



## MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY INTO ECONOMIC SECTORS IN ETHIOPIA

- The 'Pathway to Prosperity' proposed by Ethiopia's 2021-2030 National Development Plan aims to ensure inclusive and equitable development. However, such development is highly dependent on biodiversity, which is already under pressure.
- A new report assessing the status, trends and threats to biodiversity and ecosystems in Ethiopia aims to inform policy makers and feed science-policy dialogues to ensure sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.
- Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry are priority economic sectors to be engaged in a multi-stakeholder dialogue at national and landscape levels to mainstream biodiversity in their voluntary commitments for an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

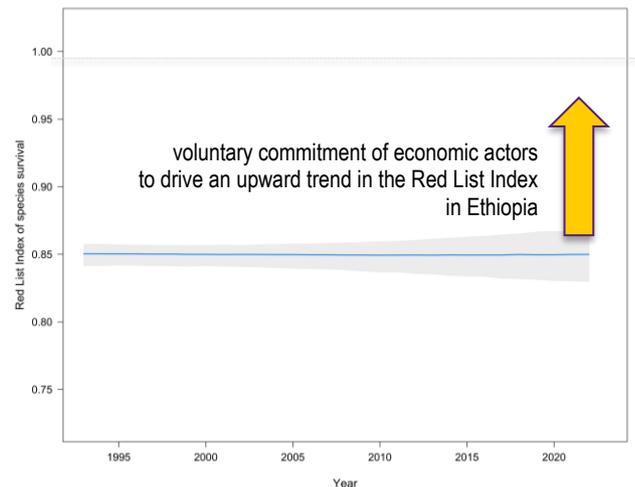


Figure 1: Biodiversity trend in Ethiopia (IUCN Red List Index). Restoring natural habitats and reducing threats to biodiversity are two complementary ways to reverse the curve of biodiversity decline.

## ETHIOPIA'S BIODIVERSITY AT RISK

Ethiopia is one of the top 25 biodiversity-rich countries in the world, and hosts two of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots, the Eastern Afromontane and the Horn of Africa hotspots (Ethiopia EBI Ecosystem Assessment 2021). This incredible richness offers invaluable ecosystem goods and services that benefit human population and their well-being.



Land use and land use changes are the primary drivers of biodiversity loss in agriculture based livelihood system. Haremma forest. ©Tom Parker

The country has 93 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and 127 Terrestrial Protected Areas (PAs), including inland waters, 121 of which are national designation type and 6 international designations type. Ethiopian KBAs and

protected areas do concentrate a lot of the rich biodiversity within the country.

The 'Pathway to Prosperity' recognizes the integrated nature of development and the need for multi-sectorial solutions and integrates cross-cutting issues such as climate change, green growth and the environment. However, the 'Pathway to prosperity' is built on the modernisation of economic sectors which rely heavily on natural resources, such as agriculture. Ethiopia's biodiversity potential is therefore undermined by multiple anthropogenic factors, most of which stem from a few economic activities.

To address the major causes of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, the government has put in place a range of policy, institutional and legislative frameworks. One of the concrete strategic actions is the design and implementation of a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), currently under revision for the period 2021-2030. The active contribution of the private sector is expected to achieve the national development vision and the biodiversity strategy.

## TACKLING ECONOMIC THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

The [BIODEV2030 initiative](#) being implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

in Ethiopia, aims to accelerate the mainstreaming of biodiversity into economic sectors which are key to biodiversity (BIO-) and development (-DEV), to ‘bend the curve’ of biodiversity decline and promote more sustainable and resilient economies.

In the context of BIODEV2030, a study was conducted to provide a scientific overview and assessment of the main threats to biodiversity and to inform voluntary commitments at national and sectoral levels. This study identifies direct threats with the greatest impact on biodiversity and the economic sectors driving them for prioritisation in engagement through the BIODEV2030 project.

Using a combination of three complementary approaches - the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric, expert assessment and literature review -, the analysis reveals that agriculture, livestock & ranching and logging & wood harvesting are the most significant threats to biodiversity across the KBAs. Cereal and coffee production were also identified as critical sub-sectors of agriculture.

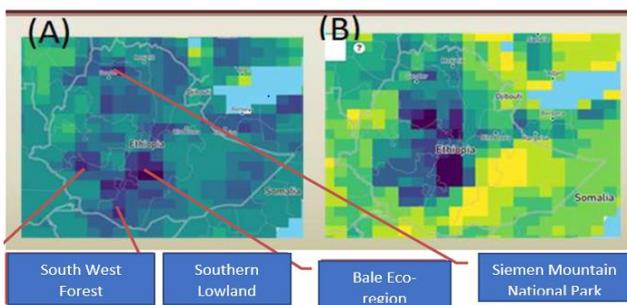


Figure 2: Maps of Ethiopia showing the STAR Threat Abatement score (map A) and STAR restoration score (Map B). Deep blue areas are those with the highest STAR scores and potential for threat abatement and restoration

The spatial dimension of the STAR metric also highlighted eco-regions and KBAs with the highest potential for threat abatement and restoration in the country. They include the Simien Mountains National Park, Bale Mountains (Bale Mts National Park and Haremma forest), South-West highland forests and southern lowlands.

Two eco-regions were pinpointed for an in-depth assessment and the mobilization of economic actors for voluntary commitments:

- (1) South-West natural forest, where coffee production and small-scale logging & wood harvesting are responsible for deforestation and biodiversity loss
- (2) Bale eco-region where cereal crops, livestock rearing and open grazing, small-scale logging and wood harvesting are jointly responsible for habitat conversion and loss.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively conserve Ethiopia’s biodiversity, the study recommends that:

- **Agriculture, livestock & ranching and logging & wood harvesting are prioritised for engagement** when setting voluntary commitments through BIODEV2030.
- **Commitments include spatial prioritization and Key Biodiversity Areas avoidance:** development projects should be avoided in sensitive ecosystem zones, unless economic activities contribute to habitat restoration and support biodiversity protection.
- **Restoration actions are prioritized for species at risk** accompanied with zoning measures and increased protection of restored areas.
- **An effective protected area (PA) network is supported,** with increased coverage and revised boundaries of existing PAs.

To support the Government of Ethiopia to secure a high-level political commitment in the above sectors, the following recommendations are made:

- **Foster Science – Policy Dialogues:** Scientific research and knowledge provides evidence of the important role that biodiversity plays, its multiple values, the cost of inaction, how to reduce threats and restore nature in an equitable and sustainable manner, with recommended action plan and targets.
- **Multi - Stakeholder Engagement at national, sectoral and landscape levels:** When establishing voluntary commitments, engaging stakeholders from communities, government, private sector, research and non-governmental organizations at the national and local levels is critical for ownership and implementation.
- **Sectoral Linkages:** Voluntary commitments can foster enhanced coordination between sectors to facilitate biodiversity mainstreaming and development of integrated biodiversity management plans. This will also contribute to the simultaneous achievement of climate change targets as well as land degradation neutrality.

## About BIODEV2030

[BIODEV2030](#) focuses on mainstreaming biodiversity through sector-based commitments emerging from multi-stakeholder dialogue in 16 pilot countries. Funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) the project is being implemented by IUCN, The World-Wide Fund for Nature – France (WWF-France) and Expertise France.

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**Reference:** Tesema, M., Asefa, A., Delelegn, Y., S (2022). *National Biodiversity Threat Assessment: Ranking Major Threat Impacting Ethiopia’s Biodiversity*. Addis Ababa: IUCN.