



**EthioTrees Quarterly Activity
Report Q2-2020**

July 2020

1) Introduction

In this short quarterly report, EthioTrees presents its most relevant activities in Q2-2020. We continued on the activity report from April (Q1). This approach allows progressive insights on ongoing activities, without losing the overall context of the running project activities.

The aim is non-technical: for the technical summaries, we refer to the annual reports of Plan Vivo.

A short note on COVID-19

In Ethiopia, the first coronavirus case was reported on 13 March 2020, while in Tigray the first coronavirus case was reported on 7 May 2020. There has been a massive awareness creation campaign on the impact of COVID-19, through television, social media and radio. In addition to implementing national rules, the Tigray region declared a 15-day state of emergency on March 26 and the state of emergency was expanded to three months and then again to the end of August.

Due to those problems, the communities in our project areas were in lockdown. Citizens were restricted to go to the city, which is problematic for jobless young people. Concerning the implementation of activities, several trainings and community meetings were delayed. Supplies of industrial materials like cement and transportation vehicles were also in short supply.

General and ongoing activities

Activity group and project aim	On track?	Achievement in 2020
Dissemination of project results		
<i>EthioTrees tries to share its project insights both locally and internationally, in order to create a broad support base and awareness beyond the boundaries of the project zone.</i>	OK!	<p>In March 2020, EthioTrees, UGent and School-Watsani together applied for a project proposal to set up an information campaign on the Covid-19 virus in the project area, as well as several hand washing facilities.</p> <p>In December 2019, the “regreening Ethiopia” piece is going out at various times on BBC World News, featuring Seifu Gebresillasie (EthioTrees) – here is a link to the online version:</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-50693249/making-ethiopia-green-again</p>
<i>We support the creation of a network to win the recognition for Dogua Tembien as an official UNESCO Global Geopark. EthioTrees cooperates with the Springer (publishing house) initiative to finalize a “tourist” GeoGuide for the Tembien Highlands.</i>	Ongoing	EthioTrees plans to set-up the organizational structure of the Geopark in 2020; the UNESCO audit would be scheduled in 2021.



Figure 1: Rock church at the project enclosure of Lafa, where plenty of grivet monkeys (upper left) and rock hyrax (lower left) can be observed. This is one of the geosites to be rehabilitated in the EthioTrees - Unesco project.

Other collaborations

After the VLIR-South Initiative ends between Ghent University (Belgium) and Mekelle University (Ethiopia), we aim to attract extra funding opportunities.

OK

Over the course of 2019, five Ethiopian MSc. students and 2 Belgian MSc. students enrolled in the South Initiative programme, supported by EthioTrees. All 7

		<p>students performed field work in the EthioTrees sites. In Q1-2020, we ended the Initiative.</p> <p>Based on the research on water quality and drinking water purification methods, EthioTrees submitted a new proposal at the KBF to set up drinking water facilities in May Genet, Adi Lihtsi and Togoga. By June 2020, the KBF project was approved. Thus, later in 2020, EthioTrees will support rainwater harvesting structures at the schools of Adi Lihtsi and Afedena, the establishment of an irrigation cooperative in May Genet, a chlorine water purifier in Togoga and one or more groundwater wells.</p>
<i>EthioTrees aims for further organic project growth, involving more communities if citizens are willing to participate.</i>	OK	<p>Thanks to a recently approved Ashoka fund, EthioTrees will expand with three new exclosures: Debremehati and Dawisra, equivalent to 926 ha and 308 ha, and Hawahiw.</p> <p>In 2020, four new site facilitators were hired as well as two new project employees.</p>
<i>EthioTrees holds regular platform meetings with stakeholders such as government and non-government actors, to integrate a shared understanding on project activities and to develop common plans.</i>	OK	<p>In 2020, EthioTrees held platform meetings with stakeholders from the regional bureau of agriculture, regional REDD+, SLM, Caritas and WeForest, Trees For Farmers, as well as the agricultural office of the Woreda (natural resource protection).</p>

2. Community meetings

Activity group and project aim	On track?	Achievement in 2020
Plan Vivo mapping		
<p><i>The project works closely with rural households near young exclosures in different villages in Dogua Tembien. During the first phases of the project activities, awareness, acceptance and participation of these rural communities in the project are assessed. Plan Vivo maps are constructed. At each exclosed area, the project engages a group of 10-40 landless farmers of different gender and age. A landless farmer represents a household without valid land certificate. The project aims to engage farmers under a 50-50% gender balance.</i></p>	OK	<p>To date, all EthioTrees exclosures have Plan Vivo maps. Maps for Hawahiw, Debremehati and Dawisra are being drafted.</p> <p>Associations elect a representative through a democratic election. The members of the association are 'under rotation' responsible to manage a part of the exclosure (including the daily management) and able to benefit from ecosystem services from the exclosure.</p>
		
<p>Figure 2: (a & b) Meeting with youngsters at the May Genet and May Bati site for participation on NTFP and setting up an irrigation project; (c) meeting with the community of Dedebeben.</p>		

Gender equality and empowerment

As an “experiment”, EthioTrees organized an awareness creation session with regards to the plan vivo planning of the project separately for men and women committees in May Genet. Thus, the village existing map and the future map were designed in separate groups, showing the impact of gender on the spatial planning priorities of the village. Results and follow-up were discussed in April 2020.



Figure 3: (a and b) Focus groups preparing plan vivo maps for women and men separately. In May Genet, we aim to start an irrigation project in 2020; (c) Community meeting in Emne Kelalu (Mestilal Afras).

Trainings

After ‘plan vivo’ maps are established, EthioTrees organizes discussions sessions and trainings to optimally manage a part of the exclosure (guarding proccess, enrichment planting of trees, soil and water conservation, honey production, frankincense cultivation, limited timber production, grasses for livestock feeding in stable). We aim for (minimum) one training per exclosure per year.

On track

In 2020, we held **15 trainings and meetings** to focus on the following:

- (i) Exclosure management
A main purpose is to learn how to keep the exclosure healthy and how to evaluate the guarding system.
- (ii) Seedling planting
Here we focus on pit excavation for planting seedlings in the exclosure and how to

		<p>manage young seedlings to improve the survival rate.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Social trainings</u> In this training, we learn how young landless farmers can gain income from NTFP.</p>
<i>EthioTrees aims for training sessions that have direct economic impact, especially related to NTFP.</i>	Ongoing	<p>To illustrate the impact of training on NTF production, the price evolution of frankincense (before and after project intervention) evolved from 28 ETB /kg to 50-60 ETB/kg. With an average of 4500 kg / association, this delivers an added value of + 144 000 ETB/year (association). The price of honey went from 200 to 400 ETB/kg with the installation of an extractor machine (while 1 beehive delivers app. 50 kg / year).</p>



Figure 4: (a & b) Training session with the community of Amanit; (c) Meeting with citizens of Adi Keshof and Gestate, where in total 224 citizens participated (154M, 70F).

3. Tree planting, soil and water conservation and water harvesting


Activity group and project aim	On track?	Achievement in 2020
Natural regeneration		
<p><i>The project assists the natural regeneration of the indigenous vegetation, partly through improved management and partly through enrichment planting activities. Enrichment planting to further support the forestation activity and to support biodiversity improvements focusses on indigenous vegetation (Olea, Juniperus, Dodonea, Cordia, Celtis, Acacia); Eucalyptus is not planted in the project areas.</i></p> <p><i>We aim for an implemented high-quality guarding system in every exclosure, and aim to install SWC in every exclosure every year.</i></p>	Ongoing	<p>The project implements soil and water conservation activities, including stone bunds, soil bunds, percolation ponds and moisture harvesting structures such as 'half moons' to trap runoff water. The project monitors biodiversity, including both plants and trees as well as (qualitatively) animals (mammals and birds).</p> <p>The survival rate of planted seedlings in 2019 is 56.1%.</p>
		
<p><i>Figure 5 (a, b): Moisture harvesting activities at Chelaqo and Teakuro. In 2020, we installed a lot of percolation ponds with the size of 3x1x1m (In Zeban Dake 24, in Katina Ruba 24, in Gojam Sefra 22, in Adi Meles 26, in Chelaqo 24 and in Teakuro 24).</i></p>		



Figure 6: Seedling planting at Meam Atal in 2020, with application of post planting management.



Figure 7: Seedling irrigation at the Meam Atal site (Togoga).

4. Socioecological investments

Activity group and project aim	On track?	Achievement in 2020
Reservoir construction		
<p><i>EthioTrees aims to support at least one socioecological investment per village per year.</i></p> <p><i>Access to safe drinking water is one of the most pressing issues in the villages of the North Ethiopian Highlands. Several communities decided to address this issue by investing the Plan Vivo credits in drinking water reservoirs.</i></p>	Ongoing	<p>In 2020, new ponds were excavated in different villages. In all sites, there was participation of communities (on road maintenance and soil embankments arrangements to access the sites by machinery).</p> <p>We also aim to focus on reservoir improvement.</p>



Figure 8: In Adi Keshefo, a new pond was excavated (537m^3 soil was excavated and 192 m^2 stone masonry wall to support the reservoir).



Figure 9: See next page.



Figure 9: New water reservoirs were constructed in Adi Lihisti village, in Horye Gidimi (40x15x5m), in Meam Atali (expansion with 71.75 m³ and 105.7 m stone masonry), in Adilal (21 x 18.5 x 3 m), in Mitsilal Aferas (Emnekelelu) (33 x 60 x 1.2 m), and in the village of Walta.

Water quality experiments and investments		
<i>Access to safe drinking water is one of the most pressing issues in the villages of the North Ethiopian Highlands. Several communities decided to address this issue by investing the Plan Vivo credits in better quality drinking water.</i>	Ongoing	<p>By December 2019, several community meetings took place in Meam Atal with the two Belgium students on how to assess the problem of water quality and how to solve such issues on household and village level.</p> <p>Fencing of ponds is important to keep cattle out, as these are important sources of water contamination. A fence was constructed in Adilihtsi.</p> <p>A chlorine filter (water purification) with solar pump is planned in Meam Atali and in Adi Lihtsi in 2020.</p>
Homestead feeding		
<i>As indicated in all PES agreements, both the associations, other customary NTFP users and the village councils pledge to monitor and counter potential displaced grazing. Livestock feeding in the stable (i.e. through feed boxes) is thus stimulated through trainings, installation of feeding boxes and drinking boxes. Observations of displaced grazing are reported.</i>	Ongoing	<p>EthioTrees selected 44 people from Adi Lihitsi and Meam Atali and provided them with 1.5 quintal - 2 quintal cement and plaster. The participants collected sand and stone masonry to construct feeding boxes at the side wall of their houses.</p> <p>EthioTrees encouraged grass collection from exclosure by cut and carry system.</p>



Figure 10: (a and b) Making a cattle feeding box and drinking spot inside the houses of Meam Atal with supporting cement – in order to save the animal fodder from wastage; (c) In 2020, three extra information boards were constructed to facilitate the spread of the project aims (in Maem Atal, Amanit and Afedena).

School construction

As indicated in all PES agreements, investments can be made to tackle pressing social issues, as long as the environmental regeneration in the exclosures is well addressed by the village.

Ongoing

In several sites there was participation of community members on road maintenance, soil and water conservation and school construction works. In Afedena specifically, the community decided to invest part of the plan vivo credits for the construction of the school.

In 2020, EthioTrees also started to construct new buildings for 8 classes with the plan vivo credit payments.



Figure 11 (a-c): New school of Afedena constructed with Plan Vivo funds (fixed walls) and current school (built with branches)

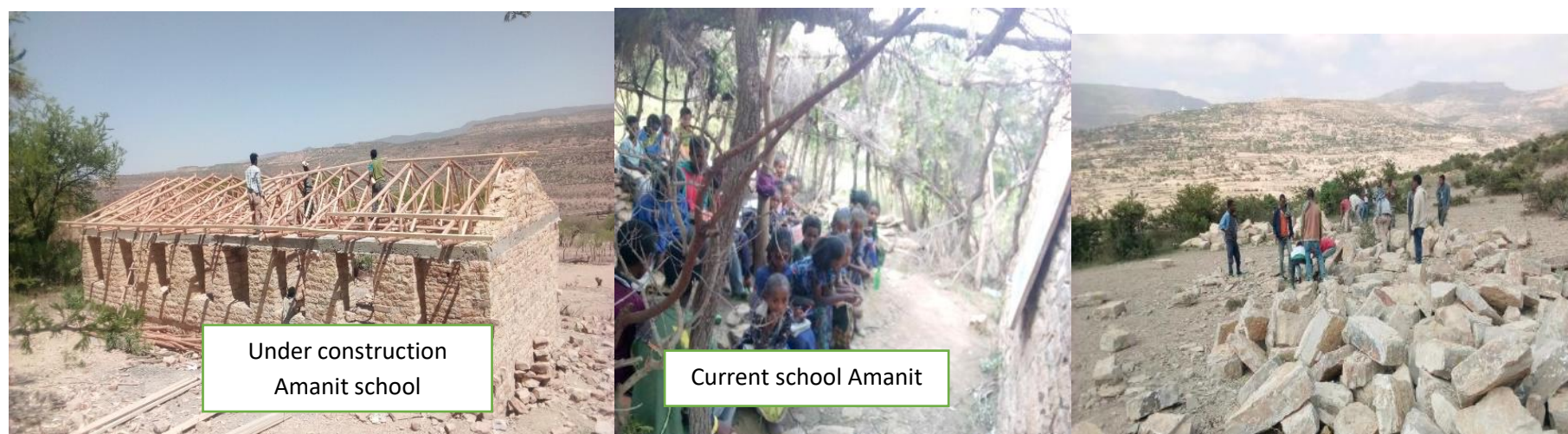



Figure 12 (a, b and c). Constructing masonry wall of the school and the current grade four class on teaching time (Amanit village). In 2020, schools are also built in May Bati and May Genet. We thus started eight classes and 6 classes are under construction.

Social activities		
Activity group and project aim	On track?	Achievement in 2020
<p><i>EthioTrees aims to support the most vulnerable groups in the project area and made an agreement for three years with Tesfays project (http://tesfayblog.blogspot.com/) to support different groups, integrated together with the Woreda Degua Tembien (social affairs).</i></p>	Ok	<p>To soften the social impact of the Covid-lockdown, EthioTrees supported 84 women (74 vulnerable women and 10 HIV victims) through 25kg maize and soap materials for sanitation in 2020. We have also planned to support 30 students from poorer families to obtain school materials in September 2020.</p>
 <p>Figure 13 (a-c) Extra support for female headed households, students, HIV victims and older women</p>		