

Delivering economic expertise to sustainable land management practices

In order to address ongoing concerns of land degradation in the Ethiopian highlands, the Government of Ethiopia (in collaboration with development partners) has implemented a variety of soil and water conservation programs. Most recently, the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Project (consisting of two phases: 2009 and 2012) has built infrastructure to stabilize soils, improve water retention and increase capacity of key service providers in planning and implementation of SLM practices. It has made progress in introducing sustainable land management practices in selected areas of the country, including rehabilitation of specific micro-watersheds in six regions of Ethiopia.

ESSP's expertise in assessing the cost/benefit of the large investments in Ethiopia, and by analysing the economic rates of return using tested methodologies, has been invaluable to identify the economic and financial feasibility of the project through its interventions.

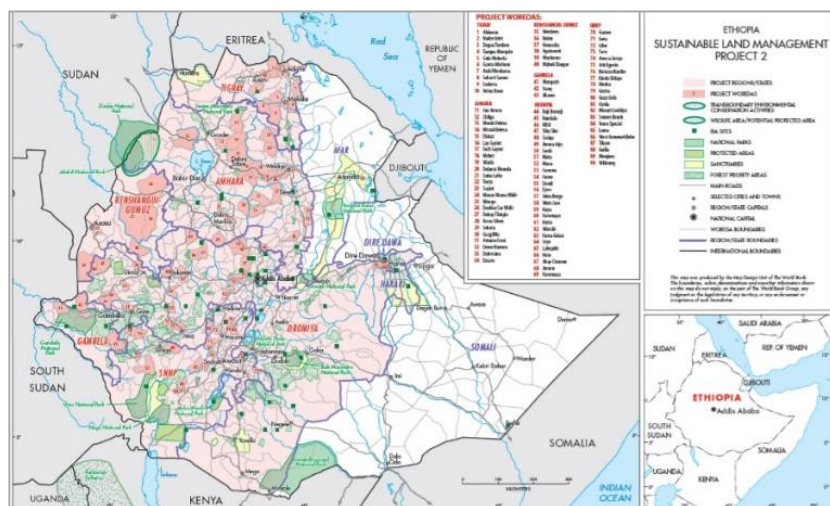
ESSP has supported change in SLM through: i) Providing expertise in economic analytical assessments of project investments
ii) Conducting fieldwork to evaluate impact of interventions
iii) Helping to develop improvements in research methodologies



Terracing in Amhara Region, Ethiopia
Photo credit: P Brown (IFPRI-ESSP)

ESSP's research into sustainable land management (SLM) practices over the years has made the case for integrating research findings into a broader development strategy to include fodder and fertility management. The inclusion of ESSP's work on the economic impacts of these investments in this area is noted in the *PAD Report 525* from the World Bank that formed the basis for a new phase of the program.

Government projects, such as SLMP, rely on accurate data and impact evaluation to widen the scope of SLMP in order to quantify the benefits from such programs, as well as to assess the individual farmer costs of maintaining SLM structures in the long run. The investigations by ESSP researchers into the complexities of SLM adoption and maintenance, as well as the economic analysis surrounding the constraints of program success, have helped inform development initiatives and guide government policy by highlighting important issues that affect rural inhabitants, and the overall success of such investments.



Map showing the Sustainable Land Management areas in Ethiopia
Source: Report No.: PAD525, World Bank

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