

Project Update: September 2019

To prioritise the deforestation drivers and future conservation interventions for the remnant Desa'a forest of the northern Ethiopia, we collected data from key relevant stakeholders such as local community (using focal group discussion and individual interviews), experts and field surveys. The analysis of the collected data (details of the analysis will be included in the final report) from the different stakeholders indicated that the Desa'a forest has various benefits for different stakeholders as showed in Table 1. However, according to the stakeholders' responses its coverage, species composition and values are decreasing throughout time due to different factors. The deforestation drivers of the forest are summarised as shown in Table 2. We also prioritised future conservation interventions for the forest and its important species as indicated in Table 3.

In the second progress report, we will send details of our field survey results including species composition of the forest and current conservation threats at field level.

Table 1. Some uses of the relic Desa'a forest for stakeholders

Stakeholder groups			
	For individual farmers	Local community	For government
Uses Desa' a forest	Farm equipment	Protect health	Source of tourism
	House construction	Source of good weather	Source of medicinal plants
	Fuel wood	Trap moisture (rain)	Habitat for wildlife Conservation
	Honey production	Protect them from volcanic ashes	Income from sale of forest products
	Medicinal plants	Protect erosion and soil degradation	
	Edible fruits and grass	Shade and feed for animal and shade for human	
	Source of income (for the guards)	Aesthetic values	

Table 2. Key deforestation drives for the Desa'a forest (ranked according their importance)

Ranks	Deforestation drives of the Desa'a forest
1	Illegal cutting for selected indigenous species (mainly <i>Juniperus procera</i> and <i>Olea europaea ssp. cuspidata</i> and <i>Dracaena ombet</i>)
2	Free grazing
3	Lack of community awareness on the forest
4	Disputes and conflicts between Afar and Tigray communities
5	Lack of law enforcement
6	Illegal settlement inside the forest and land use change
7	Lack of up to date management plan on sustainable forest management and utilization
8	Lack of government follow-up and attention
9	Few guards with very low and uncertain salary

- 10 Drought and frequent environmental shocks
- 11 Illegal charcoal making
- 12 Fire inside the forest during wild honey extraction and charcoal making

Table 3. Future conservation interventions for the Desa’a forest (ranked according their importance)

Ranks	Future priority interventions programs to conserve Desa’a forest
1	Introduce alternative source of energy e.g. (biogas, solar-based stoves) to nearby villages for reducing illegal tree cutting
2	Give continues awareness raising training about the forest
3	Introduce a strong law enforcement and follow-up mechanisms
4	Decrease free grazing and illegal cutting inside of the forest using different interventions
5	Solving the disputes and conflicts between the Afar and the Tigray communities
6	Introduce different conservation activities such as enclosures, soil and water conservation, planting indigenous trees and others
7	Develop up to date sustainable management plan for the forest
8	Support the locals in different environmentally friendly livelihood interventions (e.g. beekeeping, ecotourism)
9	Introduce agroforestry practices (e.g. home gardens, woodlots)
10	Create forest-based business
11	Helping the poor locals using a scheme “livelihood material support for work”
12	Introduce carbon credit payments into the forest/Ecosystem services payment systems
13	Develop a clear land use system (with clear demarcation of settlements and other land uses)
14	Promote local and international NGOs and other interested partners on Forest and Landscape restoration programs
15	Increase number of guards with affordable salary to tight protection of the forest

Some pictures during our data collection and stakeholders involved (WeForest, local communities, Adigrat University, Tigray Regional State BoARD, EEFRI)



Left: Project team members for data collection from stakeholders and field survey. Right: Data collection using key informant interview and discussions with local.



Left: Data collection using individual face-to-face interview