

SLMP WOREDA INFORMATION CENTERS' GUIDELINES

Draft version

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BACKGROUND

SLMP has been striving to capacitate woreda level implementers through various mechanisms. The project has supported establishment of 73 information centers in various woredas with the aim of boosting human and institution capacity of the SLMP implementers, stakeholders and partners at local level. Some regions have used spaces availed by the woreda and equipped the WICs through project financing. Woreda information centers are believed to primarily serve woreda and below woreda level project implementers and promote the scaling-up of SLM/NRM practices as they will avail SLM/NRM related knowledge products, communication materials and ICT based knowledge management and documentation facilities.

Status of woreda information centers, their internal facilities and level of functionality varies from region to region. Based on this view, during the October 2017 SLMP joint implementation support mission, members discussed how the centers best serve the knowledge management and human capacity development efforts of SLMP at woreda level. The mission, then, agreed on the need to conduct a quick assessment of the status of woreda information centers, their internal facilities and requirements needed to further strengthen them and effectively provide services to project implementers and stakeholders.

This assessment has considered the overall status of the centers in various SLMP regions and summarized their status along with recommendations to further strengthen and enhance their functionality. However, as the data on WICs in Oromia region has not been verified by the regional unit, the WICs from Oromia are not included in this assessment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

- to assess status of SLMP woreda information centers in various woredas, their internal facilities and level of functionality against the woreda information centers establishment guideline
- to provide evidence based recommendations to improve woreda information centers for better functionality

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

This assessment has been conducted using the survey data gathered by the regional SLMP units. The result shows the functionality of woreda information centers only in three of the six regions, Amhara, Tigray and SNNPR. The data regarding woreda information centers in the SLMP Oromia region could not be verified

and therefore are not included in this report. The regions of Gambella and Benishangul Gumuz confirmed that no woreda information center have been established so far.

In addition to the data delivered by the regions, the team has also reviewed the status of the centers on the basis of the recently endorsed SLMP woreda information centers' establishment guideline and the stocktaking of existing facilities in the SLMP woreda information centers.

STATUS OF WOREDAS INFORMATION CENTERS

Based on the data provided by SLMP regional M&E experts who gathered data on their respective woreda information centers and the criteria set on the SLMP woreda information center establishment guideline the table below is generated.

Table 1: Status of SLMP woreda information centers

S.N	Region	Established info centers	Functional	Non-functional	Remark
1	Amhara (3)	Sayint	✓		
2		Bibugn		✓	Lacks basic facilities
3		Gazgibla		✓	Lacks basic facilities
4	SNNPR (31)	Arbegona	✓		
5		Adiyo		✓	Lacks basic facilities
6		Boloso Bombe		✓	No chairs for users
7		Geze Gofa		✓	Lacks basic facilities
8		Geta	✓		Needs improvement – No desktop computer
9		Gumer		✓	Lacks the basic facilities
10		Hawassa Zuria	✓		Needs improvement- No Shelf
11		Hulbarag	✓		Needs improvement- needs more chairs and desktop computers
12		K. Didaye	✓		
13		Loma	✓		This is the biggest in area - 6x11 m ²
14		Masha		✓	Lacks basic facilities
15		Menit Goldiya	✓		Needs improvement- No Shelf
16		Mirab Azernet	✓		
17		Semen Ari		✓	Lacks basic facilities

18		Semen Bench		✓	Lacks basic facilities
19		Soro		✓	Lacks basic facilities
20		Yem		✓	Lacks basic facilities
21		Tembaro		✓	Lacks basic facilities
22		Oyda		✓	Lacks basic facilities
23		Gibe		✓	Lacks basic facilities
24		Gesha		✓	Lacks basic facilities
25		Angacha		✓	Lacks basic facilities
26		Alichio		✓	Lacks basic facilities
27		Bulle		✓	Lacks basic facilities
28		Basketo		✓	Lacks basic facilities
29		Chenna		✓	Lacks basic facilities
30		Gimbo		✓	Lacks basic facilities
31		Konta		✓	Lacks basic facilities
32		Marka		✓	Lacks basic facilities
33		Mihur aklil		✓	Lacks basic facilities
34		Wonsho		✓	Lacks basic facilities
35	Tigaray (1)	Enderta		✓	The region has planned to test in Enderta woreda and scale up in other woredas. Basic equipments are ready to be installed.

DISCUSSION OF THE STATUS

Although SLMP reported establishment of 73 woreda information centers, this assessment is presented based on data from 35 woreda information centers. The assessment has shown that the 35 woreda information centers are established with different standard due to absence of standard establishment guideline. SLMP has recently produced and endorsed woreda information centers establishment guideline which clearly defines the minimum building requirements and internal facilities of SLMP woreda information centers.

The functionality assessment considered the existing status of the woreda information centers based on the data from Amhara, SNNPR and Tigray regional units and evaluated the information centers against the minimum standards set-out in the guideline.

According to the assessment the woreda information centers in Sayint (Amhara), Arbegona, K. Didaye, Loma and Mirab Azernet (SNNPR) are the only woreda information centers that meet the standards and the minimum requirements of the SLMP woreda information centers. This conclusion, however, has not considered the number of users who visited the centers in a given period of time.

The assessment result has also shown that some woreda information centers are equipped with items categorized as “optional” while lacking the basic ones which are less costly than the optional facilities. The woreda information center in Geta woreda, SNNPR, is one the example of such cases; the center has 3x4m dimension and does not have desktop computers for users but it is equipped with Laptop, LCD projector, color printer and photocopier. The overall status of this information center is agreed to be functional due to the possibility of addressing the gaps or capability of the center to be functional with the existing facilities. Similar situations have been observed in Hawassa Zuriya, Hulbared and Menit Goldiya woredas in SNNP region. Centers with this trait has been considered as Functional and remarks have been given to remind them meet the minimum standard.

The rest, more than 60 SLMP woreda information centers, have not met the minimum standard and could not be considered functional as they are not well equipped and ready to provide the intended services for the target groups.

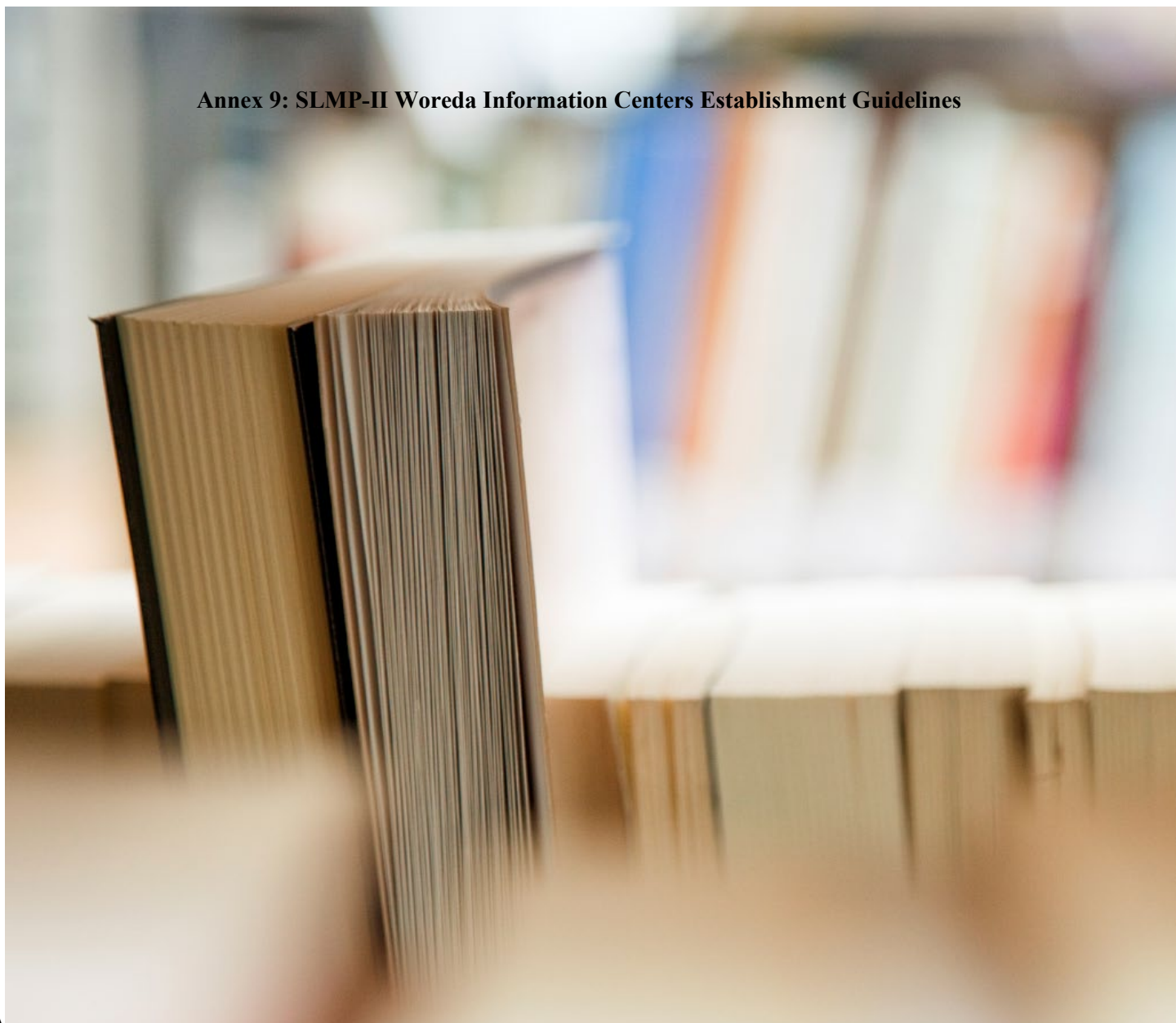
One of the major deviation from the standard is observed on the area of woreda information centers from one woreda to the other.

Some of the figures are shown in the table below:

No.	Woreda	Area (LxW)
1	Arbegona	5x8
2	Boloso Bombe	4x4
3	Geta	3x4
4	Gumer	6x9
5	Loma	6x11
6	Masha	4x12

7	Mirab Azernet	4x6
8	Semen Bench	4x6
9	Alicho	5x5
10	Sayint	5x14
11	Gazgibla	4.5x 14.5
12	Enderta	4x5

As indicated in the table the minimum woreda information center space is 12m² (3mx4m) and biggest is 66m² (6mx11m). The guideline, however, recommends 20m² (4mx5m) as the minimum area for woreda information centers; based on this, it has been noted that only few woreda information centers (Gimbo, Geta, Boloso Bombe, Geze Gofa, Menit Goldiya, Tembaro and Gibe) are below the minimum area standard.



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Acronyms

FTC	Farmers' Training Center
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IPMS	Improving the Productivity and Market Success project
NRM	Natural Resource Management
SLMP	Sustainable Land Management Program
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training

Introduction

The government of Ethiopia and development partners have put significant efforts to avail data, information and educational products to local level community who are playing key role in agricultural development and natural resource conservation. Establishment of farmers' training centers (FTCs) at kebele level, introduction of WoredaNet connecting more than 600 Woredas, regional and federal government offices across the country and construction of Woreda knowledge centers introduced by International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)/ Improving the Productivity and Market Success project (IPMS) have been some of the efforts that have given significant advantages in sharing knowledge and information for farmers, kebele and woreda level experts.

Purpose

SLM Woreda Information Centers are information hubs located in woreda towns under the woreda agriculture and natural resources office to primarily serve the woreda and below woreda level SLMP experts and supporting staffs. The woreda SLM focal person shall be responsible to manage the overall activities of the center. The centers help them acquire information and technical assistance that enhance their skill and knowledge thereby raising awareness on new SLM practices. The centers would serve as repositories for data, information, communication and knowledge products related to SLM/NRM and agricultural development.

Target Users

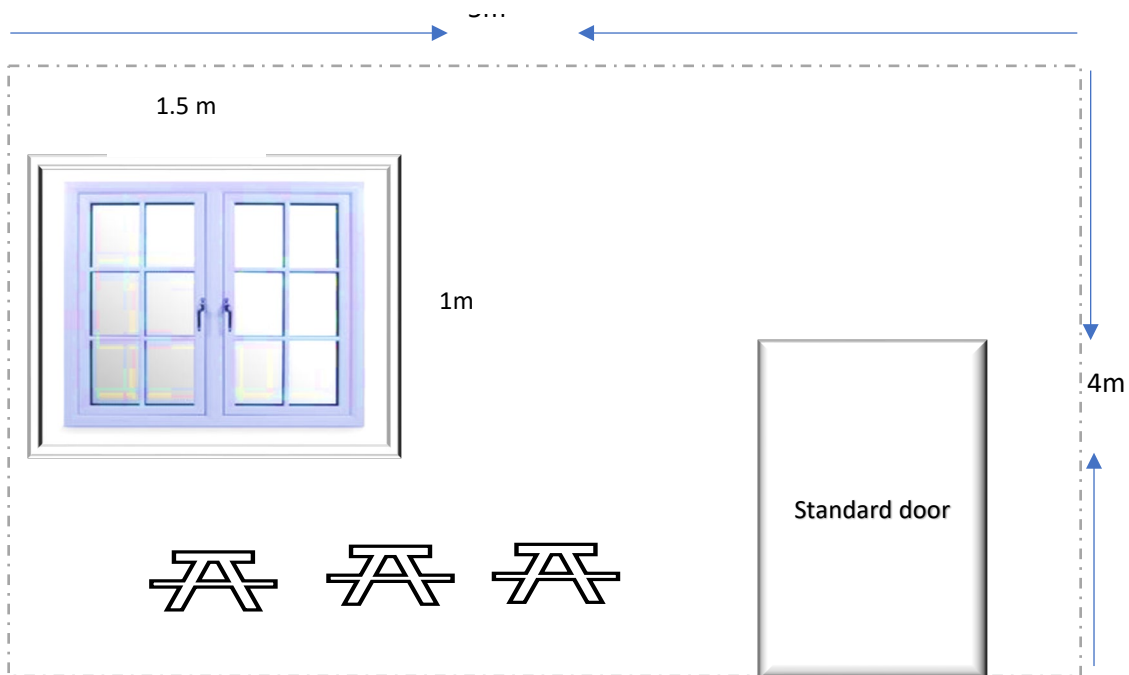
Primary users of the SLM woreda information centers are the woreda and kebele level NRM experts/offices that are working closely with the SLMP. The information centers, however, serve other users as a secondary target; these include regional partners/partners' offices, technical and vocational education training (TVET) colleges in the woreda, communities in the woreda or nearby kebele and other sector offices in the woreda or kebele that have linkage with the NRM sector and are affiliated to provide support for the project.



Building Standards

- The SLM woreda information center should be in the compound of woreda agriculture and natural resources office.
- The actual building of SLM woreda information centers need to meet the minimum required size of 4meters width and 5meters length.
- The woreda information centers should be constructed using cement mortar cube and plastering of walls should be with cement.
- The floor need to be, at least, cemented and the roof should be covered with steel sheets.
- The room need to be well ventilated and must have a standard sized door and window as showed in the illustration below.
- The electric installation should consider the number of electronic devices to be installed in the center (Possible office appliances and electronic devices to be used in the info centers are listed in the next section)

Figure 1: Potential target users and actors of the SLM Woreda information centers



Internal Facilities

SLM Woreda information centers are expected to be equipped with basic office furniture, computers, shelf cabinets, scanners, photocopiers, internet access, as relevant, and may provide space for reading, information browsing and studying. Details of the internal facilities are described below;

S.N	ITEM	SPECIFICATION	NO. REQUIRED
1	Office furniture		
	Standard office chair (no swivel) and standard table for info center manager	Determined by the market and woreda's financial capacity	1
	Standard bench chairs (standard table compatible with benches)	Determined by the market and woreda's financial capacity	2 Bench with table
2	Shelf/cabinets	Standard book shelves with multiple rows/rooms for CD/DVD and Books	1 shelve (1.5 X 2 m)
3	Desktop computers	With available brand (Dell, HP) Processor - dual core @ 2.4 GHz (i3 or i5 Intel processor or equivalent AMD) RAM - 4 GB Hard Drive - 500 GB 5400 RPM hard drive Monitor - 19" LCD - desktop only Operating System - Windows 7 DVD-RW	2 computers (for admin and user)

		<p>Ebox computers</p> <p>(model eBox-4852 / 4853 / 4862 / 4863) or other ebox models equivalent to the above (Dell or HP specs)</p> <p>Viable option: EBOX-3362-L3U4C1 - DUAL CORE, 2GB RAM. SD, SATA, 4XUSB, VGA, LINE-IN/OUT, 1XFULL RS232, 3XLAN</p>	
4	Internet access	<p>1MB internet connection (wired)</p> <p>Internet connection switch (for more than four computers)</p> <p>Modem (if four or less computers)</p>	<p>1 piece</p> <p>It has a fixed service cost of around 2000.00 Birr/Month</p>
5	Backup Device - External hard drive and/or USB Flash Drive or CD, DVD	<p>CD/ DVD R/RW, External Hard drive 1TB, USB 16 GB</p>	<p>1 External hard drive</p> <p>Or 1 USB Flash Drive and CD/DVD will be Determined by the worda</p>
6	Digital Camera	<p>Sony DSC-W830 Cyber-shot 20.1MP 2.7-Inch LCD Digital Camera + SDHC Memory (32GB) + Battery Kit</p> <p>(the brand can be any kind)</p>	<p>1 piece</p>
7	Server	<p>HPE ProLiant ML10 Gen9 Server (Optional)</p> <p>(the brand can be any kind)</p>	<p>1 piece</p> <p>Optional. It might be required in case of storing, accessing and synchronizing bulky data.</p>
8	Photocopier/Scanner	<p>Possible specs</p> <p>HP LJ 3052 AIO: Black-and-white printing, black-and-white copying, black-and-white and color scanning</p> <p>Or other common brands such as Canon image RUNNER 2204 (Optional)</p>	<p>1</p>

9	LCD Projector	Epson power Lite Home Cinema 1040 1080p LCD Projector (Optional)	1
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Resources in SLM Woreda Information Centers

Variety of resources including data, information, audio-visuals, graphics, maps, educational videos and other knowledge/communication products that showcase the SLM best practices, indigenous knowledge and experience of farmers, scientific knowledge and practices should be made available in the centers. Also, the Centers should collect and document biophysical, socio-economic, and spatial information (i.e. maps) as part of a comprehensive database to track changes and impacts of the project.

Administrative Responsibility

SLMP Woreda Information Centers are meant to mainly serve woreda level partners, stakeholders and implementers. During the project lifetime, establishment and running costs of woreda information centers shall be covered by the SLM project. The resources in the centers shall be updated, managed and administered by the woreda focal person, who is the responsible professional at every SLMP woreda.

The woreda office of agriculture and natural resources shall allot proper time and support for the woreda focal person to enable him/her to properly manage the woreda information center and assure its functionality.

Functionality Requirements

In addition to the physical requirements and minimal internal facilities, a woreda information center should address the following to be considered functional.

1. SLM documents, guidelines, knowledge products communication products etc.... should be made available for the target audiences.
2. Users should get the privilege to access resources in digital format or project database through computer connected to the national database.
3. The number and frequency of visitors should be documented and made available for internal use.
4. WICs should clearly communicate through various media and post at public places to inform target audiences its hours of operation, available resources and services.
5. WICs should regularly assess the level of satisfaction of users with the services offered by the centers. This should be done at least once a year.

Recommendations

Establish linkage with WoredaNet: WoredNet is a terrestrial and satellite-based network designed to provide various ICT services and access to connectivity among Federal, Regional and Woreda level government entities, it is therefore recommended to get access to this resource for data transfer, video conferencing, messaging and other services.

Learn from similar efforts: It is recommended to link and share experiences of Woreda knowledge centers introduced by the IPMS project and its partners which is used to collect, classify and avail documents in different woredas. These centers have been working on building capacity of staff at woreda level to make use of technology for knowledge management and encourage staff to engage in knowledge gathering, sharing and reaching farmers and community as end users.

Each center has a coordinator, internet access with 4 to 11 computers, shelved documents (books, journals, manuals, guidelines, success stories...), printer, server with rules and regulation on the use of center. Exploring similar experience would help woredas to effectively establish SLM woreda information centers and enhance their functionality.

