

# Special Sub Grantees Training Workshop on Project Management, Financial Best Practices and Replenishments

Accra, Ghana. March 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Royale Grand Hotel

## Introduction:

MPIDO under the Additional Financing (AF) round of national implementations of the FCPF supported Capacity Building Program for forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples has sub granted five (5) Indigenous national and subnational level organizations in strategic Emission Reduction areas/regions in respective countries.

Having completed the sub granting of CDI in Liberia and MESERET (MHO) in Ethiopia in addition to WATER (Nigeria), PROBICOU/CSCIPU (Uganda) and SAWA SSHDA (SUDAN), the regional project workshop on experiences and lessons learnt under working with national REDD+ structures provided a strategic opportunity for the training of representatives on specific issues. MPIDO strategically invited the financial officers in the respective implementing organizations as a direct effort to train and equip them with financial best practices as applicable and specific to the project.

Each of the sub grants had been funded with 50% of the project budget and in the case of Nigeria, Uganda and Sudan, implementation had already commenced in December 2018. Sub grantees from Sudan, Nigeria and Uganda shared their experiences from the first phase, as well as their efforts to apply lessons learnt in the current round of implementation. The session offered dedicated sharing of experiences and challenges in financial management, monitoring and reporting as required by MPIDO.

The new sub grantee Meseret Humanitarian Organization was given an opportunity to profile their organizations and detail the unique activities planned in their national implementation to communities in Oromia, Ethiopia

## Objectives:

MPIDO utilized the regional presence of key contact persons and finance officers to achieve the following;

- Detailed training of the participants in financial best practices (procurement, filing, bank reconciliation and record keeping)
- Detailed and hands-on training of the participants in Financial report using the monthly and quarterly SOE templates
- Training on project management and tracking using the work plan, project budget and SOE
- Review of implementation updates and collaboration with the national REDD+ offices.

## Implementation updates and collaboration with the national REDD+ offices

The meeting undertook sharing of updates from MPIDO and all the present Sub grantees. This offered a good learning opportunity for MESERET and MPIDO to get a brief reflection of about three months of activities in Nigeria, Uganda and Sudan as well as provide sub-granting updates for Liberia and Ethiopia.

The implementation updates can be summarized as thus:

### **REGIONAL**

MPIDO provided a regional implementation update on the project with successful development of an upscale implementation proposal in Liberia by CDI supported by the REDD+ office, and detailing the targeted call for proposals issued in Ethiopia to Indigenous Organizations operating in the Oromia Region. Specifically, Mpido shared revised implementation targets for national and regional components of the project, clarifying the synchronization of national implementing contracts to the 5 sub-grantees to lapse in September 2019. This shall offer enough time for Financial Audits and compilation of project completion reports before December 2019.

Responding to questions by the participants, MPIDO provided details of the collaboration with PACJA to sustain experience sharing and lesson learning as well as the francophone implementation to Indigenous Peoples by REPALÉAC Regional organ. The implementation by REPALÉAC shall upon its commencement also be engaged to ensure learning from implementations to Indigenous Peoples in the Congo Basin.

### **NIGERIA**

WATER was funded on the 31st Dec 2018 with 50% of the project budget and implemented 1st community activity on Jan 11, 2019. They undertook join implementation of activities with REDD+ office in cross river state beginning with a review of the implementation work plan that identified areas of collaboration.

So far, WATER has successfully;

- Undertaken a Baseline survey in partnership with Life Empowerment Foundation ( an indigenous community based organization involved in livelihood, water sanitation and forest conservation) in the new communities benefiting from this round of implementation ( 25km apart) and that were not in the previous implementation. The baseline offered an improved understanding and informed the best approach to train them on communities on REDD+ development in CRS.
- Implemented a sustainable Environment livelihood training to enable the IPs further discussions to identify environmentally responsive livelihood practices.
- Developed a simplified manual in REDD+ in Cross River State to indigenous communities, with support of Life Empowerment and the Cross River State REDD+ technical secretariat. The REDD+ secretariat provided library of information for the developing consultant to use, while Life Empowerment provided critical experience in developing community friendly products.
- Learning from the previous round, WATER engaged the national REDD+ Focal Point and REDD+ office in review and development of the project proposal with critical inputs into the implementation plan and engagement of the REDD+ structures

- Water has commenced discussions with indigenous leaders on the need to review of Ekuri Land use plan (Mangrove, Ekuri, and Afi/Mbe forest reserves), development of community By-Law for Ekuri and 3 neighboring Community land reserves and the participation of the project beneficiaries in National REDD+ structures and process.

This working partnership has seen 2 national REDD+ office (National Focal Point and Cross River state REDD+ M&E officers) participated in the project launch workshop as well hold a larger State level REDD+ secretariat. The national office is also now scheduling a closer working relation between the IPO and CSO organizations (CSdevNet) funded by PACJA and implementing in Ondo State benefiting CBOs and CSO actors. The working partnership shall seek to highlight the implementation outcomes as well as increase visibility of the projects to the state and national / Federal level.

## **UGANDA**

PROBICOU is the financial managing partner to CSCIPU that is tasked in undertaking the implementation of sub national activities. This working partnership continues to prove its critical success and acts as a model in Uganda and REDD+.

SO far, the following have been undertaken;

- Engaged a technical consultant to undertake the review policies related to REDD+, IPs' rights to, and interests in, land, territories and natural and cultural resources; climate change in Uganda
- Commence working relation with a committee hosted by the office of the Prime Minister in Uganda to consider and input views in the policy documents on Indigenous Peoples' needs and opportunities in Climate Change
- Publish and disseminate to national coalition member organization, community groups, other REDD+ Actors, REDD+ office and relevant government ministries, copies of Knowledge products generated in the initial round of implementation. This include the National Survey of IPs in Uganda and various policy briefs.

In this period and as a result of improved understanding on engaging government structures, 160 Batwa leaders petitioned their plight as a result of being evicted from Bwindi Impenetrable, Mgahinga and Echuya forests. The letter was received by the office of the Prime Minister and seconded to the office of the President.

## **SUDAN**

SAWA SUDAN promptly received their project funding amidst economic challenges in the country that have resulted in staggered release of the funds (cash control restrictions) by their bank. This has fairly slowed their implementation of project activities but not watered down their determination to succeed. The meeting deliberated with concern the security situation and government restriction of non-governmental activities. SAWA Sudan assured that their working with indigenous leaders has been key to limit and contain government control influencing their operations and project activities.

In the period, SAWA SUDAN has achieved;

- Awareness raising through opening dialogue and discussion on the role of IPLCs in sustainable management of the forest and natural resources with the participation of relevant institutions and I/NGOs.

- Implemented two forums were held in Um Rowaba and Al Rahad Localities respectively on the role of the communities in sustainable of the forest and natural resources.
- Initiated a technical committee to develop a simplified REDD+ manual to local communities in Sudan.

Liberia and Meseret utilized the opportunity to provide their implementation updates and plans to the meeting, with Meseret demonstrating strong community level structures for training and Liberia learning from previous implementation by improving the skills of their team.

## **LIBERIA**

CDI have intensified their working relation with the REDD+ coordinating office in Liberia, seeing their relentless inputs into the project proposal. The office has graciously worked with CDI to identify and comment on relevant areas of capacity building in the nation's REDD+ implementation.

CDI has improved their internal capacity with Mr. Thompson Keyta joining the organization on a full time basis. Mr. Thompson is an experienced finance administrator and will ensure timely monitoring and report to MPIDO.

In anticipation of the project, CDI has sharpened the experience of its project implementation team by engaging them in the proposal development stages as well as attending proposal review meetings with the REDD+ office.

## **ETHIOPIA**

MESERET (MHO) is a new organization identified through a targeted proposal issued to indigenous organizations working on REDD+, Emission reduction and climate change actions in Oromia Region, Ethiopia.

MHO is a women led organization with headquarters in Addis Ababa and regional Office in Cheliya, Oromia that is involved in livelihood improvement activities benefiting women and youth groups in Oromia Region. The groups have been involved in restoration activities with demonstrated success in Oromia forest block. Their proposal acknowledges the role of indigenous women as critical custodians of knowledge this their capacity building on REDD+ will increase meaningful participation in the Emission Reduction projects by the government.

MHO demonstrated their capacities to implement projects with a rich partner history of national and internationally funded projects. Their financial management is entire run on a financial management system (PASTEL) that ensures successful and efficient tracking, management and reporting to all diverse funding requirements.

MHO upon being awarded the sub project, has engaged the national REDD+ coordinating office furnishing them with Work plan details. The office has already seconded the information to the Oromia Region REDD+ secretariat for direct support and participation in all community activities. All relevant Wareda (district) Authorities have already been served with project details with their respective authorization expected by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Upon receiving the approvals, MHO shall commence implementation of the activities as outlined in their project work plan.

## The meeting Financial Best Practices; procurement, bank reconciliation and record keeping and Filing

Learning from experience sharing in the completion workshop and as identified in the due diligence mission to PROBICOUC/CSCIPU in Oct 2018, MPIDO strategically undertook to achieve direct training of the finance officers in each organization. This targeted to ensure a one-on-one interaction with MPIDO's Finance team to improve the ease of communication and e-interaction.

The training was undertaken using;

- Hands-on training of the participants in Financial report using the monthly and quarterly SOE templates
- Training on project management and tracking using the work plan, project budget and SOE

MPIDO undertook hands-on training of the participants using already submitted monthly reports from WATER and PROBICOUC as examples to highlight coherence and thoroughly filled SOEs.

The training included description of the contents of the SOE template such as;

- ***SHEET 1: Budget Format*** – that the subgrant needs to populate the approved project budget as a reference point for the financial management
- ***SHEET 1: Cash Flow*** – the subgrant uses this section to record all cash flow expenditures per budget line
- ***SHEET 2: Financial Report Summary***, that is a compiled summary on monthly columns and per budget line to track actual expenditure against the project budget
- ***SHEET 3: List of Month 1 Expenditure*** that is a detailed listing of all actual expenditures in a month (starting with Month 1)) in the respective local currencies, with full details of the expense and payee ( this is repeated for every month of implementation)
- ***SHEET 4: Quarter Summary*** that is extracted across the details of actual expenditures of Months 1, 2 and 3 in the implementation Quarter. This is not filled but populated using formulas
- ***SHEET 5: Bank Reconciliation Month 1*** that provides details of bank reconciliation between the expenditures of Month 1 and the bank statement of that month.

Best practices identified include:

1. Full compliance to the shared SOE template; without deleting or moving the SOE sheets
2. Filling of all Details per expenditure and in the correct currency
3. Consistent local currency to USD conversion rates as per exchange rate at the disbursement time.
4. Complete monthly listing of project expenditures in the identified sheets
5. Use of formulas in the calculation of summarized amount across sheets
6. Completion of bank reconciliation on a monthly basis.
7. Tracking of Actual expenditure vs Budget variation and providing justification to any variation above 10%.
8. Undertaking a monthly SOE vs PMEL planning reflection to ensure that all planned activities are implementable in the month.

Interactively, the meeting sampled the submitted SOEs with each subgrant using the acquired skills to identify the missing parts, or wrongly (or not) filled sheets in the SOE. The meeting provided a good chance for the key contact persons to gain an important understanding of the SOE template while the finance officers gained first hand training on the template.

### Project Gender monitoring, tracking and Implementation

To ensure sustained gender mainstreaming efforts in the current round of national implementation, the meeting opportunity was used to undertake discussion of the innovative means of ensuring gender mainstreaming in culturally acceptable manners within the indigenous communities.

Experiences shared from successful gender mainstreaming initiatives under the initial round provided a basis for the identification of some unique ideas for this current round. Further, the meeting emphasized the need to capture gender aggregation in recording project beneficiaries and its usefulness to achieve project targets.

The following ideas were shared with regards to gender;

- ✚ That data should be gender disintegrated as an indicator for close monitoring of any gender gaps on time.
- ✚ Implementing organizations to target women intentionally in communities ( or project activities) where they are more marginalized
- ✚ The self-selection process for IP representation at all levels should specially consider women.
- ✚ Sub grantees should learn from each other and experiences and as in the case of Uganda (where they raised extra funding for gender is a good learning point), utilize gender mainstreaming efforts for resource mobilization
- ✚ Sub Projects should ensure that women's rights are respected especially in places where the REDD+ is preparing for benefit sharing as well in actions by the national REDD+ entities.
- ✚ That the forums and or structures being formed in communities have women representatives with meaningful roles.
- ✚ Sub grantees be creative in involving women through drama, song and dance for ease of participation
- ✚ Sub grantees adjust project activities in order to suit IP women routines as may be applicable in each cultural context.
- ✚ While working with the REDD+ offices at national (federal) or sub national (Region or state) level, that women are involved in order for them to know what the processes entail.

### Project Knowledge Product Generation and dissemination

During the project regional workshop in Addis Ababa (July 2018), all sub project shared and exhibited well produced knowledge products. It was however noted that the level of intentional dissemination of the products to direct and indirect beneficiaries needed some improvement.

MPIDO and the participants interacted on recalling the highlight products from the previous round of implementation including the FM radio curriculum in Ethiopia, Self-selection manuals in Republic of Congo, IPs survey in Uganda, Bill boards and Market day loud speaker awareness campaigns in Nigeria amongst others. The recollection session concluded with sharing of knowledge products and IEC materials already developed by the currently implementing sub-grants.

PROBICOU have published their survey of IPs and REDD+ in Uganda, Sawa Sudan currently developing a simplified REDD+ manual to local communities in addition to IEC materials, while WATER have produced message Banners and Calendars that have been widely distributed.

The meeting deliberated and discussed MPIDO's communication plan and schedule on the project with Meseret committing to undertake Video interviews of critical persons, WATER and SAWA working on nation-wide media coverage of the project activities. MPIDO emphasized the need for dissemination of the products as developed widely and through the national REDD+ structures as well as through the project website page hosted by Mpidio (<http://mpido.org/fcpf.html>). MPIDO highlighted the regional products that will be developed by Nov 2019 and recognized the role played by the sub-grants in contributing to the national technical papers as produced in Oct 2018. The national technical papers were widely distributed to the 29 countries represented in the regional workshop (Accra, Ghana)

MPIDO presented the project website to the sub-grants emphasizing their ownership and use of the tool to build profile and frequently check for additional resources that may have been uploaded. The meeting contributed their remarks by identifying content that needs to be reflected in the website page including all regional workshop presentations, increasing the gallery of photos as well as utilizing videos of the projects. MPIDO shall continuously update the website page with frequent resources on the project implementation for public use.

Some of the discussed communication tools and knowledge products to be generated by the sub-grants on the project included:

- Video interviews of community persons, leaders and REDD+ officials on their benefiting from the project
- Songs and videos with key messages ( e.g. Jingles in Liberia)
- Sub-grants to develop their own websites or project pages in their already existing websites.
- Continuous sharing of KPs to MPIDO for dissemination in the project page
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As an example, the meeting used an organization profile publication and Video CD as shared during the meeting by Meseret to the sub grants and workshop participants as an example of the critical need to disseminate products. Since disseminating the products in the works (their first experience) Meseret has created immense networks with gender experts as well as identified potential partners for her other projects.

## Project Implementation and Management Training of Meseret (MHO)

Being a new member to the national implementing partners on the project, and with a strong history of women economic empowerment, benefited a lot from the interaction and networking with experienced sub grants from the other countries.

To fast track their capacity development and enable them equally implement the projects to the same standard as the others, MPIDO undertook a dedicated training session for the Contact person and finance officer that included;

1. Project Team: Meseret were introduced to the project implementation structure with emphasis on the complementing roles of the World Bank team on the project, the national and sub national REDD+ office(s) and MPIDO. Further, Meseret intensively interacted with the Project Secretariat as an effort to create a smooth and efficient communication channel. Specifically, Meseret being a women led and focused organization were encouraged to develop a closer working relation with the gender expert on the project, Betty Sereya.
2. Project Components: detailing the components of the project, roles of sub grants and MPIDO are a regional implementing organization. This covered reports and experiences of the previous round of implementations. The session also introduced the collaboration with PACJA and REPALAC regional as a model of IPOs and CSOs working together. Meseret were equipped with the contacts of all partners engaged in the project in Ethiopia to enhance their local networking efforts
3. Project Reporting requirements and templates: Meseret were introduced to the reporting templates that had been shared in advance ( during contract signing) equipping them with a good understanding of the sections in the report, and “how-to” track, record and develop the project beneficiaries section.
4. Project website page: While Meseret have an organization website that is well developed and has fund raising tools (for other projects), they appreciated the concise and ease-of-use of the project page. MPIDO used the opportunity to train Meseret on how to find and access various contents on the website. The interaction concluded with the need for Meseret to update their website with project details.
5. Knowledge Products: Meseret were provided with copies and links to the access all knowledge products from the previous round of implementation in an effort to equip them with a library of resources that they can use to enhance their implementation in Oromia Region.

## Action items from the training sessions

Action item	Due time	Responsible
Update work plan from 9 months to 7 months	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	MESERET
MHO March 2019 Monthly PMEL report	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	MESERET
MHO March Monthly SOE	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	MESERET
CDI March 2019 Monthly PMEL report	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	CDI
CDI March Monthly SOE	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	CDI
SAWA SUDAN March, Feb 2019 Monthly PMEL report	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	SAWA SUDAN
SAWA SUDAN March Feb 2019 Monthly SOE	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	SAWA SUDAN
PROBICOU Feb, March, 2019 Monthly PMEL report	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	PROBICOU
PROBICOU Jan, Feb, March Feb 2019 Monthly SOE	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	PROBICOU
WATER March Monthly PMEL report	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	WATER
WATER Jan, Feb, March Monthly SOE	March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2019	WATER
Review of SAWA SUDAN TORs for various discussion forums	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	MPIDO
Review SAWA SUDAN, CDI and WATER Concept note for Project Activities in March and April	DONE	MPIDO
Update Project Website with Presentations, Photos and Videos	April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	MPIDO
Issue PMEL, SOE and Quarterly reporting templates	DONE	MPIDO
Review revised SOE reports as an input to replenishment of funds	April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	MPIDO