

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.

FARM-Africa & SOS Sahel Ethiopia

Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Management Programme

2007 Activity Report

I. Introduction

The Bale Mountains of Ethiopia, within the Regional State of Oromia, are of critical economic, biodiversity and ecological importance. Its importance has been recognised through the establishment of the Bale Mountains National Park and several National Forest Priority Areas.

The programme is intervening in the 14 woredas (10 woredas of Bale zone and 4 woredas of the West Arsi zone). The programme has selected 4 target woredas (three in the Bale zone and one in the West Arsi zone) for the first phase (2006 - 2008). Within the four target woredas two kebele in each was selected to implement the programme activities.

OUTPUT I: Eco-Region plan completed and used

I.1. Kebele based participatory mapping

In each of the 8 priority kebeles participatory mappings were intensively conducted. The mappings were made on natural resources, social issues and economic opportunities. The mapping objectives were to identify the resources, the economic benefits to the local people and the social issues of the area.

I.2. Kebele based resource identification

Forest resource identification was intensively conducted in two kebeles in Delo menna woreda. The BERSMP team and WDF in collaboration with woreda government staffs identified the blocks and compartments of forest areas in Wabero and Chiri kebeles.

I.3. Satellite image interpretation

The Satellite image interpretation was conducted by consultants. The interpretation is for the 14 woredas of the Eco- Region and the interpretation report was finalised by the end of 2007. The AAU staff and the BERSMP planning specialist conducted ground truthing to support the interpretation.

I.4. Collaboration with RCMRD

MOU between FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia and the Regional Centre for Mapping Resource and Development (RCMRD) has been signed. The RCMRD is based in Kenya and work for the region. This is to share experience on the Eco-Region planning.

I.5. Bale Eco-Region plan framework development

The Bale Eco-Region plan framework has been developed by the programme and presented on a workshop for comments. The plan focuses on three major themes: natural resources, social issues and economic opportunities. The final plan will be finalised in the year 2008.

I.6. Spot Satellite image interpretation

BERSMP has purchased a 2006 spot satellite image for the whole Eco-Region in 2007. The interpretation was contracted to consultant. The image interpretation completed and ready for use to develop the final Eco-Region plan in 2008.

I.7 Eco-Region plan development peer review workshop conducted

BERSMP organised a two-day workshop on 3rd and 4th of December 2007 with the following four objectives:

- To review the Eco-Region plan framework developed by BERSMP;
- To discuss and comment on database design and development;
- To discuss and comment on Eco-Region planning monitoring systems;
- To identify stakeholders of the Eco-Region planning.

The participants included different experts from Addis Ababa University, Oromia Regional State, Addis Ababa University Department of Earth Sciences (AAU - ES) and NGOs including the Regional Centre of Resource Mapping for Development (RCMRD) based in Kenya, Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), and the Ethiopian Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF).

The points in focus during the workshop were: reviewing the Eco-Region planning framework developed by BERSMP, land use planning data, idea of merging the land use planning data into the Eco-region planning framework, recommendations regarding adjustments to the plan framework and schedule for the information gathering, gap filling and final Eco-Region plan development process in 2008.

The data collection, database development and final plan preparation were planned to be completed by the end of April 2008; the spatial support system tool development is planned to be completed and ready for woreda decision makers before June 2008.

1.7. Settlement dynamics study

Information on population was poorly documented in the Eco-Region. A consultant study on the human settlement dynamics in the four priority woredas was conducted. The information will assist the programme for mapping social issues during the Eco-Region plan development.

1.8. Livestock mobility consultancy study

Little was known on the livestock movement in the Bale Eco-region. The information that the programme has includes livestock movement during different seasons. During dry season people in the lowland move with their cattle to the highland areas of Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) in search of grass and shade while during the rainy season the reverse happens. This was specially observed in Delo menna woredas.

To get a bigger picture of the livestock movement, the programme has hired a consultant to study the livestock issues in the four priority woredas. The information on the livestock movement is expected to feed into the Eco-Region plan development process.

OUTPUT II: Stronger Government/community institutional capacity for sustainable NRM

2.1. Training Needs Assessment (TNA)

After identifying the government capacity needs, together with government partners in TNA exercises, site visits and woreda planning meetings, a number of key areas for capacity building were identified.

2.2. Educational Programme

A key capacity gap was identified in qualification of woreda technical staff. Woreda government offices therefore requested that BERSMP support by sponsoring technical staff in higher education. The Programme has developed the following sponsorship programmes:

- ❖ 25 Technical staff from the 14 woredas are upgrading from diploma to degree level by attending Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resources.
- ❖ 26 female students drawn from Bale Eco-Region programme intervention areas are attending Diploma courses in Wondo Genet College of Forestry and Natural Resource.
- ❖ Five technical staffs joined the same college for their M.Sc. in farm forestry.

A feedback workshop was held with education support programme participants, in November 2007. The workshop discussed the education programme's relevance with reference to BERSMP, and how participants can become involved in BERSMP activities whilst not at the college.

2.3. International Exchange Visits

International exchange visits were arranged for both Government partners and BERSMP staffs to Tanzania, Kenya and Thailand.

In Tanzania, the group was hosted by IUCN East African office and visited the award winning Village Environmental Planning Project in Rufiji District, Southern Tanzania. The group visited a number of villages managing their natural resources under village environmental plans, held discussions with village groups and district government and attended environmental law training sessions being run to support the groups.

In Kenya, as part of the follow up to the Natural Products Opportunities and Potentials study (April 2007), Government and Programme staff, including Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) and Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) staff visited a number of Natural Product enterprises and industries. Visits included community owned herb tea, organic jams and medicinal plant production sites; Honey and Silkworm production sites were visited in Mwingi, where ICIPE is supporting community groups. An Essential Oil farm was also visited. A seed oil pressing factory was also visited. Important lessons were learned from the exchange visit as BERSMP is working on the development and promotion of Organic products in the Bale Eco-Region.

3 landuse planners (EcoRegional Planning group) visited the Regional Centre of Mapping Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Nairobi. They spent a week at the centre learning about its work across Africa, and how RCMRD may support the development of the Bale EcoRegion Planning process.

The Thailand visit was made to attend an International conference on Poverty Reduction and Forests; tenure, market and policy reforms, organised by the Region Training Centre for Community Forestry. A team of Ethiopian professionals, from both Federal and Oromia government, attended the meeting. The BERSMP team presented a paper outlining the experience of PFM in Africa, based on the 2007 PFM conference held in Ethiopia.

2.4. Community based Natural Resource Management Exchange Visits

Community and Government staff from Goba and Nensabo traveled to Chilimo PFM site (FARM-Africa) and Wenchi lake Tourism site (GTZ) while community and Government staff from Dello Mena and Harena Buluk traveled to Borana PFM sites (SOS Sahel Ethiopia).The

group held community to community and government-to-government discussions concerning the development and establishment of community based NRM. In both visits more than 109 individuals participated: 18 technical staffs and 91 community members.

2.5. Tourism Exchange Visit

A group of government tourism officers, a local tourism investor and community representatives participated on a tourism exchange visit hosted by TESFA (Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives) in Meket, Wollo in Amhara Region. The exchange visit group consisted of 12 members - 6 government and 6 community members.

2.6. Certification Internal Control System (ICS) Training

Two Experts from KOAN (Kenyan Organic Agriculture Network) were invited to Bale to give week long training on ICS (internal control systems) for organic certification, for experts from government and BERSMP staffs. Specially emphasised in the training were issues related to organic coffee and honey certifications.

2.7. Sports Fishing Training

An international consultant conducted training for the Shaya river adjacent communities. The Shaya river adjacent communities discussed the options for forming a River Management Group in order to manage the mid-Shaya river for Sports Fishing and tourism. The group was given a basic training in Sports fishing management.

2.8. MELCA – Environmental Education

Through direct budget support from the BERSMP, MELCA, a local environmental NGO, ran a number of capacity building activities.

SEGNI (meaning seed in Oromiffa) environmental education programmes are carried out to expose youth groups to the environment through the stories of local elders. MELCA also conducted a Local entrepreneurship training, in order to promote local level innovation and livelihood diversification.

2.9. Land Tenure Workshop

Recognising numerous problems associated with land access, tenure right and its management both in Bale and West Arsi Zones. The Bale Eco-Region Sustainable Management Programme in collaboration with Bale and West Arsi Zonal administration, Oromia Bureau of Agriculture and Rural development, Frankfurt Zoological Society and Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Project organised a two day workshop in August 2007.

The objective of the workshop was to bring together different actors and practitioners to discuss, debate and understand the present situations regarding land resources so as to bring land use under appropriate management and control. A total of 95 participants drawn from the two zonal offices, five woredas of Balezone (Dinsho, Sinana, Goba, Dello-Mena, Harana- Buluk and Berbere) and two woredas of West Arsi (Nensebo and Adaba), representatives of West Arsi and Bale forest enterprises, Oromia Bureau of Agriculture and Rural development, Frankfurt Zoological society, Bale mountains National Park and Bale Eco-region Sustainable Management Programme were in attendance.

Workshop conclusions included the need for policy and proclamation clarification; and woreda level action. The workshop has resulted in a woreda and zonal working groups. Government institutions have also started taking legal measures on identified illegal activities.

2.10. Physical capacity building

BERSEMP is constructing an office in Robe. The programme has also supported office refurbishment in Nensabo and Harena Buluk woredas, where basic facilities and infrastructure for local government are very limited. These woredas did not have electricity until the programme supplied basic Solar Power kits to the offices. The offices are expected to serve both the government and the programme.

In addition to this, BERSMP distributed 8 motor bicycles to the four priority woredas. Four were given to woreda government counter parts and the remaining four to BERSMP employed Woreda Development Facilitators.

2.1.1. Government Coordination (Regional Advisory Committee, Zonal Steering Committee, and Woreda Co-ordination Committee)

a. Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)

Two RAC meetings have been held in this programme year. In the middle of the year the RAC chairmanship was transferred from OBARD to the newly established Oromia Forest Enterprise Supervisory Agency.

b. Zonal Steering Committee (ZSC)

The ZSC was critically involved in the selection of Priority Woredas, for BERSMP intervention. The Programme facilitated a multi criteria selection process with both Bale and West Arsi Zones

c. Woreda Coordination Committee (WCC)

Woreda coordination committee is made up of key woreda office and the woreda programme staff.

A number of workshops have been held to bring key members from each of the 13 Bale EcoRegion Woreda in to discussion concerning programme establishment and direction. A training needs assessment was also carried out with this group.

At woreda level, on going discussion of programme establishment, woreda counterpart staff assignment and coordination with other woreda level activities, has been the main points of concern. Woreda level monitoring activities, to assess BERSMP impact are being carried out.

2.1.2. Social Services Support

Following discussions with the Zonal Government (Bale and West Arsi) it was agreed that BERSMP would support the Health Departments in the promotion of reproductive health

services development. It was agreed that reproductive health has a direct link to the BERSMP in that population pressure is one of the drivers of natural resource degradation.

Training courses were carried out for community level reproductive health extension workers.

2.13. Bale Beauty club

BERSMP has been closely working with a local nature club based in Goba - the Bale beauty club.

As part of the capacity building endeavor, the programme supported the club's voluntary indigenous tree house to house planting activities as well as rehabilitation of degraded lands.

OUTPUT III: Sustainable NRM and conservation systems in place

3.1 Participatory stakeholder analysis

Participatory stakeholder analysis on Natural Resources (Forest, Grassland and River) was conducted in 4 priority woredas in 8 pilot kebeles in Bale and West Arsi zones. The community in each kebele fully participated in the meetings conducted in different kebeles and identified different stakeholders who has stake in the resources.

3.2 Tree seedling planting

BERSMP is working towards community natural forest management and community plantation forest establishment. Towards this end, in 2007 BERSMP supported community tree seedling planting in some woredas of the Ecoregion (Adaba, Dodola, Gasera, Gololcha, Goba and Kokossa woredas). The species planted were indigenous tree species like Juniperus, Hagenia, and Olea. The total number of seedlings planted was 200,464 seedlings (Goba= 75,000, Adaba = 54,000, Dodolla= 38,344, Gasera= 19,500 and Gololcha = 13,620).

3.3 Participatory Geographic Information System (PGIS)

Vegetation type (high forest, woodland, and grassland), settlement, agriculture and others were interpreted. In addition, corrected boundaries between two kebeles in Dello-Menna (Wabero and Chiri) were agreed upon.

3.4 Boundary conflict resolution

Controversial resource use borders between kebeles and between woredas were identified. This was taken up as a discussion point by the community and border dispute resolving committee from different section of the community were organised.

3.5 Community Based Organization (CBO) set up

Internal regulation/ bylaw and management plan planning committee is established and internal regulation / by-law establishment training was delivered to the planning committee members. Currently internal regulation/by-law draft is being prepared by the community in all pilot kebeles. The possible types of CBOs – traditional (Gada,ldir, Debo, etc) vs. modern (association, PLC, Cooperative, etc) were explained to the community for further discussion and to decide upon appropriate CBO they want to establish.

OUTPUT IV: Community NR based livelihoods diversified

An important aspect of the work will be to enable communities to develop an understanding of their natural resources in relationship to their needs, and the current problems impacting on sustainable use of these resources.

4.1. Natural Resource Products Opportunities & Potentials study

The study focused on the identification of opportunities for the improvement of local community livelihoods living with the resources. The study identified different opportunities to be implemented in different phases and priorities in the Bale mountains area. The natural products recommended for small scale producer commercialisation by this study are:

Phase 1. First priority natural products

- (i) Wild Coffee
- (ii) Comb honey
- (iii) Bamboo
- (iv) Essential oils
- (v) Ecotourism

Phase 1. Second priority natural resource products

- (i) Trophy hunting and fishing
- (ii) Medicinal areas – working with the already established traditional healers association on the commercialization aspect
- (iii) Essential oils
- (iv) Dried herbs/fruit/vegetables

Phase 2. Natural resource products

- (i) Diversified bee-products: pollen, propolis, royal jelly and sting-less bee honey
- (ii) Essential oils
- (iii) Ecotourism, game hunting and fly fishing
- (iv) Dried herbs/fruit/vegetables

- (v) Medicinal/nutraceutical
- (vi) Cold pressed oils:
- (vii) Incubation Centre;
- (viii) Bamboo

4.2 Community Based Ecotourism study conducted

As part of Shaya river trout sport fishing programme, BERSMP is discussing with the potential of local investor collaboration with the local community to establish tourist base-camp near the River. To assist the proposal, a consultant study was conducted on the possibility of establishing the tourist village in the area.

The purpose of the study was to provide ideas on how to implement ecotourism /CBET with trout sport fishing enterprise in order to:

- Improve the livelihoods of the local communities;
- Promote the engagement of the private sector partners; and
- Enhance the sustainable management of the Shaya River.

4.3 Goba Natural products Collection, Processing and Learning (CPL) centre establishment

The purpose of the CPL centre establishment is to enable the development of community based sustainable livelihoods from Natural products through the promotion of small and medium sized enterprise development. For the year 2007 the programme is proposing to pilot the idea in Goba woreda and construct such centre in the remaining three priority woredas. To move the process forward, BERSMP secured 1 ha plot of land from Goba town.

4.4 Forest Coffee certification process

As part of community livelihood improvement, BERSMP is working towards the organic and/or forest coffee certification in the priority woredas. Regarding the process BERSMP staff has taken training on organic certification by experts invited from Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN).

The Institute for Market ecology (IMO), which is following the EU and American organic standards, representative in Ethiopia was contacted on how to move forward. Different formats are currently being filled to proceed forward.

4.5 Product development

The potential of bee product in the four priority woredas is immense. BERSMP put much effort on the honey product development and presented the sample packed honey on exhibition during the Donors' meeting. This is an opportunity to expand honey product development in the woredas for 2008

Training was also delivered for 30 beekeepers in Goba woreda to increase the capacity of the community in producing and processing of bee products. The training will also expand to the rest of the pilot kebeles in the priority woredas starting early 2008. The activity will move forward in packaging and marketing of the products

4.6 Coffee promotion consultancy study

The Harrena sub-tropical forest, situated on the South East side of the Bale Mountains, contain part of Ethiopia's genetically unique and original forest coffee stocks. This forest coffee has been only recently identified and studied and the true extent of the resource remains unclear.

Actual forest coffee management practices are unclear, as is the situation of the wild forest coffee stocks, and whether coffee planting in the forest (to increase yield) has relied on forest coffee seedlings or improved breed coffee seedling.

The cost-benefit of managing this tropical type forest have to be clear to the community. A study on economic analysis also suggests that the conservation of the forest cannot be justified. Instead the management of the forest for coffee production turns out to be a viable compromise for all stakeholders

Based on the complex system of the management of the wild forest coffee in Harena forest, BERSMP hired consultants to study and analyse two aspects: 1. Production, processing, and ownership rights and 2. The value chain and market aspects of the coffee product. The

consultants have completed the study in the field and expected to produce reports in early January 2008.

4.7 Beekeepers group formation

BERSMP, piloted honey production system in Goba woreda. To this end an initial beekeepers group having 40 members has been formed and training on beekeeping was delivered to 30 members of the group. The plan for the group in 2008 will be piloting production site as well as starting processing, packing and marketing of the bee products

4.8 Bamboo groups training need assessment conducted

Bale and West Arsi are said to have high potential of natural bamboo stand (56,851 ha). The community in Bale and West Arsi are using bamboo for many things including house construction, fencing, different bamboo furniture, floor mat, roofing, etc. However, as different studies on bamboo revealed, the current use is unsustainable.

BERSMP is working towards promoting sustainable use and management of bamboo in the Eco-Region. The programme is planning to support different bamboo stakeholders from production to marketing. This includes supporting the community in propagation and cultivation techniques of bamboo and supporting jobless youths through training in bamboo furniture making linking them to national and local markets.

BERSMP is currently arranging training for the youths through the federal micro and small enterprises development agency (FeMSEDA). Training need and resource assessment was conducted by an expert from FeMSEDA. The training is planned to be conducted early January 2008.

4.9 GOOD WOOD exhibition

The GOOD WOOD exhibition was organized by BERSMP in Collaboration with Oromia State Forest Enterprises Supervisory Agency (OSFESA) and Cambell Project Management Service (CPMS) from December 4 – 7, 2007 in Addis Ababa.

The exhibition was organised to highlight the potential and opportunity of Ethiopia's natural resources. In the exhibition the potential of Ethiopia's forest resources were shown. Participants were from different Embassies, Government offices (Federal, Regional, Zone and Woreda level offices) and community representatives from PFM areas as well as furniture makers from Bale.

The core aim of the exhibition was to open the eyes of Ethiopia to the potential of Ethiopian Good Wood. The Good Wood exhibition demonstrated how high quality handmade furniture, which is only one of the potential products from Ethiopia's forests, can command a high economic value at a relatively low raw material (wood) consumption.

It is proposed that if forest resources are used efficiently and their full potential value realised, then adopting sustainable forest management throughout all the remaining forests of Ethiopia is not only an economic option, but a logical imperative.

4.10 Essential oil Distillation Unit constructed

There are many plant species that are potential source of the essential oil production in the Eco-region. However, BERSMP is planning to pilot processing of four species of herbaceous plants: *Juniper (Juniperus procera)*, *thyme spp*, *helicysum spp*, *fennel (Foeniculum vulgare)*

Most of these herbaceous and woody plants are distributed in the wild areas of the Dinsho and Goba woredas. Currently, it is growing naturally, however its propagation and cultivation is practiced by the traditional healers in their home gardens (especially fennel).

The programme has hired a consultant to construct a distillation unit for the production of the essential oil in Bale. The consultant has constructed one distiller in Addis Ababa in collaboration with AMIO Engineering PLC. He has trained technical workers in AMIO who are currently constructing an additional distiller.

After completion of the construction in Addis Ababa, it will be taken down to Robe/Goba to be installed and start trial production of the essential oil. This is an opportunity for the rural poor community of Bale to support their livelihoods through diversification. Therefore, conservation and sustainable use of the species is of paramount importance.

OUTPUT V: Sustainable financing

5.1 Carbon finance awareness workshop

A half day workshop was organized by PNRMU on carbon financing opportunities. Participants were from various partner GOs and NGOs, bilateral and multilateral organisations. The topics covered included: The Kyoto Protocol, the CDM and an overview of the carbon markets (voluntary and compliance), General principles and terminology, The carbon project cycle & principal actors (the DNA, DOEs, buyers, etc.) – including programmatic CDM, Bio-carbon project types – forestry, avoided deforestation, grasslands, wetlands, bio-fuels, agriculture, etc. (eligibility, risks and economics), General principles of Project Idea Note (PIN) and Project Design Document (PDD) preparation, etc. The workshop created a clearer understanding of how the carbon markets operate and their potentials for community forests in Ethiopia.

5.2 Consultancy for Sustainable financing mechanisms

Two Terms of references (ToR s) for consultancy on Carbon finance opportunities and the Development of Sustainable financing mechanisms were prepared and invitations sent out to potential firms. Among the submitted proposals Unique Forestry Consultants were selected to carry out both studies. The group has rich experience in both areas in eastern Africa and beyond. The desk work for these assignments has started in late 2007 and field works are expected to commence in early 2008.

OUTPUT VI: Improved and appropriate policy and legislation

6.1 PFM guidelines for Oromia and MoARD

The BERSMP has been actively engaged in the process of development of a PFM implementation guideline for the Oromia State Forest Enterprises Supervisory Agency (OSFESPA). The necessary contacts are also being made with the Federal MOARD to provide assistance in the formulation of PFM implementation modalities based on the newly issued federal forest proclamation. Draft guidelines are produced by consultants.

6.2 Participation in “Human rights and Environmental laws” training

BERSMP staff participated in a three day training that was organised by MELCA Mahber (a local NGO) in Woliso. Participants were from various GOs and NGOs. The training focussed on existing environmental policies and laws in the country (including the nation’s constitution) and international conventions signed by Ethiopia. Problems and opportunities, together with strategies for policy lobbying, were thoroughly discussed.

6.3 Participation on a national workshop - “How to increase forest cover in Ethiopia”

The FARM-SOS experiences with PFM in Oromia and SNNPR regions were presented in this workshop that was organized by the Ethiopian Economic Research Institute (EERI). The conclusion was that along with massive plantings on degraded areas, PFM systems should be applied in existing forest areas if forest cover is to be increased in Ethiopia.

6.4 Parliament members visit to Chilimo

A field visit was organised for the parliament’s NR & EP standing committee including representatives from other standing committees. The trip was organised by the PNRM unit in collaboration with MELCA Mahber, FFE and FCF as part of the policy advocacy efforts being made by BERSMP. A total of 40 participants attended the visit. The field visit programme included two presentations (one on Chilimo PFM activities and another on Development of PFM in Ethiopia), site visits, discussion with PFM groups and tree planting programme (as part of

the millennium initiatives). The event was captured and transmitted by newspapers and electronic media.

6.5 Participation in a public hearing

The BERSMP was represented during the public hearing organised for stakeholders to discuss on the draft forest proclamation at the federal parliament. The draft proclamation was discussed previously by a lobby group that includes FARM-Africa/SOS Sahel Ethiopia, MELCA Mahber, Forum for Environment (FFE), Forest Coffee Forum (FCF), Civil Service College and Biodiversity Network. It was found out that the concepts of PFM were not clearly included in the draft document. On the forum, requests were presented (together with proposals) to the joint session of Rural Development and Natural Resources & Environment Protection (NR&EP) standing committees for facilitation of the inclusion of communal forests as a stand alone ownership type, together with private and state forests.

6.6 Parliament briefing on “Green Forum” symposium

As a follow up of the “Green Forum 2006”, a session was organised to brief the NR & EP standing committee members on the outcome of the forum. The proceeding of the forum titled “Taking stock of Ethiopia’s environment” was distributed. ‘The Forest Ecosystems of Ethiopia’, one of the five papers in the proceeding that explains the extent, threats and options for forest conservation in Ethiopia (based on PFM experiences) was briefly presented to the committee members. This has served as a forum to bring the forest situation in Ethiopia and the potentials of PNRM to the attention of law makers.

6.7 Strengthening advocacy working group

As an attempt to keep together and strengthen the organizing committee members of the International conference on PFM in Africa for future policy advocacy, an occasion for expression of admiration for a job well done was organised. It is remembered that the conference has been a success. The members of the group are actively participating in natural resources related policy advocacy. Discussions were made on strengthening the working group in the future.

6.8 Oromia Forest Enterprise and BERSMP

The Oromia region has recently issued a decree on the establishment of Forest Enterprises. This gives way for the formation of eight forest enterprises (for all forests in the region) and a supervisory agency. BERSMP from the start has been involved in contributing ideas to make sure the newly formed enterprises will embrace PNRM approaches and those current agreements between donors, NGOs and government will not be jeopardized as a result of the new development. And this has been successful.

6.9 Programme visit by H.E. The ambassador of the Netherlands

His Excellency Mr. Alphons Hennekens, Ambassador of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and Mr. Pim De-Keizer, the first secretary, visited the BERSMP in April 2007. The visit included meeting with the West Arsi and Bale Zone Administrators, the BERSMP staff members in Robe and the Woreda government officials and communities at the Mena Angetu site. The visitors expressed their impression on the activities being done while urging the programme to work for greater impact. The Ambassador has further promised assistance by the Embassy in policy lobbying as part of its full support to the programme.

6.10 Discussions with Oromia State forest enterprises supervisory agency and Bale Forest Enterprise

Currently, the programme is closely working with its new partner, Oromia State Forest Enterprises Supervising Agency (OSFESA), and the Bale Forest Enterprise. As the enterprise newly came to the area, it was necessary to have discussion meeting on the different modalities of both organisations activities.

Discussions were made with the Agency in Addis and Bale Forest Enterprise in Bale on how to collaborate for smooth implementation of activities on the ground. The discussion with the Bale enterprise focused especially on how to participate local community in resource management and benefit sharing schemes.

BERSMP and the Enterprise has deeply discussed on the issue of timber harvesting by the enterprise, community development activities, and tree seedling development issues and reached on consensus.

6.11 Media Coverage

Some of the programme activities have been covered by public media:

- An interview focussed on the extent, potentials, threats and future directions (taking into consideration PFM options) of the forest resources of Ethiopia was covered by Panos Ethiopia in their FM radio programme.
- An article on a newspaper related to the MP s visit to a PFM site in Chilimo and advocacy on forest policy (The daily monitor)
- An article covering the GOOD WOOD exhibition and its potential in Ethiopia (The sub Saharan Informer)

6.12 Media team visit to Bale

A media team from different press agencies (government and private) has visited the programme area from December 24-27, 2007.

The objectives include;

- ❖ Familiarisation of the media team with the BERSMP, the area, and the activities
- ❖ Familiarising BERSMP to the public
- ❖ Introduction of Bale Mountains potentials to public

A brief introduction about the programme activity, programme area, activity implementation status was explained to the group. The team has also visited different programme implementation sites: Shaya river & Bale Beauty Nature Club, Harana Bulluk, and Delo Mennaa. They have also interviewed the programme staffs, Zonal government counterpart and different community resource managers.

The team was contacted through the Ethiopian Environmental Journalists Association and composed of members from the Ethiopian Television, Fortune newspaper, Embilta newspaper, Ethiopian Radio, and Panos Ethiopia. All are expected to produce different outputs in early 2008.

6.13 Tropical Garden Bazaar

BERSMP participated in this bazaar on December 1-2, 2007, where thousands of people attend twice yearly. The programme used the opportunity to announce the GOOD WOOD exhibition and also sponsored the Bonga Participatory Forest Management Cooperatives to present and sell their NTFPs – coffee, cardamom and honey.

6.14 Publications

1. Policy Brief

BERSMP has produced the first policy brief entitled The Significance of the Bale Mountains, South Central Ethiopia on December 2007. This brief gives highlight on the available resources of the area and the potentials it has.

2. E-bulletin

The programme produces the bale bulletin quarterly. Three releases have been distributed via email in 2007.

3. Forestry Policy and Proclamation

The MoARD has asked BERSMP to support it in its effort to distribute the recently released forest policy and proclamation. For this, the programme has organised a translation of the policy into English and has published booklets containing both the policy and proclamation in both languages.

4. Brochure

A brochure, showing the various activities of the programme has been produced

5. Activity Calendar

As part of its communication tool, the programme has printed and distributed activity calendar for 2008.

6. Fact sheet on the work of PFMP with a private sector

BERSMP has sponsored the publication of a fact sheet showing a joint work of the previous participatory forest management programme of FARM-Africa and SOS Sahel and a private sector, Apinec PLC, working with NTFPs in Bonga.

7. Posters, brochures, fact sheets, banner

These were produced for the GOOD WOOD exhibition with technical / design support from other stakeholders.

8. BERSMP website

BERSMP website is up and running. It provides all the activities that are being carried out by the programme and studies and research undertaken through the programme.