

THE ROLE AND ENGAGEMENT OF HAILEMARIAM & ROMAN FOUNDATION (HRF) IN THE SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (SLM V) INTEGRATED CATCHMENT RESTORATION OF LAKE CHAMO

AT A GLANCE

Purpose: To ensure effective coordination, synergy, and mobilization of all stakeholders' available and potential capacities and resources in the collective effort to restore the Chamo Catchment sustainably.

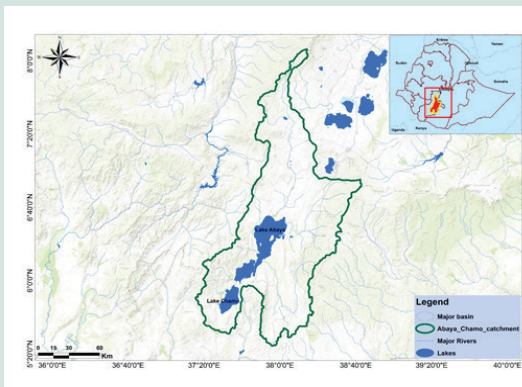
Donor: Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)

Duration: December 2024 to November 2029

Total Funding: €1,800,000

Beneficiaries: Residents of the Chamo Catchment area, particularly those dependent on agriculture, fishing, and natural resources.

Geographic Focus: The Chamo Catchment (Ten Woredas of South Ethiopia Region)



Implementing Partners:

- | Ministry of Agriculture
- | Zonal and Woreda government bodies
- | GIZ and GOPA
- | Arba Minch University
- | Private Sector

BACKGROUND

The area between the Gamo Highlands and the eastern escarpment of the Great African Rift Valley is known as the Abaya-Chamo basin. It includes Lake Abaya, the 'God's Bridge' connecting Lakes Abaya and Chamo, the Nechsar plains, and the Konso cultural landscape, which is home to diverse communities, including Gamo, Derashe, Konso, Gidicho, Kore, and Burji, with a total population of 1,282,380 (2017). The lake is approximately 32 kilometers long and 13 kilometers wide, covering an area of about 317 square kilometers at an elevation of 1,110 meters. This Chamo Catchment offers fertile agricultural land, irrigation water, and a growing tourism sector, while commercial fruit production supports many livelihoods.

However, increasing rural populations and agricultural expansion are leading to significant landscape degradation. Unsustainable land use and waste from agriculture and municipalities harm aquatic biodiversity and contribute to eutrophication. Deforestation threatens vegetation and disrupts water flow. Agricultural dependency is at risk without proper soil and water conservation measures. Past conservation efforts have often failed due to poor planning, short-term focus, and insufficient stakeholder coordination.

Ethiopia's Chamo Catchment is a crucial ecological region, offering significant environmental, economic, and cultural value. Protecting and sustainably managing this area is vital for local communities' well-being and preserving its unique biodiversity.

APPROACH

The project will employ a multi-pronged, participatory methodology that integrates various approaches to achieve the project objectives, including stakeholder engagement, capacity building, evidence-based advocacy, piloting innovative models, and continuous support and monitoring.

Co-founded in 2018 by the former Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Hailemariam Dessalegn and the former First Lady H.E. Roman Tesfaye, the Hailemariam & Roman Foundation (HRF) leverages its unique strengths, including the credibility and trust associated with its founders, the ability to bring together key stakeholders on critical issues, access to networks at both the highest and grassroots levels, a deep understanding of local conditions, and the capacity to build strong partnerships both locally and internationally.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- | Conduct a Chamo catchment community livelihood study and baseline.
- | Support Watershed User Cooperatives – mobilization, establishment, and training local communities to organise themselves.
- | Develop alternative livelihood packages; support communities in undertaking protection and livelihood works; enhance household food and nutrition security in the areas selected for interventions.
- | Create alternative income opportunities and activities, especially for poor mothers and youth, and ensure women's economic empowerment in the intervention areas.
- | In collaboration with PCU/MoA and regional bureaus, document best practices in the intervention areas and advocate for scaling up within intervention areas and beyond.
- | Convene annual forums on community-based resource conservation, watershed-based livelihoods diversification, restoration of degraded agricultural and pastoral landscapes, forest escapes and water bodies in partnership with MoA and other stakeholders.

- | Organize advocacy events at a community level, strengthen local ownership and leadership, active community engagement, and support partnerships, especially with the private sector;
- | Moderate and facilitate any local potential conflict of interest in close coordination with legal and traditional authorities wherever possible and appropriate.
- | Facilitate community experience sharing visits.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- | Improved Natural Resource Management: Enhanced coordination among stakeholders leads to effective policies for natural resource conservation.
- | Capacity Building: Increased capacity of local communities and institutions to implement sustainable practices and utilize resources effectively.
- | Diversified Livelihood Opportunities: Development of alternative livelihoods and financial inclusion for communities in the catchment area.
- | Restoration of Ecosystems: Successful enforcement of community bylaws and effective area closure leading to ecological restoration.
- | Strengthened Community Engagement: Active participation of communities in conservation efforts and governance structures fosters a sense of ownership.



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