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International Outlook for Privately Protected Areas

Country Profile: ETHIOPIA

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Introduction:

This country profile is part of a study by the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) summarizing the **legal, policy, and institutional mechanisms used to establish and incentivize privately protected areas (PPAs) in 30 understudied countries.**

PPAs contribute to the achievement of global conservation goals and biodiversity targets by contributing to landscape-scale conservation, connectivity and ecological-representativeness of protected areas.

For the purposes of this profile, an area is considered a PPA if it conforms to the definition agreed upon by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Generally speaking, a PPA's protection must be recognized and durable (with long term conservation intent); it must be governed by a private or non-governmental entity; and it must be governed and managed to meet the general conservation standards of a protected area (PA) as laid out by the IUCN.^{1,2} **Note: Alongside currently existing mechanisms in these countries, this study also references mechanisms that represent *potential opportunities for the creation of PPAs.***

The data in this profile is based on a 2018 desk review of law and policy documents, government reports, publications by multi-lateral organizations, scholarly literature, and other sources. For 28 of the 30 country profiles, data was reviewed by a volunteer in-country expert. We are grateful to these experts, whose names and the profiles they reviewed are listed in the appendix to the [International Outlook for Privately Protected Areas summary report](#).

Finally, this profile is intended to be a living document, which will be updated periodically as more information is submitted and time and resources allow. If you have a contribution, please contact the authors at landconservation@lincolninst.edu.

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¹ Mitchell, B.A., Stolton, S., Bezaury-Creel, J., Bingham, H.C., Cumming, T.L., Dudley, N., Fitzsimons, J.A., Malleret-King, D., Redford, K.H. and Solano, P. (2018). *Guidelines for privately protected areas*. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 29. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 100pp.

² Dudley, N. (ed.) (2008). *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 86pp. WITH Stolton, S., Shadie, P. and Dudley, N. (2013). *IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guidance on Recognising Protected Areas and Assigning Management Categories and Governance Types*, Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 21. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN

ETHIOPIA (*Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*)

Outlook for Private Protected Areas

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1. Dr. Jeminiwa Samuel, Chief Research Fellow, Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria
2. Tarsicio Granizo, Senior Manager on Markets and Bioeconomy, WWF-Ecuador

I. Country Overview

Land Area

Ethiopia's total land area is 100,000,000 hectares (ha). Of this territory, an estimated 36,259,000 (32.83 per cent) is in agricultural use,³ and an estimated 17.2 million ha (15.5 per cent) is forested.⁴ These two categories are not always distinct, given that coffee (Ethiopia's most important export by volume and value) is produced through various types of agroforestry systems.⁵

In total, Ethiopia has 10 ecosystem types, each home to a diverse set of species.⁶ The Ethiopian highlands are of high conservation value not only in terms of biological diversity, but also in the provision of ecosystem services throughout the region. Waters originating in Ethiopia—notably those of the Blue Nile—are the basis of watersheds in the Horn of Africa.⁷

Land Ownership and Tenure

All rural land was nationalized following the 1975 coup and installment of the socialist Derg regime. This policy remains in place under the federal parliamentary system, installed in 1991, though land policy remains at the heart of Ethiopian political debate.⁸ Rights to land are issued as usufruct rights, whereby the landholder may use and profit from the use of the land but may not sell or transfer their use right to another landholder.

Two levels of title, with differing degrees of security, are in use. First level titling was established in rural areas nation-wide in a concerted effort since the late 1990s, certifying usufruct rights to land with a documented pattern of use. Since 2005, the government has engaged in a second wave of more secure

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2014. "Ethiopia." Accessed June 2017. <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=ETH>.

⁴ REDD+ Ethiopia. n.d. "Ethiopia's Context of REDD+." Accessed November 2018. <https://ethiopiareddplus.gov.et/about-redd/ethiopias-context-of-redd/>.

⁵ Observatory of Economic Complexity. 2015. "Ethiopia". Accessed June 2017. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/eth/>.

⁶ Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute. 2015. Ethiopia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/et/et-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

⁷ Moges, Yitebitu and Eyob Tenkir. 2014. Overview of REDD+ Process in Ethiopia. p. 7. <http://www.moa.gov.et/documents/93665/2027219/MINISTRY+FOREST+FINAL+1.pdf/2523d6a1-480d-4497-94fa-fa4112b7353f>.

⁸ Crewett, W., A. Bogale, and B. Korf. 2008. Land Tenure in Ethiopia: Continuity and Change, Shifting Rulers, and the Quest for State Control. CAPRI Working Paper 91. International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2499/CAPRIWP91>.

titling.⁹ The changes of 1975 and the 1990s have dampened the potency of indigenous common resource management systems, though these still influence decision-making among certain groups.¹⁰

Protected Areas in Ethiopia

According to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), about 20,007,400 ha (17.62 per cent) of Ethiopia's land area is covered by federally-and regionally-managed protected areas, all owned by the government.¹¹ (Note: The country's 2015 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) cites that protected areas cover 14 per cent of the total land area.¹² Differences between statistics may be due to differences in methodologies or out of date reporting).

Protected areas are governed by two proclamations: the *Development, Conservation and Utilization of Wildlife Proclamation 541* of 2007 and the *Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority Establishment Proclamation 575* of 2008.¹³ The federal government designates and administers national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and wildlife conservation areas that span more than one region or are transboundary. Regions may also designate national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, as well as wildlife reserves and wildlife-controlled hunting areas. The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (overseen by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism) is the public agency responsible for the development, conservation, and sustainable use of Ethiopia's wildlife resources. Management of protected areas in Ethiopia are threatened by limited financial, legal, and institutional capacity, as well as encroachment and deforestation.¹⁴

II. Law and Policy for Private Land Conservation

Privately-owned Protected Areas

Ethiopian legislation provides no formal definition for, nor way to designate, a privately protected area (PPA).¹⁵

Privately-managed Protected Areas

Public-private partnerships for protected area management have some legislative support in Ethiopia. *Proclamation no. 541 of 2007, To Provide for the Development, Conservation, and Utilization of Wildlife,*

⁹ The Cloudburst Group. 2016. Ethiopia: Strengthening Land Tenure and Administration: Program Endline Report. produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. https://land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/USAID_Land_Tenure_ELTA-ELAP_Impact_Evaluations_Endline_Report.pdf.

¹⁰ Zelealem Tefera Ashenafi, and N. Leader-Williams. 2005. Indigenous Common Property Resource Management in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia. *Human Ecology*, 33, no. 4, p. 540. www.jstor.org/stable/4603586.

¹¹ UNEP-WCMC. 2018. Protected Area Profile for Ethiopia from the World Database of Protected Areas. Accessed November 2018. <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/ETH>.

¹² Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute. 2015. Ethiopia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025. p. 33. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/et/et-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

¹³ Vreugdenhil, Daan, Astrid M. Vreugdenhil, Tamirat Tilahun, Anteneh Shimelis, and Zelealem Tefera, 2012. Gap Analysis of the Protected Areas System of Ethiopia, with technical contributions from Nagelkerke, L., Gedeon, K. Spawls, S., Yalden, D., Lakew Berhanu, and Siegel, L., World Institute for Conservation and Environment, USA. p. 16. Completed on behalf of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority with funding from the GEF/UNDP/SDPASE project. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/ethiopia/docs/gap_analysis_of_the_protected_areas_system_of_ethiopia_part_1%20FINAL.pdf.

¹⁴ Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute. 2015. Ethiopia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025. P. 34.

¹⁵ Stolton, S. and N. Dudley. 2015. Private governance of protected areas in Africa: Cases studies, lessons learnt and conditions of success. p. 96. Equilibrium Research; IIED; under contract to IUCN EARO. http://www.equilibriumresearch.com/upload/document/PA_Governance_in_Africa_-_Final_March_2015.pdf.

indicates that protected areas may be administered by private entities through contracts.¹⁶ Such contracts had already been negotiated prior to the passage of this law.

In 2004, the NGO African Parks was contracted to manage the National Parks of Ethiopia, but it is no longer active in Ethiopia.¹⁷ The African Wildlife Foundation has since been contracted to manage a protected area and continues to do so with the permission of the Ethiopian government (see case study in Section V below).

In such instances of shared governance, the entity with ultimate decision-making power over the area determines whether a protected area satisfies the definition of a PPA as specified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).¹⁸

Church Forests

Perhaps the most notable *de facto* privately protected areas in Ethiopia are church forests, or sacred groves. Generally such forests are no more than 200 ha in area, and are managed by priests and community members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, of which 40-45 per cent of Ethiopia's population are members.¹⁹ The use patterns and degree of protection vary from site to site. Communities rely on these protected groves for non-timber forest products. Some church forests are walled and guarded, while others rely on customary management alone.²⁰

Although each site may be small, the total impact of church forests is large. An estimated 19,400 church forests are to be found in the Ethiopian highlands, protecting a total of 39,000-57,000 ha.²¹ Dotted landscape, they form an important patchwork, are ecologically unique, and represent the best-conserved afro-montane forests in northern Ethiopia.²² Church land is generally government land, conceded upon review of an application made by the religious institution for use of the land.²³ Such an arrangement might be categorized as a privately-managed, government-owned protected area. There is, however, disagreement over the ownership and conservation status of church forests, including the anticipated duration of the landholding agreement. These issues have led to calls for a more systematic legislative

¹⁶ Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia, Federal Negarit Gazeta. 2007. Proclamation no. 541/2007. A proclamation to provide for the development, conservation, and utilization of wildlife. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/eth95249.pdf>.

¹⁷ Nishizaki, Nobuko. 2014. 'Neoliberal Conservation' in Ethiopia: An Analysis of Current Conflicts in and around Protected Areas and their Resolutions. *African Study Monographs*, Supplementary issue 50:191-205. https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/189719/1/ASM_S_50_191.pdf.

¹⁸ Mitchell, B.A., S. Stolton, J. Bezaury-Creel, H.C. Bingham, T.L. Cumming, N. Dudley, J.A. Fitzsimons, D. Malleret-King, K.H. Redford, and P. Solano. 2018. Guidelines for privately protected areas. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 29. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 100pp.

¹⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2005. "International Religious Freedom Report – Ethiopia." Accessed June 2017. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2005/51472.htm>.

²⁰ Aerts R., K. Van Overtveld, E. November, A. Wassie, A. Abiyu, S. Demissew, D.D. Daye, K. Giday, M. Haile, S. Tewolde Berhan, D. Teketay, Z. Teklehaimanot, P. Binggeli, J. Deckers, I. Friis, G. Gratzler, M. Hermy, M. Heyn, O. Honnay, M. Paris, F.J. Sterck, B. Muys, F. Bongers, J.R. Healey. 2016. Conservation of the Ethiopian church forests: Threats, opportunities and implications for their management. *Science of the Total Environment*, 551-552: 404-414. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.02.034>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Reynolds, T.W., K.A. Stave, T.S. Sisay, and A.W. Eshete. 2017. Changes in community perspectives on the roles and rules of church forests in northern Ethiopia: evidence from a panel survey of four Ethiopian Orthodox communities. *International Journal of the Commons*, 11(1): 355–387. <http://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.707>.

²³ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. 2005. "International Religious Freedom Report – Ethiopia." accessed June 2017. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2005/51472.htm>.

approach to supporting sacred grove protection.²⁴ Until these issues are resolved, it is unclear whether these sites fall within the IUCN's definition of PPAs.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)

Ethiopia's most recent NBSAP (2015), submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity for 2015-2025, calls for the increase of perpetually-protected areas to 20 per cent of the national territory, greater participation of local communities in area management plans, and an end to resource gaps that hinder protected area management.²⁵ It does not, however, reflect plans to advance conservation actions by private actors.

III. Financial Incentives for Privately Protected Areas

There are, to the knowledge of the authors, no codified financial incentives for the creation or management of PPAs in Ethiopia. In the absence of tax incentives for conservation, the trade of carbon offsets through UN-REDD+ and parallel structures is crucial to conservation efforts in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority has suggested that the value of ecosystem services and carbon mitigation provided by the country's protected area system far exceeds possible eco-tourism revenues, and thus represents a better opportunity for market-based protected area advancement.²⁶

UN-REDD Program

Ethiopia has been a part of the UN REDD+ Programme since 2008, and it is embedded in the country's Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) Strategy (introduced in 2011).²⁷ Regional REDD+ programs have been initiated in four regional states, with the aim of scaling up to the national level. Through the program, Ethiopia hopes to reduce deforestation/degradation and increase forest cover. The four regional projects are currently in different stages of preparation and implementation.

Payments for Ecosystem Services

Payments for ecosystem services programs are currently under development by the Ministry of Forestry and other interested parties.^{28,29}

²⁴ Aerts et al., 2016. p. 21.

²⁵ Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute. 2015. Ethiopia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025. p. 74.

²⁶ Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority. 2009. The Value of the Ethiopian Protected Area System: Message to Policy Makers. <https://www.cbd.int/financial/values/ethiopia-valueprotectedareas.pdf>.

²⁷ REDD+ Ethiopia. n.d. "Ethiopia's Context of REDD+." Accessed November 2018. <https://ethiopiareddplus.gov.et/>.

²⁸ Global Green Growth Institute. 2016. "Validation workshop on Assessment of forest based Payment for Ecosystem Services opportunities in Ethiopia" Accessed June 2017. http://gggi.org/ai1ec_event/validation-workshop-on-assessment-of-forest-based-payment-for-ecosystem-services-opportunities-in-ethiopia/.

²⁹ Tilahun Kassahun, Habtamu. 2009. Payment for Environmental Services to Enhance Resource Use Efficiency and Labor Participation in Managing and Maintaining Irrigation Infrastructure: The Case of the Upper Blue Nile Basin. A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Cornell University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Professional Studies. http://soilandwater.bee.cornell.edu/Research/international/docs/Thesis_Habtamu_Tilahun_Kassahun.pdf.

IV. Organizations for Private Land Conservation

Government

- Since 1991, management of protected areas has been the responsibility of regional governments. These groups coordinate at the federal level through the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA; established in 2008).³⁰
- The EWCA is within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The ministry is responsible for developing and promoting tourism, as well as promoting and preserving culture and wildlife management (through the EWCA).³¹

Non-governmental

- The Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS) is a non-governmental environmental conservation organization, a member of BirdLife International, and a point-group for protected area activities in-country.³²
- The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) supports wildlife tourism and conservation efforts continent-wide. In Ethiopia, AWF is involved in public-private management plans for Simien Mountain National Park and the Bale Mountain Eco-Region (see case studies in Section V below).³³
- In 2012, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) launched a five-year, USD 9.8 million investment program for the Eastern Ethiopia Afromontane biodiversity hotspot.³⁴ Through 2017, CEPF will support non-governmental conservation activities in the region.

V. Case Studies

Simien Mountain National Park

Simien Mountain was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978, with extensive biodiversity and significant threats to its long-term protection. More than half of the park's grassland is intensively grazed by the herds of local communities, and other human activities threaten soil, watershed, wildlife health.³⁵

To build park capacity, the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (the government entity in charge of the park) contracted with the non-profit African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) in 2012. Since that time, AWF has helped to negotiate with local stakeholders and to advance specific conservation projects, like the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme. The partnership has yielded impressive conservation gains, nearly doubling the wolf population since 2012.³⁶ AWF has also increased tourist revenues, constructed new tourist lodges, trained more than 60 new guides, and invested in socioeconomic development for the

³⁰ Vreugdenhil, et al. 2012. P. 18.

³¹ Ibid. 24.

³² See their website: <http://www.ewnhs.org.et/>.

³³ See their website: <https://www.awf.org/country/ethiopia>.

³⁴ Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. n.d. "Eastern Afromontane." Accessed June 2017. http://www.cepf.net/where_we_work/regions/africa/eastern_afromontane/Pages/default.aspx.

³⁵ African Wildlife Foundation. 2017. Changing the Face of Conservation in Ethiopia. *BrightFunds*, April 4, 2017. <https://www.brightfunds.org/stories/changing-the-face-of-conservation-in-ethiopia>.

³⁶ Wilber, Hannah. 2017. Protecting the Unparalleled Simien Mountains. *African Wildlife Foundation Blog*, March 16, 2017. <http://www.awf.org/blog/protecting-unparalleled-simien-mountains>.

surrounding communities, such as by building a school.³⁷ As mentioned above, whether or not this example is considered a PPA depends on whether the government or the NGO ultimately has decision-making power over the area.³⁸

³⁷ Conservation Capital. n.d. "Case Study 8—New Conservation Economies: pioneering conservation tourism in Ethiopia's National Parks." Accessed June 2017. <http://www.conservation-capital.com/new-conservation-economies>.

³⁸ Mitchell, et al. 2018.