

## Supporting sustainable coffee production and conservation of forest ecosystems through climate-relevant and integrated landscape management of the Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve



*The Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve*

### Project objectives:

**The overall objective** is to contribute to improved environmental resilience and food security in the Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve (YCFBR) through application of research-oriented and climate-relevant landscape management systems.

**The specific objective** is to let the communities have a sustainable business model for their livelihood activities, and Government plays its role to reduce and reverse deforestation and degradation in YCFBR.

### Background

The Yayu coffee forest Biosphere Reserve is one of Ethiopia's remnant Afromontane forests that harbour the wild populations of Arabica coffee. It is an important gene pool for several plant species important for food, agriculture and forestry purposes. It was designated as a *UNESCO biosphere reserve* in 2010, with the aim of conserving the wild coffee gene pool and overall forest biodiversity, while promoting livelihood improvement of the local communities through sustainable development and wise use of the natural resources. The biosphere reserve, including its transitional and buffer zones, is severely threatened by various detrimental anthropogenic factors such as high population pressure, illegal logging, clearing of undergrowth for coffee cultivation, and other unsustainable uses and exploitation of natural resources by the local communities. The EU supported a Sustainable land management (SLM) project in 6 woredas situated around YCFBR, which purpose was to reduce anthropogenic impact on the protected area through protection of degraded landscape and enhancement of community livelihoods. The SLM project had positive outcomes in terms of land management (physical and biological soil and water conservation), and in community infrastructure and livelihood development. However, SLM project required additional support to improve livelihoods through coffee development and marketing, and develop the missing link between research and development.

### The theory of change

The main outcomes of the project are:

- the YCFBR core areas, buffer zone and transition areas are protected and sustainably conserved through integrated landscape governance;
- the income of local communities in the buffer and transitional zones of the Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve are increased and their livelihood enhanced; mapping of potential forest coffee area per level of degradation;

- Geographic Indication (GI) for certification of forest coffee is adopted to improve the recognition and value of coffee from the area in the market.

In order to achieve these outcomes, the DeSIRA project supports and implements climate smart landscape management approaches, research and innovation approaches, learning and extension approaches, market approaches for coffee, and creation of linkages with other similar initiatives.

The research activities follow participatory approaches aiming at producing knowledge and solutions for ensuring sustainable intensification of agricultural landscapes; promoting efficient utilization of resources and ecosystem services; promoting climate resilience and mitigation measures; supporting actions to preserve the agro-biodiversity in order to reduce the impact of external and internal drivers of land degradation and finally characterizing and profiling of wild *Coffea arabica*.

To ensure effective and efficient implementation, the project supports technical and institutional capacity building for government and local communities. The project further seeks to interact with policy makers through a High-level Partners Forum and a multi-stakeholders' platform.

As part of its scaling up strategy in adjacent biosphere reserves, such as Kaffa and Sheka Biosphere Reserves, the project will document best practices, lessons, methodology and tools generated by research and innovative approaches. As an effect of local institutional capacity strengthening, the government has integrated the project approach and results into their plan and implement relevant actions themselves. Furthermore, community organizations develop and implement their plan independently or with little support to improve landscape, natural resources and economic activities management.

Scaling up project's results at country level will be encouraged by integrating such activities into local government planning with possible replication in all forest coffee growing areas, and through better private sector involvement to support local communities' economic activities. This is expected to materialise through capacity building workshops including training of trainers and communication activities.



**Figure: Impact pathways diagram**

The **main activities** include:

- Protection of the reserve and landscape management: participatory land use planning at community level; promotion of participatory forest management; mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and climate actions in local government planning; development of scaling up methodologies for replicable landscape management model ;
- Improvement of livelihoods: Provision of agricultural extension services for farmers; promotion of the Gender Household Approach (GHA) through workshops & training experts of the local

- institutions; promotion of environmental-friendly enterprise models to enhance women's decision-making process and income generating activities;
- Valorisation of forest products: establishment of coffee nurseries, mapping of potential forest coffee areas including their level of degradation, development and dissemination of models of sustainable production practices;
  - Marketing of coffee and forest products: Review of the legal options for Geographic Indication for coffee; compilation and documentation on traceability and marketing of products from the YCFBR; documentation and dissemination of research findings on legal issues and marketing opportunities on Geographic Indication for coffee; development of a strategic document on market and incentives for YCFBR forest products (Coffee, honey & spices)
  - Scaling up activities: promotion of policy advocacy using research outputs, documented lessons and synthesis of experiences and best practices; Support to existing platforms and promote different forums to advance the exchange of experiences among different partners and stakeholders; capacity building of trainers, public services, and local communities.

### **Organisation:**

The project work packages are implemented by the project consortium members lead by HRNS as follows:

- 1 Protection of the Yayu Coffee Forest Biosphere Reserve core areas, buffer zone and transition areas. Implemented by Population Health Environment Ethiopia;
- 2 Improvement of the livelihood of farming communities. Implemented by HRNS, with some tasks to be covered by the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority (ECTA);
- 3 Certification of Forest Coffee. Implemented by ECTA in collaboration with the Environment and Coffee Forest Forum (ECFF)
- 4 Development and adoption of scalable landscape management model for the preservation of the YCFBR. Implemented by ECTA and ECFF
- 5 Definition of model for Training and participation of women in climate planning and landscape management. Implemented by HRNS
- 6 Identification and piloting of market incentives. Implemented by International Coffee Partners

As lead NGO, *Hanns R. Neumann Foundation* (HRNS) is responsible for the overall coordination of the project. Under the leadership of HRNS, the Strategic Management Team (SMT) is composed of representatives from all implementing partners. The SMT is responsible for the overall strategic coordination and direction, providing guidance to facilitate proper project implementation.

The governance of the project will be assured by a High-level Partners Forum that will include representative of the concerned line ministries, farmer organisations and of the regional authorities that support policy implementation and law enforcement in YCFBR.

Project implementation and supervision of technical matters is handled by the Senior Technical Team that is comprised of a panel of experts from implementing partners.

### **Implementing organizations:**

The project is implemented by a consortium consisting led by Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (International NGO)

### **Partners of the project**

- Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Development and Marketing (Government institution);
- Jimma Agricultural Research Center (represented by Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research);
- Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (local NGO);
- Environment and Coffee Forest Forum (local NGO);

- International Coffee Partners GMBH

### Other main stakeholders:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and deconcentrated Regional Bureaux and District offices,
- Ministry of Plan and Development,
- Private sector working on coffee value chain,
- Local communities and their institutions such as Forest Management Cooperatives

### Localisation:

The project is implemented in six Woredas (Districts) located in Yayu Forest Coffee Biosphere Reserve, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

### Funding and co-funding:

- EU funding: € 4,150,000
- Partners co-financing: € 415,000

### Duration:

- 30 August 2021 - 30 August 2025

