

# Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Management Programme (BERSMP) of FARM-Africa, SOS Sahel Ethiopia and Oromia State Forest Enterprises Supervising Agency



The Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Management Programme (BERSMP) has been operating in the Bale Massif since the end of 2006 and aims to bring local communities into a central role in sustainable natural resources management supported by government services, across the whole Bale Massif.

The programme is supported by the Irish, Netherlands and Norwegian embassies.

**Potential Community Based Tourism Development for Bale Eco-region  
sustainable management programme, Ethiopia**



**Report on Building River Management Group, Robe, Ethiopia**

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Binyam Admasu  
FZS-BMCP Tourism Development officer  
Dinsho, Ethiopia**

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## **Preface**

For 7 days I have been involved with the “building intervention on river management group on the Shaya River” as a tourism component of BERSMP.

This was my second visit to the Shaya, the first being in September 2007 for a short introductory to the proposed river management group. The main objective was to capacitate the river management group and to make them aware of the upcoming tourism project.

In this programme I was documenting the presentation and discussion with the stakeholders and the consultant. Later I extracted major highlights, which were discussed that will enhance the proposed sport fishing initiated by BERSMP.

This report is a result of my participation in the efforts to set up river management group as one of the tourism component in their area. It therefore focuses on, Ownership and management, Technical Training and Capacity Building, Ecolodges (fishing village) development, Fishing regulations, Permits and community revenue, Potential Tourism Related BERSMP Activities

## Community based tourism at glance

Tourism development as such is often accompanied by negative environmental and social impacts. Frequently it does not meet economic expectations of the local population with much of the foreign currency earnings bypassing them. Ecotourism, however, promises a different kind of tourism. It is a kind of nature tourism, which seeks to avoid negative environmental and sociocultural effects, to contribute to the protection of natural resources and to generate sources of alternative income for the local population in the target area. It is one means to make natural resources more valuable. It helps to increase the environmental sensibility of local populations as well as the determination of governmental institutions for nature conservation.

In the development of the ecotourism project for Sorsogon, Regis et al (2000) came up with two attributes of ecotourism: a) Species and ecosystem conservation, and b) livelihood for local communities. For a successful implementation of the project, these two attributes must set a balance to be sustainable. Too much of a) will conserve the resource but will not provide sufficient economic benefits to the local people who will eventually deplete the resource to make a living. Likewise, too much of b) will entice earning profit more than what the ecosystem can sustain, thereby causing degradation of the ecosystem and the demise/disappearance of valuable species that are the attractions for tourists.

One important contribution in the ecotourism framework came from **Community-based Ecotourism** of Kersten (1997) who defined Community-based Ecotourism as a kind of nature tourism where in the local community maintains full (or major) control over the management and the profits of the project.

### Concept of Upcoming Tourism Project

In the long run, forests and rivers can only be conserved if they are as profitable as farming or herding. Therefore, BERSMP is working towards multiple uses of rivers and generating alternative sources of income. Community based tourism is one potential source of alternative income for the peoples bordering the river. For its promotion, the project will expected to build a fishing village in collaboration with the potential private person and mobile tented camp en-route to have stops (lunch, rest and pictures). The structures must bring a difference to the community. The village administrations are expected to nominate Horse providers, horse handlers who are willing to pay a lease rent for the services to the community. The project must assists in the process, but does not act as a tour operator. Guests directly pay the service providers such as guides, horse providers or assistants. Guidelines to be introduced by them make sure that the visitor's expectations will be met to the highest possible degree.

## **Ownership and management**

When it comes to ownership and management of the upcoming tourism project, the structures must design carefully. In my view some facilities must funded by BERSMP and hand over to the local community (the river management group) directly after purchasing and construction. And all payment from Anglers goes directly to service providers without BERSMP being involved ,on the other hand BERSMP will manage the entire project , it act as organizes the fishing ( fishing guide ,horse and fishing gears) supervises the service providers and marketing and promoting, train guides and different service providers..

## **Technical Training and Capacity Building**

Such trainings are easier as they are activity and skill based. The initial focus has been on training the local guide (fishing), horse , Customer service, tourism awareness, culture and history, cook, housekeepers and designing a familiarization trip to the entire service providers to the community based tourism areas like TESFA in Wello ,Adaba-Dodolla and Wenchi and this has enabled these staff to operate without assistance. Further work is required especially training on handicrafts and other skills to develop products that can be sold to tourists to 'add value' to the tourist

## **Ec lodges (fishing village) development**

As ecotourism continues to establish itself in the global economy, the demand for well-planned, environmentally sound lodging facilities is enormously increasing, which has competitively positioned ec lodges in the market. The reason for this is that ec lodges have enabled the visitors to interact with the natural and cultural surroundings worldwide and prioritized conservation (Mehta, 2000). As ec lodges have continued to evolve, many developers and investors all over the world especially in the tourism industry have opted to abandon conventional designs and facilities to ec lodge designs because of their profitability, less sophistication, and minimum negative impacts involved in their development as well as their positive impact to rural and bio diverse areas (International Finance Corporation, 2004, Cebalos-Lascrain, 2001). From the study carried out by the World Bank, the ec lodge market is expected to grow by an average rate of 10% per year over several decades (International Finance Corporation, 2004). This potential however, may be adversely affected by negative development patterns and practices. Some of such practices include; inadequate government regulations to ensure appropriate development, poor monitoring of impacts on communities and environment, lack of expertise to maintain ec lodge

development standards, and many more, which all in the end have potential to destroy a destination.

Despite such constraints, ecolodges have broad market opportunities over the next few years as highlighted earlier to capitalize on the developing ecotourism in mostly African destinations (International Finance Corporation, 2004). However, those to benefit most from such market will be the ones that have been able to maintain the required standards. Some of the standards recognized internationally for ecolodges and as many authors have suggested they include (Mehta, 2000; Ceballos-Lascurain, 2001; Lubbe, 2003; Hawkins et al, 1995; Eagles et al, 2002): for the proposed ecolodge serious attention should be given to the following aspects:

- Ecolodges should pay attention to the natural setting and respect vernacular architecture during designing and site planning
- Ecolodges should meet energy needs through passive design and renewable energy
- Ecolodges should use environmental sensitive materials during development and maintenance.
- Ecolodges should manage waste sustainably
- Ecolodges should involve and empower local communities during planning, development and operation stages.

Guests at the expected Ecolodge or fishing village would have the following activities and attractions to choose from: bird watching\*\*; shaya forest Walk; Nature Trails; Wildlife Viewing; Scenic Viewing; and Waterfalls Trail. Stakeholders at the workshop identified a number of associated activities that local people could engage in to benefit from the proposed ecolodge or fishing village:

- **Traditional cultural performances**, including music, in-tore dance, drama, and storytelling. These would not only provide entertainment for visitors, but would also provide a mechanism for educating the hosts and enriching their cultural heritage;
- **Selling crafts** through a formal craft centre or gallery;
- **Selling food and drinks**, again from local produce;
- **Guided walks to the nearby village**, community trails developed to provide a range of experiences that could include traditional food and drink and opportunities to interact with local people.

People within the district could benefit from both skilled and unskilled employment, training opportunities, and through the sales of materials, products and services. Stakeholders recognized that the revenue from ecotourism would improve household incomes and lead to improvements in the standards of living. Participants also recognized that infrastructural improvements that would improve access for ecotourism would also benefit residents (e.g. roads, sewerage).

## **Planning and design philosophy:**

The final master plan for Ecolodge must be designed by a good Architect who has a know-how about eco-lodge and tourist expectations. (*Eng, Jemal Mohammed will be potential*) Through carefully designed, minimal landscape plantings, the built structure of the Solomon Ecolodge can blend in with and appear as an extension of the natural environment. The new buildings will be in visual harmony with their surroundings and will not violate or intrude upon the physical landscape as a foreign structure. This also enhances visitor experience and satisfaction. The principles of form, landscaping, and colour have been given particular attention in addressing such issues of physical context. The ecolodge will be sustainably designed and engineered and will be built out of local materials. Local people will help build the lodge and guests at the ecolodge will be provided with unique interpretive experiences.

## **Programme**

The programme for the ecolodge is:

- Entry gate and Guard House
- Car Park
- Entry porch, Reception, Gift Shop and river mgmt group Office
- Dining and Lounge (with fireplace)
- Forest View tower
- Kitchen, Stores and service area
- 2 nos. traditional Oromo-hut
- Honeymoon tree house
- tree shade

## **Fishing regulations**

The proposed fishing scheme needs to develop fishing regulations which govern the sport fishing activities on the rivers. The purpose of a fishing regulation is to ensure the sustainable utilization of the fish resource without endangering the ecosystem and the survival of self-sustaining fish populations. Although the economic returns and the recreational aspects of fishing are important, the river management groups' primary purpose, I suppose, is to protect and perpetuate species and natural environments so that visitors can see and enjoy existing plant and animal life and this aspect should be clearly reflected in the fishing regulation. The fishing regulation should be in line with other relevant policies and proclamations such as Fishery Resource Utilization Proclamation of Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Oromia Regional State Fishery police (**see Appendix 2** ). For example, fishing gears which are prohibited by law in Ethiopia should also be prohibited by the river management group fishing regulation.

Typical sport fishing regulations specify the type and number of fishing gear and bait an individual sport fisher can use, the number and size of fish which is allowed to catch in a day, the sites on the river which are allowed or prohibited for sport fishing, the season and time which is allowed for fishing, the payment rates for different sport fishing services and data collection and monitoring program concerning the size and number of harvested fish and fish restoration program.

The fishing regulation should be developed based on a scientific study which assesses the trout fish resource base in the river. (*Rhys and Redet can do this*) Prior to developing a fishing regulation understanding and clear information on the biomass and abundance of fish existing in the river, its reproductive season and spawning grounds, distribution of the fish along the river stretch and other related technical issues is needed. This enables to identify sport fishing sites both during the dry and rainy season, sites which should be prohibited for sport fishing, the fishing pressure which can be employed without endangering the fish stock, the type and number of fishing gears that can be employed at a time and other technical issues. These technical issues form the basic framework of the regulation and the remaining part should be developed by participating stakeholders including the local community, travel and tour agents and the river management.

## **Permits and community revenue**

Trout fishing also have a few bureaucratic obstacles which should solved at forehead .Currently tout fishing conducted in the Bale mountains National park( the weyb and Danka river) **See Appendix 1** . The fishing permit in Bale mountains National park on sale for interested visitors, there is government body

collect and manages the income but it is without the involvement of the local community.

In my view in the upcoming tourism project it is very vital to have government body to accept and manage the income (part of) and the remaining part distribute to the community (The objective of BERSMP) .for the distribution of fishing revenues to the local communities some sort of river users associations could be set up (which could in fact be river management group) bordering the river. The income generated through fishing permits, 75% would go to the community, is not that big. Anglers will pay the following fees in ETB per rod( in Bale Mountains National park)

Permit	Ethiopian	Others
3 days	40	200
Annual	100	500

Assuming a total say 50 special interest Anglers who all stay about one week (Weyb, Danka, shaya and Togona) **see the appendix 3** this would imply permit revenues of  $50 \times 500 = 25,000$ .

## **Relevance of sport fishing for Shaya river management Group**

Trout fishing in itself will probably not bring a large numbers of tourist, even though there is a considerable international market of people who pay large sums for catching trout in exotic places.(*Rhys have detailed info on this*) .possibly the fishing village closest to shaya river containing trout could be rented out as a whole for the duration of stay of anglers. With a clear agreement the fishing village must pay a percentage for the river management group. an interesting aspect of anglers is that although they pay a lot of money for trout fishing in wilderness places ,they are not the type of people who require a luxury facilities

## Potential Tourism Related BERSMP Activities

- **Extension attractions at shaya river site:** Currently, there are two attractions at this site including the nature walkway (trail) and the waterfalls. Besides this, the proposed lodge site is closer to the untapped shaya forest where we have most of tourism activities/attractions. However, there is potential to develop more attractions given the fact that this part of the forest is rich in biodiversity. There is potential to develop bird safaris and primates viewing because of the existence of many fragment forests near the site which birds and primates always rotate around as well as the proximity to the species diverse part of BMNP. Coupled with this, there is a potential to develop more attractions including more trails, developing horse riding in shaya forest and developing community tourism products among other potential products.
- **Extension of fishing range into Bale mountains National park**
- **Combining Game viewing into Bale Mountains National park particularly Sennate Plateau**
- **Focus on Children:** as expats residents are the largest category of visitors and as many expats live in Ethiopia together with their families, it is recommended to focus the fishing experience (both in services and in promotion) more on children. the forthcoming will be a tip for the upcoming marketing strategy
  - offering special child saddles
  - Focusing the next generation of promotion materials more on children (pictures on when children's fishing, playing on the river edge, a child swimming in a river bed etc....)
  - When it comes the marketing strategy of the project, the focus should be more on community based tourism, explaining tourists how the tourism project fits into the river management notion, not only in promotion brochures but also by a small hand out to all tourist at departure, on top of this another way to develop the CBT felling of tourists could design en-route of fishing to plant trees.
- **CBT Aspect:** considering the back ground of the anglers segment with the foremost potential ( expats ,of whom many work experience in development and back packers ,usually young and idealistic ) it is advisable to focus more on the community based tourism concept .CBT in principles have two dimensions
  - I. Tourism in nature which does not damage this nature ( river)
  - II. Tourism which by generating revenues gives economic value to nature which in turn contributes to conservation.
- **Rafting and canoeing:** there is definitely potential for rafting and canoeing on Shaya Rivers, seasonal canoeing should be possible, which would be of interest for expats resident visitors.

## Appendices

### *Appendix 1 - Fishing regulation in BMNP*

- Fishing should be permitted to fisherman who are in possession of a permit and who accompanied by a fishing guide
- The catch is restricted to 5 fish per rod per day, 15 fish per trip and a maximum weight or size limit of 225 gram and 25 cm .if your requirement's are less than this and or your catch more trout than this . please should return the trout to the river with care
- The fish should be caught with a rod and line using either artificial flies and spinners
- The use of nets, explosives ,poisons (Biribira) or traps strictly forbidden
- The lengths and weights, sex, reproductive conditions of all fish (including all those returned to the river) are recorded and reported to the park Ecological monitoring office. this will enable monitoring of the population and modification of the regulation as necessary
- Please make sure that your fishing guide has this information at the end of each days fishing

**Appendix 2 - Fees**

The following fees in ETB are applicable per rod

<b>Permit</b>	<b>Ethiopian</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>3 days</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Annual</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>500</b>

### Appendix 3 - Trout Fishing inclusive Tour Package

<b>Tour name:</b> Wilderness sport fishing <b>Theme:</b> Trout Fishing (Rainbow and Brown trout)	<b>Season:</b> ? ?	<b>Duration:</b> 9days / 8 nights
<p><i>This journey takes you to the spot where you will find the Rainbow and Brown trout. This trout is mainly used as a food fish and game fish (for the purpose of sport fishing). Trout is an exotic fish species in Ethiopia and it is believed that self reproducing trout populations widely exist in Wabeshebele river catchments including Wabe, Weyb, Danka, Shaya and Togona rivers.</i></p>		
<p><b>Day 1:</b> Addis Ababa to Dinsho. <b>(B,L,D)</b>  <b>Day 2:</b> From Dinsho to Weyb Valley – Wadeja. <b>(B,L,D)</b>  <b>Day 3:</b> Full day fishing in weyb Valley.<b>(B,L,D)</b>  <b>Day 4:</b> Horse trek from Wadija to Danka river<b>(B,L,D)</b>  <b>Day 5:</b> Horse trek from Dinsho to Munamo. <b>(B,L,D)</b>  <b>Day 6:</b> Horse trek from Munamo to Robe. over night Shaya Fishing village  <b>Day 7:</b> <b>(B,L,D)</b>  <b>Day 8:</b> Horse trek from Robe.-shaya river-. over night Shaya Fishing village  <b>Day 9:</b> <b>(B,L,D)</b>          Drive from Shaya fishing vilage to Togona river-over night Goba. <b>(B,L,D)</b>          Drive Back to Addis. <b>(B,L,D)</b></p>		

## **Appendix 4 - Findings from Workshop**

### **Possible attractions at Solomn site:**

- Nature walkway (trail) and the waterfalls.
- There is potential to develop bird safaris and
- there is a potential to develop more attractions including more trails, developing horse riding in the filed and
- Developing community tourism products
- Satellite camping area( silver package)
  - Golden package( traditional tukul)
  - Singing and cultural site
- Gereno river to introduce a brown trout
- CDF ( 10% literacy , schooling)

### **Solomon fear (threat)**

- **Tourism**
  - How much sport fishing will promisable?
  - How much the Ethiopian tourism also promisable?
- Water (potable water)
- Strengthening+ willingness of community
- Roads
  - either to leave as it is or
  - to maintain forest road with the participation of the community
- sewerage system
- Power ( electric supply 1.5 km far away from the fishing village)
- Certification of the plot of the land by concerned body and it must be a designated area for tourism
- 30 meters law

### **= service providers**

- **Solomon**
  - chief
  - cleaner
  - Accommodation( BLD)
- **Community**
  - local guide
  - horse providers( Riding horse, horse Assistant and pack horse)
  - eco-shop and office
  - mobile camp
  - saving policy to disseminate the money
  - fishing equipment hire

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- **Tour operator**
- **There will be two tour operators**
  - **One solely agent for fishing**
  - **Others who willing to contribute 10% of CDF( these tour operators will participate, hiking, horse riding, bird safari)**
  - **Sales the market**
  - **Entertainment and product**

**The services will rendered by the tour operators**

- booking
- inclusive tour package
- levels physical activity
- hiking grading depend on physical capability
- promotion
- customer- care
- transport
- Web-site- link to Solomon's lodge
- **Percentage**
- **10%**- community development fund
- **30%** Solomon lodge
- **60%** tour operators
- **Solomon expectation from the project**
- community awareness
- Training (hospitality)
- Promotion
- Fam-trip (in and around the world)
- Investment coast share,
- designer and architect
- professional Advisor

**Phase for world class fishery**

- 1<sup>st</sup> phase to concentrate on expiates(1-5 years)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> phase re-locating the brown trout( 1-5 years)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> phase to bring the standard fishers

**River mgmt programme**

- fish-farm for communities
- institution to set up
- identifying spawning grounds
- closing and opening the river for fishing
- multiple cattle drinking area
- seasonal works for fly fishing
- the best time for fishing( June, july and August)
- consensus to the community not to dig the land for agriculture