

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. (8° 0' 42" to 8° 44' 23"N and 35° 20' 31" to 36° 18' 20"E).

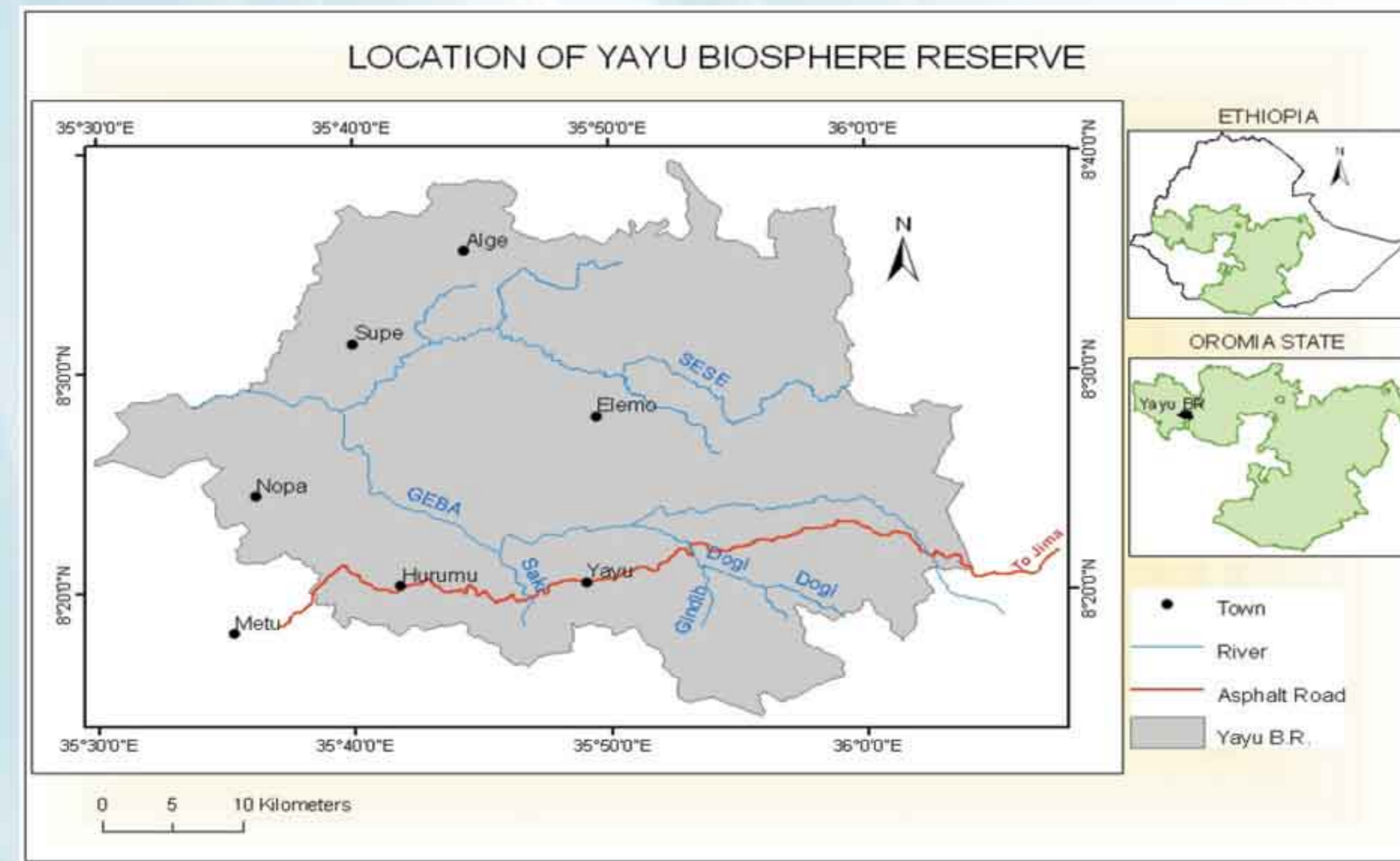


Figure 1: Map of Yayu Biosphere Reserve, Source: UNESCO

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.

Yayu Biosphere Reserve - Challenges

The Biosphere's recognition by the international organization, UNESCO, is an opportunity for sustainable management and development of the reserve. However, as the same is true for the other two Ethiopia's biospheres (Kafa and Sheka), Yayu biosphere is also facing a threat of declining. Some of the threats include ever increasing

deforestation and degradation caused by anthropogenic activities due to lack of community awareness and ownership. In addition, wild fire, new development initiatives such as Geba hydropower dam development, Yayu coal mining and Yayu fertilizer industry with wide scale road construction and electric transmission line projects; expansion of coffee planting etc are contributing for the threats.

According to a recent study, one of the major gaps that contributes for making these activities as threat is weak harmonization, coordination and integration among key actors and stockholders in the area towards the biosphere sustainable management.

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 a new conservation project called **“Network Creation and Capacity Building in Yayu Biosphere Reserve”** to work in partnership with OFWE and complement the existing positive efforts .

Project Aim

The overall aim of the project is to improve the management and conservation of Yayu Biosphere Reserve by establishing multisectoral integrated collaborations of the different relevant stakeholders and to draw good practices and lessons.

The multisectoral 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 Reserve.

* Key stockholders includes, government sector offices, communities, NGOs, enterprises like OFWE, private companies, women and youth association, media, federal ministries like Ministry of Forest and Environment

Specific objectives includes creating a framework of collaboration among key stockholders through establishing multisectoral 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 near to 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 empowerment
- Experience sharing
- Enhance corporate responsibility
- Communication and documentation

Expected Result

The overall results of the project include:

- Seven task forces, with a total of about 175 members consisting of relevant stakeholders, that will effectively make joint decisions about the Yayu Biosphere Reserve formed

- 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
- About 100 jobless youths capacitated with fuel briquette production skill and involved in production
- 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
- Establish school clubs in all targeted Woredas and develop one school PHE Club toolkit which helps as a guide and reference for the students
- 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, coffee and honey post-harvest management and value addition and RH/FP issues
- 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 multisectoral 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.

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Network Creation and Capacity Building in Yayu Biosphere Reserve

(July 2014 - December 2015)



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

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

