

Eco-region approach stimulates livelihood changes and resilience in Bale Region of Ethiopia

By [Desalegne Tadesse \(IWMI\)](#)

Farmer Fatum Shiadem in the coffee village-
Photo Desalegne Tadesse (IWMI)



Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE-BER) is helping Ethiopian farmers and their families in the Bale Eco-region in improving their livelihoods and to become drought resilient through an integrated approach Bale Eco-region. This is done by **conserving biodiversity, ecosystems services and increasing resilience and well-being of highland-midland-lowland communities.** The Eco-regional and integrated approach of the project incorporates demographic aspects and other multi-sectors that address the drivers of natural resources degradation at scale. The positive impacts of the project was boldly observed and remarked by the High-level Forum meeting and field visits held from 1-4

January 2017.

A High Level Partners (HLP) meeting was held followed by field visits demonstrating progress of the project, with discussions and reflections as the main components of the event. With the presence of the HLPF chairs, H.E. Kebede Yimam, State Minister-Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MEFCC), H.E. Dr. Kaba Urgessa, State Minister-ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR),

SHARE BER project Board chairman and
deputy chairing the High-level session
-Photo Desalegne Tadesse (IWMI)



many other dignitaries and target community attended the meeting and field visits to different sites of the project. The HLP forum also listened on the progress reports, reviewed it and gave direction on ways forward.

REFLECTION BY SOME MEMBERS OF THE HIGH LEVEL FORUM

- How do you describe the alignment of the project with national priorities?



“From the beginning, the project was designed in the way that fits into global and national priorities mainly it accounts CRGE, the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) II and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). So, there is no doubt about the alignment of the project with national initiatives. It significantly contributes to build resilience to climate change effects by sustaining ecosystem services through improving natural resource management”, **H.E. Ato Kebede Yimam** Minister-MECC. He also shared his impression, “I am really fascinated by the harmony and coordination of the five different implementers working together to improve the livelihoods of the people in the region. This is an exemplary lesson to mobilize resources and skills for common goal”.

- How do you describe the SHARE PROJECT?



“SHARE BER Project broke through the traditional approach of doing research for development business, in Ethiopia. Closing the loop between the two key sectors generating and feeding evidences into each other to exercise adaptive learning process in development efforts is one of the major gaps that challenges effectiveness of major development efforts in Ethiopia. It is more so in Natural Resources Management for Resilient Eco-system Services. With advent of climate change and increasing competition for land and water, SHARE BER project conceived that eco-regional approaches and integrating research into development effort is an effective way of addressing challenges and enabling future sustainability” –Dr. [Amare Haileselassie, Head of IWMI East Africa & Nile Basin Office](#)

- What is your impression about the project and field observations?

“Its integrated approach to address multi-faceted natural resource management problems and achievements within short period are very impressive and best way to bring impact in the lives of the small holder farmers and environment. While reviewing the performance of the project, we found that it is very promising and aligned with the priorities of government, in particular with [Climate Resilience Green Economy strategy](#) of the country. Now it is time to think about its sustainability” - **H.E. Dr. Kaba Urgessa**, State Minister-MoANR ”



- **How do you explain the unique features and key achievements of SHARE BER project?**



“The project’s unique features are 1) its Eco-regional approach with appropriate interventions that fit the agro-ecologies (Highland, Medium and Lowland) 2) Implementation of holistic interventions through using multi-sectoral taskforces and platforms as mechanism 3) Implementation of the project through establishing consortium of implementing members based on their excellence but acting as one organization 4) Incorporation of research into the project and 5) alignment to government structure and partnership working modalities. Since its launching about two years ago to date, there are promising results that has big benefits and learning for the local areas, the region and national levels. The changes brought in family planning utilization, the efforts made in creating resilient households through introducing of CSA technologies, establishment of water platforms and the trusts created among implementing partner are major achievements.” **Ato Negash Teklu, PHEEC Executive Director.**



“ We had the opportunity to ask individuals from the community how this project has made an impact in their lives. One particular conversation that stood out for me is a farmer who now uses transitional beehives which produce three times more honey than the traditional beehives. He has managed to increase his savings and pay for schooling for all his children. This investment in future generations is as a result of the project. Focusing on resource management, evidence through research, capacity development of communities and local institutions, identifying local markets, understanding the impacts of rapid population growth, climate change within the varying context we work in is an exciting journey that garners practical learnings towards development plans. We want to ensure all stakeholders are part of this conversation. ”- **Yasmin Abdulwassie**, Country Director of Farm Africa

SHARE-BER is the European Union funded project, implemented by five consortium members: [Farm Africa](#) (the lead), [IWMI](#), [SOS Sahel](#), [Population Health and Environment Ethiopia](#) (PHEE) Consortium and [Frankfurt Zoological Society](#) (FZS). The purpose of the project is to improve the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the well-being of highland and lowland communities in Bale Eco-region.

The project directly benefits 878,000 people living in the BER and also indirectly up to 12 million people residing in the downstream area who use the rivers as part of daily consumption who benefit from the BER ecosystem. **Natural environment & ecosystems, markets & economic sustainability and building response & strong institutions** are priority interventions areas of SHARE BER.