be the responsible bodies to monitor status of project beneficiaries at the kebele level.
b. The Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall record and submit final beneficiary households to the Participatory Forest management Officer.
c. The Participatory Forest Management Officer shall consolidate project beneficiaries of each kebele and submit to the woreda focal institution and to the regional agroforestry coordinator.
d. Regional agroforestry coordinators shall consolidate project beneficiaries of all project woredas and submit to the FOLUR Project Management Unit at MoPD.
e. The FOLUR Project Management Unit shall establish and manage a national level project beneficiary database.
f. The Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall set a beneficiary monitoring plan indicating types of beneficiaries to be visited, the location and time of visit.
g. The Participatory Forest Management Officer and Specialized Coffee Development Agents shall conduct a farm-level or household-level visit to project beneficiaries at least on quarterly basis.
h. The regional agroforestry coordinator shall conduct a kebele level field monitoring and sample beneficiary checking on bi-annual basis. Yet, the regional agroforestry coordinator shall conduct extraordinary monitoring of project beneficiaries if the need arises at any time of project implementation.
i. The FOLUR M & E Officer shall conduct a kebele level field monitoring and sample beneficiary checking on annual basis and report monitoring results to the FOLUR Ethiopia project Manager. Yet, the FOLUR M & E Officer shall conduct extraordinary monitoring of project beneficiaries if the need arises at any time of project implementation.
j. The FOLUR Ethiopia project Manager shall consolidate beneficiary monitoring reports on annual basis and present the findings to the FOLUR Ethiopia Project Technical Working Group (TWG) and then to the project Steering Committee (PSC) and receive guidance from the TWG & PSC on next courses of action.