

THE POTENTIAL OF BONGA FOREST FOR CERTIFICATION

A Case Study

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1. Introduction

Bonga forest is located in Kaffa zone of the Southern Nations Nationalities & People's Region (SNNPR), which is found within the southwestern plateau of Ethiopia. The original forest area covers about 161,424 ha; now including forest land, settlement areas, grazing land and agricultural land, and lies within 07°00'- 7°25'N Latitude and 35°55'-36°37'E Longitude, stretching across the boundaries of five contiguous woredas; namely; Gimbo, Menjiwo, Tello, Decha and Chena. Information on the actual size of the present forest area was not available but it is estimated that it is by far below the original size. The altitude of the area ranges from 1000 to 3350 m.a.s.l; consisting of a highly dissected plateau, with flat to moderately undulating terrain on areas above 1500 m.a.s.l (Matheos Ersado, 2001).

The forest experiences one long rainy season, lasting from March /April to October. The mean annual rainfall ranges from 1710 mm at Bonga station to 1892mm at Wushwush station. Over 85% of the total annual rainfall, with mean monthly values in the range of 125-250mm occurs in the 8 months long rainy season. The mean temperature is 19.4°C at Bonga while it is 18.1 °C at Wushwush station, which is located 200m higher than Bonga (Matheos Ersado, 2001).

There are three major river bodies that drain the catchments of Bonga forest; they are Gojeb, Dinchia and Woshi rivers. The Gojeb River along with its numerous tributaries drains the northeastern part of the areas on the eastern block accounting for about 22% of the total catchments. The Dinchia River together with its tributaries drains the central parts of the forest. The Woshi River drains areas situated along the western most parts of the forest accounting for about 28.8% of the total forest area (Matheos Ersado, 2001).

According to the recent inventory carried out by the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research through the GTZ-supported Forest Genetic Resources Conservation Project, Bonga forest is characterized by three distinct vegetation types (Matheos Ersado, 2001). These vegetation types are described below. About 106 woody plant species belonging to 74 genera and 38 families were recorded during the inventory of Bonga forest.

Upland Rain Forest Vegetation. This vegetation occurs at altitudes between 1500_2200m.a.s.l and characterized by big tree species such as *Olea welwitschii*, *Scheffleria abyssinica*, *Euphorbia obovalifolia*, *Croton macrostachyus*, *Albizia schimperiana*, *Prunus africana*, *Syzygium guineense*, *Polyscias fulva*. It also contains common smaller trees and shrubs such as *Milletia ferrugina*, *Teclia nobillis*, *Dracaena steudneri*, *D. afromontana*, *Galiniera saxifraga* and *Coffea arabica*. Ground herbs include false Cardamom (*Afromomum corrorima*). Mankira, a place where coffee was discovered is found in Keffa zone.

Upland Humid Forest Vegetation. This vegetation occurs at altitudes between 2450- 2800 m.a.s.l. and characterized by tree and shrub species such as *Hagenia abyssinica*, *Ilex mitis*, *Myrsine melanophloeos* (*Rapaenia simensis*), *Maesa lanseolata* and *Barsama abyssinica*.

Sinarindunaria /Bamboo Thicket. This vegetation occurs at altitudes between 2400-3050 m.a.s.l and characterized by bamboo thicket either in pure stands or may exist in mixture with trees, including *H. abyssinica*, *M. melanophloeos*, and *Hypericum revolutum*.

The areas in and around Bonga forest are inhabited by at least 48 mammalian species, representing fourteen families and 100 bird species were recorded from the area (Matheos Ersado, 2001, EWNHS, 1996). Fifteen of the bird species are reported to comprise the “Highland Biome Species”, thus accounting for 31% of the Restricted Highland Biome Assemblages in Ethiopia.

There are 84 service cooperatives in the zone out of which 12 are forest coffee cooperatives

2. Background

Forest certification is a process by which stakeholders agree and commit themselves to maintaining defined forest management standards, as verified by independent certifying bodies duly accredited nationally and internationally. Its origin, in the mid 1990s, was grounded on the concern that countries and stakeholders in the forest sector were not implementing the recommendations arising from the continuing global dialogue on sustainable forest management (SFM). Often the process also involves independent verification of the chain of custody and labeling of products from certified forests. Essentially, the process entails verification by an independent certifying body that a forest is managed according to agreed ecological, economic and social criteria (Anonymous, 2002, Kruedener, 2000). Forest certification has rapidly evolved in the last decade as a significant tool to promote SFM. In many countries, certification is being adopted as a market-based 'soft' policy instrument for promoting sustainable forest management, which relies on assessing and monitoring of set standards, criteria and indicators to demonstrate progress.

As a soft policy that aims at promoting sustainable management of forests or simply good forest management practice, forest certification can, among others:

- ◆ Open international market for tropical wood and wood products
- ◆ Help in achieving improved forest management by incorporating environmental, social and economic goals
- ◆ Be used to promote biodiversity and ecological management approaches

- ◆ Contribute to the bridging of gaps between conservation and development
- ◆ Be used as a tool to ensure sustainable supply of raw material
- ◆ Help in facilitating compliance to international treaties and conventions.

It was against this background that a quick case study was conducted to examine the potential of Bonga forest for certification

3. Assessment Method

A Rapid Participatory Assessment (RPA) method was employed to gather information on the types of forest products and the possibilities of certifying Bonga forest. The following specific methods were followed:

- Literature/reports review
- Group discussion was held with the following groups by using checklists and probing:
 - Group 1: Officials, Heads & Experts of Zonal and Woreda based relevant government Offices – 9 participants
 - Group 2: Agama Forest Conservation and Development Cooperative (AFCDC) – 5 participants
 - Group 2: Beka Forest Conservation and Development Cooperative (BFDC) – 9 participants
 - Group 4: Wacha Forest Conservation and Development Cooperative (WFCDC) – 8 participants

Executive committee members & regular members of the three cooperatives took part in the discussion. The three certified cooperatives were considered for this assessment.

- Pair-wise ranking
- Observation and photographing of forest products production/harvesting sites
- Forest products market assessment

It was possible to talk to the officials and experts from the zonal and woreda levels together at the same time because all the relevant persons were attending a workshop on coffee production and processing improvement at Bonga. A power-point presentation on the concept and evolution of forest certification was made to the people from zonal and woreda levels before the discussions.

A field visit was made to Bonga forest from 28th July to 2nd August 2003. The terms of reference, mission program and the list of persons met are attached as annexes 1, 2 & 3 respectively.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Forest Products

There are several forest products that are being obtained from Bonga forest. Those having significant economic contribution to the households are considered for this particular assessment. The result from the four assessment groups is presented below. The potential of other useful NTFPs is also provided at the end of this section.

4.1.1 Summary of the information obtained from different groups

Group 1: Officials, Heads & Experts of Zonal and Woreda based relevant government Offices

This group is composed of Administrators, Heads and Experts of Zonal and Woreda Administration Councils, Rural Development Offices, Agriculture and Natural Resources Desks, Cooperatives Promotion Desks and FARM/SOS Sahel-Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project. According to this group, forest coffee, honey, fuel wood, cardamom, timber, charcoal, wild pepper, bamboo and medicinal plants are the major economically important forest products of Bonga forest in their order of importance. The priority list is produced through a pair-wise exercise (see annex 1).

Group 2: Agama Forest Conservation and Development Cooperative (AFCDC)

This group is composed of the executive committee members & regular members of Agama Forest Conservation and Development Cooperatives (AFCDC). The cooperative is constituted by 147 members and has about 1200 ha. of forest under its administration. According to this group, honey, forest coffee, cardamom and wild pepper are economically important in their order of importance by fetching additional income to the households. The order of importance is reached by a consensus. Fuelwood and wood for house construction and farm implements are very important to the households but they do not sell the wood. This community is not engaged in timber and charcoal production. The cooperatives are autonomous and they get technical and administrative support from Kebele administrations, FARM Africa/SOS Sahel PFMP and the different government structures at woreda and zonal levels.

Group 3: Beka Forest Conservation and Development Cooperative (BF CDC)

This group is composed of the executive committee members & regular members of Beka Forest Conservation and Development Cooperatives (BF CDC). The cooperative is constituted by 56 members and has about 40 ha. of forest under its administration. According to this group, honey, forest coffee, wild pepper and *Ramnus prinoides* are economically important in their order of importance by fetching additional income to the households. The order of importance is reached by a consensus. Fuelwood and wood for house construction, farm implements and beehive making are very important to the households but they do not sell the wood or the processed products. This community is not engaged in timber and charcoal production.

Group 4: Wacha Forest Conservation and Development Cooperative (WF CDC)

The executive committee members & regular members of Wacha Forest Conservation and Development Cooperatives (WF CDC) participated in the discussion. The cooperative is constituted by 32 members and has about 402.7 ha. of forest under its administration. The most important forest product for this group is honey followed by forest coffee. This community is engaged in timber and charcoal production for sell. The Menja tribe dominates this Cooperative.

4.1.2 Production of NTFPs

The Annual production, and quantity for sale of firewood, charcoal and BLT from Gimbo woreda, one of the woredas covered by the forest, is summarized in Table 2. Table 3 summarizes the amount of non-timber forest products (NTFP) that were supplied to the central markets of Addis Abeba from Bonga forest from 1991-1995 E/C. The annual production of coffee from Bonga forest ranges from 132.3 tones in 1991 to 552.8 in 1993. The additional data obtained from Bonga Rural Development C. Department indicates that the long-term average of the annual coffee production ranges from 500 – 900 tones. Similarly the long-term average of the annual honey production is estimated to be 1318 tones while that of cardamom and black pepper ranges from 250 – 800 and 150 – 450 tones respectively. The data do not include the locally sold or consumed products. The long-term average of the annual production of honey by far exceeds the four-year average of both honey and wax from 1991 to 1994, which is about 9.1 tones. This could be some kind of error and needs further checking.

Almost 100% of the total coffee production is wild and semi forest. Cultivated coffee is insignificant and is mainly for household consumption. People residing in and around Bonga forest area produce honey for consumption and income generation. The occupation is a male domain and farmers hang beehives on selected trees that are formerly owned by them or their relatives.

Table 1. Annual production and market centers of forest products from the three Cooperatives

No.	Type of product	Unit	Min. & max. annual pdn/family			Range of selling prices (Birr)			Market centers		
			Agama	Beka	Wacha	Agama	Beka	Wacha	Agama	Beka	Wacha
1	Charcoal	50 kg sack						3-7			Bonga
2	Firewood	man-load						1.50-5			Bonga
3	Wild Coffee	K.g.			20-60	1-3		1-3.5	Wushwush, Bonga & Chena		Bonga
4	Forest Honey	K.g.		51	20-170	3-5.50	3-4.70	2.50-6	Wushwush, Bonga & Chena	Wushwush	Bonga
5	Cardamom	K.g.				1-37			Wushwush, Bonga & Chena		
6	Wild pepper	K.g.				3-7	2.50-4		Wushwush, Bonga & Chena	Wushwush	

Table 2. Annual production, and quantity for sale of firewood, charcoal and BLT from Gimbo woreda (part of Bonga forest) (tones)

Fuel type	Total production	Quantity for sale
Firewood	47,014.9	2261
Charcoal	749.2	723.4
BLT	163.1	

Source: FARM Africa (2002). Fuelwood and charcoal supply and demand study around Bonga forest in Gimbo woreda. Final Report

Table 3. Non-wood forest products (NWFP) supplied to central markets (Addis Abeba) from Bonga forest from 1991-1995 E/C

Product	Unit	Year					Average
		1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
Coffee	Tones	132.3	537.6	552.8	316.5	475.5	402.9
Spices	Tones	1208	653.2	123.1	159.2	2143.5	535.9
Honey and wax	Tones	9.7	7.1	3.8	16	36.6	9.2

Source: Bonga Rural Development C. Department

4.1.3 Other useful NTFPs

Medicinal plants. Bonga forest is known for its possession of important medicinal plants. Getachew Berhan and Shifferaw Dessie (2002) described ten tree species of high present value as medicinal plants against different diseases. It is believed that the forest contains many more untapped medicinal plant species including herbs, shrubs and trees. The forest contains *Prunus africana*, a tropical tree species that is used to cure prostate disorders. This species has a great demand in European pharmaceuticals for its bark. However, this species is endangered in other African countries such as Cameroon and Madagascar because of destructive harvesting of the bark. Therefore, a great care should be taken in order not to face the same problem. The best alternative is to establish big commercial plantations and to harvest the bark in a sustainable way. The other important medicinal tree species discovered during the present fieldwork is *Fagaropsis angolensis* (locally known as “yayo”). It is used to cure both human and animal diseases. People often boil the grinded seeds with coffee to drink.

Bamboo. *Arundinaria alpina* is the most abundant species in Bonga forest particularly at altitudes above 2450 m.a.s.l. It is used for house construction (including doors and windows), as fence for houses, cattle's barn and farmland. It is also used to make water containers, coffee cups, beehives and granary. The local people use *Arundinaria alpina* as source of income by selling the bole and sheath, granary, chairs, coffee cups and other utensils and furniture. Furniture made of

bamboo is beautiful and fetches attractive income. They are becoming common in towns.

4.2 Marketing

The market centers for timber and non-timber forest products from Bonga forest are given in table 1. Table 4 summarizes the current prices of forest products in the surrounding shops/markets. The prices vary from year to year depending on the amount and quality of the products and the demands. For example the current price of a kilogram of cardamom ranges from Birr 6 in Bonga – to Birr 9 in Oufa whereas there were times when the price goes up to Birr 100/k.g. in Bonga.

Table 4. Current prices (Birr) of forest products in the surrounding shops/markets

No.	Type of product	Unit	Bonga shops	Bonga open market	Oufa	Wushwush
1	Charcoal	50 kg sack		14		
2	Firewood	Woman load		6 (splitted)	4 (unsplitted)	5
3	Wild Coffee	K.g.	7	7-8	8	7
4	Forest Honey	K.g.	8		8	8
5	Cardamom	K.g.	6-7		9	8
6	Wild pepper	K.g.	4-5			

4.3 Forest Services

The service roles of most of the forests are mainly ecological, socio-cultural, and as habitats for forest fauna and flora; Bonga forest is not an exception. The major ecological functions of forests are ecosystem stability particularly at a time of climatic change, climate amelioration [shade, soil improvement, etc] soil and water conservation, and control of atmospheric warming by serving as carbon sink. The major socio-cultural values of forests are that they serve as places of recreation, ritual exchange and other ceremonies. Bonga forest is one of the largest tropical forests in Ethiopia that is rich in biodiversity and contains important wild plant species such as wild coffee (*Coffea arabica*), cardamom (*Aframomum corrorima*), black pepper (*Piper capense*) and *Prunus africana*.

This forest is an important water catchment where three major rivers, namely, Gojeb, Dinchia and Woshi have their main sources within the forest. All the

three rivers end up in Omo River, which is used for irrigation, rafting, and fishing down stream.

Bonga forest and its surroundings are sites of tourist attraction. The cultural wealth of the different tribes, particularly the Keficho and the Menja tribes, is of particular interest to tourists. The breathtaking waterfall that is close to Bonga town is another site of interest. In addition to their economic value, the unique important wild species described above can be interesting to nature admirers. The forest is also suitable for Bird watching, as it contains more than 100 bird species.

4.4 The PFM Program in Bonga

The Participatory Forest Management (PFM) Project of Bonga was launched by the end of 1996. The first phase lasted for three years. The second phase of three years was started in April 2001 under BFW, GEO and DFID funding. The purpose of the project is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of land use through participatory forest management. The purpose of the project leads to the goal: "to improve the livelihoods of forest user groups". The operation area of the project is the forest area that is covering Gimbo woreda. So far, the project has been piloting on six forest communities (Anonymous, 2003). Forest User Cooperatives were established in each of the pilot areas out of which three were certified by the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region Cooperatives Promotion Bureau. The other three cooperatives are undergoing preparations to obtain the certificates.

The project assisted the cooperatives to develop Forest Conservation and Development Plans. The plan has provisions for forest utilization, forest development, rules, institutional arrangement, and monitoring and evaluation, among others. The concerned parties did not endorse the plans so far, though some of the activities such as weeding of coffee and spices, nursery establishment and coffee enrichment planting are partially being implemented. From the discussion with zonal and woreda level officials and experts, it was learnt that major changes are not expected on the provisions and that the plans will be endorsed soon.

The project has been providing livelihood support activities such as chickens, coffee seedlings and seeds of horticultural, cereal and pulse crops. Some of the beneficiaries also obtained sheep, ox and panga on credit basis.

The PFM Program has developed a manual on the Participatory Forest Management and a Participatory Forest Resource Assessment (PFRA) Methodology for the community-managed forests (Anonymous, 2003, Jordan, 2003,). These methodologies are assets for the development of forest certification for Bonga forest.

4.5 Certification Modalities

Forest-based communities, certified or uncertified, still face the challenge of combining economic and social goals in managing their resources and planning for the future. This challenge is increasingly daunting for communities faced with the pressures of a globalizing economy and a consolidating forest industry (Irvine, 1999).

A **performance-based certification** is suitable for Bonga forest as it assesses the actual management practice for compliance with an external standard. Example is a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification system.

Certification is an expensive venture. The costs of certification for Forest Cooperatives operations include both direct assessment costs as well as indirect costs to improve management practices and to meet certification conditions; such costs are high and a burden for such small-scale cooperatives. Group certification is one of the options to reduce the cost of assessment. Therefore, a **group certification model** like that of the FSC is recommended to overcome the cost and other barriers to the certification of such small-scale forest user group cooperatives of Bonga. The different cooperatives can join to obtain group certification for timber and NTFPs. There are only six cooperatives that are established so far under the assistance of the FARM Africa-SOS Sahel Participatory Forest Management Project. The number of cooperatives should be increased in order to cover the majority of Bonga forest and to reduce the cost of certification per unit area or per cooperative.

4.6 Previous Experience in Exporting Forest Coffee

The Ethiopian forest coffee has never been recognized on international markets. It used to be exported mixed with coffee produced from other sources such as garden coffee and plantation coffee. The Ethiopian coffee is rather recognized by its provenance such as that of Yirgachefe and Limu coffees. Bonga forest coffee has recently penetrated the international market in Germany. According to the information obtained from the Bonga PFM project experts, zonal officers and Mr. Erik van Waveren (pers. Comm.) of SUPAKs, the wild coffee export promotion was initiated by Dr. Reiner Klingholz of GEO Magazine who brought a team of German-based GEO-TV crew to Bonga forest. They filmed all the steps in wild coffee production and processing and this could be an asset for further promotion of wild coffee. They also added that the wild coffee won higher price (2-3 times than the normal price) after the Amber Company (Germany) ordered to import about 70 tones of forest coffee. The coffee was exported by the Sidama Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union (Asnake, pers. comm.), as the newly established cooperatives of Bonga did not establish their own union. This is a wonderful beginning to reach the other international markets as well. Forest certification

can speed up the process. However, much has to be done in increasing the production and improving the quality of production.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Bonga forest has a great future under certification of both timber and non-timber forest products. The timber of certain species such as *Cordia africana*, *Pouteria adolfi-fredericii*, *Ocotea kenyensis*, *Prunus africana*, *Ekebergia capensis*, *Syzygium guineense*, *Hagenia abyssinica* and *Croton macrostachyus* can have attractive markets if certified under sustainable management regime, which includes the enhancement of the natural recruitment and the replacement planting of such economically important species. Charcoal can be considered for export under certification; if a well planned, efficient and sustainable charcoal production system is implemented. However, external markets should be carefully assessed before production is started. The Bonga forest coffee is not only organic but also wild and thus can easily stimulate coffee drinkers. The same is also true for cardamom and wild pepper. The current wild forest coffee and spices production system is traditional. The resource is open to everybody and no one cares for its improvement in both quantity and quality. There is also an open access to the timber, fuelwood and other wood products. Medicinal plants, particularly *Prunus africana*, have promising potential for tapping attractive income under certification schemes if sustainable harvesting coupled with establishment of commercial plantations is in place. Furniture and crafts made of bamboo are also worth considering for certification. There is experience on woodcarving around Bonga forest and with the provision of skill upgrading training, the sustainably carved wood is worth considering for certification. Certification should not be necessarily for export purpose; with strong awareness raising and promotion, domestic markets can be also targets for certified timber and NTFPs.

The conversion of the forest into agricultural land is a common practice in most parts of the forest. In general, the forest is shrinking rapidly. To mitigate this situation, the FARM Africa-SOS Sahel PFM Project is running various activities that promote sustainable forest utilization and management, among which, the establishment of forest users cooperatives and the present forest certification initiative are encouraging undertakings.

5.2 Recommendations

1) Production Enhancement

In order to win and maintain international markets, the quantity and quality of production has to be consistently improved. The expansion of the production of the NTFPs into the various sections of the forest is crucial. In the case of

coffee, this can be done by planting coffee seedlings that are produced from the wild coffee populations or by planting wildings. The coffee quality can be improved by providing training and frequent monitoring. Once coffee is produced in sufficient quantities and acceptable quantities, it can be argued that it might fetch a premium price. The premium price for coffee can be an incentive to the producers to maintain the quantity and the quality. The same can be done for cardamom and wild pepper. The members can be encouraged to expand their honey production by hanging more beehives through out the forest as the first step. Then once they become financially capable, they can start modern bee keeping by introducing appropriate modern beehives, honey extraction, purifying and packing materials with the associated knowledge.

2) Capacity Building

The cooperatives need strong technical support to implement sustainable forest management plans and strong administrative support to search for markets to export timber and non-timber forest products. The provision of credit for various activities to boost production and to improve quality can save much time to ensure food security in the shortest possible time.

3) Scaling up

FARM Africa, SOS Sahel and other concerned governmental and non-governmental institutions should work hard to scale up the current endeavors by bringing the majority of Bonga forest under SFM scheme. This might require the organization of more cooperatives in different parts of the forest.

4) Certification

It is strongly recommended that the FARM Africa/ SOS Sahel Participatory Forest Management Project work hard to get Bonga forest certified for both timber and NTFPs as indicated under section 4.5 of this report. This can be done by closely working with the Ethiopian Forest Certification Initiative (EFCI) that is to be set up soon or by looking for already existing certifying schemes, depending on circumstances.

5) Conservation

Portions of the forest should be set aside for *in situ* biodiversity conservation purpose as a security to maintain the genetic information of the wild populations of woody species, coffee, spices, and the fauna and the microorganisms as well for future use.

6) Networking

The sharing of information with other similar cooperatives with in and outside the country is beneficial to exchange experiences and to obtain information on changing markets. Such small cooperatives like those of Bonga cannot afford to pay for certification fees, which are expensive, by their own. Therefore, it is advisable to join other similar cooperatives from Bonga and other forests within the country to obtain group certification.

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7. Annexes

Annex 1. Pair-wise Ranking of the Importance of Forest Products (using economic criteria)

Assessment Group: Zonal and Woreda Sector Departments Heads and Experts (joint assessment)

	Timber	Charcoal	Wild Coffee	Forest Honey	Cardamom	Wild pepper	Fuelwood	Bamboo	Medicinal plants	Row total
Timber	xxx									0
Charcoal	Timber	xxx								0
Wild Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	xxx							2
Forest Honey	Honey	Honey	Coffee	xxx						2
Cardamom	Cardamom	Cardamom	Coffee	Honey	xxx					2
Wild pepper	Timber	Charcoal	Coffee	Honey	Cardamom	xxx				0
Fuelwood	Fuelwood	Fuelwood	Coffee	Honey	Fuelwood	Fuelwood	xxx			4
Bamboo	Timber	Charcoal	Coffee	Honey	Cardamom	Timiz	Fuelwood	xxx		0
Medicinal plants	Timber	Charcoal	Coffee	Honey	Cardamom	Timiz	Fuelwood	Bamboo	xxx	0
Column total	4	3	6	5	3	2	2	1	0	
Grand total	4	3	8	7	5	2	6	1	0	
Rank	5	6	1	2	4	7	3	8	9	

ETHIOPIAN FOREST CERTIFICATION INITIATIVE
For sustainable forest management

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Position: Forestry Expert to assess the benefits of Forest Certification in Ethiopia

1. Background

Forest certification is a process by which stakeholders agree and commit themselves to maintaining defined forest management standards, as verified by independent certifying bodies duly accredited nationally and internationally. Its origin, in the mid 1990s, was grounded on the concern that countries and stakeholders in the forest sector were not implementing the recommendations arising from the continuing global dialogue on sustainable forest management (SFM). Often the process also involves independent verification of the chain of custody and labeling of products from certified forests. Essentially, the process entails verification by an independent certifying body that a forest is managed according to agreed ecological, economic and social criteria. Forest certification has rapidly evolved in the last decade as a significant tool to promote SFM. In many countries, certification is being adopted as a market-based 'soft' policy instrument for promoting sustainable forest management, which relies on assessing and monitoring of set standards, criteria and indicators to demonstrate progress.

The main objective of the Eastern African Forest Certification Initiative (EAFCI) is to facilitate, analyze and document a process by which stakeholders formulate and agree on a regional capacity building strategy in forest certification in the region.

2. The Need for National Assessment of the Benefits of Forest Certification

A major question facing those considering launching forest certification initiatives is whether forest certification is appropriate as a tool within the circumstances of a particular country. The initial assessment undertaken in each country in the region in 2002 identified capacity within each country to undertake relevant forest research. A paper investigating the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for forest certification in Ethiopia will be commissioned to a consultant and presented to the stakeholder workshop, as a means of linking forest certification concepts to local realities.

3. Duties of the consultant

3.1 General task

1. Assess the benefits of forest certification in Ethiopia
2. Investigate the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for forest certification in Ethiopia

3.2 Specific tasks

The consultant shall perform the following specific tasks:

1. Identify and elaborate the link between forest certification and sustainable forest management
2. Explore and document other experiences on forest certification in Ethiopia, particularly on NTFP
3. Undertake a case study in Bonga forest
 - i. Assess the importance of timber and non-timber forest products (NTFP) and explore the possibilities and the potential of forest certification with special emphasis to the NTFPs
 - ii. Suggest alternative modalities of forest certification

4. Identify and prioritize forest products and/or services that are suitable for certification in the overall Ethiopian condition
 - i. Forest products
 - Timber products
 - Non-timber forest products
 - ii. Forest services
5. Recommend modalities of certification for the overall Ethiopian condition

4. Expected outputs

4.1 A working paper/technical report on the findings

4.2 Presentation of two papers on a national workshop

- General paper on the benefits of forest certification in Ethiopia
- Case study report on Bonga forest

5. Duration of the task

The consultant should complete the work and submit the final report within a month after signing the contract

ETHIOPIAN FOREST CERTIFICATION INITIATIVE
For sustainable forest management

CHECKLIST TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL AND POSSIBILITIES OF CERTIFYING BONGA FOREST

1. Secondary Information on Bonga PFM Project
 - ❖ Project Proposal
 - ❖ Progress Reports
 - ❖ Mid-Term review Report
 - ❖ Participatory Forest Monitoring/Assessment Manual
 - ❖ Local PFM Plans
2. Discussion
 - 2.1 Target Groups
 - ❖ Zonal and Woreda Councils representatives
 - ❖ Zonal and Woreda Rural Development Offices
 - ❖ Zonal and Woreda Department of Agriculture
 - ❖ Zonal and Woreda Land Administration and Natural Resources Department
 - ❖ Zonal and Woreda Cooperative Promotion Offices
 - ❖ Zonal Trade and Industry Dep't
 - ❖ FARM/SOS Sahel PFM Project
 - ❖ Forest Cooperatives
 - 2.2 Points of Discussion
 - ❖ Brief Introduction to forest certification, particularly on possible benefits and group certification
 - ❖ Type and annual production of forest products and/or services obtained from Bonga forest
 - Timber
 - NTFP
 - Forest coffee (wild, semi-forest, man-made)
 - Honey
 - Spices
 - Charcoal
 - Others
 - ❖ Monthly distribution of the production of the above forest products
 - ❖ No. of Forest Cooperatives (certified, uncertified)
 - ❖ Area of the forest belonging to the cooperatives
 - ❖ No. of members of Forest Cooperatives
 - ❖ Organizational set up of Forest Cooperatives
 - ❖ SWOT analysis of Forest Cooperatives for certification
 - ❖ Availability, extent and sustainability of local markets for forest products
 - ❖ Previous experiences on export of forest products
 - ❖ Previous experiences/attempts on certification
 - ❖ Livelihood support activities
 - ❖ Interventions to improve productivity and quality of packing the NTFPs
 - ❖ Level of implementation of PFM plans
 - ❖ Women's role
 - ❖ Willingness to join other cooperatives and pull resources to win common markets and to pay for the annual monitoring services of certifying bodies (of particular interest to the forest cooperatives)

- ❖ Readiness to improve documentation, administration and standards (for example, quality of product and packing)

3. Field Visit

- ❖ Samples of timber and NTFPs production sites
- ❖ Local markets

Mission schedule

Duration: 28 July - 02 August 2003

Date	Time	Activity	Remark
28/07/03	AM- PM	Travel to Jimma-Bonga	Transportation to be organized by FARM/SOS Sahel
	Late PM or evening	Meet Project Team Leader and discuss plans	
29	AM	Joint meeting of the relevant Zonal Departments and Project Staff	
	PM	Joint meeting of the relevant Gimbo Woreda Offices	
30		Discussion with Forest Cooperatives in Gimbo woreda	A cooperative at a time
31	AM	Joint meeting of the relevant Decha Woreda Offices	
	PM	Discussion with Forest Cooperatives and visit timber and NTFP production sites in Decha woreda	
01 Aug.	AM	Visit timber and NTFP production sites in Gimbo Woreda	
	PM	Visit local markets and wrap-up discussion with project staff	
02 Aug.		Return to Addis	

N.B. If joint meeting is not possible at zonal and woreda levels, brief separate meeting might be arranged for some of them depending on the time available.

Annex 4. Persons contacted or those who have participated in discussions

No.	Name	Title	Organization
1	Mesfin Tekle	ANRDD Head and BFCDP Team Leader	Zonal Agriculture & Natural Resources Development Desk (ANRDD) and FARM Africa, BFCDP
2	Gebeyehu Gizaw	Forester	Seconded BFCDP Staff, from ANRDD
3	Ziyenu Lemma	PFM Officer	FARM Africa, Bonga Forest Conservation and Development Project (BFCDP)
4	Luwiza W/Gabriel	Ass. Community Dev't Officer	FARM Africa, BFCDP
5	Beshir Abdela	Head	Zonal rural Dev't Main Dep't
6	Asrat Abebe	Head	Decha Woreda Council
7	Wolde Bezabih	Head	Decha Woreda Agriculture & Natural Resources Development Office
8	Ashenafi Mersha	Cooperatives Expert	Gimbo Woreda Coop. Desk
9	Shifferaw G/Michael	Head	Gimbo Woreda Rural Development Office
10	WoldeMichael Gebre	Chairman	Agama Forest Conservation and Development Cooperatives (AFCDC)
11	Taddese Kassa	Secretary	AFCDC
12	WoldeMariam Ambo	Vice Chairman	AFCDC
13	Abebe Abafogi	Member	AFCDC
14	Tesfaye WoldeMariam	Member	AFCDC
15	Atirsaw Ambo	Chairman	Beka Forest Conservation and Development Cooperatives (BFCDC)
16	Busho G/Mariam	Vice Chairman	BFCDC
17	Ademe W/Giorgis	Secretary	BFCDC
18	Haile W/T	Secretary	Audit & ___ Comm., BFCDC
19	Taddese Shawa	Member	BFCDC
20	Zewde Gebre	Chairman	Loan Comm., BFCDC
21	Gereme W/Michael	Cashier	BFCDC
22	G/Yesus G/Selassie	Member	BFCDC
23	Tesfaye W/T	Chairman	Audit & ___ Comm., BFCDC
24	Mammo G/Tsadik	Chairman	Wacha Forest Conservation and Development Cooperatives (WFCDC)
25	Alemu W/Mariam	Secretary	WFCDC
26	Haile Yeshe	Cashier	WFCDC
27	Haile Kisho	Auditor & Secretary	WFCDC
28	G/Mariam Malo	Chairman	Audit comm., WFCDC
29	W/Mariam Ambo	Member	WFCDC
30	Mrs Amete Ado	Member	WFCDC
31	Mrs. Wolete G/Tsadik	Member	WFCDC
32	Endashaw Getachew	PFMP Accountant	FARM Africa
33	Fiseha	Driver	Private Company
34	Zelalem Temesgen	PFMP Manager	FARM Africa
35	Ben Irwin	PFMP Technical Manager	SOS Sahel

