

# Project Brief

## Network Creation and Capacity Building in Yayu Biosphere Reserve

(July 2014 - June 2017)



This project is implemented with financial contribution from Conservation International Foundation (CIF) through Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) Program and implemented by PHE EC and OFWE in partnership

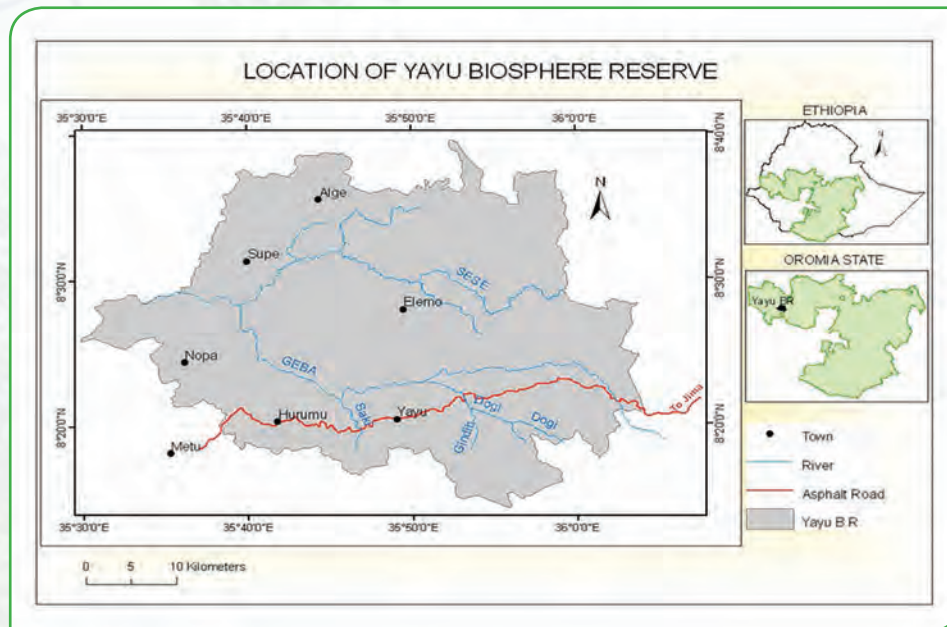
**CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM**  
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## Yayu Biosphere in Brief

Yayu Biosphere Reserve is situated in South Western Oromia region. It encompasses Hurumu, Yayu, Chora, Nopha, Alge Sachi and Doreni Woredas, in Illu Abba Bora Zone. (80° 0' 42" to 80° 44' 23" N and 35° 20' 31" to 36° 18' 20" E).



Map of Yayu Biosphere Reserve, Source: UNESCO

The Biosphere plays a key role in the conservation of natural and cultural landscapes. It is one of the last remaining montane rainforest fragments with wild Coffee Arabica populations in the world and also an important hotspot for Afromontane Biodiversity and bird species. For these and other cultural reasons, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) registered the Biosphere Reserve in 2010 and recognized its international importance.

## Threats

Biosphere's recognition by the international organization, UNESCO, is an opportunity for sustainable management and development of the reserve. However, apart from natural causes, Yayu biosphere reserve has been compromised by various anthropogenic activities:

- Forest fire: caused by traditional hunting (by chasing the hiding wildlife in the forest with forest fire), honey harvesting (traditionally harvesting by fumigating beehives with smoke to freeing the honey from the bee colony), and burning grasslands to promote fresh grass and so on.
- Development initiatives: though the developmental contribution and their economic

terms are undeniable, their side effects need to be harmonized with the natural ecosystem. There are three big government initiated development projects: Geba hydropower dam, Yayu coal mining and Yayu fertilizer industry. In addition, there are also wide scale road construction and electric transmission line projects in and around Yayu biosphere reserve.

- Expansion of Coffee plantation: there is rapid encroachment into the core and buffer zones in the side of the biosphere reserve where demarcation between core and buffer, buffer and transition zone is not completed.

According to a recent study in the area, one of the best ways to reduce the impacts of these threats is creating a multi-sectoral collaboration, coordination and integration among the work of various actors in the area and improves and harmonizes communities' livelihood to contribute for the sustainable management of the biosphere reserve (BR). It is due to this reason that Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE EC), with the financial support of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, has initiated and implementing a project called "Network Creation and Capacity Building in Yayu Biosphere Reserve" in partnership with OFWE and complementing already existing efforts.

## Project Aim

The overall aim of the project is to improve the management and conservation of Yayu Biosphere Reserve by establishing multi-sectoral integrated collaborations of the different relevant stakeholders and to draw good practices and lessons. The multi-sectoral integrated approach is opted for this project so as to create cooperation and coordination among all involved stakeholders and bring them together to have harmonized efforts towards the sustainable management and conservation of the Biosphere. Specific objectives includes creating a framework of collaboration among key stockholders through establishing multi-sectoral task forces at all levels in the area to improve the biosphere management and to ensure communities' livelihood through production system improvement and job creation in Yayu, Hurumu, Chora, Doreni, Alge Sachi and Nopha Woredas.



## Target Groups

The main target groups 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 around the biosphere, whose livelihood and ecosystem services will be enhanced through the project.

The dissemination of lessons learned from the project implementation could be used by conservationist, research centers, universities, biosphere managers in Yayu and other biospheres. The learning could also be developed to reach higher level decision makers for policy level consideration.

Overall Approach/Implementation Strategy

- Multi-sectoral PHE integration approach
- Partnership and networking
- Awareness raising interventions
- Capacity building trainings
- Livelihood improvement
- Experience sharing
- Enhance corporate responsibility
- Communication and documentation

## Expected Results

The overall results of the project include:

- Seven task forces, with a total of about 200 members consisting of relevant stakeholders, that will effectively make joint decisions about the Yayu Biosphere Reserve formed biosphere Reserve.
- Direct relationship between local stakeholders and zonal, regional and federal decision-making structures developed,
- Improved involvement of youths and families in conservation activities through the established 30 school clubs,
- Improved products handling and income (5% against the base line) of fifty coffee and honey producers associations due to the post-harvest training and organic Certification
- About 100 jobless youths and more than three hundred women capacitated with fuel briquette production skill and involved in production, distribution and marketing

- Management plan developed for Yayu biosphere
- Informed decision about the biosphere reserves by parliamentarians and policy makers as a result of field exposure.

## 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 and capacitate them to ensure participatory management.
- Establish school clubs in all targeted Woredas and use them as a means to disseminate environmental awareness education. Develop school PHE Club toolkit which helps students as a guide and reference in their day to day activities.
- Training on forest and biodiversity conservation on the need for EIA
- Training on forest and biodiversity conservation, on forest product certification, on fuel briquette production from coffee husks, coffee and honey post-harvest management and value addition and RH/FP issues
- Development of management plan for Yayu Biosphere reserve and start its implementation
- Organize field visit for parliamentarians and for other policy makers
- Organize workshop that communicate the lessons learned from the project
- 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 forming strong frame work of collaboration and capacity building in the communities, the government organizations, private sectors and other partner development practitioners in partnership with OFWE. There is a focus on supporting the development of existing and new taskforces to manage the natural resources, through creating multi-sectoral partnership at different levels, and strengthening 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 the harmonization and collaborative partnership of wider stakeholders which could improve the ownership and participation of the community and sustain the biosphere management.

## **The project current status**

### **1. Detailed base line survey and stakeholder analysis is conducted**

Baseline survey and stakeholder analysis are conducted to see the current status of the biosphere. The studies have found out that there is strong traditional bondage between the frontier communities and the biosphere reserve. Communities' livelihood depends on resources extracted and produced from the biosphere, and the traditional forest based livelihood strategy and culture of the communities has paramount importance for the existence of the coffee-forest natural ecosystem in return. With gradual increase of the population, and immigrants coming from other areas, the demand for resources is increasing and other traditions are infiltrating that put the BR under increased pressure. The biosphere has economic, conservation, social and cultural, tourism and education and research values of immense significance. The studies have also found out that there is some disparity in the management approach among the different actors, and there is lack of coordination among the different stakeholders. There are efforts to empower women and youth groups in different income generation activities, however, there are many jobless youth in all Woredas and participation of women is particularly limited. Environmental education in school students and the general public is limited due to lack of resources and capacity. Generally an integrated effort is recommended to improve the management of the biosphere reserve and livelihood of local communities in a sustainable basis.

### **2. Multi-sectoral task force have been formed and engaged in the biosphere management**

Taskforces starting from the kebele to zonal level have been established. The taskforces have brought together relevant stakeholders from local communities, government sector offices, the private sectors, NGOs, local decision makers and higher educational institutions - to provide strategic directions and promote participatory leadership on the biosphere management for its

improved and sustainable management. These taskforces have regular meetings; at kebele level every month, at Woreda level every three months and at zonal level every six months to discuss on issues related to the Biosphere and are making participatory decisions. Apart from these regular meetings, members of taskforces are also involved in day to day monitoring, facilitation and communications. The zonal taskforce is chaired by the zonal administrator; vice chaired by the Deputy Administrator & Agricultural Department Head and the secretariat is OFWE where PHE EC is playing the advisory role.

### **3. Fuel briquette from coffee husks**

About 150,000 people live in and around the biosphere. More than 90% of this community use wood and charcoal for energy. As a result the pressure on the biosphere to get these energy sources is huge. To reduce the pressure, the project has introduced fuel briquette as an alternative energy source from coffee husks. Coffee husks are abundant in the biosphere and usually burn as a waste material. But, it is possible to change it into charcoal using local made machine. The project in collaboration with the government micro and small enterprise has established youth groups, trained them in the mashin operation, and installed three machineries to produce the fuel briquette. The briquette has at least three benefits: it reduces the wood cut from the forest for charcoal production, create job for unemployed youths and women, and reduce water pollution that originate from the decay of coffee husks.

### **4. Forest product certification**

Coffee and Honey are main products of the biosphere. As these products are organic forest products, if their quality is improved and certified, farmers can get better income. This would reduce coffee expansion that is causing more deforestation. Aiming the same, the project has planned and conducted post-harvest management and value addition training for cooperatives. More training will be conducted to include more cooperatives. The project is also working hard with other partner organizations to get organic coffee certification for targeted cooperatives. With regard to creating international market for Yayu organic coffee, JICA is already in contact with OFWE and PHE EC and they have already taken coffee samples.

### **5. Family planning trainings and capacity building**

Population growth is an integral factor for natural resource conservation and sustainable development. Integrating population dynamic issues into conservation and development projects has a long term sustainable impact.



To contribute for this objective, the project has integrated family planning interventions into the overall project and undergoing implementation. The interventions include awareness rising on family planning and reproductive health and supporting the service where there is gap.

## 6. Development of a management plan for the Yayu Biosphere Reserve

Article 4.7. (b) Of the statutory framework of the world Network of biosphere reserves – each biosphere reserve must “prepare, implement

and monitor an overall management plan or policy that includes all of the zones of the biosphere reserve”. Yayu biosphere has exhaustive information collected during UNESCO registration. But it has no management plan since its registration. The project is therefore under preparation process to develop a five year management plan in collaboration with the taskforces and the regional government. Oromia regional government will actually lead the preparation of the management plan and the project will facilitate and give technical support. The plan will guide and co-ordinate the work of all stakeholders.





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