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SWFLG Briefing Note 14: Household Income and Community Management of Forests

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## Household Income and Community Management of Forests

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WCC-PFM  
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## Summary

The Wild Coffee Conservation through Participatory Forest Management (WCC-PFM) Project is a specially designed project to test the application of PFM to the *in situ* conservation of wild coffee genetic resources in parts of the southwest rainforests of Ethiopia. This briefing note summarises results of an independent assessment of the impact of the project on household income and community perceptions of control over and motivation to manage forests.

The project has succeeded in increasing the participation of men and women in forest management, their sense of forest ownership feeling and motivation to manage it. The average score of forest ownership feeling is 8.14/10 after the project compared to 1.86/10 beforehand. Motivation to manage is 8.86/10 after the project compared to 1.14/10 before the project. Higher market prices and improved production and processing contributed to a 69% increase in household income from coffee and a 275% increase from honey. The use patterns of forest products shifted in favour of maintenance of the forest and its biodiversity. Nonetheless, some minority groups and poorer households heavily dependent on the forest were negatively affected due to the increased regulation of access to forest resources enforced by got-level (village) PFM groups.

## Methodology

Assessment was undertaken by interviewing randomly selected sample households and using community group discussion (CGD) to compare the situations 'before' and 'after' the project. Nine CGDs comprising 79 individuals and 48 household heads drawn from 16 Forest Management Groups, 2 cooperatives and one woreda level Forest Management Association participated in the study. This represents 29% of the total Forest Management Groups facilitated by the project. The samples comprised male (86%) and female (14%) members of the community from eight different ethnic groups.

## Perception of level of control and motivation to manage forest

Ownership feeling and motivation to conserve the forest were positively and strongly influenced by the project. For ownership feeling, the average score out of 10 was 8.14 after the project compared to 1.86 before the project.

Motivation to manage resulted in an average score of 8.86 after the project compared to 1.14 before the project (Figures 1 & 2). Before the project, the community used to consider the forest government property and cared little to manage it. The motivation at this time was to 'steal' products from the forest for sale and subsistence use, and there was a race for claiming forestland for conversion.

Today, the community considers the forest as their own property, and exercises various forest management practices to conserve it. Gender wise, women's ownership feeling score before the project was particularly low (1.00) compared to that of men (1.89). After the project women's ownership feeling was much higher than that of men (9.00 vs 8.11 respectively). This could be due to the fact that women had not been consulted on issues of forest management prior to the WCC-PFM project, whereas through the project there has been an equal emphasis on female as well as male participation.

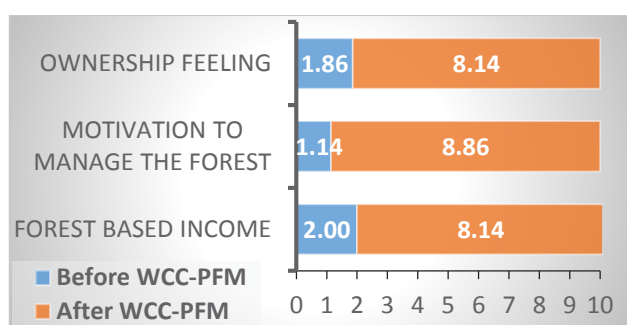


Figure 1: Community level perceptions on forest ownership feeling, forest management and household income before and after the WCC-PFM Project

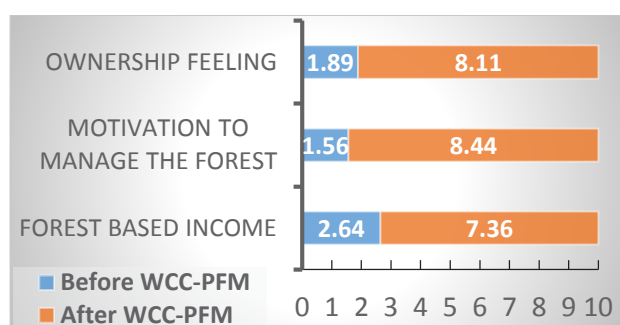


Figure 2: Household level perceptions on forest ownership feeling, forest management motivation and household income before and after the WCC-PFM Project



Tending traditional beehive in the forest canopy

## Forest based income

Household income from coffee and honey has been increased by the WCC-PFM Project. Average household income from coffee is 46,935.21 Birr/yr after the project compared to 9,921.05 Birr/yr before the project (Table 1). This change was due in part to higher coffee prices and in part to the project's improvements in the harvesting, production and processing of the coffee (Table 1).

Around 14.53% of the increase, equivalent to 6,818.23 Birr/yr/household (hh), was attributed directly to the project intervention. Revenue from honey also increased, from 923.27 Birr/hh/yr before the project to 9,786.11 Birr/yr/hh after the project. Around 35.3%, equivalent to 3,457 Birr/yr/hh, of this increased honey income was directly attributed to the project.

Income source	Quantity (kg)		Price (birr/ kilo)		Revenue generated		Attribution to the project	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	%	Value (Birr)
Coffee	1345	2982	7.4	18	9,921	46,925	14.53	6,818
Honey	111	226	8.2	43	923	9786	35.33	3,457

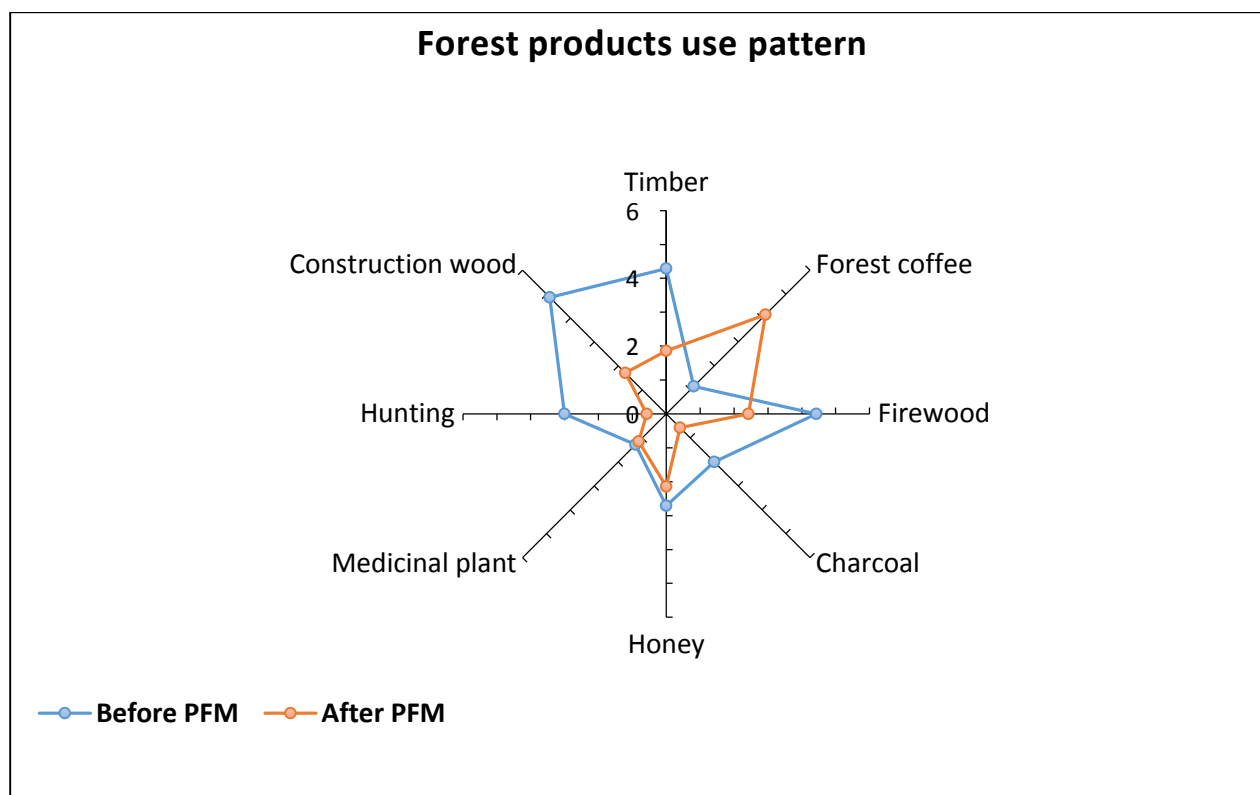
*Table 1. Coffee and Honey income changes due to WCC-PFM project in 2014/15 in Sheko woreda*

## Forest product use pattern

Compared to the open access situation before the WCC-PFM project, forest product use is now strictly regulated. Unsustainable timber (lumber), firewood and construction wood production predominated before the project. The use of these products was considerably reduced after the project (Figure 3).

The communities have developed strategies to adapt to the new situation of regulated forest product access such as a more economic and efficient use of forest products.

However, the new arrangement has also negatively affected the Manja and Guba-cara minority groups that used to depend entirely on the forest for livelihoods. The project attempted to create opportunities for some of the affected individuals by incorporating them into the Wild Forest Product Marketing Cooperative and others as collectors of the wild coffee, but not all those affected were addressed. This is something the project will seek to redress in the future.



*Figure 3: Shift in product use pattern before and after WCC-PFM project*

## Conclusion

The WCC-PFM project has had a positive impact in many areas. It has positively changed the attitude of men and women towards forest management; forest based income has been enhanced; drivers of deforestation and forest degradation reversed, and forest product use pattern has been changed in favour of conservation.

Future actions should focus on creating livelihood options for all affected households and individuals, and also on building government capacity to provide continuous and quality services to the community.

## South West Forests and Landscapes Grouping

SWFLG is an informal grouping of organisations which are interested in the development of an ecologically sound and socio-economically sensitive approach to the management of the south west landscapes of Ethiopia. The members of the grouping to date are: University of Huddersfield (UK), Ethio-Wetlands & Natural Resources Association and Sustainable Livelihood Action/Wetland Action EEIG (the Netherlands). They have been partners in projects funded by the EU and several other international donors since 1996 and have built up specific expertise in the areas outlined above.

The grouping currently has two projects in this area besides the recently completed NTFP-PFM Project. These are:

**Wild Coffee Conservation by Participatory Forest Management Project (WCC-PFM)** led by the University of Huddersfield with contributions from EWNRA and SLA and funding from the European Union, the Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre and Network and the UK Government Darwin Initiative.

**REDD+ Participatory Forest Management in South West Ethiopia (REPAFMA-SW Ethiopia)** led by Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association in association with the Development Fund of Norway with contributions from SLA and UoH, and funding from NORAD.

*The Project is implemented with financial contributions from the European Union Delegation to Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Centre and the Darwin Initiative of the British Government. The authors are solely responsible for the views expressed in this document and they do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.*

## WCC-PFM Project Summary

The “Wild Coffee Conservation by Participatory Forest Management” (WCC-PFM) Project seeks to test and fine-tune PFM so that it can contribute to *in situ* conservation of wild coffee in the forests in southwest Ethiopia. At present the project is working in parts of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS).

The focus of this approach to *in situ* conservation is the engagement of the communities so that they own and lead the process of PFM and forest management plan development and implementation. The plans include different forest management practices - development, protection and utilisation, including activities to ensure *in situ* conservation. The PFM process is driven by the way in which rights can be devolved to communities and forest-based enterprises developed which help forests become an attractive land use for communities, competing against other land uses and so “pay their way”.

Further details can be found at:

<http://wetlandsandforests.hud.ac.uk/forests.html>

All SWFLG Briefing Notes can be found at:

[http://wetlandsandforests.hud.ac.uk/wcc\\_publications.html](http://wetlandsandforests.hud.ac.uk/wcc_publications.html)

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## Project Funding Agencies



European Union,  
Environment Budget



Horn of Africa  
Regional Environment  
Centre and Network



Darwin Initiative of the  
UK Government

## Project Partners



The University of  
Huddersfield



Ethio-Wetlands and Natural  
Resources Association.



Sustainable Livelihood Action



Ethiopian Institute of  
Biodiversity



Southern Nations, Nationalities  
& Peoples Regional State,  
Bureau of Agriculture