



PFMP'S Newsletter

The Bale Eco-region Sustainable Management Programme Launches

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The joint Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP) of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia was established in 2002. The programme has projects in Bonga, Borana and Chilimo forests of Ethiopia and in the Nou forest of Tanzania.

This month an ambitious six-year programme to conserve the natural resources of the Bale Mountains eco-region with the support of the communities dependent on the forest is being launched by a consortium of FARM-Africa, SOS Sahel Ethiopia and the Oromia Regional Government.

The **Bale Eco-region Sustainable Management Programme** is being implemented in partnership with the relevant Regional, Zonal and Woreda government offices, and other natural resource management actors to balance the conservation needs of the eco-region with those of its inhabitants and government policies on development.

The programme will be working in the Bale Massif, the area of the Bale National Park, and the surrounding thirteen Woredas. This long-term initiative will cost six million euros and is being supported by an in-country donor consortium including the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Norwegian Embassy and the Embassy of Ireland.



FARM-Africa has been operating in Ethiopia since 1988. FARM-Africa is working to reduce poverty by enabling Ethiopian farmers and herders to manage their natural resources more effectively, thereby improving their living standards and well being.

SOS Sahel Ethiopia has been operating in Ethiopia since 1989. SOS Sahel Ethiopia is working with rural communities and the Ethiopian Government to tackle poverty in Ethiopia.

The two organisations have been implementing a joint programme of Participatory Forest Management since 2002 in Bonga, Borana and Chilimo forests of Ethiopia and in the Nou forest of Tanzania, funded by the EU. This new Bale initiative builds on this experience.

Area closure - Hope of the Dano community

The Chilimo Participatory Forest Management (PFM) project has been working with communities in and around the Chilimo-Gaji forest since 2002. Forest Management Groups (FMGs) are given blocks of forestland to manage and use sustainably. However, not all forest blocks are covered by natural forest and plantations. Hence, groups who are living around cleared out and highly degraded areas, need to work on their forestland but have to wait sometime before they reap the benefit.

When we went to visit the area closure of the Dano Sengota forest cooperative, we were met by Ebssa Edae, secretary of the cooperative, who was proudly beaming holding the cooperative certificate that was just handed to him. We didn't have to ask a lot for him to start explaining how the FMG was formed in 2004. He remembered the area that was measured out and given to them. "It was bare land to the most part" he said, "and when we were told by the Chilimo PFM project team that it was forestland and can be reclaimed, we agreed to work with them reluctantly".



Juniperus procera, regeneration in the area closure

After settling conflict with the surrounding non-forest management groups, the Dano community enclosed their forestland in November 2005. Today, the enclosed area is full of regenerating tree species including *Juniperus procera*, *Acacia abyssinica* and *Podocarpus falcatus*. The Dano forest cooperative members are proud of the result they have seen and are working hard in their forestland. They regularly meet to work out schedules of pruning, thinning, guarding etc. This has contributed to the overall protection of the forest and as Daniel Teshome, assistant field officer stated, "the consistent guarding of this area, highly reduced the illegal loggers in all other forest blocks because one of the main roads passes through the Dano forestland".

Seeing the strength of the Dano FMG and believing their strength to be an asset to all the forest management groups, and to ensure equitable benefit sharing, the neighbouring Gaji FMG gave up 14 hectares of *Cupressus lustranica* plantation to be included in the Dano FMG forestland, later in 2005. This was an additional encouragement for the Dano community as they were able to harvest 3.62 hectares of the plantation.

After going through the proper auction procedure worked out with the Agriculture and Rural Development office, the Dano cooperative was able to earn its first forest income. As per the agreement, after paying the 30% share to the government, the cooperative received a net total of 176,190 birr. A percentage of the earned income was given out in loans for 112 members who have submitted requests. In order to emphasise the need to actively participate in forest management, the cooperative gave out the loan according to the dedication of the members in various forest management activities including forest guarding, thinning, pruning and participation in monthly meetings. Accordingly, members were able to get a loan ranging from 600 - 1000 birr to be repaid with 5% interest.

The Dano FMG which started out with 21,700 birr revolving fund grant from PFMP is now a cooperative and has its own 103,900 birr in the bank available for community use. Currently, a cooperative office is being built and all other activities will follow according to their management plan.

"We all now know that forestland, if properly managed can be used to protect our environment and at the same time support our livelihoods. We are all ready to keep on working, "We now know that by protecting this area we are giving hope to our children," Said Ebssa.

Managing Forests ... Improving Livelihoods

Negatu Areda is a 25 years old bachelor. He is the president of the education and advocacy committee of the Dano Forest Management Cooperative. Negatu tells that he has been actively participating in forest management and has been receiving loans from the community's revolving fund since 2004. Being an active member of the Forest Management Cooperative, he was one of the beneficiaries who have received a loan of 1000 birr from the income from the Dano plantation harvest. "Knowing that we are harvesting our own forestland and making a profit from it gives a powerful satisfaction in addition to the improvement of our life", says Negatu.

Negatu, who aspires to buy a vehicle and start a transportation business to support his livelihood, used 600 birr from the loan to earn his third level driving license. He used the remaining 400 birr to buy two bulls which he hopes to fatten and sell for 1600 for the Ethiopian New Year. With the profit he makes after returning his loan, he plans to improve his farmland, vegetable garden and modernize his traditional beehives.

Negatu states that the FMG is quite strong and has developed a good management system. With the support of the Kebele and the police they are able to catch illegal loggers and hand them over to the court. Their committee regularly identifies the gap in the community and initiates the appropriate education/training the members need. Negatu states that there is a lot of work involved in forest management which sometimes affects their daily life. "However", he says "the benefit we get out of it far out weighs the cost and as the group becomes strong, I believe the load on individual members will not be as much".



Negatu with his investment

International Experience Sharing Programme

The Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP) of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia organised a programme for its staffs and government experts from Oromia and SNNPR natural resource bureaux to attend an international conference and visit a participatory forest management project in China from April 19-25, 2006. The objectives of the trip were to share experiences and network with experts from various parts of the world with similar interest and to observe and discuss the achievements and challenges of similar participatory forest management projects in China.

International Conference on the Roles of Forests in Rural Development and Environmental Sustainability, Beijing, China, April 19-21, 2006

The Chinese Society of Forestry, Japanese Forest Society and Korean Forest Society organised the conference.

Presenters came from different parts of the world and discussions focused on projects dealing with participatory approaches of forest management. The papers presented showed that forest management around the world is shifting from the conventional government protection towards participatory management. The challenges of the new system were acknowledged and various techniques taken up by projects were discussed.



Participants were able to communicate and share with others who are working on PFM approach similar to Ethiopia and get insights of various adoptions of the system in different parts of the world. It has also created a good platform to facilitate the international conference to be organised by PFMP and other stakeholders in 2007.

Project visit, Multi-Agency and Local Participatory Cooperation in Biodiversity Conservation in Yunnan Upland Ecosystem (YUEP), Yunnan, China, April 22-24, 2006

In China, similar to many other parts of the world, the conventional natural resource conservation method that fully gives control to the government to protect natural resources and assumes community members as the major destructors was not successful. Hence, since the 1980s participatory models have been penetrating the system and have proved to be sustainable.

The YUEP project (2001-2004) was financed by Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and implemented jointly by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences (YASS). The implementing strategy of the project was to establish community based co-management councils at two demonstration sites and use these councils through out the project implementation. The project promoted local participatory biodiversity conservation, introduced rural alternative energy, built the capacity of the community and worked to increase community income to reduce poverty.

Two major steps taken by the project were election of co-management council by villagers and setting up of fund for biodiversity conservation and community development.

The group visited one of the demonstration sites at the Shale Township in Wuliangshan Protected area of Nanjian County. The protected area consists of a core area where activities are not allowed as well as community managed blocks. In the latter, communities carry out various economic activities while sustainably managing the forest. Supported by the co-management council and the Yunnan Forestry Department, the community are effectively continuing their management after the phasing out of the project. Discussion with community members revealed that communities are now linked with international markets including a Thailand tea producer.

The group also visited the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) in Beijing and discussed with Dr. Ralf H. Kwaschik, Programme Manager of INBAR the fact that Ethiopia has the largest area of bamboo of any African country. However, Bamboo is poorly managed and exploited in the country and attention need to be paid for promoting sustainable utilisation. Further discussion with Ambassador Hailekiros Gessesse and Ato Eyassu Dalle, Minister Counsellor of the Ethiopian Embassy in Beijing, clarified the interest of the Ethiopian government to push this issue further by being a member of INBAR and initiating a number of projects in Ethiopia.

The key lessons learnt from this visit were the need for the government's dedication in practically supporting communities engaged in PFM in order to ensure the conservation of forest and improvement of communities' livelihood; and the necessity of appropriate markets to support sustainable natural resources based livelihoods.



Team discussing with community members

Non Timber Forest Products Promotion Day

The FARM-Africa/SOS Sahel Ethiopia Participatory Forest Management Programme (PFMP) organized an NTFP promotion day on April 8, 2006. The event was held at the Tropical Garden during the designers and artisans bazaar, which was estimated to have been visited by over 1,000 individuals.

The objective of the event was to raise awareness on the economic importance of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) and expose members of the Bonga forest cooperatives to potential market outlets.

Forest coffee, honey, cardamom and wild pepper were presented for taste and sale. In addition to the NTFP from FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel projects, 36 kilograms of grounded and packed coffee were generously donated by Bagarash PLC, Ethiopian coffee exporter.

A traditional coffee ceremony was also arranged by PFMP staff members to expose every one to the sensational flavour of Kaffa forest coffee. Promotional materials of PFMP and Ethiopian coffee forest forum were distributed to communicate with the general public the various activities that are being done by the organisations and to network with potential partners.

The small money raised by the event will be used by the Bonga forest cooperatives to further develop and enhance market opportunities and improve their livelihoods.



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