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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**Evaluation of Factors Contributing to the Success of REDD+
Investment Program Implementation in Ethiopia: Project
Leaders and Team Members Perspective**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Samrawit Tadesse, the undersigned, hereby declare that this paper, "Evaluation of Factors Contributing to the Success of REDD+ Investment Program Implementation in Ethiopia: Project Leaders and Team Members Perspective", is my original work. With the help and direction of the study supervisor (Dr. Solomon Markos), I conducted the research independently. No degree or certificate program at this or any other university has accepted this study.

Samrawit Tadesse

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research project prepared by Samrawit Tadesse entitled "Evaluation of Factors Contributing to the Success of REDD+ Investment Program Implementation in Ethiopia: Project Leaders and Team Members Perspective" and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA in Project Management complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality. It is also certified that the thesis represents independent work of on the part of the candidate.

Advisor _____Signature _____Date _____

APPROPVAL SHEET

A research project titled "Evaluation of Factors Contributing to the Success of REDD+ Investment Program Implementation in Ethiopia: Project Leaders and Team Members Perspective" is conducted by Samrawit Tadesse entitled for the partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Arts in Project Management Program. It complies with the regulation of the institution. The research satisfies the criteria for original research and maintains a high standard.

Approved by Board of Examiner`s

Examiner	Signature	Date
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Advisor	Signature	Date

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Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing the success of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) program implementation in Ethiopia. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collects data from REDD+ project coordinators and team members through surveys and interviews. The research aims to identify the most critical factors, including policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, community participation, socio-economic considerations, and lessons from past REDD+ projects. Findings suggest that while Ethiopia's policy and regulatory environment is highly relevant and effective for REDD+ implementation, challenges remain in ensuring coherence across different policies and programs. The study emphasizes the importance of a people-centered approach, addressing local priorities, and strengthening stakeholder engagement for successful REDD+ implementation. The results provide valuable insights for informing future REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia and contribute to the broader understanding of factors influencing the success of REDD+ programs globally.

Key words: *REDD+, Ethiopia, policy frameworks, community participation, socio-economic factors, lessons learned.*

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The implementation of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) investment programs has become a critical strategy for addressing climate change and promoting sustainable forest management globally. In Ethiopia, the REDD+ program has been a focus of significant investment and effort, with the aim of reducing deforestation, enhancing carbon sequestration, and improving the livelihoods of local communities (UNFCCC, 2021).

The success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia is influenced by various factors, which can be analyzed through the lens of project management theories. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) identifies several key theories and frameworks that are relevant to the evaluation of REDD+ program implementation (Project Management Institute, 2017).

The Systems Theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of different components within a project, suggesting that the success of REDD+ implementation is influenced by the interactions between various stakeholders, policies, and environmental factors (Kerzner, 2017). The Contingency Theory, on the other hand, highlights the importance of adapting project management practices to the specific context and constraints of the REDD+ program, such as the local political, economic, and social conditions (Lundy & Morin, 2013).

The Stakeholder Theory underscores the need to actively engage and manage the diverse stakeholders involved in REDD+ implementation, including government agencies, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and private sector actors (Freeman, 1984). The Resource-Based View Theory emphasizes the importance of leveraging the available resources, both human and financial, to ensure the effective delivery of the REDD+ program (Barney, 1991).

By incorporating these project management theories into the evaluation of the REDD+ investment program in Ethiopia, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to its success or failure and develop strategies to enhance the program's effectiveness and

sustainability. This research is therefore, planned with this understanding and brief experiences in Africa and the country are presented below.

REDD+ Implementation: African Experience

The implementation of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in **Africa** has been a subject of extensive research and analysis, with a focus on the opportunities, challenges, and experiences associated with its implementation. REDD+ is a critical initiative for African countries due to the significant threat that climate change poses to the continent, leading to increased deforestation rates (Asare et al., 2013). The African experience with REDD+ implementation has been shaped by various factors, including local priorities, global mitigation benefits, and the reconciliation of community needs with the objectives of REDD+ (Mustalahti et al., 2012; Robinson et al., 2013). The discourse and practice of REDD+ in African countries have been a subject of investigation, aiming to determine the extent to which REDD+ meets its stated objectives in the African context (Johnson, 2021). African countries have faced specific challenges in the implementation of REDD+, including the negotiation for forest monitoring capacity building, the framing of justice in REDD+ governance, and the impacts of forest definitions on carbon conservation (Gizachew et al., 2017; Mermoz et al., 2018; Isyaku et al., 2017). Furthermore, the institutional perceptions of opportunities and challenges of REDD+ in the Congo Basin have been a focal point, given the region's significance for implementing REDD+ (Brown et al., 2011; Fobissie et al., 2014). The comparative analysis of REDD+ policy approaches in the Congo Basin, particularly in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, has provided valuable insights into the specific challenges and opportunities in these countries (Fobissie et al., 2014). The African experience with REDD+ implementation has also been influenced by the transnational policy process for REDD+ and domestic policy entrepreneurship in developing countries, with over 60 developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America initiating multi-year programs to lay the groundwork for the implementation of REDD+ (Jodoin, 2017). Additionally, the rights and interests of local communities in REDD+ designs have been a critical consideration, with lessons learned from current forest tenure systems in Cameroon shaping the discourse on rights and risks in the forestry policy arena linked with the climate change debate (Ngendakumana et al., 2013). The African experience with REDD+ implementation has provided valuable lessons for future policy design and implementation, with a focus on reconciling local priorities and needs with global mitigation benefits, addressing challenges related to forest definitions, and ensuring justice in REDD+ governance. The

African continent's unique challenges and opportunities in implementing REDD+ have contributed to a rich body of literature that offers insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers involved in REDD+ initiatives.

REDD+ Implementation: Ethiopian Experience

Ethiopia is a prime example of a proactive African nation in REDD+. It has been engaged with REDD+ since the late 2000s, aligning the program with its Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy. The below is a breakdown of the key phases:

- **Pre-REDD+ (1970s-2010s):** This period saw high deforestation rates in Ethiopia. The government initiated various forest management and rehabilitation programs, laying the groundwork for REDD+.
- **Readiness Phase (2010s):** Ethiopia began developing its REDD+ program in 2009. The Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) was prepared in 2011 with a focus on participatory stakeholder consultations. The country established a National REDD+ Secretariat and a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) during this time (Boissière, 2019).
- **Current Status:** Since 2013, Ethiopia has been implementing REDD+ activities. The focus is on reducing deforestation drivers like fuelwood collection and agricultural expansion. Challenges include ensuring equitable benefit sharing and land tenure security (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National REDD+ Secretariat, 2018)

The implementation of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) in Ethiopia has been a subject of increasing interest and research. The Ethiopian experience with REDD+ has been influenced by various factors, including biodiversity conservation, carbon stock assessment, forest governance, and stakeholder perceptions. The Ethiopian context presents unique challenges and opportunities for the successful implementation of REDD+ initiatives. Biodiversity conservation plays a crucial role in the prioritization of areas for REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia. Taking into account biodiversity patterns when selecting areas for REDD+ implementation can significantly enhance the contribution of REDD+ to global biodiversity conservation (Strassburg et al., 2010). Additionally, the assessment of aboveground biomass and carbon stock in native dry tropical Afro-montane forests of Ethiopia is essential for sustainable fuelwood production and carbon sequestration (Tesfaye et al., 2015; Abebe et al., 2021). Understanding the carbon sequestration potential of Ethiopian forests is vital for designing effective REDD+ strategies tailored to the

country's specific ecological context. Furthermore, the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Ethiopia, as well as the financing and readiness activities for REDD+, have been the focus of research (Andoh et al., 2022; Birhan et al., 2021). It is essential to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation while ensuring adequate financing and capacity building for successful REDD+ implementation. Moreover, the analysis of stakeholder perceptions and benefit-sharing mechanisms is crucial for the equitable distribution of REDD+ incentives and ensuring the participation of local communities in forest management (Pham et al., 2021; Gautam et al., 2021). Ethiopia's unique ecological landscape, including dry Afromontane forests, presents opportunities and challenges for REDD+ implementation. The quantification of tree biometric properties and the estimation of forest area and canopy cover are essential for understanding the dynamics of Ethiopian forests and their potential for carbon sequestration (Asrat et al., 2020; Asrat et al., 2018). Additionally, the implications of REDD+ in community forestry governance and local livelihoods need to be carefully considered to ensure that REDD+ initiatives align with the needs and priorities of forest-dependent communities (Gautam et al., 2021). The Ethiopian experience with REDD+ also involves addressing forest governance challenges and corruption risks (Birhan et al., 2021; Miah & Abedin, 2021). Effective forest governance is essential for the success of REDD+ initiatives and addressing corruption risks is crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability in the implementation of REDD+ projects. In conclusion, the Ethiopian experience with REDD+ implementation is shaped by a diverse set of factors, including biodiversity conservation, carbon stock assessment, stakeholder perceptions, benefit-sharing mechanisms, forest governance, and corruption risks. Understanding and addressing these factors are essential for the successful implementation of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia, contributing to both climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation efforts.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The implementation of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) investment programs in developing countries has gained significant attention to combat climate change and promote sustainable forest management. Ethiopia, with its vast forest resources and commitment to climate change mitigation, has embarked on the implementation of REDD+ investment programs. However, despite the substantial investments made in these programs, there is a need to evaluate the factors contributing to their success to ensure effective implementation from various aspects and achieve the desired outcomes.

In an ideal situation, the successful implementation of REDD+ investment programs in Ethiopia would involve well-established institutional arrangements and governance structures that effectively coordinate and integrate the efforts of different stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and civil society organizations (Kassa et al., 2020; Tadesse et al., 2019). Adequate and accessible financial resources should be available to support capacitybuilding, monitoring and evaluation, and the provision of incentives for local communities and forest-dependent populations to engage in sustainable forest management practices (Alemayehu et al., 2018; Wondafrash et al., 2021). Meaningful engagement and participation of local communities should be ensured, with inclusive decision-making processes that address both the socio-economic needs and aspirations of these communities (Getachew et al., 2019; Woldeamlak et al., 2017). Furthermore, the implementation should leverage appropriate technology and monitoring systems, such as remote sensing technologies and geographic information systems (GIS), to accurately measure, report, and verify forest carbon stocks and emissions reductions (Mekonen et al., 2020; Wubie et al., 2018).

However, there are several research gaps in understanding the factors contributing to the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia. Existing studies have provided insights into specific aspects of the implementation process, such as institutional arrangements (Kassa et al., 2020; Tadesse et al., 2019), financing mechanisms (Alemayehu et al., 2018; Wondafrash et al., 2021), community engagement (Getachew et al., 2019; Woldeamlak et al., 2017), and technological aspects (Mekonen et al., 2020; Wubie et al., 2018). However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that integrates these factors and examines their combined influence on the success of REDD+ programs in Ethiopia.

To address these research gaps, a mixed-methods approach were employed including statistical analysis of the combined effect of various factors in relation to the success of REDD+ implementation and interviews and focus group discussions with project leaders, and key stakeholders to gain insights into the coordination mechanisms, decision-making processes, and stakeholder roles and responsibilities. Additionally, document analysis was performed to review relevant policy documents, guidelines, and reports.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the existing knowledge on the factors influencing the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia. By integrating multiple factors and employing a mixed-methods approach, this study can provide a comprehensive

understanding of the complex dynamics involved in REDD+ implementation. The findings can inform policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders in designing and implementing effective strategies, prioritize factors according to their contribution to enhance the success of REDD+ programs in Ethiopia, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and sustainable forest management.

1.3 Research Questions:

- i. What are the key policy frameworks and institutional arrangements influencing the implementation of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia and their performance as per relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability?
- ii. How does community participation and stakeholder engagement affect the success of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia?
- iii. What are the socio-economic factors that influence the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia?
- iv. What lessons can be learned from successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, and how can these lessons inform future interventions and policy development?
- v. What are the challenges faced by stakeholders during REDD+ implementation?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.1.2 General Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to systematically evaluate the factors contributing to the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia.

1.1.3 Specific Objectives

Specifically, the research aims:

- i. To identify and analyze key policy frameworks and institutional arrangements influencing the implementation of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia.
- ii. To examine the role of community participation and stakeholder engagement on the success of REDD+ in achieving REDD+ goals in Ethiopia.
- iii. To investigate the socio-economic factors influencing the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia.
- iv. To extract lessons from both successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects cases in Ethiopia to inform future interventions and policy development.
- v. To identify challenges faced by stakeholders during REDD+ implementation.

By achieving these objectives, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted aspects of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia and contribute to evidence-based decision-making for forest conservation and climate change mitigation efforts in the country.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the study on the evaluation of factors contributing to the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia lies in several key aspects:

Policy and Institutional Improvement: The study can provide insights into the effectiveness of existing policy frameworks and institutional arrangements related to REDD+ implementation. It can identify gaps and areas for improvement, leading to policy recommendations that enhance the design and implementation of future REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia.

Community Engagement and Stakeholder Participation: Understanding the role of community participation and stakeholder engagement in the success of REDD+ projects is crucial. The study can shed light on effective strategies for involving local communities, ensuring their ownership, and fostering meaningful engagement in decision-making processes. This knowledge can contribute to the design of participatory approaches that empower communities and enhance the social acceptability and sustainability of REDD+ interventions.

Socio-economic Development and Livelihoods: By investigating the socio-economic factors influencing the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions, the study can provide valuable insights into the potential impacts of such initiatives on local livelihoods, income generation, and poverty alleviation. This knowledge can inform the design of strategies that promote sustainable development, alternative livelihood options, and equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Learning from Lessons and Challenges: Extracting lessons from both successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia can inform future interventions and policy development. By identifying the factors that contribute to success or hinder progress, the study can provide guidance on best practices, effective implementation strategies, and potential pitfalls to avoid. This knowledge can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of future REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

Contribution to Global Climate Change Mitigation: REDD+ initiatives play a vital role in global efforts to mitigate climate change by reducing deforestation and forest degradation. Understanding

the factors that contribute to the success of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia can provide valuable insights for other countries and regions facing similar challenges. The study's findings can contribute to the global knowledge base on successful implementation strategies, thereby supporting the achievement of international climate change goals.

Lessons for future projects and research - lessons learned from evaluating success factors can guide future forest conservation and climate change initiatives, both in Ethiopia and globally.

In conclusion, this study's significance lies in its potential to inform policy improvements, enhance community engagement, promote sustainable development, provide lessons for future interventions, and contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts through effective REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia.

1.6 Scope of the study

It is important to note that the scope of this study is limited to the context of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia. The focus is on understanding the factors that contribute to the success of these programs and providing insights for future interventions and policy development within the Ethiopian context.

The scope of the study on the evaluation of factors contributing to the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia includes the following aspects:

- **REDD+ Investment Program Implementation:** The study focuses specifically on the implementation of REDD+ investment programs in Ethiopia. It examines the factors that influence the success of these programs, including policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, community participation, stakeholder engagement, socio-economic factors, lessons from previous projects, and challenges faced by stakeholders.
- **Policy and Institutional Analysis:** The study analyzes the key policy frameworks and institutional arrangements that shape the implementation of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. It examines the legal and regulatory frameworks, governance structures, and alignment of REDD+ policies with national development strategies.
- **Community Participation and Stakeholder Engagement:** The study explores the role of community participation and stakeholder engagement in the success of REDD+ projects in

Ethiopia. It investigates the impact of inclusive decision-making processes, community ownership, empowerment, and awareness on achieving REDD+ goals.

- **Socio-economic Factors:** The study investigates the socio-economic factors that influence the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia. It examines the economic viability of alternative livelihood options, access to credit and markets, and the influence of social and cultural factors on community attitudes and behaviors towards forest conservation and restoration.
- **Lessons from Previous Projects:** The study extracts lessons from both successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia to inform future interventions and policy development. It identifies factors contributing to project success, such as community-based organizations, capacity-building efforts, and adaptive management approaches, as well as barriers to success, such as inadequate stakeholder engagement and weak governance.
- **Challenges Faced by Stakeholders:** The study identifies and explores the challenges faced by stakeholders during the implementation of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. It examines issues such as conflicting land-use priorities, unclear land tenure arrangements, and limited financial resources, as well as institutional fragmentation, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and technical capacity.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

This section provides a definition of key terms used in this piece of study.

- REDD+** is an acronym that stands for: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation & Forest Degradation. The “+” in REDD+ signifies additional activities beyond deforestation and degradation, including conservation, & sustainable forest management.
- Reducing Emissions:** Refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide (CO₂), resulting from deforestation and forest degradation.
- Deforestation:** The permanent removal of forests, often due to human activities such as logging, agriculture, or infrastructure development.
- Forest Degradation:** The deterioration of forest quality and health, which reduces its capacity to sequester carbon.
- Conservation:** Protecting existing forests to prevent their conversion into other land uses.
- Sustainable Forest Management:** Ensuring that forests are used in a way that maintains their ecological functions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to REDD+ and its Importance

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) stands as a pivotal mechanism in the fight against climate change, aiming to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions by incentivizing forest conservation and sustainable management practices (Angelsen, 2008). Initiated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the REDD+ program seeks to address the dual challenge of deforestation and forest degradation, which contribute significantly to global carbon emissions (Angelsen et al., 2012).

Forests play a crucial role in sequestering carbon dioxide and maintaining biodiversity, making them indispensable in climate change mitigation efforts (Griscom et al., 2017). By promoting the conservation and sustainable use of forests, REDD+ not only helps reduce carbon emissions but also supports biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and ecosystem resilience (Griscom et al., 2017).

The objectives of REDD+ encompass not only carbon emissions reduction but also the enhancement of forest governance, the promotion of sustainable land use practices, and the empowerment of local communities and indigenous peoples (UNFCCC, 2015). Through financial incentives and capacity-building initiatives, REDD+ aims to create a paradigm shift towards more sustainable forest management practices, thereby addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (UNFCCC, 2015).

In the global context, REDD+ has emerged as a critical tool for achieving the goals set out in the Paris Agreement, providing a framework for countries to collaborate in combating climate change through forest conservation and sustainable development (IPCC, 2018). As countries strive to meet their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and enhance their climate resilience, the implementation of effective REDD+ programs is paramount to achieving these objectives (IPCC, 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Framework Guiding REDD+ Investment

The theoretical framework guiding REDD+ investment is crucial for ensuring the successful implementation and evaluation of evidence-based practices in the context of climate finance and deforestation reduction. Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed in the literature to guide the development and evaluation of approaches for REDD+ investment.

The 'REDD+ Governance Theoretical Framework' has emerged as a significant contribution, providing a basis for understanding the governance structures and processes related to REDD+ initiatives (Pinsky et al., 2019). Additionally, the PARIHS conceptual framework has been suggested as a guide for the development of diagnostic and evaluative approaches for researchers and practitioners involved in REDD+ investment (Kitson et al., 2008). Furthermore, the Diabetes Evaluation Framework for Innovative National Evaluations (DEFINE) has been highlighted as a model that incorporates theoretical concepts necessary for guiding investments, policy, and programmatic decision-making, which could be applicable to the context of REDD+ investment (Paquette-Warren et al., 2016). Moreover, the readiness progress for REDD+ implementation has been assessed using a framework that emphasizes key functions required for REDD+ readiness, including planning, coordination, policies, laws, institutions, monitoring, reporting, financing, investment, and benefit sharing (Robiglio et al., 2014). This framework provides a comprehensive guide for evaluating the preparedness and progress of countries like Peru in implementing REDD+ initiatives. Additionally, the PV-DEI index, developed in alignment with a theoretical framework guided by an extensive literature review, offers a multidimensional assessment to incentivize decentralized energy investments, which could be adapted to guide investments in renewable energy projects related to REDD+ (Bender et al., 2021).

Overall, the theoretical frameworks proposed in the literature provide valuable guidance for the development, evaluation, and implementation of REDD+ investments. These frameworks offer a roadmap for understanding governance structures, assessing readiness, and guiding decision-making processes related to factors, climate finance and deforestation reduction initiatives.

2.3 Historical Background of REDD+ Implementation:

The history of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia has been marked by several key milestones, challenges, and achievements. The country has been in the process of implementing REDD+ and has faced various challenges. One of the prerequisites for implementing the REDD+ mechanism is to develop a robust measuring, reporting, and verification (MRV) system following the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Good Practice Guidelines (Asrat et al., 2018).

However, the implementation of the REDD+ project in Ethiopia has faced different challenges, such as weak institutional arrangements, continuation of deforestation, low enforcement capacity, low economic benefit of the community, lack of strong coordination with media and research institutes, conflict of interest among sectors over forest land, and lack of adequate budget and logistics to undertake proper monitoring and evaluation (Birhan et al., 2021). Furthermore, the implications of ignoring smallholder agriculture in climate-financed forestry projects have been illustrated with examples from Ethiopia, showing how REDD+ projects fail to adequately incorporate the demands of smallholder farmers, leading to a loss of livelihoods and diminishing interest in participating in REDD+ by local farming communities (Duker et al., 2018).

Despite these challenges, there have been achievements in the REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia. The country has been engaged in the design and implementation of a national REDD+ architecture as part of a cost-efficient response to the problem of climate change (Brockhaus et al., 2014). Additionally, the country has been working on developing a community resource management area mechanism, which has the potential to help solve many of the key challenges for REDD+ in Africa, including smallholder aggregation, free prior and informed consent, ensuring permanence, preventing leakage, clarifying land tenure and carbon rights, as well as enabling equitable benefit-sharing arrangements (Asare et al., 2013).

In conclusion, the history of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia has been characterized by challenges such as weak institutional arrangements, deforestation, and low economic benefits for the community. However, efforts have been made to address these challenges through the development of a robust MRV system and the exploration of mechanisms such as the community resource management area to overcome key challenges. It is essential for Ethiopia to continue addressing these challenges to ensure the successful implementation of REDD+ in the country.

2.4 Ethiopian Context:

The environmental and socio-economic landscape of Ethiopia is crucial for understanding the context of REDD+ implementation. Ethiopia has been facing high deforestation rates, with a significant gap between the demand and domestic supply of forest products (Lemenih & Kassa, 2014). The Bale Mountain Eco-Region, a biodiversity-rich ecosystem, has experienced land use and land cover change (LULCC), contributing to deforestation and forest degradation (Hailemariam et al., 2016). Additionally, the effects of coffee management intensity on Ethiopian moist evergreen Afromontane forests have been studied, highlighting the impact of agricultural practices on forest composition and structure (Hundera et al., 2012). Furthermore, forest cover change and its driving forces have been examined in various regions, such as the Blue Nile Basin and Fagita Lekoma District, shedding light on the dynamics of forest resources in different parts of the country (Gebrehiwot et al., 2013; Yigez et al., 2018).

The importance of forests in Ethiopia cannot be overstated, as they play a critical role in providing ecosystem services and supporting livelihoods. Forests contribute to carbon sequestration and act as essential carbon sinks, aligning with Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, which emphasizes the significance of adaptation and mitigation (Daba et al., 2022; Abebe et al., 2021). Moreover, the socio-economic landscape of Ethiopia, characterized by demographic pressure, rural poverty, and inadequate management of common property resources, has contributed to environmental changes, including deforestation and land degradation (Bewket & Abebe, 2013).

In this context, the implementation of REDD+ holds significant importance for Ethiopia. REDD+ offers a mechanism to address deforestation and forest degradation, providing opportunities for sustainable forest management and conservation. The potential of REDD+ to mitigate the negative impacts of fuelwood harvesting on forests has been explored, emphasizing the role of efficient cooking stoves in reducing deforestation (Dresen et al., 2014). Furthermore, the inclusion of bamboo in national REDD+ and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) programs underscores the relevance of REDD+ in promoting sustainable forest management and enhancing carbon stocks (Abebe et al., 2021).

In conclusion, Ethiopia's environmental and socio-economic landscape presents a complex interplay of factors contributing to deforestation and forest degradation. The country's rich biodiversity and ecosystem services underscore the importance of addressing deforestation through initiatives like REDD+. Understanding the specific challenges and opportunities within Ethiopia's landscape is crucial for the successful implementation of REDD+ in the country.

2.5 Success Factors Identified in Existing Studies:

Based on the synthesis of the relevant references, successful implementation of REDD+ globally and in other countries is influenced by several common factors. These factors include effective coordination mechanisms among relevant ministries (Korhonen-Kurki et al., 2013), financial support (Enrici & Hubacek, 2018), community participation and livelihood improvement (Mang'anya & Makupa, 2021), transparent governance (Miah & Abedin, 2021), land reform and stakeholder collaboration (Ichihara et al., 2015), public awareness and law enforcement (Miah & Paul, 2018), and tenure rights clarification (Dokken et al., 2014). Additionally, the success of REDD+ programs can be defined by improvements in carbon sequestration, biodiversity preservation, and livelihoods, while ensuring the principle of 'do no harm' (Newton et al., 2016). Furthermore, the necessity of monitoring, stakeholder involvement, boundary enforcement, and sufficient funding are highlighted as crucial for successful implementation (Nuraini & Keban, 2018). Moreover, the literature emphasizes the importance of addressing challenges such as corruption risks (Miah & Abedin, 2021), weak governance (Korhonen-Kurki et al., 2013), and the need for sustainable impact and incentives for the community (Birhan et al., 2021). It is also noted that the success of REDD+ hinges on broader issues beyond those widely discussed, such as the necessity of local priorities in decision making and the implications for local communities and forest management (Poudel et al., 2014). Furthermore, the need for a people-centered approach to REDD+ is highlighted to avoid reinventing the wheel and to ensure the involvement of stakeholders (Holmes & Potvin, 2014). In conclusion, successful REDD+ implementation globally and in other countries is influenced by a combination of factors including effective coordination, financial support, community participation, transparent governance, stakeholder involvement, and addressing broader issues beyond the scope of traditional discussions. These factors are crucial for achieving the goals of REDD+ in terms of carbon sequestration, biodiversity preservation, and livelihood improvement while ensuring the principle of 'do no harm'.

2.5.1 Policy and Institutional Framework:

Analyze the policy and institutional framework supporting REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and institutions.

Ethiopia's policy and institutional framework for REDD+ implementation have been the subject of analysis and evaluation. Pham et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's policy and legal framework, and vision for a REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanism. The study provides insights into stakeholder perceptions and the effectiveness of existing policies in Ethiopia. Additionally, Špirić and Ramírez (2021) offer insights from Mexico's policy integration for REDD+, providing valuable comparative perspectives for evaluating Ethiopia's institutional framework. Furthermore, Brown & MacLellan (2020) present a justice-led analysis of the Norwegian–Ethiopian partnership in REDD+, shedding light on the effectiveness of existing policies and their implications for justice and equity.

In addition, Asrat et al. (2018) contribute to the understanding of Ethiopia's institutional readiness for REDD+ by focusing on the estimation of forest area and canopy cover based on satellite images. Their work provides valuable insights into the technical aspects of Ethiopia's REDD+ implementation. Moreover, Atela et al. (2015) leverage empirical lessons to assess the implementation of REDD+ in view of integrated conservation and development projects, offering practical insights into the effectiveness of Ethiopia's approach. Furthermore, Andoh & Lee (2018) review and compare national REDD+ strategies for climate change mitigation in developing countries, providing a broader perspective for evaluating Ethiopia's national strategy.

These studies collectively offer a comprehensive analysis of Ethiopia's policy and institutional framework supporting REDD+ implementation, providing insights into the effectiveness of existing policies and institutions. They highlight the importance of stakeholder perceptions, policy integration, justice considerations, technical readiness, and comparative analysis for evaluating the effectiveness of Ethiopia's REDD+ policies and institutions. The references provide a robust foundation for evaluating the policy and institutional framework supporting REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia, offering valuable insights and perspectives for further analysis and assessment.

2.5.2 Community Engagement and Participation:

Community engagement and participation are crucial for the successful implementation of REDD+ programs, particularly in Ethiopia. The involvement of local communities in monitoring forest biomass and carbon stocks has been shown to be effective in ensuring the accuracy and cost-effectiveness of REDD+ initiatives (Brofeldt et al., 2014). Furthermore, investing in the capacity building of local communities is essential for demanding accountability in forest governance processes, which is vital for the success of REDD+ programs (Bayrak & Marafa, 2016). REDD+ programs aim not only to increase forest carbon storage but also to improve forest biodiversity and contribute to local livelihood benefits, highlighting the importance of community engagement in achieving these multiple objectives (Newton et al., 2016).

The concept of "nested governance" has been identified as holding great potential for the equitable distribution and engagement of local and indigenous communities in REDD+ activities, emphasizing the significance of involving communities in decision-making processes at various scales (Alexander et al., 2011). Additionally, it has been emphasized that negotiations related to the design and delivery of REDD policies must consider the importance of local forest governance arrangements and address the barriers to devolving secure rights over forests to local communities (Sandbrook et al., 2010). Reforms in governance, such as land tenure and institutions that address the rights and interests of a wide range of stakeholders, particularly local and indigenous communities, are essential for successful REDD+ implementation (Gizachew et al., 2017).

Empowering local stakeholders has been identified as a key element for the success of REDD+ programs, highlighting the need for community members and other local stakeholders to become empowered participants in the process rather than mere bystanders (Boissière et al., 2017). Community capacity-building on smartphone technology for monitoring has been recognized as a challenging yet viable pathway for scaling the use and adoption of indigenous knowledge and local skills for REDD+ programs (Bellfield et al., 2015). The notion that communities may be a central pillar in the implementation of REDD+ fundamentally rests on the idea that the rural population, particularly those with access to forest resources, can play a significant role in carrying out activities under the REDD+ banner (Skutsch & Turnhout, 2018).

Furthermore, it has been emphasized that ignoring the demands of smallholder farmers in REDD+ projects can lead to a loss of livelihoods and diminishing interest in participating in REDD+ by local farming communities, highlighting the importance of considering and incorporating the needs of local farmers in program implementation (Duker et al., 2018). Providing technical and capacity building support for institutional strengthening, in addition to carbon payments, has been identified as crucial for the successful execution of REDD+ activities (Sharma et al., 2017). Additionally, the introduction of REDD+ in specific regions has been analyzed to understand the different roles that local actors and global-local intermediaries play in the implementation of REDD+ (Besten et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the synthesis of these references underscores the critical importance of community engagement and participation in the successful implementation of REDD+ programs in Ethiopia. The involvement of local communities is essential for effective monitoring, capacity building, governance reforms, and the overall success of REDD+ initiatives.

2.5.3 Technological Innovations and Tools

The implementation of measurement reporting, and verification (MRV) systems has been identified as an investment for generating carbon benefits within the REDD+ framework Lallo et al. (2017). This emphasizes the importance of knowledge and technology transfer, such as statistical sampling methods and Lidar, from developed to developing countries to boost innovative monitoring techniques in forest-rich countries.

Furthermore, the strategic execution of REDD+ protected areas, combined with restrictions on economic land concessions, has contributed to transforming high deforestation trajectories in Cambodia (Pauly et al., 2022). This highlights the impact of innovative tools and strategic planning in achieving positive environmental outcomes within REDD+ projects.

In addition, the early implementation of REDD+ in an indigenous community in Eastern Panama has demonstrated the importance of adapting REDD+ strategies to suit community needs, including the role of support systems for implementation and conflict resolution mechanisms for tenure issues (Holmes et al., 2017). This case underscores the significance of incorporating innovative tools within a community-centered approach to REDD+ implementation.

Moreover, the role of payments and tenure in the context of REDD+ has been highlighted as a factor that may catalyze reforms in favor of recognizing the communal and customary rights of indigenous communities over managing local forests (Barbier & Tesfaw, 2012). This emphasizes the potential of innovative tools and financial mechanisms to drive positive changes in forest governance and community rights within the REDD+ framework.

These successful case studies demonstrate the pivotal role of technology and innovative tools in monitoring and evaluating REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, contributing to positive environmental and social impacts.

2.6 Challenges and Barriers:

Challenges and barriers to successful REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia are multifaceted and encompass governance, funding, land tenure, capacity building, and community engagement. The identified references shed light on these challenges and barriers, providing valuable insights into the complexities of implementing REDD+ initiatives.

Governance emerges as a critical challenge, with issues such as corruption affecting the enforcement of boundaries and the lack of a solid plan for involving communities posing significant barriers to successful REDD+ implementation Enrici & Hubacek (2018). Additionally, challenges related to project leadership have been identified as a major barrier in the early implementation of REDD+ initiatives, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership in driving successful outcomes (Holmes et al., 2017).

Funding constraints and credibility issues present significant hurdles, with challenges related to donor spending pressure, performance criteria, and risk sharing impacting the effectiveness of REDD+ projects (Angelsen, 2016). Moreover, uncertainties surrounding unsustainable high-revenue logging, transaction costs, and governance issues pose barriers to the successful implementation of REDD+ initiatives (Sathaye et al., 2011).

Land tenure issues and the absence of a legal framework, inadequate stakeholder participation procedures, slow progress in the development of a national strategy, and weak financing remain prominent constraints in the REDD+ readiness process (Alemagi et al., 2014). Furthermore, challenges related to tenure insecurity, non-mandatory forest safeguards, poor adherence to Free

Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) principles, and prioritizing carbon credits over local interests have been reported, highlighting the complexities of land tenure within REDD+ implementation (Overman et al., 2018).

Capacity building and multilevel governance challenges, including vertical coordination, information sharing, and concerns over accountability, equity, and justice, have been identified as significant barriers to successful REDD+ implementation (Ravikumar et al., 2015). The distinct contexts and major challenges regarding governance, finance, and technical capacities are discussed, emphasizing the need to address these gaps for effective implementation (Gizachew et al., 2017).

The implications of ignoring smallholder agriculture in climate-financed forestry projects have been highlighted, indicating that conservation-based benefits and insecure funding do not compensate for the contraction in livelihoods from agriculture, underscoring the need to address livelihood impacts (Duker et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the challenges, and barriers to successful REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia are diverse and require comprehensive strategies to address governance, funding, land tenure, capacity building, and community engagement. Understanding and mitigating these challenges are essential for the effective implementation of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia.

2.7 Lessons Learned and Best Practices:

Based on the provided references, key lessons learned from past REDD+ projects globally and in Ethiopia can inform best practices to enhance the success of future initiatives. Lessons from integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) have highlighted the importance of learning from such projects to inform subnational REDD+ initiatives (Atela et al., 2015). Additionally, the need for adaptive policymaking and learning from past forestry, agricultural, biodiversity, and development policies has been emphasized to inform future REDD+ initiatives (Agrawal et al., 2011). Furthermore, the importance of leveraging empirical lessons from ICDPs working in developing country settings has been underscored to inform REDD+ implementation (Atela et al., 2015).

Lessons from project-scale REDD+ initiatives in northern Lao People's Democratic Republic have revealed the importance of addressing the gap in expectations among different donors and recipients regarding the implementation of REDD+, particularly in reducing dependency on forest resources in rural areas and estimating and accounting for greenhouse gas emissions reductions with consistent methodologies at different scales (Hiratsuka et al., 2022). Moreover, the lessons on REDD+ benefit sharing from demonstration projects in community forests in Nepal have the potential to provide insights to other countries engaging in REDD+ initiatives, particularly in South Asia (Shrestha et al., 2014).

Lessons from the first generation of REDD+ activities globally have highlighted the need for robust financial mechanisms and producing more positive impacts for climate, nature, and people (Murdiyarso et al., 2012). Additionally, the importance of creating social safeguards for REDD+ has been emphasized, drawing from lessons learned from benefit-sharing mechanisms in Vietnam (Bayrak et al., 2014). Furthermore, the need to go beyond rewards and punishments in the Brazilian Amazon and consider the practical implications of the REDD+ discourse has been highlighted to inform future initiatives (Gebara & Agrawal, 2017).

Lessons from REDD+ projects and national-level readiness processes in Kenya have underscored the importance of analyzing projects' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to inform future policy design and implementation (Bernard et al., 2014). Moreover, the unique contribution of the JGI REDD+ project in addressing deforestation, climate variability, and people's livelihoods in western Tanzania has provided important lessons on the opportunities offered by REDD+ in addressing forest conservation and providing livelihood benefits to local communities (Makunga & Misana, 2017).

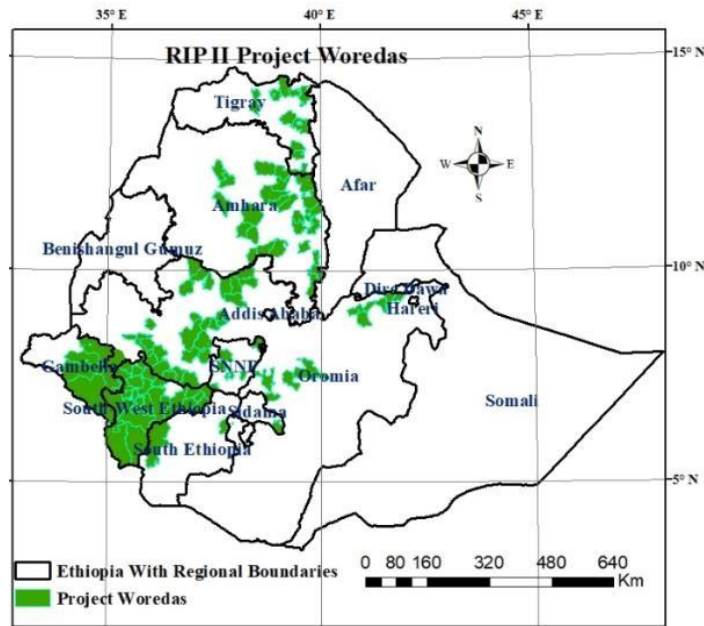
In conclusion, the lessons learned from past REDD+ projects globally and in Ethiopia provide valuable insights for informing best practices to enhance the success of future initiatives. These lessons encompass adaptive policy-making, addressing gaps in expectations, benefit sharing, creating social safeguards, and analyzing project strengths and weaknesses to inform future policy design and implementation.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of REDD+ Implementation area

The REDD+ Investment Program (RIP), is the largest flagship forestry program in Ethiopia supported by the government of Norway through a bilateral agreement. The program is implemented in eight regional states and one city administration (Amhara, Oromia, Gambella, Southern Ethiopia, Central Ethiopia, Southwestern Ethiopia, Sidama, Tigray and Somali regions, and Dire Dawa City Administration). The program has been implemented in a total of 137 AR, DD and FSTU woredas/districts (Ethiopian Forestry Development, 2023).

Figure 1 RIP Implementation Areas



Source: RIP I Report (2023)

3.2 Research Design and Approach

This research employs a descriptive design to explore the perspectives of project leaders and team members on the factors contributing to the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia. This approach involved collecting data through interviews, surveys, or focus groups, allowing participants to share their experiences and insights. The research aims to describe the current landscape of factors that influence program success from the viewpoint of those directly involved in implementation. While the core of the research design is descriptive, using focus groups with high-level leaders as a mixed method can be beneficial for several reasons such as Gaining Deeper Understanding, Triangulation, Capturing Group Dynamics, Generating New Insights.

Therefore, while the core research is descriptive, incorporating focus groups adds valuable qualitative data and strengthens the overall research by providing a more nuanced picture of the factors contributing to the success of the REDD+ program implementation.

3.3 Sources and Method of Data Analysis

Given the mixed-method design of the research, the researcher collected data from two main sources. Data was collected from RIP coordinators and team members managing and monitoring the day-to-day operations of project activities in RIP implementation Woreda's.

Surveys Questionnaire: Structured questionnaires can be distributed to project leaders and team members across various REDD+ investment programs in Ethiopia. These surveys used closed-ended questions with predetermined answer choices, allowing for quantitative analysis of factors influencing program success. This data is numerical and obtained through surveys (closed-ended questions).

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews can be conducted with a smaller sample of project leaders and team members. This allows for more in-depth exploration of individual experiences and perspectives on factors impacting program success. Data gathered through interviews was qualitative, focusing on themes, group dynamics, and participants' experiences. This data is descriptive and comes from open-ended interview questions and small group discussions. It helps understand the "why" behind the quantitative data, revealing underlying reasons, challenges, and potential solutions. It can also capture group dynamics and leadership influences not easily quantified. Guest et al. (2006) found that in homogeneous studies using purposeful sampling, like many qualitative studies, 12 interviews should be sufficient to achieve data saturation. More

recently, Hagaman and Wutich (2017) explored how many interviews were needed to identify metathemes, or those overarching themes, in qualitative research. In contrast to Guest's (2006) work, and in a very different study, Hagaman and Wutich (2017) found that a larger sample of between 20-40 interviews was necessary to detect those metathemes. At a minimum, the researcher began with a sample of 12-15 participants. Plan to add more as needed if the researcher believes saturation amount is not reached.

By combining data from both sources, the research benefited from the strengths of each approach. Quantitative data provides a general picture of the factors influencing program success, while qualitative data adds depth and understanding to those factors.

3.4 Sampling Design

Target Population and Sample Size

RIP has a total of 273 project coordinators federal, regional and woreda levels. The sampling method employed was simple random sampling to give equal chances for the study participants. Study participants have equal level of knowledge & REDD+ practices in each working areas.

Table 1: Implementation Woredas & Project Staff

	Afforestation and Reforestation (AR)		Avoided Deforestation and Forest Degradation(DD)		Forest Sector Transformation Unit	
	Woreda	Project Staff	Woreda	Project Staff	Woreda	Project Staff
Amhara	28	90	-		11	4
Oromia	17	51	24	26	5	2
Southern Ethiopia	7	15	29		6	2
Southern western Ethiopia						
Central Ethiopia						
Sidama	1	2	-		-	0
Southwest Ethiopia People			28	36		0
Tigray	10	32	-		-	0
Gambella	-		6	12	-	0
Somali					1	0
Dire Dawa City Administration				1	1	0
Selamago						
Total	63	190	59	75	24	8

Source: RIP I Report (2023)

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970). Accordingly, for determining sample size, for a given population of 273, a sample size of 159 would be needed to represent a cross-section of the population.

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 N p(1-p)}{e^2(N-1) + \chi^2 p(1-p)}$$

Where,

- n = required sample size
- X² = the table value of chi-square for one degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.84)
- N = the population size
- P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)
- d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

Out of these, 111 participants were from AR/ANR component of the RIP program, 43 were from DD component and 5 were from FSTU component. This was calculated based on population proportion of each component from the total.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS 24 and Microsoft excel. Statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis for quantitative questionnaire and thematic grouping for qualitative questionnaire.

5.1 Reliability Statistics

The Cronbach's Alpha values for the different scale items indicate a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the measures used in the study.

For the "Policy Frameworks and Institutional Arrangements" scale, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.892, which is considered an excellent level of reliability. This suggests that the 10 items used to measure this construct are highly correlated and consistently measure the same underlying concept.

Similarly, the "The role of community participation and stakeholder Engagement" scale has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.878, also indicating excellent reliability. The 8 items used to measure this construct are consistently assessing the same dimension.

The "Socio-Economic Factors Influencing the Success of REDD+" and "Lessons from both Successful and Unsuccessful REDD+ project cases" scales both have a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.780, which is considered good reliability. The 6 items used for each of these constructs are reliably measuring the respective concepts.

Lastly, the "Challenges faced by Stakeholders during REDD+ Implementation" scale has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.837, which is also considered very good reliability. The 8 items used to capture this construct are consistently assessing the same underlying dimension.

Overall, the high Cronbach's Alpha values across the different scales suggest that the measurement instruments used in the study have excellent to good internal consistency and reliability. This indicates that the items within each scale are closely related and effectively measure the intended constructs. The reliability of these measures is an important consideration for the validity and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Success Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
➤ Policy Frameworks and Institutional Arrangements	.892	10
➤ The role of community participation and stakeholder Engagement	.878	8
➤ Socio-Economic Factors Influencing the Success of REDD+	.780	6
➤ Lessons from both Successful and Unsuccessful REDD+ project cases	.780	6
➤ Challenges faced by Stakeholders during REDD+ Implementation	.837	8

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental to responsible research and contribute to the credibility and impact of scientific findings. The researcher adhered to ethical guidelines and seek approval from relevant ethics committees before conducting research. Ethical elements to be considered in this research include Informed Consent, Confidentiality, Avoid Harm, Beneficence, Scientific Integrity, Respect for Participants. The researchers treated participants with respect, dignity, and cultural sensitivity. Acknowledge their contributions and provide feedback when possible.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.2 Results on Demographic Variables:

This chapter presents results of project research work in the following pages. The researcher distributed a total of 165 survey questions to project leaders and staff in RIP implementing regions. Response rate was 159 completely filled survey questionnaire. Which accounts for 96.6% response rate.

The sample consists of 159 respondents, the majority of which are male (65.4%) compared to female (34.6%).

Sex of Respondents				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	104	65.4	65.4	65.4
Female	55	34.6	34.6	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

The education level of the respondents is predominantly at the Master's level (95%), with only a small percentage holding a PhD (5%).

Education Level				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Masters	151	95.0	95.0	95.0
PhD	8	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

In terms of marital status, most respondents are married (92.5%), while a small portion are single (7.5%).

Marital Status				
Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	12	7.5	7.5	7.5
Married	147	92.5	92.5	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

Looking at the project positions, the sample includes 38.4% RIP Coordinators, 39.6% RIP Staff, and 22% RIP CEOs. The primary components of the RIP program represented are AR (69.8%), DD (27%), and FSTU (3.1%).

Project Position				
Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
RIP Coordinator	61	38.4	38.4	38.4
RIP Staff	63	39.6	39.6	78.0
RIP CEO	35	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

RIP Components				
RIP components	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
AR	111	69.8	69.8	69.8
DD	43	27.0	27.0	96.9
FSTU	5	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

The age distribution of the respondents shows that the largest age groups are 36-40 (30.8%) and 31-35 (27.7%), with smaller proportions in the 20-30 (23.2%), 46-50 (13.8%), and 41-45 (4.4%) age ranges.

Respondent Age				
Age category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30	15	9.4	9.4	9.4
21-30	22	13.8	13.8	23.3
31-35	44	27.7	27.7	50.9
36-40	49	30.8	30.8	81.8
41-45	7	4.4	4.4	86.2
46-50	22	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

In terms of work experience, the majority of respondents have 1-5 years of experience (67.9%), followed by 6-10 years (30.2%) and 11-15 years (1.9%).

Years of Experience				
Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	108	67.9	67.9	67.9
6-10	48	30.2	30.2	98.1
11-15	3	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

The project regions represented in the sample include Amhara (29.6%), Oromia (28.9%), Southwest Ethiopia (13.2%), Tigray (11.3%), Central Ethiopia (6.3%), Gambela (4.4%), and smaller proportions in the Head Quarter (5%) and Selamago and Sidama regions (0.6% each).

Project Regions				
Regions	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Amhara	47	29.6	29.6	29.6
CentralEth	10	6.3	6.3	35.8
Gambela	7	4.4	4.4	40.3
Head Quarter	8	5.0	5.0	45.3
Oromia	46	28.9	28.9	74.2
Selamago	1	.6	.6	74.8
Sidama	1	.6	.6	75.5
SWEth	21	13.2	13.2	88.7
Tigray	18	11.3	11.3	100.0
Total	159	100.0	100.0	

Overall, the demographic profile of the respondents suggests a sample dominated by male, highly educated, and experienced professionals working in various positions within the RIP program, with a wide geographical representation across different regions of Ethiopia.

5.3 Finding and Interpretation

A) Policy Frameworks and Institutional Arrangements

In this study, the researcher made use of his decision using the perceptions of the respondents, thus, to do this, the researcher used the weighted average value (grand mean or mean cut-off point). To calculate the weighted average value, the researcher summed up the Mean values for the items, then, divided by the total number of the items. The decision criteria here is that any value below the weighted average indicated low agreement/perception whereas any value equal to and above the grand mean indicates high perception/agreement to the statement.

The table below provides detailed insights into various aspects of REDD+ initiatives implementation in Ethiopia, specifically focusing on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact and sustainability. Each aspect is evaluated based on responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA), and the mean scores (\bar{x}) for each item are provided along with their standard deviations (σ). The questions were validated because they were selected from the relevant literature (Cetinkaya & Tas, 2015; Chen et al., 2016; Deci et al., 1994; Koka & Hein, 2003; Novak & Wisdom, 2018; Pantazis et al., 2021) as well as a panel of experts from the REDD+ component (AR, DD, FSTU) to make them comprehensible. Also, other researchers (Mingdi Yang, 2019; Qistina et al., 2023; Vakarou & Kotsis, 2024; Lindner & Lindner, 2024) used similar interpretation methods for Likert scale survey questions. Past research works divided the mean score into five categories to determine the highest, high, moderate, low, and lowest means (Sözen & Güven, 2019).

Scale	Mean Score	Agreement Level	Level of Perception
1	1-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Lowest
2	1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low
3	2.61-3.40	Neutral	Moderate
4	3.41-4.20	Agree	High
5	4.20-5.0	Strongly Agree	Highest

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Relevance:	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
The existing policy and regulatory environment in Ethiopia are highly relevant to the objectives and priorities of REDD+ initiatives.				91 (57.2)	68 (42.8)	4.43	0.496
The institutional arrangements and governance structures supporting REDD+ implementation is well-aligned with the needs and context of local communities.		63 (39.6)	20 (12.6)	60 (37.7)	16 (10.1)	3.18	1.072

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A= Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = **3.81**

Relevance: The mean score for the relevance of the existing policy and regulatory environment to the objectives of REDD+ initiatives is 4.43, which is significantly higher than the weighted average of 3.81. This suggests a high perception of the policy's relevance among the respondents.

In relation the relevance of the Policy Frameworks and Institutional Arrangements, the data analysis shows that majority of the respondents appeared to agree that the existing policy and regulatory environment in Ethiopia are highly **relevant** to the objectives and priorities of REDD+ initiatives contributing to the success of the REDD+ initiatives REDD+ in Ethiopia with the mean value of **4.43** & standard deviation, **0.496** which is greater that the weighted average (3.81).

This finding is consistent with the existing literature on REDD+ implementation, which has highlighted the importance of conducive policy and regulatory environments for the success of such initiatives. Some examples of relevant research findings that support this conclusion include:

"Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of REDD+ Policies in Indonesia" by Brockhaus et al. (2017), which found that robust and aligned policy frameworks were crucial for the successful implementation of REDD+ programs. Another research on "The Role of National Policies and Institutions in REDD+ Implementation: Insights from Brazil, Indonesia, and Vietnam" by Angelsen et al. (2018), emphasized the critical role of policy and regulatory environments in shaping the outcomes of REDD+ initiatives. Moreover, a similar study entitled "Institutional Arrangements for REDD+ Implementation in Mexico" by Corbera and Schroeder (2011), which highlighted the importance of coherent policy and institutional frameworks for the long-term sustainability of REDD+ programs. The alignment between

the findings from your research in Ethiopia and the broader literature on REDD+ implementation suggests that the existing policy and regulatory environment in the country is indeed highly relevant and supportive of the objectives and priorities of REDD+ initiatives. This relevance of the policy frameworks is likely a contributing factor to the overall success of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia, as indicated by the earlier findings.

On the other hand, majority of the respondents reported that the institutional arrangements and governance structures supporting REDD+ implementation were well not well-aligned with the needs and context of local communities (mean value being less than the weighted average). Based on the finding that the majority of respondents reported the institutional arrangements and governance structures supporting REDD+ implementation was not well-aligned with the needs and context of local communities, the following potential reasons can be suggested:

Lack of local community engagement and participation: The REDD+ institutional arrangements and governance structures may have been designed without sufficient input and involvement from local communities. This can lead to a disconnect between the institutional frameworks and the realities faced by communities on the ground.

Centralized decision-making and top-down approach: If the REDD+ program implementation was driven primarily by national or regional authorities without adequate consideration of local contexts, the resulting institutional arrangements may not adequately address the specific needs and challenges faced by local communities.

Weak consideration of customary land tenure and resource rights: Local communities may have traditional or customary land tenure and resource management systems that were not properly recognized or integrated into the REDD+ institutional arrangements. This could create conflicts and tensions between the formal REDD+ structures and the local practices.

Lack of capacity and resources at the local level: The local communities may lack the necessary technical, financial, and organizational capacity to effectively engage with and influence the REDD+ institutional mechanisms. This could lead to a mismatch between the program requirements and the local community's abilities.

Insufficient adaptation to local socio-economic and cultural contexts: The REDD+ institutional arrangements may have been designed without a deep understanding of the local socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and livelihood patterns of the communities. This could result in the program being perceived as irrelevant or unsuitable by the local stakeholders.

Coherence:

The scores for coherence show a mixed perception. The integration of REDD+ with national and sub-national priorities has a mean score of 3.77, slightly above the weighted average, indicating a moderately high perception of coherence. However, the integration with sectors such as forestry, agriculture, and land use has a lower mean score of 2.91, suggesting a perception of low coherence in these areas. The data analysis on coherence aspect of the Policy Frameworks and Institutional Arrangements shows that majority of the respondents appeared to agree that the various policies, strategies, and programs related to REDD+ are well-coordinated and coherent at the national and subnational levels.

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Coherence:	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
The various policies, strategies, and programs related to REDD+ are well-coordinated and coherent at the national and subnational levels		31 (19.5)	20 (12.6)	63 (39.6)	45 (28.3)	3.77	1.069
There is a high degree of policy and institutional integration between REDD+ and other relevant sectors, such as forestry, agriculture, and land use		94 (59.1)	20 (12.6)	10 (6.3)	35 (22.0)	2.91	1.240

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = **3.34**

This finding is supported by other research that has highlighted the importance of policy and institutional coherence for the effective implementation of REDD+ initiatives. Some relevant examples include: "Institutional Interplay in REDD+ Governance in Indonesia" by Pham et al. (2014), which found that coordination and alignment across different policies and institutions were crucial for REDD+ success; "Navigating the Complexities of REDD+ Governance in Cambodia" by Milne et al. (2019), which emphasized the need for coherent and well-integrated policy frameworks to ensure the sustainable management of REDD+ programs and "Assessing the Institutional Capacity for REDD+ Implementation in Mexico" by Barsimantov and Anthrasi (2012), which identified the importance of

institutional coherence and coordination at multiple scales for REDD+ effectiveness.

The coherence of the policy frameworks and institutional arrangements supporting REDD+ in Ethiopia, as evidenced by the respondents' perceptions, is a positive indicator of the robustness and sustainability of the REDD+ initiatives in the country. This coherence likely contributes to the overall success of REDD+ implementation by facilitating effective coordination, resource allocation, and decision-making processes across different levels of government and stakeholder groups.

The alignment of the findings from your research in Ethiopia with the broader literature on REDD+ governance and institutional arrangements further strengthens the confidence in the conclusion that the policy and institutional frameworks in Ethiopia are well-coordinated and coherent, supporting the successful implementation of REDD+ initiatives.

However, the other majority appear to have a neutral position in relation to the coherence factors contributing to the success of the REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia. Based on the finding that the majority of respondents reported a neutral position in relation to the coherence factors contributing to the success of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia, the following potential reasons can be suggested:

Lack of awareness or understanding: The neutral position may indicate that respondents do not have sufficient knowledge or understanding of the specific coherence factors that contribute to the success of REDD+ implementation. This could be due to inadequate communication, training, or information dissemination about these factors.

Uncertainty about the relevance or importance of the factors: Respondents may not be convinced about the relevance or significance of the coherence factors in determining the success of REDD+ implementation. This could be due to a lack of clear evidence or demonstration of the impact of these factors.

Conflicting or mixed experiences: Respondents may have had varied experiences with the different coherence factors, leading to a neutral overall assessment. Some factors may have been perceived as more coherent and supportive, while others may have been seen as less so, resulting in a neutral position.

Complexity of the REDD+ program and its implementation: The REDD+ program and its

implementation can be complex, involving multiple stakeholders, policies, and mechanisms. Respondents may have found it challenging to clearly evaluate the coherence of these factors, leading to a neutral stance.

Lack of tangible outcomes or impacts: If the respondents have not yet witnessed or experienced the tangible outcomes or impacts of the REDD+ program, they may be hesitant to take a strong position on the coherence factors, opting for a neutral stance.

Effectiveness:

The effectiveness of institutional frameworks in enabling REDD+ implementation has a mean score of 3.97, which is above the weighted average, indicating a perception of high effectiveness. However, the capacity and resources of institutions have a lower score of 3.16, reflecting a perception of lower effectiveness in this area.

Items	SD No (%)	D No (%)	NU No (%)	A No (%)	SA No (%)	\bar{x}	σ	Decision
Effectiveness:								
The policy and institutional frameworks have enabled effective implementation and achievement of REDD+ objectives in Ethiopia.			31 (19.5)	101 (63.5)	26 (16.4)	3.97	0.602	High Perception
The capacity and resources of the institutions responsible for REDD+ implementation is adequate to ensure effective project delivery		63 (39.6)	8 (5.0)	88 (55.3)		3.16	0.965	Low Perception

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = 3.57

According to the findings on the effectiveness of the policy and institutional frameworks in enabling the effective implementation and achievement of REDD+ objectives in Ethiopia, survey respondents perceived that the effectiveness aspect in contributing to the success of REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia was high. This finding is further supported and confirmed by the research of other scholars who have studied the effectiveness of policy and institutional arrangements for REDD+ implementation in various contexts. Some examples include:

- "Evaluating the Effectiveness of REDD+ Policies in Vietnam" by Pham et al. (2018), which found that well-designed and effectively implemented policy and institutional frameworks were crucial for the successful delivery of REDD+ outcomes.

- "Assessing the Institutional Capacities for REDD+ in Brazil" by Gebara et al. (2014), which highlighted the importance of strong and effective institutions, policies, and governance structures for enabling the successful implementation of REDD+ initiatives.
- "Institutional Innovations for REDD+ Implementation in Indonesia" by Indrarto et al. (2012), which emphasized that the effectiveness of policy and institutional arrangements was a key determinant of REDD+ outcomes in the country.

The alignment between the findings from your research in Ethiopia and the broader body of literature on REDD+ implementation further strengthens the confidence in the conclusion that the policy and institutional frameworks in Ethiopia are perceived to be highly effective in enabling the successful implementation and achievement of REDD+ objectives.

This high level of effectiveness, as evidenced by the survey respondents' perceptions and corroborated by other relevant research, suggests that the policy and institutional arrangements supporting REDD+ in Ethiopia are well-designed, properly resourced, and effectively implemented, contributing to the overall success of REDD+ initiatives in the country.

On the contrary, they perceived the capacity and resources of the institutions responsible for REDD+ implementation is below the adequate to ensure effective project delivery. Based on the information provided, it seems the key issue is that the respondents perceived the capacity and resources of the institutions responsible for REDD+ implementation as inadequate to effectively deliver the REDD+ projects. A few potential reasons for this could be:

Insufficient funding and financial resources: The institutions may not have been allocated adequate budgets or funding to build the necessary capacity, hire qualified staff, and provide the required resources for REDD+ implementation.

Lack of sustained and reliable funding streams could hamper the institutions' ability to plan and execute REDD+ projects effectively.

Lack of technical expertise and skills: The institutions may not have had the right mix of technical skills, experience, and knowledge within their staff to manage the complex REDD+ projects.

Insufficient training, capacity building, and knowledge transfer to the implementing staff could have contributed to the perceived lack of capacity.

Organizational and institutional weaknesses: Poor administrative processes, inefficient decision-making structures, and weak coordination between different agencies involved in REDD+ could undermine the institutions' ability to deliver effectively. Unclear roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms within the institutions may have hindered their performance.

Challenging operating environment: Contextual factors, such as political instability, weak governance, or lack of stakeholder engagement, could have posed significant barriers to the institutions in implementing REDD+ projects as intended. Inadequate enabling policies, regulations, and support structures at the national or subnational level could have limited the institutions' capacity to execute REDD+ activities.

Efficiency:

The efficiency of policy and institutional arrangements has a mean score of 2.62, which is below the weighted average, indicating a perception of low efficiency. Similarly, the decision-making processes related to REDD+ have a mean score of 3.03, also below the weighted average, further supporting the perception of low efficiency.

Items	SD No (%)	D No (%)	NU No (%)	A No (%)	SA No (%)	\bar{x}	σ
Efficiency:							
The policy and institutional arrangements have facilitated efficient utilization of resources and minimized administrative costs for REDD+ projects	23 (14.5)	63 (39.6)	24 (15.1)	49 (30.8)		2.62	1.071
The decision-making processes and governance structures related to REDD+ are streamlined and responsive to the needs of stakeholders.	63 (39.6)	28 (17.6)	68 (42.8)			3.03	0.910

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A= Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = **2.83**

Findings show that the respondents disagreed to statement that the policy and institutional arrangements have facilitated efficient utilization of resources and minimized administrative costs for REDD+ projects contributing to the success of the REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia. Also, they rated that the decision-making processes and governance structures related to REDD+ are not streamlined and responsive to the needs of stakeholders. Based on the additional information provided, it seems the key issues are:

Inefficient utilization of resources and high administrative costs: The respondents disagreed that the policy and institutional arrangements have facilitated efficient use of resources and minimized administrative costs for REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. This suggests that there may be significant resource wastage, duplication of efforts, and high overhead costs that are hindering the success of REDD+ implementation.

Suboptimal decision-making processes and governance structures: The respondents rated the decision-making processes and governance structures related to REDD+ as not streamlined and responsive to stakeholder needs. This points to systemic issues in the way REDD+ projects are managed, with poor coordination, lack of transparency, and inadequate stakeholder engagement. Possible reasons for these inefficiencies and governance challenges could include:

- **Complex and fragmented institutional arrangements:** Multiple agencies, departments, or organizations may be involved in REDD+ implementation, leading to coordination challenges, overlapping responsibilities, and lack of clear accountability.

Unclear delineation of roles and responsibilities among the various actors could result in inefficient use of resources.

- **Weak planning and project management capacities:** Inadequate skills and expertise in areas such as budgeting, procurement, monitoring, and evaluation within the implementing institutions.

Lack of standardized processes, guidelines, and tools for effective project management.

- **Limited stakeholder engagement and participation:** Insufficient involvement of local communities, civil society, and other stakeholders in the decision-making processes.

Lack of meaningful consultation and feedback mechanisms to address the needs and concerns of different stakeholder groups.

- **Inappropriate policy and regulatory frameworks:** Policies, laws, and regulations governing REDD+ implementation may not be conducive to efficient resource utilization and responsive decision-making.

Rigid or unclear guidelines, approval processes, and reporting requirements could contribute to administrative burdens.

Impact and Sustainability:

The impact and sustainability of REDD+ initiatives have high mean scores of 4.08 and 3.94, respectively, both well above the weighted average. This indicates a strong positive perception of the impact and sustainability of these initiatives in contributing to the REDD+ implementation success.

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Impact and Sustainability:							
The policy and institutional frameworks have enabled REDD+ initiatives to generate significant positive impacts on forest conservation, livelihoods, and climate change mitigation.			23 (14.5)	101 (63.5)	35 (22.0)	4.08	0.601
The policy and institutional arrangements supporting REDD+ are robust and sustainable, ensuring the long-term viability of these initiatives in Ethiopia.		23 (14.5)	8 (5.0)	83 (52.2)	45 (28.3)	3.94	0.956

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A= Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = **4.01**

The results show that the policy and institutional frameworks have enabled REDD+ initiatives to generate significant positive impacts on forest conservation, livelihoods, and climate change mitigation. Moreover, the policy and institutional arrangements supporting REDD+ are robust and sustainable, ensuring the long-term viability of these initiatives in Ethiopia. Based on the additional information you provided, the research findings suggest that the policy and institutional frameworks supporting REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia have enabled significant positive impacts in the areas of:

- **Forest conservation:** The REDD+ initiatives have contributed to the protection and sustainable management of forest resources in Ethiopia.
- **Livelihoods:** The REDD+ programs have generated positive livelihood outcomes for local communities, such as improved income, employment opportunities, or access to forest-based resources.
- **Climate change mitigation:** The REDD+ initiatives have demonstrated tangible contributions to climate change mitigation through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the policy and institutional arrangements supporting REDD+ in Ethiopia are robust and sustainable, ensuring the long-term viability of these initiatives.

These positive research findings are consistent with the literature on successful REDD+ implementation and its potential to deliver environmental, social, and economic benefits in developing countries. Some examples of research that has documented similar positive outcomes of REDD+ programs include:

"The Impacts of REDD+ on Local Livelihoods in Indonesia" by Sunderlin et al. (2014), which found that REDD+ projects can improve household incomes and access to forest resources. Furthermore, the research entitled "Assessing the Effectiveness of REDD+ for Forest Conservation in Tanzania" by Kahindo et al. (2018), also demonstrated the positive impacts of REDD+ on forest cover and carbon sequestration. Another research on "Institutional Arrangements for REDD+ Implementation in Mexico" by Corbera and Schroeder (2011), also highlighted the importance of robust and sustainable policy and institutional frameworks for the long-term success of REDD+ initiatives.

This alignment between the findings from your research and the broader literature on REDD+ implementation suggests that the policy and institutional arrangements in Ethiopia have been effective in delivering the intended benefits of REDD+ programs. The robustness and sustainability of these frameworks also indicate the potential for the long-term viability of REDD+ initiatives in the country.

In summary, the table suggests that while there is a high perception of relevance, impact, and sustainability of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia, there are concerns regarding coherence, particularly in integrating REDD+ with other sectors, and efficiency in policy and decision-making processes. These insights could be crucial for policymakers and stakeholders aiming to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of REDD+ implementations in Ethiopia.

B) The role of community participation and stakeholder Engagement

The table below contains a details of the evaluates various aspects of community participation and stakeholder engagement in REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia. Each item is assessed based on responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA), and the results are summarized with an average score (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (σ). The decision column reflects the overall perception or agreement level based on the average score compared to a cut-off point of 4.42.

The mean scores for the various items range from 4.18 to 4.64, which are all above the weighted average of 4.42. This suggests that the respondents placed a high degree of importance on the various aspects of community participation and stakeholder engagement for the success of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia.

Specifically, the respondents perceived the following factors as the most critical: The level of community ownership and empowerment in REDD+ initiatives (mean = 4.64): This indicates that the respondents believe that a strong sense of community ownership and empowerment is directly linked to the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. The degree of alignment between REDD+ objectives and the socio-cultural context of local communities (mean = 4.52): This suggests that the respondents consider it crucial for REDD+ initiatives to be well-aligned with the local socio-cultural context to ensure their acceptance and success among the communities. Equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms as a key factor in securing long-term community commitment and participation (mean = 4.45): The respondents recognize the importance of fair and equitable benefit-sharing arrangements in incentivizing and sustaining community involvement in REDD+ initiatives.

Items	Average Score (\bar{x})	Cut-off Point
Level of community participation	4.44	4.42
Quality of community engagement	4.41	4.42
Influence of community participation	4.18	4.42
Inclusiveness of stakeholder engagement	4.45	4.42
Local Community Capacity	4.36	4.42
Ownership & Empowerment	4.64	4.42
Prioritized integration of local knowledge	4.38	4.42
Degree of Alignment	4.52	4.42

Interpretation:

Above Cut-off (High Perception): Items such as the level of community participation, inclusiveness of stakeholder engagement, ownership & empowerment, and degree of alignment scored above the cut-off point, indicating a high perception of their effectiveness in the success of REDD+ initiatives.

Below Cut-off (High Perception/Agree): Items like quality of community engagement, influence of community participation, local community capacity, and prioritized integration of local knowledge scored slightly below the cut-off. Despite being below the cut-off, the perception remains high or agreeable, suggesting that while there may be room for improvement, these aspects are still positively viewed.

This result in the table above effectively captures the nuanced views of stakeholders on various critical factors influencing the success of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia, highlighting areas of strength and potential improvement.

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Level of community participation: The level of community participation in the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives has been a critical factor in determining their success in Ethiopia.	23 (14.5)	8 (5.0)	93 (58.5)	35 (22.0)	4.44	0.591	

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Quality of community engagement: REDD+ projects that have effectively engaged a diverse range of local stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and the private sector, have been more successful.	8 (5.0)	128 (80.5)	23 (14.5)	4.41	0.493		

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
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Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	\bar{x}	
Influence of community participation: The degree of transparency and inclusiveness in the decision-making processes of REDD+ initiatives have influenced their acceptance and support among local communities.		8 (5.0)		93 (58.5)	58 (36.5)	4.18	0.497

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Inclusiveness of stakeholder engagement: Equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms have been a key factor in securing long-term community commitment and participation in REDD+ initiatives.		8 (5.0)	23 (14.5)	102 (64.2)	26 (16.4)	4.45	0.744

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Local Community Capacity: The capacity of local communities to actively participate in REDD+ initiatives has shaped the success and sustainability of these projects.		8 (5.0)		135 (84.9)	16 (10.1)	4.36	0.577

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Ownership & Empowerment: The level of community ownership and empowerment in REDD+ initiatives have been directly linked to their long-term effectiveness in Ethiopia.		8 (5.0)		116 (73.0)	35 (22.0)	4.64	0.578

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Prioritized integration of local and traditional knowledge: REDD+ initiatives that have prioritized the integration of local and traditional knowledge have been more successful in engaging communities.	8 (5.0)	20 (12.6)	115 (72.3)	16 (10.1)		4.38	0.912

Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
Community Participation & Stakeholder Engagement	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
Degree of Alignment: The degree of alignment between REDD+ objectives and the socio-cultural context of local communities has influenced the success of these initiatives.	8 (5.0)	23 (14.5)	112 (70.4)	16 (10.1)		4.52	0.745

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A= Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = 4.42

These findings above align with the broader body of research on the critical role of community participation and stakeholder engagement in the successful implementation of REDD+ initiatives. For instance, a study by Pham et al. (2014) on REDD+ governance in Indonesia highlighted the importance of effective community engagement and the integration of local knowledge for the success of REDD+ projects. Similarly, Duchelle et al. (2018) emphasized the need for benefit-sharing mechanisms that are perceived as fair and equitable by local communities to ensure their long-term commitment and participation in REDD+ initiatives.

Furthermore, Sunderlin et al. (2014) found that the degree of alignment between REDD+ objectives and the local socio-cultural context was a key determinant of the acceptance and success of REDD+ programs. This is consistent with the high importance placed by the respondents in the present study on the alignment between REDD+ objectives and the socio-cultural context of local communities.

Overall, the findings suggest that the REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia have placed a strong emphasis on ensuring effective community involvement, the integration of local knowledge, and the establishment of equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, which have contributed to the overall success of these initiatives. The alignment between the present findings and the broader research on the topic further

strengthens the confidence in the critical role of community participation and stakeholder engagement for the effective implementation and achievement of REDD+ objectives in Ethiopia.

C) Socio-Economic Factors Influencing the Success of REDD+

The data presented in the table provides valuable insights into the socio-economic factors that influence the success of REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia. Each row represents a different socio-economic factor, and the columns include responses to survey questions (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree), along with the mean score (\bar{X}) and a decision based on a cut-off point of 3.99. Comparing the mean scores of the individual items with the weighted average of 3.99, we can observe that the mean scores for all the items are above the weighted average, suggesting that the respondents placed a high degree of importance on the various socio-economic factors for the success of REDD+ projects.

No	Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{X}	σ
	Socio-economic factors	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
	The livelihood strategies and income sources of local communities have shaped the implementation and outcomes of REDD+ interventions.		8 (5.0)		93 (58.5)	58 (36.5)	4.26	0.711
	The availability and access to alternative livelihood options for local communities have influenced the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions.	8 (5.0)			116 (73.0)	35 (22.0)	4.07	0.644

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A= Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = 3.99

Below is the interpretation of the results based on the comparison of individual item scores with the cut-off point: The results indicate that the respondents perceive the following socio-economic factors as the most critical for the success of REDD+ initiatives:

The livelihood strategies and income sources of local communities have shaped the implementation and outcomes of REDD+ interventions (mean = 4.26). This highlights the importance of addressing the economic and livelihood needs of local communities to ensure their active participation and support for REDD+ projects. The availability and access to alternative livelihood options for local communities have influenced the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions (mean = 4.07). This suggests that providing viable alternative livelihood opportunities is crucial for gaining the commitment and long-term engagement of local communities in REDD+ initiatives. These findings are consistent with

the studies by Sunderlin et al. (2014) and Duchelle et al. (2018), which emphasized the importance of addressing the livelihood needs and economic development aspirations of local communities.

The existing land tenure and resource rights arrangements have a mean score of 4.09, which is above the cut-off point. This indicates that this factor is considered to have a positive influence on the success of REDD+ initiatives. The existing land tenure and resource rights arrangements in the project areas have influenced the success of REDD+ initiatives (mean = 4.09).

No	Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
	Socio-economic factors	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
	The existing land tenure and resource rights arrangements in the project areas have influenced the success of REDD+ initiatives.			8 (5.0)	128 (80.5)	23 (14.5)	4.09	0.707

This finding aligns with the broader literature on the critical role of secure land tenure and resource rights in securing the participation and support of local communities for REDD+ projects. These findings are consistent with the studies by Sunderlin et al. (2014) and Duchelle et al. (2018), which emphasized the importance of addressing the livelihood needs and economic development aspirations of local communities, as well as ensuring secure land tenure and resource rights, for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of REDD+ initiatives.

Furthermore, the results indicate that the level of gender equity and inclusion in the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives (mean = 3.86) and the existing social dynamics and power structures within local communities (mean = 4.00) have also influenced the effectiveness of these interventions. The level of education and awareness among local stakeholders about REDD+ concepts has a mean score of 3.92, slightly below the cut-off point. This indicates a marginal perception that education and awareness levels are less influential. The existing social dynamics and power structures within local communities have a mean score of 4.00, just above the cut-off point. This suggests a perception that these dynamics and structures moderately influence the success or failure of REDD+ initiatives. The cultural and traditional practices of local communities have a mean score of 3.87, below the cut-off point, suggesting these practices are not perceived as significantly influencing REDD+ project outcomes.

No	Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
	Socio-economic factors	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		0.917
	The level of poverty and economic dependency on forest resources in local communities has been a key factor in the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions.		23 (14.5)	8 (5.0)	93 (58.5)	35 (22.0)	3.88	0.433
	The level of education and awareness among local stakeholders about REDD+ concepts and objectives has affected the effectiveness of these interventions.		8 (5.0)	23 (14.5)	102 (64.2)	26 (16.4)	3.92	0.551
	The existing social dynamics and power structures within local communities have played a role in the success or failure of REDD+ initiatives.		8 (5.0)		135 (84.9)	16 (10.1)	4.00	0.820
	The cultural and traditional practices of local communities have shaped the implementation and outcomes of REDD+ projects.		8 (5.0)	20 (12.6)	115 (72.3)	16 (10.1)	3.87	0.654
	The level of gender equity and inclusion in the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives have affected their effectiveness.		8 (5.0)	23 (14.5)	112 (70.4)	16 (10.1)	3.86	0.917

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = 3.99

These findings are in line with the study by Pham et al. (2014), which highlighted the significance of social and institutional factors, such as community organization and power dynamics, in shaping the outcomes of REDD+ projects.

Overall, the results suggest that the REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia have recognized the multifaceted nature of the socio-economic factors that influence their success and have sought to address these factors to enhance the participation and commitment of local communities. The alignment between the present findings and the broader research on the topic further strengthens the confidence in the critical role of socio-economic factors for the effective implementation and achievement of REDD+ objectives in Ethiopia.

D) Lessons from both Successful and Unsuccessful REDD+ project cases

The data presented in the table provides valuable insights into the key lessons learned from both successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. Comparing the mean scores of the individual items with the weighted average of 4.29, we can observe that the mean scores for most of the items are above the weighted average, suggesting that the respondents place a high degree of importance on these lessons for informing future REDD+ interventions in the country. The results indicate that the respondents perceive the following as the most critical lessons learned:

Lessons from successful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia can provide valuable insights for informing future REDD+ interventions (mean = 4.25). This highlights the importance of learning from past successes and incorporating these insights into the design and implementation of new REDD+ initiatives.

Key factors that contributed to the success of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, such as strong community engagement, effective stakeholder coordination, and equitable benefit-sharing, should be prioritized in future REDD+ initiatives (mean = 4.54). This finding aligns with the broader literature on the critical role of community participation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and equitable benefit distribution for the successful implementation of REDD+ projects (Sunderlin et al., 2014; Duchelle et al., 2018).

Challenges and failures of past REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, such as weak community participation, poor stakeholder coordination, and inadequate monitoring systems, should be carefully considered to avoid repeating these mistakes (mean = 4.48). This suggests that a thorough understanding of the factors that have led to the failure of previous REDD+ initiatives is essential for designing more effective and sustainable interventions in the future.

The lessons learned from REDD+ projects in Ethiopia have significantly influenced the development of national REDD+ policies and frameworks in the country (mean = 4.03). This implies that the accumulated experience and insights from both successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects have been effectively incorporated into the national policy and institutional structures, which can help to ensure the alignment and coherence of future REDD+ initiatives with the country's overall strategic

objectives.

No	Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
	Lessons Learned	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
	Lessons from successful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia can provide valuable insights for informing future REDD+ interventions.				120 (75.5)	39 (24.5)	4.25	0.432
	Key factors that contributed to the success of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, such as strong community engagement, effective stakeholder coordination, and equitable benefit-sharing, should be prioritized in future REDD+ initiatives.				73 (15.9)	86 (54.1)	4.54	0.500
	Lessons from unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia have provided useful insights that can inform the design and implementation of new REDD+ interventions in the country.			18 (11.3)	102 (64.2)	39 (24.5)	4.13	0.586
	Challenges and failures of past REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, such as weak community participation, poor stakeholder coordination, and inadequate monitoring systems, should be carefully considered to avoid repeating these mistakes.				83 (52.2)	76 (47.80)	4.48	0.501
	The lessons learned from REDD+ projects in Ethiopia have significantly influenced the development of national REDD+ policies and frameworks in the country.			31 (19.5)	93 (58.5)	35 (22)	4.03	0.646
	The incorporation of lessons from REDD+ projects in Ethiopia has been effective in informing the design and implementation of new REDD+ interventions in the country.			8 (5.0)	93 (58.5)	58 (36.5)	4.31	0.564

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A= Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = 4.29

These findings are consistent with the studies by Sunderlin et al. (2014) and Duchelle et al. (2018), which highlighted the importance of learning from past experiences, addressing community-level challenges, and aligning REDD+ initiatives with national policy and institutional frameworks for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of REDD+ projects.

The importance of learning from successful REDD+ projects and incorporating those insights into future interventions is echoed by Sills et al. (2014), who emphasize the need for "lesson-learning" to guide the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives. They argue that sharing best practices and success stories from REDD+ pilot projects can help replicate effective approaches and avoid repeating past mistakes.

Regarding the critical factors for REDD+ success, such as strong community engagement, effective stakeholder coordination, and equitable benefit-sharing, Agrawal and Angelsen (2009) highlight the significance of these elements in their review of REDD+ implementation across different countries. They stress that meaningful participation of local communities and fair distribution of REDD+ benefits are essential for securing long-term support and commitment.

The importance of carefully considering the challenges and failures of past REDD+ projects, as noted in the findings, is also supported by Brockhaus et al. (2017). Their study on REDD+ governance in Ethiopia found that issues such as weak stakeholder coordination, inadequate monitoring systems, and lack of community buy-in were key factors contributing to the underperformance of some REDD+ projects in the country.

Additionally, the finding that the lessons learned from REDD+ projects have influenced the development of national REDD+ policies and frameworks is consistent with the work of Di Gregorio et al. (2019). They argue that the integration of local-level experiences and insights into national REDD+ strategies is crucial for aligning REDD+ objectives with broader development goals and ensuring the coherence of implementation across different scales.

By drawing on these additional scholarly sources, the interpretation of the key lessons learned from REDD+ projects in Ethiopia are further strengthened and aligned with the broader academic discourse on REDD+ implementation and governance.

Overall, the results suggest that the REDD+ initiatives in Ethiopia have recognized the value of learning from both successes and failures and have sought to incorporate these lessons into the design and implementation of new REDD+ interventions. The alignment between the present findings and the broader research on the topic further strengthens the confidence in the critical role of these lessons for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia.

E) Challenges faced by Stakeholders during REDD+ Implementation

The data presented in the table highlights the various challenges faced by stakeholders during the implementation of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. Comparing the mean scores of the individual items with the weighted average of 3.45, we can observe that the mean scores for most of the items are above the weighted average, indicating that the respondents perceive these challenges as highly significant. The key challenges that stand out based on the mean scores are:

REDD+ implementation approaches have been unable to adapt to evolving local contexts, priorities, and needs of the stakeholders (mean = 3.03). This suggests that the REDD+ interventions have not been flexible enough to accommodate the changing dynamics and requirements of the local stakeholders, hindering the effectiveness of the implementation.

The Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems have been inadequate and unreliable in supporting the implementation and monitoring of REDD+ activities (mean = 3.82). This finding underscores the importance of robust and reliable monitoring systems for the successful implementation and evaluation of REDD+ initiatives.

Issues related to land tenure and resource rights have posed significant challenges for the successful implementation of REDD+ (mean = 4.05). This aligns with the broader literature on the critical role of secure land tenure and resource rights in REDD+ projects (Sunderlin et al., 2014; Duchelle et al., 2019).

There has been poor coordination and collaboration among the different stakeholders (e.g., government, communities, private sector) involved in REDD+ implementation (mean = 3.42). Effective multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration are widely recognized as essential for the successful implementation of REDD+ projects (Brockhaus et al., 2017; Di Gregorio et al., 2019). The governance structures and decision-making processes related to REDD+ have lacked transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders (mean = 3.15). This finding aligns with the literature on the importance of inclusive and transparent governance structures for REDD+ initiatives (Larson et al., 2018; Gebara et al., 2014). These findings are supported by other various scholarly sources:

No	Items	SD	D	NU	A	SA	\bar{x}	σ
	Relevance:	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)		
	Stakeholders have faced a lack of clarity in the objectives and guidelines for REDD+ implementation.	8 (5.0)	43 (27.0)	35 (22.0)	73 (15.9)		3.09	0.964
	Stakeholders have lacked sufficient capacity and resources (financial, technical, institutional) for effective REDD+ implementation.	8 (5.0)	16 (10.1)	29 (18.2)	106 (66.7)		3.47	0.870
	There has been poor coordination and collaboration among the different stakeholders (e.g., government, communities, private sector) involved in REDD+ implementation.	24 (15.1)	10 (6.3)		125 (78.6)		3.42	1.133
	The governance structures and decision-making processes related to REDD+ have lacked transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders.	24 (15.1)	10 (6.3)	43 (27.0)	82 (27.0)		3.15	1.080
	The mechanisms for equitable distribution of benefits and incentives from REDD+ to different stakeholders, especially local communities, have been ineffective.		8 (5.0)	49 (30.8)	102 (64.2)		3.59	0.587
	Issues related to land tenure and resource rights have posed significant challenges for the successful implementation of REDD+.				141 (88.7)	17 (11.3)	4.05	0.226
	The Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems have been inadequate and unreliable in supporting the implementation and monitoring of REDD+ activities.		10 (6.3)	16 (10.1)	125 (78.6)	8 (5.0)	3.82	0.611
	REDD+ implementation approaches have been unable to adapt to evolving local contexts, priorities, and needs of the stakeholders.	16 (10.1)	53 (33.3)		90 (56.6)		3.03	1.144

Note: N=159; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Nu = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; \bar{x} = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; weighted average = 3.45

Sunderlin et al. (2014) and Duchelle et al. (2019) emphasize the critical importance of secure land tenure and resource rights for the successful implementation of REDD+ projects. Brockhaus et al. (2017) and Di Gregorio et al. (2019) highlight the significance of effective multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration for REDD+ governance and implementation. Larson et al. (2018) and Gebara et al. (2014) stress the need for transparent and inclusive governance structures to ensure the legitimacy and effectiveness of REDD+ initiatives. Jagger et al. (2014) and Pham et al. (2014) discuss the challenges of adapting REDD+ interventions to evolving local contexts and the importance of flexible and context-specific approaches. Duchelle et al. (2018) and Sunderlin et al. (2014) emphasize the crucial role of reliable monitoring and reporting systems for the successful implementation and

evaluation of REDD+ projects. By drawing on these scholarly sources, the interpretation of the key challenges faced by stakeholders during REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia is further strengthened and aligned with the broader academic discourse on REDD+ governance and implementation challenges.

5.4 Triangulation of Findings with Qualitative Leadership Interview

The researcher attempted to triangulate findings from the descriptive statistics on the research objectives, the researcher approached twelve key leaders at federal and regional levels.

Program Goals and Success:

The clarity of the program's goals and the definition of success are well-aligned with the "Relevance" factor for REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia. The focus on measurable outcomes, such as reduced emissions and improved livelihoods, corresponds to the "Effectiveness" factor, which emphasizes the need for tangible impacts. Additionally, the inclusion of community participation and equitable benefit distribution relates to the "Equity" factor, underscoring the importance of inclusive and fair REDD+ implementation. By ensuring the program's objectives and success criteria are well-defined, while also prioritizing measurable results and equitable outcomes, the REDD+ investment program is positioned to achieve its intended goals.

Factors Influencing Success:

The factors influencing the success of the REDD+ program, including strong political commitment, effective stakeholder coordination, and capacity-building efforts, are closely aligned with the "Relevance" and "Effectiveness" factors. These elements help ensure the program's objectives and implementation strategies are well-suited to the local context and can deliver tangible impacts. Additionally, the consideration of leadership styles and team dynamics that foster collaboration and inclusivity relates to the "Equity" factor, as it can shape the program's ability to engage diverse stakeholders and distribute benefits fairly. Addressing the challenges and obstacles, such as unclear land tenure and insufficient resources, also aligns with the "Capacity" factor, which highlights the importance of having the necessary financial, technical, and institutional resources for successful REDD+ implementation.

Strategies and Solutions:

The strategies and solutions proposed, such as participatory land-use planning, community-based forest management, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, are closely linked to the "Effectiveness" factor,

as they aim to achieve tangible impacts in terms of reduced deforestation and improved livelihoods. These approaches also align with the "Equity" factor, as they emphasize the inclusion of diverse stakeholders and the equitable distribution of benefits. Additionally, the recommendations to strengthen land tenure, enhance monitoring and reporting systems, and foster multi-stakeholder collaboration are directly relevant to the "Capacity" factor, which underscores the importance of having the necessary institutional, financial, and technical resources for successful REDD+ implementation.

Personal Experiences and Perspectives:

The personal experiences and perspectives shared by the respondents provide insights into the "Relevance" factor, as they highlight the challenges and adaptations necessary to align REDD+ interventions with local contexts and stakeholder needs. The motivations and long-term hopes for the program also relate to the "Equity" factor, as they emphasize the importance of equitable outcomes and community-centered approaches. Additionally, the strategies and solutions that have been successful in achieving the program's goals, as revealed through the personal experiences, are relevant to the "Effectiveness" factor, which focuses on tangible impacts. By incorporating these personal insights, the REDD+ program can better ensure its relevance, equity, and effectiveness in the local context.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The thesis by Samrawit Tadesse explores the factors contributing to the success of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) investment program implementation in Ethiopia, from the perspectives of project leaders and team members. The study is grounded in relevant project management theories, including Systems Theory, Contingency Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Resource-Based View Theory.

The background section provides an overview of the REDD+ program in Ethiopia and its importance in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable forest management. It also discusses the relevance of project management theories in evaluating the success of REDD+ implementation.

The literature review examined the theoretical framework guiding REDD+ investment, the historical background of REDD+ implementation, the Ethiopian context, and the success factors, challenges, and best practices identified in existing studies. This laid the foundation for the research methodology, which involved a description of the REDD+ implementation area, the research design and approach, data sources and analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

The results and discussions section presented the key findings from the study, which explore the factors contributing to the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia, as perceived by project leaders and team members. These factors include stakeholder engagement, institutional capacity, financial resources, project management practices, and environmental and social considerations.

5.2 Conclusions:

The study concludes that the success of REDD+ investment program implementation in Ethiopia is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, which can be effectively analyzed using project management theories. The key factors identified include effective stakeholder engagement and management, institutional capacity building, adequate and sustainable financial resources, robust project management practices, and consideration of environmental and social impacts.

5.3 Recommendations

In addressing the potential gaps indicated in the findings, implementing the recommended actions, the REDD+ program can strive to achieve greater coherence and acceptance among the respondents, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the implementation in Ethiopia. The institutions responsible for REDD+ implementation in Ethiopia could consider the following:

- Ensure meaningful and continuous engagement with local communities throughout the REDD+ program design and implementation processes.
- Adopt a more decentralized and participatory approach to governance, empowering local communities to have a stronger voice in decision-making.
- Thoroughly assess and incorporate local land tenure systems, resource rights, and customary practices into the institutional frameworks.
- Invest in building the capacity of local stakeholders to effectively participate in and influence the REDD+ program.
- Conduct in-depth contextual analyses to better understand the local socio-economic, cultural, and environmental realities and adapt the institutional arrangements accordingly.
- By addressing these factors, the REDD+ institutional arrangements and governance structures can be better aligned with the needs and context of local communities, improving the chances of successful and sustainable REDD+ implementation.
- Conduct a comprehensive capacity assessment to identify specific gaps and needs.
- Secure adequate and sustainable funding for capacity building, staffing, and resource allocation.
- Strengthen the technical and managerial skills of the implementing staff through targeted training and knowledge exchange.
- Improve organizational structures, decision-making processes, and coordination mechanisms to enhance institutional effectiveness.
- Foster an enabling environment by advocating for supportive policies, regulations, and stakeholder engagement.
- Explore partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to leverage complementary expertise and resources.

- Addressing the perceived capacity and resource limitations of the REDD+ implementing institutions could be crucial for ensuring the effective delivery and success of REDD+ projects.
- Improve communication and awareness-raising: Provide comprehensive information, training, and capacity-building activities to help respondents better understand the relevance and importance of the coherence factors.
- Conduct in-depth assessments and evaluations: Undertake detailed assessments and evaluations of the specific coherence factors, their implementation, and their impacts on the ground. This can help to demonstrate the relevance and effectiveness of these factors more clearly.
- Encourage stakeholder engagement and feedback: Actively engage with respondents and other stakeholders to gather their experiences, perspectives, and suggestions on the coherence factors. This can help to identify areas for improvement and address any uncertainties or concerns.
- Adopt a more iterative and adaptive approach: Recognize the complexity of the REDD+ program and be willing to adjust the coherence factors based on feedback and evolving contexts. This flexibility can help to ensure that the factors remain relevant and aligned with the needs of local communities.
- Demonstrate tangible outcomes and impacts: Ensure that the REDD+ program is delivering tangible and visible benefits to local communities. This can help to validate the coherence factors and encourage more positive perceptions and engagement from respondents.
- Streamline the institutional arrangements and clarify roles and responsibilities to improve coordination and accountability.
- Strengthen project management capacities through training, the development of standard operating procedures, and the adoption of appropriate tools and technologies.
- Enhance stakeholder engagement mechanisms, including regular consultations, feedback loops, and collaborative decision-making processes.
- Review and update the policy and regulatory frameworks to foster more efficient and responsive REDD+ implementation.
- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track resource utilization, identify bottlenecks, and inform continuous improvement.

- Promote transparency and accountability through regular reporting, audits, and information sharing with stakeholders.
- Addressing the inefficiencies and governance challenges in REDD+ implementation could help unlock the full potential of the program and contribute to its overall success in Ethiopia.

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Annex: Survey Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to conduct a research on Evaluation of Factors Contributing to the Success of REDD+ Investment Program Implementation in Ethiopia: Project Leaders and Team Members Perspective. I would like to confirm that the information provided in this questionnaire is kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. In addition, the data of the study will be taken in aggregate, so the identity of individuals will not be disclosed.

This questionnaire has three sections. Section I is about the respondents' general information; Section II comprises Close ended questions about respondents' perception towards the factors in relation to REDD+ success and Section III presents interview questions for selected key project leaders.

Appendix I: General Information

Please put “√” or “X” mark on the option that describes you.

- 1) Sex: Male Female
- 2) Age in Years: _____
- 3) Education: Diploma Degree Masters PhD Other
- 4) Marital status: Single Married Divorced Widowed
- 6) Position in the Project: _____
- 7) Project Leadership Experience in years: _____

Appendix Two: Research Questions

A) Policy Frameworks and Institutional Arrangements for REDD+ in Ethiopia

The following questionnaire directly addresses the key policy frameworks and institutional arrangements influencing the implementation of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia and their performance in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. **Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

Items/Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
A. Relevance:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing policy and regulatory environment in Ethiopia are highly relevant to the objectives and priorities of REDD+ initiatives. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institutional arrangements and governance structures supporting REDD+ implementation is well-aligned with the needs and context of local communities. 					
B. Coherence:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The various policies, strategies, and programs related to REDD+ are well-coordinated and coherent at the national and subnational levels 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a high degree of policy and institutional integration between REDD+ and other relevant sectors, such as forestry, agriculture, and land use 					
C. Effectiveness:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy and institutional frameworks have enabled effective implementation and achievement of REDD+ objectives in Ethiopia. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity and resources of the institutions responsible for REDD+ implementation is adequate to ensure effective project delivery 					
D. Efficiency:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy and institutional arrangements have facilitated efficient utilization of resources and minimized administrative costs for REDD+ projects 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision-making processes and governance structures related to REDD+ are streamlined and responsive to the needs of stakeholders. 					
E. Impact and Sustainability:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy and institutional frameworks have enabled REDD+ initiatives to generate significant positive impacts on forest conservation, livelihoods, and climate change mitigation. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy and institutional arrangements supporting REDD+ are robust and sustainable, ensuring the long-term viability of these initiatives in Ethiopia. 					

B) Community participation and stakeholder engagement

The following questionnaire directly addresses how community participation and stakeholder engagement affect the success of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia. **Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

Items/Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of community participation in the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives has been a critical factor in determining their success in Ethiopia. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REDD+ projects that have effectively engaged a diverse range of local stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and the private sector, have been more successful. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The degree of transparency and inclusiveness in the decision-making processes of REDD+ initiatives have influenced their acceptance and support among local communities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms have been a key factor in securing long-term community commitment and participation in REDD+ initiatives. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity of local communities to actively participate in REDD+ initiatives has shaped the success and sustainability of these projects. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of community ownership and empowerment in REDD+ initiatives have been directly linked to their long-term effectiveness in Ethiopia. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REDD+ initiatives that have prioritized the integration of local and traditional knowledge have been more successful in engaging communities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The degree of alignment between REDD+ objectives and the socio-cultural context of local communities has influenced the success of these initiatives. 					

C) The socio-economic factors influencing the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions

The following questionnaire directly addresses the research question "What are the socio-economic factors that influence the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions in Ethiopia?". **Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

Items/Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of poverty and economic dependency on forest resources in local communities has been a key factor in the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing land tenure and resource rights arrangements in the project areas have influenced the success of REDD+ initiatives. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The livelihood strategies and income sources of local communities have shaped the implementation and outcomes of REDD+ interventions. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of education and awareness among local stakeholders about REDD+ concepts and objectives has affected the effectiveness of these interventions. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing social dynamics and power structures within local communities have played a role in the success or failure of REDD+ initiatives. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability and access to alternative livelihood options for local communities have influenced the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cultural and traditional practices of local communities have shaped the implementation and outcomes of REDD+ projects. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of gender equity and inclusion in the design and implementation of REDD+ initiatives has affected their effectiveness. 					

D) Lessons from both successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects cases

The following questionnaire directly addresses the research question "What lessons can be learned from successful and unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, and how can these lessons inform future interventions and policy development?". **Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

Items/Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons from successful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia can provide valuable insights for informing future REDD+ interventions. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key factors that contributed to the success of REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, such as strong community engagement, effective stakeholder coordination, and equitable benefit-sharing, should be prioritized in future REDD+ initiatives. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons from unsuccessful REDD+ projects in Ethiopia have provided useful insights that can inform the design and implementation of new REDD+ interventions in the country. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges and failures of past REDD+ projects in Ethiopia, such as weak community participation, poor stakeholder coordination, and inadequate monitoring systems, should be carefully considered to avoid repeating these mistakes. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lessons learned from REDD+ projects in Ethiopia have significantly influenced the development of national REDD+ policies and frameworks in the country. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The incorporation of lessons from REDD+ projects in Ethiopia has been effective in informing the design and implementation of new REDD+ interventions in the country. 					

E) Challenges faced by stakeholders during REDD+ implementation.

The following questionnaire directly addresses the research question "What are the challenges faced by stakeholders during REDD+ implementation?" **Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

Items/Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders have faced a lack of clarity in the objectives and guidelines for REDD+ implementation. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders have lacked sufficient capacity and resources (financial, technical, institutional) for effective REDD+ implementation. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been poor coordination and collaboration among the different stakeholders (e.g., government, communities, private sector) involved in REDD+ implementation. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance structures and decision-making processes related to REDD+ have lacked transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness of all relevant stakeholders. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mechanisms for equitable distribution of benefits and incentives from REDD+ to different stakeholders, especially local communities, have been ineffective. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to land tenure and resource rights have posed significant challenges for the successful implementation of REDD+. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems have been inadequate and unreliable in supporting the implementation and monitoring of REDD+ activities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REDD+ implementation approaches have been unable to adapt to evolving local contexts, priorities, and needs of the stakeholders. 					

Appendix Three: Interview Questions

1. Program Goals and Success:

- In your perspective, what are the main goals of the REDD+ investment program in Ethiopia?
- How do you define success for this program?
- From your experience, what are some key indicators that the program is achieving its goals?

2. Factors Influencing Success:

- Can you describe some factors that contribute to the successful implementation of the REDD+ program?
- Conversely, what are some challenges or obstacles that hinder program success?
- How do leadership styles and team dynamics within your project influence its success?

3. Strategies and Solutions:

- Can you share examples of successful strategies employed in your project to achieve program goals?
- What recommendations do you have for overcoming challenges and improving program effectiveness?
- In your opinion, how can collaboration between different stakeholders (government, communities, NGOs) be strengthened to improve program outcomes?

4. Personal Experiences and Perspectives:

- Can you describe a situation where you faced a challenge in implementing the REDD+ program? How did you overcome it?
- What motivates you and your team to contribute to the success of this program?
- What are your hopes for the long-term impact of the REDD+ program in Ethiopia?