

Yayu Biosphere Reserve- the Challenge

Ethiopia has three United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) registered Biosphere Reserves, namely Kefa, Shaka and Yayu Biosphere Reserves. The fact that they are registered under UNESCO is an opportunity for sustainable development.

However, these Biosphere Reserves are facing the threat of destruction due to various human induced factors. Government resources are limited and the traditional approach to forest located/ in situ conservation based on zonation and control of the activities of the local communities, does not have a good record.

In particular, excluding communities from forests to “protect” the genetic resources have often had counter results. As a result it is increasingly questioned whether a different way of thinking and addressing this challenge should be tried.

It is due to this threat that Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE EC), with the financial support of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, has initiated a new conservation project called “**Network Creation and Capacity Building in Yayu Biosphere Reserve**”.

Project Aim

The overall aim of the project is to improve the management and conservation of Yayu Biosphere Reserve using a multisectoral integrated approach and to draw lessons for the conservation of other Biosphere Reserves in the country.

The multisectoral integrated approach is opted for this project so as to create cooperative responsibility among all involved stakeholders and bring them together to have collaborative effort towards the sustainable

management and conservation of the Biosphere Reserve.

The project specific objective is improve Yayu biosphere management through multisectoral integration and improve communities’ livelihood through production system improvement and job creation in Yayu, Hurumu, Chora, Doreni, Alge Sachi and Nopha woredas by 2015.

Location

This project is located in South West Oromia region of **Hurumu, Yayu, Chora, Nopha, Alge Sachi and Doreni** woredas of Illu Abba Bora Zone. The biosphere reserve encompasses the above mentioned six woredas of Illu Abba Bora Zone and that is why the project is targeted and will be implemented in these six woredas of the zone.

The biosphere is located within **8° 0’ 42” to 8° 44’ 23”N** and **35° 20’ 31” to 36° 18’ 20”E**.

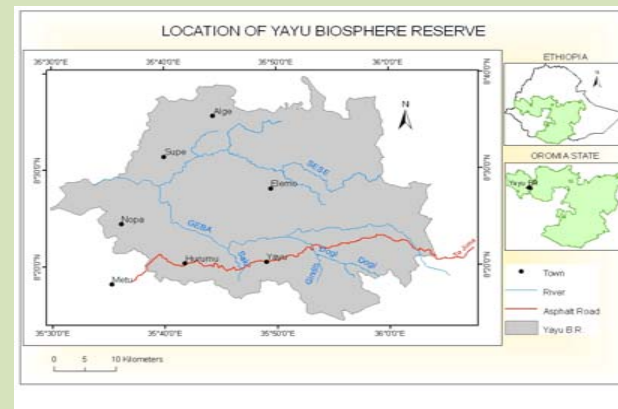


Figure 1: Map of Yayu Biosphere Reserve
Source: UNESCO - Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme – Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form,pdf

Target Groups

The main target group are the local communities, some 885 (292 Females and 593 Males) direct beneficiaries and 226,893 (113,447 males and 113,446 Females) indirect beneficiaries living in or near to the biosphere, whose livelihood will be enhanced through the project.

The final beneficiaries include government and international agencies involved with biosphere reserve management. For the dissemination of lessons, beneficiaries will also include donor, projects and education centers involved in biosphere reserve management/conservation initiatives in the country. Overall, the global community will also benefit from the conservation of the biosphere.

Overall Approach/Implementation Strategy

- Multi-sectoral PHE integration approach
- Partnership and networking
- Awareness raising interventions
- Capacity building trainings
- Livelihood empowerment
- Experience sharing programs
- Communication and documentation

Expected Result

The overall results of the project include:

- Seven task forces, consisting of around 25 people each, effectively making joint decisions about the Yayu Biosphere Reserve,
- Direct relationship between local stakeholders and regional-federal decision-making structures developed,
- Improved involvement of school youths and their families in conservation activities through the established 30 school clubs,

- Fifty coffee and honey producer associations improve their product handling and improve their income by 5% due to the post-harvest handling training,
- 100 jobless youths capacitated with fuel briquette production skill and involved in production
- Informed decision about the biosphere reserves by the parliamentarians because of the field visit to the biosphere reserve.

Activities

To achieve the project's objectives a range of activities are being undertaken in an integrated manner. These include:

- Conduct baseline and stakeholder analysis in all targeted woredas
- Establish zonal and woredas multi-sectoral taskforces by major stakeholders
- Establish school clubs in all targeted woredas and develop one school PHE Club toolkit which help as a guide and reference for the students
- Training on forest and biodiversity conservation, on forest product certification, on fuel briquette production, coffee and honey post-harvest management and value addition and RH/FP issues
- Organize field visit for parliamentarian
- Organize workshop that communicate the lessons learned from the project both in Metu and Addis Ababa
- Develop one Multi-sectoral Biosphere Management Guideline to help for documentation and dissemination of knowledge and experience

Local Collaboration & Sustainability

The project aims to ensure the sustainability of its work by focusing on capacity building in the communities and the government organizations. There is a focus on supporting the development of existing and new taskforces to manage the natural resource, through creating multisectoral partnership at different level, and strengthen them.

In addition, the task forces are planned to support the government sectoral offices in achieving their goals and at the same time to create working partnership with major stakeholders.

The intension is to ensure that local groups have the necessary skills, experience to be self-sufficient, and self-sustaining in the activities covered by the project in the long term and to obtain advisory support from the local government staff.

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PROJECT BRIEF

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Building the Capacity of Communities and Government Institutions for a New Approach to Improve Management of Biosphere Reserve

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